Rediscovering the Ruderal: An Alternative Framework for Post-Industrial Sites of Accumulation

Thesis

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Abstract

Ruderal is a term primarily used to describe emergent plant communities. Ruderal references the disused and vacant as a typology as well as a signal for growth; it is a concept of space based upon its potential to generate value. Ruderal species are weedy and rough, best adapted to the hostile conditions of disturbed ground. But plants are not the only species which flourish in ruderal sites. Human activities also come to fruition within ruderal sites, from the illicit and subversive to the formal and productive and many variants between. For this reason ruderal spaces are an important engine of the urban condition. They are charged with meaning, history, and contain great generative force. Ruderal sites are complex in nature, conflicted by a tendency to be labeled as empty or vacant, representing heterogeneous experiences of space.

Understanding a ruderal site’s history and its future potential is critical to projecting how these spaces may play a more explicit role in urban revitalization. A growing body of literature exists about ruderal space but its authors do not use the term specifically. The work does not proffer consensus among its writers and employs diverse terminology, pointing to the fact that a thorough undertaking of ruderal space has not yet been accomplished despite growing awareness of its role in our changing cities. This thesis brings together diverse voices as a foundation to propose a new framework of action and emerging mentalities for optimizing ruderal space without extinguishing its innate characteristics.

Two essential factors to understanding the potential of ruderal space include: a) top-down versus bottom-up actors, and b) levels of formality of action. While top-down actors are legitimized by political, financial and social policy, their actions have an array of associated issues. Bottom-up ruderal use is concurrently evolving with top-down forces, but the two are in conflict around demand for the same sites. Within the urban fabric, the two forces are linked; the economic gain of one influences the other although bottom-up forces are typically marginalized.
This thesis evaluates the prevailing mentalities of ruderal space, examines top-down/bottom-up paradigms and levels of formality of actions, and suggests a new framework based upon case studies and literature. The thesis proposes five emerging mentalities of ruderal space as a generator of urban revitalization which combine top-down tools with bottom-up agglomerations: exploring history, the living city, open house, location as an incubator, and long-run ruderal. The extent to which these emerging mentalities are beneficial has yet to be fully understood; they open a discussion to more empirical research. The newly constructed mentalities engage a depth of discussion not previously undertaken, and serve to open a line of inquiry.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Ruderal is a term primarily used to describe emergent plant communities. Ruderal species are often weedy and rough, filling available disturbed spaces quickly. The plants take advantage of the space, sunlight, and lack of competition with other species. The species that succeed are those best adapted to the hostile conditions of disturbed places. Sarah Cowles (2010) recently used the term in her lecture “Critical Disturbance” which focused on the types of places that were characterized by ruderal species. She defined the term as following:

The ruderals are defined as a community of species found on anthropogenic and uncultivated sites. Ruins and rubble heaps. In other words, disturbed sites” (Cowles, 2010).

The focus on sites that generate these conditions is important. Without construction debris, demolition wreckage or abandoned sites, there would be no habitat for ruderal plants. Ruderals are a set of species which can outcompete others in poor conditions, but typically are themselves outcompeted in rich environments.

Plants are not the only species which flourish in ruderal sites. A variety of human activities exist and come to fruition in ruderal spaces. Human activities include the more tenuous and weedy types of enterprises as well as polished and formal ones. Ruderal space is inviting for a diversity of actors and types of activity. There is a strong similarity between disturbance that generates plant activity and disturbance that generates human activity. For plants the disturbance of the place is a physical turning of soil; for humans the disturbance is a social and economic turning, or changing, of a site's conditions.

Human activities within ruderal sites can be illicit and subversive – graffiti, drug use, vandalism; or they may be informal and productive – inhabitation, exploration, agriculture, or
cultural reuse. At a further extreme, ruderal sites are attractive to formal endeavors such as
development.

This thesis is particularly interested in bottom-up activities which occur within ruderal space.
Bottom-up activities have not been studied as thoroughly as top-down activities, yet include some
interesting and innovative uses useful to cities and regions as a whole. Remnants of human use
take place alongside tufts of ragweed, sumac and escaped ornamentals. Neither is sanctioned,
yet both provide important functions. The invasive weeds which grow on these challenging sites
thrive and build soil where no other plants can survive, thriving in salt, compaction and toxins.
Informal activities likewise grow economic functions, even to the point of providing employment
or helping create industries. Human activities also manage to survive and thrive in decaying
structures, social margins and forgotten infrastructures.

A growing body of literature exists about ruderal space, although authors do not use that
term. The work does not have a consensus among writers on what to call the spaces in question,
employing a diversity of unique terminology. Yet within the literature several important points
come to light. One, there is a consensus of what types of spaces these consist of. Two, ruderal
space has a diversity of ways in which it is viewed: it can be many different things to different
people. To this point, through time the progression of ruderal writings describe space increasingly
by virtue of its potentials and less by simple typologies of space.

