Economic Sustainability Meets Social Inclusion: The Implications of the Municipal Identification Card Program in the City of Oakland, California.

Author:

Michael L. Johnson Jr.

B.A. Social Relations; University of California, Riverside, 2006

THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

In

Community Development

in the

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

Approved:

Frank Hirtz, Committee Chair

Jonathan London, Member

Chris Benner, Member

2012

Table of Contents

<u>Abstract</u>

Cities around the country are experimenting with city ID cards as a way of incorporating undocumented immigrants and others into civic life. Historic processes of urbanization in these cities have created fragmented notions of belonging and citizenship. Some individuals in cities are excluded from civic life for a host of reasons, including lack of valid identification and/or a lack of access to basic financial services. This lack of access within cities has very important implications for public safety and economic growth, for example.

City ID card programs are thought to encourage the reporting of crime, slum conditions, and labor violations among the undocumented population. If structured more comprehensively, however, they have the potential to benefit a wider constituency by interrupting more forms of social exclusion. Specifically, they have the potential to also benefit: the unbanked, transgender individuals, and even local businesses and local consumers.

This paper is a retrospective study about the coalition that created such a comprehensive city identification card in Oakland, California. The Oakland Municipal Identification Card Program (OMICP) combines an identification card with prepaid debit card functionality. It also has the programmatic capability to add: local currency, medical records, and buy-local incentive programs.

This paper is concerned with finding out how city ID card programs might be structured and implemented in ways that are most effective for cities. As cities consider ID card programs, it is the hope of this paper to: illuminate the reasons why these programs have proliferated in recent years, explore Oakland's process as a case study in developing city identification card programs, and provide information which other practitioners in cities might use to craft similar programs. Finally, this paper was written by an "insider" in both Oakland's city government as well as the coalition that pushed for the program. In that respect, the paper's intention is to demonstrate that these programs can benefit diverse

constituencies, make cities more livable for all residents, and can be structured to address a variety of needs faced by residents in municipalities.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the first decade of the 21st Century, cities around the country began experimenting with city identification card programs. The arguments behind these programs have been complex. They have all, however, centered on the fact that processes of urbanization in the 20th and 21st centuries have created cities in which there exist populations who have been locked out of participation in the civic and economic mainstream. This lack of access is due primarily to their: citizenship statuses, gender identities, and/or lower socioeconomic statuses. As policy interventions, these city identification card programs seek to interrupt the forms of social and economic exclusion that negatively impact the most vulnerable residents in cities, namely: undocumented residents, transgender residents, and unbanked residents.

Organization of this Paper

This paper is structured in such a way as to first illuminate the arguments for comprehensive city identification card programs. For the purposes of this discussion, a comprehensive card program would mean, at the very minimum, that card users would have the option of using the card as a prepaid debit card as well as a form of identification. As will be discussed later, this single addition to the card can expand the card's user base by including unbanked individuals, local merchants, and consumers who shop locally.

After a review of the arguments for comprehensive city identification card programs, the paper then delves into the social history that necessitated such card programs in the first place. Socio-historical processes of: segregation, ghettoization, grassroots resistance, immigration patterns, and changes in

processes of capitalist accumulation are all explored for the purposes of connecting them to the emergent social needs that these identification card programs seek to address.

While these socio-historical processes happened on a national scale, they are discussed in this paper in the context of the San Francisco Bay Area and the City of Oakland in particular. The City of Oakland is given the primary focus in this paper because the most comprehensive identification card program legislation, the OMICP, came out of it. Oakland and the OMICP also received a disproportionate amount of focus in this paper because I was heavily involved in, and intimately connected to, the political processes that ultimately gave rise to it.

From there, follows a literature review focused on how these card programs have become manifest in a number of U.S. cities. In that section, the paper connects the processes of crafting and implementing these programs to the literature on social inclusion and "Just Growth", specifically. *Social inclusion*, as defined in this paper, encompasses economic inclusion and refers to the means by which traditionally marginalized residents are able to more fully participate in civic life and/or attain greater financial security through access to valid identification and cheaper, mainstream financial services. *Just Growth* refers to a framework in which the imperatives of social inclusion and equity have been coupled with strategies to facilitate sustainable economic growth.

Essentially, the literature review argues that these card programs, especially when they are made comprehensive with the addition of a prepaid debit component, are theoretically grounded in a Just Growth framework. That is to say that these card programs seek to address the twin imperatives of economic growth and social inclusion in the cities in which they exist. It should, however, be noted that while these programs are an example of a Just Growth strategy, Just Growth is concerned with metropolitan regions as opposed to this paper's exclusive focus on metropolitan cities.

In the "Methods" Section, the paper identifies Participatory Action Research (PAR) or "a form of service-learning in which the beneficiaries of the research have significant control over their participation,

the priorities of the research, and even the questions that are asked" (Lofland 2006) as the method that most closely resembles the way in which I was involved in the process of creating the OMICP. It also reviews some of the opportunities as well as some of the obstacles that seem to be inherent in using PAR as a methodology.

Later, in the "Results" section, the paper looks retrospectively at the political process of creating the OMICP. The section details how: macroeconomic forces (specifically fiscal crisis); Oakland's micro-political climate; and multi-ethnic, multi-issue community organizing transformed the initial ID-only card concept into the comprehensive card program that currently exists.

Finally, the paper concludes by attempting to use the process of creating the OMICP and other city identification card programs to answer the question of how cities can most efficiently structure these programs. The section ends with a review focused on how activists and government officials can use the lessons learned from this retrospective analysis to structure identification card programs in other cities.

Arguments in Favor of City Identification Card Programs

City Identification Card Programs and Undocumented Individuals

By establishing these identification card programs for the aforementioned populations, cities are also acting in their own self-interests. For instance, undocumented immigrants that live within cities are much less likely than their documented counterparts to report criminal activity out of fear of deportation. They may, in turn, rely on gangs and vigilante justice instead of working with local law enforcement on public safety issues. In terms of survival, these same individuals are systematically made more likely to rely on the informal and illegal economies; from selling food without proper permits to prostitution and drug trafficking (Smith 2002).

These activities not only limit a city's tax base, they can also increase public safety costs borne by law enforcement agencies within cities. For those reasons, it makes sense to provide proper identification to city residents regardless of their national citizenship status; especially considering that millions of undocumented individuals will continue to live in American cities despite the "illegality" of their doing so[1].

City Identification Card Programs and Transgender Individuals

Cities also benefit by establishing programs for residents whose lived gender does not match their sex at birth. Their gender identity is described as "transgender" because their gender identity varies from majority practice and traditional cultural expectations. These expectations link sex inextricably to gender identity. Institutional discrimination around transgender identities often means that transgender people will lack valid identification just like the undocumented.

Transgender people of limited means or formal education, specifically, may not be able to navigate the roughly eight Federal, state, and local bureaucracies necessary to change their name and sex on their state-issued identification[2]. If they are able to successfully navigate these bureaucracies, they may still be unable to afford the hundreds or thousands of dollars needed to complete the entire process.

For many transgender people, especially male-to-female transgender women, this can mean being forced to experience: violence, hostility, and discrimination when they have to utilize an identification card that unnecessarily highlights the dissonance between their sex at birth and their lived gender. Employers, potential landlords, law enforcement officials and others are allowed frequent opportunities to discriminate against them due to this contradictory status on their state-issued identification.

---

[1] Pew Research Center. "Undocumented Immigrants in the U.S." 2009.
<http://pewresearch.org/databank/dailynumber/?NumberID=778>
[2] Transgender Law Center. 2012. "Changing Legal Identity Documents in California"
<http://transgenderlawcenter.org/issues/id/changing-legal-identity-documents-in-california>

Transgender women of color, in particular, are often forced into high-risk sex work, drug sales, and other illegal or informal economic activities in order to secure economic viability outside of the formal economy. This reliance on survival sex work has been, at least partially, implicated in the fact that 25% of transgender women in the U.S. are HIV-positive whereas 0.5% of the general U.S. population is HIV-positive[3].

The incentive for cities to establish identification card programs that eliminate the "sex" category is clear. By simply removing that category, they can open up opportunities for housing, employment, and institutional access for one more resident population. Through city identification card programs, cities can provide tangible proof that transgender people should not be treated as second-class citizens and potentially reduce the numbers of transgender women who are forced to rely on high-risk survival sex.

Not only could this reduce STI and HIV rates (especially in the hardest hit communities of color), it could also lower law enforcement costs like those associated with the detainment and arrest of people who lack valid identification and certain prostitution arrests. Programs that attempt to increase the inclusion of transgender people, such as the OMICP, can even lower healthcare costs through preventing some of the HIV infections that are directly and indirectly the result of having no valid identification. Poignancy is added to the argument when one considers that taxpayers often foot the bill for the HIV-related products and services for the poorest and most likely victims of the disease. Each one of these highly preventable infections is estimated to cost roughly $400,000 for a lifetime of treatment[4]. Any program that can potentially intervene against these disproportionate rates of HIV infection, especially given our collective fiscal emergency, is surely worth some consideration.

There are at least three more types of people within cities that might benefit from the establishment of these programs if they are structured more comprehensively. Specifically, if "open-loop"

---

[3] Ibid.
[4] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2012. "HIV Cost-Effectiveness" <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/preventionprograms/ce/index.htm>

prepaid debit card functionality is added to identification cards. This would involve adding the capacity to use the card much like a prepaid debit card where money can be loaded onto it and subsequently spent at any retailer that accepts debit cards. With this dual capacity, these cards can become attractive to those who lack access to mainstream bank accounts, a.k.a. "the unbanked", local merchants, and residents who shop locally.

City Identification Cards and the Unbanked

The unbanked within cities have a financial interest in the establishment of such a comprehensive card. Currently, many without bank accounts rely on check cashing, bill payment, and financial remittance establishments which are often concentrated in the poorest communities. A person lacking access to mainstream banking services (like check cashing and bill payment services) can end up paying more than five times the amount in fees than they would pay at a bank or credit union[5].

Further, anyone who attempts to open an account at a bank or credit union has their personal information run through a ChexSystems Database. If one is found to have past due balances at one or more financial institutions, they are disallowed from opening a simple checking or savings account. By virtue of endemic poverty and a lack of financial education in some of these communities, larger percentages of people in poor and minority communities have negative ChexSystems reports and are precluded from establishing these, very basic, accounts.

The disproportionately minority and unbanked population within cities is probably the least likely to be able to pay more in fees simply to access financial services. This situation benefits the owners of the check cashing, remittance, and bill payment establishments as it sucks the financial life out of community members forced to rely on them. This means that the poorest citizens, who would most likely use that lost

---

[5] City of Oakland's "Bank on Oakland Program Fact Sheet". 2009.
<http://bankonoakland.ca.gov/BankAccounts/NeedAccount/index.htm>

revenue to make purchases that stimulate the local economy, are instead forced to cut back in other areas in order to remain financially viable.

In the midst of the "Great Recession" and a less than stellar recovery, there are potentially many more individuals within cities in the unfortunate position of relying on check cashing, bill payment, and remittance establishments for basic financial services. By adding prepaid debit card functionality to these identification card programs, cities have the potential to ensure that their poorest citizens have less exploitative banking options and potentially more revenue to spend locally.

City Identification Card Programs and Local Merchants/Consumers

It is not just the unbanked that could benefit from the addition of prepaid debit card functionality, however. Local merchants and consumers would have a financial stake in these dual card programs as well. Merchants that agree to serve as a "loading station" where citizens can deposit cash onto their cards are often able to earn a small percentage of the fee charged for this service. The larger the number of citizens loading their cards locally, the more revenue merchants can potentially generate as a loading station. With coordinated efforts linking business communities and local government, this revenue could be used to provide exclusive discounts or giveaways for consumers who shop locally; thus rewarding participation in the card programs and making the card more attractive to many more local consumers.

