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Publics and their Spaces *Publics and their Spaces*

For more than fifty years designers, planners, social scientists and political theorists have debated the meaning and significance of public space. The course “Publics and their spaces”, at the University of California Berkeley, Faculty of Architecture (College of Environmental Design), examines the multiple and complex ways in which public space has been defined along with other relevant concepts such as the public sphere, community, and democracy. It explores these ideas through theoretical readings, case studies and our own observations and research.

Per più di cinquant'anni progettisti, urbanisti, teorici delle scienze sociali e politiche hanno approfondito e discusso il significato dello spazio pubblico. Il corso “Publics and theirs spaces”, presso la Facoltà di Architettura (College of Environmental Design) dell'Università della California a Berkeley, esamina le molteplici e complesse espressioni attraverso cui lo spazio pubblico è stato definito, sviluppando allo stesso tempo altri concetti rilevanti legati alla sfera pubblica, alla comunità e alla democrazia. Il corso esplora queste idee attraverso letture teoriche, casi di studio e percorsi specifici di osservazione e ricerca.

Keywords: public space, publics, community, everyday life

Parole chiave: spazio pubblico, publics, comunità, vita quotidiana

The following five papers investigate public life in a range of different spaces around the San Francisco bay area (with one exception: Shanghai, China). Although all of the students were either architects or landscape architects, the seminar did not use urban or designed spaces as a starting point. Instead, as the title suggests, we began by critically examining the concept of “public” as understood by political philosophers, geographers, sociologists, and even literary critics. Only then did we move on to physical space.

Our primary framework, visibly shaping every paper, was Nancy Fraser’s concept of “multiple publics.” In her well-known 1993 essay, “Rethinking the Public Sphere” Fraser argues against the theoretical and political limits of prevailing formulations of “public.” Like philosopher Jurgen Habermas, Fraser focuses on the public sphere, differentiating it from another widely used meaning of public, referring to the state (the public sector, public works, etc.). Instead, the public sphere (sometimes referred to as civil society) is an arena of discursive relations conceptually independent of both the state and the economy (the private sector). Here, private persons come together in various public arenas around common interests and circumstances.

This distinction has important implications for the study of public space. Many of the urban spaces (plazas, squares, parks, etc.) typically discussed under the rubric of “public space” are actually “civic” spaces, that is, spaces owned, created and controlled by various government entities. In contrast, citizens themselves occupy the public sphere. Fraser shows that, beginning in the 18th century, many different groups of people emerged to form a plurality of publics (associating on the basis of class, gender, and occupation, as well as ideology, religion, politics, and a host of other concerns).

The concept of multiple publics operating in the public sphere allowed us to expand our perspective and focus on the ways in which different publics produce and use space. In fact, as several of the papers demonstrate, the state, acting in the name of control, order, and “the public,” is often active in restricting use or eliminating spaces created by specific publics. Warmwater Cove in San Francisco, for example, was an out-of-the-way plot of land that, over the years, served as a site for music performances, elaborate home-made skateboard ramps, and a continually changing graffiti art gallery. Once the City of San Francisco became aware of these activities, they defined them as vandalism. They then orchestrated a “clean-up” campaign and sponsored a new park plan. Ironically, based on “community” input, the park’s design featured music, skateboarding and public art.

This underlines another of Fraser’s arguments. She points out that the public sphere, while composed of multiple publics, inevitably mirrors social inequality, so not publics are equal. She identifies strong publics (for example, the still powerful white male bourgeois public championed by Habermas), weak publics, (women, the poor, minorities) and sub-altern publics (the homeless, immigrants and other powerless people). These “counterpublics” challenge and oppose the dominant public’s exclusionary norms, asserting alternative perspectives and norms. Thus, the public sphere is founded on competition and conflict not agreement. Fraser sees this kind of contestation as the very core of democracy rather than an impediment to it.

Such widely differentiated publics necessarily require and produce multiple sites of public

expression in contrast to a single exemplary public space. These spaces are partial and selective in response to the limited segments of the populations they serve.

This offers a new perspective on public space. Instead of judging public spaces on their success in accommodating a generalized, all-inclusive public, it allows us to understand the different ways in which multiple publics select, use and occupy space. Our investigations often produce unexpected and even paradoxical results. For example, although the Temescal Farmers Market in Oakland is sponsored and operated by a non-profit (an institution firmly located in the public sphere) in a racially mixed neighborhood, it actually serves a limited public of young, white, middle-class customers. This framework also alerts us to the ways in which different publics can share, interact, or compete in physical space. Threats to the Albany Bulb have produced what might be called "strange bedfellows." There, several publics including homeless campers, off-leash dog walkers and artists have come together in an unlikely alliance to defend their space. In the Golden Gate Park Panhandle, in spite of the tensions produced by competing interests, multiple users manage to co-exist, partly because of a shared racial identity.

Fraser also argues that, through their activities, different publics are constantly redrawing the boundaries between public and private. The ways in which they use space can dissolve clear lines between private and public, allowing private spaces to acquire public meanings. As when Chinese seniors adopt IKEA for their own purposes. Although Shanghai abounds in state-provided public spaces; an emerging public (seniors) needed a new kind of space, which they discovered in an imported commercial format. Paradoxically, this space is private in both the economic and domestic senses. IKEA's displays of multiple living and dining rooms create reassuring associations with domestic interiors, producing a highly specific atmosphere appropriate to and supportive of the seniors' activities and interactions.

Building on Fraser's theories, the students added other concepts; Henri Lefebvre's definitions of three types of social space, Marco Cenzatti's differentiation between quasi-public spaces and public quasi-spaces, Ray Oldenberg's identification of the "third place" (private places such as bars, cafes, and that foster public interaction), David Sibley's critique of exclusionary spaces and my own arguments for everyday urbanism. Combined with ethnographic fieldwork, their selective theoretical combinations have produced complex and nuanced interpretations of the ways in which a range of public spaces function.

Skeptics may ask how this expanded understanding of public space will help students whose professional roles will depend on designing their own visions of public space. Emphasizing the ways in which different publics produce their own spaces sensitizes students to multiple possibilities for public life and experience. As a result, they will approach clients and commissions involving publics with broader and deeper understandings of this complex physical and social realm. This, in turn will inevitably foster more inclusive and democratic design practices.



WARMWATER COVE PARK: EXAMINING THE 2007 PARK CLEAN-UP

Molly Mehaffy
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Arch 219
Margaret Crawford

(flickr.com images above: park users and uses at Warmwater Cove Park circa 2005)

Warmwater Cove Park, a tiny bit of out-of-the-way waterfront on San Francisco's industrial coast between piers 70 and 80, was established in 1976. By 2007 it was either a wonderful and eccentric space that was well-loved and well-used by some of San Francisco's most creative art and music sub-cultures or, from the perspective of the City of San Francisco, an extremely antisocial and dangerous place that actively threatened "the public". A highly publicized and polarized City-sponsored clean up event occurred at the park on August 4th, 2007, irrevocably changing the character and constituents of the park. Luckily, there is photographic and written documentation of this event on both official and unofficial web sites. These sources allow a deeper exploration of the politics of this event, as well as its relationship to the content and readings in "Publics and their Spaces". Using these on-line personal comments, photos, and official reports and articles, I will question the perceptual and political frame of reference of the official City of San Francisco actors in their clean-up campaign.

Before the clean-up in 2007, Warmwater Cove Park was, by all accounts, an unruly and unkempt place. Park maintenance, which was under the jurisdiction of the Port of San Francisco, was admittedly not happening. What *was* happening in this out-of-sight park were spontaneous events organized by people who were attracted by the park's official neglect. The lack of 'eyes-on-the-park' allowed for late night amplified music performances, skate-boarding on elaborate home-made ramps, teen bicycle-powered meet-ups and, most provocatively, a riot of graffiti art that extended past the boundaries of the park and onto an adjacent yard of retired and rusting muni cars. Luckily, though wistfully, there are beautiful images of some of this graffiti art on flickr.com - wistfully because this is a small representation of the art that was made at Warmwater Cove, and because its absolute destruction was the direct target of the City's clean-up event.

The following images are a small sample of many that were made and posted on Flickr by Cassidy Curtis in 2005.¹



It is clear from Yelp entries² that the park functioned as a sort of public gallery for this graffiti art: the back sides of two very long property fences facing the park provided some of the more conventional painting surfaces. Multiple artists and multiple art followers could count on visiting this evolving art exhibition repeatedly over a period of years. Without knowing any more than this about the graffiti and its viewers, one can discern that the production of this graffiti involved multiple publics - the art makers and their audiences.³ One must infer the same thing about the live music scene at the park: the musicians and their audiences, who communicated through a variety of unofficial means, constituted multiple publics. In contrast, the central official point of view that becomes evident in reading the city's report, entitled "Warm Water Cove Graffiti Vandalism Project 2007: Reclaiming a waterfront park and adjacent properties from

Graffiti Vandals",⁴ is that these publics are perceived as something other than *the* public [singular]. More significantly, they are seen to be a serious threat to *the* public, and need to be removed from spaces where *the* public has legitimate rights of occupation.⁵

According to the City's report, and their own quoted words in newspaper articles that are reproduced in this report, the Port and the Public Works Department carefully and methodically built their war-against-graffiti campaign well in advance of the clean-up day in 2007. They started by asking the Police Department to engage in new surveillance and aggressive arresting practices at the park, beginning on the clean-up day. They then asked adjacent business owners - who had been unconvinced that the graffiti on the back sides of their fences was a public nuisance - to help the police prosecute anyone caught in the act of making graffiti, and to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law: arrests would result in convictions - no exceptions. They did not need to twist the arms of these business owners very hard, since there are extant laws that require business owners to paint over graffiti on their property within 30 days, with large financial penalties for failing to comply. The City, which had been turning a blind eye to these laws at Warm Water Cove, was now reminding these businesses that it could make life complicated and expensive for them if they didn't choose to join the clean-up campaign. Once these adjacent businesses in the industrial area were convinced of their civic 'duty' to join in the clean-up, the City went to other business organizations and groups in the Dogpatch area, and solicited their involvement. Last, but not least, the City went to NGO non-profit parks organizations in other parts of the City, and convinced them to join their righteous fight, all on behalf of *the* public. They were then finally ready for their carefully orchestrated day of "community" action, in which all the surfaces in the park that had been, or could be, painted with graffiti were painted over with shiny putty-gray anti-graffiti paint.



Warmwater Cove Park in October 2011 - wearing its armour of gray-green paint.
photos by author

Over 100 volunteers helped with the clean-up on the day of community action. The effort was supported by representatives or services from the following agencies, property owners, and organizations:

Mayor Gavin Newsom
The City of San Francisco Department of Public Works
The Port of San Francisco
The District Attorney's office
The San Francisco Police Department
Juvenile Probation
Pretrial Diversion Citi Program
Mirant Corporation
Sheedy Drayage
Green Trust San Francisco
City Supervisor Sophie Maxwell and her appointee to the Graffiti Advisory Board, Robin Talmadge
SF Green Connect
Norcal Waste Systems
Walgreens
Neighborhood Parks Council
BlueGreenway: project coordinator Corinne Woods
Plan Potrero
Potrero Boosters
Dogpatch Neighbors
Dog Patch Dogs

The fact that the City of San Francisco went to such a great effort to cleanse this small park of its 'bad' influences speaks to David Sibley's assertion that displacement and removal of "otherness" is embedded in our social system, and that, "... 'spatial purification' is a key feature in the organization of our social space." Sibley also sees the effort to achieve this kind of symbolic cleanliness of space as related to the aim for cleanliness, as if one could prevent acquiring something socially contagious by the physical process of cleaning.⁷ Many of the Yelp comments capture this refined understanding of the attempt by City officials to eradicate more complex things than graffiti - that they either fear or do not understand - by painting away the graffiti. Or, to put it another way, perhaps the graffiti cleaners wished to eradicate their fears by eradicating the objects of their fears. The horrific 'cleansings' of peoples of difference in the 20th century have a logical connection to this impulse.

On the day of the clean-up, a brand new vision of a planning process for the renovation of the park was unveiled by the City of San Francisco. This vision, unsurprisingly, extolled the virtues of “community” involvement in the process of planning an updated park. In other words, the City wanted a controlled process of community input that could yield only sanctioned results, and that would effectively replace the actual community input that had already been happening at the park. A UC Berkeley graduate city-planning student named Michael Ernst, who had been working that summer on plans for rejuvenating the park under the aegis of SPUR, was invited out to the clean-up day to champion the City’s official, positivist vision, and to help conduct a survey of public opinion. He was, of course, surveying the very cohort of supporters that had been put together by the City to help remove graffiti - not the broadest sample group.

There is no hint of irony in the City’s own reporting about all of the above events; one can only assume that their beliefs and biases about the good of *the* public remained completely unexamined in this entire process - even in the face of direct verbal challenges by various outside groups and graffiti supporters.⁸

Michael Ernst’s final report and proposal for Warmwater Cove Park was available at the end of that August.⁹ The surveys and interviews published in his report reveal that many potential park users in close proximity to the park want, among other things, music and skate-boarding and a place to make public art. (This language in the survey presumably does not refer to the previously-occurring art and music that were already happening in the park.) Most of the people surveyed had never been to the old Warmwater Cove Park. Based on the output data presented in Ernst’s report, it appears that the interviewees had been given leading questions, and that there was probably no allowance for a response outside the frame of reference of the survey.

At this point, no new plan has been adopted for a renovation of Warmwater Cove Park. It is easy to be critical of the rather vague design proposals that are available for public review: their very vagueness allows the City to espouse a generic wholesomeness without any in-depth attention to user needs (see image in appendix). From what I've been able to discover, the proposed program for a renovated Warm Water Cove Park has all the program ingredients that existed before the clean-up day: public art, music, and skate-boarding. The City has even engaged an arts organization called the Black Rocks Arts Foundation to provide advice on public art-making in the park; its founders were the founders of Burning Man.¹⁰ Why these folks are deemed to have the authority to provide advice on public art at Warmwater Cove Park, after every ounce of already-existing creative energy was systematically eradicated from the park, is beyond understanding.

Warmwater Cove Park is located in an area where social justice issues demand ecological clean-up and access to the waterfront. It has a rich and varied group of publics within transit and walking distance. The growing official attention to what happens in this waterfront area has potential for positive effects. But, in order to allow for the diversity and inclusiveness that is officially espoused by green-speaking civic planners, the dialogue between public officials, parks organizations, and people of all walks of life who might spend time in these spaces needs to become radically different. A complex urban social ecology needs to be recognized, and processes of engagement that offer more than lip service to inclusiveness needs to occur. The voices on the "other" side of the divide that the City created in its polarized clean-up campaign said this in many ways, but the City ferociously refused to listen to them. What will it take for the City to listen to the wisdom of its own people, and to finally see the beauty of its multiple constituents? This question should become part of the process of thinking about the future of Warmwater Cove.

As mentioned before, the public comment on the park's clean-up and eviction of alternative public

constituents is remarkably provocative and lucid. This quote, from Cassidy Curtis, as reported in Mike Ernst's Warmwater Cove report (cited above), speaks volumes. Unfortunately, it fell on deaf ears: the park's surveillance and active policing have succeeded in keeping all of the alternative art and music-making publics away.

"Artists and musicians who have made Warmwater Cove their home for many years deserve more credit than they've gotten, because their efforts, although technically illegal, have made the park safer and more enjoyable during a time when the City did nothing. These people deserve to continue their role as guardians and cultural participants in this park."

YELP QUOTES

Cynthia F.
San Francisco, CA
4/24/2011

The graffiti is still gone and the water is probably still polluted. However, this is still one of my favorite hang out spots, especially if there's a day party. Dirty beats, friendly faces, cute doggies, warm weather, and scenic views of the East Bay - what could be better?

