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Publication Date

2013

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Race, Space, and Contestation:
Gentrification in San Francisco's Latina/o Mission District, 1998-2002

By

Francisco Diaz Casique

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Ethnic Studies

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Patricia Penn Hilden, Chair

Professor José David Saldívar

Professor Stephen Small

Professor Kim Voss

Spring 2013

Abstract

“Race, Space, and Contestation:

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University of California, Berkeley

Professor Patricia Penn Hilden, Chair

From 1995 to 2005, the San Francisco Bay Area underwent quick and rapid changes as the forces of the “New Economy,” particularly those connected to internet related businesses, pushed the region’s economic engine at warp speed. San Francisco power brokers recognized the economic power of these new internet related firms and worked to lure and retain this new economic force to and within the city. By 1998, their efforts, along with other forces, created an uneven spatial distribution of internet related firms in San Francisco’s eastern quadrant, a historically working-class area of the city. The encroachment of these internet related firms into eastern quadrant neighborhoods like the Mission District, a working-class and predominantly Latina/o area of the city, also brought gentrification.

Between 1998 and 2002, the time focus of this dissertation, the upward trend that the “New Economy” had been experiencing since 1995, hit its peak before falling back to earth. During this same time, the pressures of gentrification that had been impacting Mission District residents since 1995 also hit its peak. Commercial, manufacturing and light-industrial space was being converted apace into office space, live/work lofts, and luxury condominiums. Residential evictions in the Mission District easily outpaced those in other parts of the city during this four year stretch as local real estate firms jumped into speculative real estate deals. The displacement of local industries and people combined contributed to significant residential and commercial shifts in the Mission District.

In 1998, Mission District activists and residents formally began an anti-displacement movement. This movement, which found its most potent expression in the working-class Latina/o Mission District before radiating out to other San Francisco neighborhoods, demonstrates the need to understand better the importance of space and place for social movement actors. The Mission District’s claim for spatial and social justice also highlights three key themes for social movement scholarship: collective consumption, cultural identity, and political self- management. In the Mission District these three dimensions showed themselves through a geographic struggle over the protection of livable space, the culturally and racially relevant form of protest within a

place based identity formation, and efforts to gain greater community control over city planning processes and decision-making procedures. As much as this dissertation examines a social movement, it also expands on the cultural forms of spatialized and geographically scaled protest activity. The latter two are brought to bear through the resistive efforts of a grassroots led community movement that struggled to create, challenge, and reproduce cultural meanings of place that are absolutely inscribed in our socio-spatial landscape.

The close focus of this dissertation on a single community movement within one neighborhood in San Francisco highlights larger issues of concern. How normalized processes such as privatization, and gentrification play out across major urban centers of late capitalist society reveals an intense struggle by those displaced as well as those profiting from the changes. While gentrification may be most visible at the local scale, it would be a mistake to not also understand its connecting threads to larger regional and global forces. As such, viewing gentrification through a multi-scaled lens allows one to view the nuanced impacts of larger global neoliberal tendencies and logics in actually existing places (Brenner & Theodore, 2002).

These larger tendencies and logics have made the outcomes of contemporary gentrification – further displacement, dislocation and general marginalization of the urban working-class – a durable part of a larger socio-spatial landscape that for so many produces the interruption and/or destruction of everyday life. This project is situated in larger theoretical issues of organized abandonment, “landscape,” mobility/immobility, and the racialized/spatialized outcomes of short-sighted spatial fixes to crises. This project also demonstrates how these unevenly developed landscapes carry the necessary elements for the creation of spatial justice, and the features necessary for “geographies of justice”, features that extend beyond the local scale, having fluid interplay at varying scales.

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Acknowledgements

The close of this dissertation project allows me the great privilege to thank and acknowledge the people and foundations that have made this work possible. I would like to begin by extending my deepest appreciation to my dissertation committee: Patricia Hilden (Chair), José Saldívar, Stephen Small and Kim Voss. Each offered sage words of encouragement, gave generous comments and feedback on countless chapter drafts, and listened to my frustrations and concerns regarding this project and other matters. As such, I count each as close friends. While each member of my dissertation committee has been instrumental, Patricia Hilden stands out above all others. She has not only seen me through this project with great care and compassion, but some difficult moments in my personal life as well. I count myself fortunate to regard her as one of my greatest friends and champions.

I would like to thank David Montejano, who, while not on my formal dissertation committee, offered wonderful feedback and support, both of which has served me and this project well. I would also like to thank the members of David Montejano's Ethnic Studies seminar on social movements – Maggie Elmore, Francisco Fuentes, Alejandro Garcia, and Ramon Quintero – for giving gracious commentary and probing questions on key chapters of this dissertation. I believe both my work and my development as a scholar benefited greatly from the collegiality and intellectual work done in this seminar.

I would also like to thank those who volunteered their time to lend their voices to this project: Antonio Diaz, Sue C. Hestor, Nick Pagoulatos, Eric Quezada, and Calvin Welch. I learned a great deal through our conversations about the anti-displacement movement in San Francisco during the late-1990s and early-2000s, and San Francisco politics in general. Equally important, however, they reminded me of the importance of community engaged scholarship, and my privileged position as a scholar-activist.

My sincerest appreciation goes out to Amie Fishman, who selflessly shared her wonderful MA thesis on the role community development corporations play in grassroots social movements.

I would like to thank the staff at The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley who made my archival research much easier than it would have been otherwise. In particular I would like to acknowledge and thank Theresa Salazar, Curator of Bancroft Collection of Western Americana; David Kessler, Registration Work Leader; Susan Snyder, Head Public Services; and Baiba Strads, Serials Acquisition Assistant. Tami J. Suzuki at the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library, was very helpful while I was there doing some archival work with varying Mayors Papers. Thanks also go out to Marie Browning and Sonia Johnson of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Archives. They provided me with work space at their office and access to a rich archive of materials. Special thanks go to Nancy R. Mirabal and her students at San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA, whose herculean work to collect the countless oral histories of Mission District community residents were of tremendous use to me. I am certain this rich archive will be of key use to any researcher wishing to study displacement from the “ground up”.

The generosity of fellowships such as The Bancroft Library Award, the University of California President's Dissertation Fellowship, and the Institute for the Study of Social Change Fellowship provided me with extraordinary support.

I would also like to thank those community activists and residents who had the courage to fight against their and their neighbor's displacement. It is only because of them that this dissertation exists.

Lastly, I could not imagine undertaking this project without the support of friends and family. Thankful does not come close to describe how I feel. My parents, Rafael and Teresa Casique, have sacrificed so much and given so willingly. My brothers and sisters (Manuel Casique, Rafael Casique, Adam Casique, Marisa Casique, and Dee Casique), nieces and nephews (Reyna Casique, Isabella Casique, Anthony Casique, Sofia Casique, Analisa Casique, Benjamin Ramirez, and Xavier Ramirez) have helped me “keep ten toes on the ground”. The Macias, Baylon, Reiland, and Schlagel families have been profound sources of support and encouragement throughout this entire process. I save the most important person for last. Georgin Macias, your love, care, support, and strength have made all the difference. I count myself lucky to have you as my partner, and best friend. I love you very much.

Chapter One:

“Placing” Gentrification and the Mission District

Just as none of us is beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings.

—Edward Said (1994: p. 7)

Laying the Groundwork

At 47 square miles, San Francisco, the geographic center of this dissertation, is one of the smaller major cities in the United States. The city itself rests at the northern tip of the San Francisco peninsula. While the southern boundary of the city is marked by the cities and counties that make up the San Francisco Peninsula, the northern edge of the city is marked by the Golden Gate, a strait of water that connects the Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Bay, the western and eastern boundaries of the city respectively. The natural limitations placed on San Francisco by its physical geography have made the spatial politics of property, land-use and development particularly contentious issues.

From the 1930s on through the 1950s, aging and failing urban centers became a national obsession. Citizens feared the city served as an incubator for crime and vice, while politicians and business-minded people feared a dying urban political-economy.¹ The passing of urban renewal legislation by Congress in 1949 and 1954, which gave cities the power to assemble and clear land through eminent domain, finally allowed city governments such as San Francisco the opportunity to shed its blue collar, manufacturing and production garb² for that of the more white collar service sector economy and so-called F.I.R.E industries; finance, insurance, and real estate (Mollenkopf, 1983; Walker, 1998, 2004).³ By the 1950s, when then San Francisco Mayor George Christopher steadfastly backed the efforts of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA), city power brokers and planners had already been busy developing plans through which

¹ It should be noted that this was a time in the United States where cities around the nation were experiencing significant demographic shifts as racial minorities and ethnic immigrants were entering the urban environment at greater rates. Equally important was the rise of radical worker politics throughout the nation's large urban centers. As such, the discourse on sagging urban centers and maligned local economies absolutely held xenophobic, racist, and anti-union qualities.

² Following the popular discovery of gold in 1848, San Francisco became the primary industrial and manufacturing center of the western United States. The city as an industrial and manufacturing hub, however was short lived, reaching its peak in the decades between the 1860s-1900s (Walker, 2004). Manufacturing and industrial sectors then experienced a slow and steady decline through the early decades of the twentieth century. By midcentury, however, San Francisco's manufacturing and industrial economic sector rebounded as the San Francisco Bay Area as a region became a critical location for the construction of war materiel for the United States military during World War II. For a good account on the industrial landscape of the San Francisco Bay Area see the Henry J. Kaiser Papers housed at The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. For a fine treatment of San Francisco's expansion see Brechin, Gray. *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power and Earthly Ruin*. University of California Press. Berkeley, CA: 2006. For good read on San Francisco's manufacturing history see Cohen, Peter. "Transformation of an Industrial Landscape: San Francisco's Northeast Mission" MA Thesis. San Francisco State University. 1998; and Walker, Richard. "Industry Builds Out the City: The Suburbanization of Manufacturing in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1850-1940" in *Manufacturing Suburbs: Building Work and Home on the Metropolitan Fringe*. Ed. Robert Lewis. Temple University Press. Philadelphia, PA: 2004. pp. 92-123.

³ From 1960-1970, employment increased by 28.4 percent in services, 31.9 percent in finance, insurance, and real estate, and by 26.4 percent in government. Conversely, manufacturing decreased by 15.7 percent (Castells, 1983).

to expand the capacity of the city's downtown district to accommodate the large number of office buildings necessary to position San Francisco as the principal financial center for the Pacific Rim.⁴ Also during this time were redevelopment plans set in place to improve the urban built environment by renovating "blighted neighborhoods," which would presumably reduce the exit of high income tax payers for the surrounding suburbs (Mollenkopf, 1983; Hartman, 2002; Simon, 2007). Both parties, power brokers and city planners, overwhelmingly and consistently aimed their efforts at poor communities, particularly those that sat on prime real estate directly adjacent to San Francisco's downtown (Scott, 1959). The Mission District⁵ – one of San Francisco's economically depressed neighborhoods – was one such neighborhood, sitting, as it did, near downtown on potentially rich land.⁶

The theoretical possibilities offered by city planners and officials were soon realized as San Francisco's mid-century postindustrial transition led to the displacement of aging manufacturing and industrial districts, as well as surrounding working-class residential districts, by new high-rise office buildings. San Francisco's transformation produced a new ethnic-occupational order as the former working-class, much of it a community of color, was pushed aside for a growing postindustrial, professional, and white labor force (Mollenkopf, 1983).

What began in earlier decades speeded up in the 1970s as neoliberal economic shifts began to erode the stream of federal aid city governments could access in an effort to redevelop "blighted" sections of their city.⁷ This dissertation takes up the story in the decades following the

⁴ These expectations are captured in 1970 by Rudolph Peterson, former president of Bank of America:

"When I speak of the Pacific Rim, I am putting the broadest possible construction on the term – the western coasts of South America, Central America, our own continent, and extending beyond Australia and the Far East to India. There is no more vast or rich area for resource development or trade growth in the world today than this immense region, and it is virtually our own front yard...Were we California businessmen to play a more dynamic role in helping trade development in the Pacific Rim, we would have giant, hungry new markets for our products and vast new potentials for our firms" (Hartman, 2002: p. 4).

⁵ The Mission District is physically bordered on the north by Market and 11th streets, the south by Cesar Chavez Street, and on the west and east by Dolores Street and US Highway 101 respectively. The Mission District has been considered a Latina/o neighborhood since the 1970s when this group became the majority demographic group there. By the late-1990s, Latina/os comprised 52 percent of all residents living in the Mission District.

⁶ In 1945, the San Francisco City Planning Commission, while looking for places to expand the central business district (CBD), studied the housing stock data collected by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and found that whole areas around the CBD, particularly those areas south of Market Street, had been designated as blighted. Not coincidentally, these areas were also home to vulnerable working-class communities many of which had significant numbers of people of color residing within them. For further information see San Francisco Planning Commission, "The Redevelopment of Blighted Areas: A Master Plan for San Francisco, 1945" San Francisco, CA: 1945. For a good treatment on San Francisco redevelopment and renewal efforts see Scott, Mel. The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective. University of California. Berkeley, CA: 1959; Mollenkopf, John. The Contested City. Princeton University Press. Princeton, NJ: 1983; and chapters 1-2 in Hartman, Chester. City For Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco. University of California Press. Berkeley, CA: 2002.

⁷ Prior to the 1960s, "egalitarian liberalism" was the liberal economic *modus operandi* in the United States as state intervention beginning with the New Deal era proved that a "spatial fix" (Harvey, 1985b, 1989) in which the federal government "targeted massive outlays for defense, freeway construction, and suburban real estate," was an effective mechanism to ensure the facilitation and protection of urban growth (Hackworth, 2007: p. 9). However, by the 1960s and 1970s the widespread deindustrialization process in the United States, combined with a deregulatory political climate and a popular "supply-side" economic discourse that stressed an end to state regulation of the economy and the redistributive role of the state, resulted in a shift away from rigid Fordism and towards a "flexible" Post-Fordist mode of accumulation (Amin, 1994). For a general read on the economic tenets of neoliberalism see Friedman, Milton. Free to Choose: A Personal Statement. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. NY, NY: 1980. For a good read on neoliberalism and its impacts on urban space see essays by Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore in Spaces of

drying up of large-scale redevelopment revenue streams provided by the federal government (e.g. the Model Cities Program) when gentrification took a more pronounced role in city revitalization schemes.⁸ It focuses on San Francisco's Mission District, but describes some of the processes that occurred across the city's other poorer neighborhoods.

By the early 1990s the San Francisco Bay Area had become the leading global center for electronics and computing (Zook, 2005; Walker, 2006). By 1995, when the National Science Foundation Network (NSFNET)⁹ was decommissioned (a move that allowed the internet to become fully commercialized (Harris & Gerich, 1996)), San Francisco's star rose higher, as the information technology computing subfield assumed greater importance. While the region as a whole underwent significant changes, San Francisco's long held position as the hub of the region was soon threatened by the rising significance of San José and its suburbs, a geographic region discursively grouped together to form Silicon Valley. Still, the economic recession that had gripped San Francisco from the mid-1980s through the remainder of that decade ended during the early 1990s when rising multi-media software firms located in San Francisco began to make noteworthy financial gains.¹⁰

Since then, San Francisco has continued to undergo significant change as the city's reliance on those internet-related industries of the "New Economy" began to demonstrate its importance to the local economy. On the heels of this multi-media software boom came the "dotcom" subcategory of internet related businesses, a subsector that pushed the New Economy's claim of economic supremacy even further as it challenged San Francisco's once-dominant tourist industry as the greatest revenue generating industry in the city. In a maneuver to retain the rising dotcom industry – an industry that was also being courted by surrounding cities as well as large national cities such as Los Angeles and New York – officers from various San Francisco city agencies and other public officials offered an array of pro-business incentives in the hopes of retaining San Francisco's position as the regional and global leader of internet related firms. Some of the many incentives the city offered included the creation of a high-

Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe. Eds. Neil Brenner, and Nik Theodore. Blackwell press. Oxford, UK: 2002; and Hackworth, Jason. The Neoliberal City: Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism. Cornell University Press. Ithaca, NY: 2007.

⁸ British sociologist Ruth Glass first coined the term in 1964, to describe the changing character of residential urban dwellers in an inner London neighborhood. She describes the process of gentrification as such:

"One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages – two rooms up and two down – have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences [sic]...the current social status and value of such dwellings are frequently in inverse relation to their status, and in any case enormously inflated by comparison with previous levels in their neighbourhoods [sic]. Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the social character of the district is changed" (xviii-xix).

⁹ The National Science Foundation Network (1985-1995) was designed to advance research and education networking in the United States by linking researchers to the nation's NSF-funded supercomputing centers. In this capacity the National Science Foundation Network also, "laid the foundation of the U.S. Internet and was the main catalyst for the explosion in computer networking around the world that followed" (Harris & Grenich, 1996: p. 2). For more on the decommissioning of the NSFNET spine see Harris, Susan, and Elise Gerich. "Retiring the NSFNET Backbone Service: Chronicling the End of an Era" *ConneXions* 10.4 (1996): 2-11.

¹⁰ The 1987 U.S. stock market crash hit nearly one year after San Franciscans voted to pass Proposition M, an initiative that successfully imposed severe growth measures, particularly height and bulk limits for the Downtown area. This slow-growth victory when combined with the crash of 1987 further slowed a local property market that had been experiencing fits and starts since the mid-1970s.

technology business general fund, parking and transit amelioration policies, and the creation of an information technology resource center (Marshall, 1996). The 1998 creation of bodies of specialists within San Francisco's Department of Building Inspection and within the City Planning Department of San Francisco, shared the goal of streamlining the building permit process for information technology firms wanting to do business in the city. It was these pro-internet business practices that have arguably had the greatest impact on San Francisco's built environment and social landscape (Abate & Said, 1998). Building developers, major actors throughout this dissertation, quickly took advantage of this heightened pro-business atmosphere. They soon met the demand for new office space by taking advantage of a much earlier piece of legislation, San Francisco's live/work ordinance of 1988. Ironically, this zoning ordinance was the outcome of a lengthy struggle by local working artists – painters, sculptors, photographers – in the 1970s that had used it to retain large affordable studio space during the heady days of redevelopment. Their struggle is briefly outlined in chapter two in order to contextualize building developers' later efforts in the 1990s when they exploited this ordinance in order to convert and/or newly develop industrial space into high-priced mixed-use live/work spaces in San Francisco designed to attract the growing dotcom business sector and the professional labor force attached to it. As I also discuss in chapter two, a peculiar zoning ordinance assured that these development projects were overwhelmingly channeled into San Francisco's Eastern Neighborhood zone,¹¹ an area that lies south of Market Street and which is dominated by the working-class enclaves of the South of Market, Dogpatch, Showplace, Potrero Hill, and the Mission District. Together, these neighborhoods became the locus of the dotcom industry.

Responding to the demands of the market and to those made by officials at the San Francisco Mayor's Office, officials at the San Francisco Planning Department and Planning Commission continued to shuttle live/work projects through the planning process.¹² The

¹¹ This working-class zone dates back to the 1850s, when manufacturing and industry dominated the area. Local area workers' limitations on time, income, and transit opportunities figuratively demanded that residential districts be near their places of employment. While this practice was a common form of early ad hoc urban planning, by the 1950s this de facto pattern waned. During this time many of the larger manufacturing and industrial plants in the Mission District left the area for affordable and available land offered in cities such as South San Francisco, Oakland, and Richmond (Self, 2003; Walker, 2004). While heavy manufacturing largely fell out of favor in San Francisco by the late 1950s, its absence did not leave behind an abandoned or emptied industrial landscape. Those large former manufacturing and industrial spaces left behind were taken up by smaller, lighter manufacturing businesses such as glass shops, auto shops, laundry services and warehousing.

¹² The City Planning Department of San Francisco has traditionally been a key component to the economic and physical development of the city. It handles complex issues relating to land use policy, land use law, economic development, project development, and redevelopment projects (Jacobs, 2000). This heavy burden historically resulted in the slow movement of building projects through the permit issuance phase. This changed, however, in 1996 when San Francisco voters amended the city charter. Under the old city charter the mayor, "appointed a chief administrative officer (CAO) to direct most of the city's departments...The mayor had appointment, budgetary, and veto powers but no administrative power over departments under the CAO's supervision" (Mullin et al., 2004: p. 25). The new city charter reduced the CAO's job functions while enhancing those of the mayor's office to include greater authority over city administration, the ability to revise commission-approved department budgets, alter department responsibilities, and choose department heads from a list of candidates assembled by the commissions (Mullin et al., 2004). The revised charter also gave the eleven-member San Francisco Board of Supervisors the ability to veto any mayor commission appointments through a two-thirds majority vote. Mayor Willie Brown used his political clout to ensure a loyal majority on the board of supervisors. With increased power afforded to him through the reformed city charter reform, and his support from a loyal majority on the board of supervisors, Mayor Brown was able to appoint political allies and punish foes. This administrative style virtually guaranteed a loyal staff structure with a unified message and agenda (Mullin et al., 2004). Mayor Brown's expansive power and administrative style was particularly clear at the Planning Department where he appointed and removed

construction of dotcom office buildings, luxury lofts and condominiums in these neighborhoods resulted in the loss of countless older production, distribution and repair (PDR) spaces, which in turn permanently eliminated current and future blue-collar jobs and work spaces for local residents (Gale, 1984; Marcuse, 1986; Zukin, 1987; Curran, 2004; Slater, 2006). As scores of preexisting local area businesses and community-serving organizations were displaced, the highly paid workforce of the new digital economy quickly moved in and unintentionally ignited the familiar, yet always unsettling, process of gentrification. Soon an uneven competition for available residential rental units commenced between the dotcom industry's well-paid labor force and the much more modestly-paid preexisting district residents. This competition over already limited available housing fostered a fierce wave of displacement, as residential property owners evicted pre-existing tenants in order to exploit the spike in the demand for rental units. The later development of luxury loft condominiums, which sold for many hundreds of thousands of dollars, further exacerbated the competition for available and affordable housing as preexisting low-cost apartments and single-room-occupancy (SRO) hotels were razed to make space for these new residential units. As a result, the luxury rental units rising atop the footprints of razed affordable living units effectively walled off sections of the Eastern Neighborhood zone to former working-class residents, most of whom lacked the economic means to reside in these new units (Clark, 2005; Slater, 2006). Those displaced residents sought the refuge in the areas of the city that had long provided affordable rental housing – in the South of Market and across the Mission District – only to discover that their displacement was being replicated in every poor neighborhood they knew. These forces, together with the fact that San Francisco had only minimally increased its housing stock since the 1970s, put many of the working-class communities in the eastern quadrant at risk of disappearing. The Mission District, the heart of San Francisco's working-class Latina/o population, lay at the center of these forces.¹³

The economically driven and bureaucratically channeled spatial organization of gentrification that emerged during the late 1990s and early 2000s was a response to ruling-class

commissioners sympathetic to his vision, and who would help streamline the planning and building permit process (Jacobs, 2000; DeLeon, 2003; Mullin et al., 2004).

¹³ While the Mission District is a working-class area, its built environment is different than the working-class redoubts of the South of Market. The Mission District has a particular working-class history that is largely connected to skilled trade unions and the powerful Building Trades Council (Kazin, 1989). As a result, many, though not all, of the district's early residents were white and/or white ethnics (Anglo-Scots, German, Irish, Scandinavian, and Italian) whose connection to well-paid jobs in the varying skilled trades and the powerful Building Trades Council afforded them a wage far and above other working-class groups. The Inner Mission District also counted a small but significant population of early San Francisco power brokers – former San Francisco mayors James D. Phelan (1897-1902) and James Rolph Jr. (1912-1931); industrialists Claus and John D. Spreckels; U.S. Major General John C. Frémont – amongst its residents. The combined presence of this particular sector of workers alongside influential San Francisco power brokers gave the Mission District great class diversity. This class diversity was reflected in the residential built environment. Here, one finds a range of residential buildings from modest worker cottages to large ornate Victorian mansions (Walker, 2004). When contrasted to the working-class enclaves of the South of Market – where the housing stock tended to mimic the sooty industrial cities of Manchester and Liverpool, England – the Mission District seemed more middle-class than working-class (Godfrey, 1988; Kazin, 1989). During the immediate postwar era, however, white residents began to leave residential spaces of the Mission District for the newly developed suburbs of San Francisco's Sunset and Richmond districts. The vacated, and oftentimes dilapidated, housing supply was quickly taken up by San Francisco's rising Latina/o population, many of whom were employed by light manufacturing companies located in the Northeast Mission Industrial Zone. The Mission District's Latina/o population steadily grew between 1950, and 1970; in 1950, the percentage of Spanish-surnamed people living in the Mission District was listed at 11 percent. By 1970, that figure rose to 45 percent (Godfrey, 1988).

demands for governmental control of working-class areas. This demand, however, was soon met with resistance as community serving non-profits – reinvigorated by a new generation of activists and community leadership – led a coordinated effort to organize Mission District residents to halt their collective exclusion through gentrification and displacement. This collective community expression was oftentimes understood by those resisting their displacement as both a struggle over a physically constructed place as well as a defense of an imagined place-based identity, both of which are intricately connected to everyday life (however unstable and fraught with unequal exchanges of power) (Massey, 1994; Escobar, 2001, 2008). By 1998, a fully formed anti-displacement movement was active in the neighborhood, calling itself the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition (MAC). MAC, which began as a collection of workers from five community based organizations – St. Peter’s Housing Committee (SPHC), People Organizing to Demand Economic and Environmental Rights (PODER), Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC), Mission Economic Development Association, and Mission Agenda – incorporated action repertoires that included community marches, building sit-ins, and mass attendance at San Francisco Board of Supervisors and San Francisco Planning Commission public meetings. Between 1998 and 2002, the time focus of this dissertation, MAC was at the height of its popular power, able to politicize and mobilize innumerable Mission District and San Francisco residents as the neoliberal process of urban development, better understood as gentrification, placed the Mission District squarely in the crosshairs of city agencies and officials who, working alongside building developers and real estate speculators, threatened to create a city inaccessible to working-class and poor residents.

As chapter four demonstrates, MAC’s organized agitation from 1998-2002 shifted and moved between scales¹⁴ as the geographic orientation of movement actions moved (Miller, 2000; Sewell Jr., 2001; Herod & Wright, 2002). MAC “jumped scale” as it sought to raise the crisis of gentrification and displacement from the Mission District to show how these processes were impacting all neighborhoods in San Francisco. For this tactic members focused their attention on a city-wide election in 2000. These years of MAC’s efforts to socialize the crisis of gentrification and displacement proved to be a watershed. From their election efforts a slate of progressive, slow-growth advocates to stand for seats on the eleven-member San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 2000 emerged. With the backing of the resulting supermajority on the Board of Supervisors, MAC then successfully challenged the manner in which San Francisco Planning Commissioners were appointed. Together, MAC and the new Supervisors changed commissioner appointments from a 100 percent Mayor-appointed commission to one more equitably split

¹⁴ The general geographic concept of scale, which can be deployed as either an object of analysis or as a narrative aide, has recently come under greater scrutiny by those who argue it is too abstract and rigid a term, rendering it ineffectual (Marston et al., 2005; Collinge, 2006; Escobar, 2007). I, however, contend that scale is still a key component for geographic inquiry. As Colin McFarlane (2009) writes, “the refusal to use scalar concepts is a fruitless strategy given the prevalence of scalar narratives of political, economic, social, and environmental relations that we encounter as researchers on a daily basis” (p. 564). McFarlane’s point is particularly useful where social movement analysis is concerned. Here, scale can be conceptualized as, “a relational, power-laden and contested construction that actors strategically engage with, in order to legitimate or challenge existing power relations” (Leitner et al., 2008: p. 159). Scale, of course, is not the whole of social movement activity, but it can provide useful insights. First, social movement activity routinely targets the state, which has traditionally been dominated by nested scales (national to the local). Second, social movements often overcome “localness” by turning place-specific issues into larger regional or national ones. Conversely there are also calls for the importance of keeping the scale of action local in order to hone a particularly useful attachment to place and culture. Lastly, we can look at the ways in which conflicting scale-frames and strategies (Kurtz, 2003) can potentially undermine the cohesion and strategic direction of a movement (Leitner et al., 2008).

between the Mayor and the President of the Board of Supervisors. At other points, however, MAC “scaled down” its activism to the neighborhood level as it attempted to raise the capacity of Mission District residents to retain some control over neighborhood spaces (Escobar, 2001; Martin & Miller, 2003; Kurtz, 2003). In this instance, MAC developed a collaborative community planning process model (*El Plan Popular*) between its membership base and the city’s Planning Department.¹⁵

Local Matters, Spatial Justice and Gentrification

To be plain, my stress on local geography is deliberate. Localities offer a critical means to understanding how tensions between global enterprise and local community needs unfold (Walker, 1996; Brenner & Theodor, 2002a). This renewed interest in localities is highlighted through a collection of noteworthy essays on neoliberalism and urban restructuring in North America and Western Europe edited by Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (2002a). In the opening essay of this collection Brenner and Theodore (2002a) write, “Localities and places are now back on the agenda across the political spectrum and within numerous strands of social-scientific analysis. In a geoeconomic context defined by massive upheavals of entrenched interscalar relations, local (and regional) spaces are now increasingly being viewed as key institutional arenas for a wide range of policy experiments and political strategies” (p. v). Brenner and Theodore suggest that the local scale, while particularly nuanced and specific to its own environment, operates within a largely networked global society wherein states are shaped by neoliberal tendencies and experiments. By studying localities, it is possible to see how global processes influence local sociospatial relations insofar as local power brokers use space as a privileged instrument to naturalize their effects on these sociospatial relations. Here, too, struggles over space mirror those on a much larger scale of global changes (Brenner & Elden, 2009).

¹⁵ Though this dissertation goes no further than this brief four-year period, I feel it necessary to mention briefly MAC’s decline. As is well documented, the dotcom tidal wave that swept through the region, and which many came to see as the root cause for gentrification, soon crested and fell. What lay behind was a rash of overpriced luxury lofts, converted warehouses, and high rents. As the wave crashed and dissipated, many residents perceived the immediate threat of gentrification and displacement over. This perception, when combined with a newly elected San Francisco Board of Supervisors sympathetic to issues raised by the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition, led to a loss of much of MAC’s mobilizing base. Without an immediate threat MAC was unable to maintain its popular confrontational appeal. MAC members recognized their opportunity to shift from a largely reactionary organization into a proactive one and quickly moved to increase their efforts to establish a community planning model (*El Plan Popular*). The San Francisco Planning Department had been approving projects on a project-by-project scale. MAC was demanding a more comprehensive area plan that would look at the conditions in the surrounding neighborhood when considering a project (The “specific area plan” concept was codified in 1979 through an amendment to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which allowed cities to move away from site-by-site projects, and instead towards cumulative neighborhood plans). Unfortunately this complicated process, which required a great deal of political education simply to foreground the process, moved at such a glacial pace that many of the community members who were once heavily involved eventually left. In the end only a small number of MAC’s membership were left to work through the byzantine process of changing planning and land use policy in San Francisco’s Eastern Neighborhoods. Those that remained, however, crafted a rather sophisticated piece of land use policy, *El Plan Popular* (The People’s Plan), that proposed rezoning and land use designations in the Mission District. This proposed piece of policy was a counter to the San Francisco Planning Department’s own “Eastern Neighborhoods Plan”, a piece of policy MAC activists and supporters saw as a zoning policy measure that would do little to stymie the process of gentrification and displacement in the district. In the end neither policy came to pass on its own. Instead, the “Mission Area Plan,” a more collaborative effort between the San Francisco Planning Department and MAC, was adopted in 2008. This plan was greatly informed by the proposals that MAC’s *El Plan Popular* was calling for.

One key goal of this dissertation, then, is to understand the connections between a localized process of gentrification and the resulting struggle for spatial justice (Soja, 2010), as well as the reflection of these connections across the city in similar struggles over city-spaces (Friedmann, 1995; Lefebvre, 1996; Isin, 2000; Dikec, 2001; Dulchin 2003/2004; Harvey, 2009; Soja, 2010). In the Mission District, this struggle was particularly relevant for working-class Latina/o residents. The organized resistance that rose to combat gentrification and displacement in San Francisco's Mission District did so within the context of a defense of place and amidst a growing "Right to the City" discourse, a politically charged idea about human rights in an urban context that was originally developed decades ago by Henri Lefebvre. The organized struggle positions those people negatively affected by the urban condition to take greater control over the social production of urbanized space. This localized effort to resist gentrification is thus a significant gesture as neoliberal urban strategies have made gentrification a preferred mechanism for local governments eager to "redevelop" the urban built environment. These same forces who have attempted to cast cities as sites of consumption and entertainment have also worked hard to stymie any working-class political struggle against it (Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Hackworth, 2002).¹⁶

As the opening epigraph suggests, the geography of justice is a vital part of how justice and injustice are socially constructed and evolve over time and suggests that the struggle over geography and justice is, of course, never complete and always contestable. As I detail in chapter three, the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition's struggle against gentrification and its displacing effects centered issues of community self-determination and social justice, marking MAC's struggle against gentrification and displacement as unmistakably a struggle over geography, as Edward Said (1994) might describe it.

In his classic text which elegantly theorizes the production of space, Henri Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) states that, "space is becoming the principal stake of goal-directed actions and struggles" (p. 410). Though penned in earlier decades, Lefebvre's words continue to hold true as Mission District residents and activists were able to rally a diverse segment of San Francisco's population to engage in a struggle in defense of livable space throughout the city. The connection between gentrification and concerns over a geography of justice finds increasing interest amongst many of those who study gentrification, particularly those who see the displacement of poor and working-class residents as, "nothing more and nothing less than the neighborhood expression of inequality" (Lees et al, 2008: p. 80). My work, then, joins these efforts, demanding that a critical geography of gentrification must carry with it an analysis of the resulting social justice agenda (Squires, 1992; Lees, 1999; Slater, 2006; Lees et al, 2008; Smith, 2008).

Gentrification Roots and Branches

Though studying the processes of urban gentrification alongside histories of local social resistance has engaged only a few scholars, the field is not new. Early studies of gentrification, in fact, often contained some reference to social justice (Holcomb & Beauregard, 1981; Hartman, 1984; Marcuse, 1986; Zukin, 1987). Chester Hartman's famed 1984 proclamation, for example, that lower-income residents being displaced have the "right to stay put" links displacing mechanisms such as those connected to gentrification squarely alongside concerns about spatial

¹⁶ According to Peter Marcuse and Ronald van Kempen (2000), part of the success of neoliberalism is a widely held belief that "there is no alternative" (TINA) to it. This imagined quality of indelibility imparts onto neoliberalism qualities that make it seem natural and evolutionary, and impenetrable to challenge.

justice (Hartman, 1984; Dulchin, 2003/2004; Freeman & Braconi, 2004; Newman & Wyly, 2006).

Unfortunately this early trend never assumed a dominant position among those studying gentrification. Early scholars misunderstood gentrification as a small-scale and temporary aberration in the local real estate market that eventually came to a natural end. Many, in fact, understood gentrification to be a marginal or ancillary concern, deserving little to no substantive academic inquiry (Berry, 1980; Rose, 1984; Bourne, 1993). The assumption that gentrification would somehow passively find its end is reminiscent of arguments made by early U.S. sociologists. Among the more enduring legacies of the early Chicago School has been the idea that the urban environment will tend towards equilibrium much as an organism will. In this regard, individuals and groups will sort themselves out “naturally” into areas of the city that will provide the most effective form of symbiosis. This kind of thinking influenced later neoclassical economic models of urban land markets developed in the late 1950s, and early 1960s (Alonso, 1964; Muth, 1969). In fact, prior to the 1970s, a majority of scholars studying urban residential location patterns usually incorporated some form of an urban ecological model, a model that was generally accepted as fairly representative of urban structure (Lees et. al., 2008). Such models assumed that there existed a natural succession cycle to residential patterns. They thus explained the outward migration of a city’s wealthy and affluent residents from a decaying central city and towards the outer edges of the city and/or into newly developed suburbs as a natural eventuality. This out-migration, in turn, opened up a deteriorating housing stock for less affluent residents. Postwar gentrification, however, challenged these early models as the middle-classes began to move back into what had long been changing into thoroughly working-class inner-city communities, many of which had either pronounced or growing populations of color (Hackworth & Smith, 2001).

At first, those studying this new “back to the city” middle class movement insisted that the shift was diffuse and anomalous, an exception to the evolutionary rule. By the 1960s and 1970s, however, scholars influenced by a change in the form and content of social protest in the urban environment (both domestically and internationally), as well as by a mounting global fiscal crisis began to recognize that many of the theoretical tenets dear to American social scientists were outmoded. At this same time, works that provided an alternative framework, particularly those by Karl Marx and his intellectual descendants, became increasingly influential amongst a wider segment of U.S. sociologists and geographers (Mitchell, 2000; Gottdiener & Hutchinson, 2006). Now-classic works such as Ruth Glass’s 1964 study of the residential transformation of one section of inner-London, showcased gentrification as a wider social process. Glass’s work examined the processes by which ramshackle housing in a working-class area of London was purchased and refurbished by the middle-class, leading directly to the displacement of poorer residents while simultaneously changing not only the physical condition of these residential buildings but also the area’s entire cultural and social landscape.¹⁷

¹⁷ Scholarship on gentrification has generally adhered to two theoretical models. On the one side there are those that stress a political-economic model (Smith, 1979, 1982, 1984; Clark, 1991, 1995, 2005; Hammel & Wyly, 1996; *inter alia*), while on the other there are those which emphasize a cultural model (Caulfield, 1989, 1984; Ley, 1996; Butler, 1997; Butler & Robson, 2003; *inter alia*) to explain how and/or why the lived urban built environment changes during this process. Those works privileging a political-economic model present gentrification as one connected to larger social forces wherein societal structures play significant roles in the uneven development of capitalist space (Smith, 1982, 1984; Harvey, 1985a, 1985b). This model argues gentrification is a product of investment and disinvestment in the urban real estate market. The result of this locational seesaw has been, “the successive

While Glass's study does not carry a specific social justice plan, it has served to frame much of the early debate on gentrification. As the study of gentrification grew in popularity (late-1970s through the 1980s) urban sociologists and geographers began to explore its connection to questions of economic restructuring, deindustrialization, uneven development, shifting labor and cultural markets, and consumption patterns (Smith, 1979; Harvey, 1985a, 1985b, 1989; Zukin, 1987). In so doing many of these scholars either established theoretical explanations for gentrification, or contributed to already existing theoretical models of gentrification by incorporating associated questions of land tenure and conversion, ground rent and capitalized rent, and the changing forms of cities categorized into urban hierarchies via global capital (Zukin, 1987).

Over time, of course, Glass's classic foundation work has continued to be built upon and expanded. Eric Clark (2005), for example, stretches Glass's definition to such an extent that he is able to describe gentrification as a process,

“involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital. The greater the difference in socioeconomic status, the more noticeable the process, not least because the more powerful the new users are, the more marked will be the concomitant change in the built environment. *It does not matter where, it does not matter when. Any process of change fitting this description is, to my understanding, gentrification*” (p. 258, emphasis added).

Clark's broad and creative definition has allowed some gentrification scholars (Clark 1988, 2005; Smith, 1996; Hammel, 1999) to suggest that gentrification predates Ruth Glass's classic 1964 definition. As Eric Clark writes, “The ‘process of conquest’...goes at least as far back as the mid-1800s when Friedrich Engels observed spatially concentrated displacement of workers to make space for new ‘spatial fixes’ of capital in search of potential profits and land rents” (Clark, 2005: p. 260). Similarly, Neil Smith (1996) draws on the change that the

development, underdevelopment, and redevelopment of given areas as capital jumps from one place to another, then back again, both creating and destroying its own opportunities for development” (Smith, 1982: p. 151).

