City of courts: excavating the future in West Los Angeles

Christopher Giamarino

Published online: 14 Feb 2025.

Submit your article to this journal ↗

Article views: 473

View related articles ↗

View Crossmark data ↗

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

City of courts: excavating the future in West Los Angeles

Christopher Giamarino

Department of Urban Planning, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, USA

ABSTRACT

This paper develops 'pollution of publicness' in grey spaces of polluted leisure to explore three phases of development at the West Los Angeles Courthouse. Through three chromatic shifts in the bandshell stage's paint – Monochrome (public); Shades (public-private); Compound (private), I trace this place's construction to reveal how shifts in development desires have engendered struggles against dispossession, loss and political-economic pollution of public space. I build on calls to operationalise the 'grey spaces' paradigm in leisure studies in three ways. First, I provide a case study that documents how skateboarding's material and symbolic ambivalence entrench the loss of architecturally and culturally significant skate spots. Second, I problematise the notion that 'greyness' offers tailored methodologies to study skateboarding by combining traditional methods of looking at cities with my skater's eye. Lastly, I contribute an example of how 'grey spaces' can analyse the specificities of skateboarding and connect to broader concepts beyond the board. Excavating The Courthouse's construction and making this conceptual bridging, I argue that architectural and political ambivalence contributes to 'pollution of publicness' while offering opportunities to contest this pollution. I advocate for an explicit political commitment to spatial justice in future struggles to preserve public leisure space.

Introduction

Since 1965, the West Los Angeles Civic Centre's plaza – The Courthouse to skateboarders – has retained publicness in ownership, management, accessibility and inclusivity (Li et al., 2022). The complex contains an administrative building, courthouse, public library, senior centre, bandshell and plaza. As a grey space of polluted leisure (O'Connor et al., 2023), the plaza became an architecturally and culturally significant spot for skateboarding in the 1990s due to its emptiness (Snyder, 2017) and the 'trickability' (Jenson et al., 2012) afforded by ledges, handrails, stairs, a fountain and a stage (Figure 1). Following an activist campaign by local skateboarders that co-opted entrepreneurial and competitive tenets of neoliberalism, The Courthouse was decriminalised from 2014 to 2019, when a $50,000 maintenance contract was established between Nike Skateboarding (SB) and the city (Chiu & Giamarino, 2019). The maintenance contract expired on 28 August 2019 and former City Councilmember Mike Bonin motioned for redevelopment proposals with the primary goal of transferring ownership to private developers to 'make a higher and better use of city-owned property' (Bonin, 2019). Despite The Courthouse's architectural and cultural history, and in response to budget shortfalls and an affordable housing crisis, Bonin legitimised this sale by

CONTACT Christopher Giamarino cgiamarino@g.ucla.edu Department of Urban Planning, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA, USA

Figure 1. Skateable objects at The Courthouse.

depicting the space as 'grim and foreboding' with 'acres of concrete and wasted space' (Sharp, 2019). It was sold to a private developer in 2021.

Considering skateboarders' ongoing political and socio-spatial engagement with this 'concrete and wasted space', I had two research questions. First, how have chromatic turns in the publicness of the bandshell's paint – ownership, management and redevelopment desires – influenced the plaza's accessibility and inclusivity? Second, by tracing these shifts, how can we critique and reimagine 'pollution of publicness' (i.e. privatisation)? I answer these questions by developing the concept of 'pollution of publicness' – political, social and spatial ambivalence in the use of, loss and struggle to preserve concrete leisure spaces. 'Pollution of publicness' extends David Harvey's (2003) concept of 'accumulation by dispossession' – the privatisation of public space through redevelopment. I paint three chromatic turns in the bandshell's paint – Monochrome (public); Shades (public-private); Compound (private). Here, I reappropriate Mike Davis's (1990) 'excavating the future' as a heuristic to unpack tensions in 'pollution of publicness' through an operationalisation of traditional urban design methods with my skater's eye. I illustrate how the construction of The Courthouse has produced contradictions between private redevelopment desires and struggles by skateboarders to preserve publicness. Greyness research has prioritised environmental pollution. Therefore, my contribution is political-economic 'pollution of publicness', which is a way to critique and rethink how physical and symbolic shifts in a public space's construction, ownership and management can either improve or harm accessibility and inclusion in leisure. I argue that chromatic shifts in publicness reveal underlying processes of privatisation and dispossession that pollute physical accessibility and symbolic inclusivity while presenting opportunities to contest 'pollution of publicness'.

In this paper, I operationalise the 'grey spaces' paradigm and chromatic turn in leisure studies in three ways (O'Connor, 2024). First, I present a case study that examines symbolic and material 'greyness' that impacted skateboarders' ability to contest redevelopment through neoliberal activism that entrenched privatisation. I document how skateboarders have engaged with The Courthouse's political-economic pollution due to its perceived lifelessness and architectural affordances, resorted to 'resigned activism' to legalise the spot and are subjected to displacement because skateboarders are viewed as socio-spatial pollution worthy of exclusion (O'Connor, 2024, p. 9). I

demonstrate how ambivalent civil/deviant leisure led to The Courthouse's commodification and displacement of skateboarding through an unfolding process of privatisation. I argue that this ambivalence entrenched 'pollution of publicness' – my key contribution to growing literature on grey spaces of polluted leisure. This form of pollution focuses on political-economic processes that shrink public space through transformations in ownership, management, redevelopment desires and architectural outcomes. This pollution produces contradictions that privatise yet provide opportunities to preserve access and inclusivity. Second, to illustrate my argument, I combine traditional urban design methods of looking at cities with my autoethnographic skater's eye, informed by my public advocacy in this space, to trace three chromatic development turns in the unfolding process of 'pollution of publicness'. 'Greyness' offers tailored methodologies to study skateboarding but so do urban design methods. Third, I make theoretical connections between accumulation by dispossession beyond the board to 'pollution of publicness' on the board. By excavating The Courthouse's construction and making this conceptual bridging, I argue that greyness in skateboarding at The Courthouse is a 'pollution of publicness'. Skateboarders and the city assist in this form of pollution – privatisation and demolition. This displaces opportunities to engage in leisure and experience skateboarding's social, political and physiological benefits. By untangling the relationship between 'pollution of publicness' and civil/deviant leisure, I reimagine privatised pollution through struggles against it and advocate for an explicit commitment to preserve publicness.

The paper is divided into four sections. First, I connect accumulation by dispossession to greyness – ambivalent spatial politics – and consider the contradictory role of greyness in the loss of public spaces – 'pollution of publicness'. Second, I operationalise 'excavation' as a heuristic and combination of traditional urban design methods to study cities with my skater's eye to understand and critique unfolding development processes via chromatic turns. Third, I discuss three chromatic development phases at The Courthouse that reveal its privatised pollution and how an activist campaign is fighting to retain its publicness. Lastly, I reflect on greyness and advance recommendations to resist 'pollution of publicness'.

Dispossession, loss and pollution in grey spaces of leisure

In this review, I consider nascent research on grey spaces, greyness and pollution in leisure studies, connect theories of accumulation by dispossession to the loss of publicness in grey spaces and identify a theoretical and empirical under-emphasis in grey spaces research – political-economic 'pollution of publicness' that privatises ownership and management of public spaces and impacts accessibility and inclusivity.

Polluted leisure spaces are a chromatic mixture of green, blue and grey spaces. Surfers swim in blue spaces containing high levels of radiation like the coastline of Fukushima, Japan (Evers, 2021), while skateboarders build DIY skateparks upon Superfund sites to resist exclusion from central city spaces (Glenney, 2023). Grey spaces of polluted leisure shift the chromatic gaze of leisure studies towards 'materials known for their polluting effects' like the 'concrete, granite and steel of cities and suburbia' (O'Connor et al., 2023, p. 902). Skateboarders' use of grey spaces reflects an ambivalent positionality to the 'material and symbolic space of greyness' (O'Connor et al., 2023, p. 904). Material pollution includes the use of concrete to design leisure spaces and its subsequent destruction through ongoing use. Symbolic pollution includes social stigmatisation against or incorporation of skateboarding as a legitimate leisure pursuit; commodification of public space through demolition or incorporation of profitable contests; and political aspirations to criminalise or embrace it to market to creative classes.

Previous research demonstrates the benefits of using polluted grey leisure spaces. These include mental health benefits like coping with depression and an improved sense of well-being through immersion in nature (Brymer et al., 2021; Lackey et al., 2021); enhanced spiritual and embodied connections to places like skateparks under bridges (Buchetti & O'Connor, 2024) and cycling

pathways (Dunlap et al., 2021); positive social interactions that foster conviviality and the learned ability to live with difference through 'street sports' that practise 'the materiality of embodiment' (Engell et al., 2024; Kelly et al., 2023, p. 66); and skill-building through confronting fears while cave-diving (Reed & Smith, 2023), reinterpreting brownfields for skateboarding (Glenney, 2023) and engaging in political activism (Lamond & Lashua, 2021).

This literature prioritises environmental pollution over other political-economic forms of pollution that impact chromatic shifts in a grey space's publicness – ownership, management, accessibility and inclusivity (Li et al., 2022). Through the eyes of architects, city planners, urban designers and skateboarders, grey spaces can be understood through their processual physical pollution in colouration and design, which is determined by symbolic aspects like development desires that pollute publicness, and spark struggles to contest private redevelopment and maintain access and inclusivity to engage in leisure. Material and symbolic greyness supports processes of dispossession, loss and 'pollution of publicness'.

Dispossession of publicness

'Accumulation by dispossession' is a spatio-temporal expansion of over-accumulated capital that seeks 'non-capitalist territories' to produce places for profitable investment through conversion of land from public to private, from disinvested and blighted to invested and revitalised (Harvey, 2003, p. 139). Cities are strategic places where dispossession is facilitated through neoliberal development. Privatisation produces creative destruction of public space where the effect is to 'make a new round of "enclosure of the commons" into an objective of state policies' (Harvey, 2003, p. 158). Neoliberalism is a political-economic ideology that rolled out in response to global financial recessions in the 1970s and 1980s, leading to significant cuts in public services and goods before shifting towards the promotion of public–private partnerships, economic growth, interurban competition, entrepreneurialism and the criminalisation of poverty in the 1990s (Harvey, 2005; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Smith, 1996). Neoliberal governance strategies destroy 'institutional frame-works, policy regimes, regulatory practices, and political struggles' to create new spaces for market-oriented development, commodification and individualistic, entrepreneurial and competitive social relations (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, p. 349; Dardot & Laval, 2013). Accumulation by dispossession is path-dependent and manifests unevenly across different political-economic regimes and geo-graphies (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). Harvey (2005, p. 159) states that its principal characteristics include privatisation and commodification of public services and goods, financialisation of services, management and manipulation of financial crises and state redistributions of wealth and ownership structures. For example, the ongoing affordability crisis created by gentrification has redistributed property rights and prioritised middle-class norms in public space use that led to clearances of unhoused communities at Tompkins Square Park in New York City in the 1990s, now a DIY skate spot (Smith, 1996). However, neoliberalism is unable to regulate its contradictory crises and engenders 'movements against accumulation by dispossession' (Harvey, 2005, p. 205). Grassroots struggles fight for a right to the city by participating in direct actions, lobbying politicians, producing anti-capitalist knowledge that decentres neoliberalism and practising alternative eco-nomic and spatial practices (Leitner et al., 2007).

Struggles against dispossession are struggles against political-economic pollution of public spaces, which are the symbolic and material heart of cities and centres of social, political and economic activities (Amin, 2008; Carr et al., 1992). Skateboarders identify ideal public spaces for leisure – 'activities that one does for the sake of doing so' (Glenney, 2023, p. 3) – like plazas, parks, sidewalks and streets. Ideal public space can be measured through legal and lived characteristics, specifically ownership, management, accessibility and inclusiveness (Li et al., 2022). The legal sense of who owns and manages public space dictates its lived sense or level of accessibility and inclusiveness. The legal sense impacts the lived sense in one's ability to produce leisure spaces (Lefebvre, 1991). Public spaces function as sites of cultural production and consumption that reveal

the influence of global capital on the physical and political character of a place (Zukin, 2010). Through dispossession, lived space – spots to engage in playful leisure like skateboarding – is curtailed through the proliferation of privately owned public spaces (Schmidt et al., 2011), outdoor malls (Mitchell & Staeheli, 2006) and 'architectures of dis-assurance' like CCTVs and hostile architecture (Boddy, 1992). Dispossession pollutes publicness through legal transformations in ownership structures and management strategies, which produces loss of lived spaces for accessible, inclusive forms of leisure.

Loss of publicness

Skateboarders occupy grey, capitalist spaces (e.g. freeway underpasses, deserted plazas, vacant warehouses) by misusing objects like stairs, handrails, ledges and curbs to perform tricks (Borden, 2019; McDuie-Ra, 2022). Through architectural misuse and fears of injury liability and property damage, skateboarding is viewed as socio-spatial pollution worthy of exclusion and subjected to regulatory frameworks, policing and hostile architecture, justified through the provision of contained skateparks near polluted places like freeways and brownfields (Glenney, 2023; Nemeth, 2006). In response, skateboarders pollute the exchange value of public spaces through material mis-use (McDuie-Ra, 2022), build DIY skateparks in leftover spaces to build community and design knowledge about the political-economy of place (Hollett & Vivoni, 2021; Kyrönviita & Wallin, 2022), utilise skateparks to experience leisure benefits (Dumas & Laforest, 2009; Glenney & O'Connor, 2019), and work with cities and corporations to legalise spots and construct skateparks (Chiu & Giamarino, 2019; Willing & Shearer, 2016). Across polluted spaces, skateboarding disrupts consumptive practices in commodified places by producing use values while entrenching privatisation.

Processes of dispossession that produce loss of public space and pollute publicness are path dependent. Campaigns to preserve skate spots result in uneven outcomes. The 2016 redesign of LOVE Park in Philadelphia was the result of a city partnership with private and non-profit stakeholders that transformed its legal and architectural aspects into more marketable uses that excluded skateboarding (Cianciotto, 2020). As Cianciotto (2020, pp. 694–696) details, Philadelphia desired a place with 'law-abiding citizens' that would support 'economic means' to 'promote growth, investment, and tourism'. In 2024, LOVE Park's grey granite was excavated and resurrected in a public skate plaza in Malmö, Sweden (Jenkem Staff, 2024). During a similar redevelopment process in 2014, the preservation of the Southbank undercroft skate spot in London was successful through an articulation by multiple publics of its civic role in everyday life (Latham & Layton, 2019). Fenced off since 2010, the Brooklyn Banks in Manhattan is slowly reopening thanks to the infrastructural permanence of the historic landmark, a partnership between two non-profits – The Skatepark Project and Brooklyn Bridge Manhattan – and the city and over $160 million in funds for park renovations (Hu, 2023). After a 2014 activist campaign at The Courthouse, where skateboarders leveraged social media and entrepreneurial capital to organise politically to preserve the spot, a five-year maintenance contract was established between the city and Nike SB to decriminalise the skate plaza (Snyder, 2017). While co-opting neoliberal tenets temporarily preserved the spot (Chiu & Giamarino, 2019), I articulate that when the contract expired, the campaign entrenched 'pollution of publicness' by entering into a public–private partnership, demonstrating to the city that the ownership structures, management strategies, and public land could be transferred to private hands for profitable redevelopment. Through political-economic pollution, grey spots are redesigned, demolished and excavated. As with LOVE Park and The Courthouse, temporary skateable spaces support neoliberal development agendas by marketing to creative classes, spurring gentrification, demolishing spots and containing the activity in skateparks away from commodified spaces (Howell, 2005, 2008).

With skateboarding incorporated as a legitimate Olympic sport (Thorpe & Wheaton, 2019), we should re-examine privatisation that treats the activity as pollution. Socioeconomically, there are 85

million skateboarders globally, and the industry's revenue is expected to be $4.3 billion by 2030 (Grand View Research, 2023; Hershkovits, 2022). Architecturally, the popularity of this leisure activity is reflected in the hybrid affordances of cities' built environments – plaza replicas within skateparks and public plazas with skateable architecture outside skateparks (Glenney & O'Connor, 2019). The once white, cisgender, male-dominated subculture has been diversified, challenged, adopted and embraced by a growing cohort of BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, women and ageing populations (Willing & Pappalardo, 2023).

Skateboarding promotes socio-spatial, political and physiological benefits. Socio-spatially, skateboarding transforms cities into endless playgrounds, as evidenced by the tacit architectural knowledge accrued in cooperatively building DIY skateparks and the spatial knowledge built through unstructured exploration (Hollett & Vivoni, 2021; Jenson et al., 2012). Politically, skateboarders (sub)consciously produce spaces that contest privatisation and suggest alternatives to commodification through playful reuse of mundane objects (Borden, 2019). Activist campaigns to liberate spots through public–private partnerships educate skateboarders about broader processes of privatisation, introduce them to new urban design skills and promote shared use of public spaces with non-skateboarders (Beal et al., 2017; Hollett & Vivoni, 2021; Willing & Shearer, 2016). Physiologically, the leisure activity is less injurious than organised sports, promotes sustained physical activity that decreases the likelihood of developing cardiovascular diseases, ameliorates mental health issues and encourages youth to actively engage cities (Giamarino et al., 2023). Therefore, the benefits of skateboarding in grey spaces of polluted leisure problematises skateboarders' treatment as socio-spatial pollution worthy of exclusion in cities.

Pollution of publicness

Through skateboarder's 'enskilment' in their ability to occupy polluted spaces and reinterpret their communal uses (Glenney, 2023), skateboarding functions as civil/deviant leisure. Mair (2002) defines 'civil leisure' as engagement in public protest during free time. The goals of civil leisure are to resist neoliberal power structures and processes, produce accessible socio-political public spaces, and include a plurality of voices in campaigns to foster inclusiveness (Mair, 2002, p. 231). Skateboarding as 'deviant leisure' is the anti-authoritarian mis-use of public space for illicit, mindless and spontaneous activities (Rojek, 1997). Entangled civil/deviant leisure manifests in the transformation of polluted spaces. Brownfields become DIY skateparks like Adog Skatepark in Burlington, Vermont, where locals grill glizzies and get clips (Glenney, 2023). Prior skateboard studies on grey spaces (Glenney, 2023) have focused on ambivalence in working with environmental pollution brought by climate change like skateboarding atop reclaimed brownfields (O'Connor et al., 2023). Less attention has been given to the impacts of political-economic pollution of grey spaces, specifically struggles against 'pollution of publicness'. Viewing skateboarding as pollution subjected to dispossession, exclusion and loss produces 'pollution of publicness'. Here, skateboarding is criminalised via broader political-economic processes like gentrification, commodification and privatisation of city space.

In a recent study exploring the chromatic turn in polluted leisure through the interplay between art and infrastructure, Buchetti and O'Connor (2024) analyse how Chicano Skatepark in San Diego, shaded under the Coronado Bridge, houses murals that express cultural spirituality and political resistance to dispossession. In one example, local identity is painted as a skateboarding skeleton grinding across the bridge. Art depicts a 'resistant space of leisure' that critiques material and symbolic aspects of polluted leisure within the skatepark like its situation under a freeway. 'Memmurials' speak to broader social issues like gentrification and violence and desires to engage in polluted leisure through skateboarding. By talking with artists and tracing the symbolic and material meaning of murals, they illustrate how the freeway severed the social, political and economic life of a community of colour and engendered resistance to exclusion, gentrification and violence. The case of Chicano Skatepark presents a gap for future research on grey spaces of

polluted leisure, where spots in environmentally polluted grey spaces become symbolically and physically inscribed with cultural art and political activism. Art, activism and leisure critique 'pollution of publicness' through fights to preserve public space for skateboarding by struggling against broader processes like gentrification and privatisation. Following calls for more research on 'historically and spatially grounded assessments of civil leisure' (Lamond et al., 2021; Lamond & Lashua, 2021; Mair, 2002, p. 233), I extend Buchetti and O'Connor's (2024) mural analysis to 'pollution of publicness' – privatised transfers in ownership, management, accessibility and inclusivity – expressed through development shifts in The Courthouse bandshell's paint. Three chromatic turns materially and symbolically represent tensions between 'pollution of publicness' and struggles to preserve publicness.

Excavation as method: looking at cities through a skater's eye

In Mike Davis's (1990) chapter 'Fortress L.A.', he details the privatisation of public spaces through fear of alternative leisure practices that drive exclusionary hostile designs. Davis conceptualised a fortressing effect that privatised public space through militarised architecture, which he argues is a purposeful strategy of historical-cultural erasure and future exclusion of alternative productions of public space. Excavating the future of leisure spaces is a struggle for spatial justice – the fair and equitable distribution of socially valued resources (i.e. grey skate spots) and opportunities to access them (Soja, 2010). Davis's place-based methodology helps unpack 'struggles over urban form, politics and culture that shape the geographies of Los Angeles to this day' (Tarr, 2012, p. 72). I excavate The Courthouse's future by combining traditional methods to study public space with my autoethnographic, advocacy-based involvement since 2015. Excavating The Courthouse 'lies in the power of a multiplicity of overlapping approaches to a complex place, creating a kind of harmonic chorus' (Tarr, 2012, p. 84).

Excavation serves a dual purpose. First, I incorporate it as a heuristic to better understand the historical construction of The Courthouse, 'pollution of publicness', and opportunities to preserve publicness. Second, I operationalise excavation as a dialectical (de)construction of political-economic processes, (re)developments and outcomes in cities' public spaces. I employ traditional urban design methods like content analysis, case study, storytelling, photography and autoethnographic tracing in the political-economic greying of public space to untangle the social production of civil/deviant leisure and opportunities to contest 'pollution of publicness' (Zeisel, 2006). I assess 'pollution of publicness' using Li et al.'s (2022) concept of ideal public space measured through ownership, management, accessibility and inclusiveness.

There are methodological limitations like the lack of systematically scheduled observations and mappings, interviews or reflexive co-production of knowledge (Lamond et al., 2021; Stoodley et al., 2024). To address limitations, I connect content analyses and case studies to archival analyses of skate media and my skater's eye (McDuie-Ra, 2023b). Through autoethnographic excavation, I string together a 'line' of methodological tricks to editorialise the unfolding dynamic of 'pollution of publicness' (Glenney, 2023; McDuie-Ra, 2023a). I substantiate that 'good planning is persuasive storytelling about the future' (Throgmorton, 1992, p. 17). As urban designer Allan B. Jacobs (1985, p. 1) declared, 'You can tell a lot about a city by looking'.

The chromatic turns of The Courthouse

Monochrome: public space

After Jeron Wilson lands a kickflip backside tailslide in *Goldfish*, the monochromatic amphitheatre emerges and floats with its 'swooping, parabolic arch of a roof held aloft by tiled pillars and sheltering a small stage with curves to match' (LA Conservancy, 2023). The colours of the bandshell are monochromatic shades of beige, grey and white (Figure 2), indicative of its Modernist style
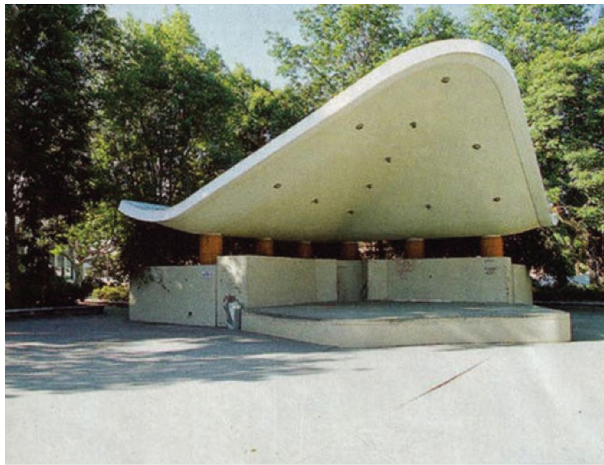
Figure 2. Monochromatic public leisure space (Sara, 2014).

representing social concerns to provide a functionally organised civic space with public amenities and services for a growing, sprawling metropolis (Serra et al., 2012). Despite perceived publicness in ownership, management through ordinances outlawed skateboarding, which reduced access and inclusivity.

This city-owned property was conceptualised in the 1949 Master Plan for Administrative Centres (Los Angeles Department of City Planning Administrative Services Division (with Ouellet, P. J.), 1964), which established 12 administrative centres throughout the sprawling city to provide public facilities and spaces to residents. At the time, LA's population was growing around 2% annually and the city aimed to provide public goods and services through comprehensive planning. Built between 1957 and 1965 during an optimistic period of post-war growth for the city and its municipal services, the complex contains five structures, including an administrative centre, a defunct courthouse, a public library, a senior centre and a bandshell. The complex was designed by Albert Criz who also designed the Van Nuys Courthouse, another famous skate spot. The first four buildings reflect Mid-Century Modernism with 'horizontal orientations, concrete construction, flat roofs, bands of windows, and glass entryways', while the bandshell is in the Googie architecture style with its 'hyperbolic paraboloid' roof and a curved stage sinuating below (Hess, 2004; LA Conservancy, 2023). Googie blends Modernism's concrete sculptures with space-age technology and bright geometries to generate commercial roadside architecture that ignores gravity altogether (Haskell, 1952). Although The Courthouse is public-facing architecture, Googie was primarily an architectural marketing campaign and has largely been 'discredited as frivolous, trivial and overall unimportant' (LeMaire, 2011). Constructed to align with the 1970 Centres Concept (The Concept) – a general plan to guide future economic and urban development of the city into transit-oriented, mixed-use and walkable nodes, The Courthouse aligned with two goals for The Concept: 1) to 'provide suitable sites for public facilities at locations convenient to users' and 2) to 'provide a full range of facilities for leisure time activities' (Department of City Planning, 1970, p. 10).

While Los Angeles's westward expansion emphasised civic life and publicness, city planning's development interests prioritised polycentric sprawl and increased securitisation of public spaces, which produced 'perceived lifelessness' (Davis, 1990, p. 50). As part of The Concept (Department of City Planning, 1970), The Courthouse was a low-medium density satellite node where pedestrians were separated from automobiles, public–private partnerships were desirable, and the remaining land would be developed for private housing with little space left for leisure. Accumulation by dispossession, loss and 'pollution of publicness' were integral to planned expansion. In the 1980s,

the fortressing of public spaces via hostile architecture and policing, as well as disinvestment and privatisation of development processes, 'supported the shift of fiscal resources to corporate-defined redevelopment priorities' (Davis, 1990, p. 227). The perceived lifelessness of The Courthouse presented opportunities for (un)sanctioned leisure. Since the 1990s, the plaza has accommodated unhoused residents, pedestrians and skateboarders. Documented in skate videos and magazines, the plaza became a popular skate spot because of its low concrete ledges shaded by mature trees, stair sets in front of the two administrative buildings, empty fountain and bandshell stage. The Courthouse contained 'soft' controls like skatestoppers and 'hard' controls like policing (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1993). In a Fox LA news report (whatchaout, 2016), an unnamed cop threatens to 'start putting people in jail' because The Courthouse is 'not a skatepark'.

During the 2013–2014 fiscal year, a statewide $15.7 billion budget shortfall crisis initially devalued the space (Associated Press, 2012). The state 'orchestrated, managed, and controlled' this crisis through 'state-administered austerity programmes' (Harvey, 2003, p. 150), which closed down The Courthouse for adjudicatory purposes. This closure sought to 'orchestrate devaluations in ways that permit accumulation by dispossession to occur without sparking a general collapse' (Harvey, 2003, p. 151). Closure spurred a process to transfer ownership from public to private hands initially through the enclosure of the plaza via skatestoppers. Skateboarders discovered that after a Go Skateboarding Day event on 21 June 2014, the city would instal skatestoppers on the plaza's objects to reinforce a citywide ban on skateboarding. In response, a coalition of skateboarders flexed their entrepreneurial capital and lobbied the city to enter into a public–private partnership with Nike SB to curb minor property damage and maintain upkeep through maintenance (Snyder, 2017). The bandshell's paint transitioned from monochromatic Modernist aspirations to shades of blue, exhibiting decriminalisation and transformation into a corporate-branded skate plaza.

Shades: public-private space

In 2014, with knowledge that The Courthouse would be skate-stopped, local skateboarders along with Alec Beck from The Skatepark Project engaged in civil leisure and co-opted tenets of neoliberal urbanism – creative use of social media and entrepreneurial capital, convivial sharing of the space with non-skateboarders and participation in public meetings (Chiu & Giamarino, 2019). This campaign established a public–private partnership between Nike SB and the city where funds 'painted [the bandshell] blue' (Eisenhour, 2014). This 5-year, $50,000 maintenance contract legalised skateboarding, installed angle iron to prevent property damage and maintained upkeep through cleanups and repaintings. The shades of blue represented a shift in ownership and management to a public–private partnership that temporarily increased legal accessibility and perceived inclusiveness of skateboarding through architectural installations on obstacles and the suspension of a citywide ban on skateboarding (Figure 3).

In contesting the loss of leisure, skateboarders co-opted tenets of neoliberalism to establish this partnership, which was contingent on experimentation in regulation that legalised it as a hazardous recreational space. Reflecting on arguments that the campaign was successful in preserving publicness (Chiu & Giamarino, 2019), Brenner (2016, p. 132) argues that neoliberal activist tactics often reinforce and entrench privatisation by extending 'a diminished role for public institutions'. The advocacy campaign in 2014 redistributed ownership and management to a public–private partnership, which indicated to the city that they could sell the land to a private redeveloper. Unknowingly, the 2014 campaign was complicit in its pollution of The Courthouse's publicness by embedding accumulation by dispossession and privatising material and symbolic accessibility and inclusivity.

Once the maintenance contract expired in 2019, the city put out a request for proposals to redevelop the site in 2020 and sold the land to two private developers – AvalonBay and Abode Communities – in 2021 (LACDA, 2020; Llewellyn, 2021). The redevelopment plan, ironically entitled The West L.A. Commons, has promised mixed-use affordable housing and ground floor

Figure 3. Shades of public-private leisure space (TWS, 2014).

retail. Missing from initial renderings were objects that have traditionally afforded skateboarding – the ledges, fountain and bandshell stage. Today, local skateboarders alongside The Skatepark Project are engaged in a civil leisure campaign with architects, developers and the city to preserve the publicness of the plaza as a shared leisure space. Since 2019, although technically closed, the plaza is frequented by skateboarders for deviant leisure, a DIY scene has popped up with homemade ramps, The Courthouse building has been fenced off and become a canvas for graffiti and the repaintings of the ledges and bandshell are chipping away. Tracing the naturally excavated paint colours reveals the plaza's construction, its social production as deviant skateboarding space, and struggles against 'pollution of publicness' during its monochromatic past, its shaded quasi-public present and its compounding private future. There have been renewed efforts by The Skatepark Project, UCLA, the Los Angeles Conservancy and local skateboarders and residents to collaboratively educate developers about this architectural and cultural history and reimagine the redevelopment as a public space with affordable housing that affords rather than pollutes opportunities for civil/deviant leisure.

Compound: private space

Today, The Courthouse is technically closed to the public but still functions as a site for skateboarding and a weekly farmer's market. 'Pollution of publicness' is reflected in its compound colours (Figure 4). There is overgrown green foliage, and the ledges are purple and yellow; the bandshell stage is red, purple and blue; the fountain contains hues of grey and blue; and the defunct courthouse is fenced off and covered with pink, purple and yellow graffiti. These chipped colours uncover a contested space, from its Modernist past to its public-private moment to its unknown future via contradictions and opportunities during the proposed redevelopment. Skateboarders contributed to 'pollution of publicness' by transferring ownership and management to private hands. The public–private partnership with Nike SB impacted the space's future accessibility and inclusiveness. In response, concerned (non)skateboarders have been involved in informal conversations, attended design charrettes and hosted do-it-yourself advocacy events to celebrate the architectural and cultural history of the place and fight against 'pollution of publicness'.

On 11 April 2022, the 'Save the West LA Courthouse Skate Spot' Instagram initiated the #savecourthouse campaign (savecourthouse, 2023). The initial post invited skateboarders to join a town hall meeting on 13 April 2022, to voice their opinions on whether to support or oppose demolition of the plaza. This was the first time that the new developers realised that a large cohort of residents were opposed to the redevelopment. Additionally, concerned members of the West LA-Sawtelle Neighbourhood Council were uneasy about the proposed density of the redevelopment, its

Figure 4. Compound pollution of publicness.

impacts on gentrification and the erasure of public space for the farmer's market. The #savecourt-house campaign was explicitly supportive of preservation of the plaza's publicness for skateboard-ing and the production of affordable housing to address the homelessness crisis. On 4 May 2022, Alec Beck and I reached out to the developers to schedule a site visit. Led by Alec Beck, we reviewed the proposed site plan taped against the bandshell, discussed The Courthouse's skateboarding history, and talked with skateboarders about their use of the space. From this experience, the developers revealed they were unaware of the spot's architectural and cultural history. We found out that the lead architect was a fan of local guerrilla architecture by Marmol Radziner in the 1990s, which had increased access to nearby Bundy Triangle Park through installation of a triangular ladder that went up-and-over its fence (Zeiger, 2015). After listening to skateboarders, they seemed open to retaining the publicness of the plaza through preservation or excavation of skateable architecture. Three options were finalised after this walk-through: 1) preserve the bandshell and ledges through integration into the redevelopment, 2) relocate them to an underutilised public parking lot across the street or 3) expand and renovate nearby Stoner Skatepark. Key concerns raised by city staff and developers were injury liability, noise and the inability for skateboarders to share the space despite weekly coexistence during the farmer's market. To draw additional desired options, skateboarders attended a design charrette on 11 May 2022 and attended a 14 June 2022 environmental impact scoping review meeting.

My involvement in this advocacy campaign, conversations during site-visits and feedback from design charrettes and meetings sparked an idea to co-organise a DIY activation. The purpose of this event would be to celebrate The Courthouse's architectural and cultural history, critique concerns about conviviality in the future redevelopment and propose an alternative future for the plaza that preserves its publicness. Through funding from UCLA's Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies and Urban Humanities Initiative, my colleagues and I from the Urban Planning and Architecture Departments co-organised a DIY celebration of the space to contest key concerns and to demon-strate that multiple leisure activities could coexist in the future development. We purposefully scheduled it during the farmer's market. The 'Make Space' event took place on 2 October 2022. The Skatepark Project and College Skateboarding brought ramps, educated attendees about the history of skateboard activism and hosted two contests for the local community. The Los Angeles Conservancy hosted an educational booth about the architectural significance of Mid-Century Modern and Googie styles. The farmer's market provided food and drink. Local skateboarders and students DJed. The city and developers held spaces to speak on the proposed redevelopment and listen to feedback. The event demonstrated the ongoing legacy of conviviality, skateboard activism

and benefits of engaging in civil/deviant leisure at The Courthouse. Younger generations of skateboarders became involved in a political activation of public space that was fun and educational.

During a product toss (Figure 5) – where clothes and skateboards donated from local shops like Marriage and Sapasi were tossed into the crowd, Alec Beck turned this into an educational opportunity, asking skateboarders to 'raise [their] hand if they've ever been ticketed, arrested, or kicked out of a spot for skateboarding'. Every skateboarder raised their hand indicating the importance of access to public leisure space.

In a mini-documentary about 'Make Space' produced by The Skatepark Project (The Skatepark Project, 2022), co-organisers and attendees described the importance of retaining the plaza's publicness. Preservationist Erik Van Breene stated, 'Everyone deserves a safe recreational space'. Speaking to the various repaintings and 'pollution of publicness', he reflected:

> Over time, layers of history here at the West LA Civic Centre. It is significant culturally. We want to preserve the space as-is and manage the change of it. I think it is important that it stays a space where you come into it and you know where you are.

Preserving the space's publicness, according to pro skateboarder Chris Roberts, educates new generations about the history of skateboarding culture while providing space to 'go out and explore the environment'. The event's focus was on accessibility and inclusion, as skateboarders and non-skateboarders shared the space. An emotional moment, highlighting the importance of accessibility and inclusivity, was when a blind skateboarder, Coco, rode off the stage, landed the drop, shouted 'I feel amazing' and was embraced by other skateboarders while receiving a deck. Skateboarder Briana King detailed 'this is a safe space'. King 'had one of [her] first skateboarding meetups for all women and queer people here'. Alec Beck, pushing against 'pollution of publicness', concluded that 'Make Space' was:

> an excellent example about people coming together, rallying for a cause, and building support that the city and county will really listen to. Nobody ever thought this place would be legalised. Nobody ever thought we would get another chance after redevelopment talks started. But if we get out there and rally things can happen.

Over 200 people attended and '140 signatures were gathered for public petition and comments to preserve community amenities and obstacles in the space's future redevelopment' (Giamarino,

Figure 5. 'Make Space' civil leisure event.

2022). Through engagement in public meetings and the 'Make Space' activation, the developers listened, observed and rethought redevelopment. They asked for more time to 'clear up space for the addition of a public park' to retain the stage and ledges for skateboarding (Sharp, 2023). Additionally, these delays were caused by 'increased financing and construction costs' that 'reduced the project return on investment for West L.A. Commons from 5.98% to 5.1 percent' (Sharp, 2024). These budgetary shortcomings amount to anywhere from $60 to $70 million in revenue (A. Beck, personal communication, 12 July 2024). 'Pollution of publicness' produced a crisis of internal redevelopment contradictions that has unlocked opportunities for the preservation of publicness through developing civil/deviant leisure at The Courthouse. The question remains: will The Courthouse's future be preserved in-place or excavated to a nearby lot? By excavating The Courthouse's construction, I explored three chromatic shifts in ownership and management that illustrate an unfolding process of 'pollution of publicness'. Through this coloured critique of redevelopment contradictions, I uncovered opportunities to preserve publicness through growing DIY advocacy. From my involvement in advocacy at The Courthouse, I impart recommendations on how to maintain it as an accessible, inclusive leisure space.

Excavating the future in West Los Angeles

In this paper, I have operationalised the grey spaces paradigm in three ways. First, I presented a case study of how symbolic and material greyness produced a political-economic 'pollution of publicness' at The Courthouse. This is articulated through three chromatic turns in the bandshell's paint that represent political-economic processes that privatise ownership structures and management strategies, which impact accessibility and inclusivity. Second, I have combined methods of looking at cities with my skater's eye to excavate The Courthouse's construction and struggles against 'pollution of publicness'. Thirdly, I have analysed skateboarding via the broader theory of 'pollution of publicness', which unfolds through dispossession, loss, and shifts in ownership and management. I have excavated and critiqued three chromatic shifts in greyness at The Courthouse to argue that 'pollution of publicness' impacts accessibility and inclusivity in grey spaces of polluted leisure. Reorienting our focus towards the privatised political economy of polluted leisure space exposes the negative externalities of 'pollution of publicness'. This focus also presents communities with opportunities to mobilise campaigns to resist 'pollution of publicness' by increasing access to inclusive public space in pursuit of spatial justice.

By excavating three chromatic development turns, I have traced an unfolding process of 'pollution of publicness'. During monochrome, the city-owned property was managed as a traditional public space, legal accessibility was limited through policing and hostile architecture and inclusiveness was based on a willingness to engage in deviant leisure. Upon closure of The Courthouse, shades established a public–private partnership through civil leisure where experimental management legalised accessibility and increased lived inclusiveness. I argue that skateboarders were complicit in 'pollution of publicness' by co-opting neoliberal principles during a contingent crisis that ultimately entrenched privatisation through the next development phase. The final phase – compound – reveals past traces of publicness and uncovers transfers of ownership and management to private developers that pollute publicness. Redevelopment contradictions also opened opportunities for the preservation of publicness – accessibility and inclusivity. The 'Make Space' event functioned as resistance to 'pollution of publicness' through an activation that articulated an alternative architectural, economic, political and social future for The Courthouse. It demonstrated how to improve and increase legal access and lived inclusion to public space through civil/deviant leisure. Exposing contradictions in The Courthouse's 'pollution of publicness', I advocate for explicit political commitments to spatial justice in preserving publicness through civil/deviant leisure. As the LA Conservancy (2023) argues, 'The existing Amphitheatre can be repurposed and kept. While it may be deemed easier to demolish everything … Easy does not

equal better'. We must combat 'pollution of publicness' and ensure a fair and equitable distribution of grey spaces of polluted leisure and opportunities to access them.

As a skateboarder, contesting 'pollution of publicness' ensures that public spaces are equitably distributed, accessible and open for reinterpretation through social productions like 'Make Space'. The event critiqued and reimagined 'pollution of publicness' at The Courthouse through collaboration with policymakers, political mobilisation of youth and adaptive reuse of a politically and economically polluted grey space that sparked an ongoing DIY scene. Three recommendations were derived from the event. They include 1) attending town halls and design charrettes to work with architects, designers, planners and policymakers to educate them about architecturally and culturally significant leisure spaces, 2) constructing skateable architecture and skateboarding in public spaces to make demands for access and inclusion known and 3) demonstrating the social, political and physiological benefits of skateboarding. While grey spaces of polluted leisure may be planned, designed and sited to cap and obfuscate environmental toxins or noxious land uses, their cultural history, skateable architecture, legal accessibility and lived inclusiveness should be remediated, free from the political-economic contaminants associated with 'pollution of publicness'.

Acknowledgments

Disclosure statement

As a skateboarder involved in ongoing civil and deviant leisure at The Courthouse, I have personal interest in the preservation of the space's publicness and struggles against pollution of publicness.

Notes on contributor

Christopher Giamarino is a Lecturer at UCLA and skateboarder based in Los Angeles. He holds a PhD in Urban Planning from UCLA. His research explores theories of social justice and urban design, public space regulation and design, and the everyday urbanisms of unhoused communities and skateboarders in the social production of space. His work has been features in the *Journal of the American Planning Association, Housing Policy Debate, Cities & health, Urban Affairs Review*, and *The New York Times*.

ORCID

Christopher Giamarino http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4141-3955

References

Amin, A. (2008). Collective culture and urban public space. *City*, *12*(1), 5–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810801933495

Beal, B., Atencio, M., Wright, E. M., & McClain, Z. (2017). Skateboarding, community and urban politics: Shifting practices and challenges. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, *9*(1), 11–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2016.1220406

Boddy, T. (1992). Underground and overhead: Building the analogous city. In M. Sorkin (Ed.), *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (pp. 123–153). Hill & Wang.

Bonin, M. (2019). *Motion to Consider Redevelopment of West L.A. Civic Center* (p. 1). City Council District 11. Office of the City Administrative Officer. https://cao.lacity.gov/capital/mfc20210126g.pdf

Borden, I. (2019). *Skateboarding and the City: A Complete History*. Bloomsbury.

Brenner, N. (2016). Is Tactical Urbanism an Alternative to Neoliberal Urbanism? In N. Brenner (Ed.), *Critique of Urbanization: Selected Essays* (pp. 128–146). Birkhauser.

Brenner, N., & Theodore, N. (2002). Cities and the Geographies of "Actually Existing Neoliberalism. *Antipode*, *34*(3), 349–379. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00246.

Brymer, E., Crabtree, J., & King, R. (2021). Exploring perceptions of how nature recreation benefits mental wellbeing: A qualitative enquiry. *Annals of Leisure Research*, *24*(3), 394–413. https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2020.1778494

Buchetti, A., & O'Connor, P. (2024). Chicano Park's skateboard memorial murals: Extending the sacred in polluted leisure. *Leisure Sciences*, 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2024.2325484

Carr, S., Francis, M., Rivlin, L. G., & Stone, A. M. (1992). *Public Space*. Cambridge University Press.

Chiu, C., & Giamarino, C. (2019). Creativity, conviviality, and civil society in neoliberalizing public space: Changing politics and discourses in skateboarder activism from New York City to Los Angeles. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, *43*(6), 462–492. https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723519842219

Cianciotto, L. M. (2020). Public space, common space, and the spaces in–between: A case study of Philadelphia's LOVE Park. *City & Community*, *19*(3), 676–703. https://doi.org/10.1111/cico.12454

Conservancy, L. A. (2023). *West Los Angeles Civic Center*. Los Angeles Conservancy. http://www.laconservancy.org/learn/historic-places/west-los-angeles-civic-center/

Dardot, P., & Laval, C. (2013). *The new way of the world: On neo-liberal society* (G. Elliot, Trans.). Verso. Original work published 2009.

Davis, M. (1990). *City of quartz: Excavating the future in Los Angeles*. Verso.

Department of City Planning. (1970). *The concept for the Los Angeles general plan*. http://www.planetizen.com/files/los-angeles-centers-plan.pdf

Dumas, A., & Laforest, S. (2009). Skateparks as a health☐resource: Are they as dangerous as they look? *Leisure Studies*, *28*(1), 19–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614360802334898

Dunlap, R., Rose, J., Standridge, S. H., & Pruitt, C. L. (2021). Experiences of urban cycling: Emotional geographies of people and place. *Leisure Studies*, *40*(1), 82–95. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2020.1720787

Eisenhour, M. (2014). *Interview: Alec Beck on liberating the Courthouse. Transworld Skateboarding*. https://skateboarding.transworld.net/features/interview-alec-beck-liberating-courthouse-slo/

Engell, Z., Larsen, S. H., & Elmose-Østerlund, K. (2024). Participation in street sports—A national study of participation patterns among youth and adults. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, *21*(2), 128–151. https://doi.org/10.1080/16138171.2023.2252276

Evers, C. (2021). Polluted leisure and blue spaces: More-than-human concerns in Fukushima. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, *45*(2), 179–195. https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723519884854

Giamarino, C. (2022, October 10). *An active example of advocacy in West Los Angeles. UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs*. https://luskin.ucla.edu/an-active-example-of-advocacy-in-west-los-angeles

Giamarino, C., O'Connor, P., & Willing, I., & Willing Indigo. (2023). The impacts of hostile designs on skateboarding as a form of active transportation and recreation: Comparing perspectives from public university spaces in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. *Cities & Health*, *7* (3), 416–432. https://doi.org/10.1080/23748834.2022.2158769

Glenney, B. (2023). Polluted leisure enskilment: Skateboarding as ecosophy. *Leisure Sciences*, 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2023.2281568

Glenney, B., & O'Connor, P. (2019). Skateparks as hybrid elements of the city. *Journal of Urban Design*, *24*(6), 840–855. https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2019.1568189

Grand View Research. (2023). *Skateboard market size, share & trends analysis report by product (Street Board, Long Board), By End-user (Kids, Teenagers, Adults), By Region, And Segment Forecasts, 2023–2030*.

Harvey, D. (2003). Accumulation by Dispossession. In D. Harvey (Ed.), *The New Imperialism* (pp. 137–182). Oxford University Press.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.

Haskell, D. (1952). Googie Architecture—Los Angeles does its bit. *House+home, February, 1952*, 86–88. https://usmodernist.org/HH/HH-1952-02.pdf

Hershkovits, E. (2022, August 12). *15 interesting skateboarding facts. Red Bull Skateboarding*. https://www.redbull.com/us-en/interesting-skateboarding-facts

Hess, A. (2004). *Googie redux: Ultramodern roadside architecture*. Chronicle Books.

Hollett, T., & Vivoni, F. (2021). DIY Skateparks as temporary disruptions to neoliberal cities: Informal learning through micropolitical making. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, *42*(6), 881–897. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2020.1742095

Howell, O. (2005). The '"creative class"' and the gentrifying city: Skateboarding in Philadelphia's Love Park. *Journal of Architectural Education*, *59*(2), 32–42. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1531-314X.2005.00014.x

Howell, O. (2008). Skatepark as Neoliberal Playground: Urban governance, recreation space, and the cultivation of personal responsibility. *Space and Culture*, *11*(4), 475–496. https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331208320488

Hu, W. (2023). The mecca of New York Skateboarding, back from the dead? *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/nyregion/brooklyn-banks-skateboarding-nyc.html

Jacobs, A. B. (1985). *Looking at Cities*. Harvard University Press.

Jenson, A., Swords, J., & Jeffries, M. (2012). The accidental youth club: Skateboarding in Newcastle-Gateshead. *Journal of Urban Design*, *17*(3), 371–388. https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2012.683400

Kelly, P., Goring, J., & Brown, S. (2023). *covid-19, the Anthropocene and Young People's Well-Being: A Posthuman Rethinking of Young People as 'Biocultural Creatures'*. Youth and Globalization. https://doi.org/10.1163/25895745-bja10025

Kyrönviita, M., & Wallin, A. (2022). Building a DIY skatepark and doing politics hands-on. *City*, *26*(4), 646–663. https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2022.2079879

LACDA. (2020). *Request for proposals for the West Los Angeles civic center and courthouse development project* (pp. 54). https://www.laconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Request-for-Proposal-West-Los-Angeles-Courthouse-Development-Project.pdf

Lackey, N. Q., Tysor, D. A., McNay, G. D., Joyner, L., Baker, K. H., & Hodge, C. (2021). Mental health benefits of nature-based recreation: A systematic review. *Annals of Leisure Research*, *24*(3), 379–393. https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2019.1655459

Lamond, I. R., & Lashua, B. (2021). Leisure, activism, and the animation of the urban environment. *Leisure Studies*, *40*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2020.1869291

Lamond, I. R., Solano, E., & Blotta, V. (2021). Leisure activism and engaged ethnography: Heterogeneous voices and the urban palimpsest. *Leisure Studies*, *40*(1), 96–108. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2020.1724318

Latham, A., & Layton, J. (2019). Publics and their problems: Notes on the remaking of the south bank, London. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *43*(6), 1148–1167. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12832

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Leitner, H., Sheppard, E. S., Sziarto, K., & Maringanti, A. (2007). Contesting urban futures: Decentering neoliberalism. In H. Leitner, J. Peck, & E. S. Sheppard (Eds.), *Contesting Neoliberalism: Urban Frontiers* (pp. 1–25). The Guilford Press.

LeMaire, G. (2011, August 27). *Googie architecture: Futurism through modernism*. ArchDaily. https://www.archdaily.com/148641/googie-architecture-futurism-through-modernism

Li, J., Dang, A., & Song, Y. (2022). Defining the ideal public space: A perspective from the publicness. *Journal of Urban Management*, *11*(4), 479–487. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2022.08.005

Llewellyn, R. H., Jr. (2021). *Report on the west Los Angeles civic center joint city- county of los angeles request for proposals and authorization to enter into an exclusive negotiating agreement with abode communities and Avalon Bay – West La Commons (0220-05213-0001, p. 40)*. Office of the City Administrative Officer. https://cao.lacity.gov/capital/mfc20210126g.pdf

Los Angeles Department of City Planning Administrative Services Division (with Ouellet, P. J.). (1964). *City planning in Los Angeles: A history/Department of City Planning, Administrative Services Division*. Department of City Planning, Administrative Services Division.

Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (1993). Privatisation of public open space: The Los Angeles experience. *The Town Planning Review*, *64*(2), 139–167. https://doi.org/10.3828/tpr.64.2.6h26535771454436

Mair, H. (2002). Civil leisure? Exploring the relationship between leisure, activism and social change. *Leisure/Loisir*, *27*(3–4), 213–237. https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2002.9651304

McDuie-Ra, D. (2022). Skateboarding and the Mis-Use Value of Infrastructure. *Acme*, *21*(1), 49–64. https://doi.org/10.14288/acme.v21i1.2167

McDuie-Ra, D. (2023a). Play space in plain sight: Disruptive alliances between street trees and skateboarders. *International Journal of Play*, *12*(3), 285–303. https://doi.org/10.1080/21594937.2023.2235470

McDuie-Ra, D. (2023b). Skateboarding in the empty city: A radical archive of alternative pandemic mobilities. *Mobilities*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2022.2154693

Mitchell, D., & Staeheli, L. A. (2006). Clean and Safe? Property redevelopment, public space, and homelessness in downtown San Diego. In S. Low & N. Smith (Eds.), *The Politics of Public Space* (pp. 143–175). Routledge.

Nemeth, J. (2006). Conflict, exclusion, relocation: Skateboarding and public space. *Journal of Urban Design*, *11*(3), 297–318. https://doi.org/10.1080/13574800600888343

O'Connor, P. (2024). Conceptualising grey spaces in skateboarding: Generating theory and method for use beyond the board. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902241250089

O'Connor, P., Evers, C., Glenney, B., & Willing, I. (2023). Skateboarding in the Anthropocene: Grey spaces of polluted leisure. *Leisure Studies*, *42*(6), 897–907. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2022.2153906

Peck, J., & Tickell, A. (2002). Neoliberalizing space. *Antipode*, *34*(3), 380–404. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00247

Press, A. (2012, May 15). *Jerry Brown urges budget cuts*. POLITICO. https://www.politico.com/story/2012/05/jerry-brown-urges-budget-cuts-076312

Reed, J., & Smith, H. (2023). 'Everything we do will have an element of fear in it': Challenging assumptions of fear for all in outdoor adventurous education. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, *23*(2), 107–119. https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2021.1961092

Rojek, C. (1997). Leisure Theory: Retrospect and Prospect. *Loisir Et Société/Society and Leisure*, *20*(2), 383–400. https://doi.org/10.1080/07053436.1997.10715549

Sara. (2014). West LA Courthouse Unlocked. *Lodown Magazine*. http://lodownmagazine.com/pulse/west-la-courthouse-unlocked

savecourthouse. (2023). *Save The West LA Courthouse Skate Spot*. https://www.instagram.com/savecourthouse/

Schmidt, S., Németh, J., & Botsford, E. (2011). The evolution of privately owned public spaces in New York City. *Urban Design International*, 16(4), 270–284. https://doi.org/10.1057/udi.2011.12

Serra, J., García, Á., Torres, A., & Llopis, J. (2012). Color composition features in modern architecture. *Color Research & Application*, 37(2), 126–133. https://doi.org/10.1002/col.20657

Sharp, S. (2019, August 29). *City to Consider Redevelopment of West L.A. Civic Center*. Urbanize LA. https://la.urbanize.city/post/city-consider-redevelopment-west-la-civic-center

Sharp, S. (2023, November 8). *Developers get more time for West Los Angeles Civic Center project*. Urbanize LA. https://la.urbanize.city/post/developers-get-more-time-west-los-angeles-civic-center-project

Sharp, S. (2024, May 7). *Financing gap could derail West L.A. Civic Center redevelopment*. Urbanize LA. https://la.urbanize.city/post/financing-gap-could-derail-west-la-civic-center-redevelopment

The Skatepark Project (Director). (2022, December 19). *What will happen to the west LA courthouse skate spot?* [Video recording]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgPU2Lq768E

Smith, N. (1996). *The new urban frontier: Gentrification and the revanchist city*. Routledge.

Snyder, G. J. (2017). *Skateboarding LA: Inside Professional Street Skateboarding*. NYU Press.

Soja, E. (2010). *Seeking Spatial Justice*. University of Minnesota Press.

Staff, J. (2024, March 6). *Love park is being resurrected … in Sweden?* Jenkem Magazine. https://www.jenkemmag.com/home/2024/03/06/love-park-is-being-resurrected-in-sweden/

Stoodley, L., Paechter, C., Keenan, M., & Lawton, C. (2024). "I don't want to get in anyone's way": Mapping girl skateboarders' navigation of place and power in skate spaces. *Leisure Studies*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2024.2314471

Tarr, A. R. (2012). Return to the city of quartz: Excavating the future 20 years on. *Human Geography*, 5(3), 72–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/194277861200500312

Thorpe, H., & Wheaton, B. (2019). The Olympic Games, Agenda 2020 and action sports: The promise, politics and performance of organisational change. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 11(3), 465–483. https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2019.1569548

Throgmorton, J. A. (1992). Planning as persuasive storytelling about the future: negotiating an electric power rate settlement in Illinois. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 12(1), 17–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X9201200103

TWS. (2014). *Go skateboarding day LA 2014. Transworld Skateboarding*. https://www.skateboarding.com/photos/go-skateboarding-day-la-2014

whatchaout (Director). (2016, November 3). *1996 FoxLA news report on skateboarding [video recording]*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snfsy8eenF4

Willing, I., & Pappalardo, A. (2023). *Skateboarding, power and change*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Willing, I., & Shearer, S. (2016). Skateboarding activism: Exploring diverse voices and community support. In K.-J. Lombard (Ed.), *Skateboarding: Subcultures, sites and shifts* (pp. 44–56). Routledge.

Zeiger, M. (2015). Marmol Radziner's Past Forays into Guerrilla Architecture. *The Architect's Newspaper*. https://www.archpaper.com/2015/10/heavy-trash-marmol-radziner-past-forays-guerrilla-architecture/

Zeisel, J. (2006). *Inquiry by Design: Environment/Behavior/Neuroscience in Architecture, Interiors, Landscape, and Planning*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Zukin, S. (2010). *Naked city: The death and life of authentic urban places*. Oxford University Press.