



“Urban Organization through the Ages: Neighborhoods, Open Spaces, and Urban Life”:

Project Description and Third Annual Progress Report

Project Year: 2010-2011

<http://cities.asu.edu/>

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This project is part of the larger research project, “Late Lessons from Early History,” sponsored by the School of Human Evolution and Social Change (“SHESC”) at Arizona State University and funded by the President’s Strategic Initiatives Fund. For more information, visit our website (<http://cities.asu.edu/>) or contact Michael Smith (mesmith9@asu.edu).

Scientific Background and Rationale

From the earliest cities to the present, two universals of urban form are the organization of residential areas into neighborhoods and the presence of open spaces within cities. Neighborhoods can differ greatly in their ethnic, political, religious, and economic dynamics; open spaces include a broad range of uses, from gardens to civic plazas to empty lots. These two features are important influences on urban life and social activities in any city. For this project, we use neighborhoods and open spaces as points of entry into the complexities of urban organization in the broad spectrum of world cities from the earliest states to the present.

Because urbanism is too big of a phenomenon to be understood from the perspectives of any single discipline, we have designed a project that is transdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and historical in design. We draw from the data and methods of archaeology, history, sociology, socio-cultural anthropology, geography, and political science to analyze key urban issues. This research will lead to enhanced understanding of both modern and ancient cities, and of urbanization processes that unfolded over several millennia of human history.

Our project is organized around four major research themes, each with a series of research questions. These questions will be applied to a large sample of cities, including archaeological data on the earliest urban centers, historical documents on preindustrial cities around the world, and modern cities as studied by many disciplines and approaches.

1. **Neighborhoods.** Are urban neighborhoods universal? What are the different patterns of neighborhood governance? How are social parameters like class, wealth, ethnicity, race and religion patterned by neighborhood, and how do these affect urban life? What is the relationship between migration and neighborhood dynamics and how does it contribute to ethnic solidarity and conflict within cities?
2. **Open Spaces.** What kinds of open spaces – both civic spaces and green spaces – are found in cities? Where are open spaces located and what are their uses and social contexts? Is struggle over open space a universal process? What are the antecedents and ramifications of the modern privatization of urban open spaces? Who provides urban open space, and who benefits from it?

3. **Dynamics of Change.** How are neighborhoods founded, how are open spaces established, and how do they change and develop historically? In what ways do bottom-up processes (the actions of local residents) and top-down processes (laws and actions by civic authorities) interact to generate change in urban life? Do varying patterns of local urban governance stimulate change or stability? What roles do neighborhoods and open spaces play in processes of urban sprawl and expansion? How do they contribute to urban sustainability?
4. **Context.** What effects do urban population, area, and density have on the spatial and social dynamics of neighborhoods and open spaces? What role does connectivity – within and beyond cities – play in structuring urban life? How are neighborhoods and open spaces affected by wider changes (social, political, economic, and environmental), and in what ways do they play creative or generative roles? How do these features vary regionally and culturally? Are there limits to growth and organizational capacity (for both neighborhoods and cities)?

1. Participants

Senior Personnel (Principal Investigators)

Christopher Boone, Co-PI, 3 years. SHESC, Professor. Geographer
George L. Cowgill, Co-PI, 3 years. SHESC, Professor. Archaeologist.
Sharon L. Harlan, Co-PI, 3 years. SHESC, Associate Professor. Sociologist.
Alison Kohn, Co-PI, 1 year. SHESC, Postdoctoral Scholar. Anthropologist.
Micheal E. Smith, Co-PI, 3 years. SHESC, Professor. Archaeologist.
Barbara L. Stark, Co-PI, 3 years. SHESC, Professor. Archaeologist.
Abigail York, Co-PI, 3 years. SHESC, Assistant Professor. Political Scientist.

Graduate Student Staff

Juliana Novic, Ph.D. student, Anthropology/SHESC (Research Assistant, years 1-2)
Benjamin Stanley, Ph.D. student, School of Sustainability (Research Assistant, years 1, 3)

Undergraduate Staff

Cinthia Caravajal, Anthropology major, senior. Started as a lab volunteer, moved on to an internship, then a paid position and finally an Undergraduate Research Assistant, (since Spring 2010) Working on a comparative study of squatter settlements and their spatial organization.

