



# “Urban Organization through the Ages: Neighborhoods, Open Spaces, and Urban Life”: *Project Description and Second Annual Progress Report*

**Project Year: 2009-2010**

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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 E. Smith ([mesmith9@asu.edu](mailto:mesmith9@asu.edu)).

- **Document date:** *June 28, 2010*

## **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 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, 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questions will be applied to a large sample of cities, including archaeological data on the earliest urban centers, historical documents on preindustrial cities around the world, and modern cities as studied by many disciplines and approaches.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

1. **Senior Personnel (Principal Investigators)** (see Appendix for biographical sketches)
  - Christopher G. Boone, Co-PI, 2 years. SHESC, Professor. Geographer.
  - George L. Cowgill, Co-PI, 2 years. SHESC, Emeritus Professor. Archaeologist.
  - Sharon L. Harlan, Co-PI, 2 years. SHESC, Associate Professor. Sociologist.
  - Michael E. Smith, Co-PI, 2 years. SHESC, Professor. Archaeologist.
  - Barbara L. Stark, Co-PI, 2 years. SHESC, Professor. Archaeologist.
  - Abigail York, Co-PI, 2 years, SHESC, Assistant Professor. Political scientist.
2. **Postdoctoral Scholar**
  - Alison Kohn. SHESC. Will start in September, 2010. Anthropologist & archaeologist.
3. **Graduate Student Staff**
  - Juliana Novic, Ph.D. student, Anthropology/SHESC (academic year)
  - Benjamin Stanley, Ph.D. student, School of Sustainability (summer)
4. **Staff (Project Manager)**
  - Katrina Johnston, ASU Anthropology graduate (academic year and summers)
5. **Undergraduate Students**
  - **Cinthia Carvajal** (2009-2010). Anthropology major, junior. Started out as a lab volunteer, moved on to an internship, then a paid position, and finally an **Undergraduate Research Assistantship (spring 2010)**. Cinthia developed her own project to study the spatial organization of squatters settlements in several parts of the world, in conjunction with our project.
  - **Bridgette Gilliland** (spring, 2010). Anthropology major, junior. 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.
  - **Alexis Nielson-Pachofsky** (fall 2009). Data gathering and graphics. Internship credit.
  - **Karin Sidaway** (fall 2009). Data gathering and graphics.
  - **Ashley Engquist** (2009-2010). Data gathering and graphics.
  - **Maria Amezquita** (spring 2010). Data gathering and graphics. Internship credit.

- *Lily Pierce* (spring 2010). Data gathering and graphics. Internship credit.
- *Norma Elizondo* (spring 2010). (Sustainability major) Data gathering and graphics.
- *Benjamin Snow* (spring 2010). Data gathering and graphics.
- *Kenneth Udall* (spring 2010). Data gathering and graphics. Internship credit.

## 6. Organizational Partners

### A. Consultants:

- *Robert Sampson* (Harvard University, Henry Ford II Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology). Dr. Sampson gave a public lecture, he met with project members, and he met and interacted with a variety of other urban scholars at ASU (spring 2010). Sampson's research focuses on the sociological analysis of modern urban neighborhoods. He is a leading researcher on crime and poverty, social capital, and neighborhood effects.
- *Alison Kohn* (University of Chicago, Ph.D. in Anthropology, 2010). Dr. Kohn met with project members; she will start as a Postdoctoral Fellow in fall 2010 (see biography below).

## 2. Activities and Findings

### 2.A. Major research, educational, and program building activities

We have spent the past year reviewing scholarly literature on urban organization in modern, historical, and ancient cities. We also consulted with a variety of experts on urbanism to help refine our goals, concepts, and methods. Our data gathering was carried out by two subgroups: the modern group and the ancient group. Our conceptual exploration was carried out by the entire group, often with input from outside experts.

**Modern group data gathering.** Graduate Assistant Ben Stanley continued his literature review on modern urban life from numerous scholarly disciplines. He made notes on individual works and produced synthetic accounts that integrated diverse publications on key themes. Project staff member Katrina Johnston made notes on works focusing on open spaces in modern and historical cities. Stanley and Johnston engaged in planning and drafting of a review article on urban open spaces (see below).

**Ancient group data gathering.** Under the direction of Johnston, Graduate Assistant Juliana Novic and PI Michael Smith, a series of undergraduate student workers and volunteers reviewed numerous works on preindustrial cities. The emphasis was on historical cities, with less effort given to archaeological cases at this stage. Students took notes, scanned maps and images, measured areas from maps (using the Image-J software), used our databases, and scanned or Xeroxed relevant works and passages.

**Database activities.** We employed several databases. The project bibliography is being maintained using the Endnote software. We experimented with use of the Mendeley software for networking project members and organizing notes on readings and pdf copies of articles. Scanned maps and other illustrations, and their metadata, are being organized in an Excel database.

**Consultants.** Our consultants are listed above. These were chosen because of their expertise in urban studies and their thematic interests that overlap with project themes. We held both group

and individual meetings with the consultants and received intensive feedback from each on methods, goals, theory, and data.

**Group meetings.** We held monthly meetings of the principal investigators and graduate students. In fall 2009 much of our time was taken up with a search for a Postdoctoral scholar; we hired Dr. Alison Kohn, who will start work in fall, 2010. We also engaged in preliminary planning for an internal conference to be held in February, 2011, and we met with Dr. Emily Talen (School of Geographical Sciences, ASU) to discuss mutually interesting research themes. In addition, various subgroups held meetings as needed.

**Student Training.** This year we had nine undergraduate student volunteers, along with one Undergraduate Research Assistant and one undergraduate paid assistant. Several of the volunteers received internship credits for their work. PI Smith held regular meetings with the volunteers to discuss the nature and methods of doing research. Participating students read portions of *The Craft of Research* by Booth et al, and more experienced students shared their experiences and expertise with the newer volunteers. Students learned techniques, from database management to note-taking to image processing in Photoshop to measuring areas from maps with the Image-J software. Several students produced posters on specific premodern cities they were researching; these posters are on display in the Social Science Building. Two students engaged in serious individual research projects (Cinthia Carvajal and Bridgette Gilliland; see above) within the framework of the overall project.

**Dumbarton Oaks Fellowship.** PI Stark spent the spring semester, 2010, in residence at The Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection in Washington, DC. She was awarded a prestigious Dumbarton Oaks Fellowship to study “Comparative Understanding of Peripheral Urban Gardens and Garden Functions.” This work is part of the present project. She drafted two articles during the semester fellowship and presented a research report at Dumbarton Oaks.

## 2.B. Major findings resulting from these activities

### A. Intellectual developments and links between these results and project goals and objectives

- **Exploration of concepts, research, and data in various disciplines.** Between student note-taking, readings of key works for discussion, and general interaction among project members, we have explored a number of relevant urban topics as they are expressed in diverse disciplines.
- **Focus on spatial clustering of class, ethnicity, and occupation.** Last year we concluded that the spatial and social clustering of social variation and attributes are topics of great concern in many disciplines, from urban history to planning. Disciplines have differing concepts and methods, but share a concern with spatial clustering (sometimes expressed as segregation), which typically occurs at the level of the urban neighborhood. The first draft of our paper on this topic was rejected by the *Journal of Urban Affairs*. We made significant revisions, and the paper is now in press in the leading journal, *Urban Studies* (see further discussion below).
- **The diversity of patterns and processes.** It is clear from the literature that there is no single pattern of social clustering, neighborhood dynamics, or the uses and significance of open spaces. Patterns typically differ within cultural regions and traditions; there is no typical “Islamic pattern” or “Maya pattern” or “African pattern.” Thus explanations will have to be sought in the realms of economic, political and social processes. A related message, more relevant for non-anthropologists, is that there was not a single preindustrial urban or social pattern out of which modern cities and societies developed. These themes are reviewed in our *Urban Studies* paper.

- **A potential contradiction between planning orthodoxy and empirical urban patterns.** The literature on urban planning and much of the social science literature emphasizes the benefits of socially diverse neighborhoods and cities. Several writers have noted that this ideal seems to be at odds with the dominant pattern in premodern cities, in which people prefer to live (and tend to live) in socially homogeneous neighborhoods. Theorists of the new urbanism are particularly interested in this issue, and we had several conversations with Emily Talen about how our project is relevant to the concerns of the new urbanism movement. A review of the relevant literature reveals that the discussion of premodern cities relies on a small amount of poor data; the degree of ethnic and other social neighborhood clustering in cities remains an open issue.
- **Dynamics of neighborhood formation and change.** We have identified several factors that are important in neighborhood dynamics in various areas and time periods. For example: rural-to-urban migration plays a particularly large role in ethnic clustering in many cases; urban administrative activities typically impact urban life on a scale larger than the neighborhood; and changing social construction of race and class can lead to new residential settlement patterns. We organize these factors in our *Urban Studies* paper as a series of “drivers” of clustering; see discussion of the paper below.
- **Palatial gardens and settlement dynamics.** Some sources document palatial gardens in peripheral locations in cities, and one reason is that cities have histories, with central built space and land values that contribute to decisions to move projects like palaces and associated gardens that to outer parts of settlements. In general the remodeling of urban space is a major challenge for long-lived cities; urban growth and owned or occupied spaces constrain new constructions that require considerable space.
- **Peripheral open spaces and agency effects.** In some cases marketplaces are in peripheral locations as unsponsored activities, instances of bottom-up agency in open spaces that were not otherwise built up or constrained. In general, following Low’s and others’ observations, streets, plazas, parks, or peripheral open spaces offer opportunities for transactions and interactions for a broad social spectrum and form a counterpoint to governmentally or institutionally sponsored and controlled buildings and spaces. We explore some of these issues in our review article on urban open spaces (see below).

## *B. Lessons learned and unanticipated effects.*

- **Lessons learned:**
  - **Narrowing the focus.** Our initial proposal was structured around five research themes: the size and scale of urban systems; stratification and segregation in urban neighborhoods; migration and ethnic enclaves; security and surveillance; and open spaces. This proved to be an unwieldy scheme, too broad to anchor our research project. Our first consultant, Besim Hakim, also expressed some dissatisfaction with the five themes and suggested that we streamline our focus. Therefore, we rewrote our objectives during 2008-2009 to focus on our two key themes—neighborhoods and open spaces—and this provided a more workable focus for the project. We have continued our efforts to narrow the focus in 2009-2010. Although we have made progress, we still have basic intellectual work to do in order to define a narrower research focus for the project.
- **Unanticipated developments:**

- **Informal settlements and shantytowns.** The study of informal settlements (squatters settlements) was not part of our original research plan. As we began to read the literature, however, we began to think that these settlements—generated by informal processes rather than central planning—may yield important lessons on urban dynamics relating to neighborhoods and open spaces. Student Cinthia Carvajal designed her own research project on the spatial and social organization of informal settlement, and she was awarded a prestigious Undergraduate Research Assistantship from SHESC to continue this work. PI Smith explored informal settlements as an analogue for ancient urban housing patterns in his published paper, “Sprawl, Squatters, and Sustainable Cities” (see discussion below).
- **Urban theory.** We realized during 2008-2009 that the variation in social theory and urban theory by discipline presents an obstacle to our efforts to define clear research questions, but it also presents a new opportunity to unify aspects of our diverse disciplines. Although we made only minor progress on this topic in 2009-2010, we plan to address this issue explicitly in the future, and such an effort may produce results whose applicability goes beyond our project.

### *C. Issues in transdisciplinary research.*

- **Disciplinary differences in explanation and interpretation.** Each discipline has its own bodies of theory, sources of data, its styles and procedures of explanation and interpretation (this is related to the issue variation in urban theory noted above). We recognize the need to reconcile or synthesize disciplinary approaches with explanations related to our topics, and we are struggling to accomplish this.
- **Mutually intelligible terminology.** We recognize the need to devise a set of terms and concepts that make sense to all project participants, and this is an ongoing effort. This problem has come up in our discussions and in devising sets of keywords for our bibliography database. For example, “social capital” is used differently in each discipline, and the concept is far less common in anthropology than in the other social sciences.
- **Comparative methods.** Our project is inherently comparative in conception, but each discipline has different views and methods of comparative analysis. Discussions with consultant Richard Blanton in 2008-2009 helped us refine our ideas about the kinds of comparative methods that might be appropriate for our project, but we still have a long way to go. One dilemma is how to manage comparisons, which can range from use of an illustrative small set of cases (see Briggs mentioned above), to a much larger but still modest set of samples (such as the 30 societies examined in Blanton and Fargher’s study of collective action), to an even larger set of samples of cities across multiple world regions. Some investigative topics are better handled with in-depth examination of fewer cases and others require bigger data sets.
- **Integration of additional disciplines into the project.** Two disciplines that are lacking among the project PIs are of crucial importance to our theme and project: urban history and planning. There are relevant literatures in both disciplines, and scholars in these areas bring unique perspectives to issues of urban life. Although we have made contacts with individuals in these disciplines (both at ASU and elsewhere) concerning our research, we have yet to devise procedure to incorporate these perspectives more fully into the project.

## 2.C. Outreach and communication activities

- **Public lectures by our consultants.** Our major consultant, Robert Sampson, gave a very well attended public lecture on his urban research as it relates to our project.
- **Presentations at professional conferences:**
  - Project members gave several formal presentations at professional conferences; these are listed below under publications and papers.
- **Web site.** We obtained an intuitive URL and started adding materials to our project web site: <http://cities.asu.edu/>

## 2.D. 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:

- **Juliana Novic**, Ph.D. student in Anthropology (archaeology), is pursuing doctoral dissertation research on archaeological evidence for neighborhoods and spatial organization at the Aztec-period city of Calixtlahuaca in Mexico. She participated in archaeological fieldwork at the site and is using GIS and other spatial methods to analyze the social implications of surface-collected artifacts for urban organization.
- **Benjamin Stanley**, Ph.D. student in the School of Sustainability, is pursuing doctoral dissertation research on urban social sustainability from a historical and philosophical perspective. His work with our project will provide some of the data for his dissertation, which will include a focus on urban social and spatial organization, including neighborhoods and open spaces.
- **Angela Huster**, Ph.D. student in Anthropology (archaeology), is carrying out doctoral dissertation research on households and economic organization at Calixtlahuaca. Her project includes an examination of the relationship between households and neighborhoods at the Aztec-period city.
- **Marion Forest**, (Ph.D. student in archaeology at the Université de Paris-1, Panthéon-Sorbonne) will spend the spring 2011 semester at ASU with the project. Her dissertation focuses on urban spatial organization and neighborhoods at Postclassic sites in Michoacan, Mexico.
- **Bridgette Gilliland**, Anthropology Major in the Barrett Honors College, is working on a senior honors thesis on neighborhoods and housing at ancient Egyptian cities. She is examining the contrast between planned and unplanned residential zones and its implications for urbanism and social life in ancient Egypt.
- **Cynthia Carvajal**, Anthropology and Sustainability Majors, is conducting research on the spatial and social organization of informal or squatters settlements in developing countries. She began this project with an Undergraduate Research Assistantship from SHESC in 2009-2010, and will continue the research next year.
- **Katrina Johnston** graduated from ASU with a Major in Anthropology in 2009, and will pursue graduate work in the Urban Studies program at Portland State University starting in

fall, 2010. Her interests include urban open spaces, walkable built environments, and alternative transportation.

### **3. Publications and Products, 2009-2010**

#### ***3A. Publications and papers deriving primarily from project activities***

- (1) York, Abigail, Michael E. Smith, Barbara L. Stark, Benjamin Stanley, Juliana Novic, Sharon L. Harlan, George L. Cowgill, and Christopher Boone  
n.d. Ethnic and Class-Based Clustering Through the Ages: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Urban Social Patterns. *Urban Studies* (accepted for publication; current in press).

This paper was accepted for publication in *Urban Studies*, one of the leading journals in the field. It is a jointly-researched and jointly-authored paper by the PIs and our Graduate Assistants that explores one of the major themes of the project. It will serve as a point of departure for our continuing research on urban neighborhoods. Included below is the abstract and a list of the drivers of clustering as identified in the paper.

**Abstract:** This paper presents initial findings from longer-term transdisciplinary research concerning the social dynamics of urban neighborhoods. We examine the spatial clustering of ethnicity and class in neighborhoods over urban history, from Bronze Age Mesopotamia to contemporary cities. We identify fourteen distinct drivers of social clustering, grouped under the headers of macro-structural forces, the state, local regimes and institutions, and bottom-up processes. The operation of these processes is examined through three historical and three archaeological case studies of clustering. We conclude that, (1) clustering is a common, but not universal, attribute of cities; (2) there is much variation in clustering patterns, both within and between cities and urban traditions; and (3) consideration of a wide variety of drivers is required to understand historical and modern residential dynamics.

