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Cultural and Imperialism (INTS 489)

Nov 25, 2022

Gang Injunctions and Settler Colonialism

Introduction

Around the United States, law enforcement agents and district attorneys have been increasingly shifting to public nuisance law in an alleged effort to reduce gang violence (Swan et al. 2017).

For instance, civil gang injunctions (CGIs) or simply Gang Injunctions (GIs), although not a proven method, have become a tool/protocol in justifying the success of reduced crime and violence in many cities in California, such as Los Angeles, Santa Ana, and Anaheim. Swan et al. define CGIs as court-ordered restraining orders utilized to control the daily routine of suspected gang members, reducing crime, and eliminating the public nuisances posed in an area of a given city. Muñiz (33) offers a similar definition, "Gang Injunctions are civil lawsuits against neighborhoods based on the claim that gang behavior is a problem for nongang-involved residents" (Muñiz 2015). In both definitions offered by Swan and Muñiz, it is evident that gang injunctions are legally recognized tools in the legal system that give power to law enforcement and attorneys. In its early history, gang injunction was initiated due to the 1980s Los Angeles street gangs exploding into popular consciousness (Muñiz 33). For instance, Rock cocaine was about to become a big business, and many black youths in Cadillac-Corning were arrested and put on probation. However, law enforcement then argued that locking up black youth had not worked, and neither did probation (33); this led to the introduction of Gang Injunctions. Since

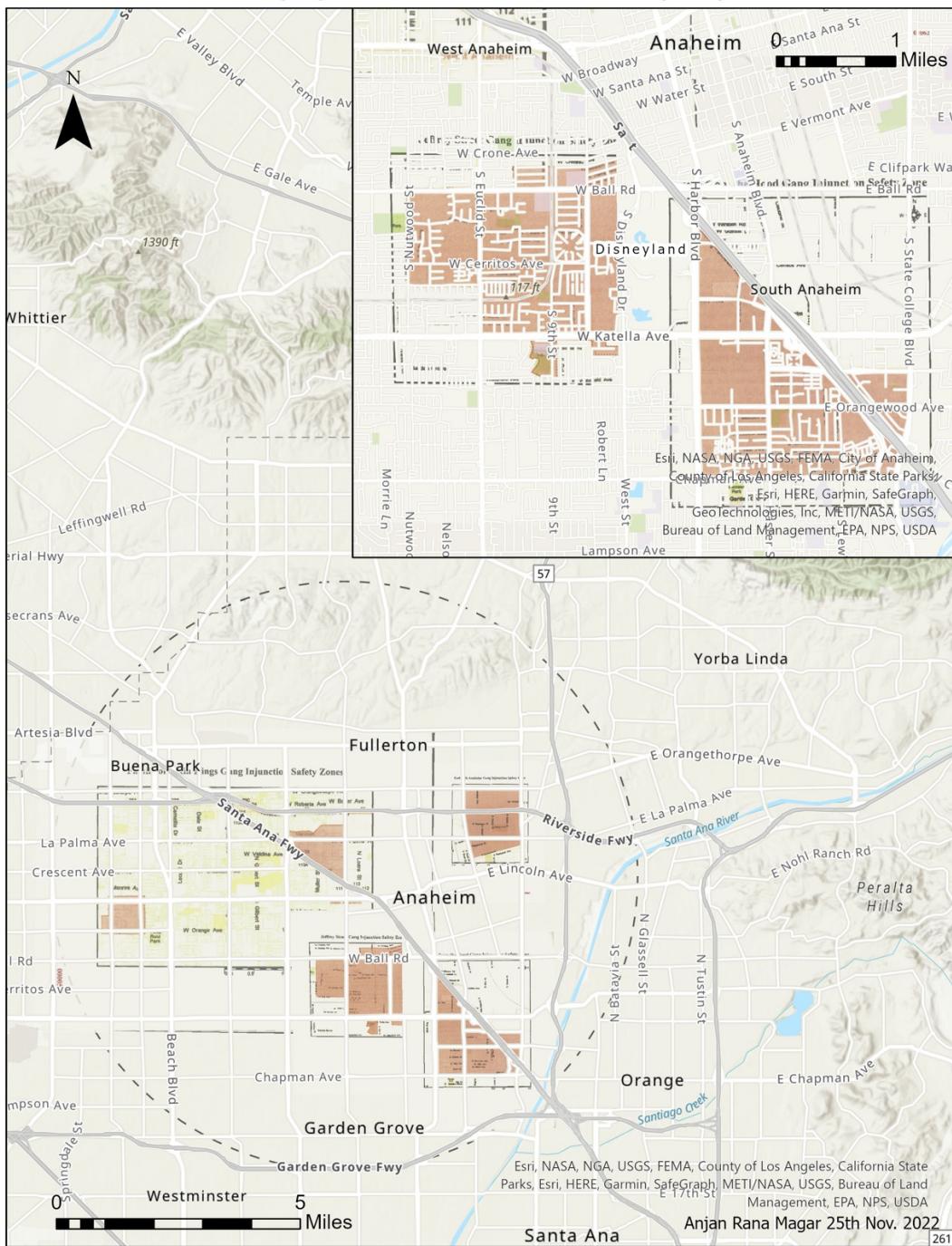
then, the protocol has been established in many other areas with race minorities to produce boilerplate injunctions.

Currently, the rules are in place, but the politics that produced them have disappeared from view. What remains is the power of law enforcement and attorney who criminalize racial groups and target spaces under the guise of a standard race-neutral policy (Muñiz 2015). As a result of such remains, segregation and displacement have become critical issues in such places, which the paper argue helps in recognizing the continuation of settler colonialist practice. Disneyland, located at the heart of Anaheim, also known as "The Happiest Place on Earth" (visitanaheim.org n.d), is an excellent investigation location with several GIs area nearby that helps understand the argument made by the paper. The paper, therefore, will visualize the current zoning code, the demographic composition of the neighborhoods, and existing developments in and near the Gang Injunctions areas to argue on GIs roles in the displacement and segregation of poor and racial minorities. Furthermore, it will embed the the discourse on settler colonialism and argue the continuation of its practice in the present day.

Gang Injunctions in Anaheim and Disneyland

Four gang injunctions safety zones in Anaheim include the *Boys from The Hood Criminals Street Gang*, *Jeffry Street Criminal Street Gang*, *Family of Latin Kings (Folks) Criminal Street Gang*, and *East Side Anaheim Criminal Street Gang*. Map 1 shows the four GIs safety zone provided by the Orange County District Attorney's Office's Gang Injunction Unit. Each gang injunction was introduced at a different time during the early 2000s. For instance, the *Boys from The Hood Criminals Street Gang* permanent order was issued on February 9, 2007. It is the first gang injunction obtained in the City of Anaheim. The safety zone is 1.63 square miles from the W Chapman Ave & City Dr. S intersection in south, and intersection of W Winston Rd and Harbor Blvd along Santa Ana freeway up north. The *Jeffry Street Criminal Street Gang* permanent order was issued on June 25, 2010. It is the second gang injunction obtained in Anaheim, and the safety zone covered 1.59 sq miles. The GIs safety zone runs through Katella Ave in the south and W Chateau Ave in the north. The *Family of Latin Kings (Folks) Criminal Street Gang* permanent was issued on March 30, 2011. It was a third gang injunction obtained in the City of Anaheim. The safety zone covers less than 1 square mile (.97 sq miles). One was near Marshall Park, and the other was near Twilla Reid Park below Lincoln Ave and Knotts Ave intersection. Finally, the permanent order of the *East Side Anaheim Criminal Street Gang* was issued on January 11, 2013. It was also the fourth gang injunction obtained in Anaheim. It had a safety zone of slightly more than 1 sq miles. It ran from Orangethorpe Ave on the north and E Sycamore St and N State College Blvd on the south.

Gang Injunctions in Anaheim, California (2022)



Map 1. Gang Injunctions Safety Zone in Anaheim, Orange County, CA

In between the two GIs' safety zone, *Jeffry Street Criminal Street Gang* and the *Boys from The Hood Criminals Street Gang*, there lies Disneyland, titled "*The Happiest Place on Earth*."

However, the title is quite ironic and slippery since its settler colonialist actions have done more harm to the local minorities than good. It was first opened on July 17, 1955, by the Walt Disney Company ("City of Anaheim"). The park sits on 160 acres of land, but only 85 are open to the public. Since its opening, however, it has undergone expansions, and major renovations, including the addition of New Orleans Square in 1966, Bear Country in 1972, Mickey's Toontown in 1993, Disney California Adventure Park also opened in 2001 at the site of Disneyland's original parking lot (Savvas 2017). The recent addition includes Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge in 2019. Since then, with its establishments and later expansions, Walt Disney has carried out its settler colonialist actions in Anaheim. What is interesting about Walt Disney is that it is an American Corporation officially known as The Walt Disney Company. It includes Disney Media and Entertainment Distribution (DMED) and Disney Parks, Experiences, and Products (DPEP), with its current net worth of 203.63 billion US dollars (Statica 2022).

Corporations and Its role in Gentrification and Displacement

In its present context, a corporation is a business entity owned by its shareholder(s), who elect a board of directors to oversee the organization's activities. The Corporation is liable for the actions and finances of the business – the shareholders are not (“Shopify”). In other words, Corporation is an artificial person that protects the real person from being accountable for their actions, if any. In her essay *US Triumphalism and Peacetime Colonialism*, Dunbar-Ortiz argues that America's primary tactic during American settler colonialism was developing colonialist power through massive corporations to protect and extend corporate wealth. She argues that this development of corporations severely affected the Indigenous people in the United States. For instance, the burgeoning of the Corporation bought about a new area of attacks on Indigenous governments, lands, and resources (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014). Even though the Indians fought back, the military backed by the Corporation was mighty; thus, compliance on the part of Indigenous leaders became a necessary survival. Later, with their justification for the need for Industrial civilization and expansion, they exploited and destroyed the entire society's space and resources without regard for the people's sovereignty. The takeover of the land by Walt Disney can be viewed as a similar approach, which has displaced the residents from that area and pushed them into the surrounding neighborhood. However, the issues remain - the surrounding neighborhood has feared being displaced and gentrified due to a new tactics, one being the Gang Injunctions and the other being the zoning laws and new development projects.

The first Gang Injunctions, *Boys from The Hood Criminals Street Gang*, was issued in Anaheim after 52 years after opening Disneyland theme park in 2007. The second injunction *Jeffry Street*

Criminal Street Gang was issued three years later in 2010. So, why were the early GIs issued near Disneyland? There is a simple answer to the question, "To Control the high crime and ensure the security and safety in neighborhood from gang-related activities." However, the simple answer is cliché and shallow and does not seek to look in depth to find proper answers. That simple answer could be found in the police station or the District Attorney's office. For instance, the Orange County District Attorney Gang Units report claimed that the crime rate was reduced by 72% in 2008 from 2007 when they enacted the first Gang Injunction, *Boys from The Hood Criminals Street Gang*, south of Disneyland. Likewise, the report claimed that the crime rate was reduced by 72% in 2011 from 2010 after the injunction *Jeffry Street Criminal Street Gang* was issued. Although these two claims strongly suggest that these areas were regarded as high crime areas, convincing the city to issue the GIs, it still does not answer the fundamental questions as to why in Disneyland and why not other places in Anaheim.

The question of why the GIs were first placed near Disneyland could be formulated to a different answer; however, increasing white neighborhoods and the role played by power corporations in lobbying the state or the district provides the best explanation. In addition, buying specific land inhabited by poor Hispanic population further validate the claim of why the GIs were placed, i.e., remove them out of their space. Furthermore, with certainty, one can argue or even claim that Disneyland has lobbied law enforcement, the city, attorneys, or even the state into fulfilling its self-interest. For instance, Disneyland gets millions of visitors every year. To attract more tourists and profit from the business, it sought to hide or eliminate poor and unwanted people who posed risks to the company. Nonetheless, this paper also argues and presents later that the Gang Injunctions were placed in or near the place where there is a white neighborhood. i.e.,

suggesting race and class separation as a tactics used by the white settler. In her book *Police, Power, And the Production of Racial Boundaries*, Muñiz provides a strong case for the producing racist Gang Injunction in the Cadillac-Cornering neighborhood in Los Angeles. For example, the 1987 injunction against the *Playboy Gangster Crips* was surprising since Cadillac-Cornering was not the area with the most murders or assaults; however, it was a threat to the boundaries of white, middle-and upper-class areas. She argues that the injunction was due to its threat to geographical racial and class separation and control; Race was central in the evidence presented to attain the injunction. Since, Anaheim has been most Hispanic people, a similar motive can be justified for the issuance of injunctions. The following paragraph discusses in depth the neighborhood near the Gang Injunction.

In the charts and maps in Fig. 2, *Neighborhood-02* has the highest Hispanic population of 96.3%, and the residents below poverty are 35.6%, with a median house value of \$ 193,800.00. The neighborhood also falls in the *Boys from The Hood Criminals Street Gang GIs Safety Zone*. A similar pattern is seen in *Neighborhood-05*, which falls into the *Jeffry Street Criminal Street Gang*, where the Hispanic population is 92.1% (city-data 2022), with a poverty rate of 24.5% and a median house value of \$ 79,000.00. However, when we look at neighborhoods other than those, we see that racial diversity, population poverty, and median property value are different. For instance, there is racial diversity, including Whites, Asians, Hispanics itself, and other races. The median value in those neighborhoods is higher than in *Neighborhood-02* and *Neighborhood-05*, where most of the Hispanic population is. For instance, *Neighborhood-01* has a median house value of \$473,500.00, *Neighborhood-03* has a median house value of \$590,900.00, and *Neighborhood-04* has a median value of \$621,600.00. The property value of neighborhoods with whites is more than 5 to 7 times compared to the Hispanic neighborhood. In other words,

the houses in the white neighborhood can only be afforded by the white rice men. It also means that the neighborhood will gradually become white, and the current Hispanic family will be pushed out because they cannot afford the rent or own a house anymore. Nonetheless, the houses in the already gentrified Hispanic neighborhood, such as *Neighborhood-02* and *Neighborhood-05*, are an easy target for corporate and business companies since they are cheaper than other neighborhoods. Even a tiny corporation, with the extra amount, could easily buy their houses and do a profitable business, just like what Disney may have done before. Thus, the role of the white neighborhood is also important in the context of the corporation to better understand why Injunctions occur and what motives it serves. The vast difference in property value, poverty rate, and diversity helps us understand the role of GIs issuance in gentrification (pushing Hispanics into one particular neighborhood) and displacement (taking over the space by a corporation such as Disney and white neighborhood).



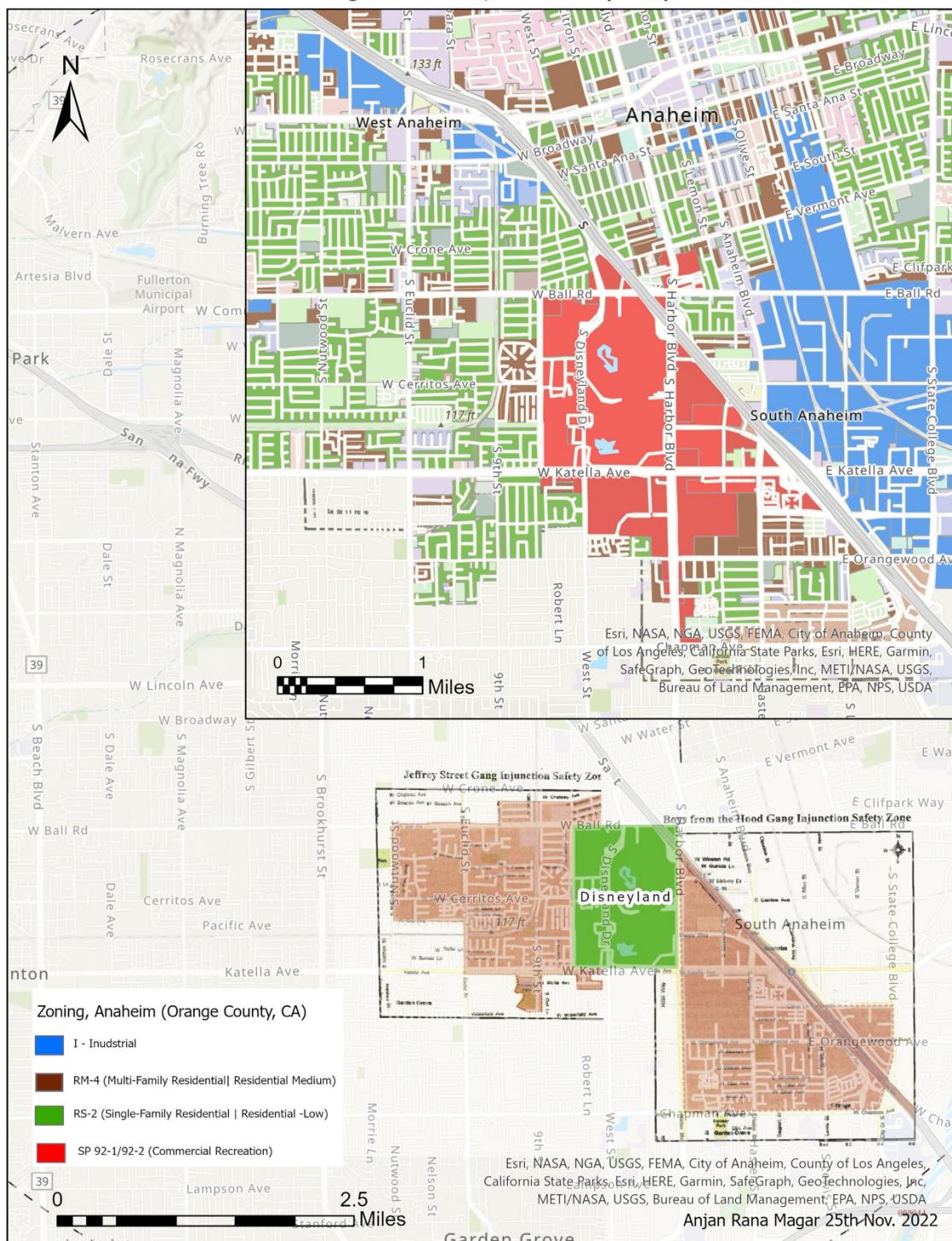
Fig 1. Charts and Map of the Demographic and the Income data in neighborhood issued a GIs near Disneyland

Source: City-Data.org

Exclusionary Zoning and New Development in the Gang Injunction Safety Zone.

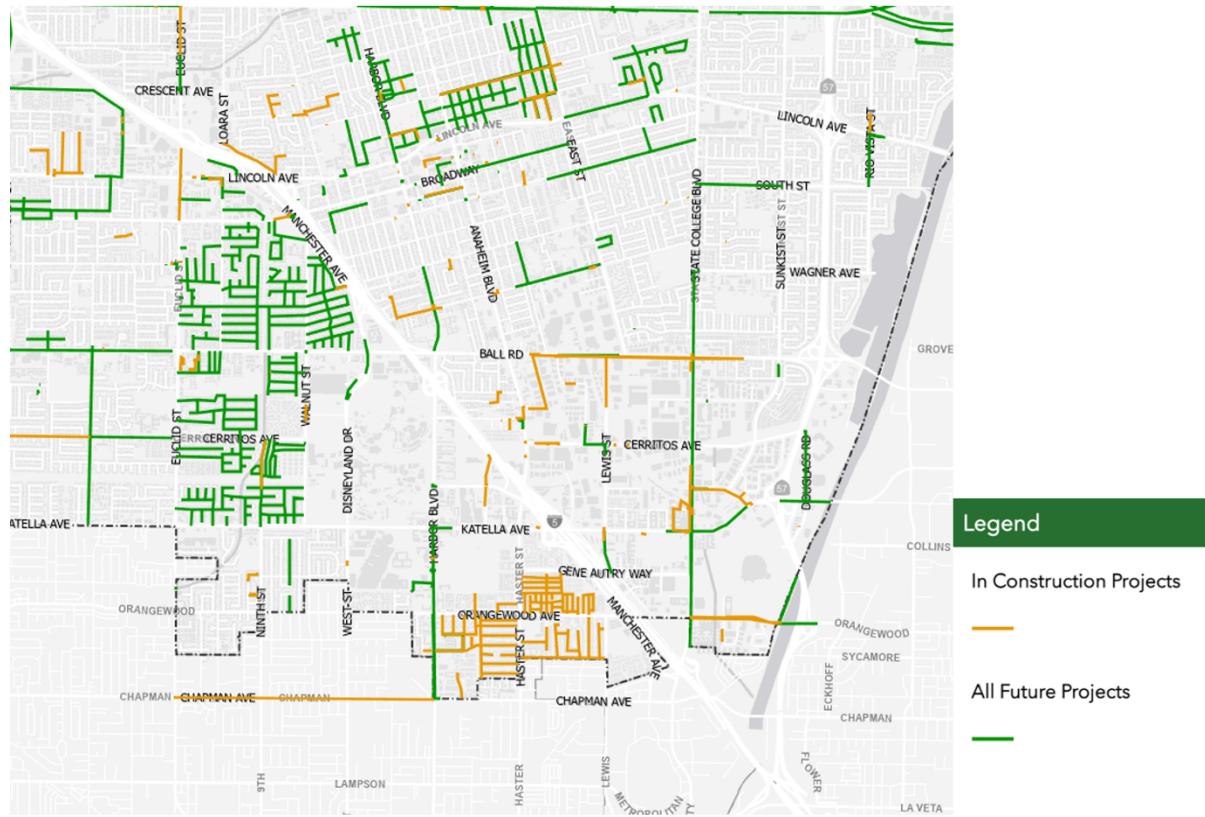
Zoning rules and regulations are other lenses providing an opportunity to understand the participation of the state or city in displacement and gentrification. Note that state and city are different entities from the corporation; however, in making an argument, this paper claims that when it comes to significant issues such as gentrification and displacement of a people, it considers the state or city as an active American corporation. This American corporation has roots in settler colonialism and a history of participating in settler colonialism violence, i.e., the removal of Indians from the land. Map 2 shows that Disneyland and the areas where the Gang Injunctions were issued as Commercial Recreation zoning areas, i.e., SP 92-1/ SP 92-2. Furthermore, next to the Santa Ana Freeway is Industrial zoning, represented by the letter "I." So why is this zoning crucial in the discussion of gentrification and displacement? It is essential because the real estate value of homes in the commercial zoning is not as valuable as the single-family zoning (RS-2), making the homes in the neighborhood with RS-1 and RS-2 higher where whites and some Asian lives compared to the one where Hispanic resident lives. It is also called an exclusionary zoning law – restricts the types of homes built in a particular neighborhood. Common examples of such laws include minimum lot size requirements, minimum square footage requirements, prohibitions on multi-family homes, and limits on the height of buildings. However, as previously mentioned, the houses in SP 92-1 and SP2-2 zoning areas are easily bought out by small companies, industries, or corporations due to their lower real estate values.

Zoning in Anaheim, California (2022)



Map 2: Current Zoning Map of Anaheim

Although, the United States Supreme Court recognized the exclusionary zoning laws and banned the use of explicit race-based zoning in *Buchanan v. Warley* (1917); city planners remained capable of segregating via indirect methods (WhiteHouse 2021). For example, St. Louis's 1919 zoning laws were designed to preserve homes in unaffordable areas for most Black families; however, the city's zoning commission would change an area's zoning designation from residential to industrial if too many Black families moved in (Rothstein 2014). Again, research on Seattle's 1923 zoning laws shows that areas in which Black or Chinese American families lived were disproportionately likely to receive commercial zoning (Twinam 2018). The same commercial zoning can be located in the above Map 2 where the GIs are issued. The above examples are evidence of race and class -driven gentrification. More importantly, they are also the capitalistic approach of acquiring essential and valuable resources while removing or pushing the natives or indigenous out of their land. In the present neighborhood around Disneyland, the poor are gentrified further into the industrial or commercial zoning areas where they can only afford a condo or a small apartment. Someday, they will be pushed out of the neighborhood or may reside in. After all, poor people of color will be pushed here and there until they disappear unless they assimilate/participate in the same settler colonialism violence.



Map 3: Current and Future Projects laid out by city of Anaheim

Map 3 shows us the current development plan of the city of Anaheim. The ongoing construction projects occurred in the same neighborhood with the Hispanic residents, and it is also the Gang Injunction Safety Zone. In contrast, future projects will happen in the next Gang Injunction Safety Zone. This evidence strongly suggests the displacement and segregation of poor residents carried out by the city, state, or corporation, whatever we may call it. This continuation of gentrification and displacement is a continuation of settler colonialism in the US.

Conclusion

As Muñiz mentions, "Injunctions originally were intended to remove people of color from public space by confining them to private residences. Over time, however, the injunction became a tool of displacement rather than confinement - a way to rid populations from target areas" (79). In the context of American history, at its beginning, Hixon mentions, "Settler-operating from the bottom up but backed by all levels of government-would accept nothing less than removal of Indians and complete control of land (Hixon 1)." I think a similar motive can be located in the context of gang injunctions. For instance, gang injunctions have displaced and segregated racial communities from their spaces. The above example of exclusionary Zoning in and near the GIs area near Disneyland Theme Park provides an excellent example. In addition, the history also helps to understand the claim. For example, in the 1990s, the Los Angeles City Planning Department proposed demolishing the Dana Strand housing project in the harbor area. The city planned to "revitalize" the neighborhood through replacement with a "mixed-income community." In practice, low-income residents will be displaced because the new development does not have enough space for the current residents (Muñiz 84). New developments such as apartments, large offices, and businesses were to take over the space and successfully displaced and pushed the poor residents from their own spaces. In the past, the natives were directly displaced from their land using the concept of legal and private property, primarily violence (Greer 366). In the later part of American history and at present, people of color are being displaced using various tactics such as Gang Injunctions, zoning policies, and new development projects, as described in this paper.

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Appendix:

Pictures Gang of *Boys from the hood* gang where they were active in Disneyland area then redevelopment pushed them out.



Image: *Boys from the Hood* in 80s Source: strretgangs.com