Scholarship that adheres to a cultural analysis of gentrification tend to describe it as a colloquial response to the private housing market wherein a small group of intrepid and risk-oblivious middle-class “pioneers” enter a working-class neighborhood, purchase moribund housing stock, and invest some “sweat equity” to refurbish previously disinvested homes (Clay, 1979; Zukin, 1987). As the urban “frontier” gets “settled” (Smith, 1986, 1996), land speculators and real estate firms, seeking to capitalize on investment properties, take greater hold of the local real estate market. In its mature stage, greater numbers of middle class residents move into the now rapidly transitioning area. The result is an “upgraded” neighborhood that displaced all, or most, of the original working-class residents, and dramatically altered the social geography of the original community (Clay, 1979).

Despite the large body of literature that emphasizes either a cultural or political-economic theoretical explanation for gentrification, many have omitted or simply neglected the concrete political issues related to gentrification: displacement. Responding to this gap in the literature, scholars such as Chris Hamnett (1991), Loretta Lees (1999), Tom Slater (2006) and others, have called for scholarship studying gentrification to be situated in local contexts and within localized struggles against displacement. The argument for taking this oftentimes ignored direction is summed up best by Jan van Weesep (1994) when he suggests that both cultural and political-economic trends are useful conceptual tools towards understanding how gentrification is, “deeply rooted in social dynamics and economic trends” (p.80). Continuing to create theoretical models where one is privileged over the other in explaining “why” gentrification occurs distracts from the material question of what the lived outcomes of gentrification and displacement are (van Weesep, 1994; Betancur, 2011).

Hausmann Plan effected in mid-19th century Paris, France. The implementation of Hausmann's plan resulted in the wide scale displacement of poor and working-class residents from the area as much of the built environment was razed. Despite such references to historical precedent, however, most gentrification scholars agree that the forms of gentrification common since the end of World War II differ sufficiently from earlier processes to require a unique scholarly treatment (Hackworth & Smith, 2001).

Though beginning with the U.S. post-war years provide a relatively short historical snapshot, Jason Hackworth and Neil Smith (2001) use it to assemble an effective and widely-accepted staged history of gentrification. Hackworth's and Smith's historicized account of gentrification unfolds over three waves, with the first wave beginning in the late 1950s and proceeding until the years just before the outbreak of the global economic recession of 1973. According to Hackworth and Smith, studies documenting gentrification during this period found that it was largely centered in the northeastern urban centers of the United States and in major global cities in Western Europe and Australia. In the United States, this time coincides with large federally-sponsored urban renewal efforts to counteract the economic decline of central city neighborhoods (Smith, 1979; Hackworth & Smith, 2001). The "federal bulldozer", as urban renewal came to be termed, was a weak spatial fix to the deeper systemic problems plaguing those major U.S. cities that were experiencing urban disinvestment (1985a).

By 1973, however, the global economic recession prompted the U.S. government to reel in its funding of local city revitalization efforts, forcing localities to find alternative funding streams. This shift marks the beginning of the second distinct wave of gentrification which lasted through the 1980s. By this time the large-scale demolition required by federal urban renewal programs was eschewed in favor of administering incentive funds to local city governments such as those related to the Model Cities program and the Community Development Block Grants (Zukin, 1987; Cullingworth, 1993). These strategic shifts in government policy from 1970 to 1975, "supported gentrification at the very time that rising inflation rates, fuel costs, and construction prices made rehabilitation in the center city an economically viable alternative for both homeowners and real estate developers" (Zukin, 1987: p. 132). Small-scale real estate investors benefitted from both local government and participating lending institutions as cities sought to continue the process of "revitalizing" the urban environment. (Zukin, 1987; Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Hackworth, 2007). In this second stage, gentrification was largely understood as either an occupation of small-scale individual gentrifiers concerned with the architectural restoration of deteriorating housing, or as actions taken by some local governments trying to revitalize inner cities by clustering new cultural amenities into the urban core (Zukin, 1987). This second wave was further characterized by its wide diffusion and durability as cities from around the globe, both large and small, allowed the process of gentrification to unfold in long-neglected central city district neighborhoods (Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Smith, 2002; Atkinson & Bridge, 2005).¹⁸

¹⁸ Many of the studies that focus on gentrification's global reach see it as part of a systemic response to global transformations in late capitalist countries towards services, recreation, and consumption. This change in orientation, it is argued, has coincided with the rise of a global hierarchy of networked global cities as contemporary urban economies from throughout the late capitalist world rely evermore on professional employment, the expansion of the financial, insurance and real estate sector, and tourism to replace their marked shift away from manufacturing and industrial economies (Zukin, 1989, 1995; Smith, 1996, 2002; Sassen, 2001; Smith & Hackworth, 2001). While studies on gentrification are now imbued with a global blush there remains the tendency economically to overdetermine gentrification. By casting gentrification as primarily an economic byproduct of a restructuring economy and as a generalizable global phenomenon, it becomes all too possible to miss the social aspect of spatial

By the early 1990s, however, a national recession halted gentrification in its figurative tracks. Lending institutions stopped making loans available to speculative real estate projects. Local real estate markets quickly began to cool. The change was so dramatic that some scholars began proclaiming the formal end to gentrification (Berry, 1985; Bourne, 1993, 1995). Larry Bourne (1993), for example, declared that, “[t]he extent and impacts of gentrification have been exaggerated in the urban literature of the 1970s and 1980s, and...the process itself will be of decreasing importance as we move beyond the recession of the early 1990s” (p. 183). This pronouncement was, of course, premature. Neil Smith (1996) reminds readers of this prematurity when he writes, “neither the memory nor the profits of gentrification are likely to be erased so quickly. Indeed, it may not be too much of an exaggeration to surmise that proclaiming the end of gentrification today may be akin to anticipating the end of suburbanization in 1933” (p. 230).

The rise of neoliberalism and its corresponding assumption that former manufacturing urban centers of the late capitalist world had plummeted to a political-economic nadir soon gave gentrification new legs. By the 1990s the urban environment became increasingly important as forms of neoliberal political and economic policies and practices entrenched themselves so firmly that they became naturalized as proper modes of governance and economic viability. This was true not only in the United States or other Western nation-states, but also across much of the globe (Hackworth, 2007). Mark Purcell (2002) notes that in this era neoliberal governance, “rescaled such that sub- and supranational scales are taking on greater powers” (p. 100). The rise of the local scale of urban governance has followed and/or been prompted by a steady devolution of control from the national scale (Purcell, 2002). This devolution has increasingly meant that cities bear greater responsibility for economic development, social service provision, infrastructure maintenance, and spatial planning (Painter, 1995). These responsibilities have in turn pushed local policy makers to emphasize the maintenance of a locality’s economic competitiveness in order to retain the positive credit rating that allows for the continued borrowing necessary to support these new responsibilities (Harvey, 1989b; Sassen, 1996; Peck, 1998; Purcell, 2002).¹⁹ This emphasis on the local scale has become, “a forceful call to arms through which local (and, in some cases, national) political-economic elites are aggressively attempting to promote economic rejuvenation from below” (Brenner & Theodor, 2002a: p. v). Here, then, local strategies to “place-brand” (Currid, 2007; Greenberg, 2008), or lure the “creative class” (Florida, 2002) oftentimes lead to gentrification – a nostrum for localities ill equipped or unwilling to alleviate disinvested urban areas – while still neglecting questions of equitable social reproduction.

High-technology companies related to the internet industry were seemingly courted by San Francisco officials who recognized this industry’s potential benefit to a city eager to

relations and losing that which is the most important social aspect of gentrification: the local displacement of people from their homes and communities. The rapid economic transformations and population shifts connected to gentrification accentuate social inequalities as already marginalized residents are pushed even further as their former communities are transformed into more expensive residential housing and/or larger entertainments zones characteristic of global cities (Zukin, 1989, 1995). And lastly, while it is of course accurate to say that the concept of gentrification is now global (Clark, 2005), it must be kept in mind that actual gentrification which occurs in, for example, New York City (Smith, 1996), will differ from that found in cities such as Sao Paulo or Rio De Janeiro (Rubino, 2005).

¹⁹ Many North American cities, for example, have utilized a supply-side interventionist rationality wherein the attraction of investment capital into the urban environment has been a persistent goal. This is particularly so for those cities eager to remain economically competitive amidst a complex and complicated global urban hierarchy (Sassen, 1996, 2000).

maintain its economic competitiveness. The city's relaxing of particular policy obligations and the creation of other incentives targeted to recruit and retain this industry also increased the number of "New Economy" workers living and/or working in the city. The result, whether intended or unintended, was the widespread gentrification of large sections of the city. Gentrification, once a "dirty word" (Smith, 1996), has become a favorable mechanism (or forgivable externality) for cities looking to "redevelop" struggling or outmoded areas of the city in order to maintain competitiveness within the global economy (Hackworth & Smith, 2001; Sassen, 2001; Smith, 2002; Blomley, 2004; Davidson & Lees, 2005). Global neoliberalism shifts have allowed localized rounds of gentrification to become durable features of the social landscape as processes linked to gentrification now push their way into city planning and onto local policy agendas as a means to improve neglected central-city locations all across the world (Smith, 2002; Atkinson & Bridge, 2005; Davidson & Lees, 2005; Wyly & Hammel, 2005; Lees et al., 2008). In most cases, these processes carry deleterious effects for the target communities.

Neoliberalism is, of course, a highly contingent process that is felt differently across varying geographies and scales (Swyngedouw, 1997; Brenner & Theodore, 2002a, 2002b; Peck & Tickell, 2002). Despite claims of race and ethnic neutrality, neoliberalism's effect on spatial policies has placed working-class communities, particularly those with a significant population of people of color, at disproportionate disadvantage. And though neoliberalism is an uneven process with varied actual effects across different localities, these particularly vulnerable communities have consistently served as prime testing grounds for the implementation of neoliberal ideals as city governments, fearful of the perception of capital flight, move closer towards functioning as market facilitators (Marcuse & van Kempen, 2000; Jessop, 2002; Kodras, 2002; Purcell, 2002; Peck, 2006; Hackworth, 2007).

As local governance institutions shift to take on greater responsibility for economic development, the secondary circuit of capital, real estate, has played a key role. Cities throughout the advanced capitalist world have utilized real estate, land use policy, and zoning ordinances as powerful vehicles through which to buoy and/or further economic development (Harvey, 1985a, 1985b; Fainstein, 2001; Lefebvre 2003 [1970]; Gottdiener & Hutchinson, 2006). This has especially been the case in those cities where traditional manufacturing and industrial economic engines have given way to the smokeless "thought industries" of finance, insurance, real estate, and tourism. In such cities, lax enforcement of land use controls and a diminution of public investment led to, "gentrified neighborhoods and downtown commercial mega-projects" (Hackworth, 2007: p. 78).

With gentrification moving from a marginal preoccupation of the real estate sector to a preeminent feature of neoliberal urbanism ((Hamnett 1991; Smith, 2002; Blomley, 2004; Wyly & Hammel, 2005; Hackworth, 2007; Lees et. al., 2008), recent scholarship trends have shifted their focus towards possible policy "fixes" in order to systematically retard the deleterious impacts of gentrification. Lance Freeman (2006) in his study of how gentrification affects the lives of existing residents in two transitioning communities – Harlem and Clinton Hill, NY – writes, "If...gentrification is becoming a widespread trend that represents the future of many cities, we should be thinking about how to manage the process to help us achieve more equitable and just society." (p. 186). Freeman's work is an example of the growing number of studies re-engaging with documenting the effects on preexisting residents in transitioning neighborhoods. However, the notion of a potential "policy fix" reconstitutes a line of gentrification research that either sought to corral the often slippery processes of gentrification or to promote the "trickle-

down” benefits of social mixing (Brooks, 2000; Crump, 2002; Florida, 2002; Punter, 2003).²⁰ Whatever the scholarly approach, however, the practicality of promoting social mixing as a policy is questionable at best (Smith, 2002; Rose, 2004; Peck, 2005; Slater, 2006). Such scholarship shifts the focus away from those residents already residing in transitioning communities – the target of both social justice arguments and the necessary participants of any “diversity” scheme – towards the “gentrification habitus” of the middle-class (Butler, 1997; Butler and Robson, 2001, 2003; Bridge, 2006). Given these problems, one must wonder how, exactly, should scholars “manage” the polarizing issue of gentrification? Rather than sequestering gentrification scholarship within policy circles where it can be “managed,” I suggest instead that the entire social process of gentrification be resisted by collectivities of community inhabitants (Hamnett, 1991; van Weesep, 1994; Lees, 1999; Slater, 2001; Blomley, 2004; Lees et al., 2008, Betancur, 2011). This study aims to document such resistance in order to suggest some paths toward a new understanding of what gentrification and its effects are.

Lastly, while those who study gentrification have rightly explored its class dynamics, the questions of race and racialization remain under-theorized within the literature (Alejandrino, 2000; Kennedy & Leonard, 2001; Atkinson, 2003; Kirkland, 2008). In the United States, where gentrification impacts working-class communities of color at rates disproportionate to “white” working class communities, the light treatment that race and racialization receives within the existing literature has been an unfortunate misstep. As Elizabeth Kirkland (2008) writes, “If widely held beliefs are true that the original residents who are most impacted negatively by gentrification are African-American and other people of color, and if displacement is the most drastic consequence to original residents, then a failure to adequately study displacement is tantamount to a failure to adequately study the racial element of gentrification” (Kirkland, 2008: p. 20). In most studies on U.S. forms of gentrification race and racialization lags far behind class as a valuable variable. Where race and racialization are used it is often within a traditional U.S. black-white racial binary.²¹ This, however, is changing as studies documenting the presence and impact of gentrification on a wider range of U.S. racialized communities continue to emerge

²⁰ David Brooks’s Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There (2000), and Richard Florida’s highly popular, The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It’s Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life (2003), are two examples wherein bourgeois bohemians (Bobos) and/or the “creative class” – a “class” that is comprised of professors, artists, entrepreneurs, and the like – are seen as principal targets for those city and regional governments seeking to stay economically competitive amidst an increasingly specialized and global economy. Both Brooks’s “Bobos” and Florida’s “creative class” bear a striking resemblance to gentrification scholar David Ley’s (1980, 1994, 1996) “new middle class” insofar as they shun suburbs in favor of an urbane city complete with a vibrant cultural *mélange*. Ironically, however, this diverse and tolerant class of in-movers often drastically alters those very neighborhoods which initially attracted them to the city.

²¹ Though the black-white paradigm may be central to racialized political thought and practice in the United States, considering other paradigmatic binaries could prove quite intriguing. For instance, while “Blackness” may be a way white Americans have historically denied African American’s access to property ownership (Harris, 1993), the obverse has been true for Indigenous people claiming land and cultural rights. In the prior African American’s have historically been demanded to prove how non-black they are, while in the latter Indigenous people within the United States have been demanded to prove how non-white they are. Where Arab, Asian, and Latina/o bodies are concerned, the specter of the immigrant or foreign-born is an ever present one (Kim, 1999). There is also the potential to open up localized issues such as gentrification to a translocal (i.e. the mechanisms through which a rural-urban relationship influence the other’s built environment and/or sociospatial relations). None of this, however, is to say that the black-white binary should be thrown out entirely. Key interventions have been made by racially diverse social activists using this binary. Here, one remembers many Latina/o activists during the Rodney King episode claiming that they too were “Rodney King” implying that the issues facing African-Americans in Los Angeles, police brutality in this case, also afflict that city’s Latina/o community .

(Alejandrino, 2000; Villa, 2000; Smith, 2002; Dulchin, 2003/2004; Perez, 2004; Atkinson & Bridge, 2005; Bromley & Mackie, 2009; Mirabal, 2009; Rudolph, 2009; Betancur, 2011). This dissertation joins those works that interrogate other fields of racial positions (Kim, 1999) by focusing instead on a particular Latina/o community (Alejandrino, 2000; Villa, 2000; Godfrey, 2004; Perez, 2004; Mirabal, 2009; Betancur, 2011).

This dissertation also engages with that scholarship that incorporates a critical perspective on spatiality for and within social movement activity (della Porta, 1995; Tilly, 2003; Soja, 2010). While the work of such scholars as Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, and Doreen Massey, greatly foreground my general conceptualization of space and society, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter, it is the work of those scholars whose work operates at a different level of abstraction that I will first address. Though not addressing issues of spatial justice specifically, Nancy Mirabal's article, "Geographies of Displacement: Latina/os, Oral History, and The Politics of Gentrification in San Francisco's Mission District" (2009), for example, has proven essential to this dissertation insofar as it uncovers the complex and complicated spatial narratives surrounding race, and spatial identity through a collection of local oral histories that document the ways in which changes to the Mission District have affected the daily lives of its working-class Latina/o residents. Many of these residents, then, understood the racial transformation of the Mission District as inescapably connected to the process of gentrification in their midst. Though not addressing issues of spatial justice specifically, her work does highlight the ranging fields of racial positions that come to bear when examining issues related to space, place, and urban change.

Similar to Mirabal's article, Rebecca Solnit's work, Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism (2000), offers a useful lens through which to see the intrinsic link between place and identity. For Solnit, whose work does not focus exclusively on the Mission District, the loss of art and cultural practices have links to the rise of new capital brought into the city by the dotcom industry and its connected "digerati" (the sobriquet given to the relatively wealthy labor force of the internet and electronic based industries), both of which have helped stimulate the reconstruction of the central city's physical and cultural landscape to the detriment, in Solnit's view, of place and identity.²²

While both Mirabal's and Solnit's work employ interview data to drive their arguments, neither is overly concerned with recounting the story of an organized community response against gentrification. Instead, both are more concerned with the effects of gentrification for particular residents of this global city. There are, however, studies that do focus directly on formal political activity stemming from this local wave of gentrification. Here, for instance, is Richard DeLeon's article, "San Francisco: The Politics of Race, Land Use, and Ideology" (2003), which examines the formal political efforts of those interested in resisting gentrification by supporting a slate of candidates for the open seats on San Francisco's Board of Supervisors during the 2000 election. While studies on formal political involvement are a relevant part of this narrative – as chapter three shows, the 2000 citywide election became a rallying point for groups such as the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition to broaden the scale of their activism by creating cross-solidarity connections with other groups hopeful that a more community responsive Board of Supervisors would address the crisis of gentrification in a greater systemic

²² For a thoughtful read on the role artists play in urban economic development see Rushton, Michael (ed.). Creative Communities: Art Works in Economic Development. Brookings Institution. Washington DC. 2013; Markusen, Anne. "Urban Development and the Politics of a Creative Class: Evidence from A Study of Artists." *Environment and Planning A* 38 (2006): pp. 1921-1940. Print

way – this dissertation concerns itself with informal grassroots organized community efforts aimed at halting immediate displacement. Towards this end I have identified a few works that both address either San Francisco generally, or the Mission District specifically, as a site of gentrification and resistance. Stephen Graham and Simon Guy’s article, “Digital Space Meets Urban Place: Sociotechnologies or Urban Restructuring in Downtown San Francisco” (2002), explores how this urban place has been forcefully appropriated as a strategic site of digital capitalism while coming under intense resistance and contestation from a wide alliance of social movement actors struggling to maintain the city as a site of social and cultural diversity. Brian Godfrey’s article, “Barrio Under Siege: Latino Sense of Place in San Francisco, California” (2004), effectively recounts the late-1990s wave of gentrification that hit the Mission District by foregrounding the question of how space is centrally located in the reproduction and contestation of social relations of power. Similarly, Tom Wetzel’s article, “San Francisco’s Space Wars” (2001), does a fine job of examining some of the causes of gentrification in the Mission District, as well as some of the efforts that arose to resist community displacement.

June Gin and Dorceta Taylor’s recent study, “Movements, Neighborhood Change, and the Media: Newspaper Coverage of Anti-gentrification Activity in the San Francisco Bay Area: 1995-2005” (2010), examines the varying mechanisms that influence the ability of anti-gentrification movements to frame media coverage for their core policy goals, while Christine Selig’s unpublished dissertation, “The Role of Education in Strengthening Social Movements: A Case Study of the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition in San Francisco” (2005), explores popular educational methods used by the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition as they attempted to raise people’s knowledge of complex land-use and zoning issues. Jason Corburn’s book, Toward the Healthy City: People, Places, and the Politics of Urban Planning (2009), discusses the linkages between a holistically healthy city (that is, with healthy economies, societies, and individuals) and the conditions that uneven development produces that militate against such a city: inequitable housing and poor population health due to prolonged exposure to pollutants.

There are also studies that look at gentrification in the Mission District through a land use lens (Leitner et al., 2002). These studies focus on the ways that social movement actors incorporate the use of geographic information systems (GIS) to map their community’s displacement. Still other studies orient themselves toward policy questions and practices. (Alejandrino, 2000; Kennedy & Leonard, 2001). Finally, Amie Fishman’s unpublished Master’s Thesis, “Community Development Corporations’ Strategies Against Gentrification and Displacement: Leading Community Movements in Park Slope, Brooklyn and in the Mission District of San Francisco” (2006), looks at the role non-profit community development corporations play in leading struggle against housing displacement.

Placing Spatial Contestation

Space is more than a simple reflection of human intentionality. Rather it is mutually constitutive of and bound together with the social world (Gregory & Urry, 1985). The intimate relationship between space and the social world implies that social activity is not only the interaction between collections of individuals, but also about the spaces those collected individuals occupy and do not occupy (Castells, 1983; Giddens, 1984; Gregory & Urry, 1985; Soja, 1985; Harvey, 1989a; Massey, 1984, 1992; Gottdiener, 1994 [1985]; Smith, 1996; *inter alia*). Given this intimate relationship, it is unproductive to imagine the one separate from the other. Indeed, as Derek Gregory and John Urry (1985) remind us, “both human geography and sociology emerged in their modern forms in the nineteenth century” (p. 1). And yet, despite this

history, the now common acknowledgement that the spatial and the social imbricate one another was originally resisted by early sociologists and geographers alike, as each group struggled to establish its respective academic discipline (Gregory & Urry, 1985; Marston, 2003). This effort to create rigid disciplinary boundaries meant that the idea that space and social action are mutually constituting and inseparable remained beyond the scope of either discipline. It has only been since the 1980s that the turn towards spatiality and its potential for adding a critical lens to our understanding of social themes has rallied social scientists from across a range of disciplines (Marston, 2003; Leitner et al., 2007).

Initially, as one would imagine, the call for a critical “spatial turn” was proposed by geographers and theorists of uneven social development as they increasingly incorporated a spatial analytic for understanding complex social relations in a rapidly changing world (Holston, 1999; Holston & Appadurai, 1999; Isin, 1996, 2000; Isin & Wood, 1999; Sassen, 2000; Harvey, 2009; Soja, 2010). Derek Gregory and John Urry (1985) illustrate the point when they write,

“These intellectual realignments have been accentuated by a series of wider developments: the emergence of new spatial structures of combined uneven development, particularly through the internationalisation [sic] of production and the restructuring of the spatial division of labour [sic]; the changing structuration and significance of social relations, and the formation of class and non-class social movements, many of which are urban- or regionally-based; transformations in the temporal and spatial organisation [sic] of everyday life, through profound revolutions in transport, communications and micro-electronics; and the heightened powers of states to maintain surveillance over distant and dispersed populations” (p. 3).

And while spatiality steadily infiltrated critical social discourse since the 1980s (Castells, 1983; Giddens, 1984; Soja, 1985; Harvey, 1989a; Lefebvre 1991 [1974]; Merrifield, 1993; Gottdiener, 1994 [1985]; *inter alia*), it has been only recently that social movement scholars have taken the category of space as an important and central variable (Tilly, 2000; Sewell Jr., 2001; Martin & Miller, 2003; Marston, 2003). Though there are descriptive accounts of places (e.g. neighborhoods) in early sociological studies – the work of the famed Chicago School comes to mind – the assertion that spatial be, as William Sewell Jr. (2001) writes, “a constituent aspect of contentious politics that must be conceptualized explicitly and probed systematically” (p. 51-52), appears only episodically in the early scholarship on the subject. Not until the late 1980s and early 1990s, in fact, did space become an important part of the theorizing of the sociology of social movements (Marston, 2003; Leitner et al., 2007). Since then, great strides have been made. Works by scholars such as Manuel Castells (1983), Paul Routledge (1993), Byron Miller (2000), Charles Tilly (2000), and Arturo Escobar (2001, 2008) point towards the growing understanding that spatial perspectives can and do have large impact on a wide range of issues in contentious politics and social movements.²³ Prior to this rising spatial turn, however, it was something of a different matter.

²³ Within Sociology the term “social movement” has been losing traction to the term “contentious politics,” which Charles Tilly (2000) describes as, “episodic, collective interaction among makers of claims and their objects when a) at least one government is a claimant, and object of claims, or a party to the claims, and b) the claims would, if realized, affect the interests of at ones one of those claimants” (p. 137). In response to Tilly’s definition, Leitner et al. (2008) present a definition which they distinguish as less state-centric or interest-oriented than that of Tilly’s.

Early attempts among U.S. sociologists to study social movements (1920s-1950s) privileged the urban built environment as the preferred site. Much of the scholarship produced by early U.S. sociologists was influenced by theories of city life that emphasized its alienating aspects, explaining issues relevant to the urban environment (industrialization, immigration, urbanization, social disorganization, etc.) in either social psychological or social ecological terms. As a result early studies tended to be overdetermined, casting the urban environment as depraved, decaying with an intractable population. These factors combined with the U.S. political fears of the time, fears generated by turn of the century worker unrest, anarchist attacks on public figures, and by the extensive organization within the U.S. of a socialist party, tended to understand social movement and protest activity as wholly irrational responses from an implacable citizenry. After the Russian Revolution, these fears increased markedly, particularly as political change continued to roil the cities.

Change in urban sociology and the scholarship on social movements remained slow across these years. Fears of cities as centers of social unrest only grew as the massive war time (WWII) migration of African Americans from the U.S. South to industrial centers in the North and West combined with the various politics that gradually coalesced into the Cold War (Fainstein & Hirst, 1995). In this later period, many of the classic works on social movements, which incorporated a collective behavior model, mistakenly continued to understand social movement activity as mostly psychological in nature, ignoring the politics of such movements. Social movement scholarship stagnated, largely understood as anomalous, irrational responses to societal stress that arose from individuated states of anomie. Social movements were merely, “spontaneous, unorganized, and unstructured phenomena that were discontinuous with institutional and organization behavior” (Morris, 2000: p. 445).

Popular movements such as the American Civil Rights movement and the Anti-Vietnam War movement helped turn the field. Since then, several changing schools of thought (e.g., resource mobilization theory and political process theory) have come to agree that social movements are indeed political in form and content. This dissertation lies within such work. For my purposes here, the definition of social movements provided by Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani (1999) is apt: “social movements,” they write, “are informal networks [which may or may not include a formal organization], based on shared beliefs and solidarity, which mobilize about conflictual issues, through the frequent use of various forms of protest” (p. 16). Though social movements take on variegated forms, most recent studies of social movements focus on how groups mobilize to challenge inequalities, either in the access to resources or in their position *vis-à-vis* formalized power. In both cases, movements are directed at changing relations of power. While studying social movements and/or social movement activity can allow for myriad scholarly focal points (the role of identity, organizational structure, etc.), this dissertation

Here, they write, “Contentious politics refer to concerted, counter-hegemonic social and political action, in which differently positioned participants come together to challenge dominant systems of authority, in order to promote and enact alternative imaginaries” (Leitner et al., 2008: p. 157). While this definition may expand the scope of what contentious politics may be, I assert that politics by any means is always contentious. As such, yoking “contentious” and “politics” together would seem to be tautological. Though the term “social movement” may be on the wane, I continue to employ it due in large measure to its suggested linkage to mobility. Mobility, I assert, is an essential cog within social movement activity and political struggle. Mobility within social movement activity acknowledges the always changing condition of space-time and suggests the material and metaphorical movability of individuals and objects between and within places. As Steve Pile (1997) writes, “it is no coincidence that communities of resistance are termed movements...The point seems to be that social movements move because they have an origin, a political destination and a path to travel, over an overt public political terrain” (p. 29).

is concerned with the study of movement activity and collective politics that situate space, and place²⁴ as key analytical points. Of the sweeping range of social movement literature that exists, I find the work of scholars such as Manuel Castells (1983), Paul Routledge (1993), Byron Miller (2000), and Arturo Escobar (2001, 2008), each of whom understand spatiality as a critical component to social movement activity, particularly useful.

There is, of course, the work of human geographers who have placed great emphasis on questions regarding socio-spatial relations and structures.²⁵ While the current spatial turn has influenced many social science scholars engaged in the study of social movements and/or change, geographers have taken a lead role. For instance, in his study on contemporary unionism, Andrew Herod (1998) uses the spatiality of social life as a means of better understanding the nature and practice of contemporary unionism for both organized labor and labor historians. David Harvey (2009) and Edward Soja (2010) each incorporate a spatial analysis to their work on social justice, arguing the importance of such an analysis for understanding urban environments. Others, such as Doreen Massey (1992), and Steve Pile (1996), have pointed to the ways in which space is critically bound to acts of resistance.

Of course, all of those who focus on spatiality, a list that includes geographers, anthropologists, historians, political scientists, sociologists, and cultural studies scholars, owe a great deal to the work of French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. Though he wrote prodigiously on topics ranging from the theorization of everyday life to dialectical materialism, Lefebvre's most influential work, particularly in the English-speaking Anglo world, has been The Production of Space (*La Production de l'espace*, originally published in 1974, translated into English from the original French in 1991). Because his work lies at the center of my own analysis of a particular time and place, it is important here to outline the ways in which his work influences this dissertation. While Lefebvre accomplishes many things in his classic text, The Production of Space, his complex understanding of the second circuit of capital – the real estate market which runs parallel to, yet out of synch with, the primary circuit of industrial capital – his analysis of lived spatial categories and the spatial imaginary has proven useful to my own work.²⁶

Lefebvre's analysis of circuits of capital demonstrates how it is possible to use economic categories such as capital investment, profit, rent, class exploitation, and uneven development to argue that the city development process is as much a product of the capitalist system as anything

²⁴ Places are particularly situated and socially constructed spatialities that are imbued with meaning and power. Place helps explain why and how social movements occur where they do, relates to us the form and function of specific social movements (particularities of place will affect social movements variously), and provide the means of understanding movement agency (Routledge, 1993). As such, places, as “terrains of resistance,” (Paul Routledge, 1993) may be comprised of, “an interwoven web of historical, political, cultural, economic, ecological, geographical, social and psychological relationships – a site of contestation among different beliefs, values, and goals that are place-specific” (Routledge, 1993: p. 36). Relatedly then, both the physical expression of a particular place (its built environment) and the historical context of struggle in that place will establish an amalgam of place-specific meanings (sense of place) for social movement actors. These two factors will then shape – among others – social movement actions, assemblages/networks of capacity, and the mobility of social movement activity.

²⁵ Similarly, urban sociologists who recognize that, “urban sociology is a sociology identified with place rather than with a unit of social organization,” have also played a significant role in helping sharpen my understanding on the social and spatial connection (Flannagan, 1993; p. 3). Here, scholars such as Mark Gottdiener (1994 [1985]), and Joe Feagin (1988) urge scholars studying the urban landscape to incorporate a “soicospatial perspective,” an approach that emphasizes the role of culture and urban semiotics, the real estate market, government intervention, and global forces in the urban arena (Gottdiener & Hutchinson, 2006).

²⁶ Henri Lefebvre's body of work has found a very receptive audience amongst social scientists and humanities scholars who think critically and creatively about spatial relations (Martin & Miller, 2003).

else. Within the city, he identifies three different types of socially-produced space – perceived, conceived, and lived – to demonstrate the complexity and interconnectedness of space and the social world.

Perceived space holds the material spaces of daily life where social production and reproduction unfold. This spatial category is loaded with power relations as countless components of social control rest upon the ability to control spaces and social activities. Conceived space gestures towards geographical semiotics as it is tied to “the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relationships impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes” (Lefebvre, 1991: p. 33). Lastly, lived space is the coexistence and interaction of the first two types of space as it is lived through on a daily level. This last category, which is also the most important for this dissertation, is, in effect, the material condition(s) of place. Here, in the material conditions of place, is where Lefebvre sees the mutual constitution of the spatial with the social, and its relationship to collective politics. It is place where everyday life is situated, and which holds the greatest potential for spaces of resistance to emerge and challenge the dominant order and its constructed intentions and meanings of material and symbolic space (Merrifield, 1993).

For Lefebvre, the struggle over place is visible because capital investors and the state, both of which he argues conceptualize space in qualities of dimension – size, width, area, location – and profit (“abstract space”), compete with urban dwellers’ imaginary of place, who understand the spaces of their environment as the place within which their everyday lives unfold (this is Lefebvre’s “social” and/or “concrete space”). The conflict that arises between “abstract” and “social” space is a fundamental one that parallels general class conflict.²⁷ This conflict and its resulting tensions play out in the Mission District as many of its spaces during the 1990s and 2000s morphed into expensive live/work loft spaces, office buildings, and high-priced residential rental units, a transformation that symbolically sealed away vast sections of the district to its preexisting working-class Latina/o population.

Charles Tilly (2000) reminds us that social contestation, “always takes place in humanly occupied spaces, often including the urban built environment (p. 138). Of course these sites of social contestation are always distinct and quite particular as the fields of power that characterize local places are always unequal, distinct, and particular (Routledge, 1993; Sewell Jr., 2001; Stillerman, 2003). The physical and cultural characteristics of each social site will influence greatly the form and tactical repertoires activists employ (Stillerman, 2003). Because each place has its own particularities I, like Deborah Martin and Byron Miller (2003), favor, “case study and comparative case study approaches that facilitate detailed attention to the spatial and historical constitution and context of contentious politics” (p. 145). Towards these ends, this dissertation explores how the repertoires of action used by the membership and constituency base of the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition (MAC) were decidedly spatial as they incorporated what some have termed “free” and/or “safe” spaces²⁸ (McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984; Evans & Boyte,

²⁷ The post-Fordist labor trends that have paralleled the rise of neoliberalism and current globalization have shifted the site of social struggle away from the factory floor and onto city neighborhoods. The rise of workers centers (Fine, 2006), and the growing community-labor alliances, particularly between U.S. immigrant populations and the American labor movement (Voss & Sherman, 2000), further suggest as much.

²⁸ Sarah Evans and Harry Boyte (1986) first incorporate the term “free space” to help explain how otherwise marginalized social movement actors will collectively voice concerns within safe democratic spaces away from repressive outside structural mechanisms. These spaces, they assert, are critical to social action and democratic reform as they are, “the environments in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue. Put simply, free spaces are between

1986; Gamson, 1991, 1996; Couto, 1993; Routledge, 1993; Tarrow, 1998; Polletta, 1999; Tilly, 2000; Sewell, 2001) as well as a “spatial claim-making”²⁹ tactic (Stillerman, 2003; Tilly, 2003).

For MAC, the use of free spaces and spatial claim-making tactics were facets of an overall spatial strategy that coupled a demand for greater accountability and reform from the San Francisco Planning Department with grassroots resistance to gentrification. Both of these points, of course, offer a key for using the anti-displacement movement as a case study through which to examine the critical role that spatiality plays in social movement activity. For that reason this

private lives and large scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity independence and vision” (Evans & Boyte, 1986, p. 17). Since Evans and Boyte’s work, a large collection of sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists, and historians of collective protest/action have incorporated the term in a number of ranging ways. And while each author uses the term distinctively, they all generally deploy the term to suggest that free spaces are, “small scale settings within a community or movement that are removed from the direct control of dominant groups, are voluntarily participated in, and generate the cultural challenge that precedes or accompanies political mobilization” (Polletta, 1999: p. 1). Of those sociologists who study social movements and who have utilized the concept of free space many have attempted to utilize it as a bridging mechanism between social movement models that focus on large institutional sources of change and those models interested in localized challenges to dominant cultural codes (Polletta, 1999). However, because of wide ranging distinctions, and diverse implementation of the concept of free space, a profound level of impreciseness and ambiguity arises. As such, writes Polletta (1999), “many have mistakenly used the concept of free space to make clear distinctions between human intentionality/agency and the “culture” of and within these spaces, in opposition to outside structural relations of power” (p. 4). My intention in using free space is not to enter into a “culture vs. structure” debate. To do so may imply oversimplifying local spatial networks and/or assemblages (Li, 2007; McFarlane, 2009), miscast structural forces as monolithic sites of uniform power outside of – or away from – these free spaces, and only further obscure the interconnections between social relations and spatial structures – a medium through which social relations are produced and reproduced (Foucault, 1980; Gregory & Urry, 1985;). Using free space as a concept implies, “mapping the structural relations in order to better understand the social relations within free space as they pertain to the timing and the form of collective action” (Polletta, 1999: pp. 2-3). Here, Polletta urges us to understand distinctive relations of power, and how space-time informs the type of free space and protest activity that may arise. As such, the geographic concept of place, which I address earlier in this chapter, is key to understanding why social movements occur where they do and the context by which they are expressed. So, while MAC activists utilized “free spaces” – those dynamic interlinked places that shape and are shaped by social relations at varying scales of power, which coincide with a particular historical mode of production (Pile, 1997) – for a range of social movement activity, they did not produce and/or reproduce them outside structural forces of power. Free space exists in spatial structures and within social relations, and respond to the constraints of both place and scale. As such, the concept of free space should also be understood as a mechanism through which to view varying forms of collective oppositional and resistive activity of marginalized groups. This activity, of course, implies that free spaces are not always physical spaces, and that they are highly organized and networked spaces. For a further critique and corrective of the free space concept see Polletta, Francesca. “Free Spaces’ in Collective Action.” *Theory and Society* 28 (1999): pp. 1-38.

²⁹ “Social movements,” write Leitner et al. (2008), “often seek to strategically manipulate, subvert, and resignify places that symbolise [sic] priorities and imaginaries they are contesting; to defend places that stand for their priorities and imaginaries; and to produce new spaces where such visions can be practiced, with that place and beyond” (pp. 161-162). Of course, the place (and its historical connection with political protest) in which these social movement activities are situated in matters considerably. This is particularly so because transgressive spatial claim-making often destabilizes normative spatial routines in particular settings. An example of this is the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition’s building occupation of a local internet firm with a staged “Board members meeting”. Transgressive spatial claim-making often involves the dramatization of public space – parades, marches, boycotts, etc. Of course, these dramatizations of public space will carry different meanings and assemblages of actors given the particularity of place where they occur. In the Mission District, where there is a long historical legacy of political activity, participants in the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition were able to seize their “sense of place” (Routledge, 1993) to piece together a transgressive spatial claim-making strategy that sought to subvert the dominant spatial imaginary with an alter vision of place that was reflective of the local culture and historical legacy of this place.

dissertation focuses on MAC's popular protest period between 1998-2002 – a brief period that coincides with the height of gentrification in San Francisco and the Mission District – wherein actions such as building takeovers, street processions, and the collective voicing of community demands during public meetings with the commissioners and/or officers at San Francisco Planning Commission and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors dramatized space (McAdam, 1983; Routledge, 1993; Tilly, 2000; Stillerman, 2003).

Though this dissertation does not rely on any single social movement theory, it does incorporate many of the points offered by the New Social Movements (NSM) approach which places greater emphasis on issues revolving around the so-called “postmaterial” (Inglehart, 1977; Touraine, 1981; Castells, 1983). In much of the European work on New Social Movements, the principal social category of class has waned in importance as the mode of production in overdeveloped countries of the late capitalist world has radically shifted to one that is transnational and that thus moves capital, labor, and information at a quickened pace that forces the workplace to yield its dominant position as the ultimate site of social conflict (Touraine, 1981; Castells, 1983; Melucci, 1980). Paul Gilroy (1991) argues that within new social movements scholarship, class, in its orthodox definition, “must itself be dispensed with, or at least ruthlessly modernized” as these new movements “rest on their potential for universalizing the issue of emancipation beyond the particularistic interests of industrial workers” (p. 225). While I appreciate Gilroy's elegant attempt to raise a cultural analysis within social movement theory, his call to dispense with class seems to rest on the position that class is structurally determined rather than a socially constructed identity forged through mobilization, a matter which E.P. Thompson (1963) has long since pointed out.³⁰ However, Gilroy's call to ruthlessly modernize the category of class is useful insofar as it indicates that NSM theory can be a productive mechanism by which to decipher postindustrial society where vulgar definitions of class are no longer *a priori* (Kriesi et al., 1995).

There are several key points to the New Social Movement approach, including “an emphasis on cultural identity...the theme of autonomous self-management, and the image of resistance to a systemic logic of commodification and bureaucratization” (Buechler, 2011: p. 163) that are useful for this dissertation. Most of these points orbit around the assertion that these new movements are linked responses to postindustrialism within advanced capitalism and are thus historically specific responses to these conditions wherein old class structures give way to a “new” middle class (Inglehart, 1977). While I do not oppose this idea, I would add that statuses such as race, gender, ethnicity and citizenship also shift the terrain as historically marginalized (socially, politically and economically marginalized) groups enter our U.S. urban areas at greater rates, could further alter trans-local modern politics (Laraña, Johnston, & Gusfield, 1994; Buechler, 1995, 2011; Crossly, 2002). Further, the formal political state, the usual agent for ameliorating grievances, becomes destabilized as NSMs often have multi-scalar goals such as human rights, environmental rights, and gay rights, issues which tend to create a dynamic hold

³⁰ There have, of course, been many who have contended that class struggle occurs in a variety of places that include, but are not exclusive to, the sphere of formal paid labor. Here, the struggles of female unpaid household labor (Dalla Costa & James, 1975), the rise of immigrant communities of color and community worker centers (Voss & Sherman, 2000), and the struggles of racialized working-class communities (Kelly, 1996; Hunter, 1997) are critical components constitutive of class struggle. I argue, in a fashion similar to those scholars mentioned above, that because gentrification overwhelmingly occurs in working-class communities (and disproportionately working-class communities with large populations of people of color within them) it is a concept around which class struggle can manifest itself in the form of an urban social movement in defense of culturally and economically significant livable space.

on democratization processes as they usually enter the terrain of everyday life and the expansion of civil dimensions of society (Klandermans & Oegema, 1987; Gilroy, 1991; Laraña, Johnston, & Gusfield, 1994).³¹

I do agree that there are destabilizing and de-territorializing effects within a neoliberal political-economic system eager to maximize production, money, power, and information. I agree, too, that our current postindustrial society, which has seen organized labor decline in numbers and power, has seen a rise in the relationship between individuals and the local places where they live their lives (Escobar, 2001) as people seek to gain control or self-determination over these space. I do not agree, however, that both the state and class structures have been destabilized to such a degree that they are no longer relevant components for social movement activity or, indeed, scholarly analysis. Instead, I agree with Manuel Castells (1983) who points out that because the city is a social product resulting from the unequal exchange of social interests and values, grassroots urban social movements, such as concern this dissertation, see the state as an important target and will engage in a dialectical struggle with it and other political forces searching to reorganize urban social life. So while socially dominant interests “seek to define urban space in keeping with the goals of capitalist commodification and bureaucratic domination..., grassroots mobilizations and urban social movements seek to defend popular interests, establish political autonomy, and maintain cultural identity” (Buechler, 2011: p. 163). And while class has given way in part to other social identities, class relations remain an essential cog as they exist alongside those social relationships associated with New Social Movements (Buechler, 1995).

The movement to resist gentrification and displacement that occurred from the late 1990s through the early 2000s, a movement which found its most potent expression in the working-class Latina/o Mission District before later radiating out to other San Francisco neighborhoods, expresses three of the major themes (collective consumption, cultural identity, and political self-management) shared by modern urban social movements as outlined by Manuel Castells (1983).³² In the Mission District these three dimensions showed themselves as struggles over the protection of livable space, the culturally and racially relevant form of protest and place-based identity, and efforts to gain greater community control over city planning processes and decision making procedures.

Methodology

This dissertation project grew out of an earlier one. In the final year of my undergraduate career at the University of California, Berkeley, I wrote an honors thesis that asked why and how people involve themselves in social movements. Aware of the rising anti-displacement movement in San Francisco’s Mission District, I reached out to the Mission District non-profit community hoping to use the nascent movement there as the subject of my research. After being given access to three community-based organizations (CBOs) I then began what became a six month project, running from October of 1999 through March of 2000. In that time, I acted as a

³¹ For a good introductory read on New Social Movement theory see Steven Buechler’s article, “New Social Movement Theories.” *The Sociological Quarterly* 36.3 (1995): pp. 441-464.

³² Urban social movements share some key similarities in spite of their clear individual diversity. Some of the similarities include organizing around collective consumption, cultural identity, and political self-management (Buechler, 2011). Collective consumption implies the goods and/or services provided either directly or indirectly by the state; cultural identity rests on the link between cultural identity and place and the defense of both as expressed through the concept of “community”; and political self-management suggests an emphasis on autonomous decision-making (Buechler, 1999, 2011).

participant-observer (PO) at the three different CBOs. I divided my time so that I spent an equal three weeks working at each CBO, averaging nine hours of work per week. In that time I spoke with Spanish-speaking residents, either by telephone or in person, participated in poster painting projects, protest marches, and attended a range of community meetings. Near the end of the project the Executive Director of St. Peter's Housing Committee (SPHC),³³ offered me the position of paid tenant counselor and community organizer. Having thoroughly enjoyed my time there, and liking all of the staff, I agreed, and began working there in May of 2000.

During the 18 months I spent as a paid employee of SPHC, most of the community people coming into our office requesting services were coming in to address an eviction notice (legal or not) that they had received. This, I was told by longer tenured staff members and the Executive Director, was an exceptional time at the organization. Prior to this wave of gentrification eviction cases comprised only a small percentage of an individual tenant counselor's caseload. The overrepresentation of eviction cases we faced as an organization demanded that we begin to understand the issue of gentrification as a systemic problem requiring a systematic, organized response. That response came in two forms; SPHC community organizing (focusing on the creation of tenant unions), and cross-organizational collaboration (linking resources with outside organizations to confront the whole problem).

Also in the year and a half that I worked at St. Peter's Housing Committee, I was able not only to sit in on regular staff and organizing meetings, but also to get directly involved in cross-organizational ventures with staff members from other CBOs such as People Organizing to Demand Economic and Environmental Rights (PODER), Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC), and Mission Agenda. As was the case with SPHC each of these CBOs had a community organizing component; working together, we soon formed the core of what later became the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition (MAC).³⁴ In this same timeframe I was an active participant in MAC related activities which included attending Planning Department public meetings, presenting before the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, walking voting precincts and door-knocking during the 2000 San Francisco general election, conducting outreach to residents of Single Resident Occupancy (SRO) hotels, participating in various street protests and building takeovers, and attending cultural events such as gallery art shows and plays that addressed issues of Mission District gentrification and displacement.

Though I left SPHC as a paid employee for graduate school in the fall of 2001, I remained active in both MAC and SPHC politics as a volunteer. Thus the period that began with my undergraduate honors thesis and which continued through the first year of my graduate career, (October 1999 through May 2002) were those when I was able to engage in participatory action research doing key ethnographic participant observation work as a social justice activist in the anti-displacement and later as an academic researcher studying this movement. In that time I

³³ St. Peter's Housing Committee (SPHC) and the Housing Rights Commission (HRC) are the only tenant advocacy non-profit groups that offer their services in San Francisco's Mission District. While the Housing Rights Commission welcomes all San Francisco tenants equally, and has staff proficient in a variety of languages, St. Peter's Housing Committee strictly advocates for low-income Latina/o tenants (Spanish-speaking or not) living in San Francisco. Due in large measure to SPHC's long established history as a successful advocacy service organization it was able to effectively capture a wide majority of the community's Latina/o and Spanish-speaking residents facing either displacement or rent increases during this time period.

³⁴ The Mission Economic Development Association (MEDA), while not necessarily incorporating a community organizing component to their daily activities, was another core group member. Their participation arose from their understanding that gentrification in the Mission District had destabilizing effects on commercial tenants and property owners.

participated and/or observed organizing strategy sessions, coalition building sessions, and interactions with community and local governmental entities. I also participated in countless arbitration hearings between Spanish-speaking Mission District residents and Mission District property owners before the San Francisco Rent Stabilization and Arbitration Board.

Since that time, I have also done extensive archival work. I read through every issue of both of San Francisco's major newspapers, the San Francisco Chronicle and the San Francisco Examiner. In both, I located and read every article that concerned gentrification and displacement between 1998 and 2002.³⁵ I also read the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, a weekly San Francisco newspaper/magazine, and *El Tecolote*, a bilingual (Spanish and English) neighborhood paper produced bi-weekly, from 1999 through 2000. Though the latter two newspapers covered issues related to gentrification, I chose to use them in order to read as many accounts of San Francisco's highly contentious district elections. Lastly, I read through the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association's (SPUR) newsletter, *The Urbanist*, from 1998-2004. I used this newsletter in order to gather a clear idea of the concerns of pro-development and pro-growth actors. This newsletter proved quite useful in offering opposing perspective on issues related to land use and economic development in San Francisco.

In addition to newspaper archives I also went into the physical archives of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA). I visited the SFRA's website every business day for three weeks, spending 3-4 hours each day sifting through "general" and "master" plans, memos, microfiche, newspaper articles pertaining to directly to the Mission District, published reports and informational brochures. I began in the 1970s and finished in the 1990s. This time period coincides with the period in which the Latina/o population was the dominant group in this neighborhood. This historical work gave me breadth understanding of social activism around property and land use in this area of the city – federally sponsored urban renewal programs such as the Model City program, and the construction of two Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) subway stations in the Mission, two prominent instances where the politics of property proved very contentious, are greatly represented in the archives housed at the SFRA.

In addition to those archived materials housed at the SFRA, I also combed through the digital archive of reports and plans held by the San Francisco Planning Department's official online website. Over the same course of time I read through various reports (e.g., environmental impact reports, socioeconomic profiles), area plans, and reviewed several maps related to land use and zoning in the Mission District.

I also undertook five interviews in the Fall of 2010. Though MAC protocols prevented the identification of an established leadership, I interviewed those individuals whom I identified as having the most influence on both the creation and direction of the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition and its activities. I established this group by counting the number of times the individuals name and/or organizations name appeared in newsprint and roll call for varying

³⁵ Both newspapers covered stories of displacement extensively as it was a hot button political issue that drove sales, a motive that seemed all the more powerful as the two were engaged in a fierce commercial battle with each other. The Hearst Corporation, parent company to the San Francisco Examiner, had been attempting to scuttle the San Francisco Examiner and acquire the San Francisco Chronicle since 1999 (Gin & Taylor, 2010). Though seemingly close to purchase several times, opposition arose from San Francisco Mayor, Willie Brown, District Attorney, Terrance Hallinan, and antitrust lawyers in the United States Justice Department. By 2000 it was discovered through testimony during the antitrust trial that editor and publisher of the San Francisco Examiner, Timothy White, duplicitously offered Mayor Willie Brown, who had long complained about the Examiner's negative coverage of his tenure in the mayor's office, favorable editorials in exchange for the mayor's support of the Hearst Corporation's purchase of the San Francisco Chronicle (Barringer, 2000).

public meetings. This group included the Executive Directors of PODER and SPHC, the lead organizer for MHDC, the lead attorney for MAC, and the Executive Director and founder of the Council of Community Housing Organizations (CCHO). Each interview lasted one hour over the course of three sessions. They were held either at organization offices, or at a local café. Rather than relying on a list of pre-determined questions, I asked general open-ended questions that allowed the respondents to recount their involvement and recollection of the anti-displacement movement. These interviews were rich and eye-opening. I then complicated these memories by comparing them to a variety of press accounts and reports found in many San Francisco department archives, and in personal archives. I concluded by comparing all these narratives with my own participant-observation.

This point in the Mission District's history also produced great amounts of politicized artwork. As such, I also incorporate a cultural analysis derived from ephemera, graffiti art, plays, movies, and songs devoted to, or rising from, this anti-displacement movement. Formal art-spaces, such as those of the Galería de la Raza (24th and Bryant streets in the Mission District) and Theatre Rhinoceros (an LGBTIQ theater space in the Mission District on Valencia Street, between 15th and 16th streets) displayed artwork and staged plays, while community walls and sidewalks became ripe terrain for graffiti art and wheat-pastes.

However, perhaps the richest material I was able to access is the private collection of oral histories held by Professor Nancy Mirabal of San Francisco State University. The César E. Chávez Institute housed at San Francisco State University (SFSU) supported Professor Mirabal and several SFSU students to undertake an impressive oral history examining the impact of gentrification on Latina/o Mission District residents beginning in 1999. Under Professor Mirabal's guidance this project, which went by the project name of "La Misión: Voices of Resistance," bloomed into a rich archive of community residents expressing how gentrification had impacted them. This project allowed a place for marginalized voices to be heard where they may otherwise have gone unheard.³⁶ I was granted access to her archive in the summer of 2005 and spent a total of two weeks sorting through the transcribed narratives of Mission District residents telling stories about how gentrification impacted them. She opened her office and allowed me to work uninterrupted, usually for two hours a day.

Chapter Construction

This dissertation is comprised of five chapters. The above serves as a contextualizing chapter where I foreground both important scholarly influences on the work as well as some of the key arguments this dissertation will make. Chapter two follows the rise of Silicon Valley's electronics industry, particularly the dotcom subcategory of internet related business and the efforts of San Francisco politicians to reshape San Francisco's long established, though less relevant, manufacturing node. The chapter then goes on to chronicle gentrification's spatial narrative of displacement as felt by Mission District residents, and in so doing, will cast a greater focus on gentrification's class and racial components. Chapter three follows the creation of the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition paying close attention to the early leadership group used "free spaces" during its formation. Chapter four charts the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition's use of spatial claim-making and/or transgressions (Cresswell, 1996) – public demonstrations and aesthetic interventions – throughout its most popular period (1999-2000). Intrinsicly bound to MAC during this period was a popular "spatial consciousness" (Soja,

³⁶ As mentioned above, in 2009 she wrote a wonderful article on place, race, and displacement wherein she beautifully weaves these rich oral histories to produce an elegantly written article.

2010) and analysis that saw the social production of space as more than epiphenomenal. The spatial problematic that gentrification and displacement open signal a point where its analysis becomes germane to issues of class, race, and struggle. Chapter five, the conclusion, recaptures the dissertation's main arguments and closes with a gesture toward a new direction. In an ironic twist, one of the unforeseen outcomes of this round of gentrification and displacement has been a new "super-gentrification" (Lees, 2003) wherein new arriving, wealthier gentrifiers are now displacing some of the original gentrifiers. This "super-gentrification" is part of San Francisco's continued transformation and a hallmark of the change metropolises throughout the developed world are undergoing as leisure and tourism become increasingly important economic engines.

Chapter Two:

There's a Different Mix of People Coming in Now

From the late 1990s through the mid-2000s no issue gripped San Franciscans more than that of the availability and cost of livable space.³⁷ In the early 1990s, San Francisco's real estate market, which had been proceeding in fits and starts since the mid-1970s, began to run apace as a rising number of multimedia companies, mostly transplants from nearby Silicon Valley, entered San Francisco's Eastern Neighborhood Zone.³⁸ Though these industries located themselves throughout this portion of the city, they were particularly clustered in and around the South of Market neighborhood (Zook, 2005), a notoriously working-class and disinvested district of the city. The success of these early multimedia firms set into motion a whole range of activities which included efforts by San Francisco public officials to incentivize this rising industry to take residence within its city limits, attempts by building developers to manipulate local land use policy in an effort to build development projects targeting this rising industry, and the work of local real estate firms to engage in speculative real estate acts. All of these combined would contribute to massive amounts of residential and commercial displacement in the working-class communities of San Francisco's Eastern Neighborhood Zone in just a few short years after these initial multimedia firms emerged in the city.

This initial wave of in-movers, however, was miniscule in comparison to the larger wave of Silicon Valley "digerati"³⁹ that entered San Francisco during the mid-1990s. Where those firms who came in during the late 1980s found themselves clustered in the affordable and

³⁷ June Gin and Dorceta Taylor (2010) concluded that of the 156 total news articles produced by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, and *San Francisco Business Times* between 1995 and 2005 that covered San Francisco's anti-displacement movement, 96 (61.5 percent) mentioned affordable housing. See Gin & Taylor (2010), page 96, Table 2. The authors note that while their concerns lie in the portrayal of movement frames in the local mainstream newspapers mentioned, issues such as displacement, gentrification, livable and affordable space came up in several of the articles studied while making no reference to an organized movement. My own reading through newspaper articles suggest similar findings, though the community newspaper, *El Tecolote*, which Gin & Taylor do not account for, had a higher representation of articles that focused on displacement or the anti-displacement movement.

³⁸ The Eastern Neighborhoods Zone encompasses most of the city's historic light-industrial and manufacturing zones. It sits on the eastern side of the city bordered on the north by Market Street, the west by Guerrero Street, the south by Cesar Chavez Street, and the east by the San Francisco Bay. It encompasses six whole neighborhoods: South of Market, Mission District, Showplace Square, Potrero Hill, Mission Bay, and Central Waterfront. The Eastern Neighborhoods Zone represents 7 percent of San Francisco's forty-seven square miles of land. Eastern neighborhoods such as the Mission District have had a well-established history of manufacturing and light-industrial activity dating as far back as the 1860s, when railroad lines were laid throughout the NEMIZ along Harrison Street connecting San Francisco to San Jose as well as to the wharf along Mission Creek (Godfrey, 1988; Walker, 2004). A proliferation of tanneries, textile mills, foundries, breweries, and a vast network of warehouses surrounding Harrison Street quickly added to the industrial bustle of the area. As the waterfront was later filled in, the area's industrial development further extended itself. By the 1890s, men and women found employment in places like the Hills Bros coffee processing plant along the Embarcadero, Levi's garment shop on Valencia and 14th Street and cigarette packing companies in the nearby South of Market neighborhood (Walker, 2004). Accordingly, a thriving community of workers quickly emerged in the area.

³⁹ "Digerati," a combination of the words "digital" and "literati," first appeared in a May (21) 1995 Paul Keegan New York Times Magazine article titled, "The Digerati!" where the author describes those key influential people in the high-tech field of digital information. Since then the term has expanded to include not only the highly influential, but most of the professional people who make up the workforce related to the internet industry. See Keegan, Paul. "The Digerati!" *The New York Times Magazine* 21 May 1995: 38-44.

abundant formal commercial spaces in the SoMa neighborhood, the later wave of incoming firms found a tougher real estate market. The competitive commercial real estate market in San Francisco's Downtown and the South of Market areas – along with other variables that I will address later in this chapter – resulted in their looking elsewhere for appropriate space. This search overwhelmingly led these incoming internet firms to locate in the relatively affordable and available spaces of the Northeast Mission Industrial Zone (NEMIZ).⁴⁰ Businesses and residents located in the NEMIZ were the first to feel the pressure of land speculation and displacement as building developers and real estate speculators clamored to get in on the construction boom created by the uptrend of Silicon Valley workers and internet startup companies locating in this area of the city. The hurried pace of new live/work lofts and office development construction – luxury condominium construction came later – proved too much for the NEMIZ as the powerful forces that first transmogrified this small industrial portion of the Mission District soon spilled over into the greater commercial and residential spaces of the district.

Soon the NEMIZ was overwhelmed and the forces of gentrification breached the NEMIZ in the late 1990s, running through the greater parts of the Mission District. The displacement wrought by this wave of gentrification from the late 1990s to early 2000s seemed totalizing to the largely working-class Latina/o residents of the Mission District. Residents saw many community based organizations, dozens of small commercial businesses and community serving businesses, and countless residents displaced from the Mission District in what seemed like a flash flood.⁴¹ What was left behind for many of the pre-existing Latina/o working-class residents was a place that felt perceptively different and increasingly alien to them.

This chapter tells the story of gentrification in San Francisco's Mission District by following the rise of Silicon Valley's electronics industry, particularly the dotcom subcategory of internet related business, and the efforts of San Francisco politicians to reshape San Francisco's long established, though "less relevant," manufacturing node.⁴² By doing so, this chapter will demonstrate the relationship between local gentrification and deindustrialization to global neoliberal processes related to the shifting structure of the international economy from production to services (Curran, 2004; Hamnett, 2008). This connection will be largely made by focusing on the conversion of old industrial and/or manufacturing spaces to luxury residential and office space in the Northeast Mission Industrial Zone. This conversion of land use and real property not only displaces current industrial and/or manufacturing spaces, but also any future

⁴⁰ The NEMIZ lies immediately southeast of both Downtown and the South of Market area. Its borders are marked on the north by the Central Freeway, the east by Potrero Avenue, the west by Folsom Street, with 20th Street marking its southern boundary. The NEMIZ also has a "tail" that extends south along Harrison Street before turning to the west along 23 Street. Approximately 75 percent of the NEMIZ is zoned 'M-1' (Light Industrial) with the remainder being divided between 'C-M' (Heavy Commercial) and a scattering of residential zoned areas. See San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association Calendar Newsletter, "NEMIZ – Land-use Stalemate" Report 330, June 1995: p. 1.

⁴¹ Many of the community residents and activists I spoke with often invoked metaphors usually related to natural disasters. For them, "rapidly rising water", "waves crashing", the "sweeping away" action of fast moving water currents, or a "perfect storm" captured the feel of gentrification in the Mission District during this time.

⁴² The discourses of globalization and neoliberalism present a narrative of obsolescence. Here, a city's industrial spaces and its industrial/manufacturing workforce are seen as outmoded and outside any economic feasibility in our postindustrial society (Hamnett, 2008). This shared marginalized position allows for "the economic rationale for the removal of certain people and uses from urban space" (Curran, 2004: p. 1245). As I will show later in this chapter, the narrative of abandoned and emptied industrial landscapes and the absence of gainful employment is highly dubious.

ones that may have come to bear. Gentrification, then, is one of the processes through which changes in the global economy become felt and spatialized at the local scale (Curran, 2004; Hamnett, 2008). In that latter instance, this chapter ends by chronicling gentrification's spatial narrative of displacement as felt by Mission District residents, and in so doing will cast a greater focus on gentrification's class and racial components.⁴³

Santa Clara Valley Version 2.0

The Santa Clara Valley used to be famous for its vast agricultural bounty. Fruit and vegetable orchards spread far and wide. The raw material produced in the valley would be harvested packed onto railcars that were bound sent some sixty miles north to San Francisco's Eastern Neighborhoods.⁴⁴ Here, this bounty of raw materials would be refined, canned then shipped to places abroad. Today, the rural agricultural economy that once earned the Santa Clara Valley the sobriquet "Valley of the Heart's Desire" is all but gone, and the San Francisco manufacturing areas which received, refined, and shipped this bounty, has equally fallen out of fashion.⁴⁵

Today, Santa Clara Valley is more famous for high-tech research and development than it is for apricots and walnuts (Markoff, 2009). The dropping of the long held appellation "Valley of the Heart's Desire" for "Silicon Valley" is symbolic of the change in the region's economic interests, which in the 1990s pushed the Bay Area and U.S. economies to greater heights.⁴⁶

In the 1990s, high-tech and computing brought a U.S. economy that had been in the doldrums since the 1987 stock market crash into swift recovery. High-tech industries, which represented 8 percent of the gross domestic product, "accounted for no less than one-third of the U.S. economic growth in the second half of the decade" (Walker, 2006: p. 123). The combination of the Bay Area's remarkably dense wiring and equally remarkable concentration of internet users propelled this region of the world to become the "heartland of the World Wide Web as it became commercially operational" (Walker, 2006: p. 122).

That, however, is not the end of the story. The mythology of the Bay Area and the New Economy in this era, according to Richard Walker (2006), rivaled that of California's 1840s Gold Rush when word swiftly spread globally about the easily available riches in California's goldfields. Rather than tapping mineral deposits, however, venture capitalists and investors, both

⁴³ In San Francisco's Mission District the expendability of these workspaces and this workforce took on a markedly racialized blush as the workers who comprise the largest percentage of those employed in the NEMIZ are Latina/o, many of whom were also Mission District residents.

⁴⁴ The movement of goods was, of course, neither unidirectional nor restricted to overland travel. The piers along Mission Bay, the easternmost part of the Eastern Neighborhoods, were a thriving transshipping area. Goods were loaded onto boats before embarking for places as near as the Santa Clara, or as distant as Sacramento. Flat bottom schooners loaded with hay, timber, salt, etc. were once common on the Bay's waters.

⁴⁵ Global restructuring in the 1970s dramatically altered the Eastern Neighborhoods Zone. In this era many of the large manufacturing firms located in the NEMIZ shutdown their operations. These gradual shutdowns had the result of casting communities like the South of Market and the Mission District, two areas once dependent on local large manufacturers for employment, into protracted bouts of disinvestment and neglect.

⁴⁶ Writing about the far-reaching impact of the San Francisco Bay Area economy in the 1990s, Richard Walker (2006) asserts, "The Bay Area's economic strength and innovative energy was the solid base on which the hyperbole of the New Economy, American revival, and dot-com dottiness were constructed. It was Ground Zero of the New Economy" (p.122). A great deal of this upwell of economic activity finds its historical roots at Stanford University's Industrial Park. Established in 1951, this "industrial park" was intended to serve as a conduit between local high-technology businesses – e.g. Hewlett Packard, General Electric, Lockheed and IBM – and the University. This initial cooperative link has led to one of the densest spatial concentrations of high-tech industries and wealth in the United States (Tajnaj, 1996).

of which played a key role in the creation of the San Francisco Bay Area (San Francisco and the Silicon Valley particularly) into a dense geography of internet related industries, were mining for the next big internet sensation (Florida & Kenney, 1988; Perkins & Perkins, 2001; Zook, 2002, 2005; Walker, 2006).⁴⁷ Success stories about companies such as Yahoo, Amazon and Ebay kindled wild dreams of instant riches to be found in the virtual mines of the high-tech and internet fields (Perkins & Perkins, 2001). Venture capitalists in the San Francisco Bay Area began using their tacit knowledge to find, select and fund the next internet sensation (Zook, 2002).⁴⁸ In the years between 1995 and 2000, the amount of venture capital invested throughout the United States had jumped 1,300 percent (Zook, 2005). During this five-year period, 80.4 percent of all investment dollars went to the top 15 U.S. metropolitan areas, with the San Francisco Bay Area comprising 32.3 percent of this 80.4 percent – the Boston area came in second, capturing 8.2 percent (Zook, 2005). The greatest intensity of this investment came during the eighteen months between July 1999 and December 2000 – a period that coincides with the height of the dotcom bubble and an exceptionally strong round of gentrification that hit San Francisco’s Mission District. Matthew Zook (2005) points out that, “during the 18 months from July 1999 to December 2000, more venture capital was invested than in the previous 30 years” (p. 53). The lion’s share of these investment funds went to internet related companies (Zook, 2005) as venture capitalists were commenting on how the high-tech boom was “the largest legal creation of wealth in the history of the planet” (Walker, 2006: p. 124). This “legal creation of wealth” resulted in the San Francisco Bay Area overtaking both New York and Los Angeles on the Forbes Fortune 400 list of premier places to find the super-rich.⁴⁹

As the explosion of the super-rich expanded, so did the numbers of those employed in internet related industries. From 1992 to 2000 Silicon Valley high-tech companies created in excess of 275,000 new jobs, many of which were highly paid professional and managerial positions occupied by young computer and technology workers (Corburn, 2009). This younger set of New Economy workers, loaded with disposable income and thirsty for the “big city” cultural milieu that Silicon Valley suburbs like Mountain View, Palo Alto, and Sunnyvale could not provide, overwhelmingly chose to live in the vibrant urban culture of San Francisco over that

⁴⁷ As Harvey Molotch (1996) and Allen Scott (1996) both show through their separate studies of Los Angeles, businesses tend to locate themselves in close vicinity to each other in order to maximize their access to a particular local workforce and to generate greater business synergies. Much the way interactive media companies first clustered around San Francisco’s South of Market area, a former redoubt of the city’s industrial working-class population, so too did internet related industries cluster in the Northeast Mission Industrial Zone.

⁴⁸ The buildup of financial capital in the Silicon Valley area had been set in motion since as early as the 1960s, when the founders of Intel had set aside special funds for new start-up companies. By the 1990s the firm’s managing these large amounts of capital had grown in sophistication, and were increasingly networked to the larger financial giants of New York and Europe (Walker, 2004). A 2003 San Francisco Chronicle article asserts that the four-decade long tradition of venture capital in the Silicon Valley made way to a mature industry which, with the initial public offering (IPO) stock boom of the 1990s, has grown quite robust. The number of venture capital firms “grew 37 percent to 840 in 2000 from 612 in 1998, according to the National Venture Capital Association. During that time, the number of venture capitalists grew 36 percent, to 8,148 from 5,998” (Shinal, 2003: 11). The rapid growth of this sector of the finance industry can be directly attributed to the amazing returns some IPOs were offering their financiers, in some cases more than 200 percent annually (Shinal, 2003). By 2000, venture capital investment in the United States rose from US\$30 billion in 1998, to US\$100 billion, with nearly one third of that being funneled into the Bay Area (Zook, 2002, 2005)

⁴⁹ In 2001 the Bay Area had forty-three representatives compared to New York’s thirty-eight. Twenty-one of those super-rich came from San Francisco, with the remainder largely concentrated in the Silicon Valley area where they had ties to the local high-tech industry (Walker, 2006).

of the San Jose metropolitan area. So, even as Silicon Valley's star was ascending, San Francisco remained the headlining attraction.

In choosing to live in San Francisco, workers from internet related business firms (elsewhere referred to as "dotcom" workers) became the inadvertent physical and cultural embodiment of a global economic system that set off a round of pronounced avarice, which drove land-speculation, gentrification and displacement roughshod throughout San Francisco during the mid-1990s and much of the first decade of the 2000s. Perhaps these dotcom workers would not have been so vilified had they entered the city with some semblance of even distribution. Had they spread their impact more evenly throughout San Francisco, maybe then the impact of their arrival would not have been so jarring. The reality of the situation, however, is that they disproportionately moved into the working-class and former manufacturing areas of San Francisco's Eastern Neighborhoods, and in particular the South of Market and the Mission District neighborhoods.

Like earlier era industrial workers of the NEMIZ who found it beneficial to live nearby their places of employment, so too did the workers of the New Economy. Many found the close proximity to a network of already existing high-tech workers, a proximity that would make collaboration and a free exchange of ideas quite facile to be very desirable qualities. As one San Francisco Chronicle article mentions, "[Dot-coms] crave the cachet of The City, its potential for networking and its proximity to the high-tech mother ship of Silicon Valley and clients of the wired world" (Seligman, 2000: A6).

There are also, to return to cultural and aesthetic tastes, other reasons to desire to live in the NEMIZ. Since New York's loft explosion of the late 1970s "industrial chic" design and gritty, but not too gritty, street scenes have been all the rage. Brick and timber warehouse and industrial buildings were converted to uphold the "character" and "charm" of earlier era industrial activity, while being apportioned with the latest in high-end appliances and modern technology (Zukin 1987, 1989). By the early 2000s living in the Eastern Neighborhood Zone, particularly in the NEMIZ, had become an example of class habitus par excellence as, "The Midas-rich venture capitalists, sleepless entrepreneurs, and trendy-hipster-brainy kids who populate the new digital-network industries have decided among themselves that San Francisco, and especially San Francisco's old, southeastern industrial region, is the only place to be" (Smith, 2000: p. 22).

But there is more to the story than individual capriciousness, as I will demonstrate in the proceeding section. There is also the guiding hand of San Francisco's business elite who have tried time and again to remake this part of the city, an area once famous for radical worker politics and non-conformist racial and ethnic communities (Wirt, 1974; Mollenkopf, 1983; Godfrey, 1988; Nelson, 1995; Carlsson, 1998; Hartman, 2002; Logan & Molotch, 2007) into an extension of the formal Downtown district.

No Reason to Exist

Since the mid-1940s, The Bay Area Council (BAC)⁵⁰ has worked closely with entities such as the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee (B-Z Committee),⁵¹ and local powerbrokers such as

⁵⁰ The Bay Regional Council (BRC), as it was originally called before changing its name to the Bay Area Council, emerged in 1945. Originally the BRC organized itself around those corporations and financial institutions that dominated the U.S. West's economy – Bank of America, American Trust Company, U.S. Steel, Standard Oil of California, Pacific Gas & Electric, and the Bechtel Corporation (Hartman, 2002). As the BRC evolved into the BAC it continued to act as, "an important force in creating an environment amenable to big business in the Bay Area"

Walter Shorenstein, Ben Swig and the San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal Association (SPUR),⁵² to ensure that the expansion of San Francisco's downtown central business district – an expansion that would concentrate all manner of business services into one central location – would result in the city's ascension as the regional, national, and international service center of the rising global economy (Hartman, 2002). This vision hinged, in no small part, on the concentration and centralization of white-collar business workers from around the Bay Area into San Francisco's downtown district. The mechanism that would bring these workers into San Francisco's downtown would be the Bay Area Rapid Transit System (BART) (Wolfe, 1973).

The BAC began planning for BART in 1946 and contrary to the claims that it was chiefly undertaken to ease automobile congestion on local freeways and bridges, the BART system functioned in great part as a direct means by which to quickly transport white-collar workers from emerging local suburban areas to work in downtown San Francisco offices, and attract tourists and shoppers into large downtown hotels and department stores (Whitt, 1982; Self, 2003). As BART rail lines and stations were green-lighted, San Francisco's downtown construction dramatically shot up. In the span of twenty-one years, from 1960 through 1981, San Francisco added thirty million square feet of office space concentrated mostly in the Downtown area (Castells, 1983). This growth is remarkable when weighed against the fact that from 1930 to 1958, only “one major office building was constructed in San Francisco, and the city's first modern high-rise, the Crown-Zellerbach building on Market Street, was built in 1959” (Hartman, 2002: p. 289). Summoning the zeitgeist of San Francisco's boom in downtown development, the Downtown Association of San Francisco (DASF) wrote in its 1969 report, “Now on a threshold of a new decade – the BART era – DASF reaffirms its determination to lend leadership to every progressive plan for the improvement of transportation facilities. The Association has never lost sight of the fact that the lifeblood of the city is the constant flow of commuters, visitors and

(Hartman, 2002, p. 6). Towards this end, the BAC drafted reports and studies outlining the most “rational” locations to develop new transit and transportation routes, and location surveys that would help to distribute the functions of the Bay Area into specialized nodal points. Due in great part to the BAC's work, the East Bay became the concentrated quadrant for heavier industry and the region's transportation hub, while the Peninsula and the South Bay were established as a light-industrial, high-tech research and development site (Hartman, 2002). For a greater analysis on early regional planning in the San Francisco Bay Area see Jones, Victor. “Bay Area Regionalism.” University of California Institute of Governmental Studies. Berkeley, CA: 1972.

⁵¹ The Blyth-Zellerbach Committee (B-Z Committee), formed in 1956, was a committee of eleven Bay Area power brokers. A great majority of these eleven B-Z Committee members were also members of the BAC (Hartman, 2002). The B-Z Committee gets its name from two of its members: Charles Blyth, a prominent stockholder and director of Hewlett-Packard, the Crown-Zellerbach Corporation and the Stanford Research Institute; and J.D. Zellerbach, pulp and paper magnate. The prior of these two men would play a significant role in contributing to the early foundation of Silicon Valley as a vital aerospace and research and design node. This foundation was key when in the 1960s, the U.S. Department of Defense's Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA) launched its network (ARPANET) – the progenitor to what would become the global internet – to network those original fifteen U.S. universities – Stanford University's Stanford Research Institute (SRI), the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) and the University of Utah were the original four west coast nodes – working on computer science, and research and development projects for the Department of Defense (Zook, 2005). For an illuminating study on San Francisco's power elite see Wirt, Frederick M. *Power in the City: Decision Making in San Francisco*. University of California Press. Berkeley, CA: 1974. For a fine study on the early internet see Abbate, Janet. *Inventing the Internet*. MIT Press. Cambridge, MA: 2000. Matthew Zook's *The Geography of the Internet Industry: Venture Capital, Dot-coms, and Local Knowledge* (2005) is a superb study demonstrating the power the internet industry has had in driving the economic development of particular U.S. regions.

⁵² SPUR would later drop “Renewal” for “Research” after the political hot stove that urban renewal had become by the 1970s.

tourists to our places of business, our stores, theaters, restaurants and hotels” (p. 2).⁵³ The four BART stations constructed below Market Street in San Francisco’s Downtown district (1962-1974) brought in great numbers of suburban office workers, shoppers, and tourists into the city. This had the discernable effect of altering San Francisco’s labor market. From 1960 through 1970 employment in services increased by 28.4 percent, and by 31.9 percent in finance, insurance, and real estate; while simultaneously decreasing by 15.7 percent in blue-collar jobs (Castells, 1983: p. 99). By the mid-1970s only New York City outpaced San Francisco as a center of international commerce and banking amongst U.S. cities (Cohen, 1981). As San Francisco grew into a global city local power brokers set their sights on the underdeveloped area of San Francisco’s Eastern Neighborhoods.⁵⁴ This 220 acre tract of land, which sat just a stone’s throw away from the northern side of Market Street, represented the obvious location into which to continue San Francisco’s march as “the center for administration, finance, consulting, and entertainment” (Hartman, 2002: p. 7). Institutional property owners like Walter Shorenstein had nothing to lose and everything to gain if they could transfer their development rights just across Market Street. Contemporary San Francisco institutional property owners such as Walter Shorenstein tended to cluster around those real estate opportunities that were connected to professional and technical employment, high-income and younger populations and areas where new infrastructure provides the potential room for further future development (Shilton & Stanley, 1996). As such, the physical development of the Eastern Neighborhoods would represent “a veritable second downtown of 25 to 30 slender, tapering neo-historical office buildings and tourist hotels, concentrated mostly South of Market Street and scattered toward the Civic Center” (Hartman, 2002: p. 301).

It Was Happening Totally Invisibly

⁵³ The concentration of four BART subway stations in the downtown area continues to reinforce the importance of this commuter rail line for San Francisco’s business and commercial interests. While the early return on the construction of the Embarcadero station (the first station in the city as one enters from the Eastern side of the Bay) was the destabilization of the working-class strongholds along the waterfront, it currently acts as a tourist zone and prime location for high-end condominium living; the Montgomery Street station, is located in the financial district of the downtown area; the Powell Street station lies at the heart of downtown’s shopping (high-end and boutique) and adjacent tourist stalwart Union Square; while the Civic Center station is in the part of downtown where civic offices and concert halls can be found. Downtown Association of San Francisco. “From Any Angle, San Francisco is DOWNTOWN: The 1969 Report of the Downtown Association.” 1969: p. 2. From the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency archives. Box CRA-65.

⁵⁴ As footnote seven points out, by 1945 the San Francisco Commission published a report identifying areas found in the Eastern Neighborhoods as being in steep decline, easily classifying them as blighted. By 1960, an emerging overseas Asian market, a growing need for the production of war materiel for the U.S.-Vietnam War that outpaced San Francisco’s old finger pier port system, and greater turn towards automation occurring throughout the industrial world all combined to push the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) into an agreement with the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) that would modernize and mechanize shipping and transshipping along San Francisco’s waterfront. The initial ILWU-PMA 1960 Modernization and Mechanization Agreement (M&M Agreement) not only severely undercut the need for longshoring labor, but it also signaled the end of the usefulness of the built-up network of warehouse and light-industrial space that littered the South of Market and Mission District neighborhoods. By the 1970s large shipping interests had all but abandoned San Francisco, moving east to Oakland’s new modern container port (Self, 2003). This final move, according to affordable housing activist and Executive Director of San Francisco’s Council of Community Housing Organization’s (CCHO) Calvin Welch, “essentially frees up the entire eastern side of San Francisco for transformation, [which] has no reason to exist, in its old form.” (Personal interview, October 2010).