More Potential for Comprehensive City Identification Card Programs

Although these card programs have not yet become ubiquitous in cities throughout the United States, there are a number of future uses already being imagined for them based on card program

legislation in New Haven, Connecticut; San Francisco, California; and Oakland, California. Adding functionality to these programs is meant to ensure that the majority of residents in cities have a use for these cards. This ensures a diverse user base and a card that does not become a mark of stigma.

As witnessed in the cities aforementioned, these cards could serve also as: high school and college identification cards, medical records storage devices, stored value cards for a local currency, public transportation payment cards, discount cards for buy-local programs, and can grant access to a city's events and services. These additions could further increase the pool of card applicants and simultaneously render impractical attempts to stigmatize card users who may be undocumented, transgender, or unbanked.

A Bit of Caution

Though the arguments for these programs are intriguing, it should be noted that Oakland's card program, upon which this paper is heavily weighted, is not yet in operation. New Haven's program is the closest program to the type of comprehensive identification card advocated by this work; although one can only use the New Haven card with a limited number of participating retailers. Since the card described does not exist, there is the potential that the benefits will not accrue exactly as they are described in this paper. For instance, participation may not be as stellar as imagined, there may be problems associated with card usage that take time to be resolved, there may continue to be barriers for certain marginalized communities in accessing these cards, and; most importantly, these cards cannot possibly rectify a long history of oppression and marginalization suffered (and constantly resisted) by the communities targeted.

Those disclaimers aside, this paper argues that comprehensive identification card programs are a small way in which cities might intervene against those processes that continue to push the groups targeted, and still others to the margins of social and economic life. In that regard these card programs,

and the universal benefits that they imply, can help cities become more livable and sustainable spaces for all residents.

Chapter 2: Historical Background

The history to be explored in this section attempts to provide background information on some of the social issues that city identification card programs, like the OMICP, hope to mitigate. The history which is most relevant to the OMICP includes: racial oppression and resistance, dramatic changes in processes of capitalist accumulation, and oppression of LGBT communities. Simply put, without an understanding of these facets of history, one cannot fully understand the rationale behind establishing identification card programs like the OMICP nor their potential impacts.

For instance, by what processes did there come to be groups of people in cities that cannot obtain valid identification? By what processes did there come to be people who can only rely on the most predatory financial institutions? What happened historically to make certain populations socially and economically marginalized relative to others? And, finally, what triggered some of the most marginalized residents in cities to organize and advocate for these card programs?

While information from a host of cities will be used to broaden the discussion on these socio-historical processes, the lion's share of the information will be most relevant to historical processes that took place in Oakland and the San Francisco Bay Area. It should be noted that analyses of history are dynamic and the processes that will be explored do not constitute an entire history at all. Indeed, these historical processes have certainly influenced and been influenced by still more processes. Far from being comprehensive, instead this section simply seeks to illuminate those historical patterns most germane to both the arguments for city identification card programs, like the OMICP, and the processes by which these programs became political realities.

Racial Oppression's Linkage to the OMICP

A long history of racial oppression has created a situation in which there are huge disparities across race in terms of: institutional access, household wealth, life chances, health outcomes and other social indicators of well-being. The OMICP and other card programs attempt to mitigate some of the worst effects of the first two disparities mentioned.

For instance, by providing a form of identification that can give the undocumented (the vast majority of whom are people of color, specifically Latinos) the ability to interact with municipal institutions without fear of deportation or detainment, these programs seek to empower those people of color who have been historically disallowed from mainstream civic protections and participation. Similarly, by providing access to less exploitative banking services, these programs seek to make the financial playing field more level for the disproportionate number of people of color (especially African-Americans) who have historically had unequal access to the financial system. Again, addressing these disparities in access benefits cities by encouraging more residents to become a part of the formal economy, increasing the real incomes and purchasing power of city residents, and discouraging reliance on vigilante justice and predatory financial institutions[6].

Essentially, past forms of racial oppression have created disproportionate numbers of undocumented and unbanked residents of color in cities. How African-American and Latino communities came to be disproportionately overrepresented as unbanked and undocumented within American cities is the subject of the rest of this section. Oakland's somewhat generalizable experience, beginning at the start of America's involvement in World War II, will be used as the case study in this historical examination.

---

[6] Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. 2003. "The Importance of Check Cashing Businesses to the Unbanked: Racial/Ethnic Differences"
<http://qa.chicagofed.org/digital_assets/publications/working_papers/2003/wp2003-10.pdf>

The Roots of Undocumented and Unbanked Status

The 1941 desegregation of the defense industry by President Franklin D. Roosevelt drove African-Americans to Oakland by the thousands to take advantage of living-wage, defense jobs that had not been previously available to them. During World War II and well after, African-Americans were able to make significant gains in terms of employment and income. However, racist governmental policies and practices ensured that they would be disallowed from participating in mass suburbanization and wealth accumulation in the Bay Area.

One of the most notorious of these racist practices was "redlining". As a term, redlining denotes the practice by which the Federal Housing Administration systematically denied insuring loans in parts of Oakland and other areas based, in large part, on the presence of African-Americans. Without Federal guarantees on mortgages, it became financially risky for banks to lend in Oakland, especially its majority African-American flatland areas (Oakland's hills, which were majority white were deemed safer, however). This process artificially raised risk and interest rates on loans that might have been made in Oakland's flatlands. Those African-Americans that had no choice but to rent or buy in Oakland paid much more for their housing and accumulated far less wealth through home equity that their white, suburbanized counterparts did (Conley 1999).

Lower interest rates and payments on mortgages in the suburbs, annual mortgage interest tax deductions, and the ability to use one's appreciating suburban home as collateral for other investments all represent "bootstraps" that were given to white residents living in Oakland's hills and surrounding suburbs. African-Americans lacked these bootstraps and many were forced to rent at high costs, were not able to deduct their rent payments from their annual tax bill, and were disallowed from participating in other bootstrapping programs under the G.I. Bill (Jackson 1985).

Even middle-class African-Americans and pillars of their communities could not use their assets to buy their way into Oakland's surrounding hills and suburbs. Their attempts to buy homes in these areas would ultimately meet: intimidation, physical violence and a myriad of restrictive laws and covenants designed to systematically ensure an all-white population.

The very construction of those suburbs also came at a high cost to Latinos, namely Mexican Americans in the East Bay Area. Before mass suburbanization, the modern-day suburbs of Hayward, San Lorenzo and others were very small, rural towns. Hayward, specifically, consisted mostly of agricultural lands that had been worked for generations by Mexican-Americans even before the Mexican-American War in the late 1840s. Cheap money, in the form of Federal mortgage guarantees after the war, soon transformed these agricultural lands into suburban greenfield communities.

When land values rose to a point in which it was more efficient to build homes than grow food, many of these Mexican-American communities were displaced. Suburban growth all over the Bay Area either disrupted Mexican-American communities or provided them places to live and work outside of the rural sectors; places called "colonias" or "colonies" in Spanish. Their only other alternative was to reside in near slum conditions in a deteriorating Oakland. Essentially, the majority of the Mexican-American population was forced into what became unincorporated areas; which lacked basic services, sanitation, and amenities (Jackson 1985). They too, were locked out of participating in the golden age of suburbanization and the copious wealth that suburbanization entailed (Self 2003).

The ways in which African-Americans and Latinos were systematically denied opportunities to accumulate wealth in the form of homeownership or geographically dislocated from their communities based on their race, is enough to justify some policy intervention for these past injustices. Instead of waiting for that policy intervention to materialize, however, these communities continuously organized and agitated for the first-class citizenship they had been denied in the postwar years.

The social, economic, and political marginalization; heightened by processes of suburbanization, bred resistance and militancy grew in Oakland's communities of color in the 1960s and 1970s. This militancy itself grew as African-Americans, Latinos, and growing numbers of other ethnic minorities in Oakland sought creative ways to undo the decline and squalid conditions that began to characterize living in Oakland's flatlands. This militancy was linked to the larger Civil Rights Movement, like an appendage, as the organizing and political agitation was not confined to the American South as typically imagined (Self 2003).

The tumult and political agitation of that era ushered in: a new social contract, a wave of increases to the social wage, and concomitant flows of capital toward Oakland's impoverished communities. Specifically, movements for Black Power, both in Oakland and beyond, forced President Lyndon B. Johnson's hand. From the president's pen came the "Great Society" Programs that: created civil rights legislation, expanded Social Security Insurance, funded mass transportation projects in the Bay Area, established Medicare and Medicaid, and declared a "War on Poverty" in America among other things (Self 2003).

The Great Society programs had many downfalls, chief among them the fact that they stressed equality of opportunity over equality of condition. Programs sought to help African-Americans and poor people of color to compete in a system in which much of the wealth had already been allocated to upper and middle-class suburban whites by previous programs and policies. Equality of opportunity was much more palatable to suburban whites and those in Oakland's hills who would not be asked to give up any of their wealth in the name of this supposed equality (Conley 1999).

The War on Poverty was, perhaps, the most difficult part of the President's vision of a Great Society to accomplish. For instance, as soon as War on Poverty funds made their way to Oakland, the city's urban regime sought to usurp those funds without carrying out the social mandates attached to them (Self 2003). Also, the civil rights legislation that came with the Great Society opened up opportunities for Oakland's

growing African-American, middle-class population to leave the squalid conditions of Oakland's flatlands for greener grasses in the hills and the still-growing suburbs. This process sucked even more capital out of Oakland and further ensured that only the poorest African-Americans would be concentrated within Oakland's flatlands.

A final blow to the War on Poverty and the Great Society was the white, conservative, backlash against these increases in the social wage for minorities and the poor. For instance, white industrialists accelerated the pace of deindustrialization by offshoring more living-wage manufacturing work to the American and Global South. Oakland's manufacturing base crumbled and thousands of jobs disappeared. Add to this the fact that once President Johnson was out of office, the next president, President Nixon, ended the War on Poverty. His administration hurriedly started the work of reducing aid to cities like Oakland; work that would continue up until the present. Oakland, with an economic base shrunken by concentrated poverty, deindustrialization, and cuts in Federal Aid came to rely more on the state and county to meet the needs of its population.

In the context of the severe recession of the early 1970s, Oakland in this period increasingly became associated with poor African-Americans, and placed under regional, state, and national scrutiny and contempt. To add insult to injury, Alameda County (of which Oakland is the seat) raised property taxes in order to meet budget shortfalls caused by precipitous declines in Federal aid and tax revenues. Unlike the past, these taxes became unbearable and cognitively delinked from increases in service provision (Self 2003). The seeds of a white, suburban, "Tax Revolt" (as it came to be known) were sown in this period. In San Leandro, Hayward, and other suburban East Bay communities at this time, there was a growing movement for lower taxes, smaller government, local control, and individual rights (Self 2003).

Political agitation of this sort, culminated in a major victory: the amendment of the California Constitution under Proposition 13 (a.k.a. the "People's Initiative to Limit Taxation) in 1978. Among the changes ushered in by Proposition 13 were: the freezing of property tax assessments at their 1975 levels,

limited increases in property taxes to no more than 2% per year, prohibition of reassessment to a new base-year property value without new construction or changes in ownership, and requiring a 2/3 majority vote in both houses of the California legislature to increase taxes or state revenues collected (Citrin and Sears 1985). This tax revolt came at the expense of those in Oakland's flatlands and other impoverished California communities that would see drastic cuts in the social safety net and continuing social and economic marginality.

Throughout this time, militancy and resistance continued in the form of movements for African-American, Latino, and Asian-American political power. The most popular organization in Oakland at this time, representing the interests of all oppressed people of color, was the Black Panther Party for Self Defense (BPPSD) (Self 2003). The BPPSD, headquartered in Oakland, created the organizational infrastructure to link the struggles of all oppressed people in Oakland and elsewhere.

Perhaps, one of the best examples of the ways in which the BPPSD intertwined the struggles of oppressed people in Oakland was their instigation and organization of protests around the building of the Bay Area Rapid Transit System (BART). Through the BPPSD, members of the growing Latino and Asian populations in Oakland marched, protested and organized alongside African-Americans during the construction of BART in the early 1970s.

The impetus behind the protests and collaboration was the fact that African-American, Chinese, and Latino communities were being disproportionately displaced and geographically divided by the construction of the high-speed rail system designed to whisk suburbanites from their homes to Downtown Oakland and San Francisco. These same minority communities were also being denied access to the living-wage jobs that were being created as a result of the project. Their protests were successful in drawing attention to these inequities and in forcing BART's board to hire minorities for construction jobs or be considered ineligible for post-civil rights Federal transportation funding.

The multi-ethnic community organizing facilitated by the BPPSD was so successful, in fact, that the organization's power came to be seen as "the number one threat to the nation's internal security" according to the FBI. With that Cold War era classification, FBI personnel were directed to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize" the activities of the BPPSD and other civil rights organizations in Oakland and elsewhere. Covert operations, assassinations, trumped up charges, and myriad forms of violence would characterize the government's response to the BPPSD and its activities. With the BPPSD and other progressive organizations crushed under the weight of this governmental assault, Oakland and other cities lost key institutional infrastructure for multi-ethnic collaboration and social justice organizing.

The type of multi-ethnic organizing exhibited by the BPPSD created the blueprint for the type multi-ethnic, multi-issue organizing and political agitation for the OMICP. In the OMICP's case, mostly African-American and Latino activists began to link issues that disproportionately impacted their communities to a solution that could simultaneously address some of the most acute issues; a city identification/debit card. These activists had the full understanding that, although these issues were concentrated in their communities, there were many others who could potentially benefit from access to identification and mainstream banking services. Two of the major differences between the BPPSD's organizing and the organizing around the OMICP are: 1) it was both: possible to involve certain minority elites in the business and policy world into that organizing, and 2) there was no Federal campaign directed against the coalition that pushed for the card.

The campaign undertaken by the Federal Government against the BPPSD and other civil rights organizations was by no means the final blow to these minority communities. For practical reasons we will conduct only a brief overview of those historical themes, tied to racial oppression, which have necessitated and currently justify interventions like the OMICP.

In the midst of: continuing suburbanization, black middle-class flight, deindustrialization, and a governmental assault on racial justice organizations, emerged a new economy centered around the production and distribution of crack-cocaine in Oakland's flatlands. The supply of crack steadily increased in Oakland during what became known as the "Crack-Epidemic" starting in the mid-1980s and lasting about a decade. Crack emerged as a commodity that could provide: employment, rapid upward mobility, and economic "freedom" to entrepreneurs in the illegal economy. A void was filled, one that produced short-term profits and long-term community fragmentation.

Crack-cocaine, concomitant crime in Oakland, and historical racism combined into a new discourse in which Oakland's flatlands were placed under national contempt once again. Crack almost single-handedly turned Oakland's ghetto into an intensely charged symbol and patterned discourses around: crime, safety, social welfare, familial organization, and social disintegration (Forman and Watkins 2012). This crisis discourse was a political expedient in and of itself as it ideologically facilitated the expansion of both the Federal Government's War on Drugs and California's Prison Industrial Complex.

With very few questions raised around the ways in which cocaine, in the form of crack, had flown from Central America to suddenly penetrate ghettos like Oakland's flatlands; on October 27, 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Anti-Drug Abuse Act[7]. Among other things, this legislation set the stage for a disparity in Mandatory Minimum Sentencing Laws in which a person caught with as little as five grams of crack had to be sentenced to a minimum of five years in prison; whereas it would take 100 times that amount in powder cocaine to generate the same penalty. Since blighted urban areas in Oakland and other cities were the only areas where customers were *allowed* to transact business with street-level dealers; and since young, unemployed, African-American men, predominated as street dealers in Oakland, the stage was set for a huge jump in the number of men who would undergo long periods of incarceration based on their easy access to a cheaper form of cocaine.

---

[7] Public Broadcasting Service's (PBS) Frontline "Thirty Years of America's Drug War: A Chronology". <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/drugs/cron/>

These unemployed, African-American men, who in a previous generation might have found stability in a middle-class manufacturing job, would be sent to California's prisons by the thousands. While incarcerated, these men were not only unable to financially contribute to their flatland communities, in many instances; their incarceration actually cost their families. Business elites profited by using California's prisons to outsource many jobs in the manufacturing sector to these incarcerated men at payrates ranging from $.30 to $.95 per hour.

In the context of a formal economy that had virtually no use for their labor, California ultimately locked away hundreds of thousands of African-Americans and many of them were originally from (or had ties to) Oakland. They returned to Oakland's flatlands with even fewer options for economic viability and social mobility. The rehabilitation or "recycling" of prisoners gave way to disposal by the late 1980s (Baumann 2004). Ex-convicts, especially African-American and Latino ex-convicts, faced the most limited job prospects and a higher likelihood of recidivism than their white counterparts (Pager and Quillian 2005). Meanwhile California led the boom in the construction of prisons as it slashed education and social welfare budgets. California, during this period, began building what would become the third largest prison system in the nation, spending roughly $5.7 billion per year to incarcerate 161,000 people.

When the smoke cleared, the vast majority of those sentenced (over 100,000 Californians) would be African-Americans and Latinos-convicted and finally sentenced for nonviolent offenses. They in turn would make up 26% of a California prison population already bloated by the War on Drugs[8]. The wealth that the War on Drugs and the Prison Industrial Complex siphoned off from Oakland's flatlands, in the form of the labor of these men and women, is immeasurable; as were the effects to social reproduction and investments of human capital in these same communities.

While a great number of men (and some women) languished in California's prisons, those African-American, mostly female, heads of household continued to be stigmatized within the crisis discourse that

---

[8] Legislative Analyst's Office. 2005. "A Primer: Three Strikes-The Impact after More Than a Decade". <http://www.lao.ca.gov/2005/3_strikes/3_strikes_102005.htm>

continued to rage around familial organization in African-American communities. This branch of that crisis discourse facilitated the further unraveling of aid programs designed for single mothers with children.

Specifically, academicians and politicians began to utilize social (Darwinist) science to vilify these women and eliminate benefits programs for them. For example, in 1984, Oscar Lewis and Charles Murray, developed a theory of the "Cycle of Welfare Dependency" where African-Americans were thought to be socialized in urban spaces that promoted dependency on welfare as opposed to gainful employment[9]. Other theorists such as Daniel Patrick Moynihan (prominent U.S. Senator and Sociologist) and E. Franklin Frazier blamed urbanization itself for the "disintegration of black folk culture" that ultimately led to families that were thought to be dysfunctional (Bradshaw 2007).

This discourse was given hegemony within the political community at all scales of government and culminated into the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 (Fang and Keane 2004). President Bill Clinton signed PRWORA and changed the notion of "welfare" or public assistance for the poor. Welfare went from being an entitlement program to a program mandating subsidized employment after two years of benefits. It also limited lifetime benefits to five years. In changing welfare into what has been described as "workfare", PRWORA as a policy further depressed the wages of workers, especially in communities like Oakland's flatlands.

Large corporations like McDonalds, however, received generous government subsidies to employ and "train" former welfare recipients (Collins 2006). Oakland residents already on the lowest rungs of the occupational ladder did not receive subsidized employment and could not reasonably compete with those on "workfare". This dynamic meant that demand for labor would soften and wages would be further

---

[9] Stanford University Fact Sheet. "Ideal Types of the 'Culture of Poverty' and its Implicit Alternative" <http://www.stanford.edu/~mrosenfe/urb_culture_of_poverty.htm>

depressed. Immigrants, especially Latino immigrants, in Oakland faced additional hurdles in trying to access public benefits under the PRWORA[10].

The largest growing immigrant population, at that time consisted of people immigrating to the U.S. from Latin America; with the majority of that overall population coming from Mexico. Many of the poorest and least educated migrated to the U.S. after passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994. After NAFTA's passage, studies indicate that between 800,000 and 1.3 million Mexican agricultural jobs were eliminated and, consequently, many of the men and women who lost these jobs had an incentive to seek employment opportunities to the north (Relinger 2010).

Many would land in Oakland and, in the simple process of making lives for themselves; they would become agents in historical processes of race-making and economic oppression of African-A American communities (Dear and Wolch 1993). BART (mentioned earlier) for example, worked with government officials in Bay Area suburbs to render more efficient the commute of Latino immigrant workers from Oakland. These suburbs had a particular interest in these workers because many were undocumented or "illegal". Without official status in the United States, they would accept employment arrangements at below minimum wage levels and tolerate humiliating and illegal labor conditions and arrangements (Anderson 2000).

Since they had none of the: power, privilege, protection, and prestige that U.S. citizens are presumed to have in the capitalist marketplace, their economic oppression could continue to benefit their suburban employers as a form of government subsidy. By having a system in which some people can exist with an "illegal" status, the social structure creates a situation whereby the wages of this "illegal population" can plummet to the level of basic subsistence (Arnott and McMillen 2006).

---

[10] Social Security Online: Compilation of the Social Security Laws. 1996. "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996" <http://www.ssa.gov/OP_Home/comp2/F104-193.html>

The economic implications of an "illegal status" are clear; it artificially increased the levels of unemployment for the documented population in Oakland's flatlands (Arnott and McMillen 2006). Without institutional infrastructure (like the existence of the BPPSD, for instance) to promote multi-ethnic unity outside of the capitalist marketplace, African-American and Latino communities in Oakland were encouraged to deal with their particular forms of marginalization separately and to compete against each other in an economic race to the bottom.

In the first decade of the 21st century; the decade in which city identification cards came into existence, both minority groups in Oakland would be given a more pronounced push toward the bottom. This push came by way of a combination of: historically low interest rates, decades of legislation aimed at increasing homeownership, and a largely deregulated (liberalized) market for credit and finance. Those factors coalesced into a highly speculative Oakland housing market. Capital and opportunity seemingly appeared out of thin air and thousands of mortgage loans and Home Equity Lines of Credit (HELOC) were created as financial products for those of limited financial means. The lion's share of the worst of these products went mostly to African-Americans and Latinos and mostly in Oakland's poorer flatland areas.

Starting in late 2006, however, this process began to unravel in Oakland's flatlands and dramatic increases in the numbers of foreclosures began to plague these communities. Oakland, like cities across the country witnessed: property abandonment, looting and vandalism of abandoned properties, mass displacement, and other social ills associated with a flood of foreclosures. A disproportionate number of African-Americans and Latinos in Oakland (and nationally) saw their primary source of wealth and stability ripped up from under their feet; later to be snapped up by wealthy investors who paid pennies on the dollar for these properties[11].   Oakland's wealthier and whiter communities in the hills, however,

---

[11] California Reinvestment Coalition. 2010. "From Foreclosure to Re-Redlining: How America's Largest Financial Institutions Devastated California Communities" <http://www.calreinvest.org/system/resources/BAhbBlsHOgZmSSI8MjAxMS8wNC8xN1

escaped the worst effects of this process as the number of "toxic" loans and financial products made there were dwarfed by those *allowed* to be made in the flatlands.