#### ***Drivers of Ethnic and Class Clustering (from York et al. n.d.)***

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##### **1. Macro-Structural Forces**

- Industrialization
- Capitalism
- Globalization
- Premodern commercialization
- Religious rules

##### **2. The State**

- Federal law and policies
- Planning and public works
- Housing policy

##### **3. Local Regimes and Institutions**

- Zoning
- Real estate practices
- Actions of premodern elites

##### **4. Bottom-Up Processes**

- Individual preferences
  - Mutual support
  - Chain migration
  - Neighborhood self-regulation
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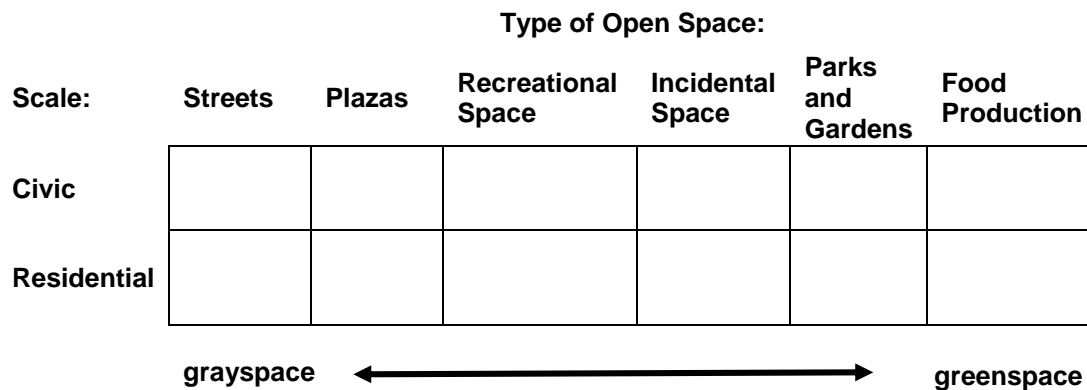


(2) Smith, Michael E.  
 2010 The Archaeological Study of Neighborhoods and Districts in Ancient Cities. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 29(2):137-154.

**Abstract:** The spatial division of cities into residential zones is a universal feature of urban life from the earliest cities to the present. I propose a two-level classification of such zones that archaeologists can use to analyze preindustrial cities. Neighborhoods are small areas of intensive face-to-face social interaction, whereas districts are larger areas that serve as administrative units within cities. I review comparative historical data on neighborhoods and districts and outline archaeological methods for their identification and analysis. Illustrative cases are drawn from Mesopotamia and Mesoamerica, and I conclude with a review of the major top-down and bottom-up social forces that generate and shape neighborhoods and districts in preindustrial cities.

(3) Stanley, Benjamin, Katrina Johnston  
 n.d. An Historical Typology of Urban Open Space. Paper in preparation for submission to a journal.

This paper presents a classification of urban open spaces that is relevant to cities throughout history, from Ur to Phoenix. The different types of open space are reviewed for various historical epochs and cultural contexts, and patterns of change and continuity are explored with respect to key dimensions such as and access to spaces, specialization of uses.



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

Smith, Michael E.

2010 Sprawl, Squatters, and Sustainable Cities: Can Archaeological Data Shed Light on Modern Urban Issues? *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 20:229-253.

Smith, Michael E. and Juliana Novic

n.d. Neighborhoods and Districts in Ancient Mesoamerica. To appear in: *Neighborhoods in Mesoamerican Cities: The Assessment of Intermediate Units of Spatial and Social Analysis*, edited by Linda Manzanilla and Charlotte Arnauld, (book in preparation).

Stark, Barbara L.

2010 Comparative Perspectives Concerning Urban Green Space in Archaeological Complex Societies: A Review. Manuscript in preparation for submission to a journal.

Stark, Barbara L.

2010 Peripheral Urban Green Space in a Mesoamerican Capital: Cerro de las Mesas. Manuscript in preparation for submission to a Journal.

Stark, Barbara L.

2010 Comparative Analysis of Ancient Urban Green Space. Professional lecture, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.

Warren, Paige S., Sharon L. Harlan, Christopher Boone, S. B. Lerman, E. Shochat, & A. P. Kinzig

2010 Urban Ecology and Human Social Organization. To appear in: *Urban Ecology*, edited by Gascon, (in press). Cambridge University Press, New York.

## **4. Contributions**

### ***Efforts made to build infrastructure and capacity for the mid- and long-term sustainability of this research.***

- **Databases.** We are developing a series of databases that ultimately will be made available to other scholars, most likely through our website. At this point our usage is still exploratory and limited to project personnel. As outlined above, these databases include Endnote (bibliographic data), Mendeley (bibliographic data, textual notes, and pdfs of articles), a custom Excel database for our nearly 1,000 maps and other images. As intensive data-gathering gains momentum, we will have considerable numerical data which will be managed initially in Access and Excel. We are working toward integration of these data into a single system that is easily usable.
- **Additional outside funding** will be sought once we settle on a clearer direction for our future research. We have begun to explore possible sources for external funding, but no proposals have been submitted yet.