Allyson S.
San Francisco, CA
10/23/2008

Back in the day, I used to go to punk shows here when my friends were playing, and it would be ghetto, running off generators, playing in the rain sometimes. I have amazing memories of this place. I haven't been back in a few years, but it sounds as if it's been cleaned up a bit which is sad.

Not only is this a great place to come for some solitude (I lived up on Potrero Hill and would walk down here for some "alone" time whenever I'd get into an argument with my parents) but the walk to get here is impressive. Lots of defunct factories and a muni graveyard to boot. I've taken some amazing photographs around here.

Scott G.
San Francisco,
3/30/2008

A great little hidden spot I stumbled upon while riding through industrial SF. Overgrown grass and a few benches nestled among the ship yards along the bay. Don't drink the water!

Quite a grimy park but I found it quite peaceful. Watch out for needles and broken glass, friends

Jean K.
San Francisco, CA
9/2/2008

I had high expectations for what's known as the most ghetto park in SF but it looks like its reputation has spread to the authorities because it's not that bad now. Nicely paved. Newly painted walls. No graffiti. No weeds.

Granted, it's still in a pretty industrial part of town with a view of the Alameda docks.

Max S.
New York, NY
10/16/2008

Nasty and gross and exploding with riotous color, it was the best park in SF. Fed on toxins, the plants were pitiful drooping things; the only thriving flora were the traces left by the graffiti artists.

The best sight was the MUNI graveyard across the mouth of the inlet, even more intensely cultivated by the graffiti gardeners than the famous wall. Sheltered between two enormous warehouses were one hundred antique trains and buses arranged in neat rows, every inch of them bursting with color - a nursery of rusting industrial flowers grown on a monumental scale. Over years, the garden subsided as MUNI gradually emptied the lot.

To be standing at the edge of Warm Water Cove, balanced upon some jutting concrete slab, was to know the compelling beauty of an industrial wasteland, a veritable ecology.

But here's a fantastic ray of hope:

A few years ago I came across a ranger who was making careful observations of the thick, oily water at the large pipe opening. She was looking for salmon. Apparently every year a handful of salmon return and swim up those pipes to spawn, the remnant of the original population that once traveled up the particular creek now traced by the city drainage pipe.

How cool is that?

I o.
San Francisco, CA
8/11/2007

Warm Water Cove (aka Tire Beach) goes way back in SF lore. In the eighties and nineties there used to be impromptu punk rock shows in this park. Graffiti has always been it's signature (and good graffiti at that), and the view of the tires at low tide is both awe inspiring and refreshing (where else can you go in SF and see a vast display of tires sinking in bay muck?) It also used to be a great place to build a bonfire with pallets collected from the local streets and drink beer without bothering anyone (and without being bothered by the police). It's been a homeless camp of sorts over the years, and on one lucky day I saw the homeless church bus parked there filled with people singing hymns and banging tambourines.

Recently I went to Tire Beach only to find all the graffiti painted over by the city, the walkways repaved with asphalt, and wood chips heaped on top of what used to be dirt and weeds. And the place was crawling with cops, some undercover and some not. They said they were doing 24-hour surveillance. I heard from a friend that not too long before there had been a murder in the park (which seems to coincide with the city's focus on "cleaning up" the park). But at least the tires are still there at low tide.

Orin Z.
San Francisco, CA
3/18/2008

Don't ever change, Warm Water. Oops, too late. That's what we get for allowing one woman walking her dog to become "uncomfortable" with all the "defacement" in a public "park." Ceci n'est pas un park.

Here's an idea, Random Whiner Who Caused This Place to be Whitewashed: if you want to move into a yuppie dorm (that was built by exploiting a legal loophole originally created to give artists live/work spaces) please expect that converting portions of an INDUSTRIAL district will necessarily leave *some places* not well-suited for Ikea merchandise. Some of those places have been around for a long time and give the neighborhood a certain feel, and their unique existence is largely an accident. A lot of people enjoy these rarities, while not too many people enjoy fewer parking spaces or forgotten dog feces or ridiculous noise complaints from people who moved into an INDUSTRIAL district (which is what you bring to the table). Simply an observation: YOU are the trespasser, while the true owners are the people who spraypainted this derelict patch of waterfront land. Perhaps the reason you're uncomfortable is that you don't belong.

Should you choose to complain about Warmwater, save yourself the trouble and just skip to the part where you move away... douchebags.

Andrew D.
San Francisco, CA
6/23/2009

well... if the last time you went to this spot was before 2007 then the next time you go back you will be in for a big surprise. "tire beach" has become something totally different. the place has the feeling of an insane asylum with everything painted grey. DHL bought the big building across the inlet and i hear that muni is building a yard for its light rail cars only a block away. years ago "tire beach" had flavor. its walls completely decorated and you'd never know what type of characters you would find here. today its a very bland spot that doesnt really offer me any reason to go there. the industrial vibe remains of course but i havent even heard of any punk shows going down there as of recent.

im sure many people will love that the spot is all cleaned up but i for one am not. it had a vibe of "pure freedom" before and now its just like everywhere else. RIP tire beach

John G.
San Francisco, CA
8/25/2007

One of my favorite memories of San Francisco was stumbling upon this park on a Sunday afternoon. I was fleeing all the signs of impending gentrification in the rest of the city and sought refuge in the old industrial sections of Dogpatch. Lo and behold, I came across this colorful graffiti gallery hidden in an unused corner of the city that clearly was ignored by everyone else. To make the scenario even better, there was a crowd of DIY punks hosting a gig there for some touring and local bands.

In a word: independence!

Yep, independence from greedy club owners who steal most of the money people pay at the door. Independence from nosey neighbors complaining about the noise and "weird" people. Independence from the forces that would turn this whole city into a whitewashed, featureless hive of uninspired architecture for million-dollar muddleheads.

And now Warm Water Cove is dead. So-called "community activists" painted over years worth of graffiti art and the cops have become humorless strong-armers who will kick you out if you attempt to do anything more than walk your dog in this "public" park. If you look strange, or punk, or anything other than a yuppie in collared shirt, you will be pulled aside and interrogated as to your intentions. It doesn't matter that the park is still a hideous mess of poisonous sludge and ugly concrete benches, with a view of nothing other than factories and cranes. Someone, somewhere decided that the new Dogpatch developers don't like this to be a refuge for the toss-offs and rejects of the New San Francisco. It's not that the people who congregated here were actually a nuisance. No, it's the IDEA of these people itself. They are persona non grata. Chosen for expurgation. Fiscally censored from the story of San Francisco.

Are you one of them?

Andrew P.
San Antonio, TX
6/1/2010

Used to go here back in 03-04 for the punk shows. My sister who was into the scene lived in SF at the time, she took me to a bunch of them down here. Good times. Sucks to hear they painted the graffiti...

P.S. After looking at the photos of the people I know more than 5 of them HOLY WOW lololol

Tom H.
San Francisco, CA
5/31/2006 2 photos

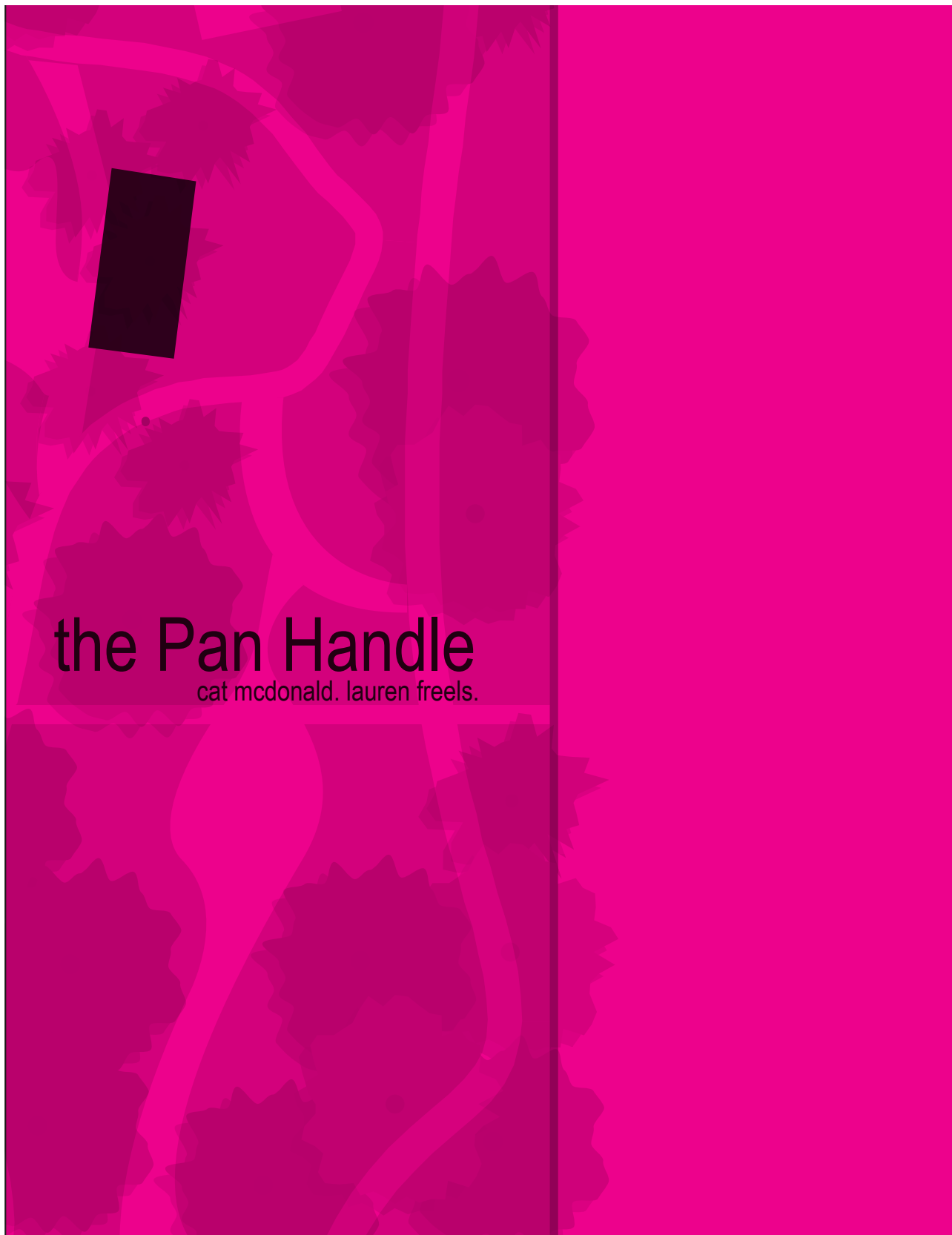
Also known as Tire Beach to some, the dirty, dangerous wonder of Warm Water Cove is not for everyone, but if you are adventurous (and armed) then you might find a trip to Warm Water Cove, well, "interesting". Home of the homeless, refuge for druggies and canvas for the artist all in one. There are huge cement cupie dolls, buried up to their eyes. There is the MUNI graveyard across the cove, every inch covered in graffiti. There just might even be a body floating the muck that collects in the cove, next to the occasional sea lion who doesn't know better. One thing is for sure, this park is not like anything else within the city limits, and that might either be a good thing, or a bad thing, depending on how you look at it.

Alexis C.
San Francisco, CA
8/10/2007

They got rid of all the graffiti before I could get down there and photograph it all. Sometimes I hate this city so goddamn much.

CITATIONS

- ¹ <http://www.flickr.com/photos/cassidy/sets/100389/>
- ² Because it is used as a primary source for ethnography, the text of the set of Yelp quotes that meet the search criterion 'Warmwater Cove Park San Francisco' is attached above as a reference.
- ³ The foundational ideas about multiple publics and the exclusivity of privileging unity over difference that have informed this paper were explored at length in the following papers:
- Margaret Crawford and Marco Cenzatti, "On Public Spaces, Quasi-Public spaces, and Public Quasi Spaces," *Modulus* 24, (1998).
- Iris Marion Young, "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference", in *Imagined Communities*. Anderson, Benedict (London ; New York : Verso, 1991).
- Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics", *Public Culture* 14, Number 1 (2002).
- ⁴ This report was produced by the Department of Public Works and the Port of San Francisco, and is signed by Mayor Gavin Newsom, the Director of Public Works, The Port Executive Director, and the Deputy Director of Port Maintenance. It is available online at www.sfdpw.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/sfdpw/director/90_WarmWaterCoveReport_0508.pdf
- ⁵ Nancy Fraser asks us to question the un-seen exclusions in the notion of a singular public sphere. Throughout their narrative, the City of San Francisco's officials polarize the real public and its needs against the destructive others in Warmwater Cove Park without imagining them as having an equal legitimacy.
- Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in Bruce Robbins, ed., *The Phantom Public Sphere*. (Minneapolis, MN : University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
- ⁶ Sibley, David. "Purification and Control" in *Geographies of Exclusion*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), p.77.
- ⁷ Sibley, David, "Mapping the Pure and the Defiled", *ibid*.
- ⁸ Newspaper accounts of these dissenters were reproduced in the City's report, cited above at ⁴
- ⁹ Michael Ernst, *Envisioning Warmwater Cove - Piero N. Patri Fellowship in Urban Design at Spur Summary Report*, San Francisco: Spur, 2007.
- ¹⁰ From the web site of Black Rock Arts Foundation, www.blackrockarts.org:
The mission of the Black Rock Arts Foundation is to support and promote community, interactive art and civic participation.
For our purposes, interactive art means art that generates social participation. The process whereby this art is created, the means by which it is displayed, and the character of the work itself should inspire immediate interactions that connect people to one another in a larger communal context.
The primary goal of the Black Rock Arts Foundation is to promote a revival of art's culture-bearing and connective function by removing art from its context in the marketplace and reintegrating it into communal settings.



Introduction

The Pan Handle is both a beloved and contested public open space in San Francisco. Some people love it and can't imagine the city without it. Some people hate it and wish this swampy sliver of land would disappear. While it is easy to speak of things in binaries and opposition, value exists in the complexity between these two opinions. Over the past month we've spent a lot of time walking around the Pan Handle exploring the complexity of this space. In doing so, we have joined the cast of characters at the Pan Handle: two students asking strangers questions about the park. During this time, we observed the different dynamics of this park and the multiple publics that access this space, exposing the nuances of this space that are not easily discerned. To do this, we conducted research in the form of ethnography and observation, and rooted our analysis in social theories regarding public open space.

