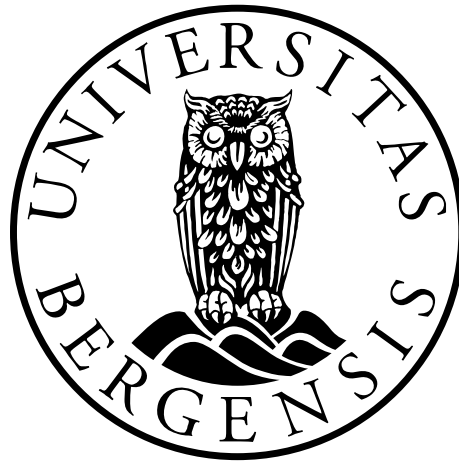


Venice California, Gentrification in a Neo-Bohemian Beach Town

Structural Violence, Power Structures, and Ideological Justification for Injustice, Exclusion, and Dispossession



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Abstract

Venice California was envisioned and founded by the wealthy tobacco mogul, Abbot Kinney. Kinney constructed the whole infrastructure of a city in a decade. From its opening in 1905 until 1925, Venice was a thrill seekers paradise, with an intricate canal system, and several amusement piers. Venice, California is the second biggest tourist attraction in California after Disneyland, with 16 million annual visitors (L.A.M.C. 2020:2).

Venice is in popular imagination seen as a creative hip, cool, place for unrestrained lifestyle, which is reproduced through popular culture, commodified and materialized through fashion, movies, music videos. Venice is famous for being the home to the Beatniks in the 1950s, Hippies (Deener 2007) as well as being a place for freaks and the radical left (Mcbride 2008) in the 1960s and 70s.

Venice has been rapidly gentrified since the 1980s. The artistic “vibe” and the sociability of social spaces is one of the major motives for gentrifiers to move to Venice. Although gentrifiers often frame their aspirations to live in Venice through “ideological consumption patterns” (Zukin et al. 2009) such as “preserving the “authenticity” (Zukin 2011) of Venice through “social preservation” (Brown-Saracino 2013), gentrifiers ultimately end up changing the “authenticity” they seek to preserve, by establishing businesses that fit the tastes of the middle and upper class.

Before the process of gentrification occurred in the 1980s, Venice had suffered from neglect and was artificially deprived because of segregation laws, restrictive covenants, and redlining that deprived the ethnically mixed working class neighborhood of upward mobility. A newfound interest in Venice occurred in the 1950s when the powerful elite lobbied urban renewal strategies, in which they legally sought to dispossess and evict many of the working-class people.

While previous efforts of exclusion was framed in explicitly racist policies, exclusion caused by gentrification is formulated in line with “neoliberal reason” (Brown 2015) which claims to have no race- or class-exclusion on the agenda. However, with the process of gentrification, Venice is becoming more and more homogenous, with an over-representation of white middle and upper-class, professionals. Moreover, with gentrification also comes exclusionary practices in public spaces.

Particularly the unhoused vendors on Venice Beach Boardwalk are a target for anti-homeless laws formulated by the Municipality of Los Angeles. The exclusion of unhoused persons is justified ideologically through the distinction of the “undeserving poor” (Katz 2013), where people who live on the boardwalk are prescribed a certain stigma which is seen as an objective truth. The stigma that unhoused persons are prescribed is reproduced as a social reality which forms discussions in formal political forums like the Venice Neighborhood Council.

Although the current technique of differentiation is formulated in line with neoliberal reason through the process of gentrification, I argue that these are power structures based on systems of differentiation that dates back to the colonial era.

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Character list

Venice brings together a myriad of different actors: vendors, established artists, gentrifiers unhoused persons, long time residents, business owners and locals with very different political views. Throughout the thesis I will refer to individuals who represent these groups. Even though these individuals are described on particular pages, they are continuously referred to throughout the thesis. To make it easier for the reader to locate specific persons, I have created a character list

Pops' Circle: Unhoused Vendors

Pops

Is a 61-year-old African American man. He works and lives on the boardwalk, where he has an exhibit. He has previously had several different types of work in the formal economy, amongst others in the army and as a chef. Pops is from Los Angeles.

Boots

Is a 50-year-old Mexican American man. Boots lives on the boardwalk. He is Pops' best friend and one of the main providers for Pops and his group. Boots used to work in construction., and as a wrestler.

PeeWee

Is an African American man in his 50s, from Los Angeles He lives on the boardwalk. He is speech impaired after a gun accident where he got shut in the head. PeeWee used to be music producer.

Knife

Knife is a white male in his 40s, from Los Angeles. He is diagnosed with schizophrenia, ADHD, and depression. Knife has lived in several half-houses but have been kicked out because of zero tolerance rules. He lives on the boardwalk, and is from Los Angeles He is married to Ella

Ella

Is a 40-year-old Latina. Ella suffers from PTSD because of abuse in her childhood. Ella has a sister she goes to stay with from time to time. Ella is from Los Angeles.

Lucky

Is a 30-year-old male old. He is a white man from the south. Lucky lives on the boardwalk where he works for different vendors with packing up and setting up their space.

Blue

Is a 65-year-old white male. He lives together with Terry and his group. He is usually too shy or drunk to talk to people.

DeeDee

Is a fifty year old African American woman. She joined the group in June. She mainly helps Marco with setting up his vending spaces. She has a speed, alcohol and weed addiction. She has mental health issues.

Julian

Is a fifty-year-old Mexican man. He does not live together with Pops and his friends but is a close friend of the group. He always carries around a flute. He plays every day.

Jim

Jim is a 35-year-old white male. Jim works for two different formally housed vendors in the informal economy of Venice Beach Boardwalk

Locals

Nina

Is a white woman in her sixties. She was previously the girlfriend of Knifes grandmother, who recently passed. Nina is part of Knife and Ella's extended network. She sells shells that she collects on the beach and puts into bottles. She sells them in the free speech area. She considers herself to be an old hippie.

Luke

Is a 40 year old African American male. Luke is an artist. To supply his income also works for Bird, collecting bikes on the boardwalk. He lives in different residential in Venice.

Oliver

Is a 35-year-old white male. He has lived in Venice for four years. He used to live in Hollywood, where he worked with different bands. He has an education in sound management. He helps out at the Venice radio show, and local arrangements. He makes a living by doing small jobs for musicians and vendors. He is to be seen in the local bars every day and has a weed addiction.

Paul

Paul is a white realtor and architect that has lived and worked in Venice since the 1970s

Julia

Christine is a fifty-year-old white woman who has lived in Venice for 30 years, she has been active in the Venice Neighborhood Council. Christine is one of the marginal gentrifiers. Even though she lives in a rent stabilized home, she still pays \$ 3500 every month for a one-bedroom apartment.

Established artist and cooperative links

RIP Cronk

Is a seventy-year-old white male. He is a world known muralist and has a formal education in arts.

Noah

White male in his fifties. He is in charge of the Venice Radio show which is recorded from his apartment on the boardwalk every Sunday at 4.20. He is a talented musician from Germany and does different projects in Venice and in other locations in Los Angeles. He also has a mini stage which he plays in outside one of the local coffee shops.

Corey

Is a white male in his twenties. He is from Texas and came to Venice to produce music. He went back to Texas after recording an album and didn't return as planned, because his family didn't approve of his music.

Eva

Eva is a white 45-year-old woman who moved to Venice from Germany in 1990. She moved to Venice to get away from what she referred to as a male chauvinistic art environment. Eva is one of the established artists that now is in danger of being evicted because rapidly increasing rental prices in Venice.

Elisabeth

Is one of the newer waves of artists in Venice. She has an art studio and gallery in the vicinity of the more affluent Abbot Kinney Boulevard.

Free speech Vendors

Monday

Is a 54-year-old white woman. She sells her art on Venice Beach boardwalk. She lives in another neighborhood of Los Angeles. She is a painter. She is in a relationship with Alex. Monday came to Los Angeles to be an actor. She has had several different types of work and used to clean houses in Venice. Monday has worked on the boardwalk for eight years and works there all year

Alex

Is a 50-year-old white male. He makes digital pictures, and paintings which he sells on the boardwalk. He is in a relationship with Monday. He was brought up in a rich family. Alex started working on the boardwalk after he lost his home, and job in the aftermath of the economic crash in 2008. He also got busted by the police for his illegal drug business. Alex works on the boardwalk in the high season, and uses the rest of the year creating art. He works on the boardwalk from April until September.

Buddy

Is a 50-year-old African American male. He is employed by Monday to help her pack up and down. He saves hers an Alex's regular spots in the mornings.

Radical left activists

Steve

Is a white male in his thirties. He has been homeless for most of his life. He now lives in an apartment in Venice, where he also works. He is often to be seen on Fridays following the Friday morning sweep, where he advocates and documents the police and sanitation officers.

Peggy

Is a white 60-year-old homeless-activist. She used to follow the Friday morning sweep every Friday, but now does it every second Friday. She wears a large camera around her neck, and documents injustice that is done to the homeless on the Friday morning sweep. She has a daughter who is diagnosed with schizophrenia. Her daughter lived on the street, before she managed to sneak her in through the back door in a mental hospital.

Sophia

Is a 71-year-old African American woman who has lived in Venice most of her life. She is running a lawsuit against the city for closing down the first Batiste church in Venice. The church was founded by Abbott Kinney's Wife.

Aron

Is a Native American male in his forties. He is an activist, working on different projects to better the situation for marginalized groups in Venice. He is also a painter and writer.

Middle-class liberal activists

Christine

Benjamin

Is a white male in his forties. He helped create Venice Dogz an activist group in Venice, protesting Snapchat's increased presence in Venice.

Linda

Was serving as the head of one of the committees of the Venice Neighborhood Council for two years. She lives on in a residential house on the boardwalk. She is 50 years old and works in the movie industry.

Betty

Betty is an elderly white woman, and long-time resident who has been an activist since the 1970s. She has a stand on the boardwalk with newspapers, where she tries to inform the public about lies in the media. She also frequently attends meetings at the Venice Neighborhood Council

VNC Local politicians

Matt

Is a white male at the end of his 30s. Matt lived on the street in Venice from he was 13, but now lives in his home in Venice. Matt stood for election at the VNC and recently became a board member for the Ocean Front Walk. Matt is politically on the radical left.

CJ

White woman that has lived in Venice for over 30 years. She is a realtor. Her main cause for candidacy in the VNC is to evict unhoused persons from the streets in Venice and is against housing for unhoused persons in Venice. CJ is a right-wing local politician.

Angela

White woman. Has been living in Venice for 5-6 years. She is a reporter for Venice Update, a local newspaper. Has previously worked as a journalist and as a web designer for UCLA. Is a marginal gentrifier on the white professional left.

Travis

White male, who moved to Venice five years ago. Works as a photographer for the skate and surf industry. He is on the white professional left.

Michael

Michael is a businessman and partner in the Venice Whaler. He is promoting his presence, and business in Venice through the Venice Neighborhood Council. It is not clear which side he is on politically, but he is a gentrifier who promotes the establishment of his business through a right-wing rhetoric.

Niza

Niza is a homeowner and stay at home mother who is concerned for her children's education. Although she might belong to the white professional left in politics, her cause is usually fought by the radical left.

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Introduction

With an average of 28-30 000 visitors daily (Recreation & Parks 2020b) and up to 16 million annual visitors (L.A.M.C. 2012:2), Venice Beach Boardwalk is the second largest tourist attraction in California after Disneyland. Venice Beach Boardwalk's "free speech" zone with its carnivalesque, creative, bohemian "vibe", is at the heart of Venice's popular identity. The boardwalk's "free speech" zone, a two-and-a-half mile stretch which runs parallel to the Pacific coastline, consists of 205 first come first serve, vending-spaces. Anyone is free to immerse themselves in the boardwalk's creative, informal economy and to express their free speech rights which includes the right to sell self-produced art¹. This marketplace that gets erect anew every day, is filled with performers, jugglers, musicians, artists, henna-painters, fortune tellers and religious groups from a range of different backgrounds and ages.

Venice is remembered in popular imagination for its theme parks from the beginning of 1900 until 1950, the bohemian Beat counterculture in the 1950s, the hippie movement and radical political activists in the 1960s and 1970s (Deener 2012, 2016, McBride 2008). The boardwalk's public identity is celebrated for its alternative lifestyles, artistic creative vibe, and freedom to expression.

Life in Venice moves to a different rhythm and nowhere more so than on the famous Venice Boardwalk, officially known as Ocean Front Walk. It's a freak show, a human zoo and a wacky carnival alive with Hula-Hoop magicians, old timey jazz combos, solo distorted garage rockers and artists (good and bad) – as far as LA experiences go, it's a must. (Schulte-Peevers et al. 2018:184)

However, in the midst of Venice's celebrated public culture is an open display of poverty, displacement, and structural violence. Moreover, Venice is a highly unusual public space with its extremely diverse demographic mix. You have the upper-, and the middle-class gentrifiers, the unhoused and the poor artists, the engineers in high paying office jobs, artists in expensive galleries and on the street, tourists from all over the world all attracted to the same place at the same time. The uneven distribution of wealth and opportunities is visually represented by a growing unhoused population living next to residents in multimillion dollar dwellings. This is the research focus of this thesis: the interplay between actors with very different backgrounds, and the power relations such a diversified social world generates in the context of gentrification.

¹ 1 As long as they follow L.A. Municipal code, Chapter IV, Article 42.15

Research focus and question

The ethnographic material which this thesis' analysis centers around is collected through six months of ethnographic fieldwork in the "free speech" area of Venice Beach Boardwalk. The main focus of research is on the impact of gentrification and the structural- and symbolic violence inherent in social, economic, and political structures that enables displacement and eviction of certain groups. I analyze the processes of evictions and change that are currently framed in the economic discourse of neoliberalism and gentrification while casting a glance on the historical formation of power-structures and the shifting ideological discourses that justifies exclusion and displacement from formal housing, and displacement pressure through law enforcement of people who already have been evicted from formal housing. Local changes in access to private and public space are influenced by specific politic-, economic- and cultural- power structures that mediate between private- and state interests involving both micro- and macro processes (Low and Smith 2006:1-5). Macro processes like neoliberalism has changed the ideology of exclusion in the housing market and regulatory structures that control acceptable behavior in public spaces.

What type of processes are inherent in the process of gentrification? How is gentrification manifested in the social fabric and material landscape of Venice? Which forms of violence does exclusion produce, and how are specific groups affected differently by gentrification based on race and class? How are historic power structures maintained in local politics? How is language used in asserting symbolic power and resistance in formal and informal politics and activism?

Gentrification and Neoliberal Reason

Ruth Glass (2010 [1964]) was the first to use the term gentrification. She used the term to conceptualize urban population changes in which upper- and middle-class residents moved into and rehabilitated houses which caused the displacement of the existing working-class residents in London (Glass 2010 [1964]:22). Since gentrification was first termed, a broad array of literature has been produced to analyze this global phenomenon. Gentrification is an extremely complex concept which intersects underlying and historical, social, economic, political and ideological processes, which is reflected in the difficulties scholars have on agreeing on an exact definition (Brown-Saracino 2010:12-13). Most definitions centers around the consequences and the physical and social changes that are caused by gentrification, rather than the causality to the process of gentrification itself (Brown-Saracino 2010:13). Discussions about gentrification are often divided between two blocks: those who argue that gentrification is culturally motivated, and those who argue that gentrification is motivated by capital (Smith 2010:71). For instance, Sharon Zukin (2010) suggests that gentrification in the 1970s was initiated by new ideological consumption patterns (2010:176). Zukin found that gentrifiers both had an attraction to eccentric places (2010:175), and a growing concern for climate change which inspired the ideological consumption of preserving old buildings in the neighborhoods they moved into (2010:176). On the other hand Neil

Smith (2010), argues that explaining gentrification through cultural consumption preferences fails to consider the whole array of actors and structures included in the process such as policies, builders, real estate companies, and urban renewal strategies that facilitate gentrification (2010:75). In other words, Smith argues that, even though consumption is embedded in the process, gentrification is inevitably dominated by the aim for economic profit and “sound investment” (2010:74).

Gentrification is a global phenomenon which affects locations beyond world cities such as New York and London (Atkinson and Bridge 2010:51). The process of gentrification does have a common dimension: the dispossession and removal of undesirable populations. However, as Damaris Rose (2010) stresses, the process of gentrification varies greatly and is predicted by specific social actors in specific places (Rose 2010:195). While gentrification scholars generally agree with Ruth Glass (2010 [1964]:22) that gentrification initially occurs when working-class residents are replaced by upper- and middle-class residents, the process of gentrification is determined by local dynamics and factors such as policies, social-, economic-, and political dynamics, law, and resistance.

For instance compared to other world cities like London where gentrification is more likely to occur around a central district, gentrification in Los Angeles is said to have a “weak center” (De Verteuil 2010:1566). In LA gentrification is scattered around the city and real estate preferred by the upper classes are more likely to have proximity to natural resources like the beach or the mountains (De Verteuil 2010:1566). Being located by the sea, makes Venice a target for gentrification.

Another point that Damaris Rose highlights is that the process of gentrification in a specific place progresses differently with time. In the 1950s Venice suffered from decay and disinvestment caused among other by segregation, restrictive covenants, and redlining. A combination of “white flight”, low rents, and new possibilities to take loans on property, inspired the first surges of gentrifiers. Before gentrification, Venice was a neighborhood of marginalized minorities, based on race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual preference, and counter-cultural resistance. It is common that long-time residents talk about how the community both socially and physically has changed over the years. Long-time residents who lived in Venice before gentrification described Venice as a working-class neighborhood. Particularly those who lives in Oakwood, the historical black community of Venice, described how eviction and displacement disrupted their close-knit community. Moreover the process of gentrification has created competing “place-based identities” (Cresswell 2004:84).

Gentrifiers often view Venice as an authentic and historical creative place², which is one of the main reasons why they choose to move to Venice. Another common reason for moving to Venice is the “community feeling” or “vibe” of the “neighborhood”. The “vibe” gentrifiers refer to is the socio-demographic diversity and sociality of public space. However as Sharon Zukin (Zukin 2008:728) notes, viewing a place as authentic usually is a perception of the outsider, not the person who grew up there

² A link to the 1950s beat generation, countercultures, and radicals of the 1960s and 1970s, and creative sub- cultures from 1970s until present time, such as roller-skate, and skate-culture, street art, graffiti, creative fitness.

(2008:728). As mentioned above, in popular imagination, Venice is remembered as a creative wacky, artistic place. The production of the symbolic imaginaries which gentrifiers are attracted to, are partly constructed by real estate developers, tourism, the media and through the cultural industry such as movies and music videos.

Gentrifiers are of course not a homogenous group, although gentrifiers, whether they are in the higher or lower specter of the middle-class, tend to be highly educated, and white. Gentrifiers vary from being “social preservationists” (Brown-Saracino 2013:135) who wants to preserve ethnic diversity of Venice, and have strong sympathies with the original population, to being “super-gentrifiers” (Lees 2016:45) like mega corporations such as Google and Snapchat. In some instances, it is the government who contribute to gentrification by selling government buildings, in other cases it is businesses engaging in place-branding strategies (Chapter 1).

Nevertheless, the process of gentrification ultimately change the neighborhoods “authenticity” (Deener 2007:292), by creating a market for businesses that fit the tastes of the middle- and upper-class hipster cafés, expensive eateries boutiques, galleries, and services (Zukin 2011:163). Moreover, as Tim Butler argues, the fight for preservation “[...] is also often the means whereby a class of people with ‘cultural capital’ can come together to protect ‘historical authenticity’ and at the same time fight for the fight for *their* future” (Butler 2013:237).

When gentrifiers move to Venice, their actions become entangled with a range of processes and thus contribute to upholding economic, and social, power structures. These involves the real estate agents, landlords, developers, financial suppliers, constructors, and government agencies (Smith 2010:74). The ideological justification for displacing the original population relies on “neoliberal reason” (Brown 2015). Neoliberal reason is based on economic market structures which economizes “noneconomic spheres and activities” (Brown 2015:17) which includes democratic ideals (Brown 2015:18), state institutions, politics, justice, (Brown 2015:17), and even the production of subjects (Brown 2015:21). Moreover, as David Harvey explains:

In so far as neoliberalism values market exchange as ‘an ethic in itself’, capable of acting as a guide to all human action and substituting for all previously held ethical beliefs. [...] it emphasizes the significance of contractual relations in the marketplace. [...] It holds that the social good will be maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions, and it seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market. (Harvey 2007:3).

Struggles over public space

With the process of gentrification in Venice, and increased tourism, during the 1980s, came an emphasis on securing economic gain for businesses through stringent regulation over informal economic uses of public space (Deener 2012:193). The demographic change caused disputes between local vendors and new business owners who lobbied a ban on street vending. The conflict was grounded in the newly established business owners fear for competition of non rent or tax paying vendors. Venice Beach

Boardwalk had traditionally been used among others to sell self-produced art (Berkson 1981). When the ban on vending was implemented in the beginning of 1980s, the police could legally fine and remove people for vending. However, locals contested the ban on vending. In fact, the term “free speech” zone refers the use of the first amendments right to free speech, that successfully contested ban in court against the Municipality of Los Angeles (Deener 2012:193). When the “free speech” ordinance (L.A.M.C. 2020) was implemented in the nineteen eighties it legally institutionalized a distinction between the “free speech” zone on the west side of the boardwalk and the “commercial side” (Deener 2012:193)

The legalization of vending gave birth to LA Municipal Code 42.15 which prominently includes a variety of rules including definitions of what a vendor and performer is, which wares are allowed to sell, time schedules and how much space one are allowed to use (L.A.M.C. 2020:IV 42.15 p.1-2). The ordinance allows all self-produced art and performances, which actually create a unique art world. Traditional art-worlds most commonly have some sort of institutionalized parameter which dictates the distinction between art and non-art (Becker 1974). A lack of such an institutionalized distinction creates a certain freedom to artistic expression.

As the process of gentrification evolves, the social and economically diversity is gradually displaced by white middle- and upper-class residents and businesses. Neoliberal reason helps legitimate the deepening of social inequality and spatial separation through gentrification. One of the effects of gentrification is increased policing (Pérez 2013:324), which in Venice particularly affects the unhoused population.

Policing Poverty

The widening gap between rich and poor is visually represented on Venice Beach Boardwalk where people on the street reside in the proximity of multi-million-dollar dwelling and businesses. Particularly because of neoliberal political- and economic restructuring, the discrepancy between rich and poor has increased since the 1980s. The free market structure was supposed to benefit everyone by “[...] liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey 2007:2). However, the market structure seems to benefit the economic power elite and further deprive those in the lower economic classes. Particularly seeing that marginalized populations have historically been affected by dispossessions, evictions, and exclusionary processes like segregation, redlining and covenant restrictions which leaves them at the bottom of the power strata (chapter 2).

In line with neoliberal reason the current political discussion about homelessness is infused with an ideology that justifies eviction of unhoused persons from public spaces.

While vagrancy laws was prohibited in the 1960s as they were deemed unconstitutional these laws were reinstated into the Los Angeles Municipal Code during the 1990s, when the amount of evictions had skyrocketed for ten years due to neoliberal economic restructuring and “breakdown in the

welfare-state” (Katz 2013:180) When analyzing Los Angeles’ current Municipal Code, I found at least 21 ordinances that disproportionately affect those who are faced with permanent eviction. These include ordinances that severely deprive unhoused persons lives by making it a felony or infraction to remove a shopping cart (Marks 2013:445) to sleep on the street, sleep in an oversized vehicle (like a van), panhandling, loitering, begging, vending and very specific restrictions of the amount of belongings one can have³.

However, the displacement of poor people has been persistent in US history. The ideological language determining the distinction of the “deserving” and “undeserving” poor (Katz 2013) has fluctuated over the last century. Although, a persistent aspect of the rhetoric can be connected to the “culture of poverty”, which essentially blames the poor for being poor, it is just part of their nature, their lack of moral, and deviant behavior (Katz 2013:12). Not before 1979 were there explicit laws formulating the rights of unhoused persons (Marks 2013:442).

Following the Conservative agenda, instead of implementing initiatives to secure already marginal groups rights through better healthcare, equal opportunities in the labor market, housing market, (Katz 2013:168-202) cities all over the US sought to deal with poverty through increased regulatory measures that directly target their citizens who lives on the street, thus criminalizing poverty.

The people who live on Venice Beach boardwalk are under constant surveillance, and have their lives disrupted by law-enforcement several times a day. The particular place where unhoused persons live on the boardwalk is sectioned into territories governed by state, municipal and city. As we shall see in chapter 3, the government delimited territories are inscribed with bureaucratically determined temporal rules of access, which makes it possible for government officials to displace unhoused persons two times a day. Moreover, these laws create different forms of structural violence.

Stigma and Structural Violence

Structural violence is here defined in line with Johan Galtung’s theory, as violence that occurs when there is no identifiable actor indirectly causing a person violence (1969:170): “[...] violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realization” (1969:168). This means that the violence is embedded in the structure in such a way that power and resources are disproportionately distributed, or monopolized, and causes unequal life expectancies based on ethnicity, social- and economic- class (1969:168-171).

The structural violence which affects unhoused persons in Venice is embedded in macro-level political- and economic power structures, which are informed by micro-level stigma. The stigmas that are attached to race and class are formed by “systems of differentiation” (Foucault 1982:792), which places different groups of people in a hierarchical positions to each other. The systems of differentiation lays the ground for ideologically justifying unjust treatment of certain groups (Foucault 1982:792).

³ See https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/los_angeles/latest/overview for entire code

Ideology is here understood as the naturalization of socially constructed reality, in a way that it seems objectively true (Wolf, Silverman, and Yengoyan 2001:381), which ideas stretches throughout the “sociocultural complexity” (Wolf, Silverman, and Yengoyan 2001:380), understood as the social reality. Ideology as defined by Eric Wolf (2001) is very much in line with Pierre Bourdieu’s (2013) conceptualization of doxa, which is the arbitrary or ordering of the social reality which brings together “the objective and the subjective principles of organization” (Bourdieu 2013:160)

To better understand the relationship between the stigma that are ascribed I use Pierre Bourdieu’s (2013) modes of capital: cultural capital (knowledge based on primary socialization and education and peers), economic capital, social capital (different kinds of beneficial and apprized relations) and symbolic capital (renown status), (Jenkins 1992:53). The accumulation of capital orders the world of possible positions and classification (2013:159-60) which again occupy different positions of dominations in different fields (Jenkins 1992:53). Together, the accumulation of different capitals, or the lack thereof constitutes what Bourdieu refers to as doxa, the social reality, the arbitrary ordering of the social world which is perceived as an objective truth (Bourdieu 2013:159-60)

I find it useful to analyze the violence unhoused persons encounter through two analytical categories *slow violence, and routine violence* (chapter 3). While Robert Nixon’s (Nixon 2011a) concept, slow violence, originated in the environmental humanities it has clear relevance in relation to homelessness. Nixon defines slow violence as: “violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (Nixon 2011b:2). Unhoused persons, as a cause of the stigma they are ascribed, dehumanized by both government and locals. The slow violence is accumulated over time and involves both macro and micro level violence, that both is internalized and deprives their mental and somatic health.

Routine violence on the other hand is determined by the intersection of government departments and agencies which particularly influences unhoused vendors who live in the “free speech”. Unhoused persons must abide by ordinances which regulate where and when they can sleep (Fauer 2020b), where and how much personal belongings they are allowed to contain (Fauer 2020c), and where they can “hang out” during the day (Fauer 2020a). Routine violence happens on such a repetitive basis and is anticipated daily by those who are victim of it. Repetitive violence is enabled through laws and ordinances, making the police officers and government employees vehicles for upholding power structures.

As will be the focus in chapter 4, the unhoused persons on Venice Beach Boardwalk are the topic of debate frequently in the local formal political institution, the VNC (Venice Neighborhood Council). Moreover, the discussion is determined by the cultural capital that the white middle- and upper-class, which more or less asserts that the stigma of the “undeserving” poor (Katz 2013), is the objective truth of the social reality.

Venice Neighborhood Council

When matters of the community is discussed between different camps in Venice the upper class are influential in deciding how the communication should be held. Every culture, says Bourdieu, is ordered by arbitrary systems of classifications which are seen as natural, and self-evident (Bourdieu 2013:160). However, the natural social order, doxa, is learned through social capital. The board members who primarily are white, upper-class professionals who first of all have been separated from other classes and races historically through segregation, have a completely different understanding of the world as do those who are resisting gentrification.

When analyzing formal and informal activism in Venice, I found that unequal opportunities are maintained through the symbolic power and social capital which is produced and dictated by residents in the upper echelons. The VNC board members were particularly influential in shaping the content and conversation about the future of Venice. The power relation between minorities and the white upper class is based on symbolic violence. Symbolic violence is violence which is invisible but acted upon the agent through structures that seems natural to the agent because the power relations itself are embodied and are a constituent of a cognition that has been created in that very world the logic of that power structure is created (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:167-172). In other words the maintenance of power is made possible through the circulation of power connected to a web of actors contributing to the maintenance of violence (Foucault 1986:234).

The unequal power of different groups in the VNC in turn creates creative forms of informal activism regarding among other super-gentrification and unhoused persons rights.

Although the recent power relations are determined and conceptualized by the process of gentrification, I argue that these power relations have roots well beyond the current social and economic discourse.

Historical Power Structures

While some scholars draw a line between state-led renewal and private capital investment as gentrification (Glass 2010 [1964]:22), others emphasize state-led renewal as a facilitator for private capital investment through gentrification. In line with Neil Smith and Peter Williams (2007), rather than finding a restrictive definition of the process of gentrification, I focus on the complex dynamics of the developing process of gentrification (Smith and Williams 2007:3) in Venice. I argue that the distinction between redevelopment initiated by Los Angeles City beginning in the 1960s (Cunningham 1976:193-194) and gentrification inspired by the private market beginning in the 1980s (Deener 2012:69), is not that sharp. In reality, the entanglement of the upper echelons, the private market, and the state (Redford 2017) has been persistent since Venice was first envisioned in 1891 (Stanton 2005:4-54). Rather than conceptualizing analytical boundaries to the process of gentrification, I consider the economic-, social-

and political processes implicit in power-structures that enable and are part of the process of gentrification, which is currently justified through the “neoliberal reason” (Brown 2015:17).

I further argue that the current process of gentrification is an extension of ongoing structural-, economic-, and social power-dynamics that can be traced back to the beginning of imperial colonialism in California, and the expansion of the Spanish throne in 1542 (Chapter 2) Moreover, I suggest that the continuation of power-structures is shaped by and justified through ever shifting ideological discourses.

Method

My methods are threefold: 1, Participant observation; 2, Supplemental methods: Semi structured interviews 3, Analysis of secondary sources.

Participant Observation

The main method for data collection is participant observation which was conducted from March to September 2019 among vendors on Venice Beach Boardwalk. The ethnographic data which is a product of the participant observation is in the form of fieldnotes, approximately 2000 pictures 50 film recordings and 50 audio recordings. Some of the excerpts presented in the ethnographic depictions which lay the foundation of analysis are exact transcriptions of video recordings.

During the first months of fieldwork my focus was to understand the dynamics of the boardwalk. I had two separate groups of key informants who worked as vendors on Venice Beach Boardwalk. Both groups had longstanding careers in the informal economy with at least eight years of practice. The first group were two vendors, and their circle of friends and cooperative links (Becker 1974:767). The other group consists of nine homeless men, and two woman that are centered around an exhibit.

There were several reasons for this approach. Firstly, the free speech zone is a place of business, and the main source of income for vendors. Particularly at the beginning of fieldwork it was important to show my interlocutors both that my presence would be extensive and at the same time that it would not interfere with their livelihood. Venice Beach boardwalk is a highly competitive place where one can easily be the target of someone wanting to disprove your right to use a specific space or be the victim of exploitation and hustling. Venice Beach boardwalk was the only public space in Los Angeles where vending without a permit was allowed, so the competition for one of the 205 spaces was notable.

I decided to have separate relationships with the two groups, and to not share anything about the about the relationship I had with one group to the other. I held the groups apart to make sure no one would worry that intimate information about their lives would be shared with other people. To be able to really trust someone on Venice beach, can be hard for vendors, and the fact that they work and/or live in a public space makes their private life vulnerable. One must bear in mind that the space they have on the boardwalk is all they have the whole workday, and the workhours are extremely long and can last up to 15 hours. The unhoused vendors are there all day. The vendors on Venice beach are both very welcoming and friendly, but because of the hard competition on the boardwalk many of the vendors

have had frightening or traumatizing experiences with other vendors, visitors, and those who work on the commercial side. The vulnerability lies in the fact that also their personal lives are on display when they are not able to keep their front stage appearance intact.

I found that it was very important to act coherently, calm, and honestly when I partook in the vendors lives. Many of my informants have experienced very traumatic pasts with persons who did not act coherently or switched between emotional states. I found that it was very important to not be too forward and ask too intrusive questions because my informants, with no exception, had experiences with that profoundly affected their lives. Particularly the unhoused persons were skeptical to government workers, police, and social workers. Although I explained that I was a student, with no affiliation to any private or state agencies in the United States or would have any economic gain from this research my unhoused interlocutors would periodically have moments of distrust concerning my motifs for “hanging out” with them.

Because of the traumatizing encounters and stigmatizing experiences, the informants that lives the boardwalk have had police, government-, health- and social and welfare employees, I avoided all overt contact with the police. All observation of the police, Sanitation Department, the Fire Department, Parks and Recreation, and the Venice Beach Business Improvement District’s (VB BID) Safe- and Clean-Team employees, conducting the “Clean and Safe” initiative each Friday morning, is done covertly. I did not explain that I was doing research when I asked them questions about their work. I also filmed the sweeps, having my camera hanging around my neck covering that I was filming them. The introduction to chapter 3 is a transcript of a covert film I recorded while following the sweep-team on their round.

I participated in my key informants lives both on the boardwalk and in their homes. For the participatory part I helped one painter sell art, and assisted to create a selfie booth, which I also managed. In addition, I had an individual “free speech” project where I performed together with my boyfriend on the boardwalk. The two-person band consisted of me on vocals and him on guitar. We acquired the necessary equipment and performed in different spots in the “free speech area”.

During the last months in the field, I reached out to other members of the Venice community where I attended and observed council meetings and committee meetings, and election meetings at the VNC (Venice Neighborhood Council). I attended various events both facilitated private and government efforts I participated at church meetings held by a group of activists that were protesting the corrupt sales of the historical African American church in Venice. The church meetings were held on the steps outside the church which was in the process of being demolished by a super gentrifier. I attended and observed local events set by two social agencies, the Venice Family Clinic, and St. Joseph Center. I also attended the Annual Night out, an event held by LAPD, local social institutions and city, state, and municipal agencies.

My own socio-economic placement, and cultural capital, being half Lebanese, with a student economy at the age of 40 served as an advantage for me when I approached people in different social and economic- positions.

Supplemental Methods

Additional to qualitative method, I have done structured and semi-structured interviews with mainly the same questionnaire. And again, because of peoples experience with exploitation, lack of respect from government employees, and neglect as citizens I would be very cautious about not force questions on them, I have also participated in radio shows, and hung out in local bars having spontaneous conversation with locals. I have done several interviews with locals and local politicians. I have attended candidate meetings, and board meetings at the VNC (Venice Neighborhood Council). I did interviews with long-time residents, profiled artists, several residents with different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as vendors on the boardwalk that were not among my key informants to get a deeper understanding of Venice and the observations I did with my key informants on the boardwalk. Because Venice is a public place it allowed me to take pictures and make videos of the boardwalk. My data includes about 2000 pictures and 50 video representations. In my opinion this a strength when considering the accuracy of the sampling data because it adds to the tacit knowledge one acquires over time in the field and to the written field notes. Venice is a place where many things happen at the same time which can leave you with a feeling of sensory overload. The films recorded during the Friday clean-up were particularly helpful. The structural violence through the Friday sweep includes so many different individuals, and my own experience was overwhelming. Although the tacit knowledge should not me underestimated, the videos help me see the whole situation and all the actors involved in the process in a perspective that was removed from my own experience.:

I have also copied 2000 pages from the Venice Archival collection which is donated by Arnold Springer to the California State University in Long Beach. These archives consist of both local and national newspapers, handwritten notes from meetings, poems, official documents from the land use committee, VNC etc. These documents date back to 1880. In addition, I have analyzed secondary sources such as online forums, newspaper articles, artistic representations of the boardwalk, visual representations, and tourist brochures. I have also red historical representations, poems, and fictional depictions. I have analyzed visual representations, watched movies located in Venice, music videos, listened to songs, and seen documentaries.

The shortcoming of this thesis is that a more holistic representations would have been made if time would have allowed for me to be able to spend more time with those that are regarded as the gentrifiers.

Ethical considerations

My key informants have been through hard times and have had experience with being taken advantage of. I found that people were very fragile. Before asking questions that were obviously uncomfortable, I would tell informants that if they were feeling uncomfortable, they should let me know and we will just stop. Especially when interviewing unhoused people, that I knew went in and out of depressive states, I would be very cautious about getting them to open up about things that might be difficult to put away after the interview. Knowing that to reflect on issues that are current, could set them in a harmful psychological state. I found that full transparency, and building a relationship based on honesty and trust was paramount. I would let them know that this is just a master thesis, and that their lives and their stories would not be compromised to gain my career.

Chapter outline

In chapter 1, I take the reader for a guided walk starting at the Windward Circle walking through Venice Beach boardwalk in the south to the border of Santa Monica in the north. Through ethnographic description, I show the reader how gentrification is manifested in the social and material fabric, and how multiple processes of gentrification occurs at the same time. I locate the essence of social life on Venice Beach Boardwalk, while introducing my interlocutors.

Chapter 2 is an analysis of exclusionary processes connected to the territory where Venice is located in the period 1542-2019. I with focus power-structures and shifting ideologies of exclusion and eviction. By tracing dominant power-structures embedded in the history of real estate and structural exclusion based on ethnicity and socio-economic status, I show how the current processes of gentrification is and extension of historical power structures. Venice is a crucial place to examine exclusion because the popular meaning and ideology associated with the place contradicts the actual history of eviction. I argue that it is necessary to examine the long-standing power structures that are characterized by ideology and capitalism to uncover the shifting ideologies that justify displacement.

In chapter 3, I examine weekly “Friday Clean-Ups” which involves intersecting government departments on Venice Boardwalk which target unhoused vendors. The analysis distinguishes between two forms of violence: routine violence and slow violence. In the first part of the chapter, I focus on the implementation of the Friday “sweep”, the second part focuses on how unhoused persons cope with slow violence.

In chapter 4, I analyze how activism and local politics are discussed through the formal institution of the Venice Neighborhood council and through informal activism. I analyze the symbolic power in formal political institutions and why diversity is declining.

Concluding thoughts

Venice is imagined in popular culture as a place of resistance, for unconventional lifestyles, as a place of leisure and artist life. These imaginaries often conflict with those who have longstanding ties to the community, those who thought of Venice as their home before the arrival of new affluent residents. The urban renewal strategies, and gentrification has since the late 1950s gradually changed Venice from a working-class area, with a large black and brown population to an up-scale happening beach town. The process of gentrification has attracted new residents, new businesses, who are attracted to the neo-bohemian-vibe. Even though gentrifiers in some are sympathetic to the “original” population, they ultimately change the neighborhood to fit a middle and upper-class lifestyle. These changes are shaped by many different actors, and gentrification has different consequences for different people, which will be the focus in the following chapter.

One of these consequences is the increased policing of public spaces, based on a fear for urban spaces, or rather the desire to get rid of certain undesired people. The policing and privatization of public space has severe consequences for unhoused persons who make their life, and work as artists on Venice Beach boardwalk. In line with neo-liberal reason or ideology the state becomes more immersed in policies that exclude, dispossess, and evict people, either through covert racism and bureaucratic categories of the poor, or scheduled anticipated violence through ordinances.

Unhoused vendors are affected by structural violence, and stigmas that I will analyze through two concepts of violence: slow violence and routine violence. To better understand the relationship between structure and subject I use Pierre Bourdieu’s modes of capital.

Moreover, injustice caused by gentrification affects people in different ways. Over the years Venetians have adopted to remarkable ways of resisting gentrification. However, the VNC which was established by locals as part of a city-wide attempt to include minorities in democratic decision making, now presents a visual representation of the colonialization of white, well educated, middle-and upper-class gentrifies, where an essential part of domination is through the symbolic power inherent in political organization and language.

Although the dispossession, eviction and policing of certain groups, the social and physical changes are at this moment in time conceptualized as the process of gentrification, and justified through neoliberal reason, I argue that these are part of power structures that can be traced back to the colonialization of California. These power structures and the justification of injustice of certain groups is framed through ideologies which rests on systems of differentiation based on race and class.

Chapter 1. Gentrification in a neo-bohemian neighborhood

“Venice is like a metropolis in a bucket”

-Luke



Venice has since the 1950s been affected by state-led urban renewal and gentrification initiated by the private market. The process of gentrification unfolds in diverging ways in different micro neighborhoods and affects certain individuals and groups in dissimilar ways based on race, socio-economic status, and geographical location within Venice. Gentrification has changed the identity of the neighborhood and caused evictions, displacement, and deterioration of whole neighborhoods within Venice. How does gentrification manifest itself in social, and public space (Kohn 2004:9) and what type of changes does it produce?

In this chapter I want to take the reader for a walk through Venice. We start our tour of Venice at the windward circle, walk north through Venice Beach boardwalk, before we end our walk a few blocs east of the boardwalk in Oakwood.

The chapter introduces the reader to key informants and show how gentrification manifest itself in the social and material fabric. Through ethnographic descriptions of what locals would refer to as “the energy” or “the vibe” of Venice I locate the symbolic mechanisms that gentrifiers identify as the main drives for choosing to live in Venice.

Venice of America

It is early morning when we step out of bus 33 at the Windward circle. A mix of warm air and drafts of the cold, damp, night-air hits your skin. It is going to be a hot day. It is hard to imagine that the asphalt we are standing on used to be a lagoon connected by an intricate canal system (Stanton 2005:28) with gondolas (Stanton 2005:63) conveying middle-class pleasure-seekers to their small beach-house lots 114 years ago (Stanton 2005:6). Venice of America was envisioned and founded by Abbot Kinney a wealthy tobacco mogul (Starr 1985:80). Venice was originally aimed at attracting people from the elite, and particularly the cultural and intellectual movement Chautauqua, that originated in New York (Deener 2012:21). Kinney had planned to make Venice of America the center for intellectual lecture and high culture (Deener 2012:21) When Kinney failed to attract the desired elite, he altered his theme to amusement which he thought would better accommodate the middle- and working-class people who were arriving in Los Angeles in large numbers (Deener 2012:21).

Venice was a thrill-seekers paradise from 1905-1925 with several amusement piers reaching from the beachfront and about 300 to 600 meters (1000-2000 feet) into the ocean (Stanton 2005:72). Americans with a 350 seat passenger boat for excursions, Zoological Garden, Last days of Pompeii, Underground Chinatown exhibit with a realistic opium den, a Panama Canal exhibit (Stanton 2005:100). There were carousels, arcades, indoor swimming hall, a Ferris Wheel, funhouses, freakshows, games, restaurants, bars, cafes, movie screenings, courts for different types of sport, a skate hall, and several hotels (Stanton 2005:73-88). The history of amusements plays into the wakey symbolism of Venice Beach boardwalk and the identity of place.

Government Involvement: Urban Renewal and Neoliberal Reason

Venice seashore and the boardwalk is appearing in the horizon as we pass the iconic old post office. The building has for the four last years been surrounded by chipboard walls covered in commercial posters. Despite major protests the Post Office was put up for sale in 2011 by the US Postal Service (Hutkins 2011), and sold to Joel Silver who planned to make it the headquarter of his movie production company, Silver Production in 2012 (Save the Post office 2011). The post office, built in 1939 had a museum like quality, with among other contained the mural "First Thirty Years of Venice's history" painted by renown artist Edward Biberman. Although the sales of postal offices has to be agreed upon by the community, the post office claimed that since they were only relocating those procedures were not necessary (Save the Post office 2011).

Across the street are some of the few original buildings with arched arcades resembling Italian renaissance architecture, stretching from where the lagoon once was, all the way up to Venice Beach boardwalk. Approximately 250 buildings were demolished between 1959 and 1965 under the Urban Renewal project supported by L.A. City and Ocean Front Improvement Association (Noonan 2015). (1976:174). Although the first attempts at urban renewal were effectively refused by Venice residents

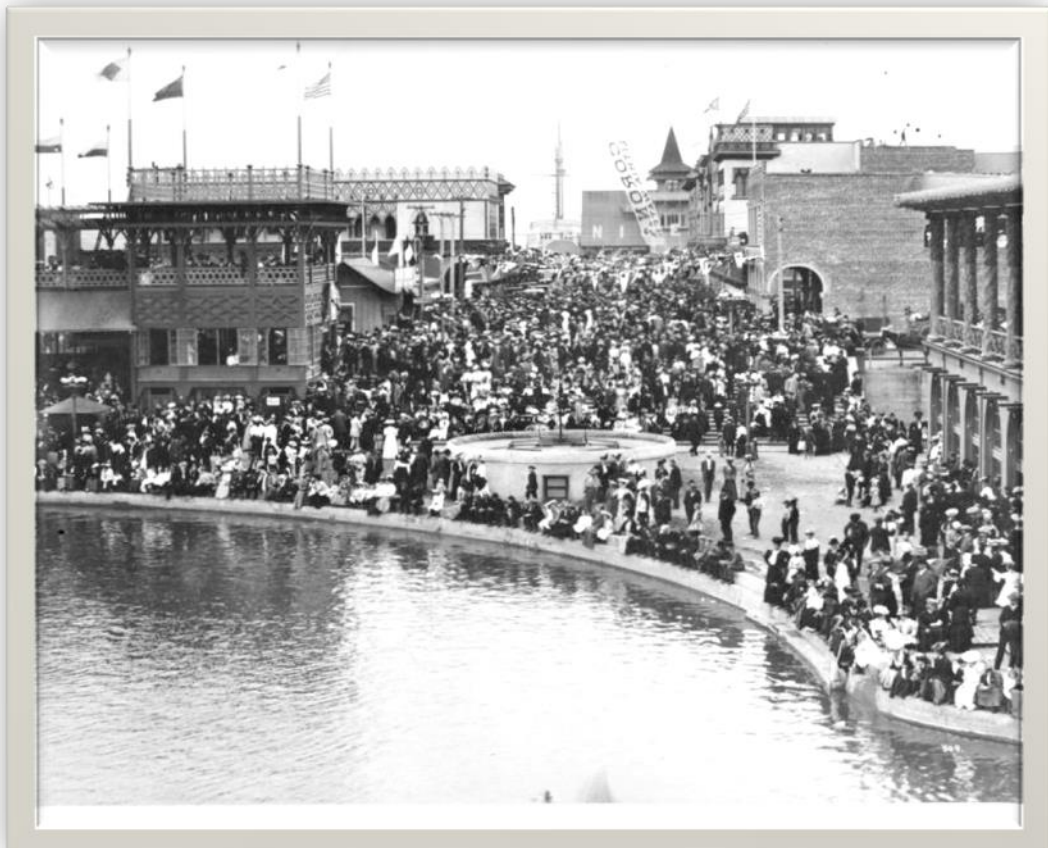


Figure 2 Crowd of onlookers huddled around the edge of Central Lagoon on Windward Avenue, Venice, ca.1915. Source "University of Southern California. Libraries" and "California Historical Society" as the source. Digitally reproduced by the USC Digital Library.



Figure 1: Aerial view of Venice, looking northwest over the canals, 1918. Source: California Historical Society



Figure 3: Winward Avenue with Venice Beach boardwalk in the horizon. Venice Sign

(Cunningham 1976:185), by 1965, one third of the buildings (550) in Venice had been demolished (Stanton 2005:239)

Here we see two examples of how the government is involved in facilitating eviction, gentrification, and privatization of public space. While the sale of the post office is an example of how the “neoliberal reason” (Brown 2015) becomes immersed in government structures, and how government agencies works around its own bureaucratic rules to make a profit while at the same time contributing to the privatization of public space. The second example shows how government officials through bureaucratic decisions legally evicted people they regarded as undesirable. The evictions and demolition facilitated the investment by private capital and gentrification.

Continuing our walk, we will see some evidence of how gentrification creates forms of exclusion in social spaces.

Social Space, Tourism and Social Segregation

There are several material and social manifestations of the mix between the legacy of the past and of the newer processes of gentrification. As we walk up Windward Ave, we pass “The Big White” a “hip” coffee shop. The building previously held the offices of the local newspaper, the Venice Vanguard. The seating area outside is packed from early morning with hip young people and middle-class clientele. I imagine they are having their morning coffee before heading off to work. Some are busy staring into their computers, while others are seated in groups conversing over a cup of coffee.

We stop at the pedestrian crossing. Drivers are waiting patiently for a couple to end their photo session in the middle of the intersection. Every year millions of people have their picture taken under the famous Venice sign, which is a replica of the sign hanging there 100 years ago.

We pass several new “chic” eateries and coffee shops we and see how the social fabric has changed from a multi-ethnic neighborhood to a place playing on bohemian symbolism that now fits the tastes of the new middle and upper class. Venice flourishes of shops created to cater the tourist industry, and hence contribute to the commodification of culture and place. Side by side are the expensive clothing stores and smoke shops with a variety of marijuana pipes displayed in the window. There are Beach-shops aimed the tourists with bathing suits in neon green, yellow and pink displayed on manikins, t-shirts, and beach towels, and clothes with sexualized prints.

It is not uncommon to strike a conversation at the bars here, with those who work in the entertainment industry, the camera men, those in charge of props, the designers, writers, acclaimed artists, and other locals. Major production companies such as Paramount Studios, Columbia Pictures/Sony pictures, Universal Studios, Warner Bros have film studios located in Los Angeles, and many of the “industry’s” workforce live in Venice. There is this kind of neo-bohemian vibe to these “social spaces” (Kohn 2004:9), where creativity and politics are discussed amongst the well educated, professional artists, and people trying to make it in the industry. Here you find primarily middle-class, people, but “starving” housed artists and musicians are welcomed as well. Many of the vendors we will meet in this chapter refuse to visit these locations because of ties to previous owners who have been evicted, or as a protest to businesses changing the identity of Venice. Unhoused persons would not be permitted into most of these places because of their socio-economic status, even if they pay for a drink.

When the processes of gentrification causes a shift in the socio-economic composition from being a low-income neighborhood to a mix of middle- and upper-class, it slowly creates a new presuppositions determined by symbolic capital which naturalizes belonging and exclusion in the social world (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013:298). The relationship between rich and poor residents are infused with power-structures that are in the favor of those with higher socio-economic status. Exclusion of unhoused persons is ideologically cemented with neoliberal economic reason (Brown 2015) which naturalizes business owners condemning unhoused persons behavior and appearance by for example seeing them as a threat to income gain from tourists and locals.

For example, the bar to our left was suggested by several of Venice’s creative professionals and middle-class residents as a place to meet for an interview. When conducting interviews, the employees would jokingly comment on the recording equipment placed on the table. However, when I one day interviewed a man who had previously lived on the boardwalk, I was told that I had to have a permission from the owner to conduct interview there. When I asked the owner, we were asked to leave. These public spaces are free to resist people’s presence, because they are privately owned and therefore adhere to property rights which allows them to exclude unwanted persons (Kohn 2004:4-5).

Leaving Windward behind us, we are now about to enter the boardwalks’ public space and the “free-speech” zone, where a whole other set of rules of access and behavior and norms are at work.



As we enter the wakey free-living atmosphere on Venice Beach Boardwalk, we pass a sign letting us know that the territory we are entering is a public park, with a certain set of rules.

Leisure and Free Speech as Tourist Attraction

Friendly faces are welcoming us as we enter the boardwalk. Before the day ends, we will have shared the boardwalk with 30-60 000 other people. People from a variety of cultures and people behaviors and backgrounds, colors, and sizes, young and older are enjoying themselves. Every clothing style is represented, and some are hardly dressed at all. The rhythm of the boardwalk changes with the season and daytime hours. Early in the morning it is quiet. You see people that are waiting to set up their wares on the boardwalk, which is first allowed to do 9am. You might see some unhoused people sleeping, people riding their bikes, or doing their morning exercise. In the summertime, and any time when the weather is nice you see a wide variety of things on the boardwalk: entertainment of all sorts, people doing tricks, playing music, dancing, doing acrobat and a display of various forms of art as well as fortune tellers and truth tellers, and people engaging the beachgoers with various games. Artists are selling costume made signs, buttons, and coins, hand made jewelry, surfboards and skateboards artistically decorated. You see it all. The explosion of sensory impressions are so extreme that even after half a year walking up and down the boardwalk I still noticed new things. In addition to the entertainment and art on the boardwalk Venice have a notable representation of public art, particularly playing on the popular and symbolic imaginaries of Venice as a place for cross-section for sub-cultures and countercultures (Salim 2019:43). A single storefront might have ten different signs on its wall.

Our first entertainer, a young boy, is using space number three out of the 205 available “spots”, as local vendors call the “designated areas” (L.A.M.C. 2012). His voice is pouring out, loudly through a portable amplifier accompanied by the original songs of Michael Jackson, playing in the background. He goes by “Little Michael” among the local vendors. His father is always nearby watching his performance and instructing him. He does some of the iconic Michael Jacksons moves and moves about in his “spot”. A large tip jar is placed in front of him. People are smiling as they approach and are able to see and hear him, charmed by his appearance. On busy days there are so many different sounds, noises, and people on the boardwalk that you most likely will not be able to



hear or see an artist or performer before you are standing right next to them. The sound of the crowd fills the boardwalk conjoined by loud music from the “commercial side”⁴ fire sirens, and constant chopping sound from LAPD helicopters flying over us. The air is filled with a mixed scent of french-fries, sea water, marijuana, and sun oil. I point to the South where we can see Gold’s Gym, known as Muscle Beach, where Arnold Schwarzenegger famously exercised back in the days. Five men with enormous muscles and oiled, tanned bodies, are working out. One of them is putting on a show for the tourists. He is doing a handstand from one of the workout appliances, stretching his body straight up in the air. A group of German tourists gathered around the fence are applauding with excitement. Matches are being played on the two basketball courts surrounding the gym. A group of retirees who regularly plays there are using the first court. The other court is occupied by a group of teenagers.

A barefoot surfer with long sun dyed hair passes with a board under his arm and the top half of his wetsuit dangling towards his feet. He is on his way past the police station and Recreation and Park office overseeing the part of the beach which is most popular among the surfers. I point to the rooftop where Red Hot Chili Peppers had their epic concert in 2011. We see a man with a professional camera is laying in the sand doing a photoshoot of a model in front of the graffiti wall next to the police station and almost stumble over a couple in their twenties. They are using the skate-pit as a background in their selfie picture memorizing a day on Venice Beach. Venice is actually known as the birthplace of the skating sub-culture and the skate pit is one of the major attractions on Venice Beach, a story that was portrayed in the movie “Dog Town”.

We walk north to our next attraction. One of the performers takes up a microphone. He talks with natural confidence as if he is on stage and the audience is already present. He comments on the people walking by, instantly making them laugh. A family of four on bikes gathers to watch. In just a couple of minutes an audience of about 150 persons, old young and from a variety of nationalities are gathered around them. The group starts to relocate the audience away from the boardwalk to the park area to prevent us blocking the boardwalk and getting shut down by the police. The speaker introduces his acrobatic team one by one. They all show off their skills, doing standing flips and swirls. The audience are cheering. The speaker announces: “We need four white rich men [...] four pretty ladies” and lastly “the future, the children”. All of the volunteers have to do a little dance instructed by one of the acrobats. The speaker’s jokes are based on “racial issues”, which makes their audience burst out in honest, spontaneous, loud laughter. As the finale approaches the speaker announces:

⁴ The commercial side runs parallel to the “free speech” zone on east side of the boardwalk and refers to the commercial stores.



People get ready for the finale!! So, if you want to remember this moment for ever, I'll say to all you Asian tourists in the audience; take out your fancy cameras, your selfie-sticks, and your professional video equipment. White people!! Get out your iPhone, iPod, and Blackberries!!! And to all the Mexican people in the audience, who took the time off work to come here today... Well...ehhhh. Just take a mental picture.

The roar of laughter attracts even more people. All the men and women are lined up next to each other, bent over, leaning their arms on their knees. One of the acrobats have walked back 20 meters. He starts running, speeds up and does a flip jump over the row of 8 people and lands perfectly on the other side. The audience dissolves while applauding their performance.

The sun is really getting out. People are smiling and exchanging pleasantries, also with strangers. We approach the Sidewalk café. The outdoor restaurant is full of customers having a meal while taking in the view. The bar inside is always full of tourist, and vendors escaping their vending spaces for a moment. The friendly bouncer who sits outside will take a good look at you when you enter, but he does not discriminate on the grounds of socio-economic status, or race. Taco Tuesday's \$5 all you can eat buffet is always packed with locals and vendors.

An older man is sitting by his piano at the other side of the boardwalk. He plays intensely with his body arched over the piano and his head almost touching the piano keys while his messy white hair hides his face entirely. His audience is impressed by his talented performance. For decades he has performed classical pieces on the boardwalk. He also lives there. Every night he rolls his grand piano over to the other side of the boardwalk, acting accordingly to the boardwalk ordinance that prohibits artists, performers and "free speechers" to occupy the "free-speech" area during the parks' closing hours from sundown until 5am.

A middle-aged woman dressed in designer clothes starts dancing in front of the grand piano. She gets more and more bold throwing her body down to the ground doing the electric eel. Her more sober friends laugh and cheer her on. A couple of people dining at the Sidewalk café laughs at the sight of the breakdancing woman. People are exchanging glances. The sense of community is one of the pleasures of being in Venice, a communal feeling that would be hard to find in other public spaces. People from all over the world are taking part in the parade moving up and down Venice Beach boardwalk. One does not simply come to Venice to look at art and wakey performances, one is there to be part of the experience, to see and be seen.

Next to the piano player sits an older man in a trolley wrapped in blankets. He has a long white braded beard that reaches all the way down to his chest. His clothes, purple jumper, and trousers with



white patterns, are hanging loosely on his lean body. Behind him is a suitcase, a collapsed tent, and a bundle of other stuff which is hard to identify. It is unclear if he is selling anything, asking for donations, or just hanging out there.

We pass a henna painter in a large tent. She has created different departments. The four walls of the entrance serve as a menu with pictures of body-paintings. In the second compartment sits a customer. The henna artist is decorating her arm with waves and dots flowing down the lady's arm. We pass a man who is hanging over a garbage bin. His clothes are dirty, and his t-shirt ripped leaving a little more room for his neck. He is eating half a taco and some fries he just found in the bin. He reaches his hand into the bin and dips his fries in ketchup, leads his hand to his mouth as he closes his eyes and tips his head back with satisfaction.