As foreclosures began to glut the market, construction and the jobs that it provided all but came to a halt. Simultaneously, city and county tax revenues began to plummet just as social need rose dramatically. The State of California, the County of Alameda, and the City of Oakland began laying off workers at the lowest rungs of the occupational hierarchy as they sought to trim their expenses. So too, many within the undocumented Latino population saw employment opportunities (like day labor) in the informal economy all but disappear as recession gripped Oakland and the rest of the nation. This recession (or "anemic recovery") as an ongoing process, continues to have a disproportionate and devastating impact on those in the formal economy as well, especially African-Americans whose hard-won gains in governmental employment and wealth accumulation have vanished first and fastest (Jones 1999).

Today, the wealth of the median white household is 18 to 20 times that of the median Latino and African-American household, respectively[12]. This gap, itself, has been bloated by the most recent recession. Essentially, these two minority groups are more likely to be poor or in poverty than their white counterparts. Not only does this mean less wealth to leverage into investments in physical and human capital, it also means less wealth for basic survival in the capitalist marketplace. Without a financial cushion or legal citizenship status, many of the poorest individuals in Oakland's flatland communities are forced to focus only upon their day-to-day survival.

One of the clearest manifestations of this dynamic in the flatlands is the proliferation of check-cashing, remittance, and bill payment establishments in these areas. They have become so common

---

81NV8xNV82MzhfRm9yZWNsb3N1cmVfdG9fUmVfUmVkbGluaW5nLnBkZgY6BkVU/Foreclosure_to_Re_Redlining.pdf>
[12] Pew Research Center: Social and Demographic Trends. 2011. "Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs between Whites, Blacks, Hispanics". http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/07/26/wealth-gaps-rise-to-record-highs-between-whites-blacks-hispanics/

because many in these neighborhoods owe mainstream financial institutions debts (that may or may not be legitimate) from past dealings and are rendered ineligible to open accounts at other institutions. Also, the concentration of poverty in the flatlands makes banks less willing to open branches because of concentrated poverty and the costs associated with a higher likelihood of street crime. Finally, increased regulation around bank fee structures means banks are becoming increasingly unwilling to work with higher-risk and lower-income customers (Arnott and McMillen 2006). All of this ultimately means that the poorest residents, impoverished by design, will be much more likely to rely on the most expensive financial services in Oakland's flatlands. What little wealth they are able to create will be slowly siphoned away over time in exorbitant fees.

The undocumented face additional hurdles; not only will they have to rely on exploitative financial services; they also face the possibility of being robbed with virtual impunity. Although Oakland is a "Sanctuary City" where the police cannot ask questions about one's immigration status, the undocumented have no tangible form of U.S. identification to show law enforcement. Fear of detainment and deportation is enough to dissuade many from reporting crimes like: robbery, assault, nonpayment of wages, slum conditions, and other quality-of-life issues.

With this socio-historical context in mind, it makes sense that the OMICP was created as an intervention against processes that continue to exploit these two groups. In providing identification and access to mainstream financial services, the OMICP also has the potential to protect some of the existing wealth in Oakland's poorest communities and encourage the reporting of the criminal activity that threatens long-term economic growth and safety in these communities.

While historical racism and processes of capitalist accumulation have all had negative effects on Oakland, the Bay Area, and the United States as a whole, the OMICP and other city identification card programs can serve as effective, albeit small, interventions to address some of the most pressing social problems in the communities most impacted by those processes.

23

Oppression of LGBT Communities and the OMICP

While oppression of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender people and other sexual/gender minorities (otherwise known as "queer" people) has been a longstanding historical phenomenon, for the purposes of this section we will focus on about the last four decades and only on the experiences of transgender people. This focus is necessary as this population is, perhaps, the most overtly oppressed among these groups. Consequently, the OMICP specifically targets transgender people. The social need that the OMICP intends to ameliorate in the transgender community is, arguably, most acute for transgender women of color; specifically, African-American and Latina transgender people who identify as women but were born with male genitalia.

In 1969, the seeds of the modern LGBT rights movement were sown in what came to be known as the "Stonewall Riots". Essentially, after years of enduring police raids of bars frequented by queer people and intense social repression of non hetero-normative or gender-normative behavior, hundreds of people took to the streets to literally fight back against the police. The bar in which this took place was the Stonewall Inn and this triumph against the police helped to politicize queer people around the country and around the world[13].

Soon certain cities and regions around the country became hubs for queer identity politics and cultural production. The "capital" of this national queer community was San Francisco. Oakland, by virtue of close geographic proximity, could not help but be impacted by the growth in power and influence of the queer community.

There has not been an equal increase in visibility and access across the queer spectrum, unfortunately. For transgender people and transgender women of color in particular, hostility, discrimination, and violence are constant threats as they navigate the social world. So too, they face added discrimination by

---

[13] Columbia UniversityWeb Resources. Stonewall and Beyond: Lesbian and Gay Culture. 2011. "The Stonewall Riot and its Aftermath".
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/exhibitions/sw25/case1.html>

virtue of their color and/or citizenship status if they are African-American, Latino, or have undocumented status.

Perhaps one of the most pressing social indicators for this lack of social protection or status has to do with the hugely disparate rates of HIV infection among transgender women of color in Oakland and nationally. HIV began to affect large numbers of injection drug users, transgender women, and gay men in the 1980s and government at all levels failed to respond to the disease as a health crisis. HIV was a political disease, something that happened to "immoral others". As a result of not recognizing the disease as a national emergency, it was essentially *allowed* to spread, virtually unchecked, among the populations aforementioned. Today, transgender women of color lead all groups in terms of the percentage of their population infected by the disease[14]. There are several reasons why this is the case, including: discrimination in healthcare access, social stigma, reliance on sex work, high incidences of incarceration, and a lack of protections inside of prisons. Perhaps the last three factors put transgender women of color at the highest direct risk of acquiring HIV infection, specifically.

Sex work, for instance, is a form of employment that: can pay more than many jobs in the service industry, doesn't require any identification whatsoever, and allows transgender women to meet people who will validate their lived gender identity (as opposed to the many that they encounter who might incessantly seek to invalidate that gender identity). Many use the money they earn to make their physical appearance match their gender identity or even to secure valid identification. However, when stopped by the police, transgender women are arrested, detained for lack of valid identification, and often charged with prostitution. Indeed, not having valid identification, whether engaged in sex work or not, subjects transgender women to police harassment and possible arrest.

Those transgender women who are arrested and incarcerated within California's jails and prisons are then put in a place where they are given new opportunities to both contract and transmit HIV within these

---

[14] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2011. "HIV Among Transgender People" <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/transgender/>

highly segregated, veritable cesspools of disease where the incidences of HIV and other STDs are often triple their incidences in the general population[15]. With bans not only on clean needles but also on condoms within California's prison system, the chances of being exposed to HIV while in prison may be higher than being exposed to it outside of prison while working in the sex industry.

HIV, as we learned in the 1980s and 1990s, does not stay contained in "certain" communities. Instead it works its way through social networks and a high prevalence of the disease in transgender communities of color does not bode well for those larger communities of color, which have been devastated by the disease in Oakland, San Francisco and the rest of the nation.

The OMICP, in this context, is a step in the right direction. It cannot address the disparities in access to healthcare nor can it address much of the social stigma attached to transgender identity. Instead, it can provide a cheaper, less encumbering process by which transgender people might access valid identification in the City of Oakland. In that regard, it can reduce (for some) the reliance on sex work as a means of paying the exorbitant costs associated with applying for state identification. It can also allow transgender people, at least within city limits, to encounter employers, store clerks, landlords, law enforcement personnel and others that may require formal identification with less fear of discrimination or hostility.

For Oaklanders, the OMICP is a step in the right direction in terms of delegitimizing the imaginary gender binary that reinforces the social stigma of transgender people and others who do not fit neatly within that antiquated binary. Simply by producing an identification card that does not consider a gender category as a necessary component, the OMICP is a chance to challenge the interrelated systems of: sexism, homophobia and transphobia.

---

[15] Gay Men's Health Crisis. 2009. "HIV in U.S. Jails and Prisons: Building a National Dialogue for Change". <http://www.gmhc.org/files/editor/file/a_pa_prison_report0511%281%29.pdf>

Identification and Debit Cards as an Intervention

For the undocumented, the unbanked, transgender people and potentially many others, city identification card programs like the OMICP can increase access to public space and programs as well as the private market.

The previous segments of this chapter have explained the historical processes that necessitated these programs. It did not, however, explain the significance of identification cards and access to basic banking services in the modern world. Suffice it to say, it is axiomatic that our citizenship affords us our human rights in the modern world and that United States citizenship is chock full of privileges, protections, powers, and forms of prestige (Baumann 2004). Access to cheap, basic financial services and a privileged position within the global capitalist system are just two examples of what that citizenship entails.

Identification, then, allows governmental bodies and citizens in key positions a convenient way to determine who should be afforded the benefits of citizenship and who should not. Similarly, a relationship with a financial institution allows one to fully realize financial citizenship in the modern world; it is the precursor to financial survival and the accumulation of wealth over one's lifetime. How these thin pieces of plastic (identification and debit/bank cards) came to grant power and access to individual citizens is yet another complex topic. Suffice it to say that the ubiquity of these cards in the United States is a clear testament to their utmost importance in our social world.

Early Experiences with City Identification Card Programs

The early history of municipal identification card programs is important in helping to explain the ways in which the OMICP was shaped into its final form. In this section, the history of the first municipal ID card in New Haven will be covered, then San Francisco's card program and, finally, Oakland's.

Simply put, just as the historical processes described earlier in this paper created the need for interventions like the OMICP, early attempts in other cities helped to shape the political direction in which the OMICP went. The section also includes how the OMICP and other programs became political as factions developed both for and against them.

New Haven, Connecticut and the First City ID Card Program

For the purposes of this paper, we will first focus on the municipal identification program that developed in the City of New Haven, Connecticut. Their card program is the forbear and the prototype for other city identification card programs, including Oakland's.

The original card concept was originally suggested in a 2005 report entitled "A City to Model: Six Proposals for Protecting Public Safety and Improving Relationships between Immigrant Communities and the City of New Haven"[16]. The report was produced by three organizations: Junta for Progressive Action, Unidad Latina en Accion, and Yale Law School's Community Lawyering Clinic (CLC).

The report was prepared in March of 2005 for the City of New Haven to recommend strategies that could improve public safety and livability in the context of a rapidly growing Latino immigrant population; both documented and undocumented. At the time Latinos accounted for 50.3% of all Fair Haven (within New Haven) residents and they presented with special needs that compromised their access to civic participation[17]. The recommendations were an attempt to incorporate their needs into the city's agenda in order to give undocumented immigrants access to the continuous reproduction of urban space (Purcell 2002).

---

[16] Yale Law School, Junta for Progressive Action, and Unidad Latina en Accion. 2005. "A City to Model: Six Proposals for Protecting Public Safety and Improving Relationships between Immigrant Communities and the City of New Haven".
<http://www.newhavenindependent.org/archives/2005/10/A_City_to_Model.pdf>
[17] New Haven Independent. 2012.
<http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/id_card_anniversary/>

Public safety was the way in which the argument was framed and in that regard, several issues for residents came to light (that were also identified in Oakland later): there was a high incidence of robberies targeting immigrants who could not get bank accounts and had to carry cash; crimes were not being reported to law enforcement partly because many immigrants lacked valid identification; and rampant underpayment or nonpayment of wages by unscrupulous employers. All of these factors impacted public safety, economic activity, and the quality of life of all New Haven residents.

There were six proposals outlined in the report for improving immigrant incorporation in the City of New Haven, CT. They are as follows.

1) Notifying New Haven banks that customers can open accounts without Social Security numbers.
2) Creating a municipal identification card for the City of New Haven.
3) Developing a New Haven Police policy of non-enforcement of federal immigration laws.
4) Enforcing criminal wage laws through the New Haven Police Department.
5) Looking to best practices nationwide for improving police-community relations.
6) Creating an Office of Immigrant Affairs.

The focus of this paper, however, is on the second proposal; the creation of a municipal identification card. The cards were intended to: encourage civic engagement by allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain bank accounts, library cards and the like; encourage the reporting of crime by issuing legitimate identification to present to authorities; and curb the growth in crimes directed at the immigrant population.

The card was funded by a grant from the First City Fund Corporation in New Haven and generates revenue through fees associated with the card application process and the addition of new uses for the card. The card later came to incorporate a closed-loop debit component where up to $150 could be stored on the card for shopping with roughly 50 participating local retailers.

The establishment of this program in New Haven meant that a city agency would have to administer it. The city was also well aware that anti-immigrant sentiment, fueled by Latino immigrant replenishment, could jeopardize the program (Jimenez 2008).

Theoretically the card would only appeal to immigrants (especially the undocumented) and it could be subject to Freedom of Information Act requests by anti-immigrant groups. These groups could and would use the personal data collected to report those who applied for the card[18]. New Haven decided to maintain the confidentiality of the records under a legal loophole that gave the information a status similar to medical and personnel files. In order to institutionalize the card, New Haven linked it with city services and made it more attractive by incorporating the closed-loop debit component to it. Finally, the card was used for Yale students as a university identification card on its reverse.

These additions to the card's functionality: greatly enhanced the usefulness of the card for non-immigrant populations (thus increasing the pool of applicants and making requests for applicant data impractical), eliminated the stigma associated with an "immigrant card", and further encouraged users to participate in the local economy. The model was so successful that the National League of Cities recommended the adoption of city identification cards for other cities as a "Best Practice" after its successful implementation in New Haven.

An Identification Card with More Features

While the original idea for municipal identification cards came from a report published to help incorporate the undocumented in New Haven, the idea grew to encompass other cities and communities within them, specifically the unbanked and transgender communities in San Francisco and Oakland.

---

[18] Yale Daily News. 2012. "Immigrants Awarded Settlement in Fair Haven Suit" <http://www.yaledailynews.com/news/2012/feb/15/immigrants-awarded-settlement-for-ice-raid/>

In becoming a National League of Cities "Best Practice Program", legislators in San Francisco took the card New Haven produced; which had already done away with a "sex" category. This made San Francisco's card immediately accessible and attractive to transgender individuals and expanded its potential user base.

Oakland, later took this card concept and added an "open-loop" debit component to the program out of fiscal constraint and political ingenuity. It was from there, that the Oakland Municipal Identification Card Coalition pushed the Oakland City Council to include the programmatic capacity to accommodate: an electronic local currency, buy-local programs, and the possibility of including other types of data (i.e. medical records) within the OMICP.

Adding these features proved important selling points for the OMICP and grew the coalition around it. As will be discussed later, Oakland could not afford to target only undocumented immigrants. In fact a disservice, through card stigma and programmatic unsustainability, might have been done to undocumented residents if the City of Oakland had created a simple city identification card like San Francisco had done. The addition of an open-loop, prepaid debit component provided potential benefits for: disproportionately African-American and Latino unbanked residents, those who wish to shop locally, and local merchants.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Building upon arguments in favor of city identification card programs and Oakland's history, this section explores the benefits of programs and policies that attempt to accomplish social justice aims; arguing that the OMICP is an example of a social justice-centered program. These programs, specifically, seek to interrupt forms of institutional oppression of minority groups; forms of oppression that are often implicated in disparities related to race, ethnicity, and gender-identity. The section also explores a growth machine model that ignores social justice considerations in favor of an exclusive focus on economic growth and the entrepreneurial form of governance that often comes with that focus.

These specific arguments are explored as they directly relate to competing processes in Oakland that created the final OMICP and helped it to gain political legitimacy. Although the OMICP could potentially accomplish both social justice and growth-centered objectives in Oakland, these aims are analyzed separately for the purposes of theoretical exploration. On the ground, there is always some dialectic at play between competing systems and this section (as well as the "Results" section) illuminates that potential. This section also links that theoretical potential to a real-life "synthesis" between a pure focus on economic growth and a social justice focus using the OMICP as its example.

The Economic Growth Mantra

At its core, a focus on economic growth for its own sake and managerial entrepreneurialism in Oakland's city government represents a form of urban politics that acknowledges the neoliberal status quo and works within that system to: limit the city's financial liabilities, increase its financial assets and otherwise encourage growth in a global capitalist market. It is a politics that has been heavily influenced by corporate ideas with emphases on: customer care; leaner, flatter managerial hierarchies; budgetary devolution; multiskilling and workforce flexibility; a key role for information technology; and the adoption of newer managerial ideologies (Purcell 2002).

Corporate ideas become helpful in this model because the city's aim is to grow. To put it more succinctly, growth becomes the main function of Oakland's local government (Molotch 2008). In the past, Oakland has been rewarded by both the market and by higher levels of government for demonstrating a commitment to a business ethic and corporate sensibilities. Conversely, Oakland has also been punished for being generous in the provision of: social welfare interventions, city employee pensions, and for otherwise failing to adopt corporate sensibilities[19].

---

[19] The San Francisco Chronicle. 2011. "Bargaining, not Balloting to Fix Oakland Pensions." <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/06/06/BA1R1JPGRS.DTL >

32

The growth-oriented regimes that take form in Oakland and other cities become a mix of government and business elites. With increasing alliances between these elites, more functions begin to fall outside the realm of government and inside the realm of *governance.* Governance, in the context of managerial entrepreneurialism, has been reconfigured in three main ways: (1) it is being rescaled, (2) policy is being reoriented from redistribution toward financing competition with other cities, and (3) many state functions are being transferred to non-state and quasi-state bodies. It is the latter shift that has been referred to as the main shift from *government* to *governance*.

These non-state and quasi-state bodies are new entities otherwise known as "quangos" (Purcell 2002) and they include: training and enterprise councils, urban development corporations, and public private partnerships that carry out many of the functions of local government without necessarily being accountable to the municipality's voters. Limiting democracy, dissidence, and rendering impotent the will of the populace is yet another way that the efficiency of quangos is maintained.

The displacement of poor people, criminalization of minority groups, and the diswelfares (Titmus 2000) caused by gentrification and subsidizing corporate investments in land are not generally considered to be an issue in these urban projects (although, admittedly, government subsidies actually run counter to the aims and claims of Neoliberalism). In Oakland, for example, it is popularly believed among political elites that economic development programs and policies should take precedence over political attempts to more evenly distribute wealth, although this "growth" may be both illusory and built on systems inherently opposed to redistribution.

An urban regime that elevates the priorities of capital above the priorities of the most economically vulnerable has a pure focus on growth; to growth's detriment. The ideology is centered on the belief that individuals who cannot maintain economic viability without government assistance are a threat to capital accumulation and growth. The contemporary social question faced by Oakland's urban

regime is "To what extent are the poorest individuals entitled to wealth that they do not (nor are they needed to) produce" (Baumann 2004)?

Since increasing the social wage implies redirecting capital away from ventures that might economically "grow" Oakland, the solutions to this question are almost invariably ones that rely on coercion and containment as policy for poor people. One highly-publicized example of how these solutions manifest in Oakland can be found in the police response to the Occupy Oakland Encampment in 2011.

As the encampment grew, business elites began to complain loudly about the presence of increasingly undesirable populations in the downtown area of the city. Sooner than anywhere else in the nation, the highest levels of city government responded with numerous and highly expensive police raids designed to displace the peaceful protestors. In a manner that epitomizes the idea of revanchism (or neoliberal revenge on the poor), Oakland decided to use its scarce fiscal resources to intimidate and remove those undesirables that posed a potential threat to economic activity in the downtown area (Dear and Flusty 1998).

This is just one, very well-known, example of the conflict within Oakland and other cities as elected officials decide how to use city resources to respond to those populations who have been left behind by decades of economic warfare targeting those at the bottom (and increasingly the middle) of the socioeconomic hierarchy. Indeed, this is the conflict inherent in the political struggle to create the OMICP.

Should Oakland invest precious staff time and city funds to explore a program that would benefit its poorest and most vulnerable populations first? Or, should it use those same resources to benefit wealthy individuals and corporations (who might invest capital into such an entrepreneurial city)? Either way, Oakland is taking a financial risk; whether it risks spending time and money on an OMICP that does

34

not accomplish the aims of economic growth or the risk of spending time and money to encourage investment from individuals and corporations that ultimately choose to economically bypass the city.

If Oakland's political regime theoretically assumes that economic growth and social equity are mutually exclusive and chooses to pursue economic growth, then it is necessarily working against the interests of the most vulnerable populations and the city as a whole. That Oakland's political elites, for the most part, have adopted the managerial style of big business, and police terror in responses to poor people and communities of color is no coincidence of history. It is, instead, the modern way of recreating forms oppression based upon socioeconomic identity.

To more concretely name those forms of oppression, structural racism and classism are some of the forces in operation, cleverly masked as neoconservatism and neoliberalism. The forms of overt and interpersonal racism described earlier in Oakland's history are no longer necessary because of racism's embeddedness in the city's institutional structures. Structural racism is more pernicious because under it, racial disparities in socioeconomic outcomes and life chances are not perpetuated by a conscious desire to hurt, but instead a failure to help. At a municipal level, a pure focus on growth is also a way of perpetuating inequities already established in previous eras (Forman and Lewis 2006). Add to this, that the most socially isolated and economically oppressed people have few reasons and opportunities to positively and economically contribute to the city and, as a result, their moral uprightness and criminal inclinations must always be under question (Forman and Lewis 2006).

Millions of local taxpayer dollars must then flood into the bloated criminal justice system in order to contain these threatening individuals. Attempts to impose: anti-homeless ordinances, police sweeps, gang injunctions, cuts to human services, curfews, and other measures have become the ways in which an economic growth-centered focus has already been realized in Oakland.

On Social Equity and "Just Growth"

First of all, it must be said that in the current political economy, economic growth itself is the mantra and the paradigm. As a city, Oakland must attract investment and position itself to generate revenue through the larger capitalist economic system. Economic growth alone, however, does not necessarily translate into economic opportunities for a segment of the population that has grown since the Great Recession: those living in poverty[20].

However, "Just Growth" as "a framework in which the imperatives of equity have been coupled with strategies to shore up the macro-economy, spur new industrial development, and re-regulate the financial system" might solve the threats to social cohesion and stability inherent within Oakland. With many of those threats caused by growing populations of residents pushed to the margins of the contemporary social and economic systems (Benner and Pastor 2011).

There are, of course, ecological criticisms around alleviating poverty (as one form of social equity) through the logic of industrialism; there is also a related criticism around the reliance of this growth on dwindling natural resources (Fitzpatrick 1998). In a very real sense, incorporating social equity concerns into our current economic system is simply a way of structurally coupling a progressive ideology with the imperatives of the current neoliberal political economy (Luhmann 1987). These criticisms of growth, and the larger economic system that encourages, it are valid and thought-provoking. They should be considered for the ways in which they can nuance the discourse and bring ecological issues to the forefront.

Just Growth, as a progressive way to undertake a growth focus, seeks to reduce poverty and interrupt the cyclical and cumulative interdependencies that cause and exacerbate disparities in wealth and life chances (Bradshaw 2007). Promoting the equal inclusion of all inhabitants of Oakland would be

---

[20] Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs. 2012. "At-Risk: America's Poor During and After the Great Recession"
<http://www.indiana.edu/~spea/pubs/white_paper_at_risk.pdf>

the local aim of this particular form of growth and the OMICP seems to exemplify this (Crow 2002). African-Americans, transgender people, the unbanked, and the undocumented are some of the most marginalized populations in Oakland and they would potentially benefit first and foremost from the program.

Oakland, like all cities is constantly in process. Just Growth encourages creating access to economic opportunity for those marginalized residents so that they may become a larger part of the process of economically remaking Oakland and the East Bay Region over time. The OMICP, then, as a card program which aims to bring those with the greatest need into the social and economic mainstream, developed in the right place. From a utilitarian perspective, the conditions, opportunities, agents and resources necessarily converged in Oakland throughout the process and were animated by the social needs the OMICP aims to serve (Cook 1994).

Just Growth as political reality and the OMICP do not seek to target the poor as those to whom *unearned* assistance will be given. Instead they seek to resolve some of the contradictions and diswelfares within larger processes of capitalist accumulation. Take for example the countless historical processes in Oakland that have economically devastated poor communities and communities of color. Just Growth and the OMICP seek to ensure that the most vulnerable are allowed greater participation in (and benefit from) the very growth that the East Bay Region seeks to promote. This, in turn, can make the East Bay Region more competitive and economically viable in the long-term. The success of the OMICP also has the instructive potential to render legitimate other policies of social inclusion because of the universality of benefits implied by the program (Goodin 1999).

Social Equity and the "Right to the City" Framework

To concretize the idea of a politics of social equity in Oakland, we will now turn to one of its most radical manifestations; the idea of a "Right to the City".

37

At its core the Right to the City stresses the need to restructure the power relations that underlie the production of urban space (Purcell 2002). In this conception, those flatland Oakland neighborhoods and other poor and minoritized communities have a right to actively participate, shape the policies, shape the culture, and influence the way the city operates. The Right to the City, then, can also be seen as the urbanizing of the human rights frame (Perera 2008).

The OMICP concretizes the conception of a Right to the City by radically rescaling citizenship to the municipal level so that a person's national political status becomes irrelevant. "Illegal" and "undocumented" as social realities become impossible when one's citizenship is delinked from one's U.S. citizenship status. Concomitantly, forms of: exploitation, political marginalization, and both literal and figurative forms of robbery become more difficult to commit against those we now (euphemistically) call "undocumented". Providing identification to: undocumented immigrants, transgender people, and others in need of valid identification in Oakland represents a political victory for those who advocate for the Right to the City. So too, providing fair, basic financial services to those who currently lack access is yet another political victory for proponents of a Right to the City.

The Right to the City framework is more radical because it is ideologically furthest away from a neoliberal framework in which municipal residents, documented or not, have only their individual rights (if they are American citizens or nationals) and the right to whatever piece of Oakland they can secure through their personal and familial wealth. The neoliberal ideologies that have become dominant in the current political discourse continue to reproduce and seem designed to reproduce huge disparities related to race and class.

Is it Growth vs. Just Growth?

Since Oakland has a unique history and characteristics, it is important to mention that it is neither a pure social equity-focused city nor a purely neoliberal city. These concepts were divorced in this

section for the purposes of exploring what are thought to be their essential characteristics as they take shape in Oakland. Both a focus on social equity and a focus on economic growth are contingent on a multiplicity of factors (Hackworth 2007). To add to this, they will constitute themselves on the ground and be changed by coupling with and interacting with other functional systems in the city.

There is a final, and arguably the most important, point that must be illuminated in this part of the paper. That point is that social equity and economic growth are by no means mutually exclusive. The idea of Just Growth is centered on the fact that social equity is not antithetical to growth. In fact, just the opposite is true. Increasing access among those populations who have been forced into economic marginality can improve outcomes and increase the competitiveness of metropolitan regions like the Bay Area. The research has also clearly demonstrated that inequality and racial segregation can trigger under-investment, damaged social capital, and erode vital economic consensus (Benner Pastor 2011). This rising inequality in Oakland constitutes a threat to the economic, social, and political health of the entire region. In this way, it is also a threat to social solidarity and, ultimately, democracy.

Chapter 4: Methods

The policy research and advocacy that I conducted as part of the process of creating the OMICP preceded by two years my arrival to this Community Development graduate program. However, I was able to link theory with practice through a seven month internship, working on the OMICP, in the Oakland City Administrator's Office.

In the beginning, I was unaware of the methodology I was utilizing as my involvement entailed utilizing various methods in order to ensure that the program would be realized. Thus, just like Community Development in general, my practice preceded my theoretical knowledge (Cook 1994). Over the years that I worked on the program, I employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to both

assess the feasibility of the program and to market the concept of the OMICP to the Oakland City Council, business elites, and grassroots activists.

Participatory Action Research as Methodology

As an overall methodology, Participatory Action Research (PAR) is what most closely resembles what my involvement throughout the process entailed. Specifically, Councilmember Quan and I shared the theoretical assumption that our partnership with a coalition of the intended beneficiaries of the OMICP would benefit all Oakland residents. My work was not about developing my own questions or testing the hypotheses behind municipal identification card programs. Instead, I worked as both a representative of a political office and an honorary member of the OMICP coalition to conduct the research and political maneuvering that would move the coalition's agenda (at times fragmented) forward. This, to me, is the essence of PAR, a form of service-learning in which the beneficiaries of the research have significant control over their participation, the priorities of the research, and even the questions that are asked.

PAR: Opportunities and Obstacles

Though the work that I conducted as part of the coalition has been a success thus far, as evidenced by the countless times the evolving ordinance passed before both the City Council and the Finance Committee, there were also drawbacks to being led in my work by a diverse coalition of activists. For instance, when the debit component's complexities began to protract the process, it was I who was asked to conduct the research to see how an ID-only card could be realized. I had no interest, whatsoever in an ID-only card because of its limited constituency, inability to become cost-covering, and the stigma that might be attached to it.

Nevertheless, I had to put the wishes of the coalition ahead of my own research bias and spent weeks working to determine how an ID-only card could be made affordable for Oakland's undocumented population. I understood that our office was involved in a supportive role as opposed to an authoritative one. At present, I can now more fully appreciate the fact that by conducting research that I didn't agree with, I was nonverbally illustrating our office's willingness to share power with the coalition; perhaps strengthening our ultimate relationship (London 2007).

For this particular program, PAR had another drawback; the final card program was a protracted process that has taken nearly four years thus far. I was allowed to conduct research and community organizing efforts because I was "funded" and encouraged through my employment with the Oakland City Council. That funding, however, was contingent on the City of Oakland being able to continue to employ me in spite of a worsening fiscal crisis and amid hundreds of layoffs annually. No one imagined in the beginning that the process would take four years. In fact, in interviews with the coalition members, the majority believed that the time frame would be closer to one year.

In leaving the City of Oakland in late 2009, the research I had begun was not continued by my successor in Councilmember Quan's Office. The program moved at a snail's pace until I returned as an "unfunded" intern in 2011 and 2012 and by then, the composition and involvement of the coalition had changed by virtue of staff turnover and the passage of time.

As identified in the literature (and very much in hindsight), it would have been fruitful for our council office and the coalition to have discussed early on what types of resources and program design models would have been necessary to support this PAR over time (London 2007). Further, identifying the funding necessary to allow me to remain economically viable throughout the PAR could have meant the passage of the OMICP much more rapidly for Oakland's residents; if the program is truly as beneficial it sounds on paper. At present, even the internship has ended and I am highly limited (partly by the process

of this writing) in my ability to participate as fully as might be helpful to promote the success of the program's implementation.

Chapter 5: Results

The original OMICP, conceptualized in 2008, is a vastly different program than the OMICP that evolved into its current form in 2011. That evolution necessarily entails the tensions, micropolitics, a worsening fiscal outlook, and other factors that impacted Oakland throughout that time. Since the program is not yet fully operational, the "results" consist of the ways in which the program was changed and augmented to serve the key constituencies it now targets as well as all other Oakland residents.

In late 2008, when the original research began (inspired by New Haven's and San Francisco's creation of city identification programs), I worked with Latino and African-American activists around an identification card for the undocumented. Since Latinos represented the vast majority of the undocumented immigrants, it made sense that Latinos would be heavily invested in the process.

African-Americans, under the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI), were involved because of the fact that economic concerns had driven many of these Latinos from their countries of origin and still more economic concerns pitted them against African-Americans in terms of employment and housing. I had become involved when my employer, Councilmember (now Mayor) Jean Quan, agreed to send a representative to learn about the coalition's work; this after having her office identified as a potential political ally during the burgeoning coalition's early power analysis.

In the first few meetings, activists from San Francisco had galvanized activists in Oakland around creating such a card so that the two Bay Area cities could more fully realize their statuses as "Sanctuary Cities" for immigrants. New Haven's identification card had already done away with the sex category and

San Francisco's activists were excited about the potential importance of such a card to the transgender community in the Bay Area.

At the time of these first meetings in Oakland, a financial crisis was gripping the country and official reports had shown that a recession had actually started the year before in 2007. However, many in Oakland had been experiencing economic uncertainty long before a recession was officially reported. By early 2009, Oakland's city government coffers were drying up through a combination of shrinking tax revenues, increasing social need, and state willingness to appropriate local revenues to balance California's perennial budget deficit.

San Francisco, having passed a city identification card ordinance in 2007, took the initiative to structure a card program much sooner than Oakland. While they were structuring their program, San Francisco was simultaneously fighting two lawsuits filed by residents on behalf of a Washington, D.C.-based right-wing organization; the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI).

The first suit alleged that the issuance of these identification cards amounted to a misappropriation of funds by the City of San Francisco because the city paid over $1 million for the machine and the staff time that would be required to print their cards. The second suit was based on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It alleged that these cards alongside San Francisco's designation as a "Sanctuary City" would encourage an unprecedented influx of undocumented immigrants whose presence would lead to environmental degradation. In late 2008, the suits against San Francisco were thrown out and, by January of 2009, San Francisco began to implement its program while activists in Oakland became emboldened to begin processes of legislation.

Early on, it became clear that San Francisco purchased an exorbitantly-priced card manufacturing machine and that Oakland's City Council would not authorize a similar purchase given the budget constraints. The one million dollars that San Francisco spent had bought the city a 21st Century ID-card powerhouse with: biometric facial recognition software (to prevent fraud), polycarbonate card capability,

and laser engraving and imaging[21]. In the end, their machine produced cards that were more secure than a California Driver's License.

However, participation in their program has been disappointing to say the least. As early as mid-2009, when San Francisco's program was only about five months old, city officials and staff, including the Director of the Office of the City Clerk, informed activists in Oakland that the city's ID card program was not cost-covering, enthusiasm was lukewarm, and there was not much interest outside of undocumented communities. Specifically, the overwhelming majority of applicants were middle-aged; Latino men who wanted to qualify for city services.

The first audit, taken two years after the program began showed that San Francisco had distributed about 13,000 cards for a population of 805,000; or about 1.6% of the population[22]. One could almost say that, outside of a small segment of the undocumented population, no one wanted San Francisco's city identification card.

As San Francisco had limited their program to an identification-only program with disappointing results, New Haven officials were expanding their program to include a prepaid, closed-loop, debit component and had seen growing interest. It seemed that a growing user base (and list of features) kept New Haven's program fiscally solvent and relevant to a greater percentage of residents than San Francisco's was. The message I received from this data was clear: Oakland could not create a simple identification card for undocumented residents.

Since PAR was my research methodology, I generally let the wishes of the coalition determine my research and advocacy trajectory. However, when the coalition was divided between those who would push for an ID-only card and those who insisted on a comprehensive card, I chose to work with the latter group of individuals.