In this paper, we will evaluate the seemingly copacetic and accepting atmosphere of the Pan Handle and the multiple publics that frequently access it to reveal who utilizes this park, how that usership is accommodated and why it is successful in doing so. For this study we were particularly interested in issues of difference, exclusion and surveillance as presented by such theorists as Iris Marion Young, Adorno, David Sibley, Henri Lefebvre, and Oscar Newman. After on-site observation and interviews were conducted, we found that underlying tensions between the multiple publics of the Pan Handle exist but are pacified by three major factors that will be discussed in this paper:

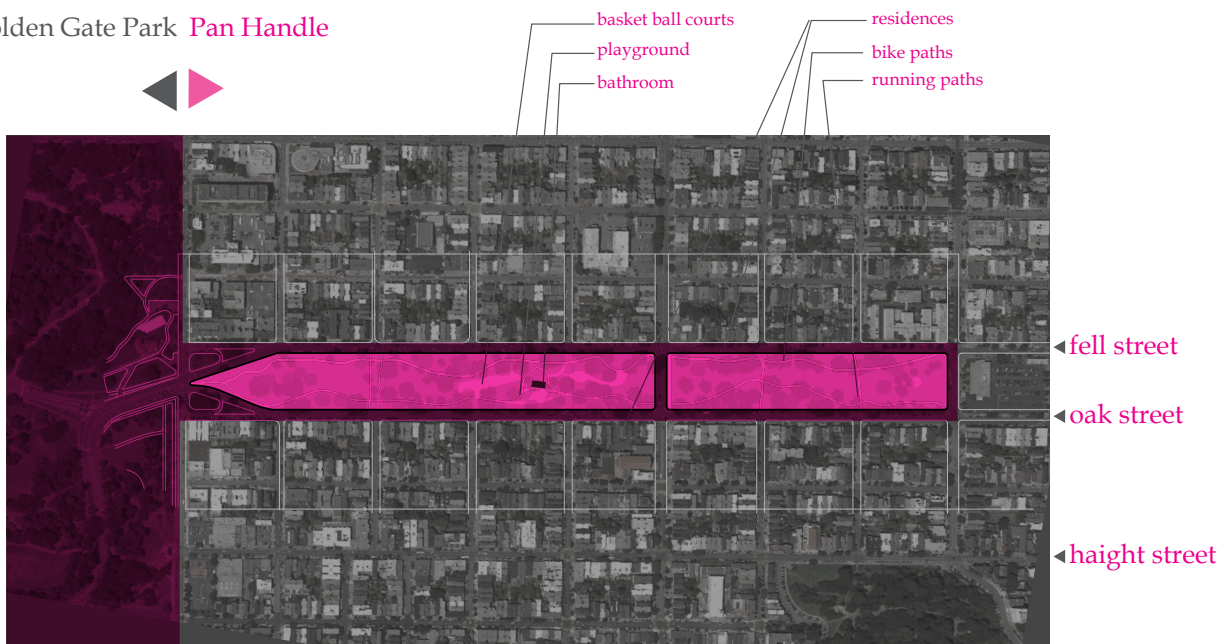
- *Sameness*: these multiple publics are a homogeneous populous in terms of politics, values and race and have a shared identity that accepts and celebrates diversity.
- *Space*: each group has a strong perceived relationship to the park and representational space. The park is adopted by the publics as a semi-private space of refuge rather than confrontation. Also, these publics claimed separate spaces and temporal choreographies that rarely compete with each other.
- *Safety*: the Pan Handle feels safe and the multiple publics are not threatened by one another because of the parks adjacency to residences which constantly surveil activity within the park. This impression of surveillance is facilitated by low undergrowth below the trees that enables clear sight lines throughout the park and makes pedestrians proprietors of the space.

History

The Pan Handle is a one block wide linear extension of Golden Gate Park, in San Francisco, California and is situated between Fell Street to the north and Oak Street to the south with residences flanked on either side. It is capped on the eastern side by the San Francisco DMV and on the western side by Golden Gate Park. The park slopes to the east slightly and is hedged from the roads that surround it by both parked cars and 100 year old trees, primarily Eucalyptus. While there are numerous trees on site, there is little under growth so that clear site lines are maintained across the park. Its core is an open lawn with amenities, including a basketball court, bathroom and children's playground. To circulate through the park there are two primary paths that run the east/west length of park. The southern path is primarily for pedestrians, while the northern path is intended for bicyclists. At its eastern edge the interior lawn has a monument to William McKinley that acts as a visual icon for the park. The western end is a highly congested intersection that hinders pedestrian

[fig. 1] Site Plan

Golden Gate Park **Pan Handle**



traffic flow from the Pan Handle to Golden gate park. (fig. 1)

The Pan Handle has been a part of Golden Gate Park since its boundaries were established in 1870 (Pollock). At the time this section of the city known as the “Outer Lands” was entirely covered with sand dunes. Frederick Law Olmsted, designer of Central Park, notably rejected the idea that the sand dunes could be reclaimed and made into suitable park (Pollock). This did not deter the project and reclamation began on the Pan Handle where vegetation was tested for its ability to root in sandy soils. The process that was adopted was to first sow barley and then sea bent grass mixed with yellow lupin. This stabilized the soil enough to begin placing manure and topsoil and planting trees. The reclamation process was a success and by 1876 the Pan handle was reported to be a green and inviting place (Pollock).

The Pan Handle served as the entrance to Golden Gate Park with little fanfare until it became the site for a purposed freeway extension. The freeway extension was to run through the middle of the park bisecting it and leading on to Golden Gate Park itself. As part of the Freeway Revolt began in 1959 to combat the building of freeways in San Francisco, the Pan Handle became a contested space. The purposed freeway was never installed, halted in its final vote before the Board of Supervisors in 1966 (Adams). This was significant because it ruptured the publics view of this space as a pastoral landscape, eliminating this as a “liberal model of the bourgeois public sphere (Fraser, 58).”

In the 1960’s, the park gained social significance by acting as a important site for civil protests, social gatherings and concerts. This was a consequence of its proximity to the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood that had become the hub of the hippie counter-cultural movement (fig. 2). This neighborhood got a reputation for accepting all types of people regardless of background, race or gender. Today this sentiment still lingers, and contradicts the historical social legacy of the park. The history of this park and its evolution of public user groups is significant because it demonstrates a shift in

thought about the social role of public open space.

When the Pan Handle was constructed in the 19th century, parks were seen as the answer to the uncivilized nature of the industrialized city. Olmsted in particular saw spaces like this as a means to civilizing men, or keeping men civilized (Olmsted, pg. 40). This encouraged the bourgeois to participate in a Habermasian discourse that would combat perceived social evils of the time. The Pan Handle, although a public space which was built in order to uphold and construct the bourgeois public sphere, has become through the countercultural movements of the 60s and the Freeway revolt, a space which manifests the multifarious and conflicting nature of the public sphere. (Fraser, pg. 61)



[fig. 2] Images from the Pan Handle in the 1960s

Publics

Over the course of the past four weeks, we observed and documented the existence of 8 different publics: joggers, walkers, bikers, dog walkers, street people, University of San Francisco students, small children, and maintenance. Through ethnography and observation, we explored the many facets within each group and the underlying dynamics between these publics.

Joggers/bikers/walkers:

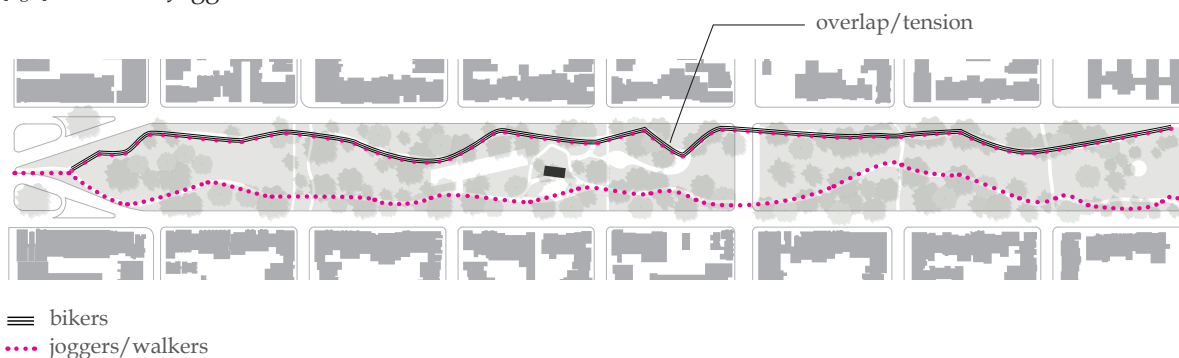
The joggers, bikers and walkers make up the largest public currently using the Pan Handle. Most of the bikers use the bike path as a thoroughfare to get to downtown San Francisco for work downtown or to Golden Gate Park or the Coast for more intense trails. Joggers mainly use the path to go to Golden Gate Park for exercise. Walkers use the paths less intentionally. Sometimes walkers create a circuit around the Pan Handle, other times walkers use the path to get to Golden Gate Park, and sometimes walkers sit and walk in cycles .

Tensions:

Joggers/Walkers vs. Bikers (fig.3)

This separation is intended to mediate the different flows of circulation. While the popularity of paths can be seen by their frequent use, this system is not flawless. Walkers and joggers are constantly using the bike lanes because the paving is smoother. This upsets the bikers because they move at a faster pace than the walkers and joggers. Bikers constantly yell at bikers to get out of the way and return to the slower, southside path. The different publics with the circulation realm are constantly alienating each other (Jess).

[fig.3] Bikers vs Joggers vs. Walker circulation



Dog Walkers:

Dog walkers are one of the few publics that use the center area of the park on a regular basis. Dog walkers come from the surrounding neighborhoods and use the Pan Handle as you would a backyard or toilet.

Tensions:

Dog Walkers vs. Park Goers

Dog Walkers use the central core of the park and on yelp there have been many complaints that the dogs exclude people from using this center space because of the dog poop (Nizaria).

Basketball Players:

There is a thriving basketball community in the Pan Handle and people come from all over the city to play pick up games on the weekend. According to one basketball player, Daniel, there is diverse mix of people who play in these games: Serbians, young black dudes, a group comes from the Divis projects, old black dudes who used to play who now watch, and heckle, white dudes in their 30s and girlfriends sometimes come to watch. According to Daniel, these games are a great way to meet new people in the city because the players are constantly switching each weekend (Daniel). When a pick up game is not going on, the basketball courts are utilized by the homeless population on the Pan Handle. This division of space and time does not seem to cause problems.

Street People:

The street community at the Pan Handle is comprised of a most white individuals from all age ranges. Most of the population is homeless but does not live in the pan handle. They only occupy the Pan Handle during the day and go to Haight St. at night for its lively nightlife. On a local level, the Pan Handle welcomes street people who live in Golden Gate park and other parts of the city. There is also a large population of people who live on the Pan Handle in vans and cars. This group is largely from out of town and uses the numerous parking options adjacent to the park and its easy access to the park to their advantage. The out of town community also, come to the pan handle to sell marijuana during the day. These groups can be found on the benches along the running paths, around the basketball courts and mixed in among the trees. The street community rarely are they seen mingling with other publics. They appreciate the park because the people and police are tolerant of their lifestyle and they are rarely bothered while at other parks, they feel less welcome.

Tensions:

Hippies vs. Posers:

People in search of an authentic hippie experience, might be disappointed by the Pan Handle to find that this lifestyle been pushed out and this is where tension emerges between authentic “hippies” and posers.

“I really want to give this place 5 stars. But I can’t. Gone is the idealism of the 60s/70s/80s. Exchanged for a bunch of hybrid cars and our parents attempting to stay healthy after many years of being burnt out. This place isn’t really much of a hippy place. You’ll see tourists, metro hipsters, and trustafarian gutter punks. Yeah, I am talking to you...I know you want to rebel against the “system” and not work. But I do work, I’ve worked for a long time, and you’re not getting my change..I know not all of them are like this. Some are just nomads, some came from abusive homes, etc. But yeah... The rest is just the trendy SF fare. You know, it isn’t cheap to live here. Tourists suck. Ben and Jerrys is so for them.” Mikki D. 2011 (yelp)

The search for an authentic hippiedom and it’s accompanying social scene is prevalent in those who seek out this district. When this expectation is not met, disappointment and conflicts between these publics emerges.

Hippies vs. Yuppies:

This is the probably the most apparent tension on the Pan Handle. Street Kids and yuppies have tension based in socio-economic differences. Most the interactions between these two groups are passive. Sometimes a yuppie might say something like “get a job.” But most of the tension is not acted on but rather these conflicts are expressed to a third party, like yelp or to friends (Lulu B.)

Street Kids vs. Runners/Walkers:

Tensions can play out in small scale antagonistic actions against each other or never surface at all. For instance, Tony, a street kid from Seattle, set up a barricade of on the running path that read, DO NOT ENTER. As “yuppies” attempted to pass, he halted them by requesting a password. This usually stunned the yuppies and made them uncomfortable (Tony). They were given no choice but to give up control to the street kid and play by his rules. Conversely, Emily, a runner described her interaction with the street people as uncomfortable but rather than engage with them, she speeds up her pace and races away (Emily).

Street People vs. Basketball:

This is the first instance where a tension has spacial implications. The street people like to use the basketball courts because there are benches located directly next to them. It is also one of the drier areas within the Pan Handle and consequently, it is easier to roll grocery carts into this area. Also, there is a high number of pick up basketball games that take place over the weekends. When the pick-up basketball games occur, the street people do not use the courts or sit on the benches. They occupy benches along the jogging path when they cannot use the basketball court.

Street People vs. Children

This tension is mainly played out in the bathroom where street people change, shower and clean themselves and where children use the public toilets. According to an anonymous homeless woman:

"People don't usually talk to homeless [in the restroom] they just ignore us."

This quote demonstrates the tactic of exclusions and avoidance people use to distance themselves from the homeless population (Anonymous Homeless Woman).

USF students:

Another major influence adjacent to the park is the University of San Francisco. This Jesuit university is the oldest in the city and has a large contingent of undergraduates who live on campus. These students are a major contributor to the users of the Panhandle. As a Catholic institution the rules and regulations on this campus in regards to alcohol and drugs are stringent. The university is located within a block of the Panhandle on the northwestern edge. (www.usfca.edu) Demographically the adjacent neighborhoods are predominantly white based on the latest US Census. This is in contrast to San Francisco as a whole which is less than 50% white based on the same data. (fig. 4) Some students from USF use the park as a space to smoke marijuana or have regular keg parties. During the day, they are located on the benches along the jogging/bike paths. They are one of the few users groups that extend their activities into the night and find alternative uses for predetermined spaces. For instance, at night this user group has been known to drink beer and party in the children's play area. They are respectful of other public space but once those spaces are vacated, they take them over (Damon).

Tensions

USF students vs. Small Children

USF students that smoke weed at the park are particularly conscientious of the small children around. If they see small children walking along the path adjacent to their smoke, they'll shield the smoke from the children. Additionally, the USF students like to use the children's play area for night parties. As long as this space is abandoned, no conflicts arise because the students do not use this space during the day for aberrant behavior.

Small Children/Parents:

Within the Pan Handle there is playground for young children ages 2-6. It is an enclosed playground with a fence surround it. Most of the parents prefer this playground to others in the area because it is enclosed and is flat so that constant surveillance is achieved. Most parents and children vacate this area before night fall or soon after.

Maintenance:

The Pan Handle is constantly maintained through work crews and community stewardship. During our four week observation, we noted that three times the William McKinley Statue was tagged and cleaned. Also, we noticed that community groups from the surrounding neighborhoods came to plant annuals or perennials in newly arranged planting beds alongside the running paths.

Equalibrium:

When interviewing the multiple publics that occupy the Pan Handle, their attitude toward the park and the different groups is mainly positive and tolerant. However, although people report to be quite happy, tensions between groups still exist. We believe that these conflicts are ameliorated because the social forces of these publics have reached an equilibrium based on three major factors: Sameness, Safety and Space.

Sameness

Despite this area's reputation as eclectic and diverse, the multiple publics occupying the Pan Handle come from a homogeneous white liberal pool (fig. 4). While this area claims to be accepting of diversity, it is in fact not a diverse community itself. Within this homogeneous community, these publics feel obligated to uphold the historical social ideals of acceptance and tolerance. The shared identity of this neighborhood is directly linked to this notion of acceptance. This pulls into question the "logic of identity" and the desire to think things together in a unity as Derrida states (Marion Young, 430). Although, a cursory glance would suggest that people within the community surrounding Pan Handle have a similar social consciousness, we believe that this identity is falsified by a lack

[fig. 4] CONTEXT



of true diversity within it and that this identity “withdraws from such particularity and constructs unreal essences” (Marion Young, 431). In the case of the Haight-Asbury, NOPA community, the unreal essence is the notion of tolerance of all people regardless of class, race, gender or values which makes up an idealism that constructs their social identity. However, if you consider the fact that most people within this community are white liberals and little diversity actually exists it is easy to see why only slight tensions between the publics of the Pan Handle exist.