As powerful local forces were maneuvering for ways to expand San Francisco's downtown into the adjacent Eastern Neighborhoods zone, marginalized and politically weak communities and residents fought against their displacement (Hartman, 1984a, 1984b). San Francisco artists presented one such oppositional group. Once concentrated in the North Beach neighborhood of San Francisco, artists of varying stripes were displaced as redevelopment projects in the 1950s reshaped the area's landscape (Godfrey, 1988). In search of available and affordable space that would allow them to continue their artistic endeavors many migrated to areas of the city such as the Western Addition, the Northeast Mission, and the South of Market, each of which had a fair amount of largely unused, often run-down, warehouse space that could be utilized as studio-space.

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s artists from all over the United States, including San Francisco, took over out of use outmoded industrial buildings for use as both living and working spaces (Susser, 1982). In San Francisco, the buildings that artists tended to appropriate had a rather murky relationship with formal building codes as they were neither exclusively housing nor commercial spaces. This ambiguous status made it nearly impossible to enforce any sort of legal standard upon them. Making matters more complex, many of these buildings were in varying states of neglect and in need of repair. For those artists who did occupy these spaces, obtaining capital to do the necessary repairs on an undefined building proved difficult as traditional financial institutions were wary of loaning money for a structure not formally listed as residential property. However, should a San Francisco artist have been fortunate enough to secure financing it would often prove fruitless as it became increasingly complicated to get any type of building permit to do the necessary work on these structures due to unclear building codes. Exacerbating the constricting position artists were enmeshed in, city districts such as the Western Addition, the Mission District, and the South of Market, where these warehouse spaces were located, were squarely in the crosshairs of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's push towards urban renewal. In 1973, the Western Addition's Goodman Building, located at the corner of Geary Boulevard and Franklin Street, received the dreaded blighted designation, and an eviction notice was posted on the front door mandating that the largely artist residents vacate the building to make way for its demolition.⁵⁵

Because the art community, at least in large cities, maintains a sufficient level of networking (Becker, 1982), it came as no surprise that San Francisco artists, keenly aware of the recent victories of artists in New York City's South of Houston Street (SoHo) area, began to organize against their own displacement. From 1973-1983 artist and activist members of the resulting Goodman Development Corporation (GoodCo) waged a noble struggle against the city in defense of their studio and living spaces. The outgrowth of the struggle by artists to resist their eviction from the Goodman Building, as well the agitation work from the greater San Francisco artist community, was the creation of a San Francisco "live/work" ordinance (1988), a special planning provision that blended residential, industrial and commercial building codes. While the new ordinance allowed for the opportunity to legally have studios and workshops in the same space where artists lived, "legalizing a practice found in places like the South of Market, where artists, photographers, graphic designers and various other light-industrial artisans lived in old

⁵⁵ The Goodman Building, now a National Historic Landmark, sits along Geary Boulevard. Geary Boulevard was expanded by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency as part of its larger efforts to redevelop the Western Addition. This redevelopment project displaced an existing African-American, Japanese and Japanese-American community in the 1960s. The irony of a designated landmark once slated to be demolished situated among one of the major displacing projects undertaken by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency should not be lost.

warehouses where they also had their studios and workshops” (Parker & Pascual, 2002: p. 57), defining and regulating live/work remained hazy.

This special ordinance, which granted full right to either renovate existing warehouses and/or industrial structures, or to create entirely new units in areas of the city zoned for industry, was relatively successful in its shortsighted goal of maintaining a community of artists in San Francisco. The murkiness of the live/work ordinance, however, also allowed live/work development projects to avoid a whole host of zoning restrictions. Property owners and building developers later exploited the murkiness of live/work buildings, using it as a means by which to get around San Francisco’s notoriously stringent housing policies.⁵⁶

Building developers took advantage of the cheap land available in the Eastern Neighborhoods Zone disproportionately locating their projects there despite the fact that the city had, “a supply of almost vacant or under-utilized land that is not zoned for industrial use which could accommodate...60,000 potential housing units under existing zoning.”⁵⁷ These developers began raising money at rapid speeds turning themselves into real estate investment trusts (REITs), a maneuver that allowed building developers to offer their projects as initial public offerings (IPOs). REITs were able to build quickly a reserve of money and capital with which to mortgage these types of investment projects (Glasscock et al., 1998). The Bay Area’s booming real estate market soon established itself as fertile investment territory and quickly developed as one of the largest centers of REITs in the country (Shilton et. al., 1996; Walker, 2006). As building developers found creative means through which to finance their development projects the pace of live/work construction rose.⁵⁸ By 2000, San Francisco building developers had constructed 2,324 new live/work units, 540 of which were in the NEMIZ area of the Mission District (Sward, 2000; Mission Anti-displacement Coalition, 2001; Bay Area Economics, 2002).⁵⁹

Many of these projects were pushed along through the planning process in rather specious ways. As Sue Hestor, notable San Francisco land use attorney, longtime slow-growth advocate, and former member of the Coalition for Jobs Arts and Housing (CJAH),⁶⁰ points out,

⁵⁶ For example, live/work units were exempt from having to meet access needs for people with disabilities, and paid a much lower one-time fee for city public schools.

⁵⁷ San Francisco Planning Commission, Resolution No. 14861, 1999.

⁵⁸ The initial rash of live/work units were converted from older industrial buildings (warehouses, former manufacturing facilities, etc.). This initial trend, however, was short-lived. A 2002 audit of the San Francisco Planning Department by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst Office, an office that provides independent fiscal and policy analyses, and special studies and management audit reports on San Francisco departments and programs to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, found that by 2000, nearly 90 percent of live/work units in the city qualified as new construction.

⁵⁹ From the mid-1990s through July 2000, 1,918 live/work units had been built (1,165 of which followed former San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown’s initial election in 1996). The biggest spike in construction occurred between 1998 and 1999. During this brief time the number of live/work units constructed jumped from 163 in 1998, to 587 in 1999, with another 1,400 still under construction. In addition to those live/work units already built by 2001, there were also over 5,500 other projects either waiting to break ground or still pending final approval by the San Francisco Planning Commission by 2000 (Sward, 2000; Mission Anti-displacement Coalition, 2001; Bay Area Economics, 2002). By the spring of 2002 the Mission District had 389 new live/work units with another 267 either in construction or in possession of a permit waiting to break ground (Godfrey, 2004).

⁶⁰ CJAH rose out of the live/work struggle in the South of Market during the early 1990s. Before imploding in 1998, CJAH members had dedicated themselves to developing a unified and sophisticated community voice around land-use and development. After its formal end, a small group of members continued to meet on Saturday mornings as a study group. A few of CJAH’s members, such as Sue Hestor, later got involved in the MAC campaign, lending both expertise and experience to the latter group’s defense of the Mission District.

“It was happening totally invisibly because it was the builder and his engineer coming with a plan for a new building saying ‘Oh, this is artist live/work’ and they would be processed internally within the Planning Department with no environmental reviews. There were no hearings, no nothing. No one ever knew about them, there was no environmental review. [Builders and developers] were exploiting a loophole which didn’t define [live/work] as housing, it defined it all as industrial. And because it was industrial it wasn’t reviewed as housing. It was an industrial use, in an industrial area. If it had been called housing, it would have had an automatic [San Francisco] Planning Commission hearing because housing was a conditional use in industrial zone land.”⁶¹

While a range of building developers, large and small, took part in the construction of new live/work lofts, one group stood apart: the Residential Builders Association (RBA). The RBA (an organization whose members encompass all aspects of the construction industry from contractors, to architects, to realtors, to attorneys), and its then president Joe O’Donoghue, established itself during the 1980s when it engaged in a bitter struggle against housing preservationists in San Francisco’s Richmond district. Housing preservationists were accusing members of the RBA of, “demolishing vintage single-family Victorians as fast as they could get the permits, and replacing them with dense, boxy (and shamefully ugly) multi-unit blockhouses known as ‘Richmond Specials’” (Brahinsky, 2004c: p. 38). At the time of the wrest, the RBA was a relatively insignificant organization with little power and no political influence to speak of. O’Donoghue, however, changed that, organizing rallies, delivering fiery speeches denouncing those who stood opposed to his goals, and making enough key donations to political candidates to gain some access to the halls of local government for himself and his organization.

In his pursuit of live/work projects Joe O’Donoghue acted as a forceful and aggressive politico with enough political sway to, “influence key personnel moves [at the Department of Building Inspections] enabling those who see matters his way to advance and side-tracking those who don’t” (Sward, 2000: A11). His sphere of influence extended beyond the Department of Building Inspections (DBI). Through his political connections he was able to sway other government employees, such as those on the Board of Appeals and the Planning Commission, to shift key decisions on matters affecting building in San Francisco his way (Sward, 2000). During Joe O’Donoghue’s tenure as president of the RBA the organization was able to expedite many of its members’ projects through the DBI. Dubious actions at the DBI were not uncommon. A 2001 audit of the department by the City Controller found that “46 percent of building inspectors responding to the [City Controller’s] questionnaire reported seeing what they considered improper preferential treatment...and 37 percent said a supervisor had asked them to give such treatment” (Baker, 2001: A17). Many of those permit expeditors and building inspectors intermingled with contractors, particularly those associated the RBA. As Sue Hestor explains, “a lot of building contractors are former building inspectors, and a lot of building inspectors are former contractors, because you have to know how buildings are constructed.”⁶² These close ties furthered the belief that San Francisco’s Building Department was littered with backroom politics:

⁶¹ Hestor, Sue C. Personal interview. 10 October 2010.

⁶² Ibid.

“[The San Francisco] Building Department turned into a wholly owned subsidiary of the RBA. Joe O’Donoghue and Randy Shaw, [Executive Director and Supervising Attorney] of the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, drafted an amendment to the code that said we need a free standing Building Department that is not under the Chief Administrative Officer. So [Randy Shaw] drafted a law that pulled out the housing code division and the permit processing division, which was Joe’s arm and Randy’s arm, into one department under a commission that was appointed half by the Mayor, half the Board of Supervisors...So the RBA and Randy had the power through the building inspection to say who was going to be the head of the Building Department. This was all going on while these live/works were going on. And we kept running into strange things like, for example, DBI inspectors enforcing the wrong building codes on [live/work] buildings.”⁶³

“Artist Lofts,” Faux Industrial Chic, and Voluntary Déclassé

Not long after the creation of this special live/work building ordinance did it become fashionable to live in these formerly industrial spaces. Similar to those artists who inadvertently created a beachhead in the mostly poor and Latina/o Lower East Side district of New York City, so too did San Francisco artists do the same in the working-class Latina/o Mission District (Currid, 2007; Greenberg, 2008). San Francisco artists were miscast as the “‘shock troops’ for gentrification...encouraging the beginnings of housing speculation” (Godfrey, 1988: p. 177). Though harboring no intentional desire to displace, artists unwittingly played a key role in the creation of an easily exploitable building code (Bowler and McBurney, 1991). As Debra Walker, an artist and major figure in the Coalition for Jobs Arts and Housing, states, “If live/work had to be affordable housing, it would’ve been a lot more successful and [the regulations] would have been harder to get around. You have got to take speculation out of things like this or you lose” (Solnit, 2000: p. 102). While artists alone were neither wealthy nor numerous enough to create any significant displacement on their own, their perceived bohemian lifestyle (and their “whiteness” notwithstanding (Lipsitz, 2006)) was alluring enough to sway trends (Solnit, 2000). As Debra Walker notes,

“In the mid-1990s, I noticed a lot more lofts going up and I went to look at them and said, these are not for artists...Shortly thereafter there was a proliferation of lofts and the prices were starting going up and businesses were started to get dislocated, and all of a sudden it was like this wild thing. Mortgage companies started giving residential loans for lofts. After that anybody could buy one” (Solnit, 2000: p. 102).

Though Walker’s comment about the wild construction and sale of live/work units does ring true (see footnote 58 and 59, at pages 35-36), her assertion that anyone was able to purchase one of these live/work units is not accurate. In 2000, the average initial price of a live/work unit was \$353,000, or 32 percent higher than the average initial sale price of \$266,900 for non-live/work housing (San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst Office, 2002). Benefiting from the ambiguous rules and regulations that governed live/work units – not quite commercial, and yet not quite residential – building developers were able to skirt a San Francisco housing policy requiring a minimum of 10 percent of all new residential construction

⁶³ Ibid.

development projects comprising of ten or more units be offered as affordable housing (Strategic Economics, 1999; Hartman, 2002).⁶⁴ This allowed building developers the ability to potentially have every single unit in their live/work project listed either at or above market-rate (this practice saw its most extensive use during the buildup of luxury live/work condominiums) (Strategic Economics, 1999).⁶⁵

In a trend of voluntary *déclassé*, many wealthier citizens, began purchasing those live/work units that had been converted from out-of-use industrial space, usually warehouses, in the disinvested industrial sectors of San Francisco. These wealthier citizens, however, only wanted staged poverty while still demanding luxury amenities, marking these new modern live/work units as discernibly different from early artist live/work spaces. These “artist lofts,” offered a faux industrial style that included exposed brick walls and ducting, and commercial-grade restaurant appliances (Hartman, 2002). As noted in the preceding paragraph, the live/work units that were being constructed were wildly expensive, making it highly inconceivable that many, if any, artists, let alone other working-class residents, would be able to afford one.

The interior “open” floor plan of live/work units, which some liken to an oversized studio apartment, also made their construction unlikely candidates to fulfill San Francisco’s housing needs, particularly for families with three or more members. Since 1990, California’s Department of Housing and Community Development has required all counties to report what measures they have employed to ensure an adequate supply of residential housing is available. In the 1990 residential element of the San Francisco General Plan, San Francisco city officials estimated that in order to meet the projected increases in city population, “22,467 new housing units would need to be built by 1995” (Wallace, 2001: B3).⁶⁶ The residential element placed an emphasis on constructing units capable of housing families with three or more members, 9,000 of which should be set aside for low-income residents (Wallace, 2001). Instead, the San Francisco Planning Department and Planning Commission, “has approved a growing number of live/work loft projects, which meet few if any of the housing needs identified in the 1990 residential analysis” (Wallace, 2001: B3).

Building affordable housing, argue for-profit building developers, is not a profitable venture. Joe O’Donoghue, President of the Residential Builders Association, a group of building developers that built many of the live/work units in the Eastern Neighborhood Zone, confirms

⁶⁴ In 1992, “the City Planning Commission adopted guidelines for applying the City’s Inclusionary Affordable Housing Policy...In 2002, the Board of Supervisors expanded and legislated these guidelines and required that all projects with 10 or more units provide 10% of their units as affordable units to renters earning 60% or less of the Area Median Income (AMI)” (San Francisco Planning Department, 2005: p. 32). The City and County of San Francisco measure affordability by the AMI of San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo counties. Those three counties boast some of the highest median incomes for the entire state of California. Using the AMI of these three counties to determine affordability for San Francisco residents becomes rather toothless, particularly for working-class residents.

⁶⁵ Live/work development projects were also free from paying fees that would otherwise go into San Francisco Affordable Housing Fund. According to a 1999 report published by Strategic Economics, the practice of sidestepping these exactions had the effect of costing the city, “...\$5.5 million in school fees, \$2.6 in planning fees, and 207 affordable housing units that would have been included under normal city rules” in the South of Market and Mission District neighborhoods (p. 16). This same study goes on to suggest that such tax and policy breaks “may be fueling gentrification and displacement by raising land values and rents while doing nothing to add to the stock of affordable housing” (p. 16).

⁶⁶ Between 1990 and 2000, building developers produced 1,200 housing units annually. Unfortunately, this production rate fell well short of San Francisco’s growing housing needs which demanded 2,700 units be built annually (San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst Office, 2003).

that money was a driving force behind loft construction when he comments ““Yes, if residential does not make as much money as live/work on the lot, then all things being equal, you would do the live/work”” (Hendricks, 1999: B9). San Francisco has seen a steady decline in the development of affordable housing units since the mid-1990s. The decline hit its nadir in 2000 when only 9 percent of all housing developed in the city was listed as affordable housing – a 40 percent decline from the previous year (San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst Office, 2002). As affordable housing development fell, construction of live/work units rose. In 2000, 30 percent of all new housing development projects in San Francisco were live/work units, 20 percent of which were located in the Eastern Neighborhoods Zone (San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst Office, 2002). Cumulatively, their unaffordability, lack of a flexible floor plan for families with three or more members, and their overwhelming location in San Francisco Eastern Neighborhoods Zone, show a lack of conformity with San Francisco’s General Plan.⁶⁷

If the live/work units developed in San Francisco neighborhoods like the Mission District and the South of Market lacked conformability with the General Plan, then it stands to reason that those units that did get developed in these neighborhoods during this time were not intended to be used by the preexisting residents of these neighborhoods as viable housing. If not them, then, for whom were these units intended for? Nancy Mirabal (2009) offers that these units were, “designed to appeal to the dot-com and technical workers moving into the Mission District, Potrero Hill, and South of Market” (Mirabal, 2009: p. 27). By 1999 the number of people employed in San Francisco’s digital industry had ballooned from 15,000 in the early 1990s, to well over 40,000, with the average tech worker pulling in an annual salary of \$78,429 (Saracevic, Said, & Kirby, 2000).⁶⁸ By 1999, there were more than 1000 internet related companies, nearly all of which operated in either the Northeast Mission or the South of Market area (Zook, 2002, 2005). These companies, which boasted a collective annual payroll of \$2 billion and combined annual revenue of \$5.7 billion, flooded these small working-class areas of the city with unimaginable amounts of capital (Saracevic, Said, & Kirby, 2000). Live/work lofts became the architectural visage of Silicon Valley’s colonization of modern San Francisco as it increasingly turned into a city for the rich, white, young and single.

People Who Grew Up Here Can’t Afford to Stay Here

⁶⁷ The city’s General Plan is adopted by the Planning Commission and approved by the Board of Supervisors. It is intended to be a strategic and long term document that is broad in scope. It accounts for social, economic and environmental concerns that impact how public resources are allocated and how the city continues to develop. The General Plan has several elements, one of which is the Housing Element. While some individual live/work unit projects may have conformed the General Plan, their overall impact violates at least three of the eight General Plan priority policies: existing housing and neighborhood be conserved to protect the cultural and economic diversity of a neighborhood (Policy two); the supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced (Policy 3); a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office construction (Policy 5) – this will be addressed later in this chapter (San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst, 2002).

⁶⁸ A 2003 Legislative Analyst report examining San Francisco’s housing development found that San Francisco’s employment grew by 9 percent between 1990 and 2000. San Francisco’s Plan for Housing Development identifies matching housing growth to job growth as the primary housing goal for the city. The growth in employments size necessitated an according increase in housing development. Unfortunately, this was not the case as development of housing units rose by a paltry 5.5 percent (San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst Office, 2003).

For much of the first half of the 1990s the population of the North Mission, a large majority of which being long-time Latina/o residents of the area, held steady. By the second of the decade, however, this section of the Mission District showed astonishing growth, receiving an influx of residents that drove up the area's overall residential population by 1,363, or 20.2 percent (Williams, 2001). Most of the newcomers, however, were not reminiscent of the preexisting population. The in-movers were overwhelmingly young, white, and employed in the area's rising internet industry (Williams, 2001). The influx of affluent white residents in this sector of the Mission District coincided with the rising number of live/work loft units and information technology offices. Workers from the digital industry unwittingly came to be seen by preexisting community residents as the unqualified reason for the neighborhood's change.

As well-paid workers from the digital industry provided the market for builders, they also provided a great amount of tension for existing community residents and businesses. Almost immediately, a power struggle took root wherein the incoming population created a market demand for increasingly upscale housing, as well as an ironic distaste for the actual industrial nature of the area they were moving into. The new neighbors wanted their community to have the appearance of an industrial space, not actually be one. Many of these new residents began objecting to longstanding activities that ran counter to their desires for a quiet community, a desire that stood opposed to the needs of local industrial businesses and night clubs that continued to conduct business late into the night. Upscale loft dwellers at 728 Alabama Street, for example, started a noise nuisance campaign against the Mission Language Vocational Center (MLVC) – an institutional outcome of the victories garnered in the 1970s by activists of the Mission Coalition Organization⁶⁹ that provided services to the local Spanish-speaking population – soon after they moved in to the new construction building (Asian Neighborhood Design, 2002). The MLVC supported its annual revenue by holding evening wedding receptions, and civic and youth events, in its large community room. On several occasions, officers from the San Francisco Police Department were called in to shut down MLVC events at the behest of newer residents. This campaign made it clear to staff at the MLVC that, “the new condo owners wanted the neighborhood, an industrial neighborhood, to adapt to them. They did not want to adapt to the neighborhood” (Asian Neighborhood Design, 2002: p. 2). As this new population moved into the Mission District, the balance of power shifted, as those perceived to be related to the internet industry were interpreted as having had a major role in the elimination of available jobs and housing.

“It’s all different, it’s all changed I mean like rents have gone up sky high, property in this area has gone sky high. A condominium up the street like two blocks from here was considered a bad area like two years ago is now going for like seven hundred grand. So people who grew up here can’t afford to stay here anymore” (Mirabal, 2009: p. 25).

⁶⁹ The Mission Coalition Organization (MCO) grew out of a pitched battle against urban renewal in San Francisco's Mission District that lasted from 1964-1967. MCOs struggle over urban renewal galvanized one of the largest neighborhood mobilizations in San Francisco's history. At the height of its power it was estimated that the MCO had 12,000 active participants working on over 100 committees (Castells, 1983; Miller, 2009). The MCO was short-lived, fracturing and disbanding by 1973. It left behind a complicated history that included the expansion or creation of several dozen new community based organizations, as well as deep scars and community divisions resulting from the power struggles over how the coalition could best manage the federally sponsored War on Poverty's Model Cities program (community controlled vs. institutional change).

The belief that the “New Economy” portended a massive displacement of working-class and Latina/o people from the Mission District was reinforced through studies conducted by the San Francisco Planning Department, which stated that if the industrial areas of San Francisco’s Mission District were not protected the city would risk the loss of “13,000-27,000 jobs in: production, distribution, auto repair, garment manufacturing, delivery services, printing and moving companies” (Solnit, 2000: p. 103). Many of these production, distribution and repair (PDR) companies were once stable employment pools for many of the low-skill Latina/o residents of the district, many of whom lacked the education and skills necessary to enter the internet industry. San Francisco’s Department of Building Inspection approval of so many building permits increased the threat of displacement and speculative pressure on the NEMIZ’s industrial real estate market. With building permits in hand, building developers converted older industrial space into high-priced live/work loft units. This conversion meant the loss of current and future low-skill blue-collar jobs, which in turn furthered the economically marginalized position of low-skilled PDR workers (Curran, 2004). The well intentioned live/work ordinance, which had been such a noble fight, became to so many, “the biggest Trojan horse artists ever dragged into a city” (Solnit, 2000: p. 101).

Going FAR to Mask Lofts as Office Space

The dot-com boom that kicked off the thunderous construction of new live/work units loomed large in the high numbers of conversions of industrial buildings – usually old warehouses or factories in the Mission District and South of Market neighborhoods – into offices for use by digital computing and information companies. The San Francisco Planning Department and the San Francisco Planning Commission, both seemingly pushing the decades old line of transforming San Francisco into the “City of Tomorrow,” did little to regulate the office construction boom.⁷⁰ Internet related business firms helped swing San Francisco’s abysmal commercial real estate market – a market which had been grossly overbuilt in the 1980s – out of a protracted lull. By the mid-1990s, internet related business firms in San Francisco’s Central Business District took hold of some 3.5 million square feet of otherwise unused office space (Hartman, 2002). As the number of workers and companies from the New Economy grew, the amount of affordable office space in downtown San Francisco dwindled. While many of Silicon Valley’s early digerati were able to take full advantage of the abundant and relatively affordable commercial space in San Francisco’s downtown, the same cannot be said for those firms riding the late-1990s initial public offering (IPO) wave. By the time most internet start-ups arrived on the scene in 2000, downtown San Francisco had a commercial vacancy rate of less than 1 percent with a price tag of nearly \$74 per square foot (Walker, 2006). However, where downtown could not accommodate these new businesses places like the Northeast Mission Industrial Zone could.

Office space is more profitable than housing. It is also, however, more costly to build. What land speculators and building developers saw in the NEMIZ was the availability of industrial land and warehouse space left behind by former large industrial and manufacturing businesses such as the Lilli-Ann Garment factory and the Best Foods Mayonnaise processing plant, both of which had operated in the area for decades before eventually shutting down their

⁷⁰ As will be discussed in chapter four, the murky live/work policy made it difficult for the Planning Department and the Planning Commission to regulate live/work units. This impotency, however, is no excuse as the Planning Commission was presented with a report from the Planning Department in 1999 that explained that without rules and regulations governing live/work units continued abuse of the spirit of the ordinance would continue (San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst, 2002).

operations in the 1980s. While it is the case that many of the larger plants that were once common in the NEMIZ had closed during the 1970s and 1980s, the myth that the city's industrial zones had turned into an abandoned wasteland devoid of economic activity, however, was wholly untrue (Wetzel, 2001). Blue collar production, distribution and repair (PDR) industries showed little decline in San Francisco as the "manufacturing jobs remained constant in the city from 1970 to 1990 at 9 percent of total jobs" (Wetzel, 2001: p. 50). Small PDR businesses such as glass shops, print shops, automobile transmission shops, and delivery services were rife in the NEMIZ. The vitality of local NEMIZ businesses to San Franciscans in general and for Mission District residents in particular is showcased in a 1995 report by the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) which states that, "In 1990, about 70% of workers in the NEMIZ were residents of San Francisco; of these, 20% were residents of the Mission itself" (San Francisco Planning & Urban Research, 1995: p. 1).⁷¹

Despite these telling numbers, however, building developers were quite successful in exploiting the myth that the NEMIZ constituted a place littered with boarded up warehouses and underused space. However, were it not for a pro-business and pro-growth Mayor (Willie Brown), who once commented that "Mayors are known for what they build and not anything else, and I intend to cover every inch of ground that isn't open space," (King, 1997: A21) and a lax San Francisco Planning Commission accused of a brand of cronyism that allowed building developers to take advantage of curious land-use zoning policies found in almost no other part of the City, perhaps the change that befell the NEMIZ would not have been so dramatic. This, however, was not the case as building developers and real estate speculators continued to exploit the spirit of the original live/work ordinance when they combined it with a rather unique zoning code found almost nowhere else in the city save for the NEMIZ. As Sue Hestor comments,

"The zoning is CM [Heavy Commercial], and CM had the highest density in the city, at the time. It had higher FAR, floor area ratio,⁷² than anything, except for one small area at the base of Telegraph [Hill], which was zoned C2 [Community Business District]. I remember saying the CM zoning is going to push that to be the most attractive area for [building developers] to go because they could build much more dense projects. Do you know what floor area ration is? FAR is, if you have a lot that is 1000 square feet, and you have a 4:1 FAR, you can build 4 times 1000 square feet of building on that. Obviously if you build lot line to lot line, which no one does, well few people do, you could have a four story building. Or if you used half of that lot, and you had height adjustment, you could build an eight story building. FAR, with a CM, was 10:1. The highest density allowed in the downtown is 9:1...All [building developers] were using, then, was the FAR limit."⁷³

⁷¹ This 20 percent figure marks NEMIZ PDR businesses as the largest employer of Mission District residents (San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, 1995).

⁷² In San Francisco, floor-to-area restrictions are designed to limit office development in the Downtown district. San Francisco has strict FAR regulations that were set in place in 1987 after a pitched battle between slow-growth activists upset over the "Manhattanization" of San Francisco's Downtown district, and a pro-growth regime eager to place San Francisco at the center of the powerful Pacific Rim economy. In the end slow-growth advocates won as pro-growth advocates grossly overbuilt San Francisco's office space (Hartman, 2002).

⁷³ Hestor, Sue C. Personal interview. 10 October 2010

So it was that the use of a loophole in the live/work ordinance, in combination with a unique land-use zoning regulation, that a discernible rise in live/work projects took shape. Angry community residents commented on the seeming encroachment of downtown offices into their section of the city,

“...We see [gentrification] all around us. I mean, God, right here on Bryant and 20th they want to bring downtown offices now over here. I mean, come on, this is our home. You know. We’re not going to be an extension of Market Street here. What’s going on?” (Mirabal, 2009: p. 25).

Firms aligned with the New Economy soon represented the greatest sector of job growth in the city. In the ten years between 1988 and 1998 local multimedia and internet related firms had risen to employ half as many people in that industry alone as those in the finance, insurance, real estate sectors combined (Abate & Said, 1998). With this newfound clout in hand some of the companies associated with internet related industries began to make overtures that they sought greater concessions from key city offices. A 1997 study commissioned by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency found that growing concerns about San Francisco’s rising commercial rents (particularly in the Downtown and South of Market areas), scarce parking, and high local taxes “have caused [firms associated with the digital computing and information industry] to consider moving elsewhere in the Bay Area when they needed to expand” (Abate & Said, 1998: A7). Losing this industry was a legitimate concern as national cities such as Los Angeles and New York were active in promoting their city’s business environment to these multimedia firms. In Los Angeles, for example, the Los Angeles Regional Technology Alliance created a partnership between the entertainment industry, city agencies, and universities in an effort to encourage technical and creative advances in multimedia (Marshall, 1996). New York City was offering tax incentives, “cut-rate electricity and even management consulting (through KPMG Peat Marwick) to multimedia firms in its Information Technology District in southern Manhattan.” (Marshall, 1996: A5). Feeling the pressure to compete for the prize in the post-industrial economy, San Francisco responded by drafting legislation that extended the former two-year payroll-tax credit for new jobs created in the city to five years, and appointing “designated specialists inside the building department to speed up the permit process for multimedia companies” (Abate & Said, 1998: A7). In 1998 the city held a multimedia summit where Mayor Willie Brown, Supervisor Leslie Katz, and the San Francisco Partnership (a public-private venture that works to market San Francisco as an attractive place for business), promoted the “‘brand’ value of San Francisco in general and Multimedia Gulch in particular. It also served as a highly visible platform for introducing the aforementioned government initiatives aimed at keeping the digital honchos happy, and thus less likely to jilt San Francisco” (Bond, 1998: A3).

Of course, San Francisco’s fastest growing economic sector had to have an actual landing spot, and that place was disproportionately in Eastern Neighborhood Zone areas such as the Mission District. Nick Pagoulatos, former Executive Director of the St. Peter’s Housing Committee and key figure in the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition, touches on this point when he states,

“There was a willingness on the part of our city government to look the other way when those low-income residents of the city were being displaced in large numbers. And, you know, part of it was an economic issue. The City really

wanted to bring in a higher-economic base, people with more money. It was also certainly a racial issue. This neighborhood, and most of the Eastern neighborhoods, contained mostly poor and mostly brown people.”⁷⁴

Not until 1999, after community pressure forced a zoning study, did the San Francisco Planning Commission find that “Competition for land and building space in the City’s [sic] industrially zoned land greatly favors... live/work uses because they can afford higher rent and land costs than can production, distribution and repair businesses.”⁷⁵ This study notwithstanding, then RBA President Joe O’Donoghue wielded his undeniable political clout when in May of 2001 he reached out to his connections on the Board of Appeals to overturn a February 2001 Board of Supervisors ruling that approved a six-month moratorium on the construction of any new live/work loft development projects. The Board of Appeals ruling seemed to allow the practice of using loft space primarily for office functions (Gordon, 2001; Hwang, 2001; Wu, 2001).

By 2001, nearly 20 percent of the building lot square footage in the NEMIZ (over 937,000 square feet of terrain) had been devoted to either live/work or office use – an increase of 330 percent since 1991 – resulting in the displacement PDR businesses such as machine shops, transmission repair shops, and laundry services from the area. The 540 lofts that were built in the NEMIZ in that 10 year period resulted in the net loss of 1.7 million square feet of industrial space, a decrease of 57 percent as more than 200 dot-coms pocked the industrial corridor of the Mission District (Mission Anti-displacement Coalition, 2001).⁷⁶ The building of these live/work spaces when combined with the displacement and loss of PDR employment spaces function as a social barrier that separated these newly built spaces and their new inhabitants from preexisting community spaces and its Latina/o working-class population (Davidson & Lees, 2005).

It Increased Exponentially Over the Course of a Few Months

NEMIZ property became a hot commodity. Commercial property owners and landlords began receiving solicitation letters from local real estate agents about the potential salability of their properties. Adam Wood, Director of the ODC Theater, comments: “All the landlords in this part of The City are being sent letters saying, ‘Do you know you’re sitting on a gold mine? All you have to do is get the existing tenants out and then we’ll buy from you’” (Hendricks, 1999: B9).

What began as an isolated round of gentrification in the Eastern Neighborhoods and Northeast Mission Industrial Zone, however, quickly escalated into a larger wave of gentrification that ran through the greater Mission District. Between 1998 and 2002 residential renters in San Francisco faced a very competitive housing market. San Franciscans demand for housing outpaced production by 1,500 units. With a reduced number of housing units available, San Francisco vacancy rate hovered around 2.5 percent, about one-half the national average during this time (San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst, 2003). The

⁷⁴ Pagoulatos, Nick. Personal Interview. 5 August, 2010.

⁷⁵ San Francisco Planning Commission, Resolution No. 14861, 1999.

⁷⁶ Real estate speculation and development in the NEMIZ area ran high, particularly along its “tail” (Harrison Street between Sixteenth and Twenty-fourth streets). This strip of the NEMIZ had once been an area heavily concentrated with large warehouse and factory space due in large part to a rail line that connected this part of the city with the South Bay. The area’s immediate access to U.S. Highway 101 allowed high volumes of tech workers located in the NEMIZ to commute south to the South Bay, revising the decades old commuting patterns from the South Bay suburbs into San Francisco. Now rush hours flowed both ways.

lack of parity not only drove down vacancy rates, but also drove up bidding prices for the few available rentals in San Francisco, making them amongst the highest in the nation.⁷⁷ As employment growth rose in San Francisco between 1990 and 2000, rental prices increased 175 percent over that same time (San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst, 2003). According to figures published by Bay Area Economics (2002) on San Francisco's housing market conditions, the median monthly rent in 2001 for a two-bedroom apartment was \$2,400.⁷⁸ To afford this monthly rent, using the general guideline of devoting 30 percent of one's income, a tenant would have to earn an annual income nearing \$95,000, and should a San Francisco worker be earning the 2001 California minimum wage of \$6.25, she or he would have to work the equivalent of 14 hours a day, every day of the week, just to afford the median rent (Hartman, 2002). And while the 2001 cost of the median monthly San Francisco rent may be shocking enough, equally astounding was the rapid rise of the average rent. From 1995-2001, the average San Francisco rent for a two-bedroom apartment rose 118 percent from \$1,100 in 1995, to \$2,400 in 2001 (Bay Area Economics, 2002). Mission District renters traditionally used to paying a comparatively lower rental rate to the rest of San Francisco were not spared this rapid uptrend. The average rent for a two-bedroom Mission District apartment in 1997 was \$1,330. By 1999 this figure rose to \$1,678, a 26 percent increase in the span of two years (Alejandrino, 2000).

As mentioned above, many San Francisco residential property owners and landlords legally raised rents on their units when able. The parameters through which rent increases can occur is outlined by chapter thirty-seven of San Francisco's Administrative Code (the "Residential Rent Stabilization and Arbitration Ordinance," hereafter referred to as the "Rent Ordinance").⁷⁹ Here, under Section 37.3.1, the Rent Ordinance is clear that a residential landlord, "may impose annually a rent increase which does not exceed a tenant's base rent by more than 60 percent of said published increase. In no event, however, shall the allowable increase be greater than 7 percent" (Section 37.3.1).⁸⁰ There are, however, two exceptions to this section. Much like the rest of the Rent Ordinance, this section covers only those units built prior to 1979. Those residential rental units built post-1979 lie outside the rules and regulations as outlined by San Francisco's Rent Ordinance. The second exception lies in the Rent Ordinance's definition of what constitutes tenancy. According to the Rent Ordinance a person must reside in his or her unit for thirty consecutive days in order to have vested tenant rights. The Mission District has some of the oldest housing stock in the city, much of it dating from the late 1880s to 1920s (San

⁷⁷ Though there are many single family homes in San Francisco, the vast majority of San Franciscans, 80 percent, are renters.

⁷⁸ This study was commissioned by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors after pressure from concerned citizen and community groups demanded the Board take action against the live/work building boom.

⁷⁹ Since 1979, San Francisco's residential tenant population has held legally codified tenant rights and rent control.

⁸⁰ On March 1st of each year, the San Francisco Residential Rent Stabilization and Arbitration Board, hereafter referred to as either the San Francisco Rent Board or the Rent Board, publishes the allowable percent rent increase. The San Francisco Rent Board calculates this allowable annual increase based on the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers for the San Francisco-Oakland Area as outlined by the U.S. Department of Labor. There are, of course, certain exceptions wherein a rent increase can occur outside of these established rules. Though not legally recognized as rent increases, a pass-through such as a utility pass-through where a landlord has been paying a tenant's utilities and the cost of those utilities increases, a change in the landlord's property tax attributable to a general obligation bond, and water rate increases resulting from issuance of a water revenue bond could all result in a property owners legal right to increase a tenant's rent. Lastly, any capital improvement wherein the benefit is general to all units (e.g. seismically retrofitting a building's foundation, installing a new roof, etc.) can result in a temporary rent increase socialized amongst all current tenants.

Francisco Planning Department, 2005). The Mission District also has an historically large tenant population, many of whom having lived in their units for decades. Mission District landlords and property owners were, of course, aware that many of their rental units and tenants were covered by the city's rent control ordinance, a fact that protected their tenants from the capriciousness of the housing market so long as the lease-signing tenant remained in the unit (once the lease-signing tenant vacates the unit the property owner and/or landlord is free to raise the rent to market rate). As such, many property owners and landlords looked for ways to rid themselves of long-term tenants and replace them with tenants who would pay a higher rent. The now profitable real estate in the Mission District resulted in a marked rise in residential evictions notices.⁸¹ Nick Pagoulatos, speaks to this issue when he recounts,

“...coming from my vantage point in St. Peter's, we weren't just seeing a gradual increase in the number of evictions. There was a tremendous spike where you literally could say it increased exponentially over the course of a few months. And whereas you would be dealing with a dozen cases a day, you would now be dealing with 30, 40, 50 people coming in through the door with lines, literally, going out of the building with people waiting to see you because they'd just been given an eviction notice. And the eviction notices were not what we had been seeing in the past, which were a mix of at-fault evictions where people couldn't pay their rent. What we were seeing were straight-up 'you need to get out' not even based on a real just cause, but just a landlord saying, 'you know what, I need my property back. You need to get out.'”⁸²

Many area landlords further exploited the fact that many Mission District residents are linguistically isolated and/or have precarious relationships with the state to successfully pressure tenants with specious eviction notices. Between 1997 and 2002 the Mission District generated an average of 150 Reports of Alleged Wrongful Evictions per year (San Francisco Rent Board, 2001). This five-year average was nearly two times more than any other San Francisco neighborhood. This average could, of course, be misleading as there is no way to quantify how many Mission District residents failed to report a wrongful eviction notice with the San Francisco Rent Board. Mission District landlords used other subtler methods to encourage a tenant into moving such as halting garbage pick-up, changing door locks, and illegally increasing a rent controlled unit's rent beyond the legally allowed amount. As the number of higher income people entering the Mission District rose, local landlords continued to respond by evicting preexisting residents and exploiting this incoming population with higher than normal rents. By 2002 the average advertised rent for a one bedroom apartment in San Francisco rose to \$2,144, or just over 25 percent. In that same five-year period, 1997-2002, the advertised rent for a one bedroom apartment in the Mission District rose to \$1,956, an increase of just over 47 percent (Godfrey, 2004).⁸³

⁸¹ Section 37.9(a) of San Francisco's Rent Ordinance allows a residential landlord to legally evict a tenant from her or his rental unit if she or he has breached one of the city's fifteen “just causes.”

⁸² Pagoulatos, Nick. Personal interview. 5 August 2010.