Organizational Partners

Consultants:

Jill Grant
Jan Nijman

2. Activities and Projects

2.1 Graduate Seminar: Principles of Urbanism (Fall Quarter)

The project PIs all participated in leading a graduate seminar that broadly explored urbanism across the many disciplines that study it. The course described urbanism as follows:

Urbanism refers to social life in cities and the material and social conditions of cities, including their built form, the people who inhabit them, and their physical and social environments. Urbanism offers contrasts and continuities with the rhythms of rural life. Urban studies include the myriad topics relevant to cities as well as ideals in urban planning for city functioning. An important component is study of urban dynamics, or the multiple drivers and consequences of urbanization, the process of growth, decline, or change in city building and urban culture. Urban life varies in important ways according to cultural and social differences and histories.

This course took a long-term perspective on urbanism and urbanization, from ancient cities to the present. Such a *longue durée* perspective is critical for understanding the cycles, dynamics, and processes of urbanization, which might not otherwise be apparent from present-day cross-sectional studies. It also permits scholars to ask questions about both locally distinct and general characteristics of urbanism through time and space.

By targeting important readings from several disciplines, we were able to highlight the different theoretical and methodological approaches to cities. The students were able to use these important readings as analytical approaches to their own research interests for the final paper.

2.2 Symposium (February 11, 2011)

On Friday February 11th 2011, the Urban Organization through the Ages project held a workshop to think through a potential symposium and series of publications that would focus on neighborhoods in comparative context. The workshop included the research team at Arizona State as well as a group of invited guests (see list of participants below). Participants were asked to write a short proposal for the future symposium/publication that would provide a useful and novel way to examine neighborhoods across the contemporary world and in comparison with historical and archaeological cases. We had two invited speakers, urban planner Jill Grant of Dalhousie University in Halifax, who gave a talk on February 10th discussing the history of enclosed neighborhoods across time and space. Jan Nijman, urban geographer from the University of Miami, gave a public talk on the Balkanized neighborhoods of Miami on February 11th.

At the meeting on Feb. 11, the morning discussion revolved around participants' individual proposals for research. A series of themes emerged that were considered particularly salient and thus dominated the discussion. The group was working with the idea that a final written product will be an edited volume or special journal issue that will consist of chapters/articles focused on empirical cases of neighborhoods as well as others that will be thematic in nature. The question was concerned with how to organize the written product.

Ultimately, the workshop determined that *processes of neighborhood production*, their origins and maintenance, will illuminate the ways in which neighborhoods mediate social life across a wide range of important socio-spatial dimensions. And further, we will be able to effectively compare any place and time that provides good data within such a framework. Thus archaeological cases can be brought into comparative frame with modern ones because of a common concern and research language around formation and persistence. A potential title could be: *The Formation and Persistence of Neighborhoods: Past, Present, Future*

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Participants from other departments at ASU

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Visiting Scholars

Dr. Jill Grant jill.grant@dal.ca (Dalhousie University)
Dr. Jan Nijman nijman@miami.edu (University of Miami)

2.3 Symposium and Publication Planning for April 2011

As a result of the February 11th symposium, the project members wrote a proposal to fund an international symposium in the Spring of 2011. The proposal has been entered into the Urban Studies Foundation international competition for financial support. The proposal is summarized below.

The Formation and Persistence of Neighborhoods: Past, Present, Future A Proposal for a Symposium

We propose a transdisciplinary symposium that compares the processes involved in neighborhood production and maintenance across cities in a variety of geographical and historical contexts. If, as archaeological evidence suggests, neighborhoods are a universal feature of cities, we ask what roles they play constituting cities and their social orders in different geo-historical situations. We do so by interrogating how acting individuals and local groups (“bottom-up processes”) intersect with larger scale institutions and governments (“top-down processes”) in the formation of neighborhoods and their reproduction over time.

The symposium will be held on April 5, 6 and 7th of 2012 at the Arizona State University campus in Tempe, AZ. We will invite scholars working on neighborhoods from various locations in the global south, Europe and North America. The cases themselves will range from contemporary historical to prehistoric contexts, transcending traditional clusters of urban types – modern, industrial, preindustrial. These boundaries have limited our ability to understand urbanism as an ancient phenomenon that is indeed highly variable, but binds humanity across time and space. Since neighborhoods are socio-spatial entities that can be identified both from an outside analytical perspective as well as from an emic perspective, no one discipline is poised to offer a holistic analysis. Methods from statistics, archaeological analysis, ethnography, and sociological analysis will thus provide a valuable range of analytical views.

The Urban Studies Foundation provides indispensable financial support for this endeavor (expected cost is £20,000.00) as well as the venue for publication. We are confident that Urban Studies is the appropriate journal for our special edition given its interdisciplinary audience and broad urban interests. Since ASU has the necessary infrastructure in place for the event, the bulk of

the budget will be used for the travel expenses of our invited scholars. The administrative staff at ASU will provide the necessary logistics support for a successful international symposium.

The post-event publications will include a special issue of *Urban Studies* and a separate series of synthetic articles. The project team at ASU in collaboration with some the symposium attendees will produce one synthetic article to be submitted to the journal *Science*, a general and high profile outlet for this interdisciplinary research. The symposium will ultimately create an intellectual forum for the comparison and synthesis of research efforts amongst scholars normally segregated according to research tendencies and traditions. Our goal is to discover a common, interdisciplinary framework connecting neighborhood processes in cities throughout time and space.

2.4 Student Training and Archive Maintenance

Student Research Projects

A number of graduate and undergraduate students are engaged in individual research projects that are either part of our larger project, or else related to it.

Cinthia Carvajal (Fall 2008- Spring 2011): Anthropology and Sustainability major, senior. Started out as a lab volunteer, moved on to an internship, then a paid position, and finally an **Undergraduate Research Assistantship (2010)**. As a result of receiving the 2010 School of Human Evolution and Social Change Undergraduate Research Assistantship, the undergraduate student Cinthia Carvajal is in the process of completing a comparative research paper on the relationship between spatial organization and social organization in squatter settlements. This research aims to build understanding on how local-social organizational patterns affect the spatial organization of squatter settlements by comparing informal settlements in the cities of Lima, Lusaka and Mumbai. The conclusions of this paper were presented at the School of Human Evolution and Social Change Undergraduate Research Symposium at the end of April, 2011. Also, Cinthia in collaboration with Ben Stanley organized volunteers' schedules and trained volunteers on data gathering and project databases usage. Cinthia was chosen to give the main speech at the Commencement Ceremony of the School of Sustainability in May, 2011.

Benjamin Stanley (Summer 2008-Summer 2009; Fall 2010-Spring 2011): Ph.D. Student in Sustainability. Ben has been working on a research paper focused on the history of urban open spaces across ancient and modern cities. This paper, planned for submission in Summer 2011, presents a transdisciplinary typology of open spaces applicable across urban history and uses a wealth of examples from all continents and time periods to show how open space is produced through a dialectic between top-down state/institutional planning and bottom-up, grassroots efforts. Ben has also submitted a research paper illustrating how open spaces in 19th century Algiers and Cape Town engendered social contact between diverse groups and influenced the evolution of group and neighborhood identities in the process. This paper aims to inform modern planning trends that encourage ethnic and class diversity in New Urbanist communities under a normative ideal of diverse contact. Finally, Ben has conducted research on neighborhood production in Indonesia and other world cities in concert with the proposed symposium.

Marion Forest (Spring 2011): Ph.D. student in archaeology at the Université de Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne. Marion spent spring semester as a visiting student in SHESC, where she took classes and worked with our project. Her dissertation is a study of social and spatial organization at several ancient urban centers near Zacapu, Michoacan, Mexico. These are unique archaeological sites in that large residential areas are well preserved on the surface of the ground, permitting detailed mapping and spatial analysis. Marion also co-organized a symposium at the 2011 Annual Meeting

of the Society for American Archaeology, “Landscape, Urbanism, and Society: Recent Research in Postclassic Western Mexico” (see discussion of conference papers below). In addition to her work with our project, Marion participated in the intellectual and professional life of SHESC, giving several talks and interacting with many faculty and students.

Juliana Novic: Ph.D. student in Anthropology, SHESC. Juliana worked for the project as a RA for two years. This year she concentrated on her dissertation research, spending much of the fall semester in Toluca Mexico gathering data and much of the spring preparing outside grant proposals. Her dissertation, titled “Neighborhood Dynamics at Calixtlahuaca, Mexico” uses data and concepts from our project.

Volunteers:

Bridgette Gilliland (Fall 2009-Fall 2010). Anthropology major, senior. Working on an honors thesis project (Barrett Honors College) to investigate neighborhoods in ancient Egyptian cities, combining her interest in Egyptology with the work of the project. Bridgette participated in the graduate urbanism seminar in fall, and spent the Spring Semester as a visiting student at the University of Prince Edward Island in Canada.

Marcus Farman (Fall 2010). Textual and graphic data gathering on open spaces in historical cities, with a focus on peripheral market spaces in Islamic and medieval European cities.

Sarah Robertson (Fall 2010- Spring 2011). Data gathering and measuring cities sizes with Image J for future use. In collaboration with Cinthia Carvajal established and maintained the new project website,.

Yui Komoda (Spring 2011). Data gathering and graphics, translation of materials on Chang’an from Japanese to English.

Caitlin Grigiatis (Spring 2011). Data gathering and graphics on Classical Greek neighborhoods. Caitlin presented her findings at the SHESC Undergraduate Research Symposium, April 29, 2011.

2.5 NSF White Paper (December, 2010)

In fall 2010, the National Science Foundation’s Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) issued a call for white papers on the future of research in this area. The program is called “SBE 2020: Future Research in the Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences.” Our project submitted a white paper titled “An Expanded Social Scientific Perspective on Urbanism.” Our suggestions are built around a central Challenge Question:

- How can scientists adequately understand the social and environmental processes of urbanization and the impacts of cities on the world?

The abstract of our paper is as follows:

In order to address the complexity of world urbanization today, we advocate a new approach to research that we call the “expanded social scientific perspective on urbanism.” This approach is “expanded” in two ways: it transcends traditional disciplinary urban research; and it incorporates disciplines and approaches not normally part of the social sciences. We identify three main components: (1) the built environment and its interaction with people and society, incorporating the fields of environment-behavior studies, architecture, and planning; (2) an explicitly historical orientation, incorporating the fields of urban history and social science history; (3) comparative

analysis at varying scales. Without this kind of broad, integrated trans- and multi-disciplinary perspective, it will not be possible to adequately describe or explain the diversity of urban processes operating in the world and their consequences for society and the environment.

This document is available on the SBE website: (http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/sbe_2020/index.cfm). It is also posted on our project website: (<http://cities.wikispaces.asu.edu/file/view/asu-urban-nsf-whitepaper.pdf>).

2.6 New Website

Our original website had been written in specialized content-management software (Joomla), and it proved awkward to update and administer. We changed over to a Wiki-based format, through the ASU Wiki service. The new website is much easier to maintain and update by all project members. The URL is: <http://cities.wikispaces.asu.edu/> . The page can also be reached through our original URL: <http://cities.asu.edu/> . We have tried to keep the website current with our activities.

2.7 New Blog

Michael Smith started a blog titled “Wide Urban World” to explore themes closely related to this project. The URL is: <http://wideurbanworld.blogspot.com/>.

2.8 Outreach and Communication Activities

Public lectures by our consultants

- Jill Grant jill.grant@dal.ca (Dalhousie!University)
- Jan Nijman nijman@miami.edu (University of Miami)

Presentations at professional conferences

Project members gave several formal presentations at professional conferences; these are listed below under publications and papers.

3. Publications and Products, 2010-2011

3A. Publications and papers deriving primarily from project activities

Kohn, Alison, Abigail York, Benjamin Stanley, and Michael E. Smith

n.d. Neighborhoods as a Unit of Analysis: A Transdisciplinary Approach. *Paper in preparation*; target submission date: September 1, 2011.

Smith, Michael E., Christopher Boone, George L. Cowgill, Sharon L. Harlan, Alison Kohn, Barbara L. Stark, and Abigail York

2010 *An Expanded Social Scientific Perspective on Urbanism*. White Paper, Future Research in the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences. National Science

Foundation, Washington, DC. <http://cities.asu.edu/images/stories/pdf/asu-urban-nsf-whitepaper.pdf>

Stanley, Benjamin W.

2011 An historical perspective on the viability of urban diversity: lessons from socio-spatial identity construction in nineteenth century Algiers and Cape Town. *Journal of Urbanism* (under review).

Stanley, Benjamin, Barbara L. Stark, Michael E Smith, and Katrina Johnston

n.d. Urban Open Spaces in Historical Perspective: A Transdisciplinary Typology and Analysis. *Paper in preparation*. Target submission date: June 1, 2011.

York, Abigail, Michael E. Smith, Benjamin Stanley, Barbara L. Stark, Juliana Novic, Sharon L. Harlan, George L. Cowgill, and Christopher Boone

2011 Ethnic and Class-Based Clustering Through the Ages: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Urban Social Patterns. *Urban Studies* (in press). Published online: <http://usj.sagepub.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/content/early/2010/12/08/0042098010384517.full.pdf+html>

3B. Publications and papers that incorporate material from project activities

Warren, P.S., S.L. Harlan, C. Boone, S B. Lerman, E. Shochat, and A.P. Kinzig

2010 “Urban Ecology and Human Social Organisation.” Pp. 172-201 in *Urban Ecology*, K.J. Gaston (ed.). Cambridge, UK : Cambridge University Press and the British Ecological Society.

Stark, Barbara L.

2011 Ancient Open Space, Gardens, and Parks: A Comparative Discussion for Mesoamerican Urbanism. Chapter in *Making Ancient Cities: Studies of the Production of Space in Early Urban Environments*, edited Kevin D. Fisher and Andrew Creekmore. Book manuscript to be submitted to University of Cambridge Press.

Smith, Michael E.

n.d. Classic Maya Settlement Clusters as Urban Neighborhoods: A Comparative Perspective on Low-Density Urbanism. *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* (in press).

Isendahl, Christian and Michael E. Smith

2011 Urban Agriculture and Dispersed Housing in the Low-density Cities of Mesoamerica. Paper presented at the 2011 Annual Meeting, Society for American Archaeology, Sacramento.

Isendahl, Christian and Michael E. Smith

2011 Sustainable Agrarian Urbanism: The Low-Density Cities of the Mayas and Aztecs. *Paper in preparation*. Target submission date: July 1, 2011.

Forest, Marion

2011 Constructing Social Space: Multi-Scalar Organization on the Zacapu Malpaís. Paper presented at the 2011 Annual Meeting, Society for American Archaeology, Sacramento.

3C. Publications and papers by project members on closely related topics

Kohn, Alison

2011 Incremental Construction Practices and Changing Urban House forms: The Production of the Popular Classes in La Paz. Chapter in *Informal Settlements: Constructing Everyday Life in Latin America* P. Kellet, ed. Sussex, Wiley Press. Bulletin of Latin American Research Book Series. (in press)

Kohn, Alison

2011 The Changing City in Bolivia: “Cholo Urbanism:” Neighborhood Production and The Political Aesthetics of Populism. *American Anthropologist* (under review)

Smith, Michael E.

2011 Empirical Urban Theory for Archaeologists. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 18:(in press). Available online: <http://www.public.asu.edu/~mesmith9/1-CompleteSet/MES-11-UrbanTheory-Proofs.pdf>

Novic, Juliana

2011 Ancient Urban Viewscapes: Viewing Monumental Architecture at Calixtlahuaca. Paper presented at the 2011 Annual Meeting, Society for American Archaeology, Sacramento