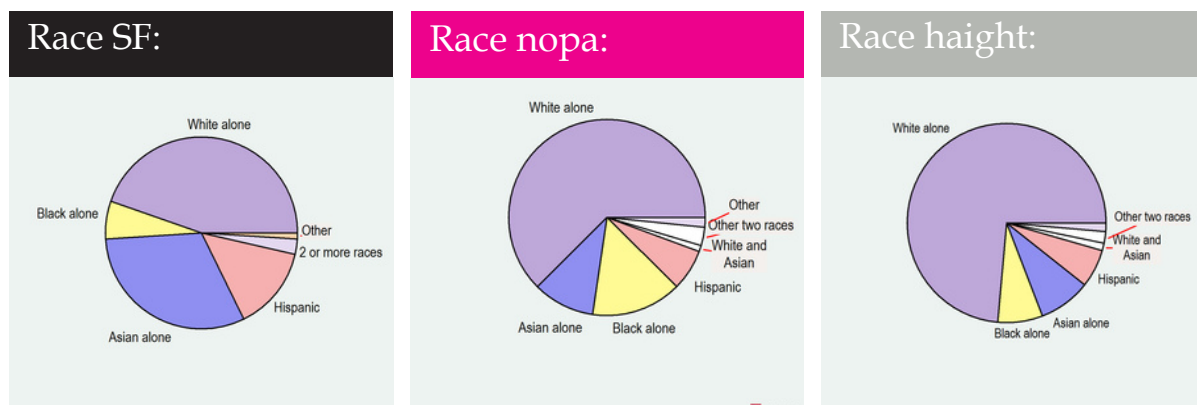
For instance, NOPA is a district in the midst of “conflicting” identities. Once known as part of the Western Addition which is associated with the African American working class of San Francisco this neighborhood is actively seeking gentrification. The name itself is contested producing vehement feelings on both sides. While one side of the argument identifies with the Western Addition as the appropriate name for the neighborhood claiming the newer title is a real-estate agents ploy for rebranding, the other is just as fiercely for the newer and evolving identity of the district. The following review is typical to the discussion of this neighborhood.

“I love it here! I don’t care what anyone says...sure we can be a little ghetto, little bit country, and a little bit rock and roll...but all in all can’t we all just get along?? If it bothers you so much that we call our lovely little neighborhood the NoPa...you don’t have to come here, we’ll keep it all for ourselves :)” Kathryn C. 2009 (yelp)

With the proponent of continuing to dub the area Western Addition, there is a perception that the district is the “hood” and continues to have a black racial identity. This is in contrast to the proponents of the North of the Panhandle name which as seen in the review above call for a more generalized, diverse racial make up while focusing primarily on amenities which the neighborhood has to offer, like good restaurants and farmers markets. The irony of course is that these differences in race are an illusion because the majority of NOPA is white.

Similarly, on the Pan Handle, the publics are homogeneously white liberals (fig. 5). The largest difference between publics is socio-economic. Thus, the illusion of this community as a tolerant one that accepts all types of people is falsified when one evaluates the range of diversity that actually exists within the neighborhood or the range of diversity that this group actually tolerates. We regard the community that occupies the Pan Handle as a group of publics who sees themselves as diverse and identifies themselves as an accepting community that appreciates difference but is in fact not diverse and rarely faces the

[fig. 5] CONTEXT



issues that this encompasses. We believe it is this apparent sameness in identity and racial construct that subdues tensions between socio-economic differences between publics on the Pan Handle.

Space:

Another factor that keeps tensions between the publics on the Pan Handle low involves space that is both physical and perceived. Publics accessing the Pan Handle believe they have a unique personal connection to the park and it becomes a *representational space*, as defined by Henri Lefebvre, that exists in their thoughts, perceptions and memories of this space (Lefebvre, pg. 39). On the other hand, within the Pan Handle, there are clear delineations of physical space that enable the multiple publics to activate the park without interacting with one another. This ability to occupy the park without disturbance from another public is a strong factor in keeping tensions between publics low.

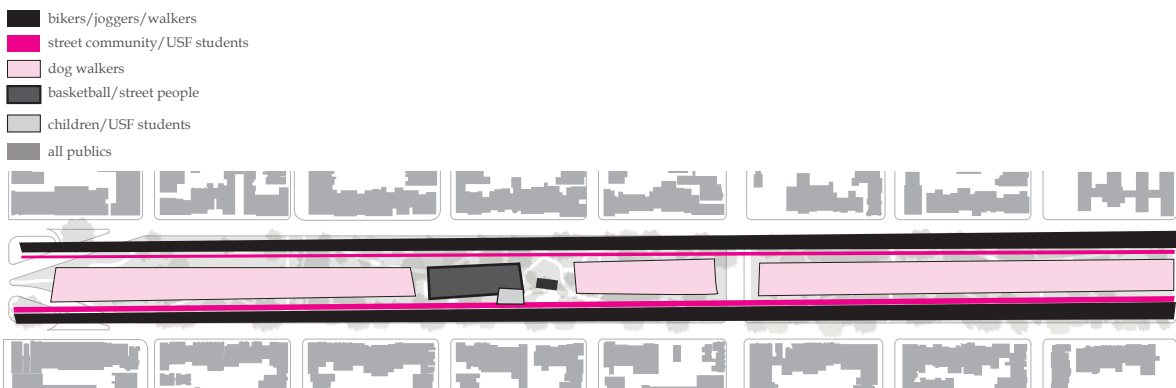
Most publics activating the Panhandle live in the neighborhoods adjacent to the park and informally use the space as one might their backyard. Each participant creates a relationship and mental map of the park that is unique. This type of attitude toward the space is described by Henri Lefebvre as *representational space*, "space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users', but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who describe and aspire to do no more than describe. This is the dominated - and hence passively experienced - space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of it's objects." (Lefebvre, pg. 39) The Panhandle's physical space becomes the stage for the stories and memories of each person's life. The following yelp story exemplifies this attitude:

"One of my best days in the city - was spent listening to Midnite on repeat while reading Still Life with Woodpecker, strategically in the glow of a sunbeam for 4 hours. While deeply engrossed in the magical world of redheads (...yes it is a magical world) a chihuahua named Billie Holiday, tongue hanging out the corner of her cute mouth, danced in a pink tutu to a fiddle accompanied original song about grass. (all true - and at the time it made perfect sense)..."
Jessica T. 2006 (yelp)

Additionally, the physical nature of the park encourages people to engage with it individually because the space that is not pure nor precious. This enables people to interact with it without fear of defilement to create unique *representational spaces*. According to Iris Marion Young, "Pure spaces expose difference and facilitate the policing of boundaries" (Marion Young, 87). The Pan Handle, as a "non-pure space", invites multiple publics to blur boundaries and engage with the space and each other without pretension or condensation. This is in contrast to Golden Gate Park itself which could be conceived as a *representation of space* or the illusion of a traditional park (Lefebvre, pg. 33). The Panhandle, despite its initial connections to Golden Gate Park, has created its own identity through the propriety of its publics and their use of this *representational space*.

In addition to people claiming the park mentally as a *representational space*, the different groups occupy separate physical spaces in the park (fig.6) . This separation privatizes spaces for the multiple publics and enables people to tolerate each other because there is a spacial distance. This distinction

[fig. 6] Zoning



between physical space is most crucial between the different socio-economic groups. The street community and the yuppies require separate spaces to uphold the persistence of stereotyped conceptions of the other. More specifically, the middle class has to distance its self from the “residues of the poor” in order to demonstrate what they have left behind and emphasize the difference between them and the street community (Exclusion, 56).

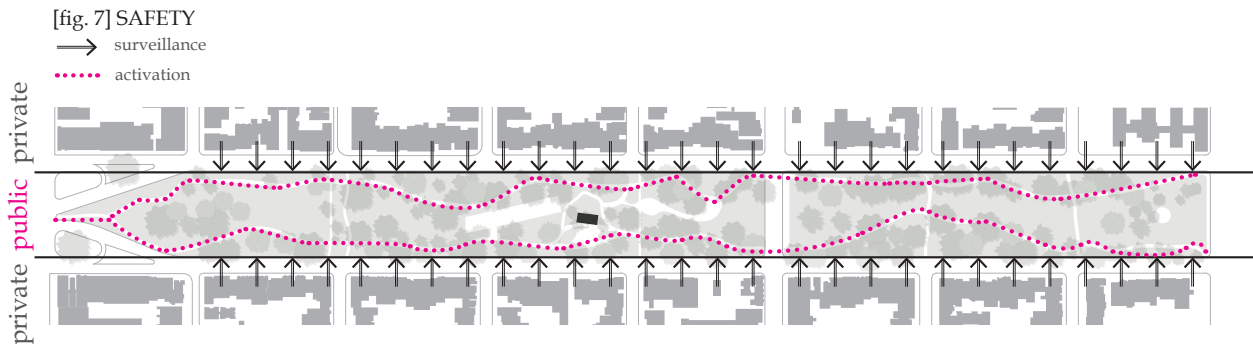
Safety:

There are a few factors that maintain the Pan Handle’s sense of safety. The first thing to note about the safety of this space is that it is not heavily monitored by police but rather a network has emerged of voluntary controls and standards enforced by the publics themselves (Jacobs, 113). This collective policing is achieved by surveillance, demarcation and activation.

The Pan Handle is surrounded by residences and this has the effect of surveillance or as Jane Jacobs calls it “eyes on the street”. Furthermore, the residences are all oriented toward the Pan Handle but also clearly separated from it. This delineation represents the separation of public and private space which clarifies the boundary of the park and what the people of the residences should surveil. This creates “natural proprietors” of the street and the Pan Handle. Additionally, the Pan Handle has little undergrowth beneath the trees and a high frequency of foot traffic. The paths are continuously used and this creates activity within the space. This in conjunction with clear sight lines from the minimal undergrowth increases the amount of eyes in the space and encourages spectatorship from the residences flanking the Pan Handle (Jacobs, 117).

Through observation we noticed that there was a lack of official monitoring by police. We also noted that the police are rather tolerant of the activities within the Pan Handle, regardless of legality. For example, beer and wine are allowed in the park but, not within 100 ft of a playground, the park is officially closed to all foot traffic between 10pm and 5am, and no overnight parking or sleeping is allowed within the park boundaries yet all of these activities, as well as other clandestine activities, take place within the Panhandle. The police are very flexible regarding the rules of the park. For example, James, a street kid, slept on the Pan Handle one night and although this is against the park rules, when the police came by James help up his hand and gave them a thumbs up, as if to say “I’m

harmless" (James). The police didn't bother him anymore once they realized James was not a threat. Rather than a heavily policed state, the Pan Handle has become something of a *defensible space* as according to Oscar Newman. "a *defensible space* is a model for residential environments which inhibits crime by creating the physical expression of a social fabric that defends itself (Newman, 3)." The Pan



Handle expresses a sense of community from its inhabitants which translates into a sense of responsibility for protecting this space from crime. The reasons stated above in regards to surveillance, demarcation and activation create this safe space and a potential criminal senses that this space is controlled and monitored by its residents exposing him as the outsider and thus deterring him from deviant activity (Newman, 3).

Conclusion:

Throughout this paper and over the past four weeks we have explored the relationships between the multiple publics of the Pan Handle. We believe that while there are different publics regularly accessing the site, underlying tensions between these groups remain unrealized because an equilibrium has been achieved. In this paper we established three factors contributing to this equilibrium: sameness, space and safety. We believe that as long as these three factors remain in tact, the park and its multiple publics will remain a tolerant of one another and the Pan Handle will remain a peaceful space. However, we had to then ask what would happen if this equilibrium were disrupted?

What if the temporal-spatial choreography of the publics were altered exposing underlying tensions between user groups? For example, if the street people refused to cede their use of the basketball courts to the basketballers or if the partying college students began to claim the playground at noon instead of midnight, what would happen? We assume these types of conflicts over physical space and ownership would result in the displacement of one or the other of the publics in question.

We also wonder if legitimate diversification of publics in the park would cause conflicts within this homogenous community. If a large contingent of conservative Muslims or large numbers jobless immigrants began to frequent the park would the celebration of difference continue within the Panhandle? We hope that the liberality of the parks reputation would be resilient enough to withstand a change of this sort, however we pessimistically consider the Panhandle's tolerant atmosphere and reputation to be in part a product of its bracketed social setting. Legitimate diversity could disrupt the Panhandle's

tolerant identity.

Finally, we wonder how minor adjustments to the parks physical appearance might parks sense of safety. For instance, if an understory were developed could this significant how the space was used and the user's perception of safety?

While we don't know for the sure the answers to these questions, we do believe that Handle will continue to be a complicated and interesting public space that demands attent analysis because of the unique and dynamic publics that access it.

Appendix A.

INTERVIEWS

Jess -

- White hipster girl mid 20s ish.
- Manning a mobile bike repair shop set up to the northwest of the basketball courts at the side of the bike path.
- Donation based bike repair. 12-5 on Sundays, they usually repair 30 - 40 bikes mostly mundane normal repairs. Trying to start using it as a way to get business for their bike repair shop during the week.
- She likes the park for getting from point A to point B.
- Doesn't hang out in the park much.
- Hates pedestrians walking 2-3 a breast along the bike path, she thinks that the pedestrians should know to keep to their own side of the park and the pedestrian path.
- Has friends who use the basketball court area for bike dance practice.

Beth -

- White women in her 60s with an old dog. Walking along the southern pedestrian path.
- “the only distraction form the park is the homeless people.” Otherwise it's very nice and surprisingly well maintained. Will keep coming here despite the homeless because it's not a big deal.
 - Moved to Masonic in September from Missouri.
 - Doesn't come after dark, because she feels unsafe and uncomfortable.
 - Walks her dog in the park everyday.

Daniel -

White dude late 20s early 30s ish basketball player on the sidelines.

-Comes for pick up basketball, finds these courts especially vibrant and nice because there is a good mix good game competition/skill without tension. Usually if the court has good competitive ball than it's really tense and mean, but if the atmosphere is nice the ball is not so great.

-Here people just give you a beer after during a break and hang out, all together. Party on the side lines, you drink beer and get stoned in between games. Everybody can come and play without getting into fights.

Who plays?:

-Serbians

-young black dudes playing: a group comes from the Divis projects

-old black dudes who used to play who now watch, and heckle.

-white dudes in their 30s

-girlfriends sometimes come watch

-Made his first park friend here at the basketball court. First public space friend since being a kid. Someone he met playing basketball who he now hangs out with.

- The court has a facebook group: Panhandle Basketball or something, about 50 people.

- Said he'd never seen homeless people around the basketball courts, there just aren't any there ever, despite the fact that we saw them there the day before. Also that day was the first day he'd seen any small children use the courts.

- The pick-up basketball games start at 10 am and go till 8 pm at night, and you get stoned in between, on Saturday and Sundays.

Edward-

- Single dad 30s with a 2ish year old boy, in the playground.

- Comes when he has his kid. They live nearby and go to this playground, the one in Golden Gate Park and the Alamo Square playground. He likes this one the best because it's flat and has a fence around the play area.

- Great and laid back, the playground always has lots of kids and is high volume but, then sometimes you get a whiff and say hey wait that's not eucalyptus and you remember that your on the panhandle.

- Used to come here to play basketball and now comes to the playground.

- Kind of cool park, since bringing your keg and having a party seems to be ok... no one would stop you.

- Housemate dog walks in the other section where there aren't as many people in the open space.

- Playground get's a lot of use sometimes it's the parents hanging out but a lot of times it's him hanging out with the nannies.

Walter-

- White street person 40s or 50s.

- He doesn't talk to people. Just drinks a little and is by himself.
- He likes the panhandle because it is very calming.
- He sleeps elsewhere, in Golden Gate park.
- He only asks some people for change he doesn't like to bother people, he asks for more on Haight.
- Prefers here to other places, and lives mostly in the area.

Sylvia-

White Femal, age 25.

- Lives in Northern California (grows weed).
- Comes here a bit and if she comes to SF, she stays at the Pan Handle.
- Lived in her car on the Pan Handle for 5 months.

Why she likes it...

- Tolerance!
- No one comes to harass her or her friends.
- They can sleep here is they don't have a blanket. if you have a blanket you might get a ticket.
- Can sleep under something called Dry Tree.
- People don't live on the Pan Handle because it is too bare/open.
- If you want a place to camp go into Golden Gate Park.