⁸³ Home sale prices followed a similar trajectory. Between 1990 and 2000, sales prices for the average single family home increased by 86 percent (San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst, 2003). In 2000, only 6 percent of houses sold in San Francisco were affordable to residents earning the area median income (San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst, 2003). The median sale price of a home in the Mission District in 1997 was \$235,000. By 2002, the median sale price rose to \$410,000, an increase of 74.5 percent

Whereas indirect eviction methods of the types mentioned above were time and cost efficient, direct eviction methods – those instances where a landlord has gone through the correct legal avenues to deliver a tenant a legal at-fault eviction notice – were not. Usually fraught with long timeframes and large financial expenses, area landlords relied heavily on two “just cause” evictions: Owner-Move-In (OMI) and Ellis Act evictions.⁸⁴ In 1998 alone, of the 2,726 total eviction notices that were filed with the San Francisco Residential Rent Stabilization Board, 1,253 were OMI evictions. Coming in at a distant second with 342 were notices filed because of a “breach of contract” (San Francisco Residential Rent Stabilization & Arbitration Board, 1999). In that same year the number of Ellis Act eviction requests received by the San Francisco Rent Board totaled 116, affecting a total of 291 units (Curiel, 2000). By 1999, however, notices for both types of eviction requests showed a clear uptrend. While OMI eviction notices still outpaced all other requests (1,480 out of a total of 2,878 notices received by the San Francisco Rent Board were OMI eviction requests), Ellis Act petition requests made the most dramatic jump of any type of eviction request (San Francisco Rent Board, 1999). During that year Ellis Act petition requests rose 80 percent from 116 in 1998 to 209 in 1999, affecting a total of 881 total rental units in San Francisco (Curiel, 2000).

Through all this Mission District residents fared poorly. Mission District landlords served 133 eviction notices in 1999, 42 more than the amount served in the next hardest-hit district, the Sunset district (Curiel, 2000).⁸⁵ In this same year roughly 14 percent of all Ellis Act evictions occurred in the Mission District, disproportionately outpacing its 9 percent of the city’s total rental units (Mirabal, 2009). Between 1994 and 2005, the Mission District had the highest number of OMI evictions in the city. Of the 8,122 OMI notices filed with the Rent Board in that 10 year period, 1,163 notices (14 percent) were served to Mission District residents. The Sunset district had the second highest number of OMI evictions with 760 in that same period of 1994-2005.⁸⁶ Perhaps a 1999 New York Times account captures it best:

“The entire Mission District, port of entry for San Francisco’s Hispanic immigrants for more than 50 years, is changing by the day. New people, people who have money, are moving in, altering life for everyone. Sagging Victorian houses that landlords had chopped into two or three rental units are sold for half a

(Godfrey, 2004; Chapple et. al., 2006).

⁸⁴ Owner-Move-In (OMI) evictions allow an owner to evict a tenant if the owner, or immediate relative of the owner, resides in the building for a minimum of 36 continuous months following the eviction. At the end of this period, the owner can return the unit to the rental market. Because San Francisco’s rent control ordinance only protects those tenants while in their units, a landlord, following a successful OMI eviction, can re-rent the same unit at market rate. Many tenant advocates argued that OMI evictions were a means used by property owners and landlords to maneuver around rent control, as well as a mechanism to potentially convert their property to more lucrative condominiums. In San Francisco, condominiums lie outside the city’s Rent Ordinance, making them especially appealing to property owners seeking to sell their units in the buildings as individual pieces of property. The Ellis Act, enacted in 1986, allows property owners the legal right to remove their property from the rental market completely, and in the process evict all tenants from the property. Under Ellis Act eviction rules tenants have first right of refusal if the unit is returned to the rental market. Though property owners must pay relocation expenses (\$4,500 to low-income tenants, \$3,000 to disabled tenants, and \$3,000 to elderly tenants; compounded, the total relocation cost to property owners could reach \$10,500), Ellis Act evictions were a common and economically justifiable way to turn a multi-unit residential building into individual condominium properties.

⁸⁵ Mission District property owners also led the city with 171 wrongful eviction notices filed with the San Francisco Rent Board. Curiel, Jonathan. “S.F. Rise in Condo Conversion Evictions/Landlords cash in during hot market” *San Francisco Chronicle*, 26 August 2000. A-1.

⁸⁶ Figures courtesy Rent Board annual eviction reports (1994-2004).

million dollars, and warehouses are becoming loft condominiums in the \$300,000 to \$400,000 range...In the last three years, rents here have jumped from \$600 a month for a two-bedroom apartment to \$1800; a house that cost \$150,000 is now \$450,000. More tenants have been evicted in the last three years than at any other time by landlords using a city ordinance that allows for eviction if the owner or a relative plans to move in for at least a year. Last year, 1,400 apartments in the city were emptied for this reason, most of them in the Mission District. Tenant advocates say the real numbers are much higher because scores of families simply moved out when asked by their landlords...‘Evictions are all we do these days,’ says Matt Brown, a lawyer who directs the St. Peter’s Housing Committee in the Mission, a tenants’ advocacy group. ‘We’d like to do other things, like community organizing, but the housing situation has made it almost impossible.’...So Mission residents are increasingly moving out of the city. Those who stay often rent space in friends’ or relatives’ apartments, miserable single-room-occupancy hotels, garages, storage barns or even vans” (Nieves, 1999: A12).

By 2005, San Francisco’s total Latina/o population – a population that then comprised 15.1 percent of San Francisco’s total population – suffered a dramatic decline, falling from 109,504 down to 98,891, a loss of more than 10 percent (Mirabal, 2009).⁸⁷ While the mythology of the economic boom was likened to the Gold Rush, the displacing effects of the ensuing gentrification were more akin to frontier relocation. As Latina/os were displaced from throughout San Francisco many ended up spatially centralized and concentrated in the Mission District’s core (an area that lies between 17th Street and César Chavez Street and US Highway 101 and Valencia Street) where the Latina/o population rose from 29,575 in 1990, to 30,145 by 2000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1993, 2000).⁸⁸ By contrast, the Mission District’s Valencia Street corridor, which runs parallel to Mission Street though one block west, housed 26.4 percent of the Mission District’s 60.9 percent total Latina/o population in 2000. Residents from the Valencia Street corridor also lived much less densely, averaging 1.9 people per household compared to 3.3 people per household in the Mission District’s core (Williams, 2001).

Latinos Don’t Utilize Valencia Anymore

A self-sustaining and thriving community needs robust commercial districts as much as it needs employment spaces and housing. Not surprisingly then, as demand for property in the NEMIZ rose, the traditional commercial/retail area of the district – the area from South Van Ness Avenue west to Valencia Street, and between Cesar Chavez Street to the south and Market Street and Duboce Avenue to the north – also began feeling the displacing power of gentrification.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Latina/os comprised a little over 15 percent of then San Francisco’s estimated population of just over 792,000.

⁸⁸ These population numbers are not always accurate as large numbers of undocumented immigrants often go uncounted. This latter point is an interesting one considering San Francisco’s Mission District continues to be a receiving center for significant numbers of Latin American immigrants (documented and undocumented).

⁸⁹ According to a 1991 report issued by the Mission Economic Development Association (MEDA), “There are three distinct business nodes along the Mission Street Commercial Corridor: North Mission District (from Duboce to 17th Street), Theater District (17th to 22nd Street) and the 24th Street District (22nd to [Cesar Chavez] Street). The Theater District contains the largest number of operating businesses (279) followed by the 24th Street District (240) and the North Mission District (149).” The most commonly found businesses along the Mission Street Commercial Corridor at this time were “eating and drinking establishments (128), sundry retail (105), semi-durable retail (89), and hair

Nancy Mirabal (2009) reminds us that, “one of the first felt primers of accelerated displacement is gentrified consumption, the hallmarks of which are businesses – expensive restaurants, antique stores, upscale bars and lounges, boutiques, specialty food stores, cafes – that are deliberately built to attract wealthier populations to the area” (p. 18). In a part of the city where 35 percent of merchants conduct their business in Spanish, and another 35 percent in a language other than English, the displacement of these small community-serving businesses that attended to a heavily Latina/o population, added to gentrification’s already jarring impact.⁹⁰

The commercial node along Mission Street between 17th and 22nd streets, where 40 percent of all commercial businesses are concentrated, had a clear expression towards local Latina/o consumption that extended well beyond the *taquerias* and other dining establishments (Mission Economic Development Association, 1991). Here, “jewelry, grocery, music and video shops offer a wide variety of items for a bilingual market” with display signs of “*se habla español aqui*” placed visibly inside local business shop windows being quite common (Mission Economic Development Association, 1991: p. 21). Along with offering basic consumer needs, this commercial corridor also had medical offices with Spanish speaking doctors and staff, stores specializing in formal attire for advertised occasions that ranged from weddings to *Quinceñeras*, movie theaters that offered Spanish language movies, and travel agencies that specialized in flights and excursions to various Latin American countries. While the influx of higher income residents into the Mission District could have had the beneficial outcome of creating new customers for existing businesses, the reality of what happened was markedly different; incoming residents turned away from those preexisting businesses in the Mission District’s core in favor of those that better served their interests located along the neighborhood’s Valencia Street corridor. This corridor’s trendy and upscale bars and restaurants such as the “Oxygen Bar” and “The Slanted Door” placed immense pressure on preexisting Latino grocery and religious stores, check-cashing store-fronts and pawnshops that serviced the residents of this working-class district. Commercial property owners, “seized the moment, evicting longtime tenants” (Gordon, 2000: A8). Restaurants such as El Herradero Restaurant, which had operated along Mission Street for twelve years, were suddenly faced with dramatic commercial rent increases, while others like Los Jarritos Restaurant and Mi Rancho Market were displaced as property owners opted to sell their buildings as vacant (Kennedy & Leonard, 2001).⁹¹

Preexisting Mission District commercial tenants along the Valencia Street corridor fared much worse. On this street alone nearly 50 percent of businesses that were in operation in 1990, many of which also served the neighborhood’s traditional working-class Latina/o population, were gone by 1998 (Alejandrino, 2000). Former St. Peter’s Housing Committee (SPHC) Executive Director and key member of the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition, Nick Pagoulatos comments,

“The displacement of older established community-serving businesses has been to whiten the commercial corridors, creat[ing] the sorts of businesses that don’t cater

salons (42)” (p. 2).

⁹⁰ Twenty percent of the business owners along the Mission Commercial Corridor live in the neighborhood. Seventy-one percent rely on the establishment as the primary source of their income. In this regard, the rapid and large-scale displacement of these sorts of commercial spaces further accelerates the general displacing forces of gentrification (Mission Economic Development Association, 1991).

⁹¹ These dramatic rent increases – 63 percent in the case of El Herradero – were so steep that many business owners unable to pay the rent increase made the difficult decision to abandon their current locations (Kennedy & Leonard, 2001).

to what we traditionally call ‘the neighborhood’...the commercial corridors, Mission, 24th, and Valencia [streets], have changed especially in terms of night-time uses. You still see brown faces during the day, especially on Mission Street and on 24th, but on Valencia, Latinos don’t utilize Valencia Street anymore...There’s a ton of cafes, galleries, boutiques, and stuff you didn’t see even five years ago.”⁹²

As gentrification of the Mission District rushed along, whiteness held court as many Latina/o residents were left having to negotiate a new terrain increasingly foreign to them.⁹³ While often unspoken “whiteness” (Lipsitz, 2006) is embedded within any discourse of revitalization. As Nancy Mirabal (2009) writes, “gentrification creates spaces where white bodies and desires, and most importantly, consumption, dominate and shape the neighborhood” (p. 17). Mission District residents Jason Esponiza and José Daniel Cruz Solis comments bring this point into focus:

“There’s a different mix of people coming in and out now. Got a lot of Caucasian people in and out of the Mission which you never actually, you know, seen. I mean we got people walking around at like two or three in the morning in places that you know me, myself, and my group wouldn’t go a few years ago...There are expensive restaurants, which our people cannot afford. I definitely cannot afford to go. Then there’s [sic] also clubs that are opening up, and everything else, it’s getting too expensive” (Mirabal, 2009: p. 17).

The renegotiation of space by longstanding community residents meant that as community serving businesses were displaced from the area, Mission District residents, and in particular Latina/o s, were forced to go outside of their community to meet more of their consumer needs. Like Chinatown, the Mission District’s centralization and concentration of Spanish language and Latino oriented businesses often made what could be arduous activities like shopping, much more facile for many of the community’s linguistically isolated residents. Once the centralization and concentration of shops became threatened, however, Mission District Latina/os had to make the choice of either following those displaced businesses into places like the Excelsior – the Excelsior lies southwest of the Mission District – or face the reality that any built-up informal relationship a local resident had with her or his local merchants, and any established informal credit system that existed between the two, would be severed (Nieves, 1999). The flip side of this sort of commercial displacement is the loss of economic opportunity and the ability for Mission District Latina/o residents to engage in San Francisco’s increasingly important service sector economy, which employed over 4,500 Mission District residents (San Francisco Department of City Planning, 2002).

It’s Crazy, Hot, Popular

New wealthier residents and visitors to the Mission District quickly changed the patterns of consumption in the district. In abstract terms, the loss of both consumption patterns and labor

⁹² Pagoulatos, Nick. Personal interview. 11 August 2010

⁹³ While often unspoken “whiteness” (Lipsitz, 2006) is embedded within any discourse of revitalization as it creates, “spaces where white bodies and desires, and most importantly, consumption, dominate and shape the neighborhood” (Mirabal, 2009: p. 17).

market participation by Latina/os in the Mission District resulted in the heightened pressure and scrutiny on the socialized functions of place. Under the swift and pronounced changes brought by gentrification into the urban landscape, the spatially contested arena of community streets becomes increasingly seen as a means through which the chaotic tension between the exchange and use value of space governs how a place becomes occupied and controlled (Lefebvre, 1991, 2003; De Certeau, 2002). The shift in this relationship suggests the malleability and contested aspect of socio-spatial relationships that occur as communities undergo such rapid change. Again, Nancy Mirabal (2009) reminds us of this when she writes, “by shifting markers of consumption, space can be redefined in ways that reflect the desired class, race, and ethnicity of certain neighborhoods” (p. 18).

This new terrain not only demands that consumption be the primary endeavor of public space, but also that socialized space must be controlled. José Daniel Cruz Solis comments,

“I remember it was cool to walk down the street really late at night. But then it became, you know. Cops were coming every night harassing people of color and telling them ‘oh, it’s too late for you to be out on the street.’ But when it was white folks, I never saw that they [the cops] approached them, you know what I mean?” (Mirabal, 2009: p. 17).

As may be expected, the rapid realignment of socio-spatial relationships has also meant greater state surveillance. Here, the increased presence of uniformed police officers intensified as gentrification ramped up through the mid-1990s. Organizers at Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC), Mission Economic Development Association (MEDA), St. Peter’s Housing Committee (SPHC), and People Organizing to Demand Economic and Environmental Rights (PODER) were being alerted through their respective membership bases that local police officers were hyper-vigilant in their scrutinizing of local Latina/os and Latino serving businesses. Eric Quezada, a former organizer at both MHDC and PODER, notes the racial aspect of police officers’ actions by stating “racism played a big part: drunk Latino males were blight, but twenty-something dot-comers were ‘people having a good time’ even though they were buying drugs on the street” (Fishman, 2006: p. 51). Similarly, Oscar Grande, an organizer with PODER, notes the selective class and race targeting police harassment took when he comments on how recent immigrants living in Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels,

“These folks, barely making ends meet, were not able to walk one block without being harassed by police. Yet, white kids the same age...would walk from Sixteenth [Street] to Twenty-fourth [Street] singing and dancing with beers...it [Sixteenth Street] was crazy, hot, popular...Before it was trannies, homeless, counterculture folks, and immigrant families...Now we were seeing kids from the Marina, in their college shirts, preppy college kids slumming” (Fishman, 2006: p. 51).

Throughout the late-1970s and 1980s Latina/o youth drove their stylized and modified cars, “lowriders,” up and down Mission Street between 16th and 24th streets, “cruising” their neighborhood displaying their cars and gathering news on the latest dances and parties (Koffler & Majano, 2010).⁹⁴ In the late-1990s and 2000s, however, the popularity of the Mission

⁹⁴ Latina/o youth in the Mission District engaged in the lowriding subculture were subject to heightened police

District's Valencia Street corridor attracted a different "cruising" culture. Replacing the late-night lowriders that slowly cruised along Mission District streets were the drivers of luxury vehicles slowly cruising Mission District streets in search of open parking spots or valets before they patronized the area's new trendy bars and restaurants. Upscale restaurants such as "Blue Plate" (1999) and "Foreign Cinema" (1999) followed already existing restaurants like "The Slanted Door" (1998) as they opened up for business alongside *taquerias* and beauty salons. Before long, the central stretch of Valencia Street between 16th and 24th streets became known as an upscale restaurant row.⁹⁵

Residential real estate firms, such as Zephyr Realty, began branding the Mission as a "transitioning zone" making sure to note the new "hip vibe" in the area when offering their properties to potential buyers and renters. This branding allowed for a type of cultural displacement to occur as tastemakers and quasi-state agencies such as the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau (SFCVB) made it a point to emphasize the Mission District's cultural diversity, the new restaurant scene, and its bohemian ambience as markers of a transitioning community safe for mass consumption. The SFCVB focused whatever attention it gave to the Mission District on the Valencia Street corridor and not the Mission Street corridor, the latter of which had a markedly pronounced working-class Latina/o presence.

The efforts to rebrand the Mission District prompted some real estate firms to rename parts of the Mission District. Soon, strange sounding sobriquets began cropping up throughout the neighborhood. Places such as "Lower Potrero Hill," "Inner Mission Dolores," and "Outer Mission Dolores" were invented as local real estate companies attempted to craft a new local imagination for the Mission, an imagination that muted the presence of the preexisting working-class Latina/o community. Changing the name of a contested place is a technique through which to cast it under erasure. The greater the silence, the larger the effort to "forget" space, the more the contested socio-political/cultural history of a place becomes safer to reinvent.

Conclusion

The city creaked and strained as the expansion of the downtown office-based economy brought new workers to the city and increased the pressure for existing housing by corporate employees who often outbid older residents. Similar to the ways by which the unintentional acts of tourists and consumers can drive a city or a district into a caricature of its former self, unrecognizable and homogenous, so too have these young affluent workers unintentionally altered the character of the Mission District. Ruth Glass, writing of 1964 London, notes how, "One by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower...Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district, it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed" (Glass, 1964: p. xviii). So it went in the Mission District. While some have argued that gentrification of the type written about by Ruth Glass in

scrutiny. Eventually, this increased scrutiny led to criminalization as San Francisco city officials attempted to stamp out this cultural expression. It should be noted that this lowriding subculture, the increased presence of police officers in the Mission District, and the eventual criminalization of Mission District youths coalesced around the time of widespread political racial unrest as typified by the Third World Liberation Front strike on the San Francisco State University campus.

⁹⁵ Gentrification is, of course, more than just the displacement of the preexisting residential working-class population, but is also the displacement of those businesses that serve this population. Between 1997 and 1999 commercial rents in the Mission District rose 42 percent. As a result only half of those businesses operating along the Valencia Street commercial strip in 1990 still remained in 1998 (Kennedy & Leonard, 2001; Alejandrino, 2002).

the early 1960s may have been an isolated phenomenon within a localized real estate market, the same cannot be said of its contemporary form. Contemporary urban economies rely evermore on professional employment, the expansion of the financial, insurance and real estate sectors, and tourism to replace their marked shift away from manufacturing and industrial economies (Neil Smith, 1996). This shift has indeed the case in modern San Francisco where San Francisco's elite have taken concerted efforts to do away with an outmoded manufacturing economy and those areas of the city where it has been most present.

Chapter Three:

Our First Meetings Were Brown Bag Lunches

Though the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition (MAC) had an active agenda that spanned ten years (1998-2008), this chapter focuses on the organizations formation and its most popular and openly contentious period, 1998-2002. Exploring MAC's initial rise and its early active years offer key ways through which to examine how space and spatiality play instrumental roles within social movement activity. Through this brief timeframe I explore how the members of the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition were able to rally great numbers of community residents – numbers not seen since the late-1970s when the Mission Coalition Organization (MCO) was at the peak of its powers – in support of its cause to halt gentrification and displacement in the Mission District. This chapter will begin by placing close attention on the use of “free” and/or “safe” spaces – two terms which I will use interchangeably – as somewhat overlooked spatial variables for social movement analysis (McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984; Evans & Boyte, 1986; Gamson, 1991, 1996; Couto, 1993; Routledge, 1993; Tarrow, 1998; Polletta, 1999; Tilly, 2000; Sewell, 2001).⁹⁶ Space, we must remember, is more than epiphenomenal or metaphorical fodder for social scientists. Indeed, as Henri Lefebvre (1991) reminds us, social spaces are dynamic forces that shape and are shaped by social relations of power, which coincide with a particular mode of production. As such, “free spaces” should be seen as both social and political areas that rely on human agency and capacity to create and sustain them – but which are not outside of structural relations of power – in order to preserve those spaces of resistance as vital sites for active movement projects (Pile, 1997). A popular example of a “free space” would include traditional Black churches in the United States, which played a significant role in the modern Civil Rights movement (Morris, 1984).

A New Leadership Takes the Lead

Benefiting largely from the institutional and ideological legacy of the Mission Coalition Organization's (MCO) highly visible struggle against redevelopment in the 1970s (Castells, 1983), and the continued regenerative presence of Latina/o immigrants arriving from disparate parts of Latin America, residents of the Mission District have cemented this community as a vibrant political place where social activism flourishes around working-class and Latina/o specific issues (Godfrey, 1988). As the MCO's star exploded in the late-1970s, dozens of Mission District residents, many of whom had been politicized through their direct or indirect contact with the MCO, were cast into the wider orbit of the Mission District. Realizing the still pressing need for social and economic equity, many of these community activists dedicated themselves to working within established service-provision and advocacy non-profits such as *La Raza en Acción Local*, the Mission Vocational Language School, and Mission Housing Development Corporation; or created entirely new community-based organizations that emerged in the wake of the MCO and the greater 1970s Chicano Civil Rights era such as *La Raza Centro Legal*, the Mission Neighborhood Health Center, and the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts. San Francisco's 1989 voter-approved “Sanctuary City” ordinance made it a city and county of refuge for all immigrants, a move that contributed to the greater movement of Central Americans to San Francisco and the Latina/o Mission District during a period in which many Central Americans were fleeing political turmoil and open warfare in their home countries. Soon

⁹⁶ For an explanation of how I use “free space” and/or “safe space” please refer to chapter one, page 35, footnote 27.

political solidarity and fraternity organizations such as *La Casa de Nicaragua*, and *La Casa del Salvador*, both of which often took a radical left-of-center political stance regarding the political activities in both Nicaragua and El Salvador, were established in the Mission District and the newly arrived Latina/o immigrants added yet another layer to the already politicized Latina/o presence in the neighborhood (Castells, 1983). The myriad non-profit and solidarity groups present in the Mission District furthered this community's reputation as home to a distinctive brand of contentious politics that buoys, and is buoyed by, an extensive network of community-based activists and non-profit organizations. Antonio Diaz, Program Director of People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights (PODER), Eric Quezada, former Director of Residential Programs at Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC) and current Executive Director of Dolores Street Community Services, and Nick Pagoulatos, former Executive Director of St. Peter's Housing Community and current Community Planning & Development Coordinator for Dolores Street Community Services, comment separately on this tradition:

“As you know you almost can't walk a block in the Mission without bumping into a community based organization, or a non-profit. A bit of an exaggeration, but for me, coming from Texas, I was just astounded at the richness of organizations that were in the neighborhood, not to mention the huge infrastructure to support community organizations and non-profits in the Bay Area. I mean, it's really unique.”⁹⁷

“There was always already a vibrant movement in the Mission because it's where political work happened. Whether you wanted to be a CISPES [Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador] activist, or you wanted to be a Venceremos Brigade person, or you wanted to work on indigenous issues, Cuba, whatever, the Mission is where it was at.”⁹⁸

“The Mission has an extremely long history of advocacy, which in part comes from the folks who were either already here, or who moved here during the 1960s and 70s. Many of those who moved here came from throughout Central America, and oftentimes from places where there was a preexisting history of radical politics, and/or a rich organizing tradition. They started organizing in the 1960s and 70s around the “Model Cities” initiative and started organizations like Mission Housing [Development Corporation], Mission Economic Development Agency, creating a really sturdy legacy. Actually it was more than a legacy. They helped extend or create a whole system of sister organizations that had existing relationships that could come together and start talking about things.”⁹⁹

Manuel Castells (1983), in his treatment of the Mission Coalition Organization, illustrates how Mission District residents have both politicized and reclaimed the public spaces of the community when he writes, “on the pavements, usually around the BART stations, flags and banners call for solidarity with the revolutionaries in Nicaragua, and El Salvador” (p. 108). For

⁹⁷ Diaz, Antonio, Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

⁹⁸ Quezada, Eric. Personal interview. 1 April 2011

⁹⁹ Pagoulatos, Nick. Personal interview. 1 April 2011

someone such as myself who grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area, the descriptive words of Antonio Diaz, Eric Quezada, and Nick Pagoulatos, and the image offered by Manuel Castells of the Mission District as a Latina/o place and a politicized space where liberal and left-leaning politics took firm root, was a popular one. And though I lived in a working-class suburban city on the eastern side of the San Francisco Bay, watching San Francisco and Mission District politics from afar helped shape my resolve that ordinary people can and will organize for social justice.

In the final year of my undergraduate career at the University of California, Berkeley, I wrote an honors thesis that asked why and how people involve themselves in social movements. Aware of the rising anti-displacement movement in San Francisco's Mission District, I reached out to the Mission District non-profit community hoping to use the nascent movement there as the subject of my research. After being given access to three community-based organizations (CBOs) I then began what became a six month project, running from October of 1999 through March of 2000. In that time, I acted as a participant-observer at the three CBOs. I divided my time so that I spent an equal three weeks working at each CBO, averaging nine hours of work per week. In that time I spoke with Spanish-speaking residents, either by telephone or in person, participated in poster painting projects, protest marches, and attended a range of community meetings. Near the end of the project the Executive Director of St. Peter's Housing Committee (SPHC), offered me the position of paid tenant counselor and community organizer. Having developed a good rapport with the small staff – five regular staff members and one Executive Director – of likeminded individuals dedicated to the pursuit of social justice, I agreed, and began working there in May of 2000.

As I worked my way through the intricacies of community politics I soon realized that the once vociferous and radical element of the neighborhood that had made it such a politically radical space had mellowed over the years as many of the older and larger non-profit organizations professionalized and entrenched themselves as service providers working from an advocacy model as opposed to an organizing model, while also aligning themselves much closer to the Mayor's office. Antonio Diaz comments on this shift:

“I do think part of it is the history and the remnants, if you will, of the MCO [Mission Coalition Organization], which did spawn different community institutions that are still around...I think that there's this rootedness, this connectedness to the neighborhood, which led to folks rather smartly setting up institutions to meet those community needs. I think part of the challenge has been that there hasn't been a similar type of infrastructure in terms of organizing the community. It's easier to get city, state, federal grants to provide services. It's harder to get the funding to do the organizing.”¹⁰⁰

As a result, Mission District non-profits developed and maintained a strong infrastructure for service provision. Unwilling to compromise their funding streams, the radical political activity that once typified Mission District politics in the 1970s and early 1980s, cooled.

However, by the late-1980s and early-1990s, a shift began to emerge as a new generation of Mission District leadership began to emerge. This newer generation of community activists focused largely on community specific issues. Many from this new wave came with the orientation that the scale of social activism and social justice should start at the local and

¹⁰⁰ Diaz, Antonio. Personal Interview. 11 August 2010.

neighborhood level. Wary of the inefficacy of the modern labor movement and its at times contradictory stance on issues relevant to communities of color,¹⁰¹ those from this generation took the community sidewalk, and not the factory floor, as the principal site where class struggle and the possible fissures for contesting power emanated. Aware that larger global forces help shape local socio-spatial relations, many of these activist were keenly attuned to the significance of solidarity and coalition building. This general course of action and vision of community and social justice challenged existing relationships and community politics:

“I think there was a level of the old guard and older leadership that was upset by the fact that the newer leadership was challenging part of the patterns of how work had been done before, which was one where developers or private entities would come in throw some money to certain organizations and they would be like, ‘sure, let’s move forward.’ I think it was also that some of the old guard that existed in the neighborhood was comfortable with status quo. Not to say they shut off any sense of outrage at the injustices that they would see, or injustices happening in the world and in the neighborhood, but just in terms of the work the organizations were doing, you know, there was a certain, ‘ok, well this is what we provide, and we’re getting our funding to do it and we’ll continue to go in that direction.’ Whereas I think, well I know, that the new leadership was not willing to do that...The new leadership felt that we’re not here for the benefit of just our organizations, but for the benefit of the community. What we wanted to do was to be more accountable to the folks that we’re serving or organizing with, and not just focus on the short term of the organization or the little fiefdom institution that a specific leader might be building.”¹⁰²

By the 1990s new community based organizations such as People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights (PODER) (founded in 1991 and led by Antonio Diaz), and Mission Agenda (formed in 1994 by longstanding homeless advocates Chris Daly and Richard Marquez) were challenging what the new cohort of Mission District activists understood as a stagnant political environment. Many of these new CBOs took on direct organizing campaigns, and created networks that extended beyond the Mission District. The change was not contained to new CBOs as organizations that had existed since the 1970s (St. Peter’s Housing Committee) brought new staff to their organizations that were committed to incorporating an organizing arm to go along with their already robust advocacy and social service programs. Even staff members

¹⁰¹ Deindustrialization, when combined with a rise in service sector employment, aggressive attacks by employers on National Labor Relations Board elections, and growing ineffective unionizing tactics, strategies and campaigns has had the effect of diminishing the number of American unionized workers since the mid-1940s (Voss & Sherman, 2000). By the 1980s, however, some in the U.S. labor movement began to build bridges with local community groups who saw the closure of factory plants as having a direct causal role in a community’s disinvestment (Breecher & Costello, 1990). By the 1990s, a new form of labor organizing began to take hold that included community-based worker centers. These worker centers were often located in disinvested working-class communities, many of which had high numbers of people of color residing within them. This new locational strategy intimated the new complexities and linkages between formal labor organizing and community organizing (Bonacich, 2000; Ganz et. al., 2004). The elections of John Sweeney, Richard Trumka, and Linda Chavez-Thompson into the top offices of the AFL-CIO furthered the sea change within the U.S. labor movement. Since their elections the AFL-CIO has created a separate organizing department and made concerted efforts to support coordinated large-scale industry-specific organizing drives (Bronfenbrenner et al., 1998).

¹⁰² Diaz, Antonio. Personal Interview. 11 August 2010.

with more conservative governing boards such as Mission Economic Development Association (MEDA), an organization in existence since the mid-1970s that concentrated its efforts on retaining Latina/o commercial and retail businesses in the community, and Mission Housing Development Corporation (MHDC), a non-profit community building developer that came directly out of the MCO's struggle to gain control over the Model Cities program, began to recognize the changing politics in the neighborhood, adapting accordingly. Each of these abovementioned organizations would play pivotal roles as Mission District residents and San Francisco activists attempted to stymie the wave of gentrification that roared through the city from the late-1990s to the early-2000s. Before this could occur, however, each group would work closely as co-members of a coalition eager to improve the substandard conditions that plagued single room occupancy (SRO) hotels in San Francisco's Mission District.

MSROC Leads Into MAC

In 1992, with funding coming from the Federal Enterprise Community program and resource support from San Francisco's Department of Public Health, MHDC launched the Mission Single Room Occupancy Collaborative (MSROC). The established goal of the collaborative group was to push for improvements in the substandard living conditions found in many Mission District single room occupancy (SRO) hotels.¹⁰³ The MSROC was comprised of regular staff members from Mission Agenda, Mission Housing Development Corporation, and St. Peter's Housing Committee.¹⁰⁴ Members of the MSROC met in the meeting space of MHDC's newly constructed, eighty-unit, Apollo SRO hotel. Located just doors from Mission Housing Development Corporation's offices at the Centro Del Pueblo Building (CDP),¹⁰⁵ the meeting space was convenient and accessible to all members of the new MSROC. Each member of the new collaborative shared the belief that long sustained change would be best served if the capacity of the community could be raised enough so that each resident had the potential to act as a knowledgeable agent for change. Though members of the MSROC held this common vision, the practical application of that vision proved difficult. Often dealing with a fluid and changing population, many SRO tenants were more accustomed to receiving aid and advocacy than the capacity building training that is common in an organizing campaign. This shift from a direct service provision model to a community organizing model made some tenants of SROs wary of the MSROC. The fluidity of the population that live in SRO hotels, in combination with the

¹⁰³ SROs, popularly seen as housing of last resort, were notorious for unsanitary conditions and fire dangers. Consisting of a tiny room with no kitchen or private bathroom, out of date electrical wiring, and poorly insulated windows, Mission District SRO hotels often resembled haphazardly built turn-of-the-century tenements. Housing an exceptionally politically marginalized and economically vulnerable population, and a lack of enforcement from the city's Department of Building Inspection (DBI), Mission District SRO property owners saw little to push them towards maintaining a healthy living environment.

¹⁰⁴ While these three core organizations comprised the central body of the MSROC, staff members from PODER were also affiliated with the group. Already operating under a community organizing framework, staff members at PODER often led workshops and participated in volunteer-driven MSROC campaigns.

¹⁰⁵ In 1992, MHDC opened the Centro Del Pueblo (CDP) building. CDP was designed and built to concentrate several complimentary Mission District community-based non-profit organizations into one central location. Located between 15th and 16th Streets on Valencia Street, just two blocks west of the 16th and Mission streets BART station, CDP was home to many non-profits including PODER, SPHC, La Raza Centro Legal, and, of course MHDC, which acted as the master tenant for the building. MEDA took up a brief residency in the building before moving on to another site. CDP meeting halls and courtyards would become critical meeting sites as MAC efforts ramped up.

skepticism that met the members of the MSROC, often meant that MSROC members first had to act as advocates for SRO tenants than as organizers in a campaign with SRO tenants for better living conditions. Members of the MSROC confronted land owners, property managers and various San Francisco agencies (e.g. the Department of Building Inspection, and the Department of Public Health), advocating on behalf of the people living in SRO hotels. Over time, as MSROC staff members grew increasingly proficient at rallying SRO tenants to push hotel owners and city agencies to address the unacceptable living conditions, the collaborative shifted from its role as an advocate into its more desired role of community capacity builder.

SRO property owners and management staff, many of whom openly doubted how effective efforts to organize SRO tenants could be, allowed staff members from the MSROC into their buildings during early door-knocking campaigns. As the MSROC gained traction, however, SRO managers and property owners began to deny MSROC organizers access to their buildings. This denied access had an unintended, but beneficial, result for the MSROC. Tenants of SROs, many of whom were often at odds with management, saw the adversarial relationship between the property owners and/or management staff and members of the MSROC, which led to their further understanding that the members of the MSROC could be trusted allies. The denial of entrance also had the added benefit of concentrating SRO tenants into the Apollo's meeting space. SRO tenants from around the Mission District then had a central space where they could meet, vocalize their complaints with each other and plan actions free of reprisal or surveillance of SRO management staff.

The MSROC eventually become a more visible political entity than the organizations that comprised it. While St. Peter's Housing Committee had a durable legacy in the community as a respected Spanish-speaking tenant advocacy and social service non-profit, it was only beginning to incorporate an organizational framework into its overall mission. Organizational changes were less of an obstacle at Mission Agenda. The small non-profit, which was widely regarded as a politically radical organization, had other obstacles to overcome. Chief among those were its limited funding and resource streams and the lack of a deep historical legacy in the neighborhood (Fishman, 2006). SPHC and Mission Agenda's issues notwithstanding, both organizations launched small and successful campaigns that resulted in each gaining wider acceptance as capable grassroots community organizing agencies. By the latter half of the 1990s SPHC and Mission Agenda were staffed with seasoned and respected community organizers.

Changing the culture of MHDC, which had much of the "old guard" Mission leadership on its Executive Board, was a slower and more difficult process than had been the case at either SPHC or Mission Agenda. As a well-established community development corporation with a multi-million dollar portfolio MHDC owned and managed thirty-one properties, making it one of the largest and most successful non-profit community development corporations in San Francisco. With a far greater profile than either of the other two organizations that made up the MSROC, MHDC's comparatively conservative Board of Directors was less willing to risk its reputation and financial footing by engaging in political activities that would put them in jeopardy (Fishman, 2006). Eric Quezada comments on MHDC's political ambivalence,

“...who should have been leading the fight was the people who had been here for a while, who had been the original organizers of the MCO and the La Raza groups. They were the ones that had, you know, won, through their organizing, these vital community institutions. But I think what happened was once they won these institutions, like Mission Housing [Development Corporation], they took a

step back. I think they abandoned organizing and just kind of became service providers. And worse than that, I think they really lost sight of what their original kind of role was in the neighborhood. So, you know, those folks had gotten well connected, they had, you know, built relationships with City Hall and other politicians and had stopped organizing. They felt like they were the entitled leaders of the neighborhood.”¹⁰⁶

Similar to SPHC, MHDC had recently hired key staff members (former Executive Director Carlos Romero, Community Planner and Architect Fernando Martí, and Director of Resident Programs Eric Quezada) who began pushing the organization towards a community capacity building model, and away from the Board of Directors more conservative service provider vision (Fishman, 2006).

Acting as a semi-autonomous entity, staff members from the various agencies participating in the MSROC were able to channel their energies toward cultivating an environment of community capacity building, while simultaneously engaging in regular grassroots community organizational campaigns. The principal campaign that linked these two together was the MSROC’s fire safety campaign. During the 1990s nearly 1000 rooms in SRO hotels were lost to fire, 400 of which were lost in 1999 alone (Sullivan, 2000; San Francisco Board of Supervisors’ SRO Health and Safety Task Force and the Families in SROs Workgroup Subcommittee, 2001). Between 1998 and 2002 more than 1,700 SRO units were destroyed by fire in San Francisco, displacing hundreds of residents in the process (Fishman, 2006). The overwhelming majority of these fires from the hotels’ antiquated electrical system being overburdened. Most SRO hotel rooms carry only a single power outlet. This single outlet may have sufficed when the buildings were constructed – many during the late 1800s and early 1900s – but modern needs for electrical power often taxed the out-of-date electrical wiring. It was not uncommon to see a power strip connecting nearly a dozen electrical components to a single wall outlet. An electrical fire was almost overdetermined as overextended power outlets operating under an old wiring system often short circuited. (The Citywide Families in SROs Collaborative, 2001). Compounding the danger were poor evacuation plans, a lack of fire extinguishers, and a general neglect of sanitary living conditions (Sullivan, 2000; San Francisco Board of Supervisors’ SRO Health and Safety Task Force and the Families in SROs Workgroup Subcommittee, 2001). The MSROC organized SRO fire survivors, demanding improved city emergency response services and preventative measures. Only after several MSROC protests and relentless appearances at various public meetings did the MSROC receive proper funding from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and the Department of Health. The MSROC was tasked with acting as the lead organization for the city’s SRO Fire Prevention and Stabilization Program (Fishman, 2006). As members of the MSROC raised issues pertaining to safety and livability standards, the city responded by enacting a San Francisco SRO Health and Safety Task Force which sought to address and ameliorate these issues in a systematic way. The MSROC’s work on fire safety issues allowed the group to open up greater demands for improved living conditions in SRO hotels. With the backing of key city agencies the MSROC assumed a quasi-institutional authority position that allowed it to be more confrontational when confronting recalcitrant SRO property owners and obstinate city departments (Fishman, 2006). As once MSROC member states,

¹⁰⁶ Quezada, Eric. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

“The Collaborative could work in a more confrontational and radical way than it could otherwise as a single entity. It gave organizational cover to go after DBI [Department of Building Inspection]...We could play good cop, bad cop with Mission Agenda as the wild eyed radicals and MHDC as the respectable voice of reason” (Fishman, 2006: p. 57).