## 5. Future Implementation

### *Overview of plans for the next project year.*

- **Goals for 2009 / 2010:**
  - To continue to refine our research problem(s).
  - To identify one or more plans of action to address the research problem with comparative data.
  - To begin gathering information, coding data, and conducting preliminary analyses.
  - To publicize the project more intensively and solicit more outside input into the research process.
- **Budgeted Personnel:**
  - 1 Postdoctoral scholar
  - 1 Graduate Assistant
  - 1 hourly student worker
- **Activities:**
  - We will jointly lead a graduate research seminar on urbanism. This is a cross-listed core course for the ASU Urbanism Ph.D. track titled, “Principles of Urbanism.” Students will carry out individual research projects related to the overall goals of our project. This seminar will also provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information.
  - French Ph.D. student Marion Forest (Université de Paris-1, Panthéon-Sorbonne) will spend the spring, 2011 semester at ASU working with the project.
  - We will establish a coding system and continue database construction (postdoc and PIs).
  - We will continue to survey relevant literature (Graduate Assistant and undergraduates).
  - We will return to sources already surveyed for coding and data entry (Graduate Assistant and undergraduates).
  - We will expand the scope of our website.
  - We plan to publish at least two papers based primarily on project activities: the open spaces review article (see above) and at least one paper targeting neighborhoods.

## 6. Impact

### *How have the funds contributed to the overall mission of the University and the aims of SHESC?*

The theme of this project—urban life and its transformations throughout history and throughout the world—fits within SHESC’s *core research theme “Urban Societies.”* Our project builds upon SHESC’s strengths using a long-time perspective and fusing the intellectual disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, geography, sociology, and political science in the spirit of Arizona State University’s model of the New American University.

*Urban studies* is a field increasingly crucial to the future of Arizona, of the United States, and of today's world. Each decade, a greater portion of the world's population lives in cities, and this urbanization trend brings numerous challenges and opportunities to society. Currently, planners, policy-makers and politicians bring a very narrow range of experience and scholarly data to their understandings of cities and urbanization. Our project is intended to broaden the horizon of relevant, useful, and rigorous comparative cases and concepts that can inform urban decision-making today and in the future. How do cities function for their residents, and what urban features are characteristic and vital to a sustainable future—socially and environmentally?

The empirical research of our project has led us to ***challenge established conceptions of historic or natural urban organizational forms*** within several scholarly disciplines, from planning to urban history. One example mentioned above is the effort by urban planners to improve cities through the creation of diverse neighborhoods, when historical and ancient examples suggest that socially homogeneous neighborhoods may be the norm throughout history because of the operation of both structural forces and individual choices. Our data do not contradict the idea that diverse urban neighborhoods are a worthwhile goal today, but they do suggest that efforts to promote such diversity need to take a broad range of forces or “drivers” into account (see the discussion above of our paper, “Ethnic and Class-Based Clustering Through the Ages: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Urban Social Patterns”).

In another example, we find that few premodern cities emphasized public access to parks and other greenspaces, yet these are a common element of urban planning today. Our work on urban open spaces has identified a wide variety of types and uses of such spaces in cities throughout history. Perhaps this expanded empirical perspective can help planners today design and create cities that are more livable and sustainable given contemporary social and economic patterns. Thus our wide comparative lens allows us to discover counter-intuitive patterns in neighborhoods, open spaces, and urban life in general. Publications of our basic research will continue to enhance the public and intellectual profile of SHESC and ASU.

***Innovative and transdisciplinary research*** are hallmarks of scholarly work in SHESC and ASU today. As made clear in the discussion above, the transdisciplinary nature of our project is one of its primary strengths and one of its unique features within urban studies today. Our focus on urban life beyond the confines of individual scholarly disciplines is starting to produce innovative and creative results, which will continue as the project moves forward in the following years.

Our work grapples with the complexity of cities and urban life today. Our basic research questions—including a focus on how neighborhoods and open space fit and function within cities, and how they impact people and are in turn generated or changed by people—are questions of complexity. As such they correspond well to ASU's vision for the new ***Complex Systems Initiative***. With a strong comparative empirical base, we are bringing together complexity theory with traditional urban theories.

Finally, we are particularly pleased with the growing ***student participation*** in the project—including graduate student researchers, undergraduate researchers, and our core of undergraduate volunteers. The training and intellectual enthusiasm generated by our project will generate benefits well into the future as these young scholars continue their participation in the urban research topics.

## Appendix 1: Biographical Sketches of Principal Investigators

**Christopher Boone** is an urban geographer who studies the social and environmental drivers and consequences of urbanization, particularly during the last 120 years. His research uses GIS, archival, and institutional analysis methods. In 2006, he co-authored *City and Environment*, an examination of urban environmental issues from ancient cities to the present. Boone holds a joint appointment as Associate Professor in the School of Human Evolution & Social Change and the School of Sustainability. <http://www.public.asu.edu/~cgboone/>

**George L. Cowgill** is a Mesoamericanist archaeologist who has conducted fieldwork and analysis at the central Mexican metropolis of Teotihuacan for four decades. In his work at this site he pioneered the use of quantitative techniques and databases in archaeology. In addition to numerous publications on Teotihuacan and Mesoamerica, Cowgill has also published on comparative early urbanism and various aspects of archaeological method and theory. He is Professor Emeritus in the School of Human Evolution & Social Change.

**Sharon L. Harlan** is a sociologist who studies class, gender, and ethnic inequalities in contemporary U.S. society. Her recent work is on interdisciplinary problems of social and environmental inequity brought about by rapid urbanization in the Phoenix, AZ region. She is the principal investigator of a project examining urban vulnerability to climate change as a dynamic feature of coupled natural and human systems that differentially place landscapes and people at risk from heat-related health problems in urban neighborhoods. She also directs the Phoenix Area Social Survey, which examines the impact of residential segregation on environmental inequalities. She is Associate Professor in the School of Human Evolution & Social Change. <http://shesc.asu.edu/harlan>

**Alison Kohn** recently received her PhD in anthropology from the University of Chicago. Her research is interdisciplinary, incorporating ethnographic, historical and archaeological methods in the comparative examination of urbanism and urbanization, particularly in colonial and postcolonial contexts. Her dissertation, "The Production of Urban Vernacular Space in a Postcolonial Context: City-Building and Social Transformation at the Margins of La Paz, Bolivia," explores emergent forms of urbanism through a close analysis of socio-material processes at the heart of today's inhabitant-driven neighborhood construction in Bolivia. In addition to long-term ethnographic research in La Paz, Alison has an ongoing archaeological research project in Southern France where she has been excavating an ancient port settlement inhabited from the 6th century BC to the 2nd century AD. Here her research examines the local socio-spatial implications of wider Mediterranean colonial relations (e.g. Greek and Roman) over the course of the site's long period of inhabitation..

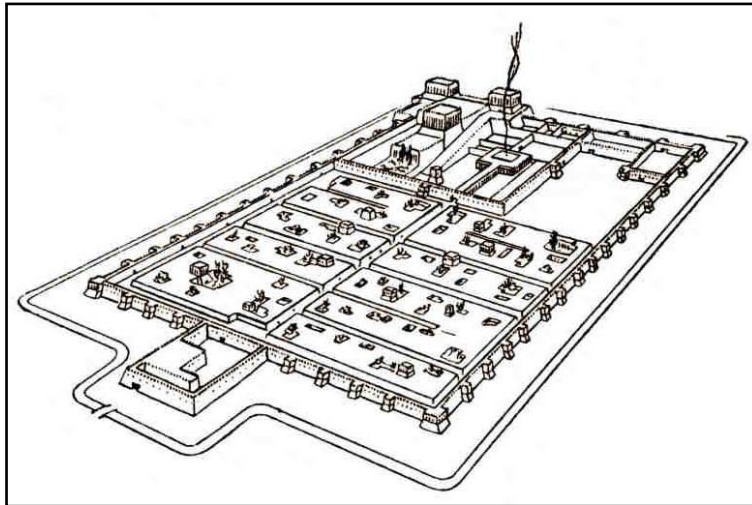
**Michael E. Smith** is an archaeologist who directs excavations at Aztec sites in central Mexico, focusing on issues of urbanization, imperialism, and household-level activities and conditions. He has published numerous books and scholarly articles on his fieldwork. Smith has also published on form and planning in ancient cities and is interested in the comparative analysis of preindustrial cities as well as comparisons between ancient and modern cities. He is Professor in the School of Human Evolution & Social Change. <http://www.public.asu.edu/~mesmith9/>

**Barbara L. Stark** is a Mesoamericanist archaeologist whose research focuses on ancient complex societies, including settlement patterns, tropical urbanism, and economy. She has directed field projects in south-central Veracruz, Mexico, funded by the National Science Foundation and other

agencies. Recent publications have focused on a variety of topics, including Nahua ethnicity, settlement patterns and gardening, archaeological survey methods, economic changes in Mesoamerica from Olmec times, the tropical urban capital Cerro de las Mesas, and craft production in south-central Veracruz. She is Professor in the School of Human Evolution & Social Change.

<http://shesc.asu.edu/stark>

**Abigail York** studies urban institutions in the social-ecological context with an emphasis on city growth and sustainability. She has a PhD in public policy with fields in political science theory and methodology, and environmental policy from Indiana University. Ongoing projects include studies of fragmentation in Western USA cities, local cross-border agreements, and coupling of water and land use institutions. She is Assistant Professor in the School of Human Evolution and Social Change and the Center for the Study of Institutional Dynamics. <http://shesc.asu.edu/york>



(Central Asian city of Topraq Qala)

## Appendix 2: Publicity Poster

The following poster, produced by Katrina Johnston, can be printed at 11 x 17 inches for posting, or it can be printed at 8.5 x 11 inches (as reproduced here) as a hand-out or flier.

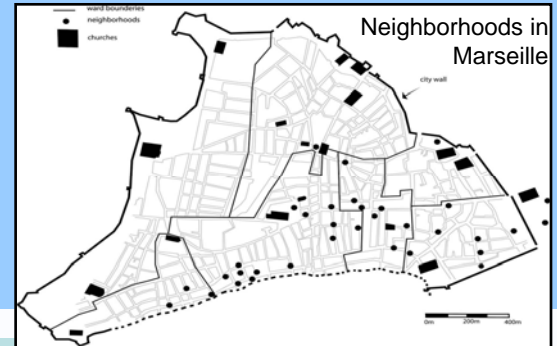
# Urban Organization through the Ages: Neighborhoods, Open Space, and Urban Life

A transdisciplinary research project at Arizona State University

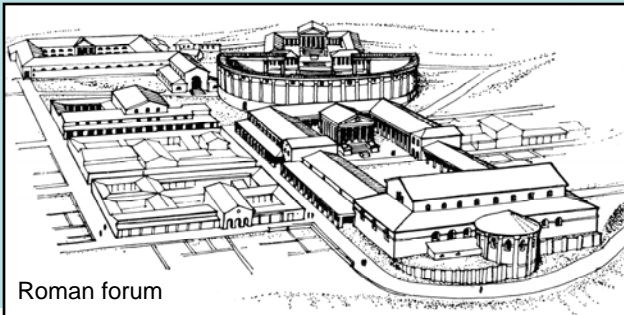


- A neighborhood is a residential zone that has considerable face-to-face interaction and is distinctive on the basis of physical and/or social characteristics.
- The spatial division of cities into districts or neighborhoods is one of the few universals of urban life from the earliest cities to the present.
- Their importance in urban life and organization comes from their social roles and composition.
- Important social features of neighborhoods are their status as communities with social ties among members (“neighbors”), and the diverse functional roles they play within a city.

## Neighborhoods



## Open Space



Roman forum

- Open space is defined here as any pedestrian accessible space, public or private, not covered by an architectural structure within city boundaries.
- Access to and use of open space is such an important component of urban life that is often taken for granted.
- Open spaces within urban areas have been critical sites of cultural, political and economic life through history.
- From the alleys of ancient Babylon to the cul-de-sacs of modern day Phoenix, the form and function of open spaces have both changed drastically and retained a host of similar features that allow comparisons across time and space.

Research questions include:

- In what ways do bottom-up processes (actions of local residents) and top-down processes (laws and actions by civic authorities) interact to generate change in urban life?
- What effects do urban population, area, and density have on the spatial and social dynamics of neighborhoods and open spaces?
- How are social parameters like class, wealth, ethnicity, race and religion patterned by neighborhood, and how do these affect urban life?
- All of these questions are relevant for cities throughout time, and through closer inspection, will help to improve urban life in the present.

### Principal Investigators:

• Christopher G. Boone  
• George L. Cowgill  
• Sharon L. Harlan  
• Alison Kohn

• Michael E. Smith  
• Barbara L. Stark  
• Abigail York

### Student Participants:

• Ben Stanley  
• Katrina Johnston  
• Juliana Novic  
• Cinthia Carvajal

## Urban Life



For more information visit our website at: <http://cities.asu.edu>, or email one of the

Principal Investigators.