- "I had a friend who had a whole camp w/traps and shit. He lived there for a year and no one found him."

- "Don't put this in. You can't because they'll shut it down. Ok, so the kids come here and sell weed in the day. Then they go sleep in a hotel or go home. They're not like us. We go up to the Haight at night... just chill."

- "Cops are coming, put your bottle away"

- "That's why I like the pan handle you can just do your own thing and no one cares."

Sean -

30 guy, lives in the area.

- Like the pan handle, it's cool around big shows like Hardly Strictly, Bay to Breakers the whole place is covered.
- Likes to play frisbee on the concrete. Grass is too wet to play.
- Sean "only problem is they [points to sylvia and friends]" Cat: "what's wrong with them?"
- Sean" I dunno, I guess they just piss me off!"

Emily -

- I run through the pan handle everyday. It's better than running on the street. It's like a track. I pick the person in front of me and try to catch them. I make it a game.
- At night it gets a little scary or when it's foggy.
- When I run through groups of guys [homeless] bums whistle at me or say gross stuff about how I

look, but I just run faster at those points.

- I never come here other than to run through.

- I have a dog and duboce park is much better or golden gate, not sure why exactly, it's just a feeling that I don't want to stay.

Damon and Anonymous -

18 year olds, freshman from USF.

-Come to pan handle to smoke weed, play football but always smoke before. USF has a strict policy about smoking and if you get caught your out. So they always come here.

- If they have a party they come at night and chill in the playground because there's a fence and seating.

-One time they got 30 people in there.

-Cops leave them alone because they have bigger problems, like more harsh drugs.

-During the day they don't party because of the families and stuff and if a kid walks by, they don't smoke.

-No one cares about weed.

-They don't buy weed here but, if you wanted it you could get it here. Golden Gate is better for that because it's a little more private.

-At night it's just us and some hobos no one cares about us because there are bigger problems out there.

-We chat with the hobos but don't really hang. They are on the basketball court, we're in the playground.

Anonymous Homeless Woman

-Sorry I'm homeless. (cleaning her clothes)

-I'm here but I don't sleep here I stay in GGP.

-I sell weed, you know for money but, I don't sell it I'm just a cover.

-I come here to wash up. It's pretty nice, not bad.

-We're try to move to San Diego, like on our friends yacht.

-Why are you talking to me? People don't usually talk to homeless they just ignore us.

-You have a nice face, I think I might need your help in the future. Can I have your number? Just in case I have an accident and break my leg or something and need a ride to the hospital.

-Sorry I freaked you out.

James -

-Doing good (drinking a 40)

-Raged here last night.

-These are my dogs - Kiley and Spal.

- Just raged on the Haight then here [last night] love it here no one bothers you, it's great.
- Probably stay for another night.
- "Cops are cool. They come by put a flashlight on us and then I put my thumb up and they kept going. That's cool."
- Keep Pan Handle weird.

Tony Booze and Chris -

- Homeless/Bums
- Pan Handle is cool but, you don't sleep here. We try to sleep on roofs where people can't see. It's warmer/a good view of the city.
- Cat: "Are there cliques here"
- Tony: Booze family [them]. Skull fucks: punk kids that harass people and say mean shit to people. We don't hand with them but they are funny to be around because they say crazy shit. Grateful Dead family

Appendix B.

YELP



Elite '11
4997
1263

Jessica T.
San Francisco, CA

★★★★★ 7/21/2006

A beautiful oasis, sandwiched between two fairly busy streets. Having lived directly across from the panhandle in my early days spent in San Francisco, when I had ABSOLUTELY nothing to do, but surf craigslist; I came to quickly appreciate and covet this lush green patch.

If you're a regular Panhandle attendee you can quickly be sucked into a bizarre enlightening world. . If you know the right folk, or go enough - you learn about the local Haight gossip, which dog likes to hump every other dog, where to get the best coffee in town, how to juggle, who's going to win American Idol, how to drum, who's got an open spot in an apartment, the best jogging trails - you name it. A wealth of information is to be found here. During the day, joggers, stoners, dog owners, new mothers, book worms and everybody in between linger and congregate here - to enjoy gorgeous SF days.

One of my best days in the city - was spent listening to Midnite on repeat while reading Still Life with Woodpecker, stategically in the glow of a sunbeam for 4 hours. While deeply engrossed in the magical world of redheads (...yes it is a magical world) a chihuahua named Billie Holiday, tongue hanging out the corner of her cute mouth, danced in a pink tutu to a fiddle accompanied original song about grass. (all true - and at the time it made perfect sense)

Sadly and in many ways -thankfully- Billie's darling dance marked the end of my afternoon trysts with the park. I got a job a day after and well....I spent far less time in the park, couldn't remember any of the dog's names, and lost touch with the park gurus with the latest gossip

Now, I'm a little less enlightened about my neighborhood and what's going on. I miss out on the drunk rants, the tourist totes, the barbecues, the first steps, and many more....



Tom A.
Chicago, IL

1
91

★★★★★ 11/21/2005 1 photo

Best place for public drunkenness near USF. The cops don't care what you do here. It is fun to watch the expression on joggers faces when they see a dozen drunken freshman sings "Stairway To Heaven." Grab a 40 and go "panhandling;" all the cool kids are doing it.



👤 216
👍 592

Pete J.
San Francisco, CA

★★★★★ 5/11/2007

The panhandle is the Only place to play basketball in this town, IMO.

Among other things it's good for: bike riding, roller blading, running, walking, jogging, cartwheels, backflips, picnicking, jumping mid-air high fiving, hugging friends, kissing lovers, doing it (I saw two people doing it under a blanket once & they seemed to be enjoying themselves, so why not?), etc.

I would also recommend panhandling in the panhandle, because I've always appreciated the irony therein.



👤 71
👍 48

Matt C.
San Francisco, CA

★★★★☆ 7/20/2008

A decent basketball court, its a big full court. On a saturday afternoon there were enough people to play 5's for a few hours. The competition was decent. No one horrible, and also no one dunking from the freethrow line. Overall one of the better pickup basketball courts I've found in SF.



👤 216
👍 592

Pete J.
San Francisco, CA

★★★★★ 5/11/2007

The panhandle is the Only place to play basketball in this town, IMO.

Among other things it's good for: bike riding, roller blading, running, walking, jogging, cartwheels, backflips, picnicking, jumping mid-air high fiving, hugging friends, kissing lovers, doing it (I saw two people doing it under a blanket once & they seemed to be enjoying themselves, so why not?), etc.

I would also recommend panhandling in the panhandle, because I've always appreciated the irony therein.



👤 3
👍 60

Lulu B.
Lutz, FL

★★☆☆☆ 6/17/2010

I never realized how much I really disliked the panhandle until I had my baby. One day I tried sitting with her on the grass, and I realized that the traffic is so damn loud, and look, there it goes by on Masonic, and Oak, and Fell, and Baker, etc. Basically, you are sitting in the middle of a traffic roundabout. And then there's the puddles, and the bum camps, and the hobo occupied benches.



👤 41
👍 209

Nizaria D.
San Francisco, CA

★★★☆☆ 9/30/2007

Having lived for a while in a smallish European nation which shall remain anonymous for purposes of this review (hint: click through my profile photos), where the concept of "curb your dog" is frequently ignored, I have become a master of nimbly dodging and weaving my way through shit-smearred city streets without ever stepping in pooch poo.

But for the less visually astute among us, WATCH YOUR STEP! There's a reason this verdant slice of urban beautification is known as Dog Shit Park.

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Publics and Their Spaces

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2011

The Albany Bulb: Informality and the Public Sphere



Stacy Farr + Corey Schnobrich | Architecture 219 | 2011.12.13

THE ALBANY BULB

Introduction

The Albany Bulb is a 30-acre land mass located at the western shoreline of the city of Albany, California. Projecting approximately one mile into the San Francisco Bay, the Bulb, as it is commonly called, is a multi-use, multi-jurisdictional space that has been created, used, claimed and altered by a variety of publics. In this paper we will explore the multiple publics that currently use the Albany Bulb. We will describe the way these publics constitute themselves, and how they relate to and organize space at Bulb. Additionally, we will attempt to connect the condition of urban informality with the ability of the Bulb to foster and promote an expanded notion of the public sphere.

In both its history as a site of discard and abandon as well as in the current condition of jurisdictional overlap and neglect, the Albany Bulb represents an example of informal public space. Similar to conditions of informality observed in Los Angeles by Margaret Crawford in "Blurring the Boundaries: Public Space and Private Life", the conditions of informality at the Albany Bulb have allowed the site to support multiple and simultaneous publics and uses (1999). Within this multiplicity of publics and uses, it would be inaccurate to claim that the space at the Bulb remains equally and completely accessible to all who desire to use it. However, the condition of informality allows for the continued evolution of the space, both through active contestation by its users as well as more gradual shifts in land-use patterns.

This informality fosters the type of democratic public space that Nancy Fraser describes in her essay "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In contrast to the idealized bourgeois notion of the public sphere described by scholars such as Jurgen Habermas, Fraser advocates for an expanded notion of the public sphere, one which is constituted by voices and actions of contention and contestation. Informal public spaces like the Albany Bulb enable these voices and actions of contention and contestation, and in doing so allow new user groups to emerge and claim different rights at the space. In Crawford's assessment of the difference between formal (normative) and informal space in Los Angeles, we can see a parallel to conditions of informality at the Bulb: "Unlike normative public spaces, which produce the existing ideology, [everyday spaces] help to overturn the status quo" (1999, p. 28). At the Albany Bulb, preservation of informality can be equated with the preservation of existing multiple publics and uses, the preservation of the site's ability to evolve in response to new claims by new users, and the preservation of an expanded notion of the public sphere.

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Figure 2: Aerial view of the Albany Bulb

Site History and Jurisdiction

The current site of the Albany Bulb has historically been a liminal site of contested use, a battle between the benign neglect of a discard pile and the active intentions of capitalism and industry. The area saw its first human site modifications approximately fifteen hundred years ago by the Ohlone Indians, who intensively harvested tidal shellfish and created massive shellmounds out of the material remains of their harvest. In 1769 a Spanish Land Grant brought the area under the ownership of the Spanish settler Luis Peralta, and the flatlands abutting the Bay were primarily used during this time as grazing land for the massive Peralta cattle empire. The discovery of gold in the Sierra Nevada mountains in 1848 shifted land use patterns throughout the entire Bay area, and by 1880 the Albany waterfront was an industrial site, dominated by two large dynamite factories. Dynamite was an integral part of the gold mining process, and a pier was constructed at the current site of the Bulb to assist in the transport of this dynamite up the Sacramento River and to the gold fields.

By 1880 rail had emerged as the preferred mode of transport, and the pier at the site of the Bulb fell into gradual disrepair. In an effort to promote industrial development, the U.S. Congress and the State of California granted a continuous swath of waterfront land along the east side of the San Francisco Bay to the Santa Fe Railway company. However, by 1905 multiple deadly explosions had compelled the dynamite factories to relocate further north, and the area where we now find the Bulb was emerging as an informal garbage dump. The city of Albany was incorporated in 1909, in part to combat the persistent dumping by Berkeley residents of garbage at the foot of Buchanan Street.

The tidelands of Albany, the current location of the Bulb, were officially granted to the city of Albany in 1919 by the State Lands Commission with the understanding that the area would be developed as a harbor to increase commerce and navigation. However, the harbor never materialized and throughout the first half of the twentieth century the area was largely neglected, used much as it is today as an unstructured recreational area by local residents.

The start of construction in the late 1930s of the Golden Gate Fields horse racing track saw the demolition of a large mound of bedrock and the emergence of the Bulb as it appears today. Infill of the marshland directly to the south of the Bulb was followed by the City of Albany's extension of Buchanan Street and the formation of the areas of the Bulb now called the neck and the plateau (see figure 2). Infilling expanded rapidly after 1961 when the City of Albany and the Santa Fe Railway, which still owned the land, signed a contract to use the site as an industrial landfill for the city. This landfill created the "bulb" section of the Bulb, and filled the site out to the size and shape existing today. Much of the landfill material came from the construction of the expanding freeway system in the 1960s. Through the 1970s illegal dumping of toxic materials led to high levels of methane emissions and sporadic fires on the Bulb. Lawsuits against the landfill operator ended active dumping at the site in 1984, after which time the Bulb was placed under a Regional Water Quality Control Board closure order which was not officially lifted until 2005. A lease agreement with the State Department of Parks and Recreation began in 1985 and established the basis for transfer of the property to the State for State Park purposes.

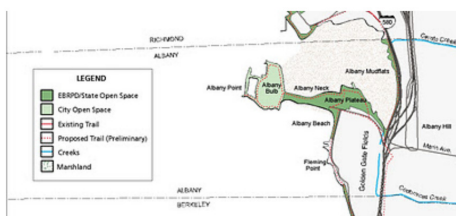


Figure 3: Eastshore State Park map from the California Dept. of Parks and Recreation

The Bulb falls under several jurisdictional boundaries while at the same time receiving the kind of

supervisory neglect that would imply that it falls under none. In preparation for the transfer of the Bulb from the City of Albany to the State of California, intensive environmental cleanup of the Bulb was undertaken, funded by federal money as well as money from the Santa Fe Railway company. The State began purchasing the land in 1992, and in 2002 portions of the Bulb including the plateau, the neck and the beach were formally incorporated into the larger Eastshore State Park. The "bulb" portion of the Bulb is still owned by the city of Albany, which is responsible for the maintenance of the Bulb until the State determines that "an integrated shoreline park has been developed to its satisfaction" (Eastshore State Park General Plan, 2002). Transfer of ownership of this portion of the Bulb requires further environmental clean-up and is currently on hold due to budget constraints. The Eastshore State Park General Plan (2002) calls for restoration and public access improvements, including restoration and protection of Albany Beach and dune habitats, expansion of dune areas behind the beach, enhancement of water access to San Francisco Bay, closing of a gap in the San Francisco Bay trail, shoreline stabilization, public access improvements, and other park facilities such as picnic areas, interpretive signage, and restrooms. Currently, the position of the State is that the "plop art" must be removed, dogs must be leashed, and hazardous construction materials including metal rebar must be removed or mitigated (Eastshore State Park General Plan, 2002). The remainder of the Bulb will be transferred to state ownership by 2053 if clean-up efforts do not make transfer possible sooner.

The Publics

In the course of direct observation as well as text and Internet research, we have identified four discernible publics that use the Albany Bulb. In our determination and classification of these four publics we were guided in part by our own research amongst the users at the Bulb and in part by several of the constituting characteristics laid out by Michael Warner in his essay "Publics and Counterpublics." Following Warner, our four publics are self-organized, "independent of state institutions, law, formal frameworks of citizenship, or pre-existing institutions such as the church" (2002, p. 51). Our publics can also be described as engaging in a relation among strangers, as well as being constituted through active uptake rather than sustained, engaged participation. And to an extent, our four publics also engage in the "poetic world making" Warner describes, the "performative dimension" (p. 82) of public discourse which will be described in further detail in the later portion of this paper. These four publics at the Bulb are in some cases overlapping and in other cases extremely disjunctive. After a brief examination of the publics currently using the Bulb we will examine how these publics interact with, perceive, and relate to space at the Bulb and to each other.



Figure 4: View towards Albany Beach

Off-Leash Dog Walkers

Both in observation and Internet research, off-leash dog walkers emerge as the largest and most well-constituted public that currently uses the Albany Bulb. In our field research we encountered numerous dog owners, walking alone and in groups, over nearly every portion of the Bulb (see figure 9). Even though dogs are not permitted on the Albany beach as part of Eastshore State Park regulations, these rules are not enforced, and the beach is a popular and well-populated spot for dogs. Nearly all of the dogs we observed during our field research were off-leash, running, fetching, and swimming in the cold, brackish water. On the plateau, dogs were running off-leash, although this is also forbidden under Eastshore State Park regulations. Dogs also ran off-leash along the perimeter paths and within the rugged interior of the Bulb, despite what would seem to be substantial hazards such as exposed rebar and broken concrete crevices. Dogs are currently permitted to run off-leash in this area, although the city of Albany is reviewing this policy as it prepares for the eventual transfer of the Bulb to state ownership.