---

[21] Dayton Daily News. 2011. "Dayton Considers Immigrant IDs"
<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/dayton-news/dayton-considers-immigrant-ids-1271703.html>
[22] Ibid.

It was my hypothesis that an identification-only program would suffer the same fate as San Francisco's program and that our best bet would be on a comprehensive program that would include the unbanked. At all times from mid-2009, I worked from that perspective and had the support of the council office for which I worked. In that regard, I experienced conflict both from opponents of the OMICP, and some of the most vociferous advocates for the undocumented.

The fact that Oakland could not afford to create a "simple identification card" was both a blessing and a curse for the coalition that advocated for the OMICP. It was a blessing, because it ensured that we *could* not make the exact same mistake that San Francisco had made; namely creating an economically unsustainable program that both serves and stigmatizes the city's undocumented. It was a curse because it drove a wedge through the multi-ethnic coalition. On one side were those who saw an increase in immigration raids and deportations as the central reason why the OMICP should be made immediately available to the undocumented. On the other side were those who saw economic issues (in the context of severe recession) as central and wanted to protect the unbanked as well as add local currency capabilities to the card.

The main reason for the wedge within the coalition was the fact that adding an open-loop, prepaid debit component (or local currency for that matter) had never been done with a city identification card program and would significantly protract the process. These arguments intensified as another council office, the office of Ignacio De La Fuente, was added to the coalition in early 2009. This office, with a majority Latino constituency, agreed that an identification-only card would have to suffice for the sake of the undocumented. Our council office, took the other position; that it would only succeed and be sustainable as a comprehensive program that targeted multiple constituencies.

What kept the coalition together was not necessarily an agreement that a financial component was necessary, but a political and fiscal reality that necessitated public-private partnership (Hackworth 2007). Specifically, those who were interested in pursuing an I.D. without the complicated financial component ran into trouble because they could not find a vendor who would sell a machine to the city at a cost lower

than $615,000 which, our estimates showed, would make the price of the cards inaccessible to many of the poorest Oakland residents.

Key councilmembers, whose support was deemed necessary, rejected any extra purchases at a time when city staff were being laid off and specified that this program had to be cost covering. At this same time, my research into San Francisco's program showed that for every $15 charged for an identification card issued by San Francisco, the city provided a $60 subsidy to make up the true cost of each card, which is about $75.

With this in mind, advocates for the unbanked had been working with financial institutions that issued pre-paid cards. These cards could be mass produced more cheaply, could be made to fit the security specifications of the Oakland Police Department, could be loaded with cash, could be used to send low-fee remittances around the world, and could be purchased for less than five dollars. The companies' incentive was to profit by consolidating people, who had been rejected by the banks, into one market where they could pay less than one tenth of the fees that they would pay at a check cashing business or money transfer business.

In short, the city could realize the creation of the OMICP without having to buy expensive equipment and pay staff to operate it like San Francisco had done. The companies offered to provide staff to guide residents through the application process for the cards. This emerged as the only feasible option and, thus, the coalition was necessarily reunited when the alternative proved infeasible.

When the final draft of the ordinance was approved, it included: a card that fit the security requirements of law enforcement agencies, a financial component, no sex category, limits on the costs of the card, a connection to buy-local programs, the ability to use the card for city services and events, and personal data security through the Federal Bank Secrecy Act[23].

---

[23] Oakland City Council. 2009. "Oakland Municipal ID Card Ordinance" <http://clerkwebsvr1.oaklandnet.com/attachments/22299.pdf>

This last point is important because an ID-only card issued by the City of Oakland could be subject to Freedom of Information Requests; which could put undocumented applicants at risk of deportation. The OMICP, structured comprehensively, has the ability to protect applicant data through a legal loophole related to protecting confidential bank records. This is similar to the way in which New Haven used a legal loophole around medical and personnel files to protect their applicant information.

Getting such a comprehensive program ordinance passed was no small accomplishment for a coalition composed of the ethnic and sexual/gender minorities that have been historically relegated to the bottom of Oakland's socioeconomic hierarchy. Oakland, where most of the coalition members came from, is both the largest city in Alameda County and its poorest in terms of the percentage of residents living in poverty. 19% of Oakland residents live below the poverty line as compared to 10.4% of residents in Alameda County as a whole. Even these simplified numbers also do not reflect the fact that African-Americans and Latinos are disproportionately concentrated in the lowest-opportunity neighborhoods in Oakland's flatlands and systematically disconnected from the political mainstream.

That they were first galvanized by forms of historical oppression, and then worked together to push the city into a public-private partnership to intervene on their social and economic behalf represents an incredible feat. It is also reminiscent of, and stands on the shoulders of, the ways in which the BPPSD, and other progressive organizations in the 1960s and 1970s, created the organizational infrastructure for multi-ethnic, multi-issue organizing in Oakland.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable features of this coalition's advocacy for the OMICP has been the socio-psychological shift as the individual interests of the coalition members, and the group interests that serve as their reference, were transformed into the collective interest of a multiethnic, multi-issue coalition; similar to ACORN's work (Delgado 1986).

To more fully expound upon the time periods in question as well as the specific circumstances that facilitated the evolution of the OMICP, here is a timeline of my involvement as well as those events most relevant to the OMICP as a four-year, highly political process.

The OMICP Timeline: 2008-2012

Time Period	Actual Task(s)	Significance to the OMICP
September, 2008 - January, 2009	Reading through the initial Yale report that initiated the first city ID program, working with SF and New Haven officials on implementation strategies, and partnering with another city council office.	Led to partnership between Quan's and De La Fuente's Office who coauthored the original ordinance.
February, 2009 -May 2009	Co-authored the "Oakland Municipal ID Card Program Ordinance" working with Claudia Burgos from De La Fuente's Office. Worked with potential vendors to figure out how to make the program cost covering.	The creation of the document that could become an ordinance gave structure and political legitimacy, to the program Debit component became key at this time as a strategy to make the program cost-covering. Advocated for local currency and other components added to increase card's user base.
May, 2009 -June, 2009	Framed the debate around the card in public safety terms; utilized Oakland's reputation for crime and need to decrease violence as the primary reason for adoption of the OMICP.	Framing the issue in terms of public safety resonated with council members who passed the OMICP as an ordinance on June 2nd, 2009.
June, 2009 -August, 2009	Met with SF City Clerk's Office and with card vendors to create a program that: met established security specifications, produced inexpensive cards, and did not create records that could be used against the card's undocumented applicants.	This enabled the City of Oakland to issue an RFP with the exact requirements for a third-party vendor that would provide the financial and administrative components of the final program.
August, 2009 -August, 2011	I was not working for the council and was uninvolved in the process during this time period. In that period, the City did issue an RFP and decided upon SF Global Inc. as the third-party vendor. In this time it is extremely important	The program was now politically and administratively viable. Her election changed the political climate in Oakland and the OMICP was

	to note that Councilmember Quan was elected Mayor of Oakland. After an election that was initially contested because of Ranked Choice Voting, she faced various recall efforts by political opponents; including members of the City Council and other offices.	attached to her name. Besides those who potentially had racist, xenophobic and other base considerations around the card, it now became politically expedient to sabotage the mayor through policy by proxy. This made my work difficult if I connected it too closely to Mayor Quan or my past employment with her.
September, 2011 - November, 2011	Returned to the City of Oakland as a Graduate Intern in the City Administrator's Office. Analyzed the due diligence assessment of the financial providers under SF Global and the draft license agreement that Oakland would use as the legal foundation of the program. Calculated city staff time commitments identified or implied by the program, identified the total costs associated with that employee time, and created a 2-year implementation timeline for the OMICP	My labor, political connections, and institutional memory quickened the pace by which this program moved and made the program less expensive (by way of staff time and duplication). My analyses of the program's components meant that this item could come to both council and committee much faster than it would have had I not returned. Allowed the city to identify the staff composition of the implementation "guiding group", and to later set the transaction fees in order to recoup previous and future staff time costs.
November, 2011 – December, 2011	Secured commitments from nonprofits and city staff to utilize spaces throughout the city as intake centers for applicants.	Made the program logistically possible as I identified locations in downtown as well as all of the poorest neighborhoods for the convenience of our targeted populations.
November, 2011 – December, 2011 (continued)	Per the council's request, I identified local financial institutions that might administer the program (and delay the process as we had already found a CDFI in Minneapolis willing to do so).	This was done to please those councilmembers who did not remember that local financial institutions had rejected participation in the program and for those obstructionist council members who were seeking to delay and deflate the program.
	Used the grassroots anger at the raids of the Occupy encampment to motivate activists to come to the final City Council meeting in support of negotiating a contract without delay.	The sheer number of people that we were able to galvanize to come to the meetings (28 at the council meeting) during the holidays convinced the council that there was continuing and widespread interest in the program.
	Created a list of 17 reasons to move	The document I created ensured that the

	the program forward (against the City Administrator's recommendations) and spread it to the coalition, the entire council and SF Global's marketing team to ensure final passage of the program.	28 activists, supportive council members, and SF Global marketing executives would be on the same page about the need for moving the program forward without delay.

The Final Council Meeting for the OMICP's Implementation

On December 20th, 2011, 28 speakers, including myself, spoke passionately from every community targeted by the program. I did not mention my internship in the City Administrator's Office as I was still working against their conservative, but politically sensible recommendation to delay the program. In that way I was able to "switch hats" and speak as a member of the coalition. This is important because it allowed me to delink myself from Oakland's micro-political drama; which centered on a Mayor facing recall efforts after the Occupy encampment raids (and the continuing financial nightmare that serves as the legacy of those raids)[24].

The coalition's work throughout the process included: working with various vendors on the open-loop, prepaid debit component; involving their constituencies in the process; collaborating with San Francisco and New Haven city officials; and galvanizing activists to show unity at council and committee meetings. BAJI and Centro Legal de la Raza were critical in spreading word of this program and of its advantages for all to the African-American and Latino communities, respectively; as these were the two largest constituencies supporting the program.

By December, 2011, our primary role as a coalition (including the two council offices) was to show the full council that a diverse group of the disenfranchised were willing to advocate for and take responsibility for the OMICP; whatever the final outcome of the program. This role was no more

---

[24] San Francisco Chronicle. 2012. "Much Blame to go Around on Occupy Oakland Response." <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2012/06/15/EDK01P2PSA.DTL>

important than the other capacities in which the coalition served. And yet; all of that previous work might have been for naught had there been a lack of actual bodies, speaking as a Community of Practice, at these council and committee meetings in support of the OMICP[25].

On December 20th, 2011; by a vote of 7 ayes and one abstention, the Oakland City Council voted to authorize the City Administrator's Office to negotiate a contract on behalf of the City with SF Global Inc. and University National Bank in Minnesota as financial services providers for the OMICP. The entire meeting was as electric as it was surreal and I sat in a trance afterward, having been awed at such a wide constituency supporting one progressive program in the city of my birth.

The wedges within the coalition had, at least superficially, disappeared; though the needs within the undocumented and unbanked communities remained just as acute. The unity exemplified in this meeting was important because it was the last meeting in which the OMICP would be brought before the Oakland City Council. When it passed, all future responsibility and administration around the program was transferred to the City Administrator's Office (CAO). The CAO then immediately began to negotiate the final contract in concert with the City Attorney's Office.

Where Oakland Stands Currently with Implementation of the OMICP

In terms of tangible results at this time, the OMICP does exist as an ordinance and has come before both the City Council and Finance Committee more than ten times. On those occasions, old versions of the OMICP were amended due to feasibility issues and new research; new versions went

---

[25] Harvard Business School. 2002. "Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge - Seven Principles for Cultivating Communities of Practice." <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/2855.html>

through the scrutiny of each councilmember's office; and vendors were vetted, selected, and vetted again to get to the point of ascertaining the practicability of such a program.

From what was a simple idea shared by a small coalition in 2008, there is now a complex and innovative program ordinance. Through the efforts of countless activists, Oakland is now set to begin its card program on February 1st, 2013. Through examining the successes and pitfalls of programs in other cities, my hypothesis that only a comprehensive card program would gain political legitimacy has been confirmed; I take the program's passage as that confirmation. The success of the agitation, of which I was a part, is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what the program has already accomplished. Increased politicization of advocates for the: undocumented; transgender; and unbanked happened as well and was a result of, and a part of, the political process of creating the final OMICP.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this paper, the arguments for city identification card programs were revealed in the context of the proliferation of such programs in the first decade of this century. They have proliferated in reaction to the growth of populations in cities that have been locked out of the social and economic mainstream. Undocumented residents, transgender residents, and the unbanked have all been the especial targets of these programs; in Oakland, all three of these groups were targeted simultaneously.

The paper then addressed the historical circumstances that created the need for card programs that could also serve as economic and social interventions. A history of social and economic exclusion, focused on Oakland and the Bay Area, was used to explain the various means by which these groups were marginalized as well as the ways in which they resisted forms of oppression and marginalization. Socio-historical processes of: segregation, ghettoization, grassroots resistance, immigration patterns, and changes in processes of capitalist accumulation were all explored for the purposes of connecting them to the needs that inspired the OMICP. In resistance to social and economic marginalization, the coalition-

building and advocacy for the OMICP can trace its roots to similar forms of multi-ethnic, multi-issue organizing in the 1960s and 1970s.

From there a review of the literature around growth and social equity provided the theoretical lens by which to examine card programs like the OMICP. It was argued that the OMICP, is related to those programs that encourage more sustainable forms of growth. By increasing access among those most excluded populations, programs like the OMICP can potentially work hand-in-hand with growth strategies that attempt to accomplish the dual objectives of growth and equity.

The paper essentially argues that reducing poverty by providing more affordable financial services and increasing security by providing the undocumented and transgender with valid identification can help move Oakland and the East Bay Region toward greater social and economic consensus and long term, sustainable growth. This could, of course, benefit a host of other cities whose economic growth is constrained by the social and economic problems caused by growing numbers of individuals pushed outside of the mainstream.

In the next, "Methods" section, the paper described the fact that the research methodology chosen, PAR, preceded my formal training in Community Development. For the first year I worked on the OMICP, I was practicing PAR without fully realizing that I was doing so. In a real sense, my practice preceded any formal training in the discipline. Being led in my research and political advocacy efforts by a diverse coalition gave me a chance to participate in the birth and growing pangs of a city ordinance as well as the opportunity to work as both a grassroots activist and a city bureaucrat. There were, of course, downfalls of PAR. Namely that: I was required to conduct research that I considered antithetical to my reasons for being involved in the first place, and that funding for my research and advocacy was intractably tied to my employment with the job-hemorrhaging City of Oakland.

In the "Results" section, the paper identifies the evolution of the process and the final passage of the OMICP as a final product, since the program has not yet begun. Through that process, Oakland's

53

original, identification-only card was rendered infeasible and a more comprehensive card, that included a debit component, emerged as the most efficient solution based on the options. The section also revealed how the differing interests were unveiled by the external factors that affected certain coalition members more than others; factors such as immigration raids and increases in deportations.

Though it had appeared that the coalition's unity was unquestionable in the beginning of the process, by the end it became clear that the very tensions, conflicts, and fragmented senses of belonging inherent within Oakland would play out in the process of crafting the OMICP. In the end, larger economic forces (namely fiscal crisis) would reunite the coalition and link the OMICP's development to a public-private partnership. This partnership itself would: protect the personal data of the most vulnerable, render the cards attractive to a larger audience, and make the program cost-covering.

There are several important "take-away" points from this paper. The first is that the OMICP and other municipal identification card programs share a common theme; namely that a governmental or nonprofit organization decides to use its ability to issue identification in order to protect the safety and security of those who might otherwise be forced to live in the economic and social shadows.

The second point is that Oakland, in particular, has borrowed from lessons learned through the creation of these programs in other cities. Through a combination of financial prudence, and political agitation, Oakland has arrived at a point in history in which it is: politically, technologically, and socially possible to create an ID card program that targets so many communities at once. The OMICP stands on the shoulders of past forms of multi-ethnic, multi-issue organizing and on programs like those in New Haven and San Francisco. Oakland's program, being the most comprehensive one to date, can now serve as a prototype for other cities around the country that are considering similar programmatic interventions.

The third and final point is that, though these programs have been constructed in different ways, with different consumers in mind, they have all expanded the possibilities by which immigrants, transgender people, and the unbanked might be more fully incorporated into cities around the country.

This final point underscores one of the central aims of this paper. That aim was to demonstrate that comprehensively structured city identification programs can benefit diverse constituencies, make cities more livable for all residents, and can be structured to address a variety of needs faced by residents in municipalities.

Of course, as mentioned throughout the paper, Oakland's program has not yet come into full fruition and so there exists the possibility of failure and a critical blow to Oakland's already checkered national reputation. Though this paper has been generally optimistic about the process and potential of the OMICP, this was not an attempt to gloss over the very theoretical nature of the program. It should be again stressed that the benefits that will accrue to the communities targeted will not "make up" for centuries of exploitation and economic subjugation. Inequities take generations to solve and this small program cannot possibly ameliorate these global conditions single-handedly nor with a hurried pace (London 2007).

Although the experience of New Haven suggests that a comprehensive program like the OMICP could be quite popular with Oakland's residents, people may not apply for the program in the numbers anticipated to be able to cover the costs of the program. It is also quite possible that the OMICP may not reach many whose past experience, adaptive paranoia, or current condition disallows them from pursuing identification or a prepaid debit card. Just for example, many people are trafficked to the United States and live in virtual slavery. Although they, too, are undocumented, there is no part of the OMICP dealing with those specific populations. Fundamentally, although the OMICP is about increasing access, there exist populations in need who will never benefit from it. Through reflexivity, there exists a universe of potential responses, positive and negative, that cannot be anticipated nor described in detail in such a short paper.

These issues aside, whatever ultimately becomes of the OMICP will depend on cooperation from a host of governmental, nonprofit, and grassroots actors over the course of the next few years. Since the

55

City Administrator is now empowered to implement the program, that office will become the face of the program's implementation.

Yet the process of imagining, advocating for, legislating, and finally passing the program was a success in and of itself. Never before have so many marginalized groups, business people, and nonprofits been able to come together in Oakland to demand a public-private partnership to benefit the most vulnerable. It is this process that I am advocating for alongside advocating for the creation of these municipal identification card programs around the country. Oakland's case is a clear example of what is possible when cities become committed to increasing access among the most vulnerable; whether that access implies public safety gains, increased levels of social solidarity, or increased levels of financial well-being in the poorest communities.

Being a part of such a dynamic process and working with a myriad of communities and interests to effect change is what most inspires me about Community Development as a practice.

The process of creating the OMICP was a template of how to work across artificial boundaries to create programs, policies, and spaces in which those boundaries become (at least slightly) blurred through activism and unity. Finally, in working on a program that can benefit all residents, these historically marginalized communities have reframed ideas in Oakland around public safety, the geography and countenance of political power, and citizenship in the 21st Century. As perhaps the strongest advocate for city identification card programs, it is my personal hope that the OMICP is highly successful when fully implemented. It is my final hope that this retrospective analysis is able to provide information and lessons learned to practitioners in other cities in order to aid them in more efficiently and comprehensively structuring their own city identification card programs.

References

Anderson, Bridget Jane. 2000. *Doing the Dirty Work?: The Global Politics of Domestic Labour*. Zed Books. Print.

Arnott, Richard; McMillen, Daniel P. 2006. *A Companion to Urban Economics*. Blackwell Publishing. Print.

Benner, Chris, and Manuel Pastor. 2011. *Just Growth: Inclusion and Prosperity in America's Metropolitan Regions*. Routledge. Print.

Baumann, Zygmunt 2004. *Wasted Lives. Modernity and its Outcasts*. Polity Press, Cambridge. Print.

Bradshaw, Ted K. "Theories of poverty and anti-poverty programs in community development." *Community Development* 38.1 (2007): 7-25.

Citrin, J. and Sears, D. 1985. Tax Revolt: Something for Nothing in California. Harvard University Press. Print.

Collins, Jane. 2006. "The Specter of Slavery: Workfare and the Economic Citizenship of Poor Women." *New Landscapes of Inequality*: 131-153. Print

Conley, Dalton. 1999. *Being Black and Living in the Red: Race, Wealth and Social Policy in America.* University of California Press. Print.

Cook, James B. 1994. *Community Development Theory*. Extension Division, University of Missouri-Columbia. Print.

Crow, Graham (2002) *Social Solidarities: Theories, Identities and Social Change*, Buckingham, UK, Open University Press. Print.

Dear, Michael; Flusty, Steven 1998. *Postmodern Urbanism*. Annals of the Association of American Geographers. Volume 88, Issue 1, Pages 50 – 72.

Fang, Hanming; Keane, Michael P. 2004. "Assessing the Impact of Welfare Reform on Single Mothers." *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*. 1-116. Print

Forman, Murray; Watkins, S. Craig. 2012. *That's The Joint!: The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge. Print.

Forman, Tyrone A. and Lewis, Amanda 2006. *RACIAL APATHY AND HURRICANE KATRINA: The Social Anatomy of Prejudice in the Post-Civil Rights Era.* Du Bois Review, 3, 175-202.

Fitzpatrick, Tony. 1998. *The Implications of Ecological Thought for Social Welfare*. Critical Social Policy 18: 5-26.

Goodin, Robert E. 1999. *The Real Worlds of Welfare Capitalism.*Cambridge University Press.

Hackworth, J.R. 2007 *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism.* Cornell University Press.

Jackson, K.T. 1985. *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of America.* Oxford University Press. Print

Jiménez, Tomás R. 2008. "Mexican Immigrant Replenishment and the Continuing Significance of Ethnicity and Race." *American Journal of Sociology* 113.6: 1527-1567.

Jones, Jacqueline. 1999. *A Social History of the Laboring Classes: From Colonial Times to the Present*. Blackwell Publishers. Print.

Lofland, John. 2006. *Analyzing social settings: a guide to qualitative observation and analysis*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. Print.

Luhmann, Niklas. *The Representation of Society within Society*. Current Sociology June 1987 35: 101-108.

Molotch, H. 2008. *The City as a Growth Machine: Toward a Political Economy of Place, in Cities and Society*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Malden, MA, USA.

Pager, D.; Quillian, L. 2005. *Walking the Talk? What Employers Say Versus What They Do.* American Sociological Review. Print.

Perera, G. 2008. *Claiming the Right to the City*. Race, Poverty, and the Environment. Print.

Purcell, Mark. *Globalization, Urban Enfranchisement, and the Right to the City: Towards an Urban Politics of the Inhabitant*. Rights to the City Conference, Rome, 2002

Purcell, Mark. "Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant." *GeoJournal* 58.2 (2002): 99-108.

Relinger, Rick. 2010. "NAFTA and US Corn Subsidies: Explaining the Displacement of Mexico's Corn Farmers." *ECONOMICS*.

Self, R.O. 2003. *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland.* Princeton University Press. Print.

Smith, Neil. 2002. *New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as a Global Urban Strategy.* City University of New York. Print.

Titmus, R 2000. *Universalism vs. Selection.* <u>The Welfare State: A Reader</u>. Polity Press

Wolch, Jennifer R.; Dear, Michael J. *Malign Neglect: Homelessness in an American city*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993. Print.