A fortuneteller has placed a table in the middle of his "spot" and an empty chair which faces him at the other side of his table. He smiles at us, making a gesture with his hand to suggest that we take a seat. We smile back as we walk by. We pass a man selling buttons. His neighboring vendor is a man with a large, framed sign saying: "Get the answer to any question". Two middle-aged white men have taken up his request and are listening to his answer.

We approach the newly established weed dispensary on the left side of the boardwalk. Their stand outside offering those who pass by a fluid cannabis-sample in a shot glass. Hip-hop is blasting out of their speakers, which makes some of the visitors go for a little dance on their way past the store. California legalized the sales of marijuana for adult recreational use when Californians in November 2016 voted in favor of the "Adult Use of Marijuana Act" (California Government 2020).

A woman in her 70s is singing into her microphone while sitting in a lawn-chair: "I love you babe, and if it's quite all right, I need you babe...", Her voice softly flows out to the boardwalk. She communicates with the people at the café across the street. She asks several times if she is too loud, being scared to get complaints that could end in a fine. Musical performers are most in danger being the target from complaints from businesses and residents on the commercial side, who will call the police.

In between singing she talks to the audience passing by. Several people drop a donation in her tip jar. She thanks them in between the lyrics. A woman sitting by herself at the cafe across the boardwalk is singing along with her, swaying her body from one side to the other. The singer gets up from her chair points her arm in the audience's direction and dancing calmly. An unhoused woman is singing along while hugging a lamp, swinging around it. She goes over to dance with the singer for a while before she starts chipping down the board walk. I am glad to see her feeling better today. Just a couple days ago she was on her knees in the sand by the boardwalk, digging intensely with her arms ,

screaming, and crying. The lack of universal health care makes persons with no supportive network vulnerable to homelessness.

Out on the beach about 100-200 have join the drum circle at the beach. Every evening at sundown people brings their guitar, drum or keyboard while others are dancing, and some are just watching. The tantric vibe soon spreads among the crowd as different sections of the circle start to synchronize the beat of the drums. A young woman is twirling around. Her long red curly hair is floating in the air as she turns. She is barefoot in the sand; her arms are playing with the air as she smiles at the sky. Her friend reaches out to catch her and lifts her up by her waist and twirls with her. Her long flowered dress is covering his shirtless body. When her feet reach the sand again, she grabs his hand and they dance toward the boardwalk, both smiling euphorically as their bodies jump up and down, evoking the “flower power” connotations . The ritual of the evening drum-circle gathering draws on a symbolic link to the time when Hippies gathered in Venice and is an example of how memory of place is “produced by everyday practices” (Cresswell 2004:116).

A Norwegian visitor in her sixties expressed her emotions of the tantric beat of the drums: “I feel like I’m back in the 70s when we were Hippies”. However, Nina a local resident on a later occasion noted: “A lot have changed in Venice. The drum-circle for example, that was not here. That’s for sure”.

Venice. The boardwalks also has a sense of what Victor Turner has labeled “communitas” (Turner 1974:46). The state of communitas is the anti-thesis to structure, a state where societal structures, differentiating mechanisms and hierarchy is wiped for the time being and creates a state of togetherness (Turner 1974:46-47), feeling of sharing something across differences. The boardwalk works as a panorama into the American society, the showmanship and misery, the laughter, and the sadness, the





rich and poor and people from all sorts of backgrounds all coming together in a neo-bohemian mix of the past and present. This feeling of togetherness also translates into another aspect of the “vibe” that is appealing for those who moves to Venice: the creative community.

Creative community

“AND ACTION “. We stop to watch a film team shooting a scene for the show 911 with Peter Crusoe. The director is screaming out the actors’ lines. A group of extras comes running out from the parking lot while pointing up in the sky, gasping. Venice is regularly used as a location for music and film production, either using the scenery or symbolic identity of Venice as a context, often using local artists in the production. Which contributes to the commodification of Venice’s symbolic identity. The smell of coffee from one of the few independent coffee shops rides the sudden gust of wind from the alley ahead. As the next alley becomes visible, we see Noah, Oliver and Corey who are strategizing about their next art collaboration. They continuously come up with new ideas and collaborations for artistic performances. Oliver has recently been dazzling in the manager business and at the moment he had a musician from Texas, Corey, that he was wooing. Cory had just arrived from Texas to pursue his dream

Figure 4: Band playing at Venice Radio

as a musician, and to produce a record. Cory came to Venice to promote his music on Venice Radio, and to build a network of connections to pursue his music career. Venice Radio is an online visual radio show, filmed out an apartment straight on the boardwalk. The radio show is held by Noah, a German musician, in his apartment. The show always has prominent and professional artists who plays for a live audience crammed together in Noah’s compact apartment.

Oliver, who had taken it upon himself to be Corey's guide for his stay, has an education in music tech and lived in Hollywood for years, where he worked with different bands and venues. The reason Oliver moved to Venice was because of the "vibe" and the lack of social judgement he felt in the public spaces, and because of the artistic "community". Although Oliver is one of the "starving" artists on his friend's couch, living in Venice provides him with opportunities to work because of the collaborative aspect of being in an artist "community. Oliver was always hanging around with other musicians like Noah who also would employ him to do different tasks in the productions of events.

Between the production of larger shows and the radio shows they came up with ideas for performing like the pop-up event they had here outside the coffee shop, at night. They called it the music box. It was a spontaneous one man show in a box that was exactly big enough for a man, his guitar, and a microphone. Those who passed by when the park had closed, when it was a little bit more "dangerous" to be in Venice had the pleasure of being entertained. Some had brought a can of beer from the corner store. It is what I imagine it once was like here, the bohemian "vibe" where excellent musicians in rugged clothes shared their latest pieces accompanied with lyrics of sore and enlightened poems.

At the other side of the alley, R.I.P. Cronk, the world-renowned mural artist is working on this mural, Starry Night. Cronk has painted some of the most iconic Venice murals, such as the Botticelli parody and the mural with the dancing animals. Cronk lived in Venice several times, and still comes back to redo his paintings. He has an education in fine art. He explains what he thinks is special with Venice as a creative community:

Venice has the sort of bohemian nature, the way that everything goes. While you have the people that aren't as talented that are there, this is the Gore-Tex where all that shit comes together. So, while you don't see them on the boardwalk, the next movie is being thought of by the guy living right down the street. This is where culture happens in America. When skateboarding was coming out, this was where it happened. The same goes for roller-skating and the fancy bicycle stuff. This is a Gore-Tex where all types of energy come together. Yes, there are lesser things, but you don't want to be negative towards them because that is part of the environment, where this other stuff comes from, that changes the cultural status quo. You have to realize all of it is part of the environment where the really good stuff comes out from. The most brilliant minds are here. This is the environment that has both the good and bad cultural expressions. You can't get rid of one without hurting the other too. Venice is really dirty and a little bit dangerous, so it is not really for everyone. But for artists it is a creative mindset. Part of the beauty of Venice is the lack of judgement. That is why I am here too. I am easy to be judged because I do radical guy. I do radical art "

These musicians and artists are professionals and have made a name for themselves. Most of them are not in the higher economic classes. They live this sort of bohemian life, where they make money on odd jobs and produce art shows based on artistic collaborations. This type of artist life, even

if it doesn't make them rich is rewarding because of the collective aspect of it. They are able to do what they want, be creative, because of the ecological aspect of living in a place that attracts other creative people, where reciprocity is part of the social fabric. Even though they do not have large incomes, they are invited to events, get discounts at local restaurants and there is always someone around to buy a beer for you. They are also approached from time to time to appear in music videos and movies by the big motion picture companies in Los Angeles.

Venice offers a social atmosphere which is described as freedom of judgement and social spaces that connotes feelings of "communitas" (Turner 1974:46). However, displacement pressure through policies and increased policing are a consequence of gentrification and "neoliberal reason" (Brown 2015). These policies are particularly aimed at the unhoused vendors on Venice Beach boardwalk

Unhoused Vendors: Introducing Pops and his circle

We approach the spot where Pops and his friends both work and live. Ella, Knife, Boots, PeeWee, Lucky, Jim, and Pops are the core members of the group. DeeDee is one of the newer members, and Pop's "cousin" Biggy and his girlfriend Tina stays with them for periods at the time. Pops and his friends spend their days "kicking it", as Pops would put it, hanging out smoking weed and drinking alcohol

Pops almost screams when he sees us. He jumps out of his living-room chair to look for some seats for us: "BOOTS!! Find some chairs! We have company!" Boots looks up, sees us, and hurries to find us a seat. Pops has an exhibit on the boardwalk where people can take pictures and leave a donation. Or as Pops would put it: "I sell smiles". Pops, Boots, Lucky, Knife, PeeWee Ella, DeDe, and Jim lives in the alley across the boardwalk. Because of laws prohibiting them to have their tent up or sit in the alley they move all their things behind pops display in the morning when the police wake them up at 6am. Today they have placed four big porch umbrellas together, which creates the feeling of sitting in a living room. Two small tables are placed in the middle with eight surrounding chairs. Pops has a large wooden living-room chair at the center. We are invited to some cake that they just got from a local bakery.

Pops is a 61 year old African American man who worked in the army for many years, stationed in different parts of the world. He now works in the informal economy of Venice and identifies as an artist. He has also had a job in oil and did high risk jobs like cleaning the oil pipes, where they pump up the oil. He also worked as a chef in a restaurant. When Pops first moved to Venice, he did odd jobs on the boardwalk for local business owners. Pops has a way of communicating that makes him able to talk to and interact with people from all types of economic and ethnic backgrounds. He served as the leader of the group in many ways because of his communication skills. Network abilities are crucial if you want to survive in the Venice Beach boardwalk ecology.

He was born in Alabama and moved Los Angeles with his family at an early age. Pops met his wife in the first grade, and they lived together in a house they owned until she passed nine years ago. Pops has a large family and has seven children. He has been living on the boardwalk for nine years. Pops says that he has a house and that he only lives on the boardwalk in the high tourist season. It is not uncommon for unhoused persons to say that they have a home and that living on the street is a choice. This reflects the stigma that is internalized by unhoused individuals like Pops.

Boots is Pops' best friend in the group. They are the oldest members. He is Mexican American. He has had several jobs in construction and was a wrestler when he was younger. Boots have a criminal history and have been jailed several times for drug related offences. In the US, there are severe aftereffects of having been convicted. You lose your eligibility to affordable housing, and it can be extremely difficult to find someone who will hire you. As a young man he had some unfortunate relationships. A woman that gave him an impression of being a mother figure for him, talked him into smuggling drugs to her in prison after she was incarcerated. Boots is one of the members who use meth. He uses it cautiously, to respect the other members and to keep his position in the group. Boots is one of the more mobile members of the group and often take the responsibility to supply the group with cheaper alcohol and marihuana.

Lucky a white male in his thirties, is from the South. Lucky comes from a family with substance abuse. His brother was also homeless and would come to visit the group from time to time on the boardwalk. Lucky has a severe alcohol addiction. Lucky is the most athletic person of the group and can be intimidating to people who threaten the welfare of the group. He contributes to the group by working for a couple of vendors. He is the one that is most comfortable begging for money and cigarettes when the group is out of resources.

PeeWee, an African American man in his late thirties, used to work in music production before he took a shot to the head that injured the speech center in his brain consequently leaving him speech and hearing impaired. PeeWee does not know sign language, but the group has their own way of communicating with him through gestures and body language. PeeWee is the look-out of the group and will often drive his bike up and down the boardwalk observing. If the police are on their way to the spot, he will notify the rest of the group. This is especially helpful on those days when the police are more aggressive on implementing ordinances that prevents the group from smoking and drinking or have quarrels (which can be seen as disturbance of order and lead to incarceration). PeeWee's substance use is moderate. I never saw him very drunk or high. PeeWee works for a vendor every morning and evening.

Knife is a white male at the end of his thirties. Because of his mental health he does not have the same ability to contribute to the group's welfare through stable employment, as the other members. Because of his condition and the administrative help of his wife Ella he gets social security checks and medication through one of the social institutions in Venice. Knife suffers from schizophrenia, ADHD, and depression. He grew up in a violent home. From time to time, he experiences psychotic episodes where he for example attacks people and bites them until they bleed because he thinks he is a werewolf.

He will often talk about being a werewolf. The other members of the group take care of him and are extra protective of him, but he is also often the person in the group that gets picked upon the most. Knife has been housed several times by social services, but has been thrown out each time, because of zero tolerance rules on alcohol and drugs and intolerance of his health condition. He had a close relationship to his grandmother, Mona, who lived in Venice until she passed in May 2019. Mona was the reason Knife came to Venice.

Ella comes to stay with her husband, Knife, for months at the time. Ella is from Mexico and is at the end of her thirties. She has an apartment that she shares with her sister who she stays with when the impact of living on the street and the stigma wears her out too much. Ella and Knife cannot afford to get an apartment together. Ella usually returns to be with her husband. She has a caring presence and does not get drunk or smoke marijuana. She has a son that suffers from drug abuse. She grew up in a home where her and her sisters were exposed to sexual abuse by her father until she was seven. She later had several abusive relationships. She suffers from post-traumatic stress and has some somatic health issues. Being around her friends and all the action on the boardwalk helps her to think less of her past. Knife's grandmother was part of and Ella's and Knife's "alternative homed network" (Wolch and Rowe 1992:117), which are housed persons with close ties to homeless individuals who provide them with emotional and material support. Ella was very close to Knife's grandmother. When Mona died, her girlfriend Nina took over the role of "alternative homed network", allowing the group to wash their clothes in her apartment, bringing them cookies, letting them take a shower, or letting Knife and Ella sleep in her apartment if the weather is too bad.

Jim is a white male about thirty years. Because of Jim's social anxiety, extremely low self-esteem, and depression, he is viewed as the weaker member of the group. Jim was born into the foster care system and ran away after being in several abusive homes at the age of 13. Jim is the member of the group who is the easiest target for bullying, but also the one that they feel need protection the most. He is heavily self-medicated, which makes him distant. Most of the time he spends with the group he seems not to be present and seldom speaks more than a few words. He is the kind of person that looks so lost, sad, and fragile, that others want to take care of him and take him under their wing. But importantly for group "membership" he worked for two different vendors which contributed to their economy.

DeeDee is the newest member to their group. She grew up in a ghetto in North America. She newly arrived in Venice. Pops and his friends have "adopted" her into the group and have been taking care of her by inviting her to stay with them. DeeDee talked about her arrival in Venice; "I tried to kill myself a couple of weeks ago. Tried to jump from the Venice pier. But the cops stopped me." She said it was a consequence of a relationship she had with a man on Facebook who misled her to thinking that he was her boyfriend, upon which she, on his request, sent him money for him to visit her. He never came to see her but continued to persuade her to send him more money.

Pops and his friends always made me feel welcome, and their spot served as a safe space for me in Venice. However, the perception of unhoused persons often are infused with stigmas and claims of them being criminal and dangerous

While the boardwalk might feel free and uninhibited for stranger, there are a complex set of ordinances that regulate this public space. The boardwalk is also constantly surveilled with cameras on individual stores, patrolling officers on foot, bikes, cars, and helicopters, and privately funded clean-and safe teams. The intense policing of public space is the corollary of privatization (Low, Taplin, and Scheld 2005:1), and the fear many Americans have of crime and violence in the city, which are expressed as a fear of the “other” (Low, Taplin, and Scheld 2005:2). It also reflects strategies in line with neoliberal reason, both from the private and public realm which seeks to exclude and control certain people and their behavior. There are several ordinances that reflect this view. One of them is the ordinance behind the execution of the “Friday clean-up” which is part of what I have labeled “routine violence” (chapter 3). Every Friday government officials check the belongings of every unhoused person on the boardwalk, and if it exceeds 60 gallon it is confiscated.

Even though Pops and his friends were under constant surveillance, they were proud to be boardwalk artists, living a bohemian way and to be part of the informal economy of Venice beach. Venice Beach’s communal vibe does create resistance and critical perception of policing when tourists and formally housed persons see the injustice of ordinance, and police violence.

After sitting for a while, people-watching with Pops and his friends, we decide to continue our walk.

Venice Beach Boardwalks Informal Economy

Monday is busy with some costumers, talking to them cheerfully. Monday has been working on the boardwalk for eight years. She has her regular spot where she sets up three to seven days a week all year. Monday is a Caucasian woman in her fifties. She moved to Los Angeles in hope of being an actress when she was 20.

She lives together with Alex who also is her partner on the boardwalk. Together they have made a display on the boardwalk that has the resemblance of an art studio. They sell paintings and posters of their paintings that are copied onto canvas which in turn is glued onto wooden plates. They have built a sort of outdoor gallery of their charts that at night serve as storage for the art. Their dollies are placed near to the beach sand on their designated spot on the pavement. They both have one wall that is about one meter long and one-and-a-half meters tall that is placed towards the boardwalk, and another wall that goes parallel with the boardwalk, creating a small space in the middle where people can come in and have a look at their art. Framed posters are hanging at the outer and inner sides of the wall making their art visible for both people passing by, and those who come inside to have a look.



Monday is one of the few regular female vendors on Venice beach boardwalk. She has both been self-employed and employed in the formal economy. She started her career as a Venice Beach vendor after the economic collapse in the housing market in 2008.

Alex decided to try Venice's informal economy in 2012 after losing his job and house in the crash of 2008. Alex and Monday perform their version of the bohemian art-vendor, for the tourists visiting, and are professionals at that. That is not to say that they are not living an unconventional life based on selling art, but they are professional at being Venice Beach art vendors and know what works and what does not when you want to make a living from selling your art. Alex has stories that he tells costumers about his more political paintings that will at times attract whole crowds.

Although there is no formal art institution that distinguishes what good art is, visual representations are often shaped by tourism. Vendors and performers are well aware that people who come to the Boardwalk expect to see creative, bohemian, and bizarre, vendors, fortune tellers, and performers, shape their products to fit market demand. Often an artist will have paintings, posters, and handcraft that both displays individual creativity and art expression as well as art specifically relating to historical and iconic events and persons central to the imagined identity of Venice. Others will rely on symbolic perceptions of Venice with links to subculture, counterculture, and drugs. To be a boardwalk vendor or performer

Figure 5: Crowd has gathered to listen to Alex talk about his art
may be perceived as a free-living lifestyle, a perception that vendors do play on. However, being a vendor is very hard work, and to sustain a living in the informal economy depends on extreme long work

hours, lack of privacy, and collaborative networks. In addition, there is no real for a steady income, health insurance, or

Many uses alcohol or drugs to help them portray a playful personality. Substance use is incorporated in the everyday life of this Venice Beach's public marketplace drawing on counterculture. The use of drugs is embedded in the boardwalk culture and is often accepted and seen as a symbolic link to the bohemian culture.

I ask Monday if she wants a coffee. She hesitates a bit but says yes in the end. I ask her if Starbucks is ok. Her face changes and she look at me with a strict facial expression; "no, that is not OK! We do not support major cooperation's here on the boardwalk. But thanks for asking, honey. Go to the coffee shop down the alley. They have organic coffee. We must support the local businesses here. I don't really have the time, but I can go with you."

Monday and other vendors are particularly worried about the latest surge of gentrification, which has evicted many iconic, and long-standing businesses on the boardwalk. One example is the locales of the "Freak Show", which now has been turned into a star Bucks The building stands out from the rest of the boardwalk with its grey frontier. The other half of the building is vacant and the step to the building is closed off with wooden planks, to prohibit anyone from sitting there, which symbolizes exclusion. The area of the boardwalk is seldom used by vendors because of its unfriendly symbolism.

Silicon beach: Super-Gentrification

A new wave of gentrification involving tech-companies such as Snap ink., a parent company of Snapchat, and google made its mark on Venice (Salim 2019:47). Tech-start-ups have sought other areas then Silicon Valley because of an increase in rent caused by the high salaries in Silicon Valley (Rønneberg 2017). The name "Silicon Beach" is now a well-established term for the area that stretches from South Santa Monica to Playa Vista. Google has it locales a couple of blocks from Venice Beach, and Snap Inc. has been broadening their base in Venice since 2012 (2019 Discover Los Angeles) they established themselves on Venice Beach boardwalk in the building that until then housed the famed and beloved "Venice, Freak show".

The establishment of Snap Inc. caused anger among local residents. In an interview with a protest group Venice Dogz Benjamin, one of the initiates shared their struggle to keep big tec-companies like snapchat from taking over:

The freakshow, represented all of us. A lot of people come here because they feel like outsiders. Venice is so diverse that you always can find someone you fit in with. We were concerned that Venice would be lost, when snapchat was gradually making it their campus buying between 30 and 50 properties. They created much more problems than they even realized.

Those who moved to Venice during the first wave of gentrification in the 1990s became as a consequence a new wave of gentrification, labeled "super-gentrification", "marginalized gentrifiers".

Although the VNC (Venice Neighborhood Council) was originally created to give residents in Los Angeles a platform to increase participation in democratic processes, the Venice Dogz did not get support from the board. The lack of support created alternative forms of resistance Benjamin noted:

Bureaucratically, it would have never worked because the VNC didn't see Snapchat as a problem. So, we would strategize on how to harass the employee. We created rumors about lay off and their stock dropped to make them feel uncomfortable, and second guess things. We tried to make fun of them every chance we could and make them feel guilty, embarrassed, and unwelcome, ashamed to work for who they work for.

Café- gentrification: Changing Venice's Identity

We are reaching the end of the boardwalk. Here the groups of unhoused that live here, define membership by race. Only white unhoused live together in this section. We have reached the end of the boardwalk's free speech zone and are at the border to Santa Monica. The difference between the two cities is striking. Behind us the street is full of people, While Santa Monica is almost empty. I cannot see any litter on the ground. Even the bike path seems of better quality.

We decide to sit down at the restaurant/bar that we just passed. While the restaurant/bar we passed on the boardwalk and on Windward before we entered the boardwalk use the symbolism of Venice's identity, by for example arranging open mike nights that resembles how the beats used to perform their poems, we have now arrived at the part of the boardwalk that does not use that symbolism. We go in to have a drink and cool down a bit. restaurant is decorated as a garden with four departments, where two are outside. One in the back yard and one in front facing the boardwalk. A cool, fit guy is at the entrance welcoming us as we walk in. His self-confidence sends a bounce down to his feet as he shows us to the table. In the outdoor yard there is a thin wall set up, decorated with green plastic leaves blocking what would otherwise have been a view to the boardwalk and the beach.

Nothing here reminds us about the vibe we have experienced on the boardwalk. We walk by group of well-dressed millennials playing at the shuffleboard table next to the DJ stage but decide we would rather sit inside. I suddenly feel discomfort and catch myself looking down at my summer dress regretting putting on those comfortable sandals. We sit down in the airconditioned garden inside. The clientele here almost exclusive white, and we are surrounded by young, and adult people in designer clothes, with styled hair and expensive accessories. A group of women in their thirties pass us in high heels. They look like they are straight out of a fashion magazine, and their faces bear clear evidence of plastic surgery. As we finish our drinks Eva, a successful painter calls us. She wants us to come over and have coffee in her studio, a couple of blocks from the boardwalk.

Neo-Bohemia

We walk down Rose Ave, on our way to meet Eva. Rose Ave was popularly referred to as Skid Rose⁵, until a couple of years ago. Rose Ave. is now home to hip and expensive restaurants and cafes, pop-up shops, and “secret” bakeries, and cafes. Sophia an oakwood resident is worried about the changes that have occurred on Rose Ave:

They are building businesses on Rose Ave where we had homes before. Wine bars, restaurants, and boutiques that have displaced houses. In some instances, they are talking about mixed use where you have businesses on the ground and the housing above. To me it depends on what type of businesses we are going to have here? Who is going to be shopping there? What is the affordability? There is an ice cream place on the corner where a scoop is \$3. Who buys that? The economics of the community is driving out the diversity. If you cannot afford to live here, you move, or you are forced to move. And then who moves in? The people who can afford it.

These changes are also felt by the artists that moved to Venice before gentrification caused by expensive boutiques (Zukin et al. 2009:47) and hipster cafés (Hubbard 2016:2) Eva is waving at us outside her studio. She is in her work outfit, a grey jumpsuit. She is happy to meet you and gives you a hug before she invites us into her studio.

Eva is an accomplished painter who makes a living selling her paintings and renting them out to real estate agents, movies and TV-shows, and events. Eva moved to Venice from Germany where she took her art degree, twenty years ago get away from what she calls “an art environment that was condescending towards woman.” She discovered that many of the painters she idealized lived in Venice. She tells you: “I don’t know what to say, I fell in love with Venice immediately, and no one told me I couldn’t be a success because I was a woman.” Eva sits down on the floor of her studio with her paint brushes in front of her on a towel. The walls are decorated with some of her large, beautiful paintings. She tells us about the upcoming art event that Google is holding. She is angry:

Google just changed the whole event. We [the artists] used to all open our studios, and you could walk from one studio to the other. Even if you didn’t sell much all year, you could rely on the art walk to survive. All these rich Beverly Hills art enthusiasts and art collectors would come down here for the day and hang out. It was a big thing. It was authentic. Now Google has it in their building, and you have to give 50% of the income to the Venice Family clinic. I am for giving some of the income to charity, but I also need to pay my bills.

Her voice gets louder: “I even went down there to donate a picture, but they didn’t want it. I mean, a FREE PAINTING. They said they wouldn’t be able to fit it in.”

⁵ Skid Rose refers to, Skid Row, an area in Downtown Los Angeles. Skid Row has the largest homeless encampment in Los Angeles.

When Google took over the Art Walk it changed the initial structure, meaning and identity of the event that was initially a joint project between the artist community and the Venice Family Clinic. The Art Walk have been replaced with the newly established “Art Crawl” which has been “hijacked” by new businesses and residents. Eva tells us that; “OHH!! The Art Crawl is just an excuse to get drunk. They don’t even have art at all the places, and no one looks at it.”

Not all artist in Venice share Eva’s view. Kristin, a Caucasian painter who moved to Venice five years ago, did not mind that Google had taken over the event. She is one of the newer waves of artists in Venice, which are from the upper echelons. When I asked her if she ever exhibited her paintings on the boardwalk, she answered:

I don't. The thing is that many people here look down at the artist. And I am so sick and tired of people putting artist and homeless in the same category. Because when they talk about the boardwalk it is always “the artist and the homeless”. And I don't want to be in that category homeless people and drug addicts. But that is not to say, at times, can find good artwork there.

The identity of Venice as an artistic, creative place is the reason many gentrifiers want to move to Venice. When prices on dwellings becomes higher it changes the socio-economic demography as well as the identity of place. What used to be diverse neighborhood is slowly changed to fit the tastes of the middle- and upper-class and creating new hierarchies of belonging. Long-time residents feel stigmatized by newcomers. Luke, an African American sculptor, and painter, who has lived in Venice since 1998, explains his experience with gentrification:

It used to have a place by myself, but now I sleep on the couch in my friend's studio-apartment. It used to be that you could be yourself it didn't matter if you didn't have fancy clothes or money, but after all these rich people moved in, I feel more and more like they are looking down at me.

Many of the artists that moved to Venice before gentrification raised prices on dwellings, and it is getting harder to find affordable studios to exhibit art. Carl, a Caucasian male, and an established multi-artist, who have produced movies and written screenplays, is a painter and sculptures. He recently held an art exhibit with a collection of other artists, in a warehouse San Pedro. On the opening day only four people and I were present. Carl explains how more and more, and more artists are displaced:

There used to be an artist that was down the street here, and his artwork was out on the easement of the street. He has big pieces of art in. You could pass by there and see the work that he had, and he had art shows. And this whole area here was a lot of artists living in art lofts and living in the warehouse over there. That is not the case anymore.

Abbot Kinney boulevard: reinventing the authentic community feeling

Abbot Kinney Boulevard is an upscale shopping street with expensive independently owned boutiques, restaurants, and art galleries. The street was voted the coolest street in 2012 by Rolling Stones Magazine. The street stands as a symbol of gentrification by locals.

The street was originally called West Washington Boulevard before it was gentrified and rebranded as Abbot Kinney Boulevard in 1989. The symbolism of using the name of Venice's founder is linked to Kinney's perceived innovation and creativity in the creation of what they perceive as an authentic anti-corporate, community-feel shopping street (Deener 2007:291). The commercial street has caused mixed feelings amongst the locals. Andrew Deener (Deener 2007) notes that because of its location the street creates a border between the historical black neighborhood, Oakwood where gentrification has been a slower process, and the more expensive parts of Venice. Deener argues that: "As a commercially successful shopping street, Abbot Kinney Boulevard is redefining the structure and symbol of the Venice neighborhood" (2007:292). The gentrification of the neighborhood has caused eviction of African American, and Hispanic people and businesses in the area. Whereas the language of rebranding of Abbot Kinney Boulevard plays on a "community feeling" which the community they displaced already had established. Long-time residents like Sophia, who is an outspoken, highly educated African American woman, questions the "lack of respect developers have for the people who built the community." She explains how the community of Oakwood was shaped by being a restrictive covenant area:

The community was redlined so to speak. No one would sell you a house outside the community. You were not even expected to ask for anything outside the community. The community was self contained in that there was mom- and pop stores on the corner where families could go to buy their groceries from. The markets that were in the community, there were lots of them. Everybody knew everybody. You could go to the mom- and pop-store and grab a carton of milk and a box of cereal, put it on a bill and your parents would pay for it. Or in the summertime you could go to the corner store and sell pop bottles, and you know, for a nickel...Everybody knew everybody.

Sophia has contributed to the neighborhood of Venice through initiatives for inclusion, preservation of civil rights for residents, employment- and work training for low-income and unemployed residents in Venice, as well as being an activist since the sixties. Community issues like affordable housing and displacement have been some of the main areas of activism. She talks about how gentrification has changed Venice:

You have restaurants and businesses that you do not know what they are, what they do there. And you have houses that have been thorned down that you knew families that lived there, people that grew up there, kids that you played with. And you go, oh, the house that USED to be there. It is not there anymore. The neighborhood has changed, and there is absolutely no regard for, in lack of a better explanation, I'll say indigenous people. Because they don't care. It is all about

the money for them. It is frustrating, and it is disappointing that there is total disregard for the community that built the community, for the structures, and contribution of the people that lived here all of those years when the world ignored Venice, being a substandard or undesirable community, until they realize that it is situated between Santa Monica and Marina Del Rey. Two very affluent communities. And it was affordable according to their means.

Luke, an African American man in his thirties remember Washington street prior to rebranding as Abbot Kinney Boulevard:

Abbot Kinney boulevard it was something special for the whole neighborhood. It was block parties and Halloween parties. Every first Friday in the month it was open longer to help the local businesses survive. They had barbeque restaurants, a perfume store, groceries. Now it is pink Berry and Swedish people who have moved in little by little changed it with their galleries and fancy boutiques”.

The impact of gentrification has been slower in Oakwood due to resident’s resilience to sell their homes. The resilience is grounded in that up until the “war on drugs” was declared, the community was close knit, and was made up of whole extended families that lived next to each other. Many of the people who live or lived in Oakwood had homes that had been in the family since the early 1900s.

Conclusion

I might have left the reader overwhelmed and confused, which has been intentional. Venice is a sensory explosion. The demographic diversity, and their different orientation and identification in Venice are extremely varied. Venice attracts people from all classes and ethnicities. What I have tried to show is that the process of gentrification is not *one* straight forward process, but rather a complex web of intersecting processes which involves actors with very different orientations and goals. We have seen how urban renewal initiated by the state was a predecessor for gentrification. Further we have seen how the collective memory of Venice as an artistic creative place is reproduced in the present both by the tourist industry and “free-speech” vendors. Further gentrification reproduces and changes the definition of creativity and art-collaboration. The process of gentrification also influences the modes of inclusion and exclusion, and acceptable behavior in public spaces which are privately owned and are owned by the government. Gentrification has little by little in different ways changed Venice to fit the tastes of the middle-class. Displacement of working-class residents has, in addition to the housing market, happened though the establishment of expensive boutiques, coffee shops, restaurants and tech-corporations, which also have contributed to marginalize initial gentrifiers. Gentrification also includes increased policing, and surveillance which is particularly harmful for residents who are not formally housed, and lives on the boardwalk. While at the same time gentrification is resisted in different ways. Moreover, the collective memory of Venice as a creative innovative place for bohemian artists, carnivalesque entertainment, sub-cultural innovation, and counterculture, which is reproduced in

different ways, dilutes the actual power structures that are at play in the process of gentrification. In the next chapter I focus how power-structures justify displacement through shifting ideologies.

Chapter 2. The legacy colonialism Shifting Power Structures and Ideological Justification

In the previous chapter we saw how the collective memory of Venice as an artistic, free-living place is used in the production of place by gentrification-agents and tourism. The process of gentrification unevenly benefits white middle and upper-class residents and business-owners and displaces persons with low-income and people of color. Yet, the neo-liberal policies which enables gentrification is thought of as a neutral structure which does not discriminate on the notion of race or class.

While the current process of gentrification is a combination of certain economic, political, and social structures that are specific to neoliberalism, I argue that the recent processes of gentrification are an extension of power structures that can be traced back to the colonial era starting in 1542. I want to explore how spatio-temporal power structures and dispossession is naturalized historically. Inspired by Michel Foucault (1982) I explore the rationalization of power structures (Foucault 1982:779) historically through the strategies employed (Foucault 1982:180) in the naturalization of domination and power. I identify the territorial space where Venice is located as the objective of power and analyze “the system of differentiation” (1982:172), institutionalized techniques and structuring mechanisms (1982:972).

Throughout the chapter I analyze how the relationship between the dominated and the dominant is justified through shifting ideologies (rationalizations) and how these are seen as natural. These shifting ideologies are whole systems with intersecting structures and processes which are produced and maintained in a dialectical relationship between structure and agency, which shapes the collective worldview in a given society at a specific time. These ideologies naturalize individuals’ perceptions of dispossession, it is just the way things work.

It would truly be impossible to include a detailed history of every demographic group, techniques of exclusion, institutions and how it is naturalized in this chapter. What I can offer is examples of major shifts and point to some of the institutionalized techniques, structuring mechanisms, and processes. The chapter is divided into two parts: Firstly, I look at four successive stages of colonialism and the historical recollections of that past. Secondly, I look at techniques of exclusion in a post-colonial setting and how the stratification which originated in these four successive stages continues to affect African Americans, Native Americans, Latino/a, minorities, and persons with low- or no income .

Successive stages of colonialization:

The Original People, The Kumivit

The area now known as Venice used to be the home to the Kumivit (Hackel 2003:649). They are usually referred to as the *Gabrielinõ* (Starr 1985:9, Lake 2006), a name ascribed by Spanish missionaries who associated them with their mission of San Gabriel (Lake 2006:9). The Kumivit's political and economic system rested on a web of interconnected villages with about 50 to 500 persons in each, connected by a central village (Lake 2006:12). Only in California they had 20 linguistic families supporting 135 languages (Starr 1985:8). California, until the settlement of Spanish missions, had the largest Native American population in North America (Brendan 2012:162). While some estimate Indigenous populations dating back 3000 to 8000 years before European colonialization (Starr 1985:8), others refer to archaeological findings dating back 20 000 years (Lake 2006:9).

The first encounter the original population had with Spanish colonizers was supposedly in 1542 when the Portuguese conquistador Juan Rodrigues Cabrillõ reached the Santa Monica Bay. Cabrillo was a follower of Hernando Cortes, and had been financed by Spanish land owners and businessmen with the main goal of finding gold (Zinn 2016:11). Cabrillo has been celebrated as the great sea voyager who “discovered” California. Though a critical reexamination of the expedition indicates that Cabrillo was an unskilled sailor, sent on an unprepared expedition for the purpose of military observation and the hopes of finding a suitable port between America and Moluccas (an Island group in Indonesia), where he and his crew passively took possession of California (Mathes 1994:248-49). The expeditions were one of Spain's techniques for territorial expansion, economic and political sovereignty. The justification for possession was a mix of what Michel Foucault refers to as “royal power” and “pastoral” (1982:982). The kings and queens of Spain who ordered expansion expeditions were seen as Gods representatives on earth (Lake 2006:20). In Spain Christianity was enforced through the policy of inquisition (1479 - 1516) and counterreformation (the Catholic reformation from 1556-1598) (Lake 2006:21), which shifted the structuring power from “royal power” to “pastoral power” (Foucault 1982:182).

The Crowns further techniques of power was the institutionalization of difference through law (Slack 2018:435). Pope Alexander VI initially encouraged evangelization of “barbarous” nations (Slack 2018:435). However, the discovery of gold in South America changed the ideological language. The creation of the Indigenous as the “irrational other” was institutionalized through the Law of Burgos (Slack 2018:436), and was instrumental in naturalizing racial hierarchies which in turn justified slavery, murder, dispossession and exploitation. The knowledge about indigenous populations their social-, economic-, political- and religious organization was essential in the foreign colonizers formulation of difference and was used to ideologically justify colonialization, exploitation of labor, social organization, stratification, and superiority (Vasko 2019:26).

The Indigenous people was categorized as racially inferior which rested on their perceptions of them as uncivilized, sexually immoral and culturally deprived subjects (Slack 2018:436). Ideologically their

inferiority was explained by their lack of knowledge of God, which in turn justified forced labor seeing that redemption could only be achieved through manual labor, religious guidance, and discipline (Slack 2018:435-36).

There is little documentation of the period between Cabrillo's expedition in 1542 and the establishments of missions in late 1600. Evidence suggests that actual colonialization and settlement by Europeans did not start in large scale in California before the mission systems at the end of the seventeenth century.

Mission Systems

From 1769, when Spanish rule was well established in Mexico, Spain sent military forces and Catholic Priests to secure supremacy of California (Lake 2006:3). The establishment of missions along the coast of California was a way of implementing Spanish rule and Christianity. When these missions were established in the Los Angeles area, colonialization had already been going on for two centuries (Vasko 2019:25), and Europeans had through encounters with natives south of California gained critical knowledge of the original inhabitants which was used in the creation of difference (Vasko 2019:26-27).

The object of power was still territorial expansion, competing international politics, and economic gain (Lake 2006:22). The establishments of missions were a way to supply other parts of the Spanish empire through agricultural farming and commerce. The techniques of power were individualized through the spread of the evangelism. The justification of these actions lies in the Spanish ideology and their belief of being morally superior. In fact, they were in the noble business of saving Native Americans souls from their savage life through Christianity, which justified them to control, punish, and convert the Kumivit, and force them into labor camps (Hackel 2003:644). Moreover, they sought to dismantle the Kumivit culture, family structure, and forms of survival justified by the idea that they were inferior.

The Spanish throne's decision to use missionaries instead of military force had economic and tactical reasons. Spanish throne was struggling economically and missionaries were cheaper than military forces (Lake 2006:22). Two successive evangelizing orders were ordered by the Spanish throne to secure supremacy, beginning in 1697 (Lake 2006:23). First the Society of Jesus an organization independent of Spanish treasury which were so economically successful that the elite in Spain became suspicious (Lake 2006:24). The Franciscan missions were ordered to take over (Lake 2006:23-5) to secure the land from Russians who had colonial aspirations in the area (Lake 2006:30).

Mexico gains independence from Spain

From 1781, a gradual shift from pastoral power to state power was implemented with the establishments of pueblos (Dear 1996:87). The Law of the Indies which was in effect from 1573 was modified in 1781 to include detailed settlement legislation (Dear 1996:87) and land tenure (Dear 1996:88) facilitating the shift from mission systems to town settlements which focused on agricultural commerce to the Spanish

colonies (Dear 1996:87). When Mexico won its independence from Spain through war in 1821, military efforts were rewarded with land grants. The ideological struggle lie between the missions and the new secularizing land-owners (Davis 2018:94). The ranch owners of these land grants have been known to help hunt Native Americans for the missions where they were forced to labor on the fields and in the mission and were hunted and killed. In the years prior to the Mexican American war the most common form of Americanization and possession of land was through intermarriage between men from the United States and the daughter of Spanish land-owners (Davis 2018:94).

American Settlers

In 1846 the US agitated to war by placing troops on a Mexican territory. They wanted Mexicans to attack US soldiers occupying a controversial area, to justify going to war (Zinn 2016:149-55). In the mindset of the US taking possession of land and people was only justified through war. The driving force behind aggressive expansionist ideology is often referred to as “Manifest Destiny” (Zinn 2016:151). The quote became famous though John O’Sullivan’s (editor of the Democratic Review) comment on the invasion: “Our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions” (Zinn 2016:151). However, the ideology of manifest destiny had been persistent since early British colonialism in North America (Brendan 2012). As I note in chapter 4, the notion of manifest destiny is still used in local politics today as an ideological justification for gentrification.

Matters got even worst for the Native Americans after Mexico surrendered the war and The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and formally made California American territory in February 1848 (Zinn 2016:169). The political organization and laws set by the Roman Catholic empire were replaced by new sets of American political and institutional organization, and most importantly laws concerning landownership (Dear 1996:88). While the Spanish colonizers aim was control over people with the purpose of labor exploitation and land for commercial and political interests (Glenn 2015:63), the new wave of colonizers aim was land-ownership to control resources for private gain (Lightfoot and Gonzalez 2018:428, Glenn 2015:57). In order to lay their claims for private ownership it was in the new settlers interest to make the original population disappear (Lightfoot and Gonzalez 2018:430). This was accomplished through and with the support of government (Lightfoot and Gonzalez 2018:430)

As California became a state in 1850 the discovery of gold attracted waves of Euro-American settlers. While the Spanish colonial tactic and technique had been to convert the original population in Los Angeles into Christian subjects, which through creating racial difference justified forced labor in the production of export commerce, the American Settlement had an even more violent approach. Genocide of Native Americans was institutionalized (Brendan 2012:430, Lightfoot and Gonzalez 2018). Census data shows a decline in the Native American populaion from 150 000 in 1848 to 35 000 in 1860 (Brendan 2012:128). In 1910 the number had further declined to 16 371 (Brendan 2012:128). Brendan

(2012) argues that “most property-holding, adult white male U.S. citizens in California “[...] at the very least tacitly supported the system of atrocities attempting to circumscribe or eliminate Native Americans in the state (Brendan 2012:9)”.

These men participated in direct genocide. But perhaps the more important story to share is that of the hundreds of thousands of white citizens who, through apathy, inaction, or tacit support, allowed the extermination to proceed directly by violence or indirectly through genocidal policies of cultural extermination and planned neglect (Brendan 2012:9)

The Kumivit was initially forced into slavery by the new settlers, but white settlers found that they preferred black slaves (Glenn 2015:61). The different racial perceptions of Indigenous population and African population was built upon white settlers’ motives. While they wanted to dispossess Indigenous populations of their land it was in their interest that they disappeared so that more land would open up for new settlers (Glenn 2015:62), making Africans more desirable for labor exploitation (Glenn 2015:62).

The Booster Era: Abbot Kinney Enters the Real Estate Game

The dispossession of Mexican ranch owners was a “race-gender project” (Glenn 2015:63). Anglo settlers used a combination of legal manipulation and intermarriage with the daughters of ranch owners to secure ownership to private property (Glenn 2015:63). The imposed Anglo settlers property-laws combined with the economic recession caused by drought, caused the collapse of the rancho economy in the 1870s (Davis 2018:98). During this period, the original land grants from the war between Mexico and Spain were subdivided (Stanton 2005:4).

This is the time when Abbot Kinney, the founder of Venice of America enters the real estate race (Stanton 2005:4). Late in 1870s, Previous British army officer Captain Hutchinson had acquired the area now known as Venice when he “foreclosed on a series of loans made by the Machado family on parts of their Bellona Rancho” (Stanton 2005:4). The Machado family fell victim of the Anglo settler’s implementation of a new set of law (Glenn 2015:63). Together with silver baron Senator John P. Jones and his partner, rail road tycoon Colonel Robert Baker, Abbot Kinney subdivides the original Spanish land grants (Stanton 2005:4). In 1891 Kinney and his Partner Francis Ryan acquires the controlling part of Ocean Park Casino in Santa Monica, and moths later the surrounding tracts (Stanton 2005:4). After several disputes and shift of partners Kinney dissolves his partnerships. They decide to split the property in two in 1904, leaving Kinney as the sole owner of the territory of Venice (Stanton 2005:14). In 1905 Kinney had realized his plan to build Venice of America, which had it’s grand opening on 4th of July (Stanton 2005:18) Over the next decade Kinney and his contractors created the infrastructure of a whole city with police- and fire department, schools, and a City Hall.

Abbot Kinney permitted some of his African American workers to build homes in the outskirts of Venice. African Americans being permitted to own property on the West-Side of Los Angeles 1905 should not be underestimated, due to the racial climate at the time. Los Angeles was divided by what is referred to as the color-divide, dividing West- and East-Los Angeles. West Los Angeles was predominantly white. Because of a growing concern of the African American migration to larger cities in the first decades of the nineteenth hundreds, racial restrictive covenants were enforced through municipal ordinances to keep African American from occupying, owning, renting certain areas of the city (Ware 1989:739). However, Abbot Kinney did not permit African Americans to use the beach area, or amusement park although they help to build his Venice of America.

The Colonial Legacy: Race as Structuralizing Mechanism

So far, we have seen how claims for territory is justified through different ideological discourses. The main structuralizing mechanism which ideologically justifies the dispossession and mistreatment of marginalized groups are the system of differentiation determined by race and class. Although race, scientifically, as a biophysical and genetic concept cannot be supported as a reason to differentiate people (Smedley and Smedley 2012:3), the notion of race as a social category is still deeply embedded in the United States' worldview (Smedley and Smedley 2012:5), and can be traced back to the colonialization of the Americas. Race as a socio-cultural phenomenon is used to classify, stratify, and interpret cultural and physical difference (Smedley and Smedley 2012:4), in such a way that it seems natural.

Even though class and race are used as structuring mechanisms, these categories and their meaning does not operate on their own. They are constantly mediated in relation to political social and economic structures. As Michel Foucault (1982) points out: "power relations are deeply rooted in the social nexus, not reconstituted "above" society as a supplementary structure whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of." (1982:792). In other words, ideology, the naturalization of difference, and the organization of economic, political, institutional, and social structures and processes are constantly constructed dialectically, people make structures and structures also form perceptions. Furthermore, because race as a differentiating mechanism is naturalized, it is able to persist in the social consciousness and be imposed in institutions and structure in the United States. Continuing I will explore how race as a mechanism is maintained through different techniques of exclusion.

Techniques of Exclusion:

Historical Recollections

The construction of racial inferiority also inspired the production of white Anglo-American identity (Glenn 2015:60-61) During the booster era (1885-1930) particularly real estate interest trying to attract Anglo settlers, (Davis and Morrow 2018:22) were instrumental in constructing a mythical past often

referred to as the mission myth. The mission myth is based on Helen Hunt Jackson's fictional book *Ramona* (Davis and Morrow 2018:22, Starr 1985:52-63). Jackson wrote the book after working together with Abbot Kinney, the founder of Venice of America on a report for Indian Affairs. Both *Ramona* and the report for Indian Affairs condemn the treatment of Indigenous people, and the corrupted legal system which supported dispossession and enslavement, and murder. However, Kinney's and Jackson's romanticized view of the missions and the "cultivation" of Kumivut subjects overshadowed the structural violence. The report for example notes that more mission schools should be created. Mission schools were an ideologically continuation of the Spanish missions and were established to Americanize native populations. However, Jackson and Kinney finds that the Native Americans do need to learn about hygiene, Christianity, and work ethics (Kinney and Jackson 1883b:11). They continue to say that only women should be teachers at these schools, because Indigenous girls are known to be promiscuous (Kinney and Jackson 1883a:10). These racist statements about the original population connotes the same rhetoric that has been used in the debate about welfare policies about people of color and about the poor up until today (see Katz 2013:156-202).

Also the built environment was also used to erase the past "redesign the present and reshape the future" (Stephen 2007:83-84) of southern California. Abbot Kinney's construction of Venice with its canal system and Venetian architecture, and amusement zone was a technique used to erase the past for economic gain. In many ways Kinney's approach is very much in line with the current place-branding strategies used in the process of gentrification today, such as Abbot Kinney boulevard (Deener 2007) (chapter 1). Moreover, these historical narratives, either through written histories or through the physical landscape produces the foundation for the collective memory of place which is incorporated in U.S. historical public memory (Jefferson 2020:9-10), and even in educational system because they are perceived as objective recollections (Zinn 2016:9). Alison Rose Jefferson (2020) notes that:

Due to the fact that so much of this history is about struggle, racism, and tragedy, some whites, who are in institutional capacities with tremendous influence on the dissemination of information, resist incorporating and commemorating the histories of African Americans, other people of color, and other marginal groups into the regional and national American narrative. The development of a more inclusive national consciousness and identity is a slow process" (Jefferson 2020:12-13)

Joe, a teacher at Venice high school explains that these are issues they are struggling with even today. He has struggled to find curriculum that teaches the brown and black kids in his class about their heritage. Although a critical examination of histories have existed since 1960s through efforts of scholars, through programs for awareness, in public programs in places such as in museums, important landmarks, and exhibits, that does not mean that these efforts are capable of penetrating the collective memory of place (Jefferson 2020:12).

Obscuring historical facts and creating alternative past by erasing multicultural presence with an emphasis on Euro-American, has been persistent in US and the collective memory of the South West (Jefferson 2020:6). The right to define the collective memory has been a continuous battle between different groups in Venice, The history of the US and Americas are full of these mythical recollections where violence against indigenous groups are downplayed or erased making the room for grandiose stories of European-Americans (Zinn 2016:9). Tools of historical erasure are several: through historical narratives, by alternation of land, and by changing architecture. The whitewashing of history combined with shifting ideological discourses are powerful tools in the legitimation of dispossession and eviction. *How* these recollections have been depicted and *why* they have been depicted in this way, reveals information about the nature of hierarchies and power structures and why diverging perceptions of the past exists between different groups of US citizens today.

Moving on, I return to the exclusionary processes connected to Venice as a territory. Although slavery was abolished in 1865, the legacy of difference created in the successive stages of colonialism continued to be a part of the US world view and ideology affecting decision making and modern state structures and institutions.

Segregation and Restrictive Covenant

The perceptions of racial differences became more and more entangled with the distinction of class beginning in the 1900. Los Angeles was divided by what is referred to as the color divide that separated the predominantly white West side of Los Angeles with a multi-racial Eastside. American settlers were afraid that their property values would decrease. The story of segregation is deeply entangled with private property (Redford 2017). Laura Redford (2017) argues that developers and real estate agents in Los Angeles had a significant role in keeping segregation alive, and institutionalizing segregation of race and class in California (Redford 2017:305). The connection between power and private property is historically intertwined with “political disenfranchisement of minorities” (Redford 2017:575, Chemerinsky and Kleiner 2014). The Los Angeles Realty Board (LARB), which was established in 1903, played a significant role in the structuring of segregation before formal planning and zoning laws and restrictive covenants where institutionalized in the region (2017:306). The LARB consisted of persons in powerful leadership roles on a national level making them the most influential

board in the US (Redford 2017:306). Sophia a long-lime resident of Oakwood explained:

Venice was a restricted covenant area, meaning that black people could not live anywhere else. The area was redlined. The black community was contained in the neighborhood (Oakwood). We were excluded from shops and services in other areas of Los Angeles and Venice. It was pretty much a closed community. People didn't venture much out of the boundaries except to go

to work. People bartered for services. My uncle was a mechanic, and a painter, so he might fix someone's car, in exchange for services they might have.

The fact that Venice in addition to being a restrictive covenant was redlined, meaning that major lenders were not allowed to give loans, kept the area artificially suppressed. Paul, a local real estate agent with long ties in Venice explained:

And of course, redlining excluded certain races from participating, because they were always in the lower socio-economic range, and that was what they were redlining out. And they could do that without saying it was race, even though it was race.

The courts found it unconstitutional with segregation and discrimination through the private housing market in 1948, but the abandonment of restrictive covenant was not included in LARB's codes before 1950. The lift of restrictive covenants actually was one of the causes of what is referred to as "White flight" (Schneider 2008:996). Los Angeles was highly segregated until the 1970s and Los Angeles schools were mostly segregated until the 1980s (Schneider 2008:997). The fear of the destruction of white neighborhoods (Schneider 2008:996), and particularly the threat of desegregation particularly caused white people with children to flee the city (Schneider 2008:997). The perceptions both white teachers and white residents had of black and brown children were that they were less suited for learning, and more violent, which created a fear for their white children's education and well-being (Schneider 2008:1000).

Another cause of white flight was the continued neglect of Venice by city officials Abbot Kinney's Venice of America was shortly after Kinney's death in 1920 (Cunningham 1976:56) annexed to Los Angeles to Los Angeles by Venetian's own vote in 1925 (Cunningham 1976:92). The promises made by the initiators for expansion were not held and the following centuries were impacted by neglect (Cunningham 1976:104,121-2,150-3), and exploitation (Cunningham 1976:112-24),. Despite protest from some of the citizens of Venice, almost all the canals filled in, to make vehicle streets (Cunningham 1976:105-12). Venice was in such a deteriorated state the because the exploitation of by the oil industry (Elkind 2012), and because L.A. City dumped sewer in the sea (Cunningham 1976:151) which caused a decline in the interest in the amusement zone. In fact, the Venice shoreline was quarantined for eight years from 1943-51 (Cunningham 1976:155).



Figure 6: Venice Beach in 1939 Source: University of Southern California. Libraries and California Historical Society

Urban Renewal and Redlining

The demographics changes caused by suburban white flight combined with the neglect of both the environment and infrastructure made real estate prices fall in Venice. Venice was the poorest community in Los Angeles (Mcbride 2008:116). The minority community in Venice got new neighbors. The new residents were students, veterans, struggling artists and low-income individuals. Venice became a haven for the beat generation, who thought the neglect and lack of policing was beneficial (Cunningham 1976:195). The beats were a group of artists that carried on the Bohemian culture that had, among others, been a part of Venice's identity from 1905 (Cunningham 1976:195). They were an artist collective of nonconformist radical thinkers who were opposed to the commodification of culture (Cunningham 1976:195) Venice was made famous as a haven for beatniks in Laurence Lipton's book "The Holy Barbarians" (Lipton 1959). Lipton gives intimate details of individuals living in Venice, including their drug consumption, macho culture and how they take advantage of the system by stealing and exploiting social services (Lipton 1959). This in fact caused so much fury among other beats and officials that when redevelopment was implemented the first building to get demolished was the Gas House in 1962, the main gathering point for the beatniks poetry reading (Cunningham 1976:198). Although Venice was a multi-cultural area the beatniks (who where white intellectuals) are those who are the most prominent part of popular imagination.

Public officials, businessmen and real-estate agents implemented urban renewal initiative that was lobbied in the post war period in the 1930s (Deviene 2019: 1). The first attempt at urban renewal was plan in 1956 and 1957 was successfully rejected by concerned Venetians (Cunningham 1976:183).

Especially those on fixed income and retired elderly were worried about evictions and increased rent (Cunningham 1976:184). The main reason for implementing systemic enforcement of the urban renewal program was to evict the undesired: beatniks (Cunningham 1976:194), and minority groups (Cunningham 1976:186). Lynn Craig Cunningham (1976) quotes a report made in 1951 which underscores that community redevelopment is in need because of the under-use of otherwise extremely valuable beach property (Cunningham 1976:183). The report's main concern is with the poor construction standards that are overpopulated by minorities (Cunningham 1976:183). What they referred to was the well established Polish and Russian ghetto (1976:175), a growing population of elderly persons with minority background (1976:175), and a growing African American (1976:173) and Mexican American population in Venice.

A few years after urban redevelopment, policies were implemented to outlaw redlining through the Fair Housing Act in 1968, that made it illegal to refuse loans of whole areas based on race or class. Although, the denunciation of redlining was intended to create a more fair housing market for marginalized groups, it was mostly the white middle and upper class who benefited from it.

Paul explained how the removal of redlining laws opened up possibilities for him:

I would say that was probably the most substantive change in Venice, was the Jerry Brown act, the anti redlining. That was a statewide rule, it wasn't only Venice. I happened to be here at that time. I was buying properties with really bad loans, and then once I had them done and produced, I could get a regular loan because of that shift. I was just so lucky. Just dumb luck. It was so attractive. It had all the city services, and it was right here on the beach, perfect! Why would it not be attractive. AND the parcels were so small that you could actually afford to live here, that was what got me here. The parcels were so small that you could buy a little parcel and build something, and then you could buy another one and build something, then you could buy another one and build something.

Urban redevelopment plans and the demolition of houses helped evict a large amount of people without having explicitly say that it as based on race and class. I argue that a combination of urban renewal that displaced “undesired” groups, juridical denunciation of segregation laws and the Fair Housing Act in 1968, was the ingredients that really facilitated gentrification of Venice.

These last sections show how power structures are maintained through shifting techniques of exclusion, which are supported by the state apparatus and bureaucratic decision making. The naturalization and ideological justification for dispossession is still infused by differentiating mechanisms based on race and class. However, the injustice, racism and exploitation did not go undisputed. Resistance was fought by joint efforts of Venice residents.

Joint activism takes shape: radicals, minorities, leftist

David McBride notes that “Even if the counter culture and New Left in Los Angeles were animated by national and international ideas and dilemmas, the battles they fought with authorities were almost always inflected by local concerns, and the most rancorous conflicts were often regional in nature (Mcbride 2008:114)”, and “Furthermore the periodic sweeps of “underground” zones by local authorities engendered clearly ‘political’ reactions from hippies, responses that were in the main “New Leftist” in tone” (Mcbride 2008:114).

In Los Angeles, Venice and Hollywood were the main centers for leftwing radicals and “freaks” and “hippies” (Mcbride 2008). David McBride argues that in the case of Los Angeles the political left radicalism and counterculture did not have the sharp distinctions as in cities like San Francisco where the radical left had a historical legacy. The underlying macro conditions for resistance in Los Angeles were the dominant right wing politics and racism in the nation’s second most ethnical diverse city (Mcbride 2008:111-114), mass conformity, and mass production of mainstream culture that was seen as unauthentic and anti-realistic (2008:111). The new left radicals and hippies found themselves in the same geographical space, where Hollywood and Venice were the main centers in Los Angeles. In Venice the white political left who traditionally was associated with causes concerning anti-war and democratic-and equal right, and the countercultural movements promoting free-loving , anti-discipline, and anti-commodity (Mcbride 2008:112). The free-spirited environment made Venice a safe haven for people being discriminated for their lifestyle choices, sexual preference or ethnic background.

These groups found themselves fighting the same local, and regional causes, and thus linking them together forming a place specific resistance (Mcbride 2008:114). They worked together despite differences on certain issues, for the greater good (Mcbride 2008:117)The loosely knit alliance between countercultural movement and left wing political stands have laid the ground for generations of court cases and resistance of redevelopment plans, ordinances and gentrification for generations.

However, power struggles are a continuing battle, this time the battle has moved from formalized housing to the street.

The right to public space

The conflict over the right to public space unfolds as redevelopment plans are being pursued by L.A. The identification to different aspects of Venice’s history is similar to contemporary contradictions between different groups where for example current place-branding strategies plays on symbolic of Venice as a place for the rich and famous, and lower-income residents, vendors and artists emphasize the carnivalesque of Venice’s past. At the same time as redevelopment plans are being announced in 1965 in the newspapers the call for cleaning up the streets of undesirables such as “winos, dope pushers, and hustlers” (Mauldin 1965:1). In a newspaper article from 1965 Paul Mauldin reminds his readers of a past when “stars and millionaires” (1965:1) lived in the Windward hotels before noting that;

The streets have been the despair of residents of the better sections of Venice. Civic groups periodically have pushed for control of winos, panhandlers and other characters attracted to the area by cheap rooms or a soft bed of sand. But all of that may change once the streets is cleaned up, city officials hope. The Venice Hotel at 47,1/2, 51 Windward will be completely demolished.” (Mauldin 1965:1,4)

Mauldin refers to a statement by assistant superintendent of buildings, Robert Adolphe who comments; Windward is key to the entire cleanup program” he said ‘It’s likely to inspire other rehabilitation throughout the community’ (1965:8)”.

During 1969s L.A.P.D. enforced efforts to clean up Venice. Under section 647E of Los Angeles City Penal code the police could arrest and fine “every person who loiters or wanders on the street or place to place without apparent reason or business and fails to identify himself and account for his presence when requested by any police officer [...] if the surrounding circumstances are such as to indicate to a reasonable man that the public safety demands such identification. (L. A. Times 1965:1)”.

At the end of 1970 Venice again became a tourist attraction, much due to it being referred to as the “roller skater capital of the world (Deener 2009:173). Musicians, artists, vendors, locals who tried to ear a few bucks extra became more and more visible. Venice was also a place for sub-cultures of skaters, surfers, and bodybuilders.

The clean up also involved the vendors of what was then referred to as “the vendors lot” (Berkson 1981:4). Carol Berkson a local vendor explains how Venice changed for vendors from 1978 to 1980, from being a friendly family like atmosphere between the vendors; “Sellin there wasn’t just selling. It was being a part of something (Berkson 1981:6)”. As tourism increased and more stores was opened on the east side (rent-paying) side of the boardwalk, the conflict between vendors who paid rent and those who did not escalated. Rent-paying vendors formed the Venice Beach Association, who were successful in lobbying a ban on vending in Venice (Fondelier 1985:5). In 1979 vendors on the west side started fighting for their right to vend in court and formed the protest group “Save the Pushcart and the American Dream” (Berkson 1981). On March 30th 1985 police enforcement targeting vendors was stepped up again and a meeting was held where the police, city attorney and about 100 people most of them vendors from the west side of the boardwalk (Fondelier 1985). The business owners meant that vendors on the right side were a threat to their businesses and responsible for the crime in Venice, which is still the rhetoric used against unhoused vendors in Venice today. On the meeting two lots were made available for “rent-free” vending with the condition that they paid the landowners approximately 1500 for vending permits, and warning them that they would be fined and eventually jailed if they vended on the lots without permits (Fondelier 1985:5 and 14). The “space wars” (Dundier 1999 (2001): 131-52)

continued to escalate the next couple of years. The “commercial side” organized in several new associations including Chamber of Commerce (Fondelier 1986, Nickerson 1987:6).

The same rhetoric continued as the process of gentrification started and Venice attracted even more recreational visitors, and wealthy residents. In a letter to the editor in Ocean Front Weekly a resident expresses his frustration, adding to the community discussion about the construction of a concrete walk to make the beach accessible to wheelchair users in a letter with the headline “Wealthy have rights too”: “Why do we need more bike riders, wheelchairs, roller skaters, vendors (without licenses), pedicabs, trams, parking lots, toilets, shower and lanes on the Marina Peninsula beach (Meersand 1980:6)”. The author continues to say that what is needed is more police to clean out all the filth and reduce crime and ends the letter with stating.

All beach areas do not have to be like Venice; wealth and affluence are rights of our supposedly democratic state and way of life. When everything threatens to become the same, when wealth and privacy are denied and have to be defended, and the lower classes are legislatively being allowed to virtually overrun and destroy neighborhoods, I can't help but feel the next step is communism. (Meersand 1980:6)

In the same issue another letter to the editor about the new walkway expresses another viewpoint; “The well-to-do big wheels who have made our beach into a private beach now wants to make the walks into cobble stone, mostly the handicapped wheelchair victims cannot enjoy some fresh air and sunshine (Franks 1980:6-7)”. During the summer of 1980 L.A.P.D.’s presence in Venice was increased to “put a stop to the harassment of business people, tourists, and neighbors (Levin 1980:11)”.

In 1990 Los Angeles made several efforts to regulate street vending, which was a part of a city wide urban renewal projects (Sarmiento 2015), such as Great street initiative and People Streets program formed by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT). The Great Streets initiative was supposed to improve the safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Part of the program was to make wider sidewalks, better conditions for bikes, and centralized camera surveillance. The initiative was to be implemented by a public-private partnership by the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). The BIDs role is to secure local business interest. Sarmiento notes that “LADOT does not give BIDs any special preference however their financial resources and capacity, above all, makes them the ideal community partner” (Sarmiento 2015:4). However, the implementation of BID’s blurred the distinction between private and public space seeing that the BiDs are implemented to secure private interests in public space.

The scholarly literature on street vendors in Los Angeles is poorly represented (Sarmiento 2015). Hugo Sarmiento notes that: “(..) mainstream planning has normally treated as an anomaly in the urban possess. Marked as a disorder at the margins of urban society, a disruption of public space and transportation flow, street vendors, have been rendered objects of control to be policed and written out of rational, urban planning” (Sarmiento 2015:1).

Particularly unhoused vendors are targeted by policies that controls behavior, and creates displacement pressure through law enforcement, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

During the 1980s we begin to see how neo-liberal reasoning begins to enter the ideological justification for exclusion. The justification of segregation and redlining was formulated in an explicit racist language. When covenant restrictions became unconstitutional dispossession was formulated as an act of revitalization through urban redevelopment, with an implicit race and class discrimination. Further, after the civil movement at the end of 1960s and 1970s which ended redlining, race as a differentiating mechanism becomes more controversial and is toned down. However, as neoliberal economic policies become more wide-spread, the ideological justification for exclusion becomes economized, in line with the neoliberal reasoning. Although the justification is referred to as explicitly economic, I argue that the differentiating mechanisms are still based on race and more and more on class. Although it is not pronounced, dispossession and institutionalized violence still disproportionately affects minorities and economically marginalized.

Gang Injunction Displacing Brown and Black Residents in Oakwood

When the gang violence escalated gentrification in Venice slowed down (Deener 2007:306). From 1993 to 1994 Oakwood went through what was referred to as a “gang war” for ten months (Umemoto 2018:2). Karen Umemoto (2018). The conflict started in Mar Vista between the Culver City Boys and Venice Shoreline Crips over turf and drug trade, and soon shifted to tensions between individual members of Venice Shoreline Crips and Venice 13 (Umemoto 2018:1). Mar Vista and Oakwood was at the time locations for “drive-through” distribution for customers in nearby middle- and upper income residents along the coast, stretching from Santa Monica to Marina del Rey (Umemoto 2018:2-3). Local newspapers were quick to pin this as a “race-war” between Mexican Americans and African Americans. Which caused officials to implement the gang injunction. Of all the things we talked about, Sophia seemed most disappointment of how the government and police had treated those who lived in Oakwood under the gang injunction during the 1980s:

It was consistent with the Rockefeller drug laws Differentiation between the way people of color were treated vs. white people through choice of drug: The sentences were much harsher for crack cocaine than powder cocaine, which usually was the drug of choice for poor communities of black and brown people. People here were low level educated, unemployed, probably with some arrest record already, and so the possibility of entering into the mainstream of American society was really difficult. Selling drugs became the job of choice. But most people in the community did not sell drugs. They worked, raised their children, went to PTA meetings. Some people moved because of harassment as a result of the gang injunction. The gang injunction which came after the 80s drug wars had laws said that if you where if you were identified as a gang member you could not associate or be seen with another gang member. If you were, you could be arrested, and incarcerated. It didn't matter if you were a relative. It didn't make any

sense because in a small close-knit community, you are going to be related to a whole lot of people, and that's the nature of the community. , So it really tore the community apart when they incarcerated gang-members who associated because they were in the same family. And now 20 years later the gang injunction has been deemed unconstitutional. But where are the people? You have successfully accomplished what you have intended by chasing the people, the undesirables, that you call them, from the community. The poor people, people with the records.

Andrew Deener writes about the gang injunction “A combination of local community action and city-led accomplishments during the late 1990s and early 2000s helped transform Oakwood into a safer location. For instance, increased policing and neighborhood watch groups, led to more arrests.”(Deener 2007:306), which poses the question, for who? And the answer is wealthy white gentrifiers. The same mechanisms used in the creation of difference in colonial time were used in the implementation of the Rockefeller Drug Laws. African Americans were constructed as criminal subject which played into existing racial connotations and increased White fear (Fortner 2013:14). Labeling the poor and people of color as dangerous instead of addressing the institutionalized violence through housing, labor, certainly is an effective way of displacing those who are not wanted.

Gentrification

Deener explains how the complimentary actions of the Council Woman, the City Attorneys office and Los Angeles Police department through the gang injunction helped set a new start to the process of gentrification (Deener 2007:306) Locals remember that the process of gentrification started in the mid-1990s. John, a local real estate Developer explained how the “development community” in Venice would try to pitch Venice as Marina del Rey (the affluent neighboring area)at Jason, to try to attract wealthier people in the 1980s:

So, they were pitching to a certain demographics, and I found that really annoying because I would have to explain to people where it was. And I finally said, screw it, I will pitch it as Venice. Venice attracted a whole different crowd, people from the arts world, fashion, and the movie-industry. They didn't have a lot of creative places to go to except Venice, certain parts of Downtown, Silver Lake, Ecco P. And so that shift is deeply ingrained in Venice and still is. It is also one of the reasons why places like Snap Chat could happen [because Venice is seen as a creative place.

In many ways the real estate community again is involved with shaping the identity of place. Moreover, developers have the power to actually control the demographic of an area. Andrew Deener notes that white residents in Venice were regularly contacted to inquire if they wanted to purchase vacant property, because of the difficulties selling property when the gang violence escalated (Deener 2007:304). He

further notes that several middle-class families teamed up together and bought property (Deener 2007:306) Though, on the other hand Sophia explains:

What has happened here is that real estate developers came into the community, particularly targeting older people, and they have been enticed to sell their homes because it seems very attractive. And I would say this began in 1995 from my observation.

While Sophia says that African Americans were encouraged to sell their homes, Andrew Deneer shows how white residents in Oakwood were encouraged to buy property in Venice (Deener 2007)

Conclusion

Inspired by Michel Foucault, this chapter has argued that the displacement of marginalized groups, which currently is conceptualized by specific political, social, and economic structures as the process of gentrification, are an extension of power structures that can be traced back to European colonial expansion. While focusing on the territory now known as Venice as the object of power, I have shown how successive populations have used different techniques of securing supremacy. However, consistent through shifting ideological justification has been the systems of differentiation.

The creation of difference has been a consistent technique to control the original population. The initial colonialization was justified through “royal power” (Foucault 1982:182) where the initial conquests were sent to spread supremacy ordered by the royals who were Gods representatives on earth. Further the dispossession and control over the Indigenous population was justified with the ideology of “pastoral power” (Foucault 1982:182). In this period the Spanish missionaries were in the noble business of saving Native Americans from their barbarous lifestyles.

With the Spanish Mexican war and the U.S. agitation to war, dispossession was justified through Euro-American settlers who engaged in genocide to take over the land. In this period the institutionalization of the modern state helped justify dispossession and murder of the original population.

As more U.S. settlers arrive, the original population are written out of history and place, by the creation of a mythic past based on the mission myth. Continuing the justification and marginalization of “undesired” peoples, government policies and the private real state market continued the legacy of exclusion through policies that justified segregation, neglect, and redlining. Using the same systems of differentiation, the target was in the first 50 years of the 1900s, was the African American population. The bureaucratically formulated ideological justification, starting in the 1950s shifted away from straight out racist reasons for exclusion. Now dispossession was formulated as urban renewal, and the war on drugs. However, the dispossession still affected people of color, and more and more people in the lower economic classes. The current process of gentrification is naturalized through neoliberal

reason, rendering that this is the work of free market structures. However, gentrification as a process is formed by actors that have preferred to get marginalized groups to sell their properties and have tried to convince white people to buy.

With gentrification and urban renewal also came the increased policing of public space. In the next chapter I take a closer look at how these exclusionary processes are maintained and dealt with on a personal level.

Chapter 3.

Living on the Boardwalk: Slow- and Repetitive Violence

The image is a composite of two parts. On the left is a sign titled "CLEAN & SAFE PARKS" with the City of Los Angeles logo and "PARK PROUD LA". It lists various park rules with icons: no sleeping or camping, shelter information, no smoking, no open fires, keep dogs on leash, keep sidewalks clear, limit personal property, move items quickly, and report emergencies. On the right is a poster titled "NOTICE: MAJOR CLEANING" from "environment LASANTATION CITY OF LOS ANGELES". It announces a major cleaning on Friday, March 15, 2019, at 06:30 a.m., and requests that residents remove all personal belongings by 06:00 a.m. The poster also provides contact information for item retrieval.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
FOUNDED 1781
PARK PROUD LA

CLEAN & SAFE PARKS

Let's work together to keep parks clean and safe

- No sleeping or camping allowed in parks
- For shelter, call Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority at **213-225-6581**, or **211**
- No smoking, alcohol, illegal drugs, or weapons allowed
- No open fires or barbecues except for designated areas
- Keep dogs on leash at all times
- Keep sidewalks, pathways, and stairs clear for pedestrians and persons in wheelchairs
- Limit personal property (no bulky items or hazardous materials) to no more than 60 gallons
- Please quickly move items when the City comes to clean or make repairs. Call **213-806-6355** to locate removed items
- Call **911** to report a crime or emergency or **311** to report non-emergency issues

THANK YOU!

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
FOUNDED 1781
environment LASANTATION
CITY OF LOS ANGELES

NOTICE: MAJOR CLEANING

INCLUDES SIDEWALKS, ALLEYS, PARKS, BEACH, PARKING LOTS, AND OTHER PUBLIC ACCESS AREAS

AN AREA CLEANING WILL COMMENCE AT THIS LOCATION ON:

Friday, March 15, 2019 at 06:30 a.m.

PLEASE REMOVE ALL PERSONAL BELONGINGS, INCLUDING BULKY ITEMS BY

Friday, March 15, 2019 by 06:00 a.m.

This effort is designed to clean, improve and maintain a safe environment for the general public. The City may use power wash and street cleaning equipment to clean and disinfect the sidewalks, alleys, parks and other public access areas.

Please remove all personal belongings, including bulky items from sidewalks, alleys, parks, and public access areas. All property remaining will be removed by the City. Property left behind, except for items that pose an immediate threat to public health or safety, trash, and evidence of a crime or contraband, will be collected by the City and kept in a secure location for a period of 90 days during which time it may be retrieved by its rightful owner.

Items collected by the City may be retrieved at:

507 Towne Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90013
Monday - Friday
(9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.)
Saturday
(9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.)
213-806-6355

cooperation as we initiate
of healthy.

In chapter 2 we saw how power relations are maintained and mediated historically and justified through shifting ideologies, which naturalizes dispossession, exclusion, and violence. In this chapter I want to build on that knowledge and look at how power relations built on systems of differentiation embedded in ideology informs policy and naturalizes institutionalized violence against unhoused persons on Venice Beach boardwalk.

In Venice, unhoused persons are prescribed a certain stigma that dehumanizes (Goffman 1990:15) their social identity (Goffman 1990:12). I find it useful to analytically distinguish between two forms of violence: *slow violence* (Nixon 2011a:2) and anticipated *routine violence*. Both slow violence and routine violence is caused by stigma (Goffman 1990) and reproduced as social classification based on the “culture of poverty” (Katz 2013:10). The culture of poverty is in short, a class distinction that naturalizes stringent policies, dismissal, dispossession, and displacement by the assumption that it being poor is inherent in their personality. The belief that some people are just lazy and lack moral judgement plays into the U.S. ideology of the undeserving poor (Katz 2013:2) who are not worthy of help because they are in fact have an exploitive nature. Even though empirical evidence disprove the reality of these stigmas they are still used to form the political conversations, public thought and policies (Katz 2013:2). Therefore, it is found that the best way to protect the health and safety of “ordinary well-abiding citizens” is to control the poor and restrict them (Katz 2013:151-176).

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part will focus on routine violence. Routine violence is institutionalized violence which is scheduled orchestrated and anticipated on a repeated basis. Pops and his friends, (who we met in chapter 1) are evicted from public property two times a day. Every morning at 6am, and every evening at 9pm. In addition, they are inspected every Friday by government officials to make sure that they do not have more than the bureaucratically formulated amount of personal property allowed. The futility, the performance and spectacle of this repetition and of people making their homes in a long contested “public space:”, the free speech/artist area, of a tourist boardwalk is in itself is highly unusual.

Slow on the other hand is “[...]violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. (Nixon 2011b:2). Slow violence is determined by the prolonged and accumulated experience of “structural violence” (Galtung 2016), and “symbolic violence” (Bourdieu 2000:9) which entails long duration. Slow violence creates certain coping mechanisms, which will be described in the second part of this chapter.

Both Johan Galtung’s concept of structural violence and Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of slow violence entails and unidentifiable source/actor responsible of violence and happens out of sight. To better understand the relationship between structure and subject I apply Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic violence, which connects the subject to the structure through modes of capital and doxa, the arbitrary objective truth (Bourdieu 2013).

Routine Eviction

A defining aspect of gentrification is the displacement of residents in low-income neighborhoods. Though, as will be elaborated in this chapter, gentrification does not only produce “spatial dislocation” (Davidson 2009:228), and displacement from formal dwellings through out-migration (Davidson 2009:225-6). Evictions also happens through displacement pressure and “symbolic exclusion” (Kern 2016:442) of those who are already are evicted from formal housing.

Regulatory measures in Venice Beach Park area are set by three bordering jurisdictions represented by the: The Coastal Commission⁶, Beaches and Harbors⁷, L.A. Recreation and Parks⁸, and Los Angeles City, together these agencies and departments compose State, County and Municipal laws. The spatial manifestation of these different jurisdictions comes with bureaucratically formulated ordinances which temporalizes territory. Two of the ordinances are “time and manner” restrictions that dictate where unhoused person can sleep and sit during certain hours. displaced minimum two times each day. When the park⁹ closes at sundown, the unhoused vendors must move to the alleys on the other side of the boardwalk, between the commercial stores. The alleys are by contrast, under the jurisdiction of the city of Los Angeles. At 6:am, unhoused persons are evicted from the alleys where they sleep by police officers implementing ordinance 56.11 (“Los Angeles Department of Sanitation and LAMC 2016) of Los Angeles Municipal code. (see figure 7, 8 and 2 for overview), the bureaucratic sectioning of the particular place where Pops and his friends live on the boardwalk are as a consequence of overlapping ordinances, The manifestations of different temporalities, through tempos, or “rhythms” (Bourdieu 2013:157) The rhythms of different spaces is built into the “socially constructed order”, the social reality (Bourdieu 2000:17), in such a way that it seems natural (what Pierre Bourdieu labels “doxa”) (Bourdieu 2013:160). Moreover, these bordering government-defined territories creates a certain type of multi-temporal “sectioning of time” (Koster 2020:185) for Pops and his friends who live on the boardwalk. What adds to the temporal experience is the commodification of space.

The normative rhythms dictates the norms for correct behavior in certain public spaces at certain daytime hours, and therefore commodifies temporalities of certain spaces (Munn 1992:110) influenced by categorization of territorial jurisdiction and laws connected to that particular space. Venice beach boardwalk is embedded in the tempos of leisure and tourism and the symbolic experience of Venice as a creative, artistic place with roots in counterculture, sub-culture, and alternative lifestyles. However, it

⁶ The Coastal Commission “[...] is an independent, quasi-judicial state agency” (Coastal Commission 2020) who oversees water and land use.

⁷ Beaches and Harbors is a county agency in charge of maintenance and operation of beaches owned by the county (L.A. County 2020)

⁸ L.A. Recreation and Parks is a department under the City of Los Angeles overseas the green areas and recreational activities (Recreation & Parks 2020a)

⁹ under the jurisdiction of the Department of Recreation and Parks

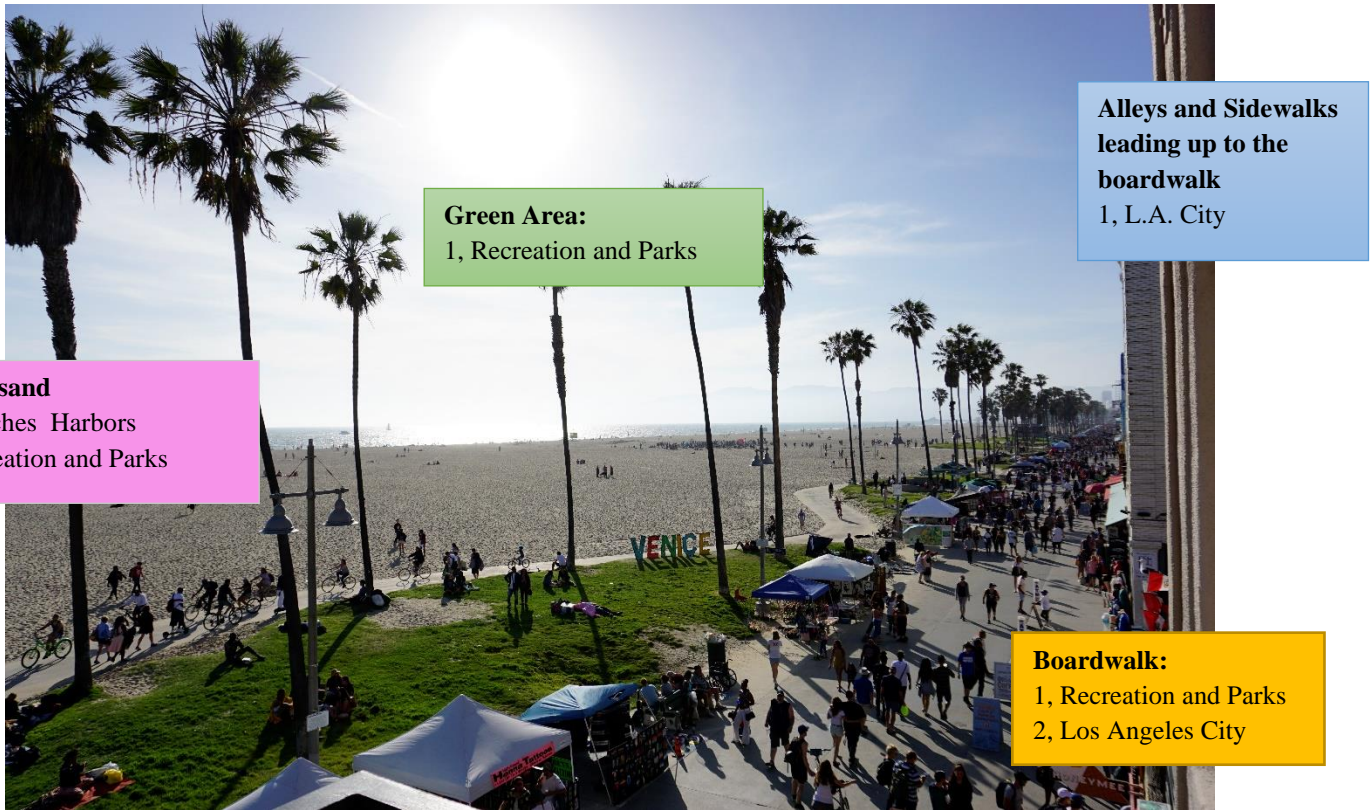


Figure 7: Overview of different jurisdictional delimitations: 1) Beach sand, 2) Green area, 3, Alleys and sidewalks, 4, Boardwalk

Jurisdiksjon Area	Rules
Beach Sand	No smoking No Drinking No tents No un
Green Area	No Smoking No Drinking No sitting or sleeping between midnight-5am No usage of public toilets between midnight and 5 am
Boardwalk	No smoking No drinking No sitting or sleeping
Alley	No drinking No sitting or sleeping from 6am-9pm

over restriction

Ordinance number	Routine violence and time-sectioning
Sec 42.15	Designated areas in the free speech zone can be used from 9:am-sundown
Sec 63.11	Green area and beach open from 5:am -midnight Personal property can be taken without notice at all times.
Sec 41.18	Allowed to sleep in a tent from 9:pm-6:am
Sec 56.11	Friday Cleanup from 7-12

Figure 9

Overview Figure 8: Routine violence and time-sectioning

determined by territorial jurisdiction

is also a tourist attraction which infuses neoliberal capitalism and reason (Brown 2015). The regulation of the boardwalk is inspired by the normative tempos of productive employment of formally housed people. Moreover, unhoused persons are not allowed to sit, sleep, or put up a tent on the boardwalk at any daytime hour. The alleys leading up to the boardwalk is shaped by the formally housed persons “normative tempos of productive employment”, which Pops and his friends are excluded from (Burraway 2019:). The normative tempos of productive employment are formulated in ordinances prohibiting sitting or sleeping on sidewalks and alleys:

a) No person shall stand in or upon any street, sidewalk, or public way open for pedestrian travel or otherwise occupy any portion thereof in such a manner as to annoy or molest any pedestrian thereon or so as to obstruct or unreasonably interfere with the free passage of pedestrians.

d) No person shall sit, lie, or sleep in or upon any street, sidewalk or other public way.¹⁰

The law indicates that those who are formally housed have to be able to go about their day, without being hindered or harassed. However, Pops and his friends are allowed to sleep in the alley at night¹¹.

The beach is inscribed with the rhythm that is connected to leisure, freedom. However, by inscribing the territory with an ordinance which prohibits the erection of tents at any daytime hour, it indicates which public leisure and fun is meant for and who it is not. Those who have a home or a hotel room to go to, are most likely to not sleep at the beach according to normative social rules. Because the bureaucratically formulated ordinances are infused with different tempos it makes it possible to legally displace unhoused persons. This type of “commodification” of time makes it possible to govern unhoused and placing them in a wider world context (Munn 1992:110) of global neoliberal economics through tourism.

What I want to highlight here is how poverty is criminalized. In fact refusing to wake up at 6:am means that one is breaking a local ordinance, which has the same consequences as breaking a federal law, and can be enforced by temporary probation, imprisonment, or Stay Away Orders (Marks 2013:447).

The most invasive form of routine violence is what Pops, and his friends refers to as “Fucked Up Friday”, namely the enforcement of the Friday clean-up¹²

The Friday clean-up is legally enforced by the Bureau of Sanitation, accompanied personnel from Recreation and Parks, LAPD, and the department of Harbors. Adding further to the policing on Venice

¹⁰ Los Angeles Municipal Code, Chapter IV Public Welfare SEC. 41.18. Sidewalks, Pedestrian Subways – Loitering,

¹¹ Chapter V Public Safety and Protection under article 6: public Hazard: SEC. 56.11-7: Ban on Erection of Tent during Certain Daytime Hours: No Person shall erect, configure, or construct a Tent in any Public Area from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. (except during rainfall or when the temperature is below 50 degrees Fahrenheit). s

¹² Department of Sanitations conduct “Major Cleaning as set by sec 56.11 of Los Angeles Municipal Code.

Beach Boardwalk is the privatization of public space. The privatization of policing through Business Improvement Districts (BID) is paid for by private businesses through tax-like profits. All over America business owners have established clean-and safe teams to help the police fight crime (Mitchell 2003:1), which makes the distinction between private and public space blurry.

The politics behind routine violence and displacement pressure lies in local distinctions between the “deserving” and “undeserving poor” (Katz 2013). To exemplify how temporalities of eviction are an “instrument of power” (Harms 2013:346), and how structural violence through law enforcement particularly symbolizes which public this public space is meant for, the following section describes the unfolding of such an enforcement.



Fucked up Friday”: Routine violence through Weekly Enforcement

It is Friday at 7:30am. The sun is already warming up the sea breeze coming in from the ocean. Only a few people are using the Venice beach park area. Except for the occasional dog-walker, tourist and jogger doing their morning workout routine, the boardwalk is mostly populated by unhoused men and women, artists and representatives from different government departments and private businesses. The

Figure 10: Fucked up Friday, the parade of government employees fills the boardwalk

spectacular of what locals refers to as the “parade”, stretches about 200 meters down the boardwalk. and has been repeated every Friday.

The “parade” includes representatives from LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department), LAFD (Los Angeles Fire Department), Parks and Recreation, the Sanitation Department, the Department of Harbors and Beaches, and the VB BID (Venice Beach Business Improvement District), who fill the boardwalk with garbage trucks, cars from every department, and sanitation equipment. They work their way through the boardwalk. Among the homeless people the event, which amounts to a weekly forced removal, is referred to as “Fucked-up Friday”. A joke, but a serious one. Pops and his friends compare the inspection in Nazi Germany, which implies how severe the experience of structural violence of the Friday routine evection, and inspection by law enforcement is.

Every Friday since the beginning of 2015, when Mayor Eric Garcetti launched the “Clean streets initiative” where he announced that “The new Clean Street Strike Team is expected to clear 500 tons of trash every month” (Office of LA Mayor Eric Garcetti 2016) there has been a so-called “sweep” from about 6.30:AM to 11:AM¹³. City officials inspect every unhoused person on the boardwalk according to a set of ordinances regulates and defines personal property and the amount allowed to be “stored” in the respective public spaces. Personal property is defined in four categories:

Types of personal property	Definition
1, Essential Personal property	[...]property that amounts to less than two cubic feet, approximately the size of a backpack,
2, "Personal Property	[...]any goods, materials, merchandise, Tents, tarpaulins, bedding, sleeping bags, hammocks, personal items such as household items, luggage, backpacks, clothing, documents, and medication.
3, "Bulky Item"	[...]any item “[...] too large to fit into a 60-gallon container”. Constructed tents, bicycles, walkers, wheelchairs, and crutches are exempted as bulky items.
4, «Excess Personal Property	[...] all Personal Property that cumulatively exceeds the amount of property that could fit in a 60-gallon container with the lid closed.

¹³ The initiative is the foundation for the execution under the Department of Sanitation through enforcement of a combination of Los Angeles Municipal Code section 56.11 which territory is under the jurisdiction of Los Angeles City and sec 63. 44 under the jurisdiction of both Recreation and Parks and the Departments of Beaches and Harbors.

Figure 11: Personal property defined by four categories: 1) Essential Personal Property, 2) Personal Property, 3) Bulky Item, 4) Excess Personal Property. Source: Los Angeles Municipal Code section 56.11

The westside of the boardwalk, running parallel to the sea, is empty. Any other day of the week, vendors and performers would already have saved a spot for the day. But not on Fridays.

Pops steps out of the convenient store, smacking a packet of cigarettes towards his palm while walking towards me. Lucky walks up to the boardwalk from the alley where the group sleep at night. All their belongings are already packed up. Some of their items are stored in a compartment in the building they sleep next to, which leads to the back entrance to one of the businesses on the “commercial side” of the boardwalk. Pops has an unofficial agreement with the storeowner, which allows him to store some of their belongings on private property while the clean- team comes by. Pops and his group of friends in return looks out for the store at night.

DeeDee, Knife, and Ella are sitting silently with all their belongings, packed up at the beginning of the next block. They all look tired. Blue stops by on his bike. He is drunk and loudly shares his chippy mood. Pops' "cousin" Biggy, and his girlfriend Tina, are sitting in the next alley with Jim, hiding their things in one of the bushes surrounding the beach house. Jim is nervous, moving his weight from one foot to the other. He is standing in front of Biggy and Tina looking up at the boardwalk. Duke is wandering forth and back at the end of the alley. Everyone is waiting for the "sweep-team" to come and inspect them. Lucky gets up, walks up to the boardwalk. He looks south. The crew is coming closer. One garbage-truck has already passed us.

R.I.P Cronk is working on his painting in the alley. He has been coming back a couple of times a year since he originally made the mural in the nineties. He usually has to redo the painting because local youths have a ritual for signing their name graffiti-style over the mural.

There is tension in the air.



Figure 12:Storage Loophole: Some of Pops' property legally stored on private property located about 10cm from public property, and thus out of risk from being impounded

I am standing next to Pops watching the crew come closer to their alley. Lucky is walking forth and back, and Knife is standing in the middle of the boardwalk, turning his body, looking up and then down.

Michelle: *“What happened over there?”*

Pops: *“Over where?”*

Michelle: *“There”*

I point towards the “sweep-team” who are out on the beach. The sanitation crew are all wearing white jump-suits with hoodies, purple plastic gloves, and yellow vests. There are eight sanitation officers and four police officers on the beach, now on their way back to the boardwalk. Two of the sanitation officers are pushing a cart with white buckets and cleaning supply. They have confiscated the belongings of a man that has spent the night on the beach.

Pops: *“They (the sweep-team) took their shit. They started to toss it.”*

Lucky: *“They (the police) started yelling shit.”*

While the law requires the territories under the jurisdiction of the LA City and the Recreation and Parks Department¹⁴ to issue a pre-removal notice to impound any Attended excess Personal Property, they are allowed to remove all “Unattended Personal Property in a Public Area, regardless of volume”. A stricter version of the law enforced on the boardwalk and the alley is enforced under the Department of Harbors, which has a “Ban on erection of tent” and only permits a 60-gallon bag of personal property¹⁵. The man arguing with the police is on territory under the jurisdiction of the Harbor Department, a county agency, which holds that: “The City may remove and discard any non-permitted Bulky Item from the park without any prior notice”¹⁶.

¹⁴ SEC.56.11, B-7

¹⁵ 15 SEC.56.11, B-7

¹⁶ SEC.63.11, B. f) 4.



The unhoused man has been screaming for about half an hour while they have carried his belongings to the garbage truck. He gave up fighting the “sweep team” and paced angrily across the beach sand and onto the boardwalk, dragging his comforter in his left hand. He is passing us. His face is blazed with anger and indignation. The “sweep-team” is right behind him, dragging his tent toward the garbage truck. We all watch his home being crushed as the truck does its job. A police car passes us. We all look inside.

Lucky: *Three God dam cops in one car? Oh, that’s bad!*

Oh, four of them, God, Jesus Christ, four of them in one car.”

The “free speech area” is empty, except for one space. Items no longer in need have been gathered folded neatly and placed next to one of the garbage bins, so that the sweep-team can dispose of it: two folded chairs, a barstool, and a small, folded table that is covered with paint in every color. The vendors and performers who have already showed up to save a spot, are sitting on the east side of the boardwalk waiting for the team to finish, so they can begin their day.

We are all facing the south part of the boardwalk watching the parade of cars and “sweep-personnel” approach. There is a constant beeping sound from the trucks. One more garbage truck passes us, followed by a police car, a black jeep with dark windows and Texas plates, a jeep from Parks and Recreation. Following the parade is a pickup from the Fire Department with an open cargo area filled with bags of confiscated personal property, a pickup from the Sanitation Department with cleaning supplies that is sprayed on the ground, a second police car, and another garbage truck.



Figure 14: The Friday "sweep-crew" is coming closer

Pops: *"They are going to stop there, by the ones living on the street on the alley all the way up there"*

He points to an alley further up north on the boardwalk.

Michelle: *"Why?"*

Pops: *"They have all their shit out. And I'm like; 'Hey! You need to move your shit.', and They're like; 'No, they're not going to take my shit.' ... Just watch!"*

The police car passes, while several police officers are closing into their alley. Pops lower his voice to avoid the officers hearing him.

Pops: *"That's how we do it. They go right past us, even though we have more shit than anyone over here. But we know how to put it. There is nothing over here."*

Pops turns around. Their alley is empty, except for two chairs. The "sweep-team" decides to inspect the alley anyway. A police officer approaches us by foot. She is wearing a bulletproof vest. A body camera is attached to the right side of her chest, and her duty belt is heavily equipped with weapons. She has two handgun holsters presumably with shotguns or pistols, a pepper spray, a teaser gun, handcuffs, two small, folded knives, a baton, and a police radio.

Police officer; *"How are you guys doing?"*

Pops; *"Good, and you?"*

Her mood is lifted. She answers in a cheerful tone.

Police officer: *“I’m good. It’s Friday morning, you know. Gotta’ be happy on a Friday. See you guys later”.*

Pops: *“You too.”*

Knife has been circling around a bit and is now standing beside the officer.

Knife: *“I have all my pills now.”*

Police officer: *“I see you got your coffee too.”*

Knife continues to talk to the officer. His embodied anxiety fully erupts as he starts talking. He explains that last Friday the “sweep-team” confiscated all his medication. When she asks what happened, he tells her that he was on his way back from somewhere and didn’t make it back in time for the inspection.

Police officer: *“What happens when you don’t take your medication?”*

Knife: *“I get seizures. I have schizophrenia, ADHD, and depression.”*

Knife continues to talk to the officer. He starts to follow her. His anxiety is manifested in his gesticulations and moves. He talks fast, continuously, and repeatedly tells her that they took his medicine last Friday. He seems manic and scared. The officers lifted mood starts to wear off and is replaced by a concerned expression. She seems uncomfortable with his close presence.

Knife has internalized the routine violence he has experienced on the Friday “sweeps”. The stigma attached to unhoused persons as being dirty and lacking moral judgement is embedded in the social category of being unhoused and is incorporated in the government official’s cultural capital (knowledge of the world) and ideology (doxa)(Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013). Knife’s internalization of structural violence and the government officials symbolic capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013:298) over time inscribes itself in their habitus (Bourdieu 2000:38).

The chippy mood the police officer displays difference in social reality that she and the unhoused persons have, which really exemplifies the power relation between her and Pops and his friends. The social experience for the unhoused persons would in no way invoke a chippy mood, which again exemplifies the discrepancy in symbolic power.

Knife’s fear of having his medicines collected by the sweep team was the consequence of the routine violence. Knife had experienced a psychotic episode upon where he was hospitalized for 24 hours, leaving Ella responsible for his belongings. When she tried to explain the situation, the police still only let her keep the amount allowed for one person. However, all the things Ella and Knife were

essential. For obvious reasons unhoused persons do not often have a storage room for their essential property. The police ended up confiscating their medication, the urn with the ashes of Knives recently deceased grand mother, all of Ella's clothes, and items that were of sentimental value for Knife and Ella, like pictures, a feather Ella had gotten from Knife's grand mother, and Ella's bible. The thought that unhoused persons carry around non-essential things, or even garbage is made visible through the Friday sweep routine violence. The thought that unhoused persons carry around non-essential things, and the justification of government officials to inspect them (the symbolic capital of the government official) is incorporated in the social world so that it seems natural (doxa).

The stigma that is connected to the unhoused persons is hidden in the structure of arbitrary bureaucratic decisions of how much property an unhoused person can survive with, in which type of territory in such a way that it releases the government official for his/her/hens responsibility to the violence conducted. They are just doing their job.

Two more officers, and two sanitation officers approach the alley. The sanitation officer in charge passes us and walks into the alley. The Sanitation Officer in charge has a reputation of being strict and merciless and is referred to as "the Nazi". The Officer spots the two chairs, goes back to the garbage trucks, and gets a 60 gallon, see-through, garbage bag witch he hands to PeeWee. Pops, Lucky and PeeWee try to fit one of the chairs in the bag, while the sanitation officer in charge, and a second team-member watches.



Figure 15: Pops, PeeWee and Lucky try to fit an office chair into a 60-gallon bag while "the Nazi" watches.

More officers approach. At this point there are seven police officers and eight sanitation officers present in the ally.

Steve and Sally, two homeless-rights activists who regularly observe, and protest discriminating conduct by the “sweep-team”, shows up.

Steve and Sally are both part of an informal activism group and are fully devoted to fight for unhoused persons rights, a fight that is complicated by the current discourse of exclusion. Locals often justified routine violence through the category of “the undeserving poor” (Katz 2013) which in Venice translates to the “transient poor.” Betty, a local activist who has lived in Venice since the 1970s explained that: “the transients they just come and exploit the community, they just take and take and destroy everything.” The stigma of the unhoused people is so incorporated in the social reality (doxa) that the approximately 200 unhoused people who live on the boardwalk are blamed for Venice being dirty, and also the crime in Venice. This is an example of the arbitrariness of the understanding and sectioning of the social world (Bourdieu 2013:159). The paradox lies in the fact that it is seen as an objective truth that the 200 unhoused persons who live on the boardwalk are responsible for the crime in Venice, even though Venice annually has 16 000 000 visitors, and about 41 000 residents in a county with about 10 000 000 residents (United States Census Bureau 2019). Because it is seen as an objective truth that unhoused persons are responsible for the dirt and crime in Venice, it complicates the fight for unhoused persons rights in formal local politics through the VNC (Venice Neighborhood Council).

Because Steve previously lived on the boardwalk, and Sally has knowledge (cultural capital) of the reality of slow and routine violence through her daughter, their perception of the social reality of living on the street challenges the doxic understanding of what living on the street entails. Sally’s daughter has been diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder, and because the health care system could not force her to be hospitalized, she ended up on living on the streets several times. Because of the discrepancy in perceived social reality between those who are part of the VNC and activists like Sally and Steve finds alternative and creative ways to protest routine violence outside direct formal political organization. One of the strategies involves shadowing, protesting the police as well as documenting and publishing routine violence social media channels like YouTube and Facebook.

Sally: *“Let him keep the chair, man! It could be a matter of life and death, dude”.*

Steve: *“You just want him to sit on the sidewalk, hu!? He can’t even have a chair??”*

Pops, PeeWee, and Lucky are still trying to force the chair into the bag. Steve goes closer to film the team with his cell phone. Two police officers approach him: «STEP BACK!». Eventually the sanitation officer in charge takes the chair from them. They only managed to pull the plastic bag halfway up. He rolls it toward the garbage truck, and throws it in. We hear the chair get crushed.

Steve shouts out; “You’re ‘gonna be famous on YouTube!! This guy here from the Sanitation Department don’t want homeless people to have chairs.”

The sanitation team approaches the mural artist. They tell him to remove his painting supplies. Cronk looks confused but complies and starts to carry his supplies to his storage room. The situation gets heated. Several people stop to watch the police and “sweep-team.” A mother is holding her arm around her three children to protect them as they pass by. Several others pass by. The contempt in their facial expression is directed at the police and reveals the regularity of police violence directed at marginalized groups.

Pops shouts out: “NOO!! Not Cronk!!”

Pops steps up to the police- and sanitation officers surrounding the mural artist. He is angry, waving his hands to get the officers attention, trying to stop them. Several by-passers are stopping to ask if the officers are expelling the world renown mural artist. Two officers in firm loud voices tell Pops to: “STEP BACK”. Cronk patiently carries paint cans, a ladder, and art appliances. Pops and Lucky offers to help. Cronk shakes his head with a serious mine, he wants to do it himself.

When the alley is cleared, the “sweep-team” walks further down to where Ella, DeeDee, Jim, Blue, Biggy and Tina are still sitting with their belongings packed up. The routine violence is ingrained in their bodies and collective memory. It is hard to see how these otherwise kind, funny and strong persons are tacitly expressing their submissive relationship to the police through their crouched bodies, and facial expression that can only be tied to injustice.

Knife’s anxiety has fully erupted. He fears that his belongings will be collected. He is still following the police officer, repeating over and over again that his medicine was taken. The team inspects the amount of personal property. The “Nazi” nods quietly to the other officers, approving the amount of personal property before he walks back to the boardwalk and continues with firm steps to the next alley. The whole “sweep-team” follows, and in seconds the alley is empty. Pops, Ella, PeeWee, Knife, Lucky, Boots, Blue, Jim, DeeDee, Biggie and Tina can finally let go of the anxiety of this weeks “Fucked up Friday”.

A couple of streets up the police seals off both sides of the alley and walks up to an unhoused man who is sleeping in a chair. Four police officers and two Sanitation Officers are standing around him, firmly telling him to: “WAKE UP”. A blanket is covering his body and face. After repeated commands, he wakes up startled by the crowd. He quickly gets up, gather his things annoyed by the disturbance of sleep. He goes under the police seal with his bike and belongings, and leaves. The sweep-team approaches a woman who is alone with a large number of items. She tells them that some of it belongs to her friends. They give her exactly five minutes to find them, a task she cannot fulfill.

Lucky comes to support her and helps her gather some of the things. She tries to convince the team to let her keep their belongings, but the team has made up their mind. She is upset and starts throwing

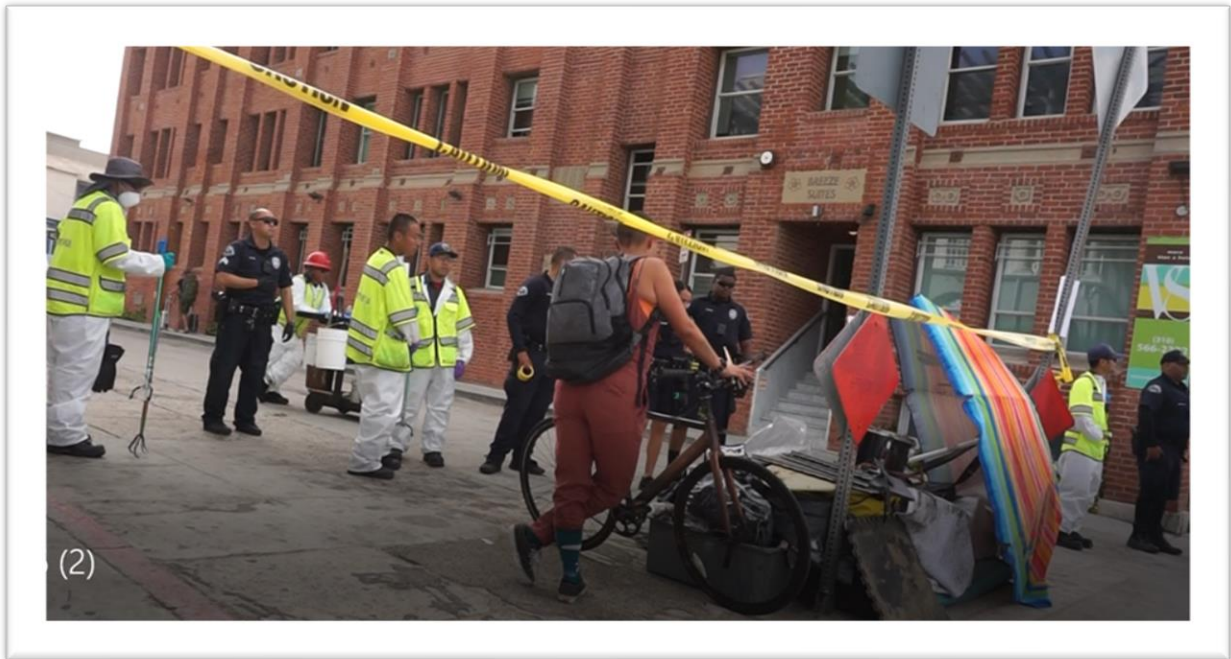


Figure 16: Police and sanitation officers enforcing Friday "clean-up"

the things she wants to save in a bundle, a protest for their treatment of her. Lucky helps her with the things she chose to save. They carry it away together, while the team lawfully fills the garbage truck with blankets, mattresses, a surfboard, and their source for income: a drum set used to perform on the boardwalk.

And so, the team goes on to the next alley, and work their way until the four kilometer(two-and-a-half-miles) long "free speech" zone is cleared. At least until next week when a new round of "Fucked up Friday" is expected.

The portrayal of power exerted over unhoused persons could not be exaggerated. The presence of the police and their treatment of the unhoused further forms the public imaginary of unhoused persons as dangerous, dirty, and criminal, an example to the claim that gentrification is the new segregation (Katz 2013:162)

Slow violence

Slow violence is tacitly revealed through social organization and adaption to specific ways of interacting with people in the community. Coping mechanisms like terming themselves as a family, being cop wise and killing time by "kickin' it", which I will explain further in this section, reveals the internalization of structural violence like the Friday "sweep" which accumulated over time goes over in the category of

slow violence. Slow violence is internalized and creates individual and collective coping mechanisms through interaction strategies and social formations. The anticipated routine evictions such as in the example described above plays into the slow violence over time. We see how Knife's fear of the future, fear of getting really sick which might in the worst-case lead to his death, and the anxiety inflicted in his anticipations of the Friday sweep, has become internalized as a consequence of a multiplicity of similar experiences.

Like we saw in chapter 2, stigmatic traits are often used to frame the moral of exclusion. In the case of the Friday "sweep" we see how enforcement is justified through local ordinances, and how these ordinances and law enforcement both are informed by ideology and contribute to maintaining ideologies that legitimate structural violence of the poor.

The slow violence those evicted from formal housing is multilayered and have diverging intersecting historical economic- and political processes which are essentially formed by mythical stigmas about the poor (Katz 2013:168-9). Slow violence is both determined by structural violence and symbolic violence. The categorical stigma attached to being poor has assumed a variety of forms through out history, however, the belief that poverty is faulted by the individual has been persistent since the 1900 (Katz 2013:2) The person experiencing poverty does so because of laziness, immoral behavior, lack of intelligence (Katz 2013:3) However as we saw in chapter 2, systems of differentiation is mediated by power elites to justify exclusion, exploitation and dispossession and is incorporated in the social order in such a way that it seems natural. Slow violence involves intersecting tactics of exclusion: from formal productive employment (Bourgois 2003:114-15), neo-liberal politics that deprives worker rights for long term employment and higher minimum wages (Wolch and Dear 1993:xvii-xviii), insufficient social services, and healthcare (Katz 2013, Wolch and Dear 1993:1-16, Bourgois and Schonberg 2009) prolonged by bureaucratic delaying tactics (Hansen, Bourgois, and Drucker 2014:78), which is deeply embedded in the moral exclusion based on race and socio-economic class (Bourgois 2003, Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). The relations of power are always determined by intersecting processes that are time and place specific, and so are the ideological justifications.

It is important to notice that the stigma and justification in the context of police violence against persons without a home to go to, are not only interactions about poverty, often about race, people of color and recent protests in the U.S. As we saw in chapter 2, people of color have systematically been deprived of a fair chance of upward mobility, through high incarcerating rates, and unconstitutional policies as segregation, the gang injunction, redlining, and now gentrification.

Coping with Slow Violence

The Friday "sweep" was finally over, and the group immediately started to carry their folded tents, blankets, clothes, and personal items. Lucky and PeeWee helped each other folding a tarp over their

belongings to preserve them. Miles a young, unhoused man who lives in one of the alleys further up the boardwalk came by with his collection of games, tent, chairs and tables. He had an appointment with a social worker and wanted Boots to take care of his game installation while he was gone, to prevent government workers to dispose his source of income. The boardwalk did not have many visitors and few vendors had saved a spot this day, which allowed them to set the games up in two spots in the “free speech zone”. On the first spot they had set up a small, white party tent, with two tables plastic chairs on each side. The first table had two games; a fishing pond with fishing rods with magnets, and a game called Penguin Trap. On the next spot two smaller tables were placed together with four chairs in different shape, size, and color. One table had a boxing game with plastic figures. The other table had the game “four connect” placed on it. The boards for the game “Corn hole” was placed in front of the tables. The game has two boards, each with one hole that serves as a goal. The boards are elevated on one side and placed about two meters apart. Each board has four bean bags.

I sat down with Pops. We had a conversation about the routine violence. Pops was in a good mood. He was relieved that this Friday’s sweep had gone so well. A month ago as the tourist high season was approaching, the sweep-team got more and more aggressive. Three weeks in a row, they took all of Pops’ art exhibit. The first and second time the sanitation officer acted according to their laws. They have to store the items they impound for 90 days. Though, the third week they threw everything in the garbage truck.

The displacement pressure tends to escalate during the high season. The routine policing plays into the slow violence of poverty. The repeated experience with routine violence turned into an escalated depression for Pops. The symbolic and structural violence and particularly the outspoken stigma that dehumanized him affected his mental health. He continuously talked about that it was his time to go, he felt he was dying. He would often start to cry when we were hanging out together. Pops had taken pride in his good communication with the police, and the social capital he thought he had accomplished. However, when explicitly encountering the power relation between him and the police and the symbolic power they have over unhoused persons, even him, he went into a state of despair. He internalized the injustice and stigma and started doubting himself. He suddenly understood how powerless he was against the police. What I think hurt him the most was that he tried to explain the circumstances, and still was not heard, which revealed the stigma they had against him. When I asked him how he would manage he answered:

I have family. That's when your family kicks in. I'm gonna eat, I'm gonna smoke, I'm gonna have a beer to, I'm gonna always continue. And it's the same thing with me. I make the most money out of all of them. But I take that money, and I take care of the guys who didn't do anything. They are all going to be alright, they are all going to be ok.

Pops got up from his chair and walked down to the corner store to get a couple of beers for the group, before he started setting up his art display. Boots was finally ready with the game station. Boots waved at me; “Hey, mama!! You want to play?”. Music was boosting out from three different stores on the commercial side. The other members of the group were sitting on the grass behind the game station. Pops returned with a couple of beers he shared with his friends. Knife took up a pipe and passed it around.

The Family

The group’s core “coping strategy” (Wolch and Rowe 1992: 123) is living together and defining themselves as a family. This coping strategy is the main strategy for attaining food, employment, income, clothes, and emotional support. Wolch and Row notes that groups are “[...] usually defined by race or ethnicity, sexual preference and substance-abuse patterns” (1992:123). Pops and his friends are an ethnic diverse group which is defined by preference in substance-consumption. They distinguish themselves from other homeless groups and will not allow people who have a preference of for example methamphetamine, or heroine to share their space, or hang out with them. Some of the members in Pops’ circle use meth moderately, but the group’s preference in substances are mainly alcohol and marijuana.

The social organization of the «family” is a loosely structured hierarchal system based on social capital as income strategy. Pops, Lucky and Boots would often say; “Pops is the king, Lucky the Prince, Boots the evil advisor, and PeeWee the lookout”.

Communication skills are key to surviving on the boardwalk, their social capital is a strategy for material income to the group, the distribution of donations in form of money, food, furniture, drugs, alcohol, and other material income. The gift economy is vital for all of them because it ensures income and survival. Pops and his friends often got furniture, clothes, blankets and food form other residents or tourists at the end of their holyday. Unhoused persons often create networks of reciprocal ties with other groups of unhoused which serves as extended support networks.

The slow violence that Pops and his “family” has experienced with social workers has caused a severe internalized distrust for welfare institutions. The common perception local residents in Venice have of the social reality of being unhoused are that about 30 per cent are homeless by choice. The perception supports what is perceived as an objective truth, namely that unhoused persons lazy, and exploitive. The ideology is combined with an exaggerated view of how easy and how profitable public social benefits are, which also reflects the “culture of poverty” thesis which asserts that homelessness it is just a chosen “way of living” (Katz 2013:12). In addition many efforts have been done by conservatives to blame the poor for their own situation, by claiming poverty does not have any causal relation to segregation, (Katz 2013:187), or “structural unemployment” (Katz 2013:182).Conservatives

have even applied the denial of poverty all together, in their efforts to reduce social benefits (Katz 2013:179).

However, between 1982 and 1985 \$57 billions were cut in federal welfare spending (Wolch and Dear 1993:11) with the “new federalism” that shifted responsibility for social benefits from federal welfare to state responsibility (Wolch and Dear 1993:114) . The ideology behind the cut was the theory of privatization, (neoliberal reason) (Wolch and Dear 1993:13). Cutbacks in federal welfare spending shifted the responsibilities to the private sphere and commercial voluntary agencies and private households (Wolch and Dear 1993:13). When President Clinton signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity act in 1996, the welfare system was further restructured to a stronger emphasis on medically grounded welfare assistance which require a psychiatric diagnosis (Hansen, Bourgois, and Drucker 2014:76). Only 35% of those who apply for disability benefits are granted them (Hansen, Bourgois, and Drucker 2014:78), and it is almost impossible to get benefits if you have problems with alcoholism (Hansen, Bourgois, and Drucker 2014:77). The restructuring of the welfare state has deep ideological ties to the “culture of poverty” which is posed as an objective truth (Katz 2013:10)

Among Pops and his friends only Ella and Knife gets benefits, which is based on their medical diagnosis. Knife is diagnosed with schizophrenia ADHD and depression, and Ella is diagnosed with PTSD. Ella’s father sexually abused her and her sister when they were children, she later had several abusive relationships. Her PTSD is also related to her son who is suffering from drug use, and lives on the street.

The group members all have their fields of contribution to the groups welfare and are dependent on internal and external gift economy. When Pops gets donations on his expo, he usually uses it to buy alcohol and cigarettes at the store across the street from their expo. He doesn’t necessarily divide his purchases evenly to each member, but anyone who is close by usually gets a sip of beer or a cigarette when they ask. Joints and pipes are usually passed without request. The gift economy is heavily reliant on their capacity of social capital.

There is a clear macho structure in the group. It is fringed upon when group members invite casual sexual partners to stay over, and permanent relationships are accepted. They like Ella staying with them because she is married to Knife and takes care of him, relieving the symptoms of his psychiatric conditions. Ella’s kind personality, and her calm and sober presence is respected. Pops would often say that she and him were the only normal people in the group. She is one of the core members, but is also an outsider because she is female. Knife and Ella often sit by themselves about a meter from the others and share their food and cigarettes with each other. Ella would often be upset by the male members of the group: “Michelle, I know you think they are so sweet. But when you are not here the only thing, they talk about is; “look at that ass”, “I would pound that”. They are cursing and swearing. I’m so tired of listening to that”.

Kickin' it: Killing Time, Slow Violence

Boots was getting impatient and started screaming: "MAAAMMAAAA!! YOU WANNA PLAY??". I looked at Pops. "Go!" he said, smiling. Boots gave me four bean bags and instructed me to stand behind the plate on my side and aim the bean bag at the hole in the plate on his side and shouted; "You get one point for hitting the board, and three points for hitting the hole. First one to twenty wins." We played three games. Ella, Knife and Lucky were cheering in the background. Ella was shouting; "Yeeyy Michelle!! Girl Power", whenever I made a goal. Boots shook his head each time I scored; "And she said: 'I'm probably not going to do so well.' You see! You are better, mama."

Julian, a Mexican man who lived in another 'village' (Pops' term for the homeless encampments) on the boardwalk came by. He often came to hang with Pops and his friends. Julian sat down for a while and started singing and talking to himself. He was notably drunk and started playing music on his phone which he accompanied with his flute. None of the notes were congenious, but it was obvious that that he was playing together with the band from his phone. He had consciously left us for a while living in the state of his music, he was in the "zone". A couple of guys from a nearby "village" passed by to smoke marijuana, drink, and pass time. I turned and saw Pops dozing of in the background, despite Julian's musical contribution.

Prolonging the process of allocating homes for those who make their homes in public spaces, are local NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) (Wolch and Dear 1993:26-27), a movement which again is entangled in the ideology of progress through gentrification, neo-liberal capitalism and individual profit. One of the main coping mechanisms Pops and his friends applied between the recurring events of routine eviction was "kickin' it". Kickin' it refers to hanging out with friends and having fun, relaxing getting drunk smoking weed, having a party, inviting guests over. Kickin' it can take many different forms but on the contrary to the stigma Pops and his friend are prescribed, as criminal and violent with drug problems, their days are rather uneventful. It is more a way to kill time to cope with the slow violence, and long durée of homelessness. Because of scarce resources, and the internalization of slow- and routine violence, making it almost impossible for them to make plans for the future.

Pops woke up and started to cheer as well. Bud, one of the younger men that lives a couple of alleys up passed by and wanted to play against the winner. He was stoned, his eyes were red and he had a shy smile on his face. Bud is 25 years old and lives together with a group of men in their twenties. Bud is a gentle person and is usually to be seen working on his art on one of the "free speech" spots. Once a week he would come by and invite people to come with him to the outdoor cinema in Santa Monica. He gets the tickets cheaper through one of the social services in Venice.

Bud smiled continuously while we were playing. He won the game and returned to his vending spot. Jim had returned from a walk and asked to be next in line. I was almost startled when he looked me straight in the eyes and smiled. He was having a good day. He usually sits with the group without interacting, looking another way. Jim was stoned and drunk, but nevertheless won the game. Blue, who saw that we were playing games while on his bike ride down the boardwalk. He stopped in for a match with Jim. Ella and Peewee joined in for a couple of games as well.

After sitting quietly for a bit, I asked Pops if he wanted to go to the other side of the boardwalk to have a smoke to prevent us from getting a ticket from the police. The hill that they sit on during the day, and the boardwalk is part of the Venice Beach Park area where it is prohibited to smoke. He joined me over to the alley. Pops: "Ohh look, we got a new pidgin. He is just a baby, and he is lost, so we are taking care of him". His face lid up when he was talking about it. They named the first pidgin Clumpy because of the lumps he has on his left foot. The group takes care of them, by scaring of other birds that pick on the birds because they are outcasts. We smoked a cigarette while people-watching. Pops started to look intensely at his art exhibit. He went across the boardwalk. The exhibit looked really good today. Pops made a new theme, rearranged, and added some elements. One of Pops' housed neighbors had given him a donation they thought he could use for his display.

Space as a Coping Mechanism

The space they live on is part of their coping strategy. The group has a psychological attachment to the place. Having one place to consider home, has a calming effect on humans in general and is crucial to the group's wellbeing, in an otherwise unpredictable living situation. The attachment to this space is connected to the economic dimension, as it increases the chance for income in the informal boardwalk economy through donations from visitors and tourists by displaying free expression or selling art. The boardwalk also has job opportunities. Unhoused vendors often work for housed vendors by helping them save spaces, and other practical task. However, the connection to the place and immobility of the members of the group is also forced upon them because of the routinely enforcement of ordinances, such as the Friday clean up, described above.

Ellen M. Marks notes that the isolation caused by marginalization is particularly harmful for unhoused persons with mental illness (Marks 2013: 441). Being on the street may cause physical and mental health problems, posttraumatic stress and depression and malnutrition. The stigma of being unhoused was particularly emphasized when I had conversations in his most depressing states. When I redirected the conversation to Pops being an artist, his whole demeanor changed. The shift in mental states was noteworthy.

The groups stereo was turned on full volume. It was plugged into the bike besides him, playing music from a local radio station. Some tourists stopped to take pictures of Pops' display. Pops shouted out;

“Don’t forget to tip the artist”. He turned to me and said, “See I don’t even care if they tip. What I’m selling are smiles”. He leaned back in his chair again, with a smile of content. He was having a particularly good day. The day before a friend had come by and given him \$400. When I asked him why he gave him the money, he replied as usual; “I’m Pops. Everybody knows me.” He would often answer questions about money and drugs in a manner that did not clarify anything.

Being Cop-wise

Pops is particularly good at being “cop wise”; (Forrest 2016:292), which refers to “additional proactive strategies [...] to more effectively avoid and avert officer scrutiny” (Forrest 2016, 291). Stuart Foster gives a sociological account on policing and the impact of criminalization on street-level. He estimates that roughly “(..) 40 million people have face-to face contact with police per year in the US (Forrest 2016:279). Through nine years of living on the boardwalk Pops has adopted “cop-wisdom” (Forrest 2016:279). Venice as a community have extreme differences in wealth and poverty, is multi-ethnic, have residents with diverse socio-economic status, and is a tourist destination. “Cop-wisdom” is the result of observing behavior aimed at the unhoused population by other community members, visitors, business owners and the police, and enables Pops manipulate social interaction by shifting between different “identities” that fit the person he talks to, and the perception he anticipates he/ she has of unhoused persons (Forrest 2016: 279).

“Cop-Wisdom” also involves acting in a way that is socially acceptable and internalizing the diverse perception of unhoused persons and reflects the long duration of slow violence.

After a life changing event that affected the whole group emotionally, Pops stepped up and showed himself as a leader who held the group together. What makes Pops a “public character” is based on his social intelligence and communication skills that enables him to frequently interact with a large diversity people His long career in the formal economy, and a family life with seven children contributes to his communication skills. Another thing that makes Pops a central figure to the group is that he is in charge of the exhibit, making him one of the artists using a spot in the informal economy of the free speech area. His role as “community leader” (Wolch and Rowe 1992:127), is recognized by business owners on the boardwalk who will address him when they have an issue with him or other member of the group. The role as “community ‘leader’” is a product of Pops’ social capital and cultural. Pops’ role as “community leader”, involves being the eyes and ears of the group and giving advice and distributing goods. Pops’ mild and caring personality gives the members and new members emotional support. Pops shifts between his party personality and being a fatherly figure of the group, reprimanding group members if they behave perceived as unacceptable by other residents, or in a way that would cause consequences for the group member or the group as a whole. He tells other group members to clean up after themselves, behave properly or cut back on drinking and drug consumption.

Pops have a broad knowledge of social services in the community, ordinances that affect them, which police officers to fear and which are more accepting. When the group adopt new members, he will give them advise them to where they can have a free meal, go to the doctor, find shelter, or housing assistance. He holds an overview over the group and when members of the group experience encounters with the police, Pops would be the one addressing the police in an effort to reduce the tension.

The whole day has passed. As the sun was setting Boots started to carry over the tents and the rest of their stuff. So did Knife and Ella. When Pops, went to the toilet before Parks and Recreation closed it. I sat for a little bit longer chatting with Lucky. When popes came back, he asked if I wanted him to walk me to the bus. He wanted me to be sure that I got home safe, because as he said: "It can be dangerous being a women alone in Venice at night." I said he didn't have to.

Conclusion

In chapter 2 we saw how policies are ideologically justified through systems of differentiation, such as race and class, historically, in a macro-perspective. In this chapter I have focused on the micro-perspective of policies that are created on macro-level through systems of differentiation which targets specific groups.

Pops and his friends are the target of race and class exclusion formed by neoliberal economic reason. Businessowners and property owners in Venice have increasingly lobbied for regulation of public place. While these policies targets unhoused persons, those who wish to exclude them are able to do so without formulating that it is intended to exclude unhoused persons. The explanation is that formulated according to neoliberal reason which explains forced removal and exclusion as necessary measures to ensure property value, and a continuing tourism. By inscribing certain tempos or rhythms into intersecting government they are able to displace unhoused persons two times per day, and use law enforcement to check every individual unhoused person on the boardwalk every Friday to see if they meet the requirement on amount of personal property. The naturalization of routine violence is made possible through two mechanisms: 1 the incorporation of a mythic perception of unhoused persons in the social reality, or doxa, which is experienced as the objective truth about unhoused persons, and 2, the arbitrary bureaucratic formulation of different rhythms in bordering intersections of government territory, which also are public spaces.

The repeated routine violence creates anxiety, disbelief in government, and life threatening situations for Pops and his friends. The routine violence is internalized together with other forms of structural and symbolic violence which deprives Pops and his friends of achieving their actual mental and somatic possibilities (Galtung 2016), over time becomes part of their habitus. Pops and his friends habitus creates a set of coping strategies to the slow violence they over time have experienced, such as

symbolic exclusion from the formal labor market, policies that makes it harder to get a job, or be a part of the federal housing program, as well as certain benefits after being incarcerated. In addition the breakdown of the welfare systems breakdown in 1996, which has caused a medicalization of welfare benefits. And bureaucratic delaying tactics, where it can take several months to have application for health benefits reviewed.

Through slow violence Pops and his friends have bin incorporated in their consciousness and reflects their disbelief in government officials, health and social workers. The main coping mechanisms to slow violence is: 1, living together and defining themselves as a family;2, the space they live in; 3, Kickn' it and 4,becoming cop wise. These four strategies creates the strategies and network they need for emotional and material support, for anticipating and handling policing, and for dealing with time.

Chapter 4.

Mapping the political field: Symbolic Power, Venice Neighborhood Council and Activism

The VNC (Venice Neighborhood Council) was formed in 1999 (Deener 2016:899), after intensive work by community members where the main focus was on inclusion. A new wave of activism against oppression, racism and systemic violence prompted the city-wide suggestion of creating a neighborhood council system that would serve as a platform to enhance the democratic participation for marginalized groups in political decision-making.

However, as discussed in chapter 2, the economic transformation of Venice from being a working-class multi-ethnic neighborhood has been a gradual process caused by a combination of the lift of restrictive covenants, state subsidized renewal projects (Reese, Deverteuil, and Thach 2010) , and neo-liberal economics. Since the establishment of the Neighborhood council, Venice have been gentrified by new middle- and upper-class residents and business owners (Deener 2007), which is now are over-represented at the VNC. Moreover, the socio-economic variety (Deener 2007) causes polarized opinions about the symbolic definition and ideology of the community.

In this chapter I analyze the power relations in the local political field. I analyze the use of symbolic power in formal political institution of the Venice Neighborhood Council, and the formation of informal political organization and activism.

I argue that the processes of decision-making on the local level, that are shaped by different groups' historical orientation and cultural capital can inform us about how political decisions are debated and agreed upon on state and national level. Furthermore, I show how discussions are formed by competing interests, that again are connected to global neo-liberal economic.

I use two cases to exemplify the distinction between formal and informal activism: 1) Activism among Oakwood residents who have long-standing ties to the community, and those who associates with them; and 2) activism working to better the conditions for the unhoused population in Venice.

Candidate Meeting Prior to Election at the Venice Neighborhood Council

At the end of May in 2019, two candidate meetings are held at Westminster elementary school, prior to the up-coming election for Venice Neighborhood Council. 200 chairs are placed in rows at the auditorium. In front of the light-blue velvet backstage curtain nine chairs facing the audience are prepared for the second round of candidates, who are about to get ready to promote their candidacy for election.

The Neighborhood Council was established when the municipality of Los Angeles revised the City Charter in 1999 (Deener 2016:822) as a way to increase minority representation in democratic processes

and neighborhood participation on local issues (Chemerinsky and Kleiner 2014). The interest in community-based participation as a way to advance a “strong democracy” was debated in urban areas all over the USA during the 1990s (Juliet et al. 2011:102). Initially the proposal sought actual decision making authority for the Neighborhood councils, but was rejected because of threats by “Business leaders including the Chamber of commerce and the Central City Business Association, [who] repeatedly and forcefully said that they would work to defeat a charter with such provisions” (Chemerinsky and Kleiner 2014:573). The riot in the aftermath Los Angeles Police officers sadistic beating, and killing of Rodney King in 1992, was the starting point of widespread political organization among minority groups (Chemerinsky and Kleiner 2014:569). The possibility of persons with minority or lower social-class background to exercise any actual power, were virtually non-existent (Chemerinsky and Kleiner 2014:569). The solution prompted were that Los Angeles implemented local Neighborhood Councils in the charter reform¹⁷ between 1997-1999 (Chemerinsky and Kleiner 2014:569, Deener 2016:822).

Sophia a 71-year-old African American woman who has lived in Oakwood, Venice most of her life was one of the persons responsible for the organization of the neighborhood council in Venice. Sophia has been politically active through formal and informal activism and has a professional history working for the public sector. Los Angeles is divided into different political districts, where Venice is in district 11. When the Neighborhood Council system first started, Sophia had worked in another of L.A.’s districts with what was called “empowerment zones”, where she served on the committee for economic development. The idea was to divide the “community” (Venice) into zones which focused on different prioritized issues. When Sophia moved back to Venice she got in touch with Vera, who was interested in organizing for the neighborhood council:

I was one of the organizing people for the VNC, after the city included the Neighborhood Council in their charter in 1994/93. The criteria to form a neighborhood council was a constituent of 60 thousand people Our focus was to be inclusive. We sent out flyers, went to different organizations that helped means within the community, to all the churches the synagogues, the catholic church, the non-denominational churches gathering more and more participation on the way. It took us two years to do it. Many people were pushing for us to put in the certification sooner, but Vera and I stood fast on that we wanted to make sure that no one was left out of the discussion. We had huge amounts of people coming to meetings. We developed various committees and built it from the ground up. We called it Grassroot Venice Neighborhood Council. The first council had 7 districts within Venice. One of them were Oakwood, where I ran for representation and won. I was the first elected representative of the Oakwood community. The next term I was elected as vice President of the Grassroots Venice Neighborhood Council.

¹⁷ The city charter serves as Los Angeles’s constitution and a stipulation of city government, operation and individual rights (Chemerinsky and Kleiner 2014:570). .

Since the initial organization of the Grassroot Venice Neighborhood Council Venice has gone through major socio-economic changes as a consequence of gentrification which started in the mid-1990s. The initial focus on minority representation in democratic processes, and strengthening the political platform for marginal groups, has been replaced by an over-representation of white middle- and upper-class residents, developers, and investors on the VNC board.

In discussions about gentrification the tendency is often to think about the process as between two opposing parts (Rose 2010): the gentrifiers and the gentrified. The battle between the working-class population which is replaced by the middle- and upper-class gentrifiers. While gentrifiers are often described in generic terms, Damaris Rose stresses that gentrifiers are a diverse group (2010). Rose refers to evidence that supports the category “marginal gentrifiers” (2010:196). “Marginal gentrifiers” are those who most likely will not experience upwards mobility through the housing-market and are in fear of downward mobility because of for example uncertainty in the work-market, or.

In Venice marginalization of initial gentrifiers is caused by new capital particularly tech-companies, that have higher profits than the traditional economic base. Loretta Lees have has conceptualized this process “Super-gentrification” (2016), where “the transformation of already gentrified, prosperous and solidly upper-middle-class neighborhoods into more exclusive and expensive enclaves” (Lees 2016:45).

Mapping the political field: Marginal Gentrifiers and The White Professional Left

The organizers are doing sound-checks, testing the two microphones on stage. A lectern and a digital counter facing of the stage, is prepared for the speaker. By the entrance at the back of the auditorium several tables are set with coffee, tea, paper cups, fruit, and cookies for those who are attending. Venetians are starting to arrive. Some are casually talking in groups of two or more, while others are sitting alone quietly reading newsletters and campaign pamphlets. The show-up is notably higher than the meeting for the first round of candidates held two days ago, yet only half of the chairs are filled.

The announcer lets us know that we can use the next half hour to network and talk to the candidates before the event starts. C.J. is handing out her pamphlets which reads: “CJ [...] for Venice Neighborhood Council Community Officer [...] a Vote for CJ is s vote for reducing crime while increasing the safety and cleanliness of Venice.” The pamphlet has a picture of CJ, a Caucasian real estate agent.

A variety of people has shown up. Linda, who is a board member on the Ocean Front Walk committee (The official name of Venice Beach Boardwalk), Benjamin one of the founders of Venice Dogz, who organized the mobilization against Snapchat’s increased real estate investment in Venice is there, as well as some of the contributors to Venice Radio, some of Venice’s artists, and some of the unhoused people who live on the boardwalk.

The speaker tells everyone to sit down and announces some practical information about the voting procedures: “Remember, you can only vote for one candidate.” He reminds the audience that to vote

on June 2nd, you have to prove that you either live, work, or own property in Venice. He then explains that: “The event will start with an opening statement by all candidates, before we start with the speed-round where all candidates will be asked the same question.”

Three Caucasian women and four Caucasian men gets up on the stage and finds a seat. Before the opening statement they are asked to present their names. The microphone is handed from one candidate to the next.

The first Candidate to give an opening statement is Angela who is a reporter for the Venice Update, a local newspaper. Angela is now retired but has 16 years of journalism behind her and has worked as a web-designer for UCLA (University of California Los Angeles). She tells the audience that she has lived in Venice for 5/6 years, and has been working with the Oxford Triangle Association, which is a housing project with 98 units of affordable housing that was approved last week by the VNC.

A mild applause is heard from the audience, as Angela hands the microphone to Travis, the next candidate. Travis presents himself:

I am a photographer for the skate- and surf Industry [...] I got into politics when Airbnb rolled into town five years ago. I live [in a housing complex] which at the time [he moved to Venice] was home to 60 [...] What was a community of 60 people became ten people hanging on for their dear life. I have fought this through City Hall and zoning meetings. I was frustrated and wanted to do more for fellow renters and tenants.

Angela and Travis are examples of “marginal gentrifiers”. The shortage of affordable housing is a major problem both for the working- and, increasingly, for the middle class. Most of the affordable housing in Los Angeles are multi-family homes that were rent stabilized in 1978. The City of Los Angeles implemented a rent-stabilizing ordinance on multi-family units occupied by tenants prior to 1, October 1978. The ordinance prohibits land-lords to raise rents significantly unless a tenant chose to leave (Milder 2016:107-108). The ordinance was challenged in 1983 by a landlord who had inherited plot with a rent-controlled building, which he wanted to sell. Active lobbying by real estate agent, led to what is known as the Ellis Act, which protects the right of landlords to go out of the real estate and rental market. The act proved to be a loophole for the landlords who wished work around the rent stabilizing ordinance. In most cases rent stabilized housing built before 1978 is demolished to build condominiums (Milder 2016:104,109), or encourages the sales of entire buildings to major corporations who in turn use the plots to build condominiums or offices for their employers (Opillard 2016:4). The rent-stabilizing ordinance was further compromised in 1995 through the Costa-Hawkin act which prevents municipalities from placing rent control on units built after 1995 (Milder 2016:108). The combination of these two acts have caused a permanent loss in rent-stabilized housing.

With that in mind, complicating the need for rent stabilized housing even more is the decrease in median income. Between 2006 and 2013 the median rent increased with 11% while the median income decreased 4%. Further more the county’s cut in resources were 65% leaving only 5% of rented homes

affordable for low-income residents (Milder 2016:105). The consequences are that those with low income and 50% of middle-income residents on average uses half of their income on living-fees (Milder 2016:105) .

The candidates in this section will here be referred to as the *white professional left*. The white professional left will often fight their causes through the formal political field but will sometimes fight their causes through informal activism. One example of how marginal gentrifiers organize informal activism is the Venice Dogz that was formed in 2015 as to protest how Snapchat and Google increasingly bought real estate in Venice. This form of activism was run by marginal gentrifiers but sought broad participation from both those who will here be referred to as the *radical left*, and the white professional left.

The white professional left is most likely to vote for the democratic party in the national elections. However, in Venice, those who categorize themselves as the radical would not agree that the white professional left, entirely fits the left side of politics. The white professional left is often young to middle-aged professionals who have a standpoint that lingers somewhere in the middle, between the left and right political landscape. This will be elaborated below in relation to political discussion concerning the unhoused persons who live in Venice.

The Political Right

The next candidate introduces himself:

My name is Travis and I have lived in Venice for eight years. Venice is the greatest city in the world for surfing and skateboard [...]. I have been coming for VNC meetings for one and a half year. The main reason for running is an uptake in crime. My apartment has been broken into several times and things have been stolen. I want to work for a closer alignment with LAPD. People should be able to feel safe.

He sends the microphone over to the next candidate; an older white woman named CJ. CJ explains that she is not too good at winging it, and therefore wants to read from a prepared sheet:

As a VNC board-member my mission is to increase the safety and cleanliness of Venice. Our community has turned into a real garbage pit with homeless encampments polluting our public areas. Pluss, we are experiencing an all-time high in in personal property crime. I believe that we can have sympathy while recognizing that the homeless are infringing on our public space that we are paying for. They do not have the right to make our community worst. What I hope to do for us is represent the rights of homeowners and businesses to peacefully enjoy their properties. I will advocate for reducing the crime and filthy conditions caused by our homeless encampments. I will oppose the Metro Lodge Bridge housing and the Venice Median project. I will fight to protect our private residents and low-density housing from future large-scale

building. I will support moderate growth while keeping our small-town vibe. I am a Venice property owner, resident, and community activist since 1968. We have a unique and wonderful locality. Let us work together to make Venice an even better place to work, live, and play.

Both Travis and CJ are talking about the most heated debate in Venice, namely the “homeless situation”. Both candidates feel that the conditions in Venice concerning safety, crime, and filth are caused by the unhoused persons who live in Venice. While Travis is more moderate and calls for a closer alignment with the police, he later stated that he wants to work on the homeless committee, insinuating that the cause of crime are unhoused persons. CJ is more direct in her feelings about the encampments. Like we saw in chapter 2, the praxis of exclusion and power are framed in different ways at different time-periods, and the moral of exclusion often frames those victim of structural and symbolic violence as, dirty, lazy, and morally inferior. This highlights the competing ideologies and social realities of the political right, Pops and his friend, and the radical left. The cultural capital they have accumulated, describes very diverging realities. CJ for example argues that home- and business owners have a greater right to public space. Her rhetoric is moralized in line with neoliberal reason, and ideology. The system of differentiation is made natural through an economized objective reality which ranges her more worthy of public space than unhoused persons. Moreover, CJ is both opposed to having unhoused persons living on the street in Venice, and at the same time states that she will oppose any efforts to build bridge-housing and affordable housing that would serve as a solution to homeless, which indicates that she does not want to poor people to live in the neighborhood. While CJ Cole has a chance of a better income, because of rising real estate prices caused by gentrification, Michal the next candidate, is an example of gentrification through the establishment of new businesses.

Michael starts by thanking everyone for coming and devoting their time. Some of the audience boos. The speaker waves his arm, to signal that booing is not accepted. Michal continues:

I love Venice. I have not been here as long as the others, but I have been coming here since 1981. I used to visit my cousin every summer, because why wouldn't I. I am a managing partner in the Venice Whaler. My company purchased and restored the two-story building across the street [from the Whaler]. We are coming out at the end of June or July. We have employed 80 persons and when the venue opens, we will have employed 150 people, 80% live in the community. You have these businesses, and people either treat you as a superhero or a supervillain, and frankly I understand. It is great to be very protective of the community. I am from the Bronx; I understand what it feels like to have pride and the sense of: this is my community. I get that. My four years at the Whaler has been like dog eat years, and I have talked to 1000 of 1000 of 1000 of people and am available for questions all day. I don't run from anything if you have anything to ask me. I believe very much that this community is inevitably

going to expand. As the great forefathers said, it is our manifest destiny. I am a calm voice and a voice of reason, and I just want to help the community.

In his closing comment Michael refers to the ideology of “manifest destiny” to justify gentrification. Referring to “manifest destiny” on the one side can refer to an ideology that is grounded in cultural capital that informs the American ideology or a certain stratum, however, the statement is a very good example of how a glorifying perception of the past still plays a role in popular imagination. The phrase, as mentioned in chapter 2, was the ideology of settlers that through war justified dispossession of land and genocide. It further exemplifies how history based on cultural capital creates very different social truths about the past.

The Radical Left

The next candidate is Niza who is a homeowner and has two daughters. She has a professional background in sales and media marketing:

I learned about the politics behind education and became involved daily to better the education in Venice. I never intended to get involved in politics. The reason why is that I enjoy reaching out to my community. I come into this not as someone with an agenda, but I want a safe place for my kids and my community to get along with each other. Everyone needs to get together without arguing, without screaming. We will never agree on everything, but I believe that we have the ability to come together and hold our officials accountable. When we come together and say similar things that will benefit the community, change will come. So, my goal is to reach out to the community and find out where we are at.

Niza touches on a subject that is most often fought for by the radical left. Even though Venice is the next biggest tourist attraction in California and has a myriad of businesses and homes that contributes to the amount of tax-money, Venice has a rather deprived infrastructure. The allocation of tax-money is oft used elsewhere in Los Angeles, or for funding the police, fire department, and initiatives such as the greater city initiative, which was described in chapter 3.

Roy, who works in the Venice’s public educational system described how new and affluent residents send their children to private schools outside of Venice, leaving mostly children from minority and working-class families to attend a public school-system. Compared to nearby cities like Santa Monica the public schools are deprived of funds and an updated curriculum. Roy had to fight to change the curriculum to entail literature that had any history of a multi-ethnic and class existence in the US.

The last candidate on stage is Matt:

I am 39 years old, and I was homeless for almost 15 years. I wound up in the foster care system where I ran away after going through six abusive homes before I turned 13. I wound up in Venice where I grew up on our boardwalk, surviving by working for vendors and local businesses. I wound up learning construction, going back to school all while sleeping on our beach. Eventually I got into property management and project management, where I learned the effects of homelessness from the other side. Using my own life experience, I was able to prevent burdens on properties, businesses, and residents all while bettering the lives of people who live on the street with a different situation. I want to use my 15 years of homelessness experience and 25 years of friendships and connection within the community to help everyone suffering from this. "I am tired of people being mistreated for no reason.

Matt is part of the group that I will refer to as the radical left in the political field. The radical left has a higher participation of minorities, working- and lower-middle class residents, unhoused persons, and people being marginalized for sexual preference, and sexuality.

Following, I will examine how discussions are debated between persons which posit very different positionings in the political field.

Symbolic Power of Political institutions

As mentioned above, Sophia recollects the beginning of VNC (then the Grassroot Neighborhood Council), as a place for inclusion, and to strengthen the position of minorities. The candidates above inform us of the variety of issues in the community: affordable housing, lack of funds for infrastructure, gentrification, and homelessness-. However, as Sophia notes, the Neighborhood Council has changed a lot since it was initiated:

When we started, we worked on subjects that were on grassroots, education, housing, services, or lack thereof within the community. We focused on economic development. Now the neighborhood council is largely developers and investors. The socioeconomics as it is now has driven out any economic diversity in the community. You cannot afford to live here if you haven't already lived here. You can't afford living here without a very good job. Aside from 15 apartments, there is no low-income housing anywhere in Venice. It is not uncommon for rent to be 4, and 5 000 \$ a month. And that is modest. I mean \$10 000 is not unusual. Gentrification has changed the face the makeup, the demographics, everything in Venice.

All the candidates at the election meeting described above were white professionals in the middle and upper class, except Matt who had “worked himself out of homelessness”. The over-representation of white middle- and upper-class residents and stakeholders, makes the representation of matters that

concerns marginalized groups harder to get through. Therefore, the radical left finds themselves fighting their causes through informal channels of activism.

Marginal groups view the Venice Neighborhood Council as a formal organ that does not represent their causes within the neighborhood. Consequently, the increased level of political awareness and mobilization have shaped a myriad of informal institutions of activism. In the following I will look at three empirical examples of issues fought outside the VNC: African American church in Oakwood, and homelessness.

Although, as we see in Sophia's statement above the issues, they worked with in the start phase of the VNC, such as education and housing are still of concern, however, it is now the issues of the marginalized gentrifiers that are addressed.

Informal Political Organization, Activism, and the Radical Left

It is Sunday and about 20 people have gathered on the church steps. Every Sunday a group of people gathers to have their church meetings and protest the sale of the First Baptist Church of Venice. The church was dedicated to the African American population in Oakwood 1910 by Abbot Kinney's wife. After getting into private financial difficulties, Horace Allen who served as the church bishop, took up loans on the church's dead, and lent money from the congregation. In 2015 he sold the church and property to Jay Penske, the son of billionaire Roger Penske, who is the owner of the Rolling Stones Magazine, Variety and Deadline. The Penske family's plan is to build a 11,680 square-foot-single-family-home with a roof deck.

The bishop made \$6,3 million on the sale, which the court later found fraudulent. The bishop later established a new church with the money he earned from the sales at another location in Los Angeles, under the name the First Baptist Church of Venice Worship Center. To his critics he said: "I teach the people the building is not your God. God is in you."

The activists are now fighting the case through the court system without a lawyer representing them, against the Penske family's lawyers, as well as applying L.A. city to make it historical site. Penske's building plan is backed by the VNC board.

They are all talking about the success of the rally that was held on Friday. At the event, Sophia held a speech and several of the local school children entertained with poems and songs describing the marginalization they experience. Even though the issues they were addressing are dead serious, the event had more resemblance to a block party than a rally. They played music in between the appeals and people were dancing in the street. Everyone as invited to eat There was a barbeque potlatch, and everyone was invited to chare the food.

Both side of the street was filled with booths where other groups of informal activists had shown up to support the case and promote their own specific issue of activism. They represent the legacy of three successive counter cultural movements in Venice from the nineteen fifties to the nineteen seventies

which are still a part of the political landscape. Some of these activists have been fighting the process of gentrification, dispossession, and displacement from the beginning when the initial redevelopment plans were implemented by Los Angeles City at the end of the nineteen sixties.

The radical left is a mix of upper-middle, middle-, lower-, and no-income Caucasian, African American, Indigenous and minority groups. Some have high education, and many have long-standing ties to Venice. In this group you have the schoolteachers, the artists, the writers of the local newspaper *The Beachhead*, the retired, and the working-class families. They are the activists fighting for the rights of homeless people in Venice, for fair housing prices for low-income residents, for a better educational system, and for vendors right to vend on the boardwalk. They seek to prevent Venice from being a playground for the rich, the large corporations, and the tech-industry from establishing their headquarters in the area. They are opposed to real estate developers taking advantage of Venice for profit by building large expensive condominiums and mansions, and the efforts they do to find loopholes in the law to pursue their goals. Individual activists normally have dedications to one primary cause but will not hesitate to show their support for other causes.

Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 2013) argues that structural violence and symbolic power are phenomenon that happens in systems where the dominated are complying. Although this group are dominated by persons who exhibit more political and economic capital or symbolic capital than themselves, they are fully aware of that dominance and the structural inequality they historically have experienced. However, further using Bourdieu's theory, even if all the actors on the radical left the professional white left and the political right have acquired the same amount of the same cultural capital, the white professional left and the political left still have an advantage, because the cultural capital they would have all learned would necessarily have been created by the white, professional left and the political right.

The most effective way to achieve political change is through the political field, but because the political field (here the VNC), is dominated by the white professional left and the right, it can be near impossible for those dominated to have any significant say in the political process and decision making over the agenda. Whereby, the radical left has retracted their causes, and uses other and creative means to be heard. Furthermore, those who have the economic- cultural- and political capital are also those who determine how candidates talk about the issues they want to address. The issues concerning marginalized groups such as gentrification, saving the historical African American First Baptist Church of Venice, and homelessness are not addressed in their perspective at the VNC.

Symbolic Power and Language

In an interview with Matt Fisher after the election meeting on May 28th I told him that: "I saw that there were a lot of people rooting for you at the candidate meeting." Whereupon Matt replied:

Oh really? That is good to hear. A lot of people didn't like me at the start. [...] They thought that I was going to be very sensitive towards the homeless issue because I have that experience.

Matt's comment points to the symbolic power the board members exert, and in which way causes are allowed to be addressed at the VNC. The VNC as a political field does not acknowledge the suffering of the poor, while the "suffering of the rich" is acknowledged. One would think that the knowledge of unhoused persons and people like Matt who has genuine experience of the homeless situation would be seen as a valuable resource in the political discussion about unhoused persons destiny. Moreover, why would Matt not be "overly sensitive to the homeless situation?"

His experience with slow violence (chapter 3), and how upward mobility is systemically almost impossible in addition to dealing with the stigmas of being unhoused, *should* be criticized, and questioned. However, on the contrary, the opinions of those on the right side of the political field are more likely to be acknowledged at the VNC. Many people share CJ view that unhoused persons are responsible for the crime and "filth" in Venice and additionally oppose housing project that are aimed at the unhoused persons.

The symbolic power over political debates at the VNC are in many ways controlled by the white middle and upper-class, in particular the language of the political debate. Those who are considered to be on the radical left find themselves being dismissed as being too emotional, or, paradoxically, too political.

While the white professional left, and political right see themselves as inhabiting the right cultural capital and symbolic capital who now the rules socially acceptable conduct and describes themselves as emotionally balanced and factual in their discussions. However, in discussions about the homeless crisis or gentrification, the one side of the political spectrum is not less emotional than the other or less political than the other. They are all discussing the same matter with different views that are related to their position in society and the political field. However, when the white professional left and upper-class right side say that they think that the radical left are too emotional or political, they are in reality determining what and how the political conversation should be discussed. As discussed in chapter 2, throughout the history of the US, there has been efforts to downplay the suffering of marginalized groups. The difference here is that we see how it works in real time. Aron, who is a writer and devoted activist for the radical left explained that:

A lot of activists don't want to come to our meetings because we talk about race and class. We are considered the more edgy group of activists. People who are going for seats at the VNC, they are just going along with gentrification. They are not really resisting. A lot of the time they see us over here. We are not intense in the sense that we are aggressive, but intense in that we represent a lot of the history, truth, and the thoughts and feelings that are not in the history books. Local newspapers that report on the community and culture. We are not in those. they are not talking about people like us. And if they are, it is a very paternalistic, defeatist type of language. We are not part of the popular narrative of the neighborhood.

Although there is an extreme display of power at hand when being able to exclude issues about race and class and being able to dismiss people for being too emotional on issues that entails extreme injustice, for example through slow and routine violence, segregation, and symbolic exclusion from labor. What Aron refers to is the overall dismissal of Indigenous, African American, minorities and working-class people. In this case he refers to the lack of support for saving the First Baptist Church of Venice. However, when groups who does not belong to the dominant class, address their issues based on their cultural and social capital and social reality it is often dismissed or not fully understood.

Diverging historical realities

When activists like Aron, Sophia, and Matt are dismissed for being too political and too emotional, they are in reality being dismissed for talking about race and class, and the structural violence they have and are experiencing. The symbolic power board-members exert cannot be exaggerated, because gentrification, and homelessness ultimately are about race, class, and structural violence. Moreover, when race, class and structural violence is left out of the conversation the symbolic power of the VNC lies in the fact that they are allowed to redirect the discussion.

Moreover, when groups who do not belong to the dominant group retract themselves from the formal political institution of the VNC they the dominant class is able to maintain and reproduce their position of power(Jenkins 1992:69).

John, a local relator, and board member of the homeless committee has created statistics relying on census data dating back from 1960 to 2010. His data shows that Venice is not becoming a high-density area, which many people in Venice fear, but that the population in Venice actually has decreased. John is distressed over the lack of factual knowledge among the those on the radical left. Leaving him to claim that their despair comes from an emotional place rather than a place based on their social reality and cultural capital:

It is this sort of emotional argument, which I understand: "Things are changing, and I am not in control of it." Then the emotion wants to latch onto it. You have this huge influx of people where Los Angeles went on from six million to 12 million from 1960 to 2010, then you don't want to participate in anything you want to stop, like if we keep Venice looking the same it will stay the same. That is not what happens. Venice is a very attractive area. People want to live here and spend a lot of money to live here. And you are not doing anything to mitigate that. You know, everything is going to change, you cannot stop change.

When race, class and structural violence are left out of the conversation, the conversation can be stirred towards the issue of inevitable change. Nevertheless, when John says that change is inevitable, that means something very different than when Aron, Sophia and Matt say they are fighting for change and progress.

The difference in how progress and change are seen by the political right and the radical left can be exemplified by Michal's statement at the VNC election meeting above. Michal said that change is

part of our “manifest destiny.” The choice of these words is peculiar, and also highlights how powerful the erasure of Indigenous history actually has been on the knowledge about US history, and Venice’s past.

As explained in chapter 2 the ideology of “manifest destiny” refers to an ideology used by expansionists with roots back to early English expansion, and which also was the ideology that justified genocide, dismantling of indigenous culture, and dispossession. Whether Michal knows the history, and ideological implication of “manifest destiny”, is unclear. Regardless, his statement is the product of the romanticization of invasion, whitewashing of history, and dismissal of marginalized groups in the name of progress. Throughout history of the Venice area, this has been a consistent answer to questions concerning the people who have been living in the area. In 1969 a real estate investor said this:” Don't forget that. There are some poor people down there now, but they won't get to remain by the water [..]"The property is too valuable. They'll have to go” (LA Times 1969).

I argue that the separation of class and race, though systems of differentiation have created different historical orientations. Furthermore, the erasure of a multicultural history, makes it easier for white middle and upper-class individuals to dismiss the ongoing structural violence toward marginalized groups. The lack of first-hand experience it may make it is easy to label the radical left as too emotional and too political. John for example was frustrated by the radical left’s insistence of historical preservation:

We are a new country as a whole and a very new city. And that is part of my pitch: ‘Look, we are new. Stop talking about historical. The history is only 100 years old. Get over it.’

His frustration with the claim to a status as historical, is connected to how the radical left resists gentrification and development by providing evidence that an area or building is of historical value when disputing it in court. As Michal Herzfeld notes activists seeking historical preservation do so by producing a logic they “have learned to deploy against its source” (Herzfeld 2010) By seeking historical preservation status, they are able to buy time by using the same bureaucratic delaying tactics, used by the bureaucracy to form policies that has affected them (Herzfeld 2010:263-4), One example of that is the “free-speech zone” on the boardwalk, and the radical left’s ongoing lawsuit against the sale of the first Baptist Church in Venice. While John does not understand the longstanding structural violence that marginalized people have experienced in this matter, he does understand the injustice that he has seen firsthand affecting the African American residents in Oakwood during the 1980s:

The gang injunction which targeted all the black and brown kids for the most part. That was a travesty, I mean that was just a travesty. That was just the most ridiculous thing. If they would have tried that in a white low-class area, low socio-economic that would have never happened. Everybody knows why it happened, and it was a lot of reasons for it, but the methodology was just terrible, and it probably has more to do with those skewing lines of race. You couldn't talk to your cousin or your brother because you were supposedly in a gang. It was just crazy,

draconian, and it happened. That was a real stain on Venice. In that area [Oakwood] there was some 300 kids that were killed. We are trying to get together with the gang intervention groups and some to locate where all these people got killed, so we can memorialize that somehow.

My argument is that because of ethnic-and class segregation, and a history based on myth some aspects of history, police violence, and systemic violence are not fully comprehended by white Americans, while on the other hand cases like the gang injunction which is experienced firsthand is remembered and acknowledged as systemic violence.

VNC Defines Discrimination

As mentioned, the VNC was established to promote minority representation, though as Sophia points out above the VNC has changed into a representation of professional white marginalized gentrifiers middle-and upper-class citizens and real estate agents, not unlike the City Council, which has historically been known for its disenfranchisement of minority groups. According to LA Government:

The Neighborhood Council system tailors LA's municipal government to the City's communities, ensuring that recognition and accommodation of these communities' diversity is built into City governance. (Neighborhood Councils Department of Neighborhood Empowerment 2020)

Furthermore, they note that:

Because Neighborhood Councils are created by the Los Angeles City Charter, they are subject to many of the federal, state, and local laws that govern other City departments and government entities. Every Neighborhood Council also has its own set of bylaws and standing (aka procedural) rules they follow, too. In addition, Neighborhood Councils must abide by laws preventing workplace violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination.(Neighborhood Councils Department of Neighborhood Empowerment 2020)

While the notion that abiding by laws that prevent workplace violence, sexual harassment and discrimination are good standards to go by, these standards are mediated and defined by the members of the VNC.

Matt did get elected at the VNC election in 2019. Although Matt was elected as a representative for the VNC, the board voted on a motion to remove him in January 2020. A meeting was held where the President of the VNC announced that he would be removed. The people who joined the meeting were confused, thinking that there would be a vote on the matter, and an announcement of what had caused the board's decision. Ira, the President of the VNC told them the board had decided to vote him out, and he did not disclose the reason for removal. Matt told the audience that they were in a disagreement and that he had said he would set in motion a lawsuit against one of the board members

On the next public hearing at the VNC the progressive left had gathered to oppose the decision to remove Matt Fisher. They asked the board if they could be allowed to start

the meeting with a traditional indigenous prayer. The request was denied, where upon the group held prayer and some short appeals outside prior to the meeting. Both Aron and Sophia held a speech in support of Matt. When entering the hearing they saw that the police were called. One by one went to the speaker podium to support Matt, but the board members one by one voted in favor of the motion to remove Matt, while complaining: “You guys are just wearing us out, let it go” At one point the discussion got heated, and an unhoused man he shouted out of anger. Christian who was the other participant of the argument shouted to the police: “SEIZE HIM”. But the police stood still.

The reason for the removal of Matt Fisher was not disclosed, it was centered around an e-mail exchange that the board defined as harassment. However, on the other hand when the VNC held its election on June 2, 2019, many unhoused persons had showed up to use their vote at the election, whereupon those in charge of registration tried to prohibit them from using their right. The VNC require documentation from voters proving that they either live, work, owned property, or have a business in Venice. For obvious reasons it would be problematic for an unhoused person to prove residency. However, Pops for example, have lived on the boardwalk in Venice for eight years. It is his home.

When it was pointed out that this was undemocratic and unjust, the unhoused persons were allowed to vote after all. Though the act itself, trying to exclude a person because of their social class, did not have any consequences for those who tried to refuse unhoused persons from voting. Another example of defining discrimination is CJ’s statement at the candidate meeting described above. CJ states that the unhoused persons in Venice are ruining the neighborhood and accuses a whole social class of being “criminal and filthy.” She further implicitly states that she does not want to have poor people living in the community, by her promise to oppose affordable housing-projects. It is clearly a discriminatory act to announce that you want to move a whole group of people out of Venice. CJ was also elected to be in the VNC without this being addressed. Although there are many people in Venice who defend the rights of unhoused, persons, including those who live there, the social ordering of the world, the doxa, is infused with systems of differentiation that naturalizes this type of rhetoric. Which seems to suggest that there is objective truth to her perception. Moreover, the mythic perception of unhoused persons is also reflected in the names of initiatives on larger scale.

Symbolic Power and Language on Larger Scale Initiatives

The gentrification processes in L.A., which are often state subsidized projects (Reese, Deverteuil, and Thach 2010) with names such as “beautifying projects”, “great city-“, and “clean and safe” initiatives (Sarmiento 2015) which are created to fit the taste of the higher-class (Reese, Deverteuil, and Thach 2010).

The name of these initiatives reveals the power of language and also who the city is for, and which group one wants to displace. Take the Safer City Initiative (SCI) which was implemented in 2005 to reduce crime in Skid Row, a 50 square block, in Central District in Downtown LA, where the largest concentration of homeless encampments is located. The project was based on law enforcement targeting the poor, with additional fifty police officers hired and dozens of specialized units like for example narcotics units costing the city approximately \$150-\$200 million dollars per year (Vitale 2010:868).

While Alex S. Vitale (2010) questions the police's self-celebrated success in reducing crime. While before the implementation of the SCI the total population estimated to a total of 10 000 -15 000, the city's homeless count (by LAHSA) saw a reduction of 10 000 persons as a cause of the initiative between 2005 and 2009m (2010:869). The project that was supposed to reduce homelessness ended up incarcerating thousands of unhoused people in jails and prisons (Vitale 2010:869). In addition, thousands were displaced and tens of thousands of citations were given, which in many cases turns into warrants and actually makes it more difficult to escape homelessness (Vitale 2010:869, Desmond 2017). Instead of reducing homelessness, the project in fact made it more difficult to escape homelessness seeing that citations and arrests may prevent access to jobs, social services, housing, food stamps, college and training programs with federal funding, and welfare (Vitale 2010:869, Desmond 2017). It is also known that these initiatives are much more expensive to support than actually creating housing initiatives, and work to change structural violence and inequality.

The same goes for the Clean and Safe Initiative and routine violence described in Chapter 3. Although most of the unhoused persons said that city cleaning was a good thing, the way these inspections are orchestrated with heavily police enforcement displays the symbolic power of these initiatives. These initiatives pose the question of who these streets are unsafe for. One would think that those being homeless have the most unsafe situation. On the contrary, it symbolizes that unhoused persons inhabit individualized traits as being criminal, filthy, dangerous and in lack of moral, it also symbolizes who public spaces are meant to be clean and safe for, and who it is not.

Though the effect of higher levels of government choice in words of description such as the safer city initiative and their solution to making the city safer is to incarcerate poor people, strongly indicates which group the city is for and who is to blame for crimes. The choice of name and strategy also plays into the collective consciousness about blame and responsibility.

The Language of Larger Scale Initiatives the perception

Julia, who is politically active in the VNC is a perfect example of the distinction between the progressive left and the white professional left. Julia is a "marginal gentrifier" who has lived in her rented apartment by the boardwalk for decades. She is both in favor of an unrestricted housing initiatives for the unhoused, which is a typical stand for the progressive left, *and* sees the need for enforcing ordinances that regulate unhoused persons behavior:

When they first started [the Friday clean-up] it was an issue because they were spraying pesticide and it was rolling down to these other people, but they got that done fairly quickly. There are always issues with the homeless, and I think that's why you see so many police there. I think the police are good. It gives it a good brushing down and everybody that has been here knows, vendors and homeless alike, you gotta have your stuff out of the way, if not we are going to take it. It's not like its not posted, and it's not like people don't know about it, so I think it is good. I think that is a great way for LAPD to reach out to the people who are living on the streets, I don't know if they need as many people as they have now, but they obviously do it for a reason

Julia's perspective of the need for police enforcement to inspect every unhoused person on the boardwalk, is surprising. Yes, Venice does need to be cleaned because there are 30 0000 visitors daily in Venice. But does the cleaning service have to be enforced by the police?

Even though the distance between a property-owner, homeowner, or business-owner and unhoused persons are only a couple of meters across the boardwalk, the knowledge about the unhoused that they live and work next to are limited. I argue that the lack of knowledge about the unhoused and their view of police harassment lies in the diverging historical orientations, and encounters with the police.

Business owners and vendors see unhoused persons as a threat to their livelihood and often resume to harsh descriptions of unhoused persons. When residents and business owners distinguish themselves from unhoused persons they often tend to mythic perceptions even when they defend the rights of unhoused persons. Moreover, justification for blaming the unhoused persons for making the streets unsafe seems to lie in the distinction between the "deserving and "undeserving poor" (Katz 2013). In a conversation before a VNC board meeting Linda, and Betty explains how they distinguish between local- and transient homeless.

Linda: *"Homeless and transients are two different groups of people. The transients usually are the ones that doesn't respect the area, who are vandalizing, destroying property, and committing the small crimes.*

Betty: *«They take what they can and move on.»*

Linda: *«Yea, they come to the community, and take advantage because they see that they can tent up, because (...) of laws that that allow people to do that.»*

Betty: *"Oh yes!!"*

Linda: *"We kind of saw our regular homeless people, of course a lot of them got old and some died, but (...) got kicked out. This is where there became an issue with the community because*

there is a distinction between homeless and transients. That was about the time gentrification really started too. when it really came up. When you have gentrification of a community, and you have homeless that are already there. Those buying expensive houses do not want that person living on the corner. 'Well, you moved into the community, that person has probably been there 15 years, and has been fine there'. They want to change the neighborhood because they think they have the money to. That when an issue gets started."

Betty and Linda have lived in Venice for over 30 years and have personal relationships with “the regular homeless on their block.” By distinguishing between their “regular” unhoused neighbors and the transient homeless, they are able to defend their unhoused neighbors when new rich housed neighbors blame their unhoused neighbors for being criminal. Blaming the homeless for crimes were worsened with the process of gentrification in the 1990 when Venice’s status as a tourist attraction was restored. However, on the contrary, analysis of mobility patterns among unhoused persons shows that the tendency is persistency rather than mobility because of strong social ties to both housed and unhoused friends and family (Christine, Mark, and Ferris 1999:692). Most people move because of job opportunities or to be close to relatives. Another misconception in local politics is that homelessness is choice, or a cause of personal traits such as laziness. Julia explains: “(...) probably 70 percent of the homeless have health and mental issues. And then you have that 20-25 percent people just want to be on the street and they don't want to have responsibility.”

Homelessness as a choice (Parsell and Parsell 2012) has been contested by scholars (Christine, Mark, and Ferris 1999, Parsell and Parsell 2012, Nicholls 2009, Allison 2007, Sosin 2003), and personal traits causing homeless, have been empirically disproved (Sosin 2003). Michael R. Sosin (2003) notes that statistics on homelessness and causality are imprecise, oversimplistic . Interestingly, none of the local residents linked homelessness to the economic crises in 2008, or structural inequalities. Linda mentions that gentrification heightened the housing prices and that gentrification caused people to have different opinions about solutions. With a few exceptions, formally housed residents’ discussions about unhoused persons were focused on how unhoused persons affected them and their life, and less on the actual cause, experience, and rights of unhoused persons. However, the discussion about how to solve the homeless crises is diverted by unhelpful discussions which blames those victims of eviction, which is also a tendency in larger scale political discussions on the subject. An example is the Trump administration’s national report on homelessness, which uses a considerable amount of time considering whether or not the weather is a possible cause of high rates of homelessness in California. The report in no way discusses what type of structural inequalities are at hand or how homelessness structurally can be handled.

Even though the geographical territory of Venice Beach boardwalk is relatively narrow, the social- and political distance between different groups of the community are evident, and this I argue is connected to the consequences of power relations that favor’s those with economic capital, who also

are influential and are granted a certain symbolic power in shaping the social reality and the arbitrary ordering of doxa (Bourdieu 2013:160)

Conclusion

Gentrifiers are often talked about as a unison group, however, gentrifiers are not. There are the initial gentrifiers, who might me in the lower middle-class who as the process of gentrification evolves, finds themselves being marginalized. Through the field of formal political organization, I have identified gentrifiers on as the white professional left, and on the political right. Most commonly gentrifiers are Caucasian, highly professional, from the upper echelons.

Although the VNC originally was established by the efforts of a multicultural Venice community, inspired by creating a formal political organization, that would encourage minority-representation, the VNC largely represents the white upper class professionals in Venice. I have argued because of positions of power, informed by economic, symbolic and cultural power, the radical left, the white professional left and the political right have very different understandings of the social world. However, the historical power structures, although currently framed by neoliberal reason, still is to be seen in the local political field. I have argued that the symbolic power of the board members at the VNC involves being able to dictate how and what the political conversation should be about, and hence excluding explanations related to race and class.

To further exemplify the discrepancy between different social realities, I have used two cases of informal activism, the fight for the First Baptist church and the debate about unhoused persons living on Venice Beach Boardwalk

Conclusion

Walking down the boardwalk as a tourist you get this incredible feeling of being in a truly inclusive space. The true meaning of the agora, a place where all people are equal, where critical conversation about the social reality can be addressed in a beautiful beach setting with palm trees waving softly over your heads. To see the seriousness of our social reality, the discrepancy between rich and poor, in a setting that allows the distance between different groups of people shrink for the time being. However, in the midst of Venice's celebrated identity as an inclusive, artistic, wacky bohemian like, sub-culture hub is a public display of naturalized structural violence.

For those who have a home to go to, Venice can appear in this way, however, for the unhoused persons, for Pops, Ella, Knife, Lucky, Julian, Bud, DeeDee, Boots, Jim and Blue, there is a different reality. While some gentrifiers are attracted to Venice because of the authentic vibe of the neighborhood and the demographic diversity, some groups of diversity are more favored than others. The most disadvantaged and most misunderstood are the unhoused population who in the current social reality are dehumanized to a point where they are perceived less than other groups. The mythical perception, the differentializing mechanism that the stigma of being unhoused entails is informed by the current discourse of homelessness. The stigma of being unhoused entails being perceived as lacking moral judgment, having a deviant personality, being prone to substance abuse, being lazy and dirty. The common thought is that about 70 % are homeless because of either substance use or are suffering from mental health problems. The last 30% are believed to be unhoused by choice, and that they are happier with out responsibilities. When homelessness was discussed in Venice, the growing discrepancy between rich and poor, the economic recession in 2008, low wages or symbolic and structural inequalities caused by the labor market, was rarely mentioned. At least not by the upper echelons.

Seeing the territory of Venice as the objective of power, there is one clear historical consistency, the removal of what the those in power regards as unwanted persons. The definition of the unwanted either if it is unhoused persons, the Kumivit, African Americans, is formulated through systems of differentiation which creates some type of inferior stigma that justifies and naturalizes genocide, dispossession, eviction, and displacement. Systems of differentiation has been formulated as a way of exploiting and expelling different populations during the last 400 years. These differentiating mechanisms have been used in different ways to secure superiority by shifting ideological formulations.

When the Spanish throne sought expansion through colonialism in California, they built critical knowledge of the original populations which was used to formulate difference which was used to justify labor exploitation and murder through Christian values. The only source of redemption for the original population was through labor. The Spanish colonizers were in fact doing Indigenous populations a favor by helping them redeem their souls, educating them, and forming them into righteous Christian subjects. While the initial Ideological justifications to colonialism was through "royal power"(Foucault 1982:182), the successive stage was naturalized through the ideology of "pastoral power" (Foucault

1982:182). The establishment of missions was formulated as the noble business of converting a barbarous people. However, the mission systems were used to force the Kumivit who lived in the Los Angeles area, into labor camps. The mission system was a cheaper way for the Spanish throne to secure supremacy from competing colonizer, such as the Russians.

As California became Mexican territory after the Spanish Mexican war and further U.S territory when Americans agitated to war, the mission systems were overrun by new Anglo-American laws that had an emphasis on private ownership to land. The ideological shift went from “pastoral power” to regulations set by the modern state. With the fourth successive stage of colonialism matters got even worse for the Kumivit, the original people. Spanish colonizers used the mission system and religion to justify and naturalize enslavement so secure the production of commercial and agricultural supplies to other parts of the colonies, and Spain. The atrocities and the cruel treatment got even worse for the Kumivit when the American settlers arrived (Brendan 2012). The new settlers desires were the land the Kumivit lived on, and therefore they sought to rid themselves of the Indigenous population by participating in genocide. American settlers still used slaves for their economic gain, but preferred African Americans, since they did not have ties to the land they wanted.

These successive stages of colonialism sought to dismantle the Native American culture, not unlike more recent processes of gentrification. In the initial stages of gentrification, the gang injunction caused the disruption of family structures by mass incarcerating African Americans who happened to for example be in the same family and regarded as a gang member. Black and Brown people were arrested for being seen with another gang members. Moreover, because of modern state policies and efforts from the private market, families and extended families were often contained in the same “neighborhood”. I say contained because that was what segregation and restrictive covenants entailed. Particularly African Americans were not permitted to be in areas considered white. They were not allowed to partake in the amusement and thrill-rides of Abbot Kinney’s Venice of America, they were not allowed to use the beach.

After decades of neglect and exploitation by oil companies, and continuous power battles among the elite, Venice was left in a deprived state. Because of the dumping of sewers and spill from oil derricks and abandoned wells the beaches of Venice was in such a depraved state that the beach was quarantined for eight years, from the end of the 1940s to the beginning of the 1950s. Together with desegregation and “white flight” partly caused by the fear of black and brown families extending their settlements outside the previously contained restrictive covenants, left Venice with abandoned houses and cheap rents, which attracted people from the lower economic classes, as well as the counter-cultural Avant Garde writers.

However, their slum by the sea would not be theirs for long. During the 1950s the power elite, again found an interest in Venice. The initial efforts of urban renewal were successfully rejected by Venetians, the minorities, the freaks, the radical left and the counter-cultural movement joined in their mutual efforts to stop the power stratum from evicting them. Urban renewal strategies were implemented

anyway a couple of years later. 550 buildings were fined and demolished and as a consequence, people were displaced.

With the lift in redlined areas, aimed at benefiting the communities affected by segregation, and artificial deprivation, created new opportunities of investment for those in the higher echelons, who sought to invest in property in Venice. Urban renewal and the ban on segregation laws laid the foundation for the process of gentrification. The new ideological justification was now formulated with neoliberal reason (Brown 2015).

The techniques of power used in the beginning of 1900 by whitewashing continued its legacy. Instead of erasing the Kumivit land and culture with myths about missions, the new imaginaries were based on white counter culture, the Avant Garde writers, the hippie movement, skate sub-culture, and Gold's gym where Arnold Schwarzenegger famously trained. That is not to say that Venice does not have these identities. Popular imaginaries of Venice are both recreated and produces by everyday practices.

These imaginaries and the “vibe” of Venice, as well as the sociability of public spaces is one of the main motivations gentrifiers have to move to Venice. However, as rents are getting higher, and old populations are evicted, Venice is becoming more and more homogenous, white, middle-and upper class.

However, gentrification is not a one-way process. Gentrification is the accumulation of many intersection processes that happens simultaneously and is created by specific actors at specific times with diverging individual motives. While the original process starts by the displacement of working-class population (Glass 2010 [1964]:22), and the inn-movement of individuals from the upper echelons, the process of gentrification progresses differently over time, and is justified in diverging ways. As the process of gentrification has progressed, the social and material fabric has changed to fit the tastes of the upper-classes, through boutique-gentrification, café-gentrification, and super-gentrification.

As the gentrification progresses, more and more of the original gentrifiers now find themselves as marginalized, and worried of being evicted. Although the VNC originally was a city-wide project to increase minority representation in democratic decision making, which was built up from the ground by residents who sought equality and inclusion, the VNC is now the place where predominantly white-middle and upper class business owners and residents fight their causes. The VNC have a large representation of marginal gentrifiers fighting for their right to be in Venice. Other causes that are frequently discussed is the eviction of the poorest individual in the society, unhoused persons like Pops, Boots, Ella, PeeWee, Jim, Julian, Knife, Lucky and DeeDee.

As the VNC and the white professional upper class continues their line of power, they exclude the causes of the radical left by the symbolic power they have to control *what* and *how* to formulate political issues. Rejecting rhetoric about race and class. The radical left finds themselves fighting their causes outside of the VNC, that they contributed to build.

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