The potential revision of the dog policy at the Bulb has activated the off-leash dog-walking public to constitute itself in several ways. People we interviewed at the Bulb reported having been approached by anti-leash-law advocates, bearing petitions and information on potential leash-law

changes. Online, three websites provide a forum for alliances and action on behalf of the off-leash dog owners' agenda: The Albany Landfill Dog Owners Group (www.alldogs.com), the Coalition for Diverse Activities on Water, Grass, and Sand (www.cdawgs.org), and The Albany Bulb (www.albanybulb.com). All describe the emerging restrictions on current dog policy at the Bulb and keep readers abreast of petitions that can be signed, politicians that can be approached, and Albany city council meetings where advocacy is needed. Additionally, an open letter authored by CDAWGS organizer Paul Kamen and posted on the city of Albany blog Albany Patch (www.albany.patch.com) addressed shortcomings in the City's waterfront revitalization plan and has drawn a healthy and surprisingly civil response dialogue between, as of December 2011, over 80 people (P. Kamen, personal communication, November 21, 2011). There is evidence that this online activism makes the jump to active participation as well: at a February 2011 meeting of the Albany city council over 100 people rose to speak their opposition to proposed adjustments in the city's dog policy at the Bulb.



Figure 5. The Water Lady by Osha Neumann and Jason DeAntonis

Art-making

The Bulb is saturated with art, taking a range of forms from hasty graffiti to more complex and permanent assemblages. It marks a range of identities, from clearly signed and authored pieces to completely anonymous works. Some of the largest, most permanent and most iconic pieces of art have been created by Osha Neumann, a Berkeley attorney and homeless advocate who became familiar with the Bulb in the late 1990s when he defended the Bulb's resident community in the face of eviction by the City of Albany. Since then, Neumann, often in collaboration with his son-in-law Jason DeAntonis, has been creating art at the Bulb. One of his larger pieces, called *The Water Lady*, has been discussed as a potential Albany city landmark. A collective of four painters which calls itself SNIFF is also credited with many of the more permanent and iconic works located on the large concrete blocks that line the north side of the Bulb. Additionally, in an interview with two local residents, we learned that a graffiti crew from nearby Richmond visits the Bulb to paint large murals wherever they find space available. Smaller pieces of painting and assemblage are visible at almost every nook and cranny of the Bulb. Nearly all of the art at the Bulb has a fleeting quality, with the understanding that either the elements or the continued cycle of painting and re-painting will continue to change the artistic landscape.

Through the course of our research we found little basis on which to claim that the art producers at the Bulb represent a particularly well-constituted public. However, the body of work that they have collectively produced certainly represents an important aesthetic and iconic facet of the Bulb. The Bulb remains one of the last public spaces along the East Bay waterfront where "plop art" is still allowed to be created; tideland assemblages used to pepper the waterfront in Emeryville and Berkeley before the takeover of these areas by the East Bay State Regional Park. The visually rich environment of the Bulb was a stated draw for many of the people we spoke with during our field research, and presents a contrast to other shoreline parks in the area such as Cesar Chavez Park (the Berkeley Marina) and Point Isabel further to the north. Additionally, as detailed below, production of art at the Bulb is a way in which some users of the Bulb modify and claim personal and private rights to this public space.





Figure 6: Encampment near the center of the bulb

Residents

The residential community of the Albany Bulb began to emerge after the landfill officially closed in 1984. By 1990 there was a large enough community of people living on the Bulb that the City of Albany undertook a concerted eviction and enforcement program, which brought the estimated population down to less than a dozen residents. By 1999 this population had returned and redoubled, with an estimated one hundred people occupying the Bulb (McCabe, 2003). In the same year, the city passed an ordinance prohibiting camping and gave the resident population three months to relocate. The city's effort was met with harsh public criticism and widespread press coverage. Evictions did take place, although the terrain of the Bulb and the overall lack of law enforcement enabled the residential population to return, only to be subject to another wave of evictions in 2007. Within these larger cycles of population rise and fall, several long-term visitors and residents of the Bulb whom we interviewed described smaller population fluctuations tied to economic and seasonal conditions. Several interviewees commented that population seems to be higher than usual right now.

During our site visits we observed nearly thirty active and several abandoned encampments of varying sizes, concentrated largely in the central and northern sections of the Bulb. Camps ranged from single canvas tents to larger compounds constructed of canvas, plywood, and other building materials. One resident named Frank estimated that around sixty residents occupied the Bulb in the fall of 2011, though numbers were dropping with winter rains (2011). Residents have addressed the almost complete lack of infrastructure on the Bulb in a number of ways. Bikes and attached wheeled trailers appear to be integral to residents, serving as a way to transport all needed supplies from off-Bulb sites as well as transport of scrap metal to West Berkeley for sale. During our field research we observed coolers, propane stoves, and gasoline and water jugs at many encampments, further illustrating that life on the Bulb is one of daily or semi-daily self-provisioning. Other observed self-created infrastructure improvements included a pulley transport system up a steep embankment and the use of a five-gallon bucket lined with a trash bag and topped with a toilet seat as a make-shift toilet. Although not specifically mentioned in the Eastshore State Park General Plan, the residential population clearly represents an aspect of the Bulb which will need to be "cleaned up" if the land is to be successfully transferred to state ownership. However, lack of available funding has made the continued enforcement of these routine evictions impossible. Meanwhile, the residential community constitutes itself as well as it is able. Although residents keep mostly to themselves, a resident named Thomas told us that decisions that are seen to affect all members of the community are raised informally through a "word of mouth" system (2011). Historically residents have also attended City Council meetings that are known to feature agenda issues that impact the Bulb (McCabe, 2003). Bulb residents are willing, in varying degrees, to talk to media, and have willingly participated in several media representations of themselves, including the 2003 film *Bum's Paradise*. Residents also have a dedicated legal advocate in the form of Osha Neumann, a lawyer in private practice who routinely defends residents both in individual and group legal cases.



Figure 7: Sign marking the protected burrowing owl habitat on the plateau

Conservancy/Improved Access

The last public is actually comprised of two distinct groups, but they are paired for the purposes of this paper because they both seek an increase in regulatory order at the site of the Albany Bulb, and in doing such often find themselves in opposition to the previously described publics. In this desire for increased regulatory order, this fourth (dual) public advocates for a definition of public space which necessitates the exclusion or restriction of the three well-constituted publics

we have so far introduced.

Due to its location protruding into the San Francisco Bay across from the Golden Gate, the site of the Albany Bulb is attractive to local and migrating bird populations. Despite its origins as an industrial landfill, much of the habitat of the area has either persevered, as in the case of the vast tidal mud flats at the north of the Bulb, or emerged in response to site conditions, as in the case of the vegetation that has overgrown much of the site (this is true only of certain vegetation: much of the Bulb's vegetation is non-native and is therefore recommended for removal by some conservancy proposals). A vocal conservation public has emerged that would like to see the Bulb treated as an environmentally protected area with "sited, designed, and managed" public access, which will foster the preservation of native plant life and enable the use of the Bulb by bird and other wildlife populations (Save The Bay, 2001). This public is led by well-funded groups like the Sierra Club and Save the Bay and has had multiple successes, including the co-effort of Save the Bay and the Sierra Club in spearheading the move to transfer ownership of the East Bay shoreline to state ownership in the 1990s and, most recently, the 2008 creation of an 8-acre set aside habitat at the plateau section of the Bulb for the burrowing owl (located on land already within the purview of the Eastshore State Park). This public has broad ideological and financial support from an environmentally conscious Bay Area population as well as the notable advantage of working in concert with the larger goal of the City of Albany: the clean up of the Bulb for eventual transfer of the land to the State. The improved access public would like to see the Bulb physically accessible to a wider range of users, although this "wider" range notably excludes specific users. At the Bulb, improved access means several things. First, it involves improved infrastructure such as widened and paved paths through the Bulb and to the Beach, as well as picnic areas, interpretive signage, and more restrooms. Second, it means enforcement of dog leash policies where they exist and the extension of mandatory dog leash policies to include the entire area of the Bulb. A third expressed desire of this public is the removal of the resident population, which is perceived as threatening to some user groups (Kamen, 2011). Members of the improved access public are very active in online forums as well as at community meetings, filling a special February 2011 Albany City Council "Beach Improvement Workshop" session to capacity. The results of a 2011 East Bay Regional Parks user survey indicate that this public is in the majority regarding the question of enforced and enhanced leash laws when the question was posed in a random telephone sample but in the minority when answered by online form, indicating the organizational powers of the off-leash dog-walking public to know about and respond to surveys of this type. And as mentioned earlier, this public has the advantage of its desires aligning with the larger goal of the City of Albany: the clean-up of the Bulb for eventual transfer of the land to the state.

The conservancy/improved access public at the Bulb, in their desire for increased formal control of the space at the Bulb, represents a user group that would benefit from a reassertion of what Fraser describes as a bourgeois public sphere constituted by significant exclusions. (59) While all of the publics at the Bulb to some degree exclude members of other publics, it is only this fourth public that would require explicit exclusion. Implementation of the desires of the conservancy/improved access public, which will happen de facto by 2053 at the latest when the State takes possession of the Bulb, will see a decrease in informality at the Bulb and a reassertion of the notion of the bourgeois public sphere, accompanied by the loss of the ability of the site to evolve socially and physically.

Their Spaces

In addition to constituting themselves socially, the publics that use the space constitute themselves spatially. Beyond their mere presence on the Bulb, these publics shape and mark the landscape, whether through built structures or painted surfaces. Along with natural forces, they affect the landform's physical evolution through excavation, erosion, and construction. They are both users and, to a lesser but significant extent, creators. In this section we will first briefly describe the physical space of the Bulb and how the publics use these geographies. We will then discuss how social perceptions of this informal space encourage appropriation.

The Physical and Social Landscape

As a landform, we divide the Bulb's geography into five somewhat discrete areas: the plateau, the beach, the neck, the bulb, and the tidal flats (see figure 2). The plateau lies just north of Buchanan Street and the formal entry to the park. It hosts the fenced-off burrowing owl habitat created in 2008, and despite its explicitly environmental function, is used more frequently by off-leash dog walkers on the looped path than the conservancy public. The Albany Beach, located southwest of the plateau and directly adjacent to the park's main path to the bulb, is an approximately 600 feet long and 60 feet wide stretch of sand with hewn logs and small groundcover on its inland edge. Dominated by dogs running and swimming off-leash, the beach is the most densely used part of the Bulb by humans and animal alike. The neck, just north of Albany beach, connects the plateau and the beach to the bulb by two quarter mile long paths, one running along the waterfront and another along its ridge. Dog owners and visitors predominate along the waterfront, while many residents ride the ridge trail to and from their encampments. The bulb, the amorphous land mass for which the whole site derives its name, protrudes into the San Francisco Bay, rising to a height of roughly fifty feet at its center. Much like the neck, the bulb is predominantly covered by a mix of shrubs and grasses growing around the

Publics and their Spaces

industrial rubble and land fill that covers most of its surface. The resident population is scattered throughout but particularly concentrated in the bulb's center (see figures 8). Visitors pass by some of these encampments on the way to Mad Mark's Fairy Castle to the southwest and the largest sculptural pieces to the north. Though graffiti art is present on thousands of surfaces across the bulb, the biggest attractions lie along this shoreline. A thin, rocky path connects this area to two tidal pools, one at the bulb's western edge and another to the northeast, part of a popular loop for all visitors.



Figure 8: Encampments on the Bulb, November 2011

The Informal Landscape and Loose Space

The confluence of these publics in this space, if not always side by side, has been called "a complicated stew of people and competing interests" (Moon, 2005) or, more simply, "anarchic" (Kristin, 2011). Some of the conditions that make this possible are social, including the multiple jurisdictions at the site and the lack of regulatory enforcement mentioned earlier. But some of the conditions are spatial, as site conditions encourage these publics to appropriate their own portion and make use of it in ways they see fit. This type of space is what Karen Franck and Quentin Stevens call a "loose space", an urban site of informality and indeterminacy (2007). Whether under a freeway overpass or in a vacant lot, these spaces are "characterized by an absence or abeyance of the determinacy which is common in place types with assigned and limited functions" (17). By catering to no one in specific, they encourage and perhaps require individuals and groups to adopt or shape them to be suitable for use.

The Bulb bears many of the characteristics of Franck and Quentin's notion of a loose space. The authors write, "Such (loose) spaces may be oddly shaped or difficult to get to, they may lack a name or be a secret; yet they become places of expression and occupation- often because of these very characteristics" (7). The Bulb is similarly accessible to nearly all, yet paradoxically remote. As we found through our interviews, many if not most of the Bulb's users are from Berkeley and Oakland, while the population of Albany itself is oddly unrepresented (see figure 9). Physically the bulb is isolated from foot-traffic by the adjacent freeway and from easy vehicular access by the mile-long length of the neck. And even though the site is regularly patrolled by police, their presence is easily observed on the bulb's wider gravel paths and communicated by word-of-mouth among the residents (citation). The landscape, too, conceals and hides; at least two residents' campsites were never discovered during 2005 evictions (Zamora, 2005). As Simon Abrams, an off-leash dog walker and longtime visitor said, "If you're going to be homeless, this really is a nifty place . . . It's remote, but not too remote" (Zamora, 2005).

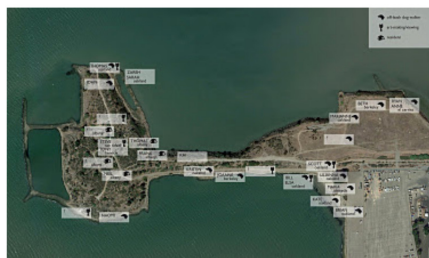


Figure 9: Publics interviewed on the Bulb, October-November 2011

Second, as a former landfill whose industrial waste remains strewn across the site, the Bulb offers material easily appropriated. Franck and Stevens write, "Elements that are moveable, flexible or malleable can be appropriated . . . but also parts of ruins or junk left behind in abandoned spaces" (2009, p.9). The Bulb's art-making public uses the industrial rubble as a canvas for two dimensional work and material for sculptural assemblages. The residents scavenge for sheet metal and rebar, creating a local informal economy that networks with the formal economy of scrapyards in West Berkeley. Residents have also used material dumped on site in combination with purchased items to create several structures, including a small library and

reinforced concrete castle, a popular attraction for Bulb visitors. While these structures use appropriated material, they also appropriated space. As with all the encampments on the Bulb, their enclosure provides an inside and an outside, a bounded space. But in contrast to the public interiors of the library and castle, the space claimed by resident encampments represents not only the difference between inside and outside, but between private and public. While holding no legal claim to these spaces, both residents and visitors alike honor the sometimes subtle boundaries between appropriated "private" space and unclaimed public space. Several people we interviewed, both off-leash dog walkers and art admirers, expressed their discomfort at intruding on resident encampments.



Figure 10: Posted City of Albany park regulations

Third, the looseness of the Bulb is enabled by its programmatic indeterminacy. With the exception of the owl habitat, no part of the landscape defines activity in the way that playing fields or a formal campsite would. The Bulb offers "freedom of choice" (Franck and Stevens, 2009, p. 2), in practice if not in rule (see figure 10). On the Bulb, anything goes, or at least the potential exists for anything to go. The amphitheater, a small bowl shaped depression in the bulb's center, is and has been the site of both day picnicking and night raves (Thompson and Cathcart, 1999). The castle is a playground for children, a mural for spray paint artists, and late night drinking spot for teenagers. The tidal pools serve migratory birds and as pathways for contemplative explorers.

The future of the Albany Bulb, however, is almost certainly not as an informal, loose space. Whether through immediate action by the City of Albany or the eventual action of the State of California via the Eastshore State Park, the Bulb will become an ordered space of increased regulatory control. Physically, it will become a place of no, or maybe just less, industrial waste, informal art, and non-native species. Socially, many fear or desire that it will mean the prohibition or curtailment of the resident, off-leash dog walker, and art-making public in favor of the conservancy/ improved access publics. These first three publics, or at least the activities that define them, will be explicitly excluded and the public sphere's efficacy as a whole diminished relative to the state. A space that currently encourages appropriation, agency, and freedom of choice will likely give way to a more programmed, defined, and determined space.

Conclusion

Throughout its history, the Albany Bulb has been formed and re-formed by a variety of actors from private corporations to state agencies. Since 1985, individuals and groups in the public sphere have also had a significant role in this process, shaping the Bulb physically and socially. Often acting outside of or in opposition to the state, these entities have organized and asserted their right to use and inhabit the Bulb according to their interests. Today there are at least four discernible publics with interests in the Bulb: off-leash dog walkers, art-makers, residents, and conservancy/ improved access publics. Each entity has constituted themselves in different ways, from the digital petition-signing of off-leash dog advocates to the largely anonymous graffiti art on the Bulb's landform itself. The first three publics, organized independently but not exclusively to one another, often express a common sentiment: we want the Bulb to stay the way it is- off-leash, wild, free. The last (dual) public, though itself divided between environmental and recreational goals, desires change. This public, though largely invisible on site, holds many affinities with the vision of the state, particularly the City of Albany and the Eastshore State Parks system.

Inevitably, the Bulb will change from an informal, indeterminate, loose space of contestation in the public sphere to a more ordered, regulatory space of the state. Whether the increased formality of the state's vision for the Albany Bulb is enacted in the near future or at the latest possible date of

2053, the diminishment of informal or loose space that the state plans require will have an effect on the kind of public sphere that the public space of the Bulb can support. In its existing form, the Bulb, in its informality, supports an expanded notion of the public sphere, one described by Fraser as a site of active contestation amongst user groups.

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Temescal Farmers' Market: Defining Local

Nicholas Buccelli, Micah Burger, Dominique Elie | Architecture 219 | 2011.12.13



OVERVIEW

The Temescal Farmer's Market is a small to mid-sized weekly market held on Sundays from 9am to 1pm in the Claremont Avenue DMV parking lot in Oakland's Temescal neighborhood. It hosts over 50 vendors who sell a variety of products and goods, including produce, prepared and baked goods, crafts and other artisanal products. It is a lively and well-attended market that has been in operation for almost 5 years.

Of interest in the study of the space were issues of temporary urbanism and a questioning of the construction of the idea of "locality". These concepts were considered particularly as they pertain to ideas about authenticity and "realness" in terms of how an event with strong associations to deliberate and idealized choices about modes of interaction in the public sphere plays out in real experience.

Our research mixed ethnography, observation, and demographic analysis; we visited the market on Sundays throughout the fall, documented the event with video footage and photography, and recorded interviews with vendors, buyers, and market representatives. The following report organizes the research through the prism of what we have identified as three vital constituencies: the farmer's market association, the vendors, and the market's consumer base. Although only the latter of these constitutes a real "public" in question (as opposed to a more focused interest group), the roles played by the other two actors (the association and the vendors) are vital to understanding who the public is and how they operate within the space of the market. Through these three lenses, inherently mixed and overlapping, we have also identified relevant theoretical underpinnings: the market is an example of Margaret Crawford's idea of "urbanism as a by-product of economic activity,"; a mix of Henri Lefebvre's triad of "spatial practice," "representations of space," and "representational space,"; and a modern-day take on the inversions of daily life associated with the concept of the Carnavalesque.



[figure 1] Urban Village Farmers' Market Association Website

THE ASSOCIATION

The Temescal Farmers' Market is administered by the Urban Village Farmers' Market Association, an organization based in Fremont, California running ten such markets in the wider Bay Area. Administration by Urban Village consists of three key aspects: securing of spatial infrastructure with the aid of local sponsoring civic groups, selection of vendors through an application process, and promotion of the market to consumer publics. This position of managing not only the layout of the physical space but also its projected identity makes the association the primary arbiter of the market's intended character.

Interpretation of how the physical layout combined with definitive language and graphic identity about the markets goals influences user experience and encourages a reading of the roll of the Market Association within Henri Lefebvre's conception of the production of space. In each case, a top-down construction of both real (spatial practice) and imagined (representations of space) elements strongly influences lived meanings (representational spaces) by visiting publics.

Physical Character

The spatial practice of the market is defined by the pre-existing infrastructure of the Claremont DMV. The fact that the DMV is also a public space drawing from a neighborhood constituency lends it a useful position as a foil for what goes on at the market. Urban Village pays rent to the DMV, currently under a two-year lease, for its parking lot, and on Sundays, market tent stalls fill its modular parking spaces. The physical space is inscribed with signs and symbols that reassert the representations of space promoted by the Association. For example, signs outside a tent for use of Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) are clearly visible. Somewhat expected waste strategies like composting and recycling are accompanied by a recent ban on plastic bags (Oakland Local, 2010), and the words "local" and "organic" are prominent throughout the space. Indeed, two visitors that were interviewed about the distance they traveled to the market indicated that despite having closer markets available, they routinely chose the Temescal market specifically because of the perception that it better emphasized organic produce.

Identity

The mission of Urban Village is clearly self-identified by descriptions on its website as aiding an authentic and important—but increasingly threatened—form of food commerce. The concept is that there is a holistic connection between support at an institutional level for growers of artisanal or heirloom produce and the benefits to consumers of support for the same at an individual level: farming the “right” way carries benefits that buyers should be privy to and sellers should be aided in promoting. These ideas have been bundled by researchers studying such material as the notion of a “foodshed”. (Sanderson 11)

This mission is articulated by Urban Village to carry both practical and moral weight, ranging from support for small farms to the creation of a venue for public interaction and economic revitalization to fuzzier declarations that “put simply, certified farmers’ markets are the real thing”. (Urban Village, 2011) Such language has been consistently identified by researchers as typical of material from farmers’ market associations (Smithers 219), and indeed the wording used by Urban Village continues in the same vein:

“The markets produce a strong sense of community identity bringing people from diverse ethnic and other backgrounds together. They also serve to unite the urban and rural segments of the population”

“Markets have become instrumental in many cities’ successful efforts to revitalize economically and socially depressed areas”

“In most parts of the world the local market is the heartbeat of the community”



[figure 2] Green Ideals

Ultimately, the representational space of the farmers' market finds its resolution in the weekly interactions of actual lived experience by the two groups it proposes to serve: vendors and consumers. Their interaction is guided by a mix of social and economic factors, with vendors coming to sell their goods at a desirable or in some cases singular practical venue. Consumers shop at farmers' markets for a mix of economic and social motivations, skewing toward the social at Temescal.

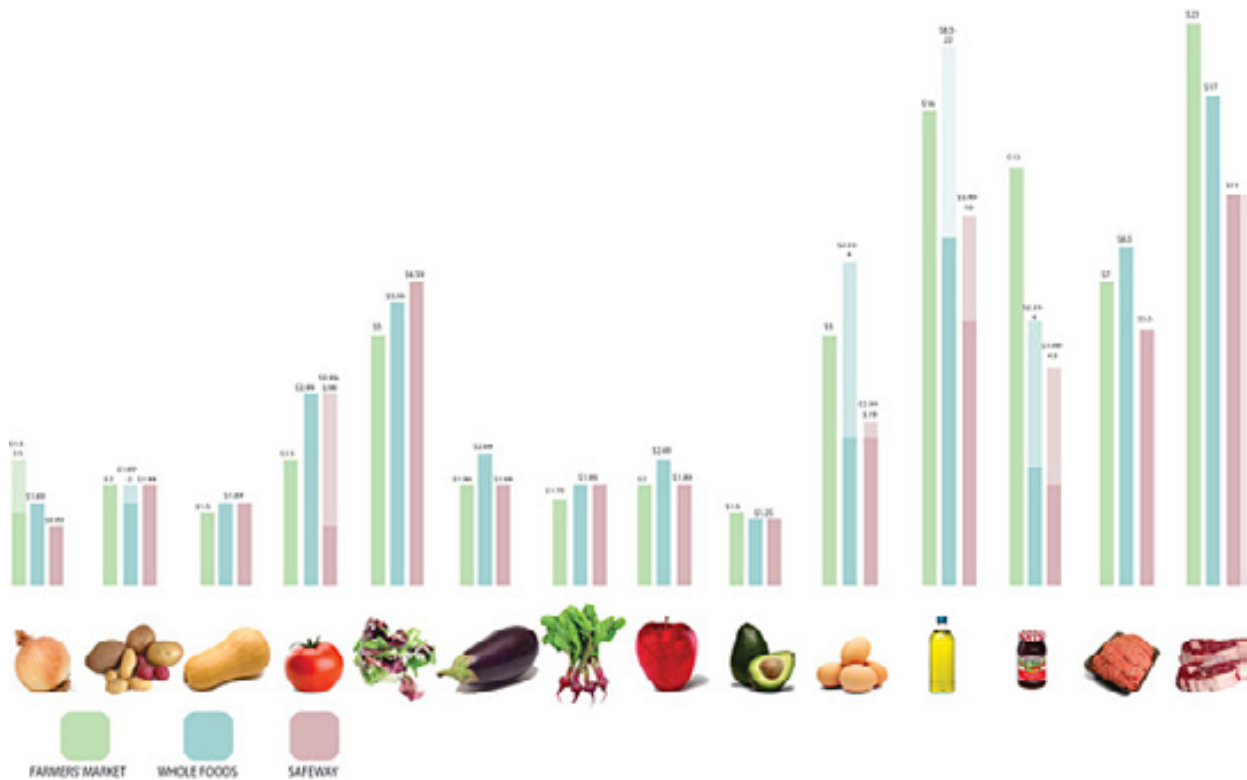
VENDORS: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FARMERS' MARKETS

The Temescal Farmers' Market is an example of public space produced as a byproduct of the economy. A formerly homogenous parking lot, a pseudo-public place during the week, becomes a flourishing public arena under the guise of economic transactions. Farmers' markets produce many direct and indirect economic benefits for the vendors, consumers and community.

For vendors, farmers' markets provide a distribution channel with lower barriers to entry than traditional wholesale produce supply chains. Traditional supply chains often require high volumes of "packing grade" produce to be delivered on a regular schedule. Small or new farms that might struggle to meet these criteria see farmers' markets as a more desirable venue for distribution. In addition to being able to sell smaller quantities with less stringent grade and consistency demands, these farmers are able to cut out the middle-men in the supply chain and realize higher returns. Through farmers' markets, producers are able to take control of all levels of the supply chain from sorting and grading to marketing and retail. One study showed that producers can realize 40 to 80% higher returns when selling through farmers' markets as opposed to traditional supply chains (Sanderson et al, pg 5).

Farmers' markets provide low-cost, low-risk venues for producers looking to start selling commercially or market new products. Gianna from GDS Clothing Goods has a full-time job, but uses the Sunday market to sell her goods that she makes in her home studio. She sees the market as a jumping off point for her company. The market provides her with a base clientele without the expenses of a storefront and allows her to sell small quantities of her goods. Surrounded by a community of vendors, Gianna has the opportunity to learn from their business practices and develop her young business. Gianna only sells at the Temescal Market because, as she said, "the Temescal clientele has some extra income on their hands."

Consumers often realize cost savings as a result of the higher returns experienced by farmers. In our informal survey of product pricing, we found produce at Temescal Market to be comparable in price or cheaper than similar produce at both Whole Foods and Safeway [see figure 3]. Prepared foods, meats, and other specialty items tended to be more expensive at the farmers' market, probably because market products were more specialty, gourmet, and small-run. While there is little published research on farmers' market pricing compared to conventional supermarkets, one study of 15 farmers' markets in California found that on average, prices at farmers' markets were one-third less than supermarket chains (Sanderson et al, pg 6.) While bargaining is not typical at farmers' markets, it is not uncommon for some bargaining to take place at the end of the day when consumers know that vendors are trying to unload the remainder of their stock. Haley, a vendor with Thomas Farms from Santa Cruz county explained how bartering is more prevalent at the Grand Lake farmers' market than at Temescal. The Grand Lake market is in a lower-income neighborhood, which might explain the increase in bartering. She said that a good portion of her sales took place near the end of the day. In addition to bartering, there is a tradition of trade between vendors. At the end of the day, vendors will often trade their over-stock with each other.



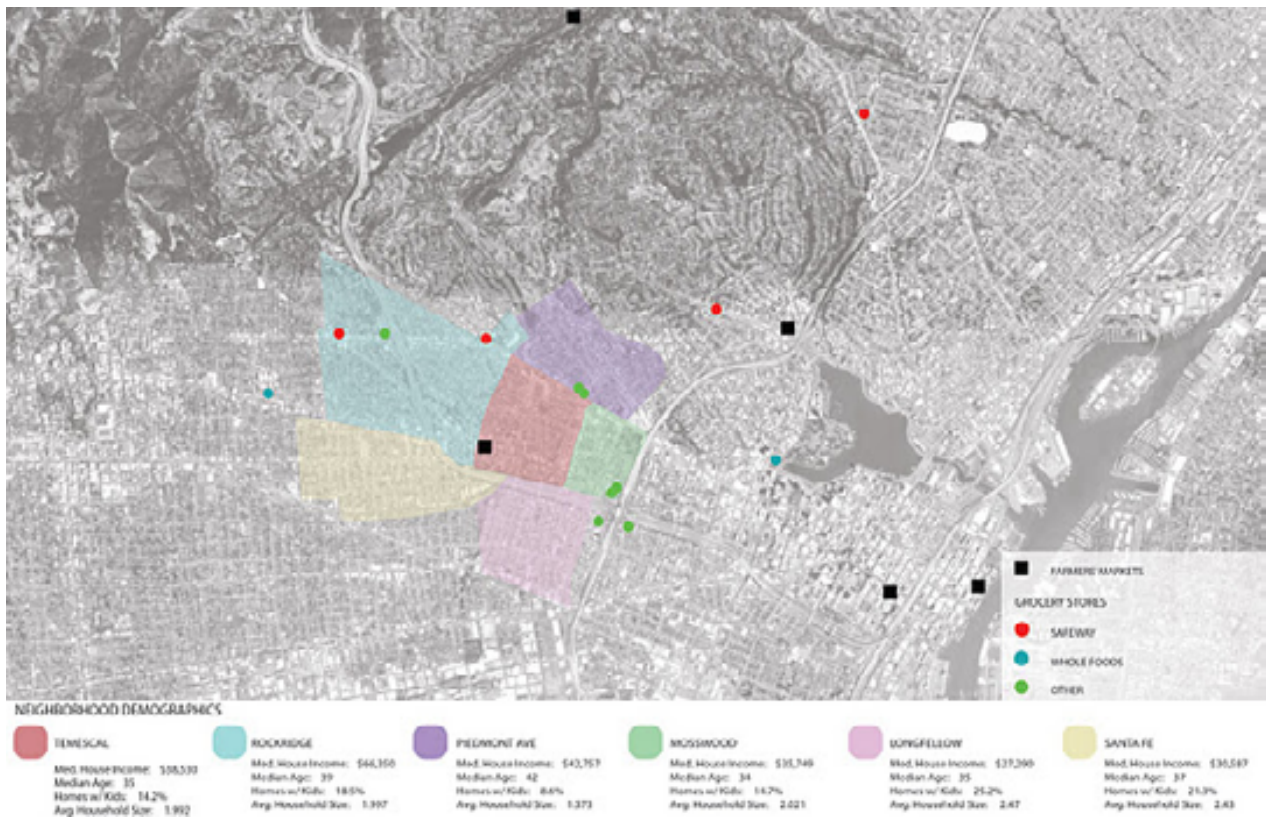
[figure 3] Price Comparison

There is also evidence of positive economic impacts from farmers’ markets on the communities in which they are located. The Temescal market, like many farmers’ markets, is sponsored by the local business improvement district and is seen as a way to attract people to the neighborhood and increase spending in nearby shops. One study, looking at farmers’ markets in Oregon, found that between 38 and 63% of people attending the market planned to do errands in the neighborhood on the same day as the market (Brown, pg 6). One couple we talked to at the Temescal market named the market as one of the main reasons they moved to the neighborhood.