It was not until the mid-1990s, however, that a unified discussion around gentrification began to emerge. At regular MSROC meetings, staff members from Mission Agenda began talking about the changing character of 16th Street. Chris Daly and Richard Marquez spoke about the dreadful juxtaposition between the new bars, restaurants, and upscale art galleries operating on the floors of SRO hotels (Fishman, 2006). Accompanying Marquez and Daly’s observations was the practice of “musical rooms” inside Mission District SROs, and the troubling rise of entire families living in an SRO. SRO property owners used the tactic of “musical rooms”, forcing tenants to move from one room to another. The timing of “musical rooms” is key. Should a tenant reside in their unit for thirty consecutive days they must be granted full tenant rights and a rent controlled unit. With no codified tenant rights prior to those thirty days, SRO tenants either had to abide to the request to change rooms, forfeiting any accrued consecutive days, or risk a likely eviction if they refused – with no codified tenant rights the property owner and/or manager is under no obligation to offer a “just cause” for a tenant’s eviction.¹⁰⁷ This practice allowed SRO property owners and their management staff to evict their tenants and/or raise their rents rather easily.

Unlike the tenants in Chinatown SROs, where a tradition of multi-generational families living in residential hotels has long been the norm, residents of Mission District SROs historically tended to be transient. While one may see the occasional family living in a Mission District SRO, it is an isolated and rare occurrence. By the mid-1990s however, this rare and isolated occurrence became rather frequent and common. Working-class families living in SROs proved to be the proverbial canary in the mine as they began to use SRO hotels as a stop-gap measure before heading into homelessness (The Citywide Families in SROs Collaborative, 2001).

Soon, the issue went beyond the MSROC. Staff members at St. Peter’s Housing Committee, Mission Housing Development Corporation, People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights and Mission Economic Development Agency began seeing these trends as residents began arriving at their offices demanding services. St. Peter’s Housing Committee saw dozens people anxious waiting to speak with a Spanish-speaking tenant counselor/advocate regarding an eviction notice recently received. It seemed that overnight my individual caseload went from handling an average of ten evictions a week, to taking on ten eviction cases per day.¹⁰⁸ The spike was discernible and troubling, and as Nick Pagoulatos comments,

¹⁰⁷ The MSROC staged several actions and mounted a campaign to end the practice of “musical rooms”. Unfortunately, while the MSROC confronted property owners for the gross exploitation of an already vulnerable group and targeted the City Attorney’s Office for lack of enforcement, the practice of “musical rooms” continued.

¹⁰⁸ Another common issue was a rising trend of living more densely. While it is certainly true that Latina/os have more familiarity with dense living conditions – families residing within the same house often include the nuclear family in addition to extended family members such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc. – the ever constricting economic condition of gentrification led many to live even more densely than before. This push towards greater density oftentimes resulted in the surpassing stated unit occupancy limits. Exceeding occupancy limits was grounds for a “just cause” eviction as it represented a breach of contract.

“There was literally a palpable. Everybody was walking around with that fear that they were gonna get evicted. If you were a renter, there was always that possibility, but it had reached a new level. Nobody felt safe. And it went beyond [housing]. Actual organizations, non-profits were being evicted wholesale as well.”¹⁰⁹

As a community development corporation that had several properties dedicated to low-income community residents, MHDC saw an overwhelming increase in the number of applications and queries for the availability of units in those buildings.¹¹⁰ From a tenant rights organization and housing developer perspective, the staff members from St. Peter’s Housing Committee and MHDC began to feel the initial tentacles of what would become a more totalizing wave of gentrification. As Eric Quezada notes:

“The tenant rights and the housing movement was a little more developed than the land use stuff, and the anti-gentrification stuff, but it hadn’t really come together in the big picture. There was definitely housing activists around that had been working around displacement stuff, but it was sort of scattered, piecemeal, and unfocused. It wasn’t until MAC emerged that we began to coalesce all of these different community groups.”¹¹¹

Similar to the pressures faced by staff members at SPHC and MHDC, staff members at PODER confronted related issues. Faced with considerable travel time and cost, many of the youth who participated in PODER’s community organizer training programs dropped out as commuting from places on the eastern side of the San Francisco Bay – Richmond and East Oakland – became too difficult to sustain. Staff members at the Mission Economic Development Agency saw an increase in small neighborhood businesses coming by and asking for assistance in locating and procuring loan opportunities in a sort of last ditch effort to continue operating in the Mission. As discussed in the preceding chapter, the issue of commercial gentrification was so pronounced that MEDA sponsored several staff members in gathering data that documented the

¹⁰⁹ Pagoulatos, Nick. Personal Interview. 5 August 2010

¹¹⁰ Mission Housing Development Corporation, established in 1971, came out of the Mission Model Neighborhood Coalition (MMNC). The MMNC was created after a hard fought battle between the MCO and then San Francisco Mayor Joseph Alioto over the course the Model Cities program would take in the Mission District. As Manuel Castells (1983) writes, “Model Cities was for the mayor the channel through which funds and jobs could be distributed to the blacks and Latinos in exchange for their political allegiance” (p. 114). For the MCO, control over the Model Cities program meant the ability to oversee it independent of City Hall. The MCO felt it, “should be created as a neighbourhood-based [sic], private corporation, controlled by the community and operated with funds directly allocated to it from the Model Cities Programme [sic]” (Castells, 1983: p. 114). The mayor, on the other hand, wanted the program ran by the city’s Community Development Administration, while allowing the, “participation of blacks and Latinos on its board of directors” (Castells, 1983: p 114). The final agreed upon compromise, which HUD also had to approve as Model Cities was a federally sponsored program, gave the MCO the ability to appoint two-thirds of the twenty-one members of a newly created public agency, the Mission Model Neighborhood Corporation. The MMNC created the non-profit Mission Housing Development Corporation to design, build and manage affordable housing units in the Mission District and to provide affordable loans for rehabilitating distressed neighborhood properties. By the 1990s MHDC was a mature and respected community organization with a portfolio that boasted over 2,000 built units of affordable housing in the Mission District.

¹¹¹ Quezada, Eric. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

disturbing trend (MEDA took their findings to the appropriate city agencies hoping to find some systemic way to retain these businesses) (Kennedy & Leonard, 2000). As both Eric Quezada and Antonio Diaz recount in separate interviews, there was a much wider view of the changing effects gentrification was causing:

“There was sort of this fledgling consciousness that was spreading throughout the Mission, especially around those more progressive non-profits. We all worked out of Centro Del Pueblo on Valencia Street, so, you know, it didn’t take rocket science to figure out something was happening as soon as we walked out the doors, you know. People were coming in to our agencies wanting help with evictions, wanting help, wanting housing, wanting help keeping their businesses open. So it became very clear that we needed to come together to form some kind of an opposition to what was happening. And, you know, there was a lot of energy, a lot of new energy.”¹¹²

“Because of the live/work loft development that was proliferating, initially in the northeast Mission, and the increasing presence of dotcom companies in the neighborhood, we all recognized, really pretty quickly, what was happening in the neighborhood. We saw the connecting threads, how eliminating blue-collar jobs, and having landlords kick people out because it was more profitable to turn it into a live/work loft caused a squeeze. The unchecked and steady chipping away of the community forced us to respond and do something about it. It was pretty clear to us all that this was not a fight that we could do separately, but that we really needed to have a coordinated response for addressing these issues. It wasn’t just one developer, it was whole institutions. Through our weekly meetings, and really our daily interactions with each other, we came to recognize how our own city government was allowing the type of development that took place to foment, resulting in the vicious wave of gentrification and displacement that we saw in the late 1990s.”¹¹³

Brown Bags and Saturday Morning Study Sessions

The early rumblings of what would later be called the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition (MAC) were small and humble. The organizations that came to constitute the core of MAC were welded together through their existing collaborative relationship within the Mission Single Room Occupancy Coalition and their shared address at the Centro Del Pueblo building. Being closely linked, both spatially and ideologically, “played a big role in our being able to communicate and meet regularly. I mean our first few meetings were brown bag lunches where we would all talk about stuff right here in the Plaza [Del Sol]”.¹¹⁴ Centro Del Pueblo meeting spaces allowed activists to congregate and speak openly and honestly about their observations.

¹¹² Diaz, Antonio. Personal Interview. 1 April 2011.

¹¹³ Quezada, Eric. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

¹¹⁴ The Plaza Del Sol is a courtyard that connects the Centro Del Pueblo building to a Mission Housing Development Corporation apartment building by the same name. The Plaza is easily accessed by CDP tenants through the interior of the building by way of a common hallway that has a door leading directly onto it. Plaza Del Sol residents merely had to walk outside of their homes to be inside the courtyard. Because of its many sitting areas, Plaza Del Sol was a common gathering area for many of those who worked at CDP. Quezada, Eric. Personal Interview. 5 September 2010.

This relatively open and free exchange in turn allowed activists involved in the nascent anti-displacement movement to achieve an awareness that went beyond their own organization's specific response.

Alongside the nascent anti-displacement movement in the Mission District was another set of actors were working separately on issues related to displacement. Originally centered in the South of Market area, the Save Our Shops (SOS) groups, a collection of South of Market residents, nightclub owners, local area artists and workers, organized themselves into a more potent organization called the Coalition for Jobs Arts and Housing (CJAH) (Parker & Pascual, 2002). Made up of long-time slow-growth land use activists, artists, labor organizers, and area residents, the fifteen-member CJAH group, "dedicated itself to developing a unified, and intelligent community voice on issues of development" (Parker & Pascual, 2002: p.).

Similar to MAC's initial meetings, CJAH held informal meetings, usually in one of the various nightclubs in the SoMa (Parker & Pascual, 2002). The Saturday morning strategy sessions were often deliberately educational and informative in function. CJAH's steering committee – a mark that distinguished how, organizationally, far ahead CJAH was to MAC – used to the sessions to deliver lessons on land use regulations and policies, and the area's political-economic historical legacy (Parker & Pascual, 2002). CJAH members organized themselves into three smaller groups that operated at the neighborhood scale, "each responsible for reaching out to the various constituencies affected by rezoning" (Parker & Pascual, 2002: p.62) in and around San Francisco's Eastern Neighborhoods area.¹¹⁵ CJAH members relied on an established network of community based non-profit organizations and local community activists to provide technical support and resources to the group. This assemblage included veteran land use attorney Sue Hestor "who offered legal services pro-bono, filing lawsuits against developers and assisting businesses with displacement battles and several non-profit housing developers and community activists who were very experienced in leading community-initiated referenda in San Francisco." (Parker & Pascual, 2002: p. 62)

CJAH, believing that displacement of art and small industrial spaces in the South of Market area was directly related to developers' exploitation of San Francisco's live/work ordinance, set about the task of fighting against the seemingly endless tide of live/work development projects that came through the San Francisco Planning Department. Rather early on artist Debra Walker and land use attorney Sue Hestor, two key figures in CJAH, were among the few to address displacement from this vantage point:

"Debra [Walker] and I were the first people to tangle with live/works. Live/works were incredibly stealthy in how it came through the city...We are talking about the mid-1990s here. Debra's then partner called me because they were dealing with a building right across the street from where they lived, on Harrison Street. It was under the radar, and [the developer] had evicted all the tenants, which were a mix of light-industrial shops and working artists. Debra, because she and her partner lived in the part of the Mission where all of this stuff was happening,

¹¹⁵ In February 1998, after a heated public hearing where the Planning Department listened to impassioned public testimony from small business owners in the South of Market businesses regarding compatibility issues between their businesses and the live/work lofts being constructed near each other, the San Francisco Planning Department decided to conduct a land use study to rezone the district. Officials at the Planning Department claimed that the speedy nature of the study would mean that there would be no room for community participation (Pascual & Parker, 2002)

started noticing the trend early on because it was all around her. There was an SRO type conversion of a motel on Harrison [Street], this was the blocks between 16th and 17th [Streets], as well as an auto shop and motorcycle shop. All the while the [San Francisco] Planning Department was just approving all these projects just at the staff level.”¹¹⁶

San Francisco’s Planning Department and Planning Commission, CJAH’s primary target, bore the brunt of the group’s attacks. In May of 1998, members of CJAH, utilizing geographic information system data gathered by an area social service provider calling itself the South of Market Foundation (SOMF), demonstrated the South of Market area as one that was “fast transforming from a blue-collar neighborhood into a chic residential and retail district” (Parker & Pascual, 2002: p. 55) due in great part to the overdevelopment of luxury live/work lofts. This study, which the group presented to the San Francisco Planning Department and Planning Commission, showed discernable links between the exploitation of the live/work ordinance and the loss of light industrial spaces, both of which resulted in a clear and significant loss in population numbers and in fees and taxes otherwise collectable by the City and County of San Francisco (Parker & Pascual, 2002). Despite the overwhelming evidence presented, the officers and staff members at the San Francisco Planning Department remained unmoved.¹¹⁷

While CJAH members engaged in an array of different actions and tactics to raise awareness around displacement and live/work exploitation, its preferred method was to diligently track each and every live/work development project that came through the Planning Department in order to force discretionary hearings. Similar to the early-1980s, when Sue Hestor was a key member of a cadre of slow-growth advocates calling themselves San Franciscans for Reasonable Growth (SFRG), a group who successfully fought back against San Francisco’s unmitigated downtown office building growth, she challenged nearly every live/work development project using the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). She demanded environmental impact reports (EIRs), and filed negative declarations when applicable. Tracing all of these projects, however, proved to be a long and arduous process, as most live/work projects, “...didn’t have any notices, they didn’t have any [environmental impact reports] filed. It was a huge project just to even find out about them.”¹¹⁸ An example of the difficulty in locating the proper documents can be seen in how Hestor describes a building conversion project of the old Best Foods Mayonnaise factory on Bryant and 19th Streets in the Northeast Mission Industrial Zone area:

“It’s *huge*, it’s an *entire factory*, a one-block big factory. And [the developer] changed it into live/works, offices, a Williams-Sonoma warehouse testing company, and all kinds of things...And the permits, well the staff folks at the [San Francisco] Planning Department couldn’t find them. They couldn’t find the permits because the permit expeditor was filing them under a different block number. Best Foods had two blocks, they had this block here, and they had this

¹¹⁶ Hestor, Sue. Personal Interview. 17 September 2010.

¹¹⁷ The San Francisco Planning Department collaborated with the South of Market Foundation in 1996 on a series of GIS studies that tracked the dynamic rise of the post-industrial high tech sector of the economy against the decline of the area’s blue-collar spaces. The study found that the construction of “new live/work units was a serious threat to the South of Market’s economy due to business displacement caused by incompatible uses or evictions.” (Parker & Pascual, 2002: p. 58). Despite this knowledge, and because live/work projects were not violating any zoning or land use policy, live/work lofts continued to be approved at the Planning Department.

¹¹⁸ Hestor, Sue C. Personal interview. April 1, 2011

block there... And I would call the zoning administrator and say, 'I'm trying to force a discretionary review of this, but I can't find the damned permit.' He said it couldn't exist. It doesn't exist because they couldn't find [the permit]. This is what Debra [Walker] and I were doing. We did all of this work, all of it complicated. We had to figure out how to get a handle on this whole thing" (emphasis in original interview).¹¹⁹

This portion of CJAH's work, which surrounded tackling specious live/work development projects at the Planning Department permit approval level, predates the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition. There was, as Sue Hestor points out, "a floating crap game in the Mission, of people's opposition on Mission District issues, but no consolidated or coordinated effort like what MAC was to become."¹²⁰ Sue Hestor and some of the other members of CJAH, such as Debra Walker and Jake McGoldrick, began going down to the San Francisco Planning Department and accessing their computer system trying to find out who the permit expeditor was, who the project architect was, who the building engineer and developer were, all in the effort to force public hearings. Of course, assiduously tracking and challenging every live/work project requires one to dedicate himself or herself to the tedium of sitting before the Planning Department's permit database. Should a dubious project be identified the next step would be to pay the appropriate filing fees in order to challenge the project. Hestor, correctly reading the unabated passing of live/work development projects as detrimental to healthy urban growth, volunteered her time to the task of ferreting out suspect projects, leaving only the matter of the filing fees. As Sue Hestor recalls,

"I went to some friends and said 'this is a scam, we can't afford not to fight these. I'll do all the volunteer work, but we need the filing fees.' In a matter of a few weeks I think I managed to raise a \$5000 fund for filing fees. As we'd get a whiff of a project, we'd go and force a hearing on it. It became such an explosive issue that we put together a working group that worked on just the live/work scam."¹²¹

CJAH's project-by-project vigilance represents the politics of place at the smallest and most complex scale (Pascual & Parker, 2002). While CJAH did enjoy a moderate level of success, the enormous pressures and time commitments associated with countless battles before the Planning Department and the Planning Commissioners forced many of CJAH activists to leave the organization. The disparate backgrounds of the members meant that while some were diligent students of land use and zoning, others simply understood that they did not want to be displaced. Fighting each and every live/work development project, while certainly an important tactic, also had the unintended outcome of turning CJAH into a technically driven, land use policy entity, and by August of 1998, CJAH, under strain from engaging in parcel politics and losing a great deal of its mobilization base, lost nearly every member. The small technical steering committee, however, remained mostly intact and continued meeting on Saturday mornings (Parker & Pascual, 2002).

As CJAH was scaling back, Mission activists began to ramp up their efforts. Near the end of 1998, the informal Friday afternoon lunch meetings shifted to Friday evenings. The shift

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

coincided with the anti-displacement movement gaining momentum and numbers. The courtyard at the Plaza Del Sol building was not capable of holding the dozens wanting to work on the issue of displacement and gentrification. A shift was made to use the second floor auditorium in the Centro Del Pueblo building. By this point, staff members from the MSROC and varying CDP non-profits were developing a deeper and broader analysis of gentrification, and beginning to reach out to organizations beyond those already in the Mission District. The leap in scale across the semiotic landscape is a profound one, “as it allows ‘their protest over there’ to become ‘our protest over here.’” (Herrod & Wright, 2002: p. 4.). Antonio Diaz recounts how the early anti-displacement movement tried to reach beyond the local scale, removing it from the dominant narrative that gentrification was merely a “natural” localized phenomena within a niche real estate market and its attendant displacement only individually felt, in an effort to “socialize a conflict” (Nevins, 2004):

“There was a meeting, in fact, that we had with [people from] Oakland, Richmond and other parts of San Francisco to talk about these things. Part of why that even occurred was the new leadership and the kind of political mindset that we carried. We all knew that this couldn’t just be happening here, in the Mission. We saw people leave for Oakland, Richmond, Vallejo. We knew what was happening here, and assumed it must be being felt elsewhere as well. So, we tried to collaborate with folks on creating some strategies to support one another, transferring lessons learned.”¹²²

Out of this meeting came education sessions initiated by staff from PODER, St. Peter’s Housing Committee, and MHDC on linkages between the region’s economic restructuring to global pressures and gentrification at the local level. These internal sessions were later formalized by the Center for Political Education (CPE), a progressive collective of community leaders, which held a community political-education session entitled “Brown + Brown = Gentrification” in 1999 wherein they linked Mayor Willie Brown of San Francisco and Mayor Jerry Brown of Oakland as mayors of adjoining Bay Area cities that were heralding the regions “new” post-industrial workforce and global position within the electronics industry while also promoting the gentrification of low-income and working-class neighborhoods within primarily communities of color (Fishman, 2006).

Along with being an MHDC staff member, Eric Quezada was also a former staff and current Board member of PODER as well as an active member of the CPE collective. As the anti-displacement movement began to form, Quezada utilized his extensive social network to cast the struggle against gentrification and displacement in the Mission as one that should be seen in its wider scope. In so doing, Quezada became an essential bridge between the growing ad hoc coalition and other city activists and organizations. His position within MHDC allowed him to stay in contact with other community development corporations throughout San Francisco. While reaching out to other San Francisco community development corporations, he was also able to pull in key members of the Council of Community Housing Organizations (CCHO) such as Rene Cazanave and William Welch.¹²³ While openly presenting itself as a politically

¹²² Diaz, Antonio. Personal Interview. 1 April 2011.

¹²³ Popularly called Choo-Choo, CCHO is a highly regarded non-profit organization within San Francisco’s housing activist network. Founded more than 30 years ago by Rene Cazanave and Calvin Welch, the Council of Community Housing Organizations is a comprised of twenty-four San Francisco affordable housing organizations. Among

progressive organization, CCHO had, over the years, steered itself towards changing San Francisco land use policy through electoral and legal challenges. As such, the amount of grassroots activism they actually engaged in, outside of formal voter campaign issues, was minimal. Cazanave and Welch, after attending the weekly Friday evening strategy sessions rather regularly, became more deeply involved with the early anti-displacement movement. Quezada recalls how those already involved in the movement pushed and challenged CCHO:

“I think we brought more of an activist energy that hadn’t been there for a while. I mean [CCHO] was active, but it was more around stuff like precincts walking during elections, and placing some pretty progressive ballot measures up for voter approval. Some of us in the meetings were coming from a background where we wanted to take action into the streets and into the community. We wanted to rally mass action and support, and while Rene and William still had that radical spirit, for whatever reason they just weren’t as active as they once were. I really think when they got in with us we infused more action oriented politics from them. And not just [CCHO], but different [community development corporations] across the city, like Chinatown CDC, and Bernal CDC who we reached out to were also affected...Soon it felt like all sorts of group started emerging, and thinking about organizing in a deeper way. It was a fascinating time in that sense, there was a lot of action, a lot of movement and I think we began to build power in the city, grassroots power.”¹²⁴

After taking part in a 1996 door-knocking campaign initiated by the staff members at PODER, Quezada, became aware of the issues in the Northeast Mission Industrial Zone and how the exploitation of the live/work ordinance was adversely affecting local artists. He realized that the displacement of the artist community in the NEMIZ was, “the first wave of mass evictions that were beginning to take place so we began to talk more and more with folks in the group called CJAH and had strategy sessions with them where we began making greater and greater connecting threads between their struggle and ours, and it became pretty clear that their struggle was ours, and our struggle was theirs”.¹²⁵ Sue Hestor, who was also pulled into MAC’s orbit, echoes Quezada’s point when she recounts,

“back then [MAC was] not heavily involved in the live/work battle. They were fighting all these pressures of competition for land, but there was enough of a link between their stuff and ours that Debra and I started going to the MAC meetings, which I think were held in the auditorium over at Centro Del Pueblo. So [Debra and I] started doing the Mission work as well as our artist live/work thing... [MAC’s] initial involvement was not the battle of live/work, but it soon wound up there because it was the battle of the Mission. And so, we started pulling our efforts into organizing. In fact, I’m the one who gave MAC its name. At one

CCHO’s many achievements its most noticeable may be the creation and preservation of more than 20,000 affordable housing units in San Francisco, and its instrumental role in restructuring San Francisco’s land use policy (CCHO was key in the successful passage of San Francisco’s 1986 Proposition M, a citizen sponsored initiative that created the first annual growth limit on high-rise development in the United States).

¹²⁴ Quezada, Eric. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

meeting they were calling themselves something strange. I said, ‘we can’t be calling ourselves this strange name, we need something easier to say, something that identifies us as a Mission anti-displacement group’. And they said, ‘ok, that’s what we’ll call it’. That’s where the name MAC comes from.”¹²⁶

Sue Hestor’s naming of MAC came during an April 2000 meeting held at the Centro del Pueblo where the nascent anti-displacement movement was attempting to develop an articulate and cohesive response to news that Eikon Investments, the newly minted owners of the National Guard Armory on 14th and Mission Streets, had proposed to convert the massive structure into 265,000 square feet of high-tech office space. The Armory building occupies half of an entire city block. The proposed development project, “the equivalent of a downtown skyscraper placed on its side, would bring in approximately 1,500-2,000 workers everyday into the low-income neighborhood” (Fishman, 2006: p. 64). Eikon’s project raised the potential threat of significant secondary displacement to an alarming level. In a strange sense of irony, the Armory’s next door neighbor, *Arriba Juntos*, a community based organization borne out of the MCO’s 1970s struggle against redevelopment and dedicated to protecting the employment outlook and rights of Mission District residents, was accused of selling out to the developers as they entered into negotiations to secure a space within the Armory building (Fishman, 2006)

Conclusion: A Big Upsurge in Consciousness

As the crisis of gentrification grew in the Mission District, so did MAC activities. Mission District politics began to coalesce around the issue of gentrification and displacement, and MAC was there to take the lead. As Eric Quezada, Member of MAC and Director of Residential Programs at MHDC, comments,

“groups that were on the fringe at that time started to figure out stuff was happening. There was a big upsurge in consciousness in the Mission District and MAC stepped into a leadership role, representing the first upsurge in urban organizing in the Mission District around urban issues since probably the early ‘80s. People, of course, knew [MAC] was around and doing stuff, but they really didn’t know what we were or what we were going to become. So, when things got to the point of crisis, MAC jumped to the forefront, you know, with this whole new organizing model from people that were coming out of either the environmental justice movement, or some other social justice movement, or who had been involved in the Rodney King stuff, or done anti-prop 187 work, or the first anti-Gulf war kind of work. [MAC members] had good principled politics, worked with good people, and we had an analysis of the situation.”¹²⁷

While community based organizations such as St. Peter’s Housing Committee and PODER, both of which had small staff sizes and a left-of-center board of directors, were able to shift their organizational models relatively easily, larger and more mature community based organizations found the transition much more difficult. Mission Housing Development Corporation, the largest community based organization in the Mission District with the greatest potential to turn out staff and residents to MAC actions, facts that made MHDC the most important member of MAC, was

¹²⁶ Hestor, Sue C. Personal Interview. 1 April 2011.

¹²⁷ Quezada, Eric. Personal Interview. 1 April 2011.

governed by a board of directors that largely opposed MAC efforts. MHDC's board of directors contended that the political blowback from engaging in anti-displacement activity could potentially diminish their ability to gain funding for future projects (Fishman, 2006). MHDC staff, undeterred by the stance taken by its board of directors, continued to work to support MAC goals and provide much needed space for MAC activities.¹²⁸ While CJAH and CCHO never wholly integrated into MAC, both allowed MAC members to connect with progressive forces from different demographics across the city, while also offering key historical and educational lessons for the rising Mission Anti-displacement Coalition, resulting in a clear and emerging citywide movement. Together, all of MAC's parts were able to voice and direct a rising anger at what many community people felt was a biased agenda of Mayor Brown and the Planning Commission.

MAC prepared to fuse the overlapping base constituencies of its member organizations: Latina/o families, immigrants, renters, youths, seniors, SRO tenants, day laborers, small businesses, other community based non-profits and service providers, and other multi-racial low-income and working-class people. It also began to scale its community response against downtown-type high tech office development and upscale housing development that did not meet community needs and would cause displacement. MAC's organizations and leadership were able to draw from previous experience working together. Most of the organizations were in close proximity and were able to develop joint strategies through ongoing interaction. The core organizations that comprised MAC began to turn in their respective emphasis from direct service providers to community organizing. Equally important was the shift from an isolationism to a cooperative culture that allowed the issue of gentrification and displacement to be attacked from many angles, a tactic that would have been lost if left to any one organization.

¹²⁸ Though it lies outside the scope of this dissertation, I would like to write that this divide between MHDC's board of directors and the staff proved costly for all. The bitter irony of this situation is clear when one realizes that MHDC's board of directors is largely dominated by former MCO members, some of whom had served as board members since the heady days of redevelopment – at the time of this dispute MHDC had no term limits on board members. Rather than offer a supportive environment for MHDC staff and management, the board of directors began a hostile purge of staff members that supported and/or worked with MAC. At this same time the board of directors voted to curb the development of low-income supportive housing and begin to focus on the creation of mixed-income and market-rate housing. MHDC's board also cut funding for MHDC's award winning residential programs. Feeling the growing hostility, MHDC staff fired back at the board by leveling charges of financial mismanagement and harassment against it. In an effort to reflect any retaliatory tactics, MHDC staff reached out to the Service Employees International Union Local 790. This move furthered the tension between the two as board members began to ferret out those who were seeking union protection. By the end of 2003, the infighting that had been going on for four years was beginning to play out in San Francisco's daily newspaper. By March 2004 the San Francisco Board of Supervisors called a hearing to address MHDC staff member allegations after a February letter from the Board of Supervisors to MHDC's board of directors requesting board chair, Larry del Carlo, step down from his post was ignored. Finding staff members allegations true and enough evidence that del Carlo was intent on shifting the focus of the organization from low-income to middle-income property projects, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors suspended MHDC's funding indefinitely (Brahinsky, 2004a, 2004b). It is this author's view that the toxic atmosphere at MHDC had a great impact MAC's decline.

Chapter Four:

We Felt Pretty Safe Because the Neighborhood Was So Horrible

Rising nine stories high and located on the corner of Mission and 22nd Street, a mere two blocks north of the 24th Street BART station, the Bay View Bank building is easily one of the largest and most recognizable buildings in the Mission District. Acquired by the Robert J. Cort Trust Corporation in mid-1999, the Bay View Bank building housed not only its namesake bank, but a robust occupancy of two dozen community-serving entities. Those occupants of the Bay View Bank building included low-cost dental and medical offices, immigration lawyers, the Spanish-language television network *Telemundo*, two Spanish-language community newspapers (*El Tecolote* and *El Reportero*), and the Spanish-language radio station *Radio Unica* which had operated in the basement of the building since 1980 (Costantinou, 1999). It was also home to the San Francisco Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Mission Economic Development Association, and several other Spanish-language community-based non-profit organizations. The directors of the Robert J. Cort Trust were aware of the area's rising commercial and real estate office market before its acquisition of the Bay View Bank building. Earlier in 1998, the Robert J Cort Trust Corporation acquired and rehabbed the old Lili Ann garment factory on 17th and Harrison Street before deciding to lease it to an internet related business firm.¹²⁹ As discussed in chapter two, internet related business firms, many awash with money from venture capitalists, had the capacity to pay a rental rate far in excess of what existing area tenants were already paying. Acting on this knowledge, the Robert J. Cort Trust Corporation offered Bigstep.com,¹³⁰ an internet firm that had yet to turn a profit, three of the nine floors in the Bay View Bank building with an option to lease the remainder of the building at a later date.

At the other end of the neighborhood (literally and figuratively) was the Redstone building. Sitting on the corner of 16th and Capp Street, squarely in what local community residents had termed "Heroin Alley," the Redstone building was filled with forty-five art groups and grassroots political organizations. Some of these Redstone tenants included Theater Rhinoceros, a queer theater production group; *El Teatro de la Esperanza*, a Latina/o theater troupe; the Industrial Workers of the World, the Coalition on Homelessness, and Mission Agenda. Built in 1914 by labor unions, and known as the San Francisco Labor Temple, the Redstone building was the nerve center for much of early San Francisco's labor agitation. As a reflection of the Mission District as a whole, the Redstone building was a haven for left-leaning grassroots activism. The Redstone building had been offered for sale intermittently over the years only to be pulled back due to unsatisfactory offers. Tenants of the Redstone building felt somewhat assured that even though the building was again on the market, their location within a notoriously crime and drug addled section of the neighborhood would repel the pall of gentrification and displacement surrounding most of the neighborhood, leaving their tiny perch

¹²⁹ In July of 1998, Robert Cort's decision to whitewash a popular 5,000 square foot mural that rested on the outside of the garment factory building raised community ire. Purported to have been done in order to repair and waterproof the wall, it later came out in court that the internet firm that was set to move into the empty former garment factory was assured by Robert Cort that the wall could be used for advertising. (Glendhill, 1998)

¹³⁰ Bigstep.com was an internet firm whose main service was offering a suite of web hosting services to small businesses looking to build and market e-commerce sites. Opening operations in 1999 with forty-five full time employees and with the financial backing from venture capitalists such as Menlo Park, CA based Mayfield Fund (this firm invested 10 million dollars in Bigstep.com), Bigstep.com seemed poised to become an internet success story. By the year 2000, the small internet firm grew to staff 170 full time employees (Sinton, 1999).

relatively unscathed. Unfortunately for the tenants of the Redstone building, its location near the 16th Street BART station and the blossoming scene of hip new restaurants on nearby Valencia Street seeded fears that they, like the tenants from the Bay View Bank building, would soon be under siege from the same rampant real estate speculation that was impacting most of the Mission District. That fear heightened when real estate agents and prospective buyers were spotted touring the three-story brick Redstone building (Constantinou, 2000). Marc Huestis, of Outsider Enterprises was quoted as saying, “for a long time we felt pretty safe because the neighborhood was so horrible. Now the gentrification is spreading like cancer, we don’t feel so immune anymore.” (Constantinou, 2000: A-6). In an effort to save their place in the neighborhood, tenants of the Redstone banded together to purchase the building themselves. The likelihood of the tenants securing a loan for the buildings purchase, however, seemed doubtful as most were without large endowments or revenue streams. In the end the owners of the Redstone building were unable to sell the property, much to the relief of the existing tenants.

The preexisting tenants at the Bay View Bank building, however, were not as fortunate. BigStep.com, which had been leasing a smaller building near the Robert J. Cort Trust’s Lili Ann garment factory building, accepted the Cort Trust’s offer to relocate to the Bay View Bank building and agreed to the terms of the lease. Blocking the Bigstep.com move, however, was the more than two dozen lower-rent paying business and non-profit organization tenants of the Bay View Bank building. Robert Cort, through his property managers, issued notices of lease termination to all of his existing tenants instructing them to vacate their respective offices by June of 2000.¹³¹ According to Luis Granados, Executive Director of the Mission Economic Development Association, “the simultaneous eviction of two dozen community non-profits and small businesses that operated from the Bay View Bank building was the biggest example of displacement in the Mission.” (Constantinou, 2000: A-6). Julio Aponte Jr., vice president and general manager of *Radio Unica*, equated the importance of the collection of small community serving businesses and non-profits at the Bay View Bank building to, “what a town hall or square is to a Latin American town” (Constantinou, 1999).

When the Robert J. Cort Trust Corporation evicted the existing tenants and replaced them with BigStep.com it unwittingly violated a zoning regulation aimed at protecting a historically significant collection of San Francisco’s largest grouping of residential-over-commercial and small-scale commercial buildings. The ordinance says that no single entity along the Mission Street corridor shall occupy more than 6,000 square feet of any building without a conditional use permit.¹³² Lucy Reid, Chief Executive Officer and President of Bigstep.com, was unaware that her company, which was leasing 26,500 square feet of office space in the building, would have to apply for a conditional use permit when it decided to rent the space (Baker, 2000a). Having discovered this loophole, Sue Hestor, working alongside the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition’s (MAC) Land Use and Zoning committee (LUZ), immediately filed a formal complaint in June of 2000 with the San Francisco Planning Department citing the square footage violation and the lack of any conditional use permit as grounds for the complaint.

¹³¹ In an odd twist of circumstances, Colliers International, both a tenant of and property manager for the Bay View building, delivered eviction notices to all tenants, including its own offices.

¹³² This restriction was set in place to preserve the historic collection of buildings, which, according to a study conducted by the San Francisco Planning Department (2005), includes the largest collection of pre-1906 disaster buildings. It also ensures that local neighborhood retail businesses along the Mission Street commercial corridor be safe from being overran by larger chain retailers.

On September 21, 2000, after weeks of correspondence requesting representatives from the Robert J. Cort Trust Corporation and chief officers from Bigstep.com meet with MAC members went ignored, and a stalled decision process from the San Francisco Planning Commission regarding the conditional use permit, dozens of community members and activists marched through the streets of the Mission District towards the Bay View Bank Building singing “Ain’t no power like the power of the people, ‘cause the power of the people don’t stop/*No hay poder como el poder del pueblo, porque el poder del pueblo no para*”. Upon reaching the building, fifteen MAC members, which included the chief negotiating team, buoyed by the dozens of supporters who remained outside flooding the sidewalk while defiantly chanting “hey, hey, ho, ho, Bigstep.com has got to go!”, strode into the offices of Bigstep.com and promised an occupation of the premises if chief executive officers did not acquiesce to an immediate face-to-face conference. Weighing the gravity of the situation correctly, Lucy Reid and other executive officers agreed and entered into discussions with the fifteen member MAC negotiating team. Chief among MAC’s litany of demands was that Bigstep.com help in relocating each small business and community based organization that it helped displace. Andrew Beebe, co-founder of the internet company, offered to release one floor, to which the protestors pointed out that there were four floors of non-profits and community businesses that were displaced.

As ongoing negotiations continued inside the offices of Bigstep.com, the number of protestors out on the street continued to rise. Speakers from the different displaced non-profit groups and community serving entities once housed in the Bay View Bank took turns commenting to the growing street crowd about how the Robert J. Cort Trust Corporation’s decision to displace them in favor of a dotcom firm was emblematic of similar actions occurring throughout the Northeast Mission Industrial Zone (NEMIZ) and in the South of Market (SoMa) neighborhood. Others commented on what they believed was the turning of a seemingly deaf ear from San Francisco Planning Department to the outcries coming from negatively affected communities. As the crowd grew, a small group of MAC affiliated artists from the San Francisco Print Collective (SFPC) scaled up the side of the building, unfurling a large MAC protest banner that read: “Profit takes a BIG STEP on the heart of the community” (see figure 1.)

Back inside the offices of Bigstep.com, negotiations had stalled. Chief Executive Officer Lucy Reid expressed that the demand to relocate each of the two dozen former tenants was “not a realistic demand,” citing that “the businesses are already gone” (Baker, 2000a: A-22). Reaching an impasse in negotiations with the officers of the internet firm, the fifteen MAC activists sat on the floor, linked arms and began chanting “Stop the displacement!” (Glionna, 2000). Refusing to vacate the offices, San Francisco police officers arrived and handcuffed and arrested all fifteen MAC occupiers. As members of the San Francisco Police Department escorted the occupiers out of the Bay View Bank building, those protestors who had been outside rallying on the sidewalk greeted the fifteen arrestees with cheers and chants of “*Si Se Puede!*”

The actions against the potential sale of the Redstone building and the displacement of its tenants along with the protest that occurred at the Bay View Bank building were part of a growing wave of social unrest orbiting around displacement and gentrification in the Mission District. Prior to both events, most of the large-scale displacement from internet related firms and live/work loft development projects had been germane to the Northeast Mission Industrial Zone, where zoning regulations were much more ambiguous. The speculation of a sale of the Redstone building, and Bigstep.com’s move from the NEMIZ into the main commercial thoroughfare of the neighborhood became glaring examples of what many community residents and activists symbolically saw as a takeover of the Mission District.



Figure 1. Bay View Bank protest. Photo Courtesy the San Francisco Print Collective

The action at the Bay View Bank building marked one of the high points in the life of the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition. It showcased an anti-displacement movement that had reached a rare position in radical organizing, one that is at once radical and relevant. MAC was able to remain publicly contentious, drawing out hundreds of community residents and activists to its rallies and demonstrations, while simultaneously attacking the heart of the issue, which for them stemmed from non-responsive and unaccountable city agencies and public servants. The remainder of this chapter charts the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition's use of spatial transgressions (Cresswell, 1996) via public demonstrations and aesthetic interventions, and its increasingly sophisticated analysis of gentrification through its most popular period (1998-2002).

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition's use of spatialized tactics – building occupations, aesthetic interventions, public rallies, and public hearings – as a means to elucidate power and contestation within and amongst spatial relations. This chapter also points towards the sense of place that both MAC activists and Mission District residents had when resisting against a form of gentrification that threatened to change the neighborhood's residential demographics from Latina/o and working-class to white and middle-class, and threatened to radically alter the neighborhood's built environment through the construction of new buildings and the conversion of older buildings.

Painting a Different Picture

San Francisco has a distinct appreciation for public art, from the works approved by the San Francisco Arts Commission that grace public spaces and buildings throughout the city, to more clandestine “wheat-pastes,” “burners” and “throw ups”¹³³ that cling defiantly to the walls of San Francisco buildings. This love affair is perhaps no more apparent than in the Mission District where a striking number of significant works of public art adorn the many alleyways, plazas, and various public spaces of the small district. From murals and frescos produced during the WPA days, to more recent displays of spray can art that run the length of Clarion Alley between Mission and Valencia streets, visual art is part of the neighborhood’s social mélange. Often representative of the distinctive working-class and Latina/o culture, Mission District residents, as Rebecca Solnit points out (2000), “seemingly embrace the idea of public art as a part of everyday life, a reinforcement of varied identities and a celebration of radical history” (p. 156). Located on Balmy Street between 24th and 25th streets, for example, is the greatest concentrated collection of public murals in San Francisco. Painted along the garages and fences of the narrow alleyway, the artwork suggests that in moving through the spaces of the neighborhood, residents of the Mission District move through narratives of history and struggle particular to the Latina/o population (Solnit, 2000; Latorre, 2008). Public art, and those artists that produce it, construct the Mission District’s spaces with an openly oppositional narrative. Interestingly, the public art in the Mission District spatially transgresses and repositions a geographical narrative of mobility as the stationary images in these murals address myriad issues from forced migrations to social movements, while simultaneously illustrating the different mobilities of those producing and consuming this art (De Certeau 1993; Drescher 1998; Cresswell, 2000; Solnit 2000; Latorre, 2008).¹³⁴ This openly politicized social landscape lent itself to myriad aesthetic interventions during the height of the anti-displacement movement in Mission District.

Certainly individuated and small scale acts of spatial transgression and resistance were afoot in the neighborhood prior to MAC’s initial act of civil disobedience at the Bay View Bank building. Individuals like Kevin Keating, founder and principal actor of the militaristic sounding Mission Yuppie Eradication Project, oversimplified the neighborhoods struggle with gentrification by openly decrying the workers of the New Economy as the responsible party for the wild real estate speculation and displacement gripping the neighborhood. The posters Keating wheat-pasted throughout the Mission neglected the racial aspect of gentrification,

¹³³ Graffiti “burners” are large, elaborate works of spray can art that can take up an entire wall, or train car. Because burners are large and elaborate pieces, those that are found in readily accessible spaces within a city’s central business district have usually been commissioned by the building owner. Those that are found on walls along train tracks, on train cars, or freeway overpasses are usually non-commissioned works of art. “Throw ups” are pieces of graffiti spray can art that have been quickly thrown up on a wall. Less elaborate than a burner, throw ups are large enough to attract attention, yet quickly executable so as to avoid artist detection. Throw ups usually consist of a single word in a particular writing style, such as bubble letters or “wild style,” and can be filled in with varying other colors.

¹³⁴ Certainly not every piece of artwork that appears in the Mission District has an overtly political message. Some pieces of community artwork can be quite abstract, a noticeable trend popularized in the 1990s by the so-called “Mission School” art movement (Helfand, 2002). Though the work associated with the Mission School does differ from the realist artwork created during the WPA and the Mission Mural movement of the 1970s and 1980s, it does ascribe to a similar emphasis of placing art in public spaces. As such, this continued tradition of placing art boldly in public places offers a re-visioning of dominant spatial narratives and, in turn, spatial relationships of power and mobility.

leaning heavily on the always clear class aspect of gentrification.¹³⁵ Nick Pagoulatos recalls Keating, who assumed the name of Ukrainian anarchist Nestor Makhno – an infamous anarchist who terrorized landlords prior to the Russian Civil War (1917-1923) – and his actions as, “tremendously entertaining theatre that got the final analysis wrong”.¹³⁶ Nevertheless, over the span of nearly two years, 1998-2000, the Mission Yuppie Eradication Project plastered the neighborhood with varying types of posters. One of the earlier ones (see figure 2) reads:

“Over the past several years the Mission has been colonized by pigs with money. Yuppie scumbags have crawled out of their haunts on Union Street and the suburbs to take our neighborhood away from us. They go to restaurants like The Slanted Door and Ti-Couz and bars like Skylark and Liquid. They come to party, and end up moving into what used to be affordable rental housing. They help landlords drive up rents, pushing working and poor people out of their homes. Now Buffy and Chip are moving into ‘lawyer lofts’ built by real estate speculators in the Mission’s northeast corner, further gutting our neighborhood. This yuppie takeover can be turned back. We can drive these cigar bar clowns back to Orinda and Walnut Creek where they belong. VANDALIZE YUPPIE CARS, BMW’s – Porsches – Jaguars – Sport Utility Vehicles. Break the glass, scratch the paint, slash the upholstery. Trash them all. If yuppie scum know their precious cars aren’t safe on the streets of this neighborhood, they’ll go away and they won’t come back – and the trendoid restaurants, bars, and shops that cater to them will go out of business. MAKE THE MISSION DISTRICT A SPORT-UTILITY VEHICLE FREE ZONE! NOT ONE YUPPIE VEHICLE SHOULD BE SAFE ON THE STREETS OF THE MISSION! TAKE ACTION NOW!”

Not particularly eye catching, the poster with simple black text on a white backdrop was no larger than a normal sized sheet of legal paper. The wide margins and open white space of the poster seemed to invite anonymous social commentary, much of which teetered on the side of levity. Keating’s posters were so blatantly over the top that it was impossible to see them as anything but a lark, and in normal times Keating’s militant call to arms would have simply been laughed away as the writings of another fringe radical. Unfortunately for Keating he was writing in extraordinary times and was soon the target of local police officers (Van Derbeken, 1999). Keating’s rhetoric, while incendiary and overstated, did seem to cut to the matter as it struck a nerve with those impacted by, or fearful of, displacement. As a social space whose meaning is both shaped by and reflective of spatial relationships, gentrification and the struggle against displacement cast a spotlight on the Mission as indicative of a highly contested arena where varying and unequal exchanges of power and resistance inscribe themselves upon the social landscape (Pile, 1996). Individual acts of resistance like Kevin Keating’s highlighted what many from the impacted community felt as “a conflict between rich and the poor, between those who can afford to own property and those who can’t.” (Gurnon, 1999: A-14). The cultural battle lines had been drawn between a rising wave of white, wealthier residents and the established working-class and Latina/o residents of the neighborhood. However, gentrification and displacement are not simply reducible to individual intention. As writer and Mission District resident Christian

¹³⁵ Several months after the Mission Yuppie Eradication Project’s initial English language poster appeared, a Spanish language version began appearing throughout the neighborhood.

¹³⁶ Pagoulatos, Nick. Personal interview. 5 September 2010

Parenti notes, “The neighborhood is increasingly the playground of really wealthy young and middle-aged folks who live in Silicon Valley; they come here because it’s authentic and hip, and, *not intentionally*, end up destroying those qualities and displacing people in the process” (Gurnon, 1999: A-14. *Emphasis added*). Though the cultural landscape of the district certainly changed, I do not suggest that it was the stated intention of the in-movers to change it. Dan Kingsley, whose SKS Investment company has made a windfall in converting much of the industrial building stock of the Northeast Mission into high-tech offices, commented that the artistic interventions and social commentary aimed at the workers of the New Economy was, “an unfortunate waste of everyone’s time.” (Martin, 2000: A-18). True. Directing protest at building developers like Dan Kingsley and SKS would have hit the heart of the matter much more directly. Unfortunately, the daily visible workers of the New Economy were an easier target.

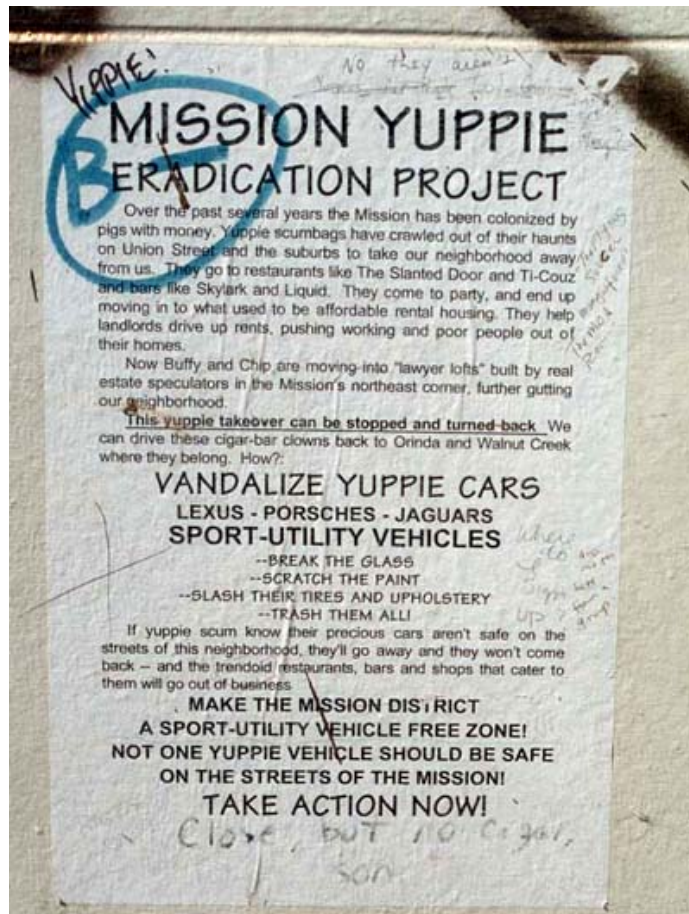


Figure 2. Picture of Mission Yuppie Eradication Project poster. Photo courtesy of Tom Wetzel.

The digerati became emblematic of the sweeping changes occurring in the city writ large, and were oftentimes miscast as the prime antagonist. Community members increasingly focused their annoyance on those they visibly witnessed moving into newly constructed \$600,000 lofts, frequenting the new hip and trendy restaurant and bar scene on Valencia Street, and forcing residential rents in the otherwise affordable working-class Latina/o district to climb quickly.

From a relatively early point, then, it was fairly easy to “point the finger at the dotcomers, or the yuppies that were coming into the Mission as the faces of the unwanted interlopers.”¹³⁷

When the formerly relatively corralled digerati from the South of Market’s “Multimedia Gulch” took advantage of the cheap commercial rents and industrial spaces found in the northeast quadrant of the Mission District, those individual and small artist organizations who were already established in the area perceived this new group as the physical and cultural representation of the whirlwind forces that were causing such troubling displacement throughout the Mission District and San Francisco. Mission District artists from throughout the periphery of the Northeast Mission Industrial Zone were witness to purchases of local large former manufacturing spaces being bought and turned into offices for internet related firms. Many of them feared their space may be the next to go. Those artists who occupied places closer to the core of the Mission District were equally apprehensive. They feared rising rents, and changing demographics would change the Mission District into “nothing but one giant Starbucks” (Martin, 2000: A-18). Realizing the unintended exploitation of the live/work ordinance by entities such as the Residential Builders Association, artists from around the Mission District responded through aesthetic interventions. Curators and muralists affiliated with the *Galería de la Raza*,¹³⁸ started a digital mural project in response to the increasing displacement occurring in the neighborhood. The first digital mural, “Y2K: A History of Displacement,” hanged on the exterior wall of the gallery – a move intended to publicize and aesthetically politicize the issue of displacement – visually harkening displacement’s historically racial and class-stratifying project (see figure 3).¹³⁹

As the pace of gentrification and displacement hastened, three subsequent digital mural projects also address issues similar to those found in “Y2K.” Two of those three murals, “Ese, the Last Mexican in the Mission”¹⁴⁰ (see figure 4) and “*eVICTED*,”¹⁴¹ (see figure 5) touch

¹³⁷ Pagoulatos, Nick. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

¹³⁸ Founded in 1970, *Galería de la Raza*, located in the Mission District on the corner of 24th and Bryant Streets, is a non-profit community based arts organization whose primary function is to foster public awareness of and appreciation for Chicana/o and/or Latina/o art while simultaneously acting as an artistic space where artists could explore contemporary issues in art, civic and cultural life.

¹³⁹ Bisected in two diagonal halves, the upper left portion of the mural depicts workers from the mobile digital economy hermetically sealed in space pods rocketing into a digital future. The bottom right half, which is a cloudy haze meant to trap and obscure, lay those subjects and objects indicative of the history of displacement that weaves throughout the Mission District. Those figures include a portrait of an Ohlone Indian, reminding passersby of the forced displacement and enslavement of early indigenous people, as well as a pair of feet tethered together, a met punishment for the resistant act of running away from the Mission; a BART train, which hearkens to the redevelopment days of the 1960s and 1970s when the Bay Area Rapid Transit system tore through Mission Street displacing scores of small businesses and residents; and a lowrider car along with street signs ordering vehicular traffic to travel in a prescribed pattern intimating the link between the hyper policing of area youths by San Francisco Police and the Department of Parking and Traffic, and the displacement of “cruising” Mission Street by a creative and vibrant sub-cultural group of Latina/o and Chicana/o youth.

¹⁴⁰ The “Ese, The Last Mexican in the Mission” mural is a newspaper article from the fictitious *San Francisco ReExaminer* that attempts to link the “discovery of the last Mexican in the Mission” with the famous story of Ishi, the last of the Yahi tribe of California Indians. Part of the text in the newspaper article reads, “...Ese formerly shared a small studio with two other young men of the Latina/o sort but they were unhoused when their spaces was reclassified from an apartment to an e-partment, with a corresponding rent increase. Ese was shocked to learn that he was the last Mexican in the Mission. When informed that the dishwashers and laborers he saw from the park were all bussed in from outside the digital zone, he fell silent. Ese is currently under observation at the UC Department of Cultural Anthropology...” Photo courtesy of *Galería de la Raza*.

¹⁴¹ Albert Lujan’s “*eVICTED*” plays on San Francisco’s tourist economy by pantomiming a tourist postcard. In the mural an oversized moving truck, with “*eVICTED* & *eXILED*” painted around the top, occupies the entire width of

explicitly on the physical and cultural displacement of Latina/o s from a neighborhood that had been home to most of San Francisco’s Latina/o population since as late as the 1970s and as early as the 1940s. Collectively, the initial four murals remained in public view from November of 1999 to September of 2000. The digital murals, which ironically use much of the same technology that the digerati created to propel the meteoric rise of the information technology sub-computing field over the last twenty years, are prime examples of individual muralists acting collectively to respond to the shifting relationships of power in the neighborhood.



Figure 3. "Y2K: A History of Displacement," (1999) a digital mural by John Leanos and San Francisco School for the Arts students, hangs outside Galería de la Raza. Photo courtesy of Galería de la Raza.

Muralists from the *Galería de la Raza* were not the only artist group opposing displacement. Organizations with names such as “Against Ruthless Greedy Gentrification (AARG!),” “Artists’ Eviction Defense Coalition (AEDC),” “San Francisco Artists Alliance (SFAA),” and countless others rose in defense of their studio and residential spaces. When dancers from troupes such as Dancers’ Group, Dance Mission, and Footwork each faced a 500 percent increase on their studio space, each organized outdoor events to illustrate the injustice occurring underneath the surface.¹⁴² Constant protest around a singular issue with a less than tangible target, however, is untenable. Artist groups that were successful in creating bonds that went beyond the art community, however, made the greatest impact. Artist Debra Walker, a member of the Coalition for Jobs Arts and Housing and an appointee to the San Francisco Building Inspection Commission, comments,

the eastbound Bay Bridge. The size of the moving truck suggests that in leaving San Francisco it is not carrying a single family, but rather an entire community. The text, “*eVICTED & eXLIED*,” that wraps around the top of the moving truck implies that the move is not a voluntary one, is seemingly permanent and is relatable to San Francisco’s courting of the New Economy. Photo courtesy of Galería de la Raza.

¹⁴² The dancers from each company banded together to hold a “Circus of Resistance.” The event included dancing, music, and puppetry. At the end of the day’s events, the dancers occupied both the interior and exterior spaces of the building refusing to vacate. After a few days of occupation, the owners called the San Francisco Police Department and had the protestors arrested. (Glionna, 2000).

“I’m part of organizations that include the labor movement and affordable housing...[Artists] have to get down in the trenches and fight with the other people who are on our side, align ourselves with the unions, with the affordable housing people, with the people in the affordable housing” (Solnit, 2000: p. 104).



Figure 4. Digital mural by art group Los Uber Locos, "Ese, The Last Mexican in the Mission" (2000). Photo courtesy of *Galería De La Raza*.



Figure 5. Albert Lujan's digital mural, "eVICTED" (2000). Photo courtesy of *Galería De La Raza*.

This stance was perhaps best exemplified by those artists that formed the San Francisco Print Collective (SFPC). The San Francisco Print Collective was created in 2000 when dozens of local printmakers met, after attending a MAC meeting, at the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts¹⁴³ to respond to the growing problem of gentrification and displacement through graphic art.

¹⁴³ Located on Mission Street between 24th and 25th Streets, the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts is an institutional legacy of the Mission Coalition Organization that has offered a low-cost silk-screening class to

Similar to the artists who hung their digital murals on the exterior walls of the Galería de la Raza, the diverse members of the SFPC saw gentrification and displacement as culturally destabilizing and dislocating forces and used their artwork to publicly position themselves as an artist group opposing community displacement. This understanding of gentrification and displacement fell in line with that of the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition (MAC), which connoted the gentrification of the Mission as more than just the displacement of residents from their homes, but a deracination of Latina/o socio-political cultural space. The understanding of gentrification shared by SFPC and MAC, allowed members from the Print Collective to align themselves easily with MAC in their efforts to resist gentrification. As Nick Pagoulatos comments,

“...the initial response was to bring attention to this, and that was like the first great flowering of resistance. That’s when people began literally taking to the streets, wheat-pasting everything. You saw incredible art, beautiful political art, which you just don’t see anymore. To a large extent it was the folks at the San Francisco Print Collective, who were a bunch of anonymous folks who decided this is what art is about, it should be about confrontation, it should be about conflict. They came to MAC meetings and found a place and a role in the campaign. Their role was to publicize the happenings through art, which was great because even though everybody was feeling gentrification, it was really hard to express it. Those posters, like the ones that caricatured Willie Brown as the king of San Francisco, or placed Joe O’Donoghue’s face on a wanted poster, graphically explained and educated casual folks about concepts that were really pretty complicated and abstract. They were so bold and so pointed, and I really think they were part of the reason why MAC was able to rally so many folks, why we were able to extend as far out as we did.”¹⁴⁴

Members of the Print Collective unfurled banners at MAC demonstrations, appropriated and subverted billboard advertising space, organized art exhibits and made street theater props for MAC campaigns. They printed banners, placards, armbands and clothing to boost visibility and media coverage at MAC events. Volunteer members working with SFPC and MAC produced and distributed countless posters in a variety of languages promoting MAC’s work. As MAC and the anti-displacement movement grew, work by the SFPC could be seen everywhere in the neighborhood. This work often spatially contested the dominant narrative of Willie Brown’s pro-growth agenda (see figure 6). Art, and particularly the work created by the SFPC, became a powerful tool for MAC as it graphically shifted the target from the individual generic dotcom worker to building developers and officials at City Hall, all the while making commentary on the need to oppose and understand gentrification as linked to global capitalism and uneven spatial development.

The aesthetic interventions by the Mission Yuppie Eradication Project, the various artist groups resisting gentrification and the San Francisco Print Collective were representative of an increasing level of community resistance to upscale development, and a growing awareness that parts of the city government – the San Francisco’s Planning Department and Planning

community residents since it first opened in 1977.

¹⁴⁴ Pagoulatos, Nick. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

Commission,¹⁴⁵ Board of Supervisors, and Mayor – were linked to the gentrification and displacement of Mission District residents and Latina/o cultural life.



Figure 6. Members of the SFPC clandestinely wheat-pasted posters, such as those photographed above, throughout the Mission district. Photograph courtesy of the San Francisco Print Collective.

This Is Really an Economic and Planning Problem

From mid-1990s on, real estate firms were pushing San Francisco building developers to find and/or build new office space for the growing internet related sector of the New Economy. Most of the buildings they were acquiring were “wonderful 100-year-old brick-and-timber buildings that housed good industrial uses” and which were later converted “from 20th century economic uses to 21st century economic uses.” (Fost, 1999: A-1). As San Francisco raced to untether itself from its manufacturing past, the conversion of large manufacturing spaces in the Mission District became a telling snapshot of similar trends occurring worldwide (i.e. processes wherein industrial landscapes once dominated by “smokestack” industries are rapidly reindustrialized, usually by those “thought” industries associated with high-technology (Soja, 2000)). SKS Investments, a large San Francisco based real estate investment and development group, was no stranger to San Francisco’s hot commercial real estate market. In April 2000, an SKS proposed project was swiftly moving towards approval by the Planning Commission. Bryant Square, the name the project came to be known as, was located at 2101 Bryant Street. Taking up a 1.7-acre city block, bounded by Bryant, York, 19th and 20th street, the massive project consisted of two phases: The first phase of the project, already on the market, included 45 live/work and commercial lofts, while the second phase included a new four-story 130,000

¹⁴⁵ Members of the San Francisco Planning Commission, as well as the Planning Director, are appointed and removed by the mayor. This relationship has resulted in a San Francisco Planning Commission that has, since the days of redevelopment in the 1960s, “abdicated any serious planning function or concept of themselves as stewards of the public interest” and has instead “functioned to assist and abet the profit-oriented development decisions of the real estate community; only sporadically, weakly and when forcefully prodded have they moved to limit development and interject more public-regarding concerns into their deliberations and decisions” (Hartman, 2002: p. 275). For a more detailed view of the Planning Commission’s ties to the Office of the Mayor see Chester Hartman’s *City for Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco* (2002), pp. 275-288; as well as Mullin, Megan, Gillian Peele, Bruce E. Cain. “City Caesars?: Institutional Structure and Mayoral Success in Three California Cities.” *Urban Affairs Review* 40.1 (2004): pp. 19-43.

square feet office building slated to act as a multimedia office complex that would house high-tech offices, along with the renovation of a 20,000 square feet commercial building (Fost, 1999). The project called for a demolition of three older industrial buildings, the renovation of three others, and the new construction of two others (Hendricks, 2000). The total estimated square footage of the proposed project was listed at 160,000.

The Bryant Square complex is noteworthy for its timing and location. For the better part of two years, 1997-1999, activists affiliated with the Coalition for Jobs Arts and Housing (CJAH) and MAC had been working together to better understand the particularly localized root of gentrification and displacement in the Mission District. As Nick Pagoulatos recalls,

“Eventually, as the analysis progressed, the realization came that this really is an economic and planning problem. Both the San Francisco Planning Department and Planning Commission had been following an understood rule that San Francisco would become the nexus of the New Economy, and simply rubber stamped countless development projects, all the while knowing that their approval was resulting in some really harmful changes in the Mission, the greatest being community displacement and permanent loss of industrial space. In that regard it really became an issue of access and self-determination, where vast majorities of the people in the neighborhood were not being catered to and were literally being kept out of those processes that were impacting their lives in a negative way.”¹⁴⁶

Eventually these meetings and study sessions led to the creation of MAC’s Land Use and Zoning Committee (LUZ). LUZ committee members included MAC organizers such as Nick Pagoulatos and Eric Quezada, loosely affiliated activists such as Calvin Welch (Co-Founder of the Council of Community Housing Organizations (CCHO)), Sue Hestor and Debra Walker, each of whom held a great deal of technical expertise and proficiency in dealing with land use and zoning issues.

Over time, LUZ formalized a process of identifying and evaluating all Mission District specific development projects that went before the Planning Commission. The LUZ committee reported their findings to the larger MAC group membership meetings, recommending MAC either fight the project, negotiate with the developer to gain community concessions, or support the project. Depending on the evaluation of the project and the determination of the LUZ committee, MAC would mobilize a large or small showing of concerned Mission District residents to Planning Commission hearings. From very early on, the LUZ committee proved essential as MAC consistently filled Planning Commission hearings before eventually, “calling for a moratorium on market rate housing development, and demanding environmental impact reports, each of which were used to slow things down.”¹⁴⁷ Known as Sue Hestor’s list, because of her dogged information gathering and alarm sounding on specious projects, MAC adopted a project-by-project vigilance (Fishman, 2006). Sometimes winning, and sometimes losing, MAC aggressively targeted development projects at Planning Commission hearings. Eric Quezada comments,

“We used to say in a joking manner that even though we would lose, we would really win because it was so outrageous what was happening at the Planning

¹⁴⁶ Pagoulatos, Nick. Personal interview. 5 September 2010.

¹⁴⁷ Quezada, Eric. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

Commission. It was so wired, it was so clearly pro-development that we would show up with 500 people and lose on a 7-2 vote, or whatever. I think that that really made people think, ‘Whoa, man, something’s going on here. There’s some corruption. This is fucked up.’ From then on, I think people on the eastern side of the city, and really the city as a whole, began to really identify with us... We pushed the envelope enough to where we knew we could influence the debate and we could move the debate to the left and expose the contradictions within the system. At the same time we weren’t so far out there where we were marginalized and irrelevant. We were dealing with the actual reality of what was happening on the ground, and people were really feeling and hurting from that displacement. We found that sweet spot for a few years where we had the multiple fronts that we worked on, we were smart, we were conscious, and we had good politics. When I say we had good politics I mean we had an analysis, and we had a base of support that drove us into different arenas to push back.”¹⁴⁸

MAC’s vigilance in tracking and challenging nearly every new live/work development project that came through the Planning Department soon resulted in so many filings that frustrated staff members were rumored to tell developers, “here’s MAC’s number, call them then call us later. Go talk to them and then we’ll talk to you. If you haven’t talked to them don’t even call us.”¹⁴⁹

MAC’s success through LUZ was long in the making. As noted earlier, CJAH had been pressuring both the Planning Department and the Planning Commission since the mid-1990 to establish clear zoning controls in the South of Market neighborhood. While CJAH was successful in some of its early site-by-site challenges, its collaboration with MAC had the effect of widening the impact it was able to make at the Planning Commission. Together, both groups doggedly pressured the Planning Department and Planning Commission at various hearings and meetings on issues related to live/work development projects. In March of 1997, after months of constant haranguing, San Francisco’s Planning Commission held a public hearing on the issue. The public hearing room was at capacity, attended by several dozen concerned citizens and community groups. After hours of heated public testimony demanding the Planning Commission adopt a moratorium on new live/work development projects in the Eastern Neighborhoods Zone, the Planning Department was forced by the Board of Supervisors to conduct a study on the live/work projects in industrial zones.

Their study (May, 1997) found inadequate enforcement of arts and work activities in live/work projects; increased land values resulting from live/work projects in industrial zones; a failure of live/work projects to conform to the character of the surrounding area; and the lack of affordability of live/work projects for artists and art activities. In June of 1997, the San Francisco Planning Department presented the Planning Commission a report of short term and long term recommendations that included: retaining the existing discretionary review of live/work projects of ten or more units in the NEMIZ; adopting an obligatory discretionary review policy for live/work projects of ten or more units in the Eastern Neighborhoods Zone; and re-examining the rules and definitions of live/work. The Planning Commission agreed to adhere to the proposed short term recommendations while it continued to work on formalizing long term solutions that included clear rules and definitions for live/work projects. San Francisco Planning Commissioner Hector Chinchilla underscored the pledge in a March 1998 interview when he stated, “until such

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

time that we develop long-term solutions for this (industrial zone) area, it is now the policy of this commission to prefer industrial over residential development” (Salter, 2000: D-11). Unable to agree on permanent zoning controls, the San Francisco Planning Commission, in August of 1999, created an interim Industrial Protection Zone (IPZ) with zoning controls for the entire Eastern Neighborhoods that would stay in effect for two years. These temporary interim controls promised to significantly discourage live/work projects in that part of the city. Despite the interim controls and Commissioner Chinchilla’s assurances, however, live/work projects continued to be shuttled through the Planning Department. A June 3, 2002 report published by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst Office revealed that between March of 1997 and August of 1999, nearly 1,035 live/work units had been constructed in the IPZ area.¹⁵⁰ Sue Hestor, questioning the sincerity of the Planning Commission’s effort to follow its own recommendations, comments,

“Instead of planning decisions, we have capital decisions being made. Whatever planning IS going on in this city is not being done by the Commission, it’s being done by the people with a lot of money – by developers” (Salter, 2000: D-11).

This Is About to be a Hot Political Issue

Lying at the fringe end of the industrial sector of the Eastern Neighborhood zone, the Bryant Square project was the largest multimedia project ever proposed for a residential area (Levy, 2000a). The enormity of the project held the assurance that the surrounding light industrial businesses and artist spaces would be displaced if the three-building, four-story high, 160,000 square feet multimedia complex was allowed to go forward. The main structure in the development project offered a final 113,500 square feet of internet-related office space on the site of an old wood-framed manufacturing building which would have to be demolished (Levy, 2000a). The 1920s era warehouse was home to dozens of artists who were outraged by their pending eviction. Many of these artists began organizing with other threatened small business owners and neighbors to form the Community Alternatives for Bryant Square (CABS) group. One of the members of the CABS group recalled how “twenty years ago we had 60 to 65 artists in the building. They were contributing to the community. Then the greed came along and slowly but surely the property’s been converted and we’ve lost artists” (Hendricks, 2000: B-9). Only Planning Commissioner Dennis Antenore seemed to display any concern saying, “This area of town is obviously being affected in a major way, socially, environmentally, economically and in terms of transportation. But in the [environmental impact report] we say ‘This is not the place for us to deal with it.’ If this is not the place, what is the place? We’ve got to pull our heads up out of the sand. Everybody in this room knows we need to deal with these issues.” (Hendricks, 2000: B-9). Despite Antenore’s impassioned plea, however, the Bryant Square project continued its move towards full Commission review.

SKS Investments, aware of MAC’s growing influence, the negative community response to the project and the potentially costly battle of having to wait for permit approval if stymied in the appeal process, offered office space at 95 percent below market rate to two community groups, Digital Mission and the California Lawyers for the Arts. Both organizations would also

¹⁵⁰ Between 1997 and 2000, 87 percent of all live/work units erected in the city were located in the Eastern Neighborhoods Zone; 71 percent of the more than 1,300 live/work units built were located in South of Market neighborhood, while another 16 percent were developed in the Mission District (San Francisco Board of Supervisors Budget and Legislative Analyst Office, 2002).

be given, “a two-story, 6,000 square-foot building in the heart of the project” (Kim, 2000a: A-1). Supervisor Leslie Katz, who had worked diligently over her term in office to make San Francisco a business friendly environment for the multimedia and information technology industries, lauded this effort calling it, “an example of how to do an ideal project” (Kim, 2000a: A-1). Considering the tremendous amount of displacement the project would cause, however, members from CABS considered the gesture a hollow effort to appease an outraged community and a means to help ease the SKS project towards approval at the Planning Commission level.

MAC began a collaborative relationship with the members of CABS before eventually turning the Bryant Square project into one of MAC’s first major campaigns. Working alongside CABS, MAC helped “organize the residents around the area, raise the level of support from those businesses and artists that were being displaced, and really push for a strong representation of people to come out to the Planning Commission hearing to voice their opposition.”¹⁵¹ Having emerged victorious in gaining concessions with developers in the past, MAC and CABS attempted to push SKS Investments to consider a smaller development project as well as greater community exactions. In May of 2000, after weeks of negotiations and escalating community concern about the negative impacts the development project would have on the surrounding community, SKS Investments Bryant Square project went before the Planning Commission for final approval.

On May 4, 2000, dozens of concerned citizens and community activists packed the Planning Commission meeting where commissioners were finally set to deny or approve SKS Investments Bryant Square project. Opposition groups feared that SKS Investments connections within the Brown administration – SKS had contributed \$95,000 to Mayor Willie Brown’s 1999 re-election campaign, and was aware that the Mayor had the ability to appoint and/or remove Planning Commission officers at his discretion – would propel the Bryant Square project to full Commission approval.¹⁵² As the meeting progressed, public testimony painted a picture of displacement and community upheaval. Planning Commissioner Hector Chinchilla agreed with community members stating, “There is no hiding from the fact that this would have a significant impact on the quality of life of tenants and people who live in the neighborhood” (Levy, 2000b: A-21). After a lengthy public testimony, however, planning commissioners delivered a 4:1 approval with Commissioner Dennis Antenore being the sole dissenting vote. In a prescient comment Sue Hestor, land use attorney for both CABS and MAC, commented that the Commission’s approval left little doubt in her mind that, “this is about to become a hot political issue,” with Chris Daly of Mission Agenda adding, “We’re going to have some pretty serious opposition to the project (Levy, 2000b: A-21).

After the Planning Commission had granted majority approval to the project, CABS and MAC took two courses of action; scheduling a community forum between the members of the Planning Commission and Mission District residents, and petitioning to the Board of Supervisors to overturn the Planning Commission’s earlier ruling. MAC received notice on Friday, June 23rd that the San Francisco Board of Supervisors would hear the appeal Monday, June 26th. Immediately, MAC leadership requested a postponement of two weeks. Members of San

¹⁵¹ Diaz, Antonio. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

¹⁵² In a clever circumvention of San Francisco’s individual campaign contribution limit laws, Willie Brown created non-profit independent political action committees (PAC). These PACs allowed millions of unregulated “soft money” donations to be made to them, which eventually made their way to Willie Brown’s campaign treasure chest (Williams, 2001). From 1996-1999, the San Francisco Chronicle had listed SKS Investments among Willie Brown’s top soft and hard money contributors (Lloyd, 2004).

Francisco's Board of Supervisors were informed by the Clerk of the Board that all legal rules for notification had been followed. Assured of this, the Board of Supervisors rejected the postponement 8:3. The June 26 hearing before the Board of Supervisors was well attended, drawing over 100 concerned community residents and organizers opposing the project. After a vociferous showing of opposition to a development project and five hours of testimony, Mayor Willie Brown's loyal working majority of Supervisors overrode the neighborhood's outcry and approved the project by an 8:3 margin; Supervisors Sue Bierman, Mark Leno, and Tom Ammiano casted the dissenting votes. Mission District residents had one more opportunity, a community forum with Planning Commissioners and Planning Director Gerald Green, to voice their displeasure with both the Bryant Square project and a planning process that seemed to take their concerns with little regard.

They Picked the Wrong District to Mess With

Two days removed from the contentious hearing before the Board of Supervisors, there was a sense of anticipation on Wednesday, June 28th as local residents made their way inside the auditorium of the neighborhood's Horace Mann Middle School. Less than three months into its formal organizational life, the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition had hoped for a 200 person turnout – maximum occupancy for the small auditorium – for a public forum that would allow Mission District residents to voice their concerns directly to members of the San Francisco Planning Commission and the Director of the Planning Department. The Mission Anti-displacement Coalition's public accountability session proved a popular draw, as an estimated 500 concerned community residents packed the auditorium. With signs and banners reading "Keep downtown offices out of the Mission" and "Respect our neighborhood" residents looked to take advantage of the opportunity to speak directly to members of San Francisco's Planning Commission. Planning Department Director Gerald Green, and Commissioners Hector Chinchilla and Linda Richardson attended the community forum representing the much maligned city agency. Speaking in both English and Spanish, the diverse showing of community residents wasted little time verbally lashing the Planning Commission and its Commissioners for a planning process that encouraged a "growing invasion of dot-com companies...triggering the evictions of residents and small businesses." (Kim, 2000b: A-1) The two hour community forum came to a peak when Rene Saucedo, MAC member and director of the San Francisco Day Laborer Program, presented the Planning Director and Commissioners with a list of MAC developed demands stating, "We are here to submit realistic, concrete demands, because in times of an emergency, we need measures that will work" (Kim, 2000b: A-1). The list of demands included:

1. An immediate moratorium on new market rate housing and live/work lofts in the Mission.
2. An immediate moratorium on office conversions and new construction of dot.com office space in the Mission.
3. Implementation of an immediate abatement of illegal office conversions
4. Commitment to a community-initiated planning process to rezone the Mission and reprogram funds in the 2000/2001 budget so that the rezoning can be done in that fiscal year (Fishman, 2006).

Saucedo resolutely stated that the situation was an emergency, justifying her call for a moratorium as a means to allow the community to halt a pernicious wave of displacement that was having deleterious effects on the residents of the Mission District and surrounding Eastern Neighborhoods. She ended her presentation stating “we believe in the word moratorium” and brought the raucous crowd to its feet with a crescendo of chants that cried out, “moratorium!” (Kim, 2000b: A-1). Planning Director Gerald Green consented to all of the demands save for the calls for moratorium stating that only the Board of Supervisors had the authority to call a moratorium on construction, and it would only come after office and housing developers were given the chance to weigh in on the issue.¹⁵³ Though the Planning Director and Planning Commissioners were unable to agree to every MAC sponsored demand, community residents considered the accountability session a success, commenting that they saw the accountability session “as the inception of a long struggle” and “a harbinger of things to come” (Kim, 2000b: A-1). Supervisor Tom Ammiano, who was in the audience during the Horace Mann Middle School action but chose not to speak at the podium, touched on the things to come when he later commented, “There’s a tradition of activism [in the Mission District] that goes back to the 1960s and ‘70s. They picked the wrong district to mess with” (Zoellner, 2000: A-17). His words would prove correct as the major issues of displacement, land use and self-determination would become primary community concerns for the upcoming Board of Supervisors election, an election that would see district elections return to replace the then existing at-large system.¹⁵⁴

The action at Horace Mann Middle School effectively demonstrated how widely felt the issues of displacement, land use and self-determination were in the Mission District. The meeting attracted community members from a diverse cross-section of the community: Artists and low-income residents; gay, lesbian and transgender people; small business owners, labor groups and community non-profit workers; men, women and children; Spanish and English speakers; senior citizen and youth groups. The Horace Mann session also highlighted MAC’s strategic creativity by indirectly critiquing the Brown administration through his hand selected Planning Director and Planning Commissioners. As Eric Quezada comments,

“Willie Brown was a very powerful mayor, sort of all encompassing. Willie was so encompassing that we didn’t need to target him to get to him. We made Gerald Green our primary target. Gerald Green, hand-picked by Brown to act as Planning Director after his predecessor vacated the post, was a direct representation of the Willie Brown administration in every way. Politically speaking, Gerald Green was pretty unseasoned and we knew he couldn’t defend himself the same way Willie Brown could. So while Willie Brown literally got pie in his face¹⁵⁵ from different fringe element of the movement, we were very strategic in how we went after him. Targeting his Planning Commission put a lot of indirect pressure on him. If we would have attacked him directly it wouldn’t have been that big of a

¹⁵³ Planning Director Gerald Green also agreed to investigate immediately the conversion of the Bay View Bank building.

¹⁵⁴ San Francisco had relied on at-large elections since 1979, following the assassinations of then Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk. In 1996, however, community activist’s rallied enough support to pass Proposition G, a ballot measure that reintroduced district elections. See chapter one, page four, footnote twelve of this dissertation for greater detail.

¹⁵⁵ Members of the Biotic Baking Brigade (BBB) threw pies in the face of Mayor Brown during a 1998 press conference announcing city plans to go forward with a new football stadium for the San Francisco 49ers. The three-person BBB were protesting Brown’s inactivity around San Francisco’s growing homeless problem and rising rents.

deal, “Slick Willie” could talk his way out of anything. We took the route of exposing him through his Planning Director, which made things really difficult for his administration to answer to”.¹⁵⁶

The large community representation and support displayed at the accountability session allowed the Mission Anti-displacement Coalition to increase its shift from a reactionary organization that fought individual development projects on a case-by-case scale, to a proactive organization that pushed for moratoriums and a community led rezoning planning process. By the end of Willie Brown’s first term in office, MAC’s issues of affordability, displacement, land use and community self-determination rose to become hallmark issues of the anti-displacement movement. Eric Quezada noted the change this way:

“I think the biggest expression of that was the election of 2000...and to an extent Ammiano’s [1999] write-in campaign [for mayor of San Francisco]. I mean I wouldn’t say we were directly responsible for his successful write-in campaign because there were other sectors of the movement involved in that as well, but MAC folks provided a lot of energy; phone-banking, precinct walking, wheat-pasting. The truth of the matter, though, is that people were ready for something different, something that could challenge the Willie Brown machine. So by the time the 2000 elections came, and we had won back district elections [in 1996], our issues were the defining issues in the general election, in that district election.”¹⁵⁷

1999 Mayoral Race

Willie Brown made his way into the San Francisco mayor’s office in January 1996, handily defeating incumbent Frank Jordan in the December runoff. Winning 57 percent to 43 percent, Brown became the city’s first mayor of color (Hartman, 2002; DeLeon, 2003). Mayor Brown entered the mayor’s office as San Francisco had become a majority-minority city, and had a local economy hitting full stride after years of sputtering fits under the Art Agnos (1988-1991) and Frank Jordan (1992-1995) mayoral administrations respectively (DeLeon, 2003). Voter approved reforms to the city’s charter allowed Willie Brown to enjoy “unprecedented mayoral control of the city’s bureaucracy, expanded budget authority, and greater influence over the city’s many policy-making boards and commissions” (DeLeon, 2003: p. 168). The planned departure of incumbents from the eleven-member Board of Supervisors opened vacancies that he could fill to build a loyal working majority. His deep and longstanding connections within the Democratic Party gave him a political gravitas not seen in the mayor’s office in decades, while his contacts in the private sector tapped him into an impressive stream of campaign contributors eager to bankroll a candidate whom they rightly assessed would give them the keys to the city.¹⁵⁸ The future for Mayor Willie Brown looked bright.