Ruderal spaces have become a familiar sight in post-industrial cities. The pattern is seen as
razed buildings, piles of rubble or grassy lots, boarded-up houses, huge surface parking lots,
empty industrial sites and vacant store fronts. Authors also mention underused spaces and
marginal territories. Ruderal space constitutes a variety of anthropogenic waste spaces.

Ruderal spaces are easily identified, but less easily understood. Ruderal sites are complex in
their histories and perceptions of them. The history of actions that has occurred in ruderal places
are diverse
and have included various forces that altered them from a state of activity to ruderality.
Perceptions are also diverse, and this thesis has distilled them down to a few mentalities, calling
out dominant and instrumental attitudes.

Mentalities are subjective perceptions of reality. Truth is not absolute, but relative to each
person who perceives it. Attitudes about ruderal spaces are likewise diverse, partly a result of the complex layering of history, meaning, and projected uses of those places.

In the vacant sites of our cities we imagine many things, some real some not. Ruins may attract stories of boogie-men or crime. Monumental structures often attach a nostalgia or nobility which they may or may not have had in their working lives. Other places may inspire sadness, introspection or even anger. Moreover, for every under-used site there is also a vision of what the future of what that site may bring. Landscape is inscribed with not only our pasts and values but also our hopes and dreams. Vacant sites are not empty but full of histories, uses and futures.

In looking at specific uses of ruderal space, themes emerge which can be categorized as top-down or bottom-up. Top-down and bottom-up are not absolutes, but exist as ranges on a dialectical axis. These two categories represent the scale and agency of actors. Actors in the top-down range are larger and have greater ability to leverage power to enact their needs and wants than the bottom-up. In addition to differing scales of actors, levels of formality are another crucial measure. Actions undertaken on ruderal sites can either be formal or informal in nature. Formal actions include legally recognized behaviors that uphold the letter and the spirit of the law and follow socially upheld mores. In contrast, informal actions exist outside social codes, although they may be favored by a majority of people; more neutrally they may be tolerated, and at a hostile extreme may be actively opposed.

Top-down forces dominate the ultimate reuse of ruderal spaces. In the past real-estate and private development has dominated these places and set the stage for urban regeneration programs. Currently, neo-liberal privatization operates similarly, redeveloping large tracts of downtown areas. Both private interest and the government are key players in top-down actions. The motivations of these players as well as the typical patterns and problems of top-down use of ruderal sites are discussed in Chapter 3.

In the prevailing literature bottom-up uses have not been analyzed as heavily as top-down ones. Therefore this thesis uses primarily anecdotal case studies. In Chapter 3 examples are broken down into categories of use such as inhabitation, recreation, agriculture, and cultural activities. Examples drawn from each category reveal commonalities and benefits. These commonalities play into an overall framework of how the bottom-up functions for the best use of ruderal space.
This framework, presented in Chapter 4, is drawn from the examples as well as several authors who study the causality of ruderal space. In the framework, the factors which make ruderal space productive to the bottom-up are considered as well as those factors which benefit a locality. A variety of authors are consulted in the framework to create the most comprehensive consideration, and although individual authors have not necessarily written directly about ruderal space, their work is linked to it via the interplay of factors. The framework informs actions which should be taken to harness ruderal sites, and suggest a set of emerging mentalities concerned with promoting the vitality and unique value of ruderal sites.

Chapter 5 presents five emerging mentalities constructed to capitalize on the benefits of ruderal space while preserving its essential characteristics: exploring history, the living city, open house, location as an incubator, and long-run ruderal. These emerging mentalities range from light programming to long-term intervention in how sites are used. Representing a potential societal shift in land use decision-making toward appreciation of the adaptive and the participatory, the emerging mentalities themselves are subject to the peculiarities of each site.
A) Introduction

Ruderal spaces are an important part of the urban condition. They are charged with meaning, and history, and are spaces that contain great generative force. Ruderal sites are complex in nature, despite a tendency to be labeled as empty or vacant; they represent heterogeneous experiences of space. Seeing past this inherent diversity, ruderal spaces have gained increasing recognition in a body of work. A number of authors discuss ruderal space, although each has different terminology. The spaces described converge on a common phenomenon, one described more or less fully by different authors. Some use a more typological focus, and others theoretical. These authors form the beginning of an understanding about the phenomenon of ruderal space. While these works do not constitute a complete understanding of ruderal space; they do serve as a good starting point for a more rigorous exploration.

A thorough examination turns up a resultant diversity of views that are shaped by the way ruderal space is produced, reproduced, and inhabited. The views are more aptly called mentalities. A mentality is a way of thought and embodies a subjective – not absolute – truth. A mentality is how a person views a particular subject, and to them that view is understandable and true, regardless of whether or not it is contradictory of other mentalities, or empirical and logical arguments. How these sites are conceptualized and what mentalities are formed about them, is key to understanding the best way to use or not use ruderal space. The attitudes of people shape how spaces are viewed. While the dominant discourse of vacant space is that of it being negative and or unused; it is far from the only dialog these spaces produce. Other views and uses of these sites exist, which encompass more than negative perceptions and iniquitous acts. Some of the reason for negative labeling comes from the history of a site.