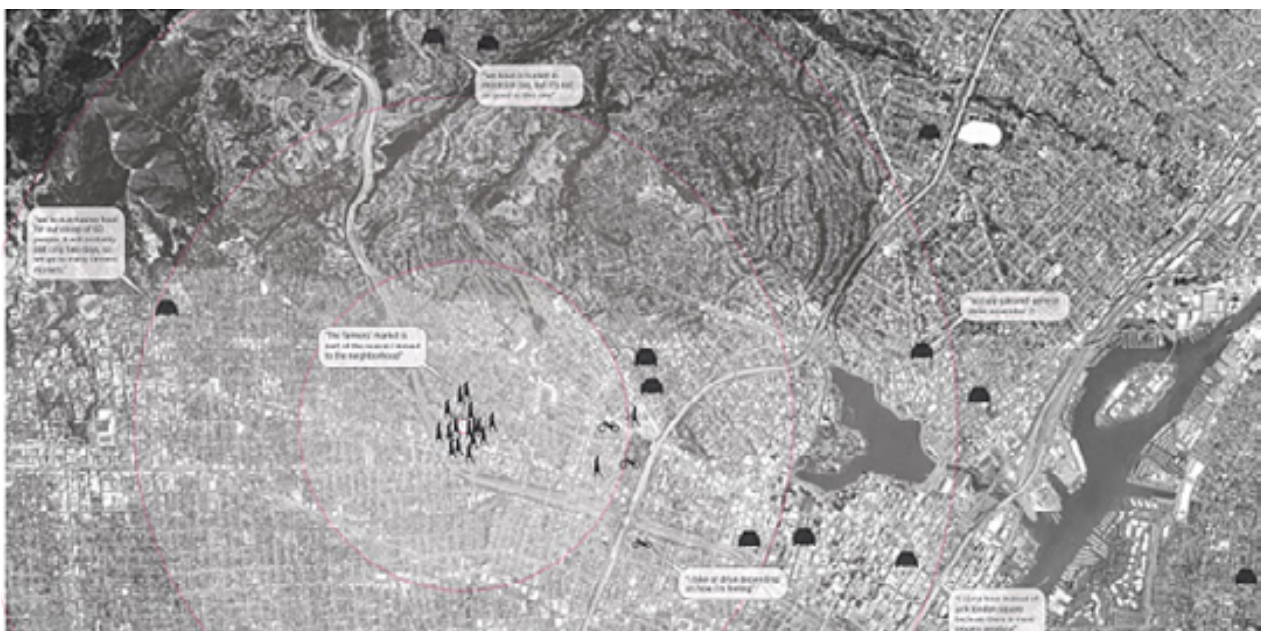
All of these economic efficiencies work together to allow producers and consumers to come together in way that produces urbanism as a byproduct. As described in “Everyday Urbanism” by John Leighton Chase, Margaret Crawford, and John Kaliski, “The sites for multiple social and economic transactions, these mundane places serve as primary intersections between the individual and the city (Crawford et al, pg 26).” The DMV parking lot, a landscape normally experienced through the automobile, is given new meanings through the individuals and groups that appropriate the lot for the market. A temporal place, the farmers’ market imbues the DMV lot with “social, aesthetic, political, and economic” meaning (Crawford et al, pg 29). As opposed to traditional retail outlets, which are typically rated on a sales per square foot basis, farmers’ markets produce spaces that represent more than a monetary value. More than a place of monetary exchange, vendors and consumers bring to markets a social atmosphere and local identity that is absent in the traditional economic sphere.

While the economy plays an important role in defining the identity of the Temescal Farmers Market, ultimately we found that its public is primarily engaged in a social act, motivated by a desire to assert their localness by participating in a weekly neighborhood event.

BUYERS: "HIP DADS WITH TATTOOS AND BABIES"



[figure 4] Neighborhood Demographics



[figure 5] Usership Statistics

The Temescal farmer's market is a largely "local" destination in that the majority of buyers are traveling from within a two-mile radius [see figure 5]. Most people surveyed walked from nearby homes, with the exception of some drivers traveling with small children. The market is an important weekly neighborhood activity and both supports and reflects the self-consciously "sustainable" lifestyle the local residents have chosen to engage in. As stated above, more than one buyer emphasized that "the farmer's market is part of the reason [they] moved to the neighborhood." To understand the nature of the public of the Temescal farmers' market is to understand the nature of the neighborhood. The market usership very clearly reflects the neighborhood demographics, which consist mostly of young white families with children. It is a definitively gentrifying neighborhood, bordered on the North and East by wealthier and whiter Rockridge and Piedmont, and on the South and West by the less wealthy and more diverse neighborhoods of Mosswood and Longfellow [see figure 4]. Despite the market association's acceptance of food stamps and desire for an ethnically diverse clientele, the usership remains largely homogenous and its sphere of influence expands geographically at times but not necessarily ethnically. As one vendor put it, the clientele consists of "hip dads with tattoos and babies." Almost all the vendors mentioned that the clientele at this market was "wealthier" than at others, or had "extra money to spend." The missing "public," in this case, are lower income residents of the adjacent neighborhoods that are ostensibly welcome but choose to go elsewhere.

For the "public" that is present, much of the attraction of the market exists outside the economic realm. From interviewing both vendors and buyers, it was clear that for many a trip to the farmers' market is a repeat activity—a ritualistic practice they look forward to and engage in every Sunday. They participate in the farmers' market not necessarily because it is the most convenient or efficient way for them to buy their groceries but largely as a social activity. They bring their kids to listen to the live music or participate in neighborhood hula hooping with other children. Many will buy produce, but the majority come simply to get a cup of coffee and a pastry which they enjoy while people watching and chatting. It is a space to see and be seen, a space to assert their presence in the Temescal neighborhood and mingle with people that they will likely see again both at the market the following week and at another local neighborhood establishment.

These coexisting activities – economic, social, and sometimes political – play out spatially as well. Although the parking lot itself, occupied by the vendors, is the more formal sight of economic activity and exchange between vendors and buyers, areas adjacent to the stands become vital to the market's success as a thriving public space. The Temescal Creek, a normally underused natural area that runs next to the DMV parking lot, becomes an overpopulated zone of sitting, eating, hanging out, and friendly conversation [see figure 6]. The DMV carport and adjacent plaza area, become entertainment spaces hosting the aforementioned hula hooping corner and live music [see figure 8]. In-between spaces get populated with folding tables and chairs, which become hot commodities [see figure 7]. People often resort to sitting on curbs, ledges, and tree stumps. These surplus areas, hosting carefree social gathering, contrast activities that take place at the entrance to the market where activists will often loiter with flyers and petitions. These coexisting zones and activity areas are clearly bounded and adhered to by the varying constituencies, existing in proximity to each other but never mixing [see figure 9].

One way to understand the Temescal farmers' market is through the concept of the carnivalesque. Like the carnival, the market is a ritual of overabundance that allows participants to escape daily life for a determinate and recurring period. In this way it acts as a foil to the official culture and consequently comments on normative practices through an inversion of the norm. In *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, make this very point in a larger argument about the role of hierarchical binarisms. They cite Bakhtin, who writes, "As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrates temporary liberation from the prevailing truth of the established order; it marks the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions. Carnival was the true fest

of time, the feast of becoming, change and renewal” (Bakhtin 1968: 109). In the case of the Temescal farmers’ market, its inversion of daily life, although not extreme, is perhaps a critique of the commercialization and anonymity associated with current methods of food production and distribution—it creates a slow, local, healthy option in a fast, globalized food world.



[figure 6] Activating the Temescal Creek



[figure 7] From sidewalk to seating area



[figure 8] From carport to hula hoop zone



[figure 9] Activity Zones

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FangHuan

Publics and their Spaces

FangHuan

UC-Berkeley, Publics and their Space

Case study:

Chinese seniors find love at IKEA

Abstract:

This essay focuses on using public space concepts: “quasi-public space, third place and multiple publics” to analysis an interesting case: Chinese taking a nap, freeloading on air-conditioning, sipping free coffee and even meeting dates in this private owned public space in IKEA.

Key words:

IKEA; quasi-public space; third place; multiply public space; weak public, subaltern counter public

Introduction:

Normally furniture stores in China lack design sense. Different brands are located in the same so called big “furniture shopping mall” in the suburbs. But the interior of the mall has been separated into small stores. Thus there are no comfortable places for people to eat, drink and rest when tired of shopping. Also because of its location, it is inconvenient to visit. On the other hand, there are some high-end brands of furniture shops in the city center shopping mall. However, the absurd prices keep people away.

By contrast, IKEA’s modern minimalist design style, assemble and disassemble idea and reasonable price, attracted lots of customs when it came to China. Also IKEA has a different shopping environment, for instance encouraging everyone to try before making a purchase, making a “domestic” shopping space and a relatively cozy cafeteria.

Case study and analysis

Quite a number of Chinese go to IKEA to do private things: take a nap, freeload on air-conditioning, sip free coffee, rather than furniture shopping. As presented in the article entitled “on public space, Quasi-public spaces and public Quasi-space”, this case became a very typical “quasi-public space”: “a privately owned but publicly used interior space”[1]. Here IKEA owned this space which actually used in various ways: the home product giant has become children’s

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favorite playground with colorful decorated plush toys; In one showroom, grandparents chatted on the couch while two kids were jumping on the couch and playing pillow fights; Many lovebirds are so not shy about public display of affection; Teenagers sat in a white leather Tirup chair, watching home videos from their smart phone. As in the concept talked by Nancy Fraser in "Rethinking Public Sphere: a Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy", here IKEA as the economy part opened this furniture store. No matter they decorated their stores home like or they opened a cafeteria, these are their selling strategies to attract more clients for their own interest which is maximizing their profit potential. While some clients came here actually take this advantages and change them for their own private concerns. As said before, taking a nap, watch movies or kids playing, people bring in domestic and personal life into IKEA which has been present in front of other visitors.



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One idealized conception of public space as a “Space of democracy”, says that “everyone has the right to inhabit the space then social exchanges can take place”[2]. However public space has always been constituted inclusion and exclusion. In this case, IKEA is opened to a wide range of people, from kids to the elders. And a minimal admission requirement: an IKEA membership card can guarantee them countless free refills of coffee in the cafeteria. Parents, children and the seniors appreciate this safety, clean, well-organized and afford place to stay in the center of city.

Today more interesting things happened in IKEA in China: Chinese seniors find love at IKEA.

Normally IKEA is located in the center of the city, for example in Shanghai’s Xuhui shopping district. In the same area, other western cafes are much more expensive than a senior Chinese can or want to afford. In terms of Chinese culture, it is not appropriate to date at bars, clubs, Karaoke joints or coffee shops for seniors. This is also the reason, this matchmaking club want to organize this event in IKEA. At this weekly IKEA romance session, the elderly arrive in swarms of 70 to 700 to get the free coffee offered to holders of the IKEA Family membership card. One official IKEA card swapper would hands out an average of 500 coffee cups each time the group meets. Bags of creamer, sugar and disposable cups ran out in half an hour.

Characters of “Third place” displayed here:

- Third place is a matter of both time and place. Access to IKEA is convenient, which is in the center of city. Each Tuesday and Thursday, hundreds of members of a matchmaking club at their middle age and beyond came from all over the city and took up seats for five or six hours while meeting their dates.
- As a physical environment, although IKEA coffee is a Swedish designed interior space, it is still typically plain. Plastic table, chairs, cheap instant coffee, color painted walls, comparing to other western cafe in Shanghai, IKEA cafe is typical fast food chain shop style.
- “The activity is conversation”, “the conversation there is good, lively, colorful. They maintained the conversation in pleasurable and entertaining.”[3]In Emerson’s essay on “table talk”, he focused on Paris, supreme merit is that it is the city of conversation and cafes. While in China, for these seniors, this IKEA cafe place actually became a date places. Instead of in the bars, cinemas for younger people, IKEA become a place for meeting love and other private things.
- Before come to IKEA, all these elders were already members of a match-date club. They are actually an exclusive group of people. They maybe are retired or divorced. Their kids are so busy to take care with them or even come to talk with them. After coming to this place, they find a group a people around the same generation, sharing the same

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interests and topics. Instead of coming for coffee or date, they want to social exchange with other people. So IKEA provides a basic place for sociability for these seniors. As I found in one interview, one old lady said she is grateful to have such a meeting place. She made more senior citizen friends. There is more to offer than meeting a boyfriend at IKEA.

When they found these seniors actually sitting there for 6 or 7 hours, IKEA decided to take action. To keep order, they bolstered security, assigning six guards to the cafeteria on Tuesdays and Thursdays in addition to the usual two posted there on other days. They created a special roped off zone for sitting, allowing more tables to be open for shoppers who wanted warm tilapia, not hot dates.

Policing the freeloaders and the unruly isn't so easy. Attempting to tell a rowdy crowd of seniors to lower their voices recently, 24-year-old security guard encountered resistance. An older man who didn't enjoy being hushed by someone 40 years his junior splashed scalding coffee on him. The Seniors always argue that they have the right to do what they want here.



Pic 3:

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Publics and their Spaces

Here, these seniors, they are weak public. Outside IKEA, normally they live alone, no one to talk with, no one to share common interests, and it is hard to express their public opinions. As discussed by Nancy Fraser: “members of subordinated groups would have no arenas for deliberation among themselves about their needs, objects. They would have no venues in which to undertake communicative process”. Especially, under the Chinese traditional culture environment, seniors are not appropriate to express love feeling outside of domestic life and present in front of other people. After they have been organized by this match-date club, they become an exclusive community. These dating events have been organized by this group of people which can happen everywhere for instance, tea house, park, gardens and etc.. But actually there is another important reason here: in Chinese’s consciousness, coffee which is part of outside culture always expresses love, romance and intimacy, comparing with tea. Even as old as these seniors, they still want to create some special environment for dates, even just as a metaphor. So they come to occupy IKEA cafe and take the advantage of this place. This group of people becomes a subaltern counter public: “they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” [4]. The seniors actually have the right to come to IKEA to do whatever they want under shop’s rule. IKEA find the organizer of this group’s organizers and try to negotiate with them. As a result, IKEA had to create a special sitting zone just for this group of people on Tuesday and Thursday. This subaltern counter public actually successfully occupied this space for their own interests.

But compared to IKEA, other companies seem more successfully blend of retail and entertainment together. Wal-Mart stores in China set up a children's camp for summer and winter school breaks. McDonald's, with its free Wi-Fi and clean bathrooms, is adding more electrical outlets to most of its China stores in hopes that people will actually come and hang around longer. In Hong Kong, the fast food giant is developing a service known as "McWedding" to encourage people to marry in their stores. One proposed feature of the ceremony: When it is time for the big kiss, the bride and groom can each chomp on the end of a French fry until their lips meet.

Conclusion:

People bring domestic or personal life: napping, kids’ playgrounds, and dating, to IKEA which is a privately owned public space. After analysis these interesting cases that happened in IKEA in China using several public concepts, I found they correspond to characters of “quasi-public space”, “third place”, “multiple publics”: “strong public, weak public and subaltern counter public”.

FangHuan

Publics and their Spaces

Note:

1. Margaret Crawford and Macro Cenzatti. "On public spaces, quasi-public spaces and public quasi-spaces"
2. "The Character of third place", the great good place.
3. Nancy Fraser. "Rethinking the public sphere: a contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy", *Social Text*, No. 25/26(1990), pp. 56-80, (Duke university Press)