¹⁵⁶ Quezada, Eric. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

¹⁵⁷ Quezada, Eric. Personal Interview. 1 April 2011.

¹⁵⁸ Prior to his tenure as San Francisco mayor, Willie Brown’s political work and law practice consisted largely of lobbying for development projects before public agencies. His lobbying efforts played a major role in development projects throughout San Francisco which included working for Olympia & York on the highly contentious Yerba Buena Center (1976), as well as working against an anti-high-rise initiative, Proposition M (1983). For more on Brown’s political background see chapter eleven of Chester Hartman’s City for Sale: The Transformation of San Francisco (2002).

By 1999, however, the picture turned much murkier as a general swell in building construction resulted in hundreds of live/work building development projects hastily going up in San Francisco's working-class Eastern Neighborhood Zone. Largely rubber-stamped by staff at the San Francisco Planning Department and approved by the Planning Commission,¹⁵⁹ these development projects helped push along gentrification and the displacement of working-class residents of color in the South of Market and Mission districts, and were symptomatically linked to the Brown administration. Mayor Brown had by then also alienated the city's powerful Community Development Corporation Coalition anchored by CCHO¹⁶⁰ when he made deals that ran counter to his campaign commitment to strengthen rent control measures by eliminating the end-of-vacancy loophole. As they saw San Francisco turn into a city of have-nots and have-a-lots, leaders of grassroots organizations began to urge San Francisco Board of Supervisors president Tom Ammiano, an outspoken critic of Mayor Brown's pro-growth policies, to reverse his long held position not run for mayor in the upcoming election. Ammiano's politics were distinguishably to the left of Willie Brown's on many issues – particularly on the issues of housing, development and the impact gentrification was having on the city. With just a few weeks before election day, Tom Ammiano reversed his original decision not to run against Willie Brown and entered the already crowded fourteen-person field (DeLeon, 2003).

Ammiano's tardiness in announcing his candidacy, however, meant that he missed the deadline for formal ballot inclusion. His would have to be a write-in campaign. While some of the candidates in the field managed to raise a vast millions of dollars for their campaign – Clint Reilly spent \$4 million of his own money – Ammiano managed a meager \$25,000 (Hartman, 2002). In lieu of a large campaign fund Ammiano leaned heavily on the mobilization efforts of volunteers from new grassroots neighborhood slow-growth coalition groups like MAC and the South of Market Anti-Displacement Coalition (SOMAD),¹⁶¹ both of which were comprised of working-class renters with an overwhelming display of people of color in prominent positions of influence. Working closely with seasoned Council of Community Housing Organization (CCHO) campaign workers, Mission District activists participated in all aspects of the campaign. Early on, activists made it a priority to highlight Mayor Brown's pro-growth tendencies, demonstrating his close relationship with developers such as SKS Investments (Fishman, 2006). The grassroots write-in campaign was astonishingly successful. The November 2 mayoral election results showed Tom Ammiano with 25 percent of the total votes cast, to Brown's 39

¹⁵⁹ Under the Brown administration, both the Planning Commission and the Board of Permit Appeals, "approved dozens of building projects and live/work developments that violated the spirit, if not the letter, of; Proposition M; ignored the city's neighborhood preservation priorities; and made mush of other planning codes." (DeLeon, 2003: p. 188). Allen Jacobs (2000), San Francisco's former Director of City Planning (1967-1974), echoes this when he writes: "Today, the [City Planning Department of San Francisco] is considered a rubber stamp agency, a costly hurdle to be bypassed whenever possible by special legislation and an elite group of pragmatic doers in the mayor's office" (p. 48).

¹⁶⁰ The Community Block Grant (CBG) program severely undercut the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's (SFRA) access to federal urban renewal dollars, and forced the agency into competition with community development corporations for block grants. Community development corporations like Mission Housing Development Corporation, Bernal Heights Development Corporation, and Chinese Community Housing Corporation were able to build housing faster, less expensively, and in a manner that was much more community responsive than the SFRA could. As the umbrella group for these housing organizations, CCHO has been successful in channeling substantial amounts of CBG monies to affordable housing endeavors.

¹⁶¹ SOMAD, which later turned into the South of Market Community Action Network (SOMCAN), is a sister organization of MAC that focuses on issues relevant to working-class renters of color – primarily those comprising the diverse Pacific Islander community – using a multi-pronged approach similar to MAC.

percent (Hartman, 2002; DeLeon, 2003). The strong showing assured Ammiano a December 14 runoff election with the incumbent.

Unfortunately for Ammiano, this was as far as his election bid would go. Willie Brown, a master fund-raiser since his days in the California Assembly, raised a staggering \$5.5 million from business and pro-growth developers for the runoff election (McCormick & Winokur, 1999; Williams & Finnie, 2001; Hartman, 2002), dwarfing Ammiano's \$300,000. He rolled out stars from the Democratic Party such as Jesse Jackson, Senators Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, and U.S. President Bill Clinton, before eventually cruising to victory with 60 percent of the total ballots cast (Hartman, 2002; DeLeon, 2003).

Though Ammiano lost the city-wide election, he was able to call victories in the Mission District and other relatively progressive districts of the city. In practical terms, the Ammiano campaign acted as a proving ground for many of the volunteer community organizers and activists new to the mechanics of formal electoral political campaigns. But it also signaled a new political machine driven largely by radical elements within the labor movement, "and the growing cadres of militant slow-growth organizers in the Mission and South of Market" (DeLeon, 2003: p. 189). So while Willie Brown won his bid for a second term, Eric Quezada's earlier comment that people were ready for something different seemed accurate.

Voting With Their Feet

Earlier in 2000, Mayor Brown had urged the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce to convene negotiations between business interests and neighborhood community advocates, the latter heavily represented by leaders from CCHO, and MAC. Mayor Brown's intention behind the meeting was to reach a deal that would loosen the 1986 Proposition M cap on office development.¹⁶² Beginning in late-May of 2000 and running through late-June of 2000, "the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce held more than 20 meetings between developers and community activists to discuss ways to increase the [1986 Proposition M] office cap" (Kim, 2000c: A-3). Though the anti-displacement movement was gaining ground, slow-growth advocates felt that the balance of power was in the Mayor's favor as he controlled a loyal working majority on the Board of Supervisors and he had the ability to appoint and dismiss those serving on the Planning Commission. After a month-long negotiation process, a tentative proposal was set in place that seemed to appease both sides as it, "would allow developers to build almost 2 million square feet of office space in the first of a 10-year cycle and 1.5 million in the second year" in exchange for some modest growth-limiting concessions (Kim, 2000c: A-3). Requiring the approval of the Mayor and at least four San Francisco Supervisors to be placed on the general ballot, Chamber of Commerce Vice President Roberta Achtenberg submitted the plan to Mayor Brown on June 26th believing it would be approved. In an unexpected move, however, Mayor Brown refused to sign the proposal (Kim, 2000c).¹⁶³

Responding to Brown's decision, and based on the escalation of recent events, CJAH and CCHO members rushed to draft the "Honest Planning Initiative," a ballot initiative set to close the loopholes in the planning codes that developers were exploiting at the Planning Department and Planning Commission. The proposed "Honest Planning Initiative" would,

¹⁶² Though Proposition M (1986) embodied many facets, the main debating point was the lift on the annual 950,000 square feet of permits for new office construction – 875,000 in large projects, and 75,000 in small projects.

¹⁶³ Mayor Brown's decision was timed rather curiously as a large turnout of upset community residents gathered at an appeals hearing before the Board of Supervisors regarding the Bryant Square development project that same day.

1. impose a ban on new development projects in the northeast Mission District and South of Market neighborhoods;
2. apply an indefinite moratorium on new development projects in parts of the South of Market, Lower Potrero Hill, and the northeast Mission District until a comprehensive and collaborative – Planning Department acting in tandem with the community – is set in place to protect these areas;
3. raise the per square foot development exaction to pay for growth-induced demands on housing and public transit;
4. re-define dot-com companies as office space, requiring independent verification for any project labeled as “business service,” demanding higher exaction fees;
5. re-define live/work lofts as residential space, requiring all applicable fees, and prohibit their conversion to office space;
6. require all new office developments to set aside 10 percent of the space for non-profits at rent one-third of the market rate. Non-complying developers would have to contribute to a non-profit fund (Nieves, 2000; Hartman, 2002; DeLeon, 2003; Fishman, 2006)

In July, after its legal review and approval, CCHO, with MAC support, initiated a two-week marathon petition drive to gather the necessary 30,001 signatures required by the July 31 deadline in order to qualify for the November 7 election. Using many of the lessons and tactics learned through the Ammiano campaign, CCHO, and MAC activists succeeded in gathering the necessary signatures, ensuring the “Honest Planning Initiative,” which became Proposition L, would appear on the upcoming ballot. The combination of CCHO and MAC resulted in an interesting coalition that linked technical expertise with organizing capacity.

“Delighting the developers, entrepreneurs, and speculators who chaffed at any restrictions, but infuriating others, including some of his business friends, who had hoped to work out something reasonable behind the scenes,” (DeLeon, 2003: p 191) the Mayor responded to Proposition L in early-August when he presented a competing measure: Proposition K. Presented as a compromise growth control measure, Proposition K “contained a series of loopholes that together would allow an estimated seven million square feet of new office space before April 2001” (Hartman 2002: p. 307). Proposition K would also exempt live/work lofts from being designated as office space. Proposition K did give interim protection to the Mission, Potrero Hill, and South of Market,

“these neighborhoods would be open to commercial office development if the Planning Department failed to produce protective plans within two years – a highly worrisome feature in light of the fact that the department had failed after three years to finish planned industrial protection zoning controls for much of the same area, as well as the clear pro-development orientation of the Planning Commission under Mayor Brown” (Hartman, 2002: p. 307).

Mayor Brown’s Proposition K would also allow the mayor to create and appoint the position of “Growth Management Coordinator” to serve a ten-year term the mayor’s discretion (Hartman, 2002). True to his history, Mayor Willie Brown raised massive amounts of soft money from well-known contributors, which resulted in a war chest of 2.3 million dollars for his proposition (Finnie, 2000b; Williams & Finnie, 2001). For that amount of money, the political

and business interests backing the measure insisted Mayor Brown rally the fullest support for his proposition that he could muster. When one of his appointed Planning Commissioners, Dennis Antenore, often the lone dissident to Mayor Brown's pro-growth machine, refused to give his approval, Mayor Brown immediately dismissed him from his post. In his place Brown appointed William Fay, son-in-law of former owner of the San Francisco Giants baseball club and real estate magnate, Robert Lurie (Hartman, 2002).¹⁶⁴ The drafting of a competing ballot measure, the dismissal of Dennis Antenore and his replacement with someone intimately interested in San Francisco's real estate market, seemed to position Mayor Brown firmly against MAC's slow-growth neighborhood coalition. The November 2000 election came to be viewed as one fought over the rules of development in San Francisco between opposing downtown and neighborhood interests, with the issues of land use, displacement and growth controls defining the debate (DeLeon, 2003).

MAC activists, realizing the high stakes involved in the coming election, ramped up their efforts throughout the summer of 2000. In July MAC organized a rally of more than 500 people on the steps of San Francisco's City Hall, marched to shut down a Planning Commission hearing (July 13, 2000), and crashed a dotcom party with the Mayor in attendance at the National Guard Armory on Mission and 13th Street (Eikon Investments had bought the building in April of 2000, hoping to convert it to offices for potential internet related firms). Both actions exemplified MAC's strategy of keeping public pressure on the Brown administration while maintaining its focus on the land use and zoning issues that were becoming central to the upcoming November elections. One of the notable actions that contained this two tiered approach was MAC's August 12th "Walk to Defend Our Right to Live in the Mission" (see figure 7).

Organized as a walking tour (see figure 8), MAC organizers, riding atop a slow-moving flatbed truck carrying a public address sound system, a local music band, and several community residents and activists, led hundreds of community residents through the streets of the Mission District, pointing out the "many stores, studios and apartments that are being snapped up by dot-com companies and wealthier residents" (Kim, 2000d: B-1). Sam Ruiz, Director of the Mission Neighborhood Center, bellowed into the microphone "For too long, families and individuals of low and fixed income have been evicted from where they rightly belong: the Mission community," receiving thunderous applause from the crowd following behind (Kim, 2000d: B-1). Carrying signs that read "Housing is a right" and "We plan for people," the jubilant crowd carried a serious current. With only three months remaining before the November elections, MAC utilized the walking tour to raise issues of land, displacement and community self-determination, while also urging the crowd to support MAC's approved slate of supervisorial candidates¹⁶⁵ and Proposition L. The highly contentious campaigning seemed to set up an election that figuratively pitted Willie Brown's pro-growth juggernaut against MAC's coalition of grassroots slow-growth activists. Speakers addressing the crowd thus insisted "we should vote no on K, which is just a Willie Brown whitewash" and, "we want to elect people who represent the community and what's important to the working-class" (Kim, 2000d: B-1). Speaker Richard

¹⁶⁴ Robert Lurie and his connections at the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR) were instrumental in the Giants' move to a new downtown stadium, located just off San Francisco's Central Waterfront in Eastern Neighborhood of China Basin (Hartman, 2002).

¹⁶⁵ MAC openly backed Jake McGoldrick in District 1 (running against incumbent Michael Yaki); Aaron Peskin in District 2 (opposing incumbent Alicia Becerril); Leland Yee in District 4; Matt Gonzalez in District 5; Chris Daly in District 6; Tom Ammann in District 9; Sophie Maxwell in District 10; and Gerardo Sandoval in District (running against incumbent Rev. Amos Brown). Neither Tony Hall, who was challenging incumbent Mabel Teng for Supervisor of District 7, nor Mark Leno (District 8) was openly backed by MAC.

Marquez, co-director of Mission Agenda, focused on the pivotal election: “We have the potential in November to build the perfect political storm. We’ve got no choice, because our backs are up against the wall. We’ve got to come out swinging” (Kim, 2000d: B-1). Board of Supervisors President, Tom Ammiano, who marched alongside his district nine constituents, echoed those sentiments stating, “I think a grass-roots effort is really taking hold in San Francisco in reaction to all the machine politics...I hope it manifests itself [in November] in what supervisors are elected and what propositions are passed” (Kim, 2000d: B-1).

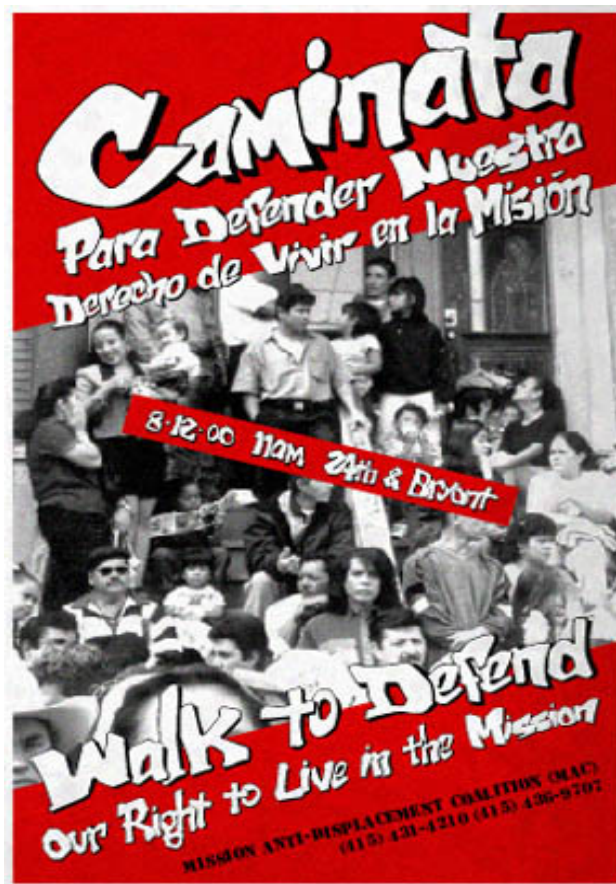


Figure 7. Poster advertising MAC's *Caminata*. Courtesy San Francisco Print Collective

The political tension in San Francisco grew throughout the summer and into the early fall. During a large and raucous Planning Commission hearing in September, where Eikon Investments proposed conversion of the Armory building into dotcom offices was being heard, a speaker opposed to the Eikon project was wrestled to the ground by a sheriff for speaking beyond his allotted three-minutes. The aggressive display of the sheriff caused an immediate uproar, with MAC members and supporters demanding the meetings be shut down and postponed. The Planning Commission proceeded to shut down the meeting, tabling the matter for a later date. Eikon Investments, the investment group that was seeking approval for the conversion, later dropped its office proposal due in some measure to community opposition.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Eikon Investments later proposed a “server farm” for the Armory site, raising environmental concerns. The continued delays on development lasted until the dotcom bubble began to burst, which fortuitously saved Eikon Investments from major financial losses.

MAC organizers saw a rise in the number of weekly evening meeting attendees, which coincided with its increased public profile and growing reputation. With a consistent 80-100 person attendance record for its meetings, MAC organizers kept the upcoming election at the top of meeting agendas. General meetings were broken down into sub-committee meetings that focused on a range of activities that included outreach, direct action, political education and culture, media, and land use and zoning. Under normal times each subcommittee assumed a different focus with different campaign goals. The importance of the upcoming election, however, ensured that each subcommittee meeting held a clear electoral focus. With only a handful of weeks leading up to the November 7 election, MAC volunteers continued their grassroots outreach efforts in the hopes of capturing as many voters as possible, while also clearing up the growing confusion between propositions K and L.¹⁶⁷ In the remaining weeks, MAC volunteers were asked to use the coalition’s database to conduct weekly voter-education phone banking sessions (Fishman, 2006) The San Francisco Print Collective joined the coordinated effort, pasting campaign ephemera throughout the Mission District and San Francisco (see figure 9).



Figure 8. Photograph of *Caminata* as it heads up 24th Street. Photo courtesy Tom Wetzel.

District Elections

The August deadline for announcing candidacy for San Francisco’s Board of Supervisors election produced a political free-for-all, as eighty-seven candidates filed to run (DeLeon, 2003). The most hotly contested seat was in District 6,¹⁶⁸ where a stunning seventeen candidates filed to

¹⁶⁷ Significant portions of the 2.3 million dollars raised for the Proposition K campaign went towards efforts to saturate the public with media messages (television commercials, print ads, billboards). Television media messages boasted the potential benefits of Proposition K, while simultaneously attacking Proposition L as parochial and bad for future growth. Pro-Proposition K posters, which looked remarkably similar to those created by the San Francisco Print Collective’s “Yes on H, L, and N” posters, competed throughout the urban landscape.

¹⁶⁸ District 6 includes the northeast part of the Mission District, all of the South of Market, Hayes Valley and the Civic Center, and western portions of Downtown. The neighborhoods that comprise District 6 were some of the

represent the new district (Hartman, 2002). Several seats were open. Supervisors Sue Bierman and Barbara Kaufman were termed out of office. Supervisor Leslie Katz, who resided in the same district (District 9) as fellow incumbent, President of the Board of Supervisors Tom Ammiano, chose to drop out of the race entirely (Hartman, 2002). The remaining eight Supervisor seats were held by incumbents. Four of those eight were faithful Brown supporters (Alicia Becerril, Rev. Amos Brown, Mabel Teng, and Michael Yaki). Together these four comprised the core of his outgoing working majority on the Board of Supervisors. Mark Leno and Gavin Newsom, two other incumbents, “supported the mayor’s agenda on many issues, and another two (Tom Ammiano and Leland Yee) were the core of Mayor Brown’s disloyal opposition” (DeLeon 2003: p. 191).



Figure 9. Example of election ephemera produced by San Francisco Print Collective. The “Yes on L, H and N” poster on the left is a Spanish language version, while the one on the right is an English language one. Posters were also produced in Tagalog, Mandarin, and Vietnamese. Photograph courtesy of the San Francisco Print Collective

In order to retain his working majority, Mayor Brown reached out to many of those same business and political allies that had bankrolled his 1999 mayoral election. Many were already financing Proposition K. By attracting these supporters, Brown tried to ensure the re-election of either his favored incumbents or favored challengers in nine of the eleven districts (Gavin Newsom ran unopposed in District 2, and Tom Ammiano was all but unbeatable in District 9). In a scene of *déjà vu*, “San Franciscans for Sensible Government (the business lobbying group) once again was a key funder, using dollars supplied by corporations such as the Gap (fifty thousand dollars), Chevron (fifty thousand dollars), and Bechtel (ten thousand dollars)” to fill Mayor Brown’s soft money war chest (Hartman, 2002: p. 273). One of the bigger donors, however, was Joe O’Donoghue’s Residential Builders Association. Leading up to the general election the RBA had raised \$235,000. Sensing the real potential for a run-off election, the RBA pledged an additional \$1.5 million (Hartman, 2002). Nearly all of this soft-money was intended

more adversely affected ones during the speed-up of office and live/work development projects.

to pay for signs and billboards, mailings, field operations and research which often appeared as attack pieces.

With only \$132,000 raised, MAC's efforts to help elect a new progressive board of supervisors and pass Proposition L relied heavily on volunteers and allies to campaign with grassroots efforts including precinct walking. The group also depended on producing friendly media coverage (Kim, 2000).¹⁶⁹ Sue Hestor comments,

There was a huge awareness on MAC activities. We were in the papers. [San Francisco] used to have two daily papers, and our issues were played out in the papers. Every Friday morning there would be an article on what happened at the Planning Commission, usually written by Gerald Adams or Ryan Kim, both of whom wrote for the [*San Francisco*] *Examiner* and produced some really good stuff. In the [*San Francisco*] *Chronicle* it was the usual stuff of nibbling around the edges, but even then we had weekly coverage. And when the election stuff came out, well, by then it was such a hot issue that there was coverage on almost anything that MAC, CJAH or CCHO was doing. All this was played out in old media.¹⁷⁰

Cementing this last point were two front-page reports appearing in both the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *San Francisco Examiner* outlining how Mayor Brown was acting as a campaign marionette pulling political strings during the 2000 district campaigns (Lelchuck, 2000; Finnie, 2000). Perhaps the greatest impact the reports have is in the detailed analysis of highly-paid consultants the mayor had solicited to raise, and then distribute unprecedented sums of money to support his preferred slate of candidates.

Even for all of his free spending, Mayor Brown's preferred candidates could not win the necessary 50 percent in the November general election, forcing nearly all of them into a December runoff with MAC supported candidates. As Sue Hestor recalls,

“Everything came to a head in November of 2000. Michael Yaki was forced into a runoff with Jake, and Jake beat him. Alicia Becerril didn't even make it to the runoff; she was humiliated in her district. Jim Gonzalez pulled out of his race. Ammiano won his district handily. So what happened was, we just went bang, bang, bang, all the way down the line. We thumped Ol' Willie, but good.”¹⁷¹

In District 1 (a heavily Asian and Asian-American district that includes the Outer Sunset and Richmond neighborhoods), incumbent Chinese-American Michael Yaki fell to Jake McGoldrick, a white, pro-tenant, progressive. Chris Daly rallied what many thought was a lost demographic in SRO tenants, to an overwhelming run-off win in District 2 (80 percent). Gerardo Sandoval, battling incumbent Reverend Amos Brown in predominantly African-American District 11 (a

¹⁶⁹ As I note in chapter one, footnote 33, San Francisco's two daily newspapers, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *San Francisco Examiner*, were in the midst of a newspaper war which resulted in the former eventually being purchased by the latter. No doubt aware of the deep interest the city was taking in the election and in the efforts of grassroots groups to resist gentrification, which represented a greater sale of newspapers and in turn drove newspaper advertising, some *San Francisco Examiner* reporters were kept on staff and allowed to continue writing stories that were relatively supportive of MAC's efforts.

¹⁷⁰ Hestor, Sue. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

district that includes the Ingleside and Oceanview neighborhoods), beat the incumbent 60 percent to 40 percent in the December run-off. MAC and other members of the rising grassroots slow-growth coalition achieved what many thought was unimaginable, electing a progressive and community responsive slate of candidates to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

While MAC supported candidates had clear victories, Proposition L's outcome was hazier. After taking a marginal lead near the end of the evening during the November election, it began to lose ground as the tedious task of counting the tens of thousands of ballots continued over the next several days. Those next few days saw Yes on L supporters questioning the accuracy of the vote-counting process. At one point Proposition L supporters noted "that the numbers released by the city Elections Department showed an overall increase of fewer than 1,000 votes counted from Saturday [November 11] to yesterday [November 12], and yet the number of votes tabulated on Proposition L appeared to be more than 1,400" (Baker, 2000b: A-17). Eventually Proposition L fell by a slight margin (49.8 percent), while Proposition K lost badly (39 percent).¹⁷² The outcome of the district elections, and the ballot measure signaled what many saw as an end to the Brown machine and victory for MAC and its search for spatial justice. Eric Quezada remembers,

"What you saw [in the district elections] was that we made [Proposition L] the litmus test for Supervisor candidates, particularly on the east side and in our neighborhoods. And what you saw was that those who supported Prop L won, and those who didn't, lost. And while we killed Prop K, we narrowly lost prop L, by like a thousand votes. I think the confusion around [the two measures] is what did L in. It quite possibly even some voter fraud, because there were ballots found floating in the Bay, but who knows. The point was that, we lost prop L, but we won the Supervisors election, taking nine out of the eleven seats. Supervisors that were Yes on L won, and the ones that had been Yes on K lost."¹⁷³

A Twig in a Current

Though MAC remained active over the next few years, winning major victories proved harder. MAC's main successes were remarkable. They had changed the appointment procedure for the Planning Commission so that the mayor and the President of the Board of Supervisors split the appointments 60 percent to 40 percent, and collaborated as an equal partner with the San Francisco Planning Department to address zoning and planning issues in the Eastern Neighborhoods. MAC effectively used the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) – a move that opened up the greater environmental justice movement to include issues related to urban land use and zoning– with the new San Francisco Board of Supervisors, resulting in the latter imposing a sixth-month moratorium on new live/work development projects in the Eastern Neighborhood Zone. By the end of 2001, however, the movement began to lose steam. The collapse of the dotcom sector of the New Economy,¹⁷⁴ the election of a new progressive San

¹⁷² This narrow defeat belies the discrepancy in campaign spending. Mayor Brown was able to rally a stunning \$2.186 million in support of his measure. Conversely the Yes on L campaign managed a paltry \$150,000 (Epstein, 2000).

¹⁷³ Quezada, Eric. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

¹⁷⁴ Fallout from the over exuberant financing of so many dotcom firms was felt swiftly as many closed their doors or scaled back operations. By December of 2000, the two and a half years old Bigstep.com, the target of MAC's first public civil disobedience in September of 2000, had reduced its staff by 20 percent, and was negotiating with Robert Cort to get out of its lease at the Bay View Bank (Olsen, 2000; Hua, 2001). In the case of Bryant Square, SKS

Francisco Board of Supervisors, and the collaborative work with the San Francisco Planning Department moved MAC into a less publicly contentious mode. Because they did not need to push against the new Board of Supervisors in the manner they had employed before, they found open contestation unnecessary. Refusing a junior partner in their collaborative work with the Planning Department, MAC took the lead role in land use and rezoning matters in the Mission District. Eric Quezada recalls,

“It became very daunting to figure out change from the perspective of land use. It’s necessarily a slow process, with a lot of coordination from different, sometimes competing, sectors of the city. For a lot of us, I think that ran counter to some of our revolutionary thinking which is “burn this shit down! Turn it over!” you know. That route is also unsustainable. You can’t go out and protest every day. You just lose relevance like that. In the long view of things, however, we aligned ourselves to achieve some lasting changes. I think we were successful to an extent, but, you know, institutional changes are more difficult to make, and small. That said, however, once you make them, and though they may be small at that moment, they could be that twig in a current that moves things in a different direction than where it had gone had we not done the work that we did. We have people who were in MAC who are in positions of power today. Doug Shoemaker [formerly of MHDC] is director of housing for the Mayor. Chris Daly, for 10 years on the Board, represented MACs ideological interests, maybe not always as effectively as we may have wanted him to, but he always reflected the idea that this is a city for all, and that we need to put protections in place to guarantee that lower income people can be here. Lots of people landed on their feet in different places who have continued to do good work because of their experiences at MAC. The politic had a longer life than even MAC did. I think MAC reached a scale and a scope that it could make change. I’m not quite sure that I’ve been involved in a moment that’s been able to get there. MAC was a good local model to show that we can reach a large enough scale and scope to make spatial and social change.”¹⁷⁵

Investments financing for high tech offices dried up. After demolition and building a new foundation, all construction stopped and SKS was forced to cap the hole (the hole, which remained for some time, was symbolic of the meteoric crash of the dot.com craze and the fall out felt on the ground). In May of 2002, there was 13 million square feet of vacant office space in San Francisco, a record 21 percent, and millions more stalled in the pipeline including Bryant Square (Levy, 2002). In July of 2003, SKS began petitioning the Planning Commission to rezone its original site in the hope that it could build and sell 77 residential units (they began collaborating with MAC, who had pushed SKS to slate greater numbers of units at below market rate, to get this done.). SKS agreed to earmark 10 percent of those units as below market rate housing.

¹⁷⁵ Quezada, Eric. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

Chapter Five:

The *Taquerias* and *Bodegas* Give it the Feel of a Latino Space

Each morning Harold Liss, a twenty-six year old software engineer, makes his way to the corner of 26th and Mission streets where boards a bus bound for his job at a dotcom firm. Like many American workers he stops to get a cup of coffee and a newspaper for his wait at the bus stop. Liss's commute, however, is far from regular, and his bus is not a city bus. He lives in San Francisco and commutes to his job at Yahoo.com's Sunnyvale office by company shuttle. Liss is not alone. Every morning, private shuttles carry sectors of San Francisco's New Economy workforce away to various cities in the South Bay. When asked why he commutes from such a long distance, Liss replied, "I wanted to live in the city, absolutely. There is more to do; things are walkable; you don't need a car. There is a lot of good food, a lot of great parties, and you really have everything you need in a really small area" (Swift, 2010: C-1).

Although typical of many San Francisco to South Bay commuters, in another sense Liss represents an anomaly. Unlike other "dotcom's," his company escaped the collapse of the "dotcom" bubble at the beginning of the new century. It had been this boom that had originally drawn thousands of workers linked to the New Economy to San Francisco. They and their companies had, in fact, propelled the local San Francisco economy to grow at a breakneck speed throughout the late-1990s and early-2000s. But as Nick Pagoulatos points out, "by 2002 there was a slowing down, and by 2003, the party was over."¹⁷⁶ Many of the larger firms, including Facebook, Google, and Yahoo, survived, but smaller firms, such as Bigstep.com, fell, as the speculative wave of capital that guided their way to the pinnacle of a local economy dried up.

Though the boom was short, the effects on San Francisco and the Mission District have been lasting. San Francisco's population of computer workers continued to boom in the years between 2004-2009, "adding even more resident computer workers than much larger Santa Clara County, the heart of Silicon Valley" (Swift, 2010: C-1). San Francisco gained 8,600, tech workers in that four year period and now sports the third greatest concentration of computer workers among California counties (Swift, 2010). Because so many settled in or near the Mission District, their presence has effected a discernible change in the Mission's culture. A struggle between the incomers and local residents ensued and, as Edward Said reminds us, the struggle over geography is, inherently, a struggle over relationships of power. In other words, the dialectic struggle to create, challenge, and reproduce cultural meanings – as occurred in these years in the Mission District – is absolutely inscribed in our socio-spatial landscape. Gentrification, then, was the process that transformed the Mission District. Nick Pagoulatos comments,

"Gentrification became a self-perpetuating cycle. As the Mission became less gritty, and less ethnic, it became more attractive for professionals that were already established in the city. It's no longer the case of the dotcom people changing the character of the Mission, but rather traditional professionals; managers, executives, doctors, lawyers, all these types are now looking to the Mission as a great place to live. You had stories in the New York Times talking about what a great shopping adventure Valencia Street has become. A sort of cultural erasure is going on in the Mission. The taquerias and the bodegas give it

¹⁷⁶ Pagoulatos, Nick. Personal interview. 1 April 2011.

the feel of a Latino space, but it's not what it used to be. The historical legacy of the Mission as a working-class and Latino space is missing. Generally speaking, it's now seen as a really good up and coming neighborhood, which is the problem. The Mission is now the equivalent to New York's East Village. Once you establish a beachhead at some point there comes that tipping point where people start seeing it as an affordable possibility, and that's what we're looking at right now."¹⁷⁷

Nick Pagoulatos's assessment of the current social landscape of the Mission District points to the constant changing condition of urban spatiality, and with it the constantly evolving condition of resistance and meaning.

The Mission Anti-displacement Coalition's struggle for spatial justice is a key element for understanding Pagoulatos's first point. In a clever maneuver, MAC oscillated between varying geographic scales; scaling down to make their social movement geographically specific while also expanding its scope to incorporate larger city and regional shifts. MAC activists took the issue of gentrification and displacement affecting Mission District residents and linked it to systematic city efforts that sought to position San Francisco as a leading figure within the global electronics field. MAC's neighborhood response to gentrification expanded the terrain of displacement and rather effectively challenged socio-spatial inequalities. My study of MAC's struggles over gentrification and spatial justice represent a claim for a "right to the city" (Lefebvre, 1996). This work also argues that social movement literature must incorporate clear spatial analysis. The growing significance of issues concerning quality of life and spatial justice for cities in a globalized society, wherein ideals and discussions of rights have taken a prime spot in our political and ethical worlds, raises key questions for a claim to a "right to the city". The right is a particularly tenuous one as we live in a world "in which the rights of private property and the profit rate trump all other notions of rights" (Harvey, 2008: p. 315). Yet, the fact that cities enmeshed in a global urban hierarchy place a great emphasis on the sphere of accumulation than on the sphere of social reproduction suggests that there could be dire consequences for urban dwellers' collective claims to a city.

Contemporary San Francisco is fast becoming a place that is unaffordable for working-people. High-rise luxury condominiums and apartment complexes pierce the skyline as penthouse dwellers and high-end apartment residents seek sweeping views of the Bay. Meanwhile, those in ground floor apartments who have managed to keep hold of their rentals, look out onto gritty streets, seeing the effects of a bleak local job market and the neglect of a local government increasingly dismissive of their demands. More and more of the working-poor, however, have either left or are in the process of being driven out, as highly-skilled, highly-paid, and increasingly white, male, and single professionals move into the neighborhoods to join the urban San Francisco lifestyle. This rise in luxury residential building and the gentrification of disinvested working class neighborhoods, with the consequent displacement of poor people, mirror a global situation (Smith, 1996; Sassen, 2001; Lees, Slater & Wyly, 2008). Gentrification particularly is no longer a localized phenomenon isolated in a niche area of a real estate market. Rather, gentrification in most major cities links local and global forces which, when they come together in cities such as San Francisco, cause rapid urban displacement. The processes of gentrification in the urban centers of all highly developed countries – London, Paris, Berlin, and New York, as well as in San Francisco – speak to a new orientation in global economics for

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

global cities. Gentrification in developing countries, such as Brazil, Mexico, and Turkey, is reminiscent of the expansion of early forms of capital (colonial and mercantile) in the now developed world, whereby deliberate, uneven economic development allowed for greater exploitative measures (Smith, 1996; Hamnett, 2003; Atkinson & Bridge, 2005).

Another major shift has meant that global cities such as New York or Los Angeles no longer act as hubs for industrial/manufacturing activity. Rather, these cities increasingly function as the financial, real estate, and tourism hubs for regional economies, while increasingly being tied into global networks. Global cities are increasingly crafted as spaces of leisure and/or consumption (Hannigan, 1998; Valle & Torres, 2000; Florida, 2002; Currid, 2007). That Harold Liss sees San Francisco as a place where “there is more to do” underscores this reality.

As we have seen in the Mission District, the privatization of the urban built environment, through creative techniques like tax breaks, subsidies, and zoning and rent deregulation accelerate the capitalist tendency towards uneven development (Smith, [1984] 2008), “whereby stark inequalities in real estate prices and land rents may be exploited for future gain” (Greenberg, 2008: 28). The consequence of this restructuring was the raising of rents and the displacement of residents as decayed neighborhoods were redeveloped by gentrification (Hackworth & Smith, 2001). In many cities, including San Francisco, this change is particularly pronounced in older, mixed-use, industrial districts and underused downtowns, both of which often contain residential enclaves of the working-class. In these cities, moreover, a high proportion of that working-class consists of communities of color. A complicated process, then, transformed San Francisco’s Mission District, as San Francisco city government officials, real estate developers, financiers, and others in the real estate industry have altered the built environment in San Francisco’s Eastern Neighborhood Zone, an area of the city that had an established history of neglect long before the wave of information technology related businesses washed ashore in the 1990s. Taking advantage of depressed land values (Smith, 1996), land speculators and developers set off a building boom in the area that set in motion a pernicious wave of gentrification and displacement. As we saw in chapter two, building developers, taking advantage of a rising real estate market, exploited a loophole in San Francisco’s building code which failed to clearly classify live/work development projects as either residential or commercial.

These new and/or converted live/work development projects changed the physical built environment and with it the urban social landscape and the semiotics of place. This chapter’s opening comments by high-tech worker Harold Liss and community organizer Nick Pagoulatos highlight the inherent chaos and complexity bound up within gentrification (Beauregard, 1986). While some see the Mission as a place to enjoy “a lot of good food, a lot of great parties,” others see the inherent displacement that accompanies gentrification as “cultural erasure.” This dissertation has engaged that problem, showing that as gentrification turns into a “major component of the urban imaginary” (Ley, 2003: 2527), the struggle over place, movements for spatial justice, and the creation of geographies of justice, each of which is laden with racial, gendered, classed and cultural meanings, must play a larger role within critical gentrification studies (Slater, 2006).

The close focus of this dissertation on a single community movement within one neighborhood in San Francisco disguises, to some extent, the larger issues of concern here. How the processes of deindustrialization, privatization, and gentrification play out in major urban centers of late capitalist society reveals an intense struggle by those displaced as well as by those profiting from the changes. At the same time, however, this story has obscured the less visible

transformation of the Mission District (and, arguably, other similar neighborhoods) into enclaves of young, mostly white, males. Race, age and gender, then, have all played key roles in the re-creation of urban neighborhoods. In the case of the Mission District, a working-class, Latina/o, family-oriented area was effectively placed under erasure from the urban landscape. Only “atmospheric,” tourist-attracting elements – including *taquerias* – remain to tantalize the youthful white males who now occupy these spaces.

Although this study focuses on only a brief moment of the city’s history, a broader view would, I think, reinforce the main arguments of this dissertation. At least since the second half of the 19th century each element presented here – organized social action, shifting labor markets, gentrification as a process of spatialization and racialization – has played a key role in the long, complicated history of San Francisco’s Mission District. These matters lie beyond the confines of this dissertation, but they provide fruitful material for future research.

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