Views formed about ruderal space are often a product of the history of a site or how it came
to be dis-used. Ruderal spaces have various histories of inhabitation, some happy, other less so. Ruderal spaces are usually products of fragmentation and change – de-industrialization, suburban growth, and blight – forces that can be traumatic. In addition, the current conditions of ruderal space are not homogeneously blank. “Vacant” spaces are often far from empty, and have a subtle, complex layering of uses, history, language, and perceptions. All of these factors add meaning to a site and can affect attitudes.

It is important to examine ruderal spaces with a critical eye towards bias, and an understanding of how history, current, and future interpretations of space give it meaning. Bias can come from the ways in which people desire to use or reuse space. By understanding the complexity of perceptions and mindsets surrounding ruderal space bias becomes visible. Further discussions of how space ought to be used becomes multifaceted rather than one-sided. If we are to pursue responsible design and use of space, a multiplicity of subjective understandings of space is needed.

B) Concepts

The sites investigated by this thesis are the vacant, derelict, abandoned, marginal, and the spaces in-between. Land vacancy is a common theme of various authors in literature of geography, landscape, architecture, and related fields. Despite a tendency to describe sites by what they lack, ruderal sites are not to be defined merely as places that are “empty”. Fundamental to the understanding and utility of these places are the ways that they are “full”. A consensus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Terminology</th>
<th>Bottom-Up</th>
<th>Plans</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jackie &amp; Wilson</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Derelict Landscapes</td>
<td>Top-down Regen</td>
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<td>de Sola-Morales</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Terrain Vague</td>
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<td>Bowman &amp; Pagano</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Terra Incognita</td>
<td>More room for Social Needs</td>
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<td>Edensor</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Industrial Ruins</td>
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<td>Berger</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Drosscapes</td>
<td>Designer’s Change in Role</td>
<td>Rethink Current Planning</td>
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<td>Kohoutek &amp; Kamleitner</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<td>Franck &amp; Stevens</td>
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Figure 1. Ruderal Literature
exists about the phenomenon of vacancy and its properties, although definitions and terminology do not match exactly. Authors range from aesthetic to quantitative descriptions of space; they describe it through definitions, use, or categories. In the end, it is clear that the authors are explaining the same phenomenon through different lenses.

An early source, John Jakle and David Wilson (1992) published a work which focused on derelict landscapes. The authors are concerned about the condition of “degraded lived-in habitats of everyday life” (1992, xv). They focus on the change within cities post world war II, both within the culture and condition of the cities. The account is mostly historical, looking at causes and conditions currently. They conclude that dereliction is intrinsic to the American Landscape, and that it represents a value of using and discarding that has been present since the earliest settlers (Jakle and Wilson 1992, 283). They cite Americans with a tendency to avoid and remove themselves from places of dereliction (Jakle and Wilson 1992, 287). Besides identifying and explaining causality, the authors do not engage the topic much further. The discussion is thorough, but narrowly focused.

A more contemporary source, Alan Berger (2006) discusses these spaces in his book “Drosscape”, his work is comprehensive and makes a good reference for other literature. He renders large portions of the American urban landscape into patterns and descriptions. The spaces that he is interested in he calls “Dross”, or waste spaces. He describes these spaces through forces that shape them. Berger says that drosspaces, “accumulate in the wake of the socio- and spatio-economic processes of deindustrialization, post-Fordism, and technological innovation” (Berger 2006, 2). These are spaces left over from sprawl, deindustrialization, and horizontal urbanization. He describes these spaces as “interstitial,” referring to their leftover nature, and the resultant marginalization (Berger 2006, 5).

Berger (2006) categorizes drossspaces into six types of landscapes: dwelling, transition, infrastructure, obsolescence, exchange, and contamination. Landscapes of dwelling contain drossspaces because they add extra buffer areas that are “designed into” these areas: golf courses, extra large back yards (Berger 2006, 140). Landscapes of transition are areas of speculation: self-storage, “real estate investment trusts,” parking, or other uses (Berger 2006, 158). Landscapes of infrastructure include easements, highways, railroads and utilities (Berger
2006, 170). Landscapes of obsolescence accommodate those things that we have no further use for: landfills, waste water treatment plants, and scrapyards (Berger 2006, 186). Landscapes of exchange are malls, both occupied and obsolete (Berger 2006, 204). Finally, landscapes of contamination include Superfund sites, brownfields, and other areas rendered empty because of environmental hazards (Berger 2006, 220).

Berger (2006) explains drosscapes both through typologies and their potential use. His term dross is meant to imply how these spaces may be “scraped,” reused, and “scavenged” from the urban landscape (Berger 2006, 12). He finds these waste spaces are of interest because of their potential for redesign, and advocates a non-traditional approach to these sites. He explains that designers should research and look for clients in a “bottom-up” way (Berger 2006, 239). This design approach views spaces through a new perspective, seeing them as that of “marginal” orientation rather than that of the “center” (Berger 2006, 241).

Bowman and Pagano (2004) also tackle the definition of vacancy from a typological standpoint, dividing vacancy into categories of unused and underused. Underused land includes properties that have little investment in built structures, such as surface parking lots (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 4). Bowman and Pagano (2004) understand that vacancy happens for a variety of reasons: physical barriers to use, damage from previous use, and land being held as reserve or for speculation. They discuss vacant spaces in terms of their history of use, some parcels have been used and abandoned, while others never used at all (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 7). Bowman and Pagano (2004, 6) explain that typical abandoned property was industrial in nature: either “productive and valued” or “productive but unwanted”. They cite the difference as being a relatively benign use such as a textile mill, versus a noxious site such as a slaughterhouse (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 6). The differentiation is subjective; industries that are viewed in a positive light will not always elicit a positive response from all people. Textile mills, while not as odor heavy as a slaughterhouse, are a historically associated with respiratory problems. Heavier more noxious industries can have certain positive connotations of being strong or productive for a region. No industries exist that will create entirely positive or negative perceptions. Beyond their exhaustive sorting of vacant space, Bowman and Pagano (2004, 18) understand vacant space encompasses a large “depth and range”, and can transcend these categories to allow a person to
read a “fresh perspective on cities – and on where they are headed.” (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 19).

Heading a collection of essays, Franck and Stevens (2007) discuss space that they have termed “loose”. The discussion is not framed by a concept of vacancy, but instead, of use through appropriation. The spaces that are described overlap the vacant and waste spaces described by previous authors. Their three main categories are public spaces, “leftover spaces”, and “spaces that once had assigned functions but no longer do” (Franck and Stevens 2007, 7-8). The mention of abandoned and marginal spaces is familiar from Berger. Franck and Stevens’ inclusion of public space is not random, but rather highly informative. Because they discuss space through its use rather than dis-use, the categorization gives a key idea of what these spaces can accomplish. Vacant space has the potential to transform society and house necessary functions.

Rudolph Kohoutek and Christa Kamleithner (2006) have also described ruderal sites. They focus on use, not vacancy. They spend a deal of time explaining the concept of use, and conclude that it is, “not a quality that is inscribed in things, buildings or spaces but rather a social relationship in the triangle of property, possession and right of use” (Kohoutek and Kamleithner 2006, 26). Use is not a static quality of space but is a changeable property. Kohoutek and Kamleithner (2006, 27) argue that over time use has become less connected to specific places, but deterritorialization has not lessened the conflict over who gets to use space. More types of uses exist than current legislation allows for. The breadth and depth of uses have grown past what private markets can accommodate (Kohoutek and Kamleithner 2006, 30). Because uses are more plentiful than available space, and official sanctioning lags behind current patterns of use, most spaces tolerate unlicensed activities only as “temporary use” (Kohoutek and Kamleithner 2006, 30). Temporary uses typically occupy structures that are otherwise vacant, a now familiar conclusion (Kohoutek and Kamleithner 2006, 30-1). Kohoutek and Kamleithner (2006, 31) note that users are apt to take advantage of “gaps and niches”, reinforcing the opportunism seen in ruderal spaces.

In a similar argument concerning the relationship of spatial functions and vacancy, Tim Edensor (2005) has written extensively about ruins. He is interested in interactions with ruins and how they inform “wider social and cultural processes across urban space” (Edensor 2005, 15).
He contests their labeling as waste, and argues they are not merely empty or negative in value. Instead he sees vacant spaces as being “ripe with transgressive and transcendent possibilities” (Edensor 2005, 4).

Ignasi de Sola-Morales (2007), originally published in 1995, discusses the concept of “terrain vague”. He is interested in the relationship of people to the city, focusing on photography as a way to conceptualize landscape that brings to light indeterminate spaces. De Sola-Morales (2007, 110) identifies qualities of the city that are less definite, “vague”, but does not categorize or list the types of spaces like previous authors. He alternately describes spaces as empty and unoccupied, and as free, available, and unengaged (de Sola-Morales 2007, 110). Terrain vague is a concept that occupies a dialectic between lack of use and a future potential; a site exists in a liminal state between these poles. He ends by asking how architecture can respond to the terrain vague without being overly aggressive and dominating of more indeterminate spaces (de Sola-Morales 2007, 113). The increasing sensitivity to ruderal space, and consideration of its potential is an ongoing theme which has developed over time.

Concepts of vacancy and potentials are linked within the literature on the subject. These writings range from the more quantitative writings of Bowman and Pagano to theory-weighty works such as de Sola-Morales, and Franck and Stevens. All the authors see patterns in the land and its occupancy. There is a confluence of descriptions include vacant lots, post industrial sites, and unused margins within the urban landscape. Equally important are patterns of use. Franck and Stevens are interested in the set of activities that happen in appropriated space. Bowman and Pagano see the ability of vacant space to represent an urban barometer, and Edensor reads an overall cultural climate from attitudes and activities. Throughout these works, none of the authors contend that vacant space can be understood only as empty space. Moreover, spaces begin to speak to the future: Berger sees potential for designers, and de Sola-Morales sees an infinite number of uses in the vagueness of place.

Understanding a site’s history and its future use, is critical to seeing how these spaces can play a role in urban revitalization. It is for this reason a different term has been employed in this thesis. Ruderal, as a concept labels a place by virtue of what it generates. Ruderal references disused and vacant typologies as well as a potential for growth. The next step in understanding
the ruderal is to engage site history fully, exploring the conditions and disturbances that formed these sites.

C) External Factors: Production of Space

The actions of the past set forces into motion that inhabit and use spaces. Spaces turn into industry and housing. Commercial zones boom with the jobs and finish the colonization. However, just as forces may converge, they also diverge. Other forces pull places apart. Highly structured sites may eventually turn into ruderal places. These forces are unique in each location, but are not isolated events. Forces draw from patterns much larger than the site itself, and act on spaces in similar ways. Some of the previous authors recognize patterns that shape ruderal spaces: Bowman and Pagano, Franck and Stevens, Berger, Edensor, and de Sola-Morales. Yet others, who do not specifically focus on ruderal sites, break down reasons for vacancy in more detail: Harvey, Scott, Kunstler, and LeFebvre. The forces that have caused wide scale abandonment of urban areas have been under scrutiny recently because of an increasing prevalence of vacancy in developing counties. These currents and trends bear repeating because they play into how space is perceived and re-used.

1) Capital Cycles

As industry develops and grows within the city it puts down roots in the physical form. Although some sites of investment are massive, changes within economies can still cause them to be abandoned. Many of the patterns seen are rooted in industrial conditions. Business come, accumulate structures and territory through building and acquisition, but eventually leave. In particular, the change from large scale Fordist economies to smaller scale dis-integrated businesses has caused a shift. The process of accumulation and disinvestment of industry has been discussed by a number of authors, including arguments below.

Harvey (1978) understands that capital accumulated through production will become re-invested. He names the “second circuit of capital” as his term for the process where money is put into the “built environment for production” (Harvey 1978, 106). Scott (2004) expands the understanding of capitalistic investment through the concept of changing regimes of accumulation. He is primarily interested in contemporary, flexible systems, one regime of accumulation. Scott gives an accounting of Fordism, a regime more associated with Harvey.
He says that mass production boomed from the 1920s through the 1970s, and came to an end at the end of the 1960s and 1970s (Scott 2004, 126-7). Some potential reasons for the decline were “overproduction, class conflict, economic depression, and competition” (Scott 2004, 126). Between the late 1960s and early 1970s, the United States lost over a million jobs as production moved overseas (Jakle and Wilson 1992, 63). Aging plants drove up plant costs and gave businesses the incentive to open new plants elsewhere (Jakle and Wilson 1992, 63). Scott (2004, 126) mentions that competition from firms in Japan and other industrializing countries contributed to a focus on efficiency. The oil crisis of the 1970s also had a role creating a situation of austerity. Due to these pressures, the method of production changed from mass production to more flexible forms (Scott 2004). The smaller flexible systems were dis-integrated versions of larger systems: many smaller suppliers working independently instead of having all the operations under one roof (Scott 2004). The change meant new patterns of industry did not need the huge facilities of the past. Even if companies could find desirable plant operating costs in the same location, the sites of production would likely need to be much smaller in size.

The change in regimes that Scott describes is supported by further analysis. At the scale of the city Alan Berger (2006, 251) mapped a cross section of de-industrialization in United States cities, representing the potential for vacancy. He researched the change in manufacturing establishments in ten cities between 1977-1992, and again 1992-2001. He then plotted the growth or decline by distance from the city center noting the 10, 40, and 70 mile radii (Berger 2006, 251). Only one of the cities showed current growth in the inner radius; most cities show decline inside the 40 mile radius (Berger 2006). All cities mapped have growth outside of that radius, showing sprawl and likely abandonment in inner city sites (Berger 2006). Vacant post-industrial spaces have a strong pattern of being located near the city center. The work of Harvey, Berger and Scott is complimented by Lefebvre (1991, 46), who says each mode of production requires its own space; the shift between modes of production requires a shift in space.

These shifts in production have left large campuses and factories of industry empty, leaving a reminder of past cycles of capital. The memory of these industries becomes a ghost to reemerge later, haunting further interactions. The shift from large to small is only one change in restructuring which has occurred; companies can also increase in size through growth or buyouts.
The cycle from accumulation to disinvestment is one reason for the massive urban vacancy currently observed, but there are others. Even when industry keeps a similar form, it often chooses a new location. Industry, commercial enterprises, and residences all share this pattern, and are a part of another phenomenon known as sprawl.

2) Sprawl

Disinvestment is only one of the issues that have created a surplus of urban vacancy, another issue is sprawl, or horizontal development. New development on the periphery of urban areas is a change in land use in the U.S. that has contributed to the increase of vacancy and growth of ruderal sites. The cycles of industry have seen a changing of locations for production, but instead of a greater urban area losing industry entirely sometimes it shifts within the greater urban area. This de-densification, or sprawl, has been credited with aiding the emptying of the central city.

Kunstler (1993) discusses sprawl in his book The Geography of Nowhere. He describes the growth of suburbs and motives for leaving the city behind. According to Kunstler (1993) the actions of the individual homeowner in early industrial periods were shaped by a that desire to escape the cities. People wanted to leave behind pollution and slum conditions (Kunstler 1993, 35). Unstable property values resulted from factories being built in unpredictable locations near urban housing, which further motivated migration (Kunstler 1993, 55). Beyond the flight of industrial conditions, Kunstler examines at the impact of the car. The mass production of the automobile enabled the post-war suburbs to exist in the United States by creating a way to access areas further from the city (Kunstler 1993, 104-5). The efficacy of the car was further heightened by creation of the interstate highway system. A supply of fresh new residences easily accessible by car changed the density of central city neighborhoods as people abandoned them. The middle and upper classes fled the city, leaving the less affluent, underfunded, populations to deal with old infrastructure (Kunstler 1993).

Ashton (1984) corroborates the flight to the suburbs. He discusses how cities saw a major shift between the 1930s and 1960s (Ashton 1984, 55). Development of the Federal Housing Administration subsidized down payments at a level that the middle class could afford (Ashton 1984, 64). Coupled with the stimulation of the U.S. Economy post World War II, the suburbs boomed. Actions specifically targeted at soldiers, such as mortgages provided
through the Veteran’s Administration further reinforced this trend (Ashton 1984, 65). During the 1950s the suburbs grew five times faster than the central cities (Ashton 1984, 65). The trend of suburbanization continued through the 1970s, and slowed but did not stop through the recession of that decade (Ashton 1984, 66). Jakle and Wilson (1992, xv), trace the changes of suburbanization to the post World War II period as well, and associate it with a “throwaway” mentality. The successes of the WWII and the American economy led gave the country “confidence to configure itself anew” (Jakle and Wilson 1992, xvii).

Berger links sprawl and horizontal development to the creation of waste spaces. He explains that sprawl is not just a phenomenon of housing, but also stems from commercial, infrastructure, manufacturing, and industry development (Berger 2006, 22). When factories relocated, workers relocated, and finally services did as well. The de-densification of the city and the widening urban territories is possible because of the reduction of automotive transportation costs (Berger 2006, 22).

In explaining sprawl Berger (2006) tries to divorce it from heated arguments that typically surround it, and posits it in an essentialist argument. He maintains that sprawl and the waste of space are natural: “such overflows, in a larger, evolutionary context, are the inevitable result of life’s expansionist, waste-making tendencies” (Berger 2006, 24). Regardless of moral judgments that may be placed on suburban development, his argument neatly sidesteps the role of policy. The reasoning seems fallible because policy has been significant in how it changed the urban landscape. Supporting the role of governments and policy, all of the factors Kunstler (1993) mentions are government actions that support the use of the car: the highway system of the 1950s, previous road improvements, funding for suburban mortgages, and oil use policies. Kunstler argues that the majority of the American economy revolved around the development and growth of suburban areas and all things that supported it (Kunstler 1993).

In addition to residential examples, sprawl is a complex system and involves many different types of development and actors. It involves not only the decisions of individuals and corporations, but also those of institutions to subsidize and fund its spread. Sprawl encompasses all types of development: residential, commercial and industrial. It has created a lessening of density, and draws development away from the city, which increases the prevalence of vacancy.
Suburbs and associated developments serve as a comparison to central urban conditions. The
cleanliness of the new built environment is a strong contrast to problems of older neighborhoods.
Once vacancy has been created, through changes in capital cycles or changing development –
sprawl, it is subject to further spread.
3) Blight and spread of vacancy

The growth of vacancy can come from a number of different sources; the forces that started the
phenomenon are usually still at work putting pressures on the area, but it can be self-reproducing
as well. Vacancy has it’s own psychological and economic effects, and creates problems
that perpetuate the condition. Place is a factor in how vacancy is created; The problems of a
neighborhood are self-reinforcing. Bowman and Pagano (2004, 129) document the “contagion
effect”. A vacant property threatens the value of neighboring properties, and subsequent
abandonment usually happens in adjacent properties (Bowman and Pagano 2004). As more
properties become vacant, the effect spreads further, with the original property still having an
effect.

There are other reasons that vacancy and neglect will spread in an area. Kelling and Wilson
(1982) documented this effect early on, linking community disorder and crime through the
physical appearance of buildings. They found that when property had physical features –broken
windows – signifying a lack of care, further destruction of the property followed soon after
(Kelling and Wilson 1982). Moreover, individuals involved were people who would not normally
be involved in these activities (Kelling and Wilson 1982). Kelling and Wilson (1982) concluded
that it is a lack of “tending” that causes order to break down.

Overall maintenance such as broken windows are often neglected in areas that contain a
high density of vacant properties. Upkeep does not increase the value of a property, but instead
keeps a property’s use from declining (Jakle and Wilson 1992, 25) . As a property receives less
maintenance, it creates a “negative cycle” between appearance and maintenance, further reducing
the worth of the property (Jakle and Wilson 1992, 25). In addition, the price of a property is
dependent on the prices of other properties around it (Davis and Whinston 1966, 53). If the
overall value of a property in the neighborhood goes down, it reduces the value, even at full
repair. The devaluation of property decreases the likelihood that an owner will want to fix up a
Declining population and increased vacancies mean greater problems for utility systems. Lower flows in both water supply and waste streams create issues of stagnation in sewers (Westphal 2007, 110). In addition, the loss of population results in a lowered density of users; because the system is losing users in an in dispersed patterns the cost of operations increases per capita (Westphal 2007, 111). Eventually reduced demand will increase problems and weaken utility income to the point where it is untenable to maintain the system.

Vacancy and the formation of ruderal space can be due to deliberate social choices as well as previously listed conditions. The practice of red-lining is an example of this phenomenon. In the 1960s and 1970s, banks practiced discriminatory lending, refusing to lend to areas of decline in the cities (Jakle and Wilson 1992, 159). They used maps that identified these areas. Because of being cut off from funds at the level of the home-owner, these areas declined further, reinforcing the concept (Jakle and Wilson 1992, 159). The choice of areas was made on the basis of race primarily discriminating against African American neighborhoods (Jakle and Wilson 1992, 160).

The creation of ruderal space can come from influential spatial forces – ones outside of the area of vacancy – or they may stem from self-reproducing tendencies of dereliction within a much smaller area or region. Vacancy brings down property values and decreases the impetus to maintain places. A reduced burden on infrastructure lowers its efficiency. The site itself can weaken the condition of a neighborhood. The beginnings of blight seen in a racial context, have been used to deny funding and self-sufficiency to problem areas. These causes of vacancy begin to hint at why negative mindsets are created around ruderal space. However causes alone will not be enough to understand how space is viewed. The mindsets themselves must be examined and dissected.

D) Cultural Factors: the Reproduction of Space

Site processes are some of the forces which affect perceptions and set up future understandings of ruderal spaces through the creation of mentalities. Tumultuous histories add emotion to sites. The production of space leaves layers of history, meaning, and language within it (De Certeau 1984, 201). The layers do not become lost, but resurface in discontinuous moments.
The resurfacing of these histories can be seen in mentalities which affect how space is produced and reproduced. Mentalities are created for or against various purposes; prevailing mentalities embody different perceptions of abandoned ruderal space. Although an infinite number of dialogs exist about vacant space, here they have been distilled down to three current, significant views. Discussed are the “derelict”, “exploratory”, and “potential” dialogs of space. Each of these prevailing mentalities are typically reproduced under a certain context; they reproduce a certain mentality or culture of space, which feeds into future uses.

1) The Derelict

A host of negative perceptions surround ruderal spaces concerning its lack of use, this prevailing mentality is named after one of the main issues of this mindset: dereliction. Some of the perceptions surrounding dereliction are strongly rooted in existing conditions and site history while other perceptions are merely that – perceptions. Most of these perceptions carry a blend of both imagination and reality. Dereliction is a view connected to the otherness of ruderal sites.

The concept of vacancy is one sub-mindset within dereliction, and it illuminates some of the bias within the mentality of dereliction. Vacancy is itself a skewed term, “vacant” spaces are frequently appropriated and explored by informal users. Whether these spaces are used for graffiti, exploration or a shortcut home, they constitute use. In the same way that the idea of discovery of the new world was not objective or empty of people, the idea of vacancy is subjective and refers to places that are occupied.

In a specific example of how sites are labeled as vacant, Doron (2007) explores the concept of “dead zones” in Tel-Aviv in the Ha’Yarkon Estuary. He connects the spaces with language that surrounds them: void, tabula rasa, blank slate, and no man’s land (Doron 2007, 212). The dead zones are created and marked off by planners and labeled as such in order to justify redevelopment without needing to consider preexisting conditions of a site (Doron 2007, 213).

In contrast to labeling as dead, Doron’s (2007, 210-11) experience of dead zones recount the existence of a number of activities: seeing rebuilt huts used as residences, nudists sunbathing, teenagers recreating and having a bonfire. Because of the action of labeling, these spaces can be “safely” categorized as blank and reusable. A planner does not have to worry about the rights of people using a space because they are semantically non-existent. Terms such as vacant, blank,
or dead do not carry heavy negative connotations, which other terms do, but further negative labeling of these spaces reinforces the validity of wiping them clean.

Tackling a second sub-mentality of dereliction, Tim Edensor (2005) looks at how ruderal spaces may be labeled negatively because they challenge the structure and order of society. He says that ruins are perceived as a threat because of their potential for non-ordered behavior (Edensor 2005, 53). Ordered spaces carefully delineate, monitor, and enforce conformity to “classed, gendered, and racialised behavioural regimes, in which work and leisure domestic and civic life, all have their proper place” (Edensor 2005, 55). The possibility of subversive or illegal behavior arises within spaces of disorder. These places have the potential to house dangerous activities, which further reinforces the dominant view. Franck and Stevens (2007, 17) agree in their discussion of loose space, saying that the uncertainty of loose space stands in direct opposition to qualities people value such as “certainty, homogeneity, and order”. Furthermore they theorize that a drive for beautification may be a response to the perceived threat (Franck and Stevens 2007, 17). Berger (2006, 7) does not explain the mentality behind drosscapes, but forewarns hey will often be considered “unsightly” and admonishes that funds will not typically be available for “complete scenic amelioration” implying an improvement of sites will be seen as necessary.

The otherness and disorder of a site not only challenges social order, but reminds the viewer of the “death of site”. Edensor (2005, 125) discusses the implications that vacant spaces hold for cycles of the built environment. He compares the reproduction of space to a life cycle; like natural cycles the process implies a transiency for spaces. The state of ruination accompanies a “foreboding” that all spaces will come to ruin (Edensor 2005). Furthermore he examines the contrast vacant sites pose between the active and busy world outside of them. The contrast heightens the awareness of ruderal spaces and triggers the sense that vacant spaces constitute “intrusions from the past which penetrate the everyday life of the city” (Edensor 2005, 126).

Bowman and Pagano (2004, 1) have a similar point to Edensor, saying that vacant land creates “powerful signals”, forming negative images in people’s minds such as abandonment, decay, emptiness, or danger. These feelings are connected to causes such as neglect, loss of money, and the erosion of societal fabric (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 1). Interestingly they cite and use
language to describe conditions such as “the ills of neglect”, “abandonment often spreads by contagion”, and “if the economic viability of the locale weakens...” (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 2). That is, the loss of structure in the city is connected with sickness and corporal dissolution. It is not a large leap to draw parallels between the problems of the city, and the individual. In the decay of the city we see our own personal mortalities. In this way the breakdown of the urban fabric triggers a long ingrained reflexive fear of death.

Jakle and Wilson (1992) explain the connection between dereliction and negativity as well. “Deferred maintenance creates clear visual signals that the future is uncertain” (Jakle and Wilson 1992, 25). Referring back to their point that maintenance does not increase value, inputs will only hold a level of quality for a place, making it more likely that degradation spiral out of control with the addition of economic stress.

Where the herd immunity breaks down, we see danger. When numbers fall and die, we are afraid seeing a lack of security. Danger may be inherently present in vacant spaces, but even if it is not, we imagine it. Jane Jacobs (1961) noted how occupied streets pose less danger than vacant ones. In unregulated, ignored spaces there exists the possibility of dangerous unmonitored activities. However, spaces of decay do not solely connote death and danger. Cycles of decay in the ecological sense are associated with renewal and regrowth. Death in the Tarot is also rebirth. It is not to say that vacancy in the urban core is never dangerous or fearful, but rather it is a situation where we can realize one of two potentials: either rebirth or death. Unfortunately the negative is often more dominant.

Negative perceptions are not without cause; ruderal sites often have intrinsic problems. Because of the industrial history of these places, contamination is often very real. Bowman and Pagano (2004) discuss contamination of vacant sites as a barrier to re-use. Within the discussion they admit contamination may be perceived whether or not it is present, (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 5) such is the power of pollution: it can contaminate even that which it does not touch. Nancy Green Leigh and Joan Fitzgerald (2002) have written extensively on brownfield development. They acknowledge that the suspicion of contamination is enough to impede development. A far reaching process of assigning responsibility for the cleanup of sites even obligates people remotely involved, with the need to pay (Leigh and Fitzgerald 2002, 75). Berger
(2006, 65) also acknowledges the widespread presence of brownfields and contaminated sites in the realm of vacant and waste spaces.

Current levels of contamination serve to reinforce long standing histories of industrial sites and prevailing mentalities. Berger (2006, 50) associates the condition of current landscapes with the anti-urban attitudes of previous times. Sites were abandoned because of industrial problems, as per Kunstler (1993). Factories are, as Gillian Darley (2004, 5) points out, as “black or white as the argument requires”, and have been associated with strong social problems such as wage labor. If society needs to label industrial spaces as villains or protagonists, it will.

Ruderal spaces often serve to remind us of death and decay, of illegal, unstructured or dangerous activities. When labeled as derelict, vacant, contaminated or disordered it serves to reinforce the space as being outside the normal system. Negative terms are chosen deliberately instead of neutral or positive ones. Labeling of the otherness is seductive; it justifies the reuse of sites, serves as a whipping boy for a pent-up hatred of industrial pollution, and reifies fears of the unknown.

2) The Exploratory

A competing mentality to dereliction is one of exploration, associated with wonder, awe, and nostalgia for history, rather than: death, fear, and vacancy. Some of these sites have have histories of power or mystery about their dimly remembered pasts. Explorers look to discover the lost history of these places while experiencing the awe and sublimity associated with the scale and details of ruderal places. The recent popularity of urban exploration has brought the view to the forefront in recent years.

Fascination is growing with post-industrial, abandoned sites as places of exploration, and this trend is not lost on ruderal authors. Edensor (2005) mentions these activities as a part of larger set of informal performances in space, which happen in ruined sites. Edensor (2005, 30) describes the activity as loosely organized groups of people who explore vacant sites and record exploits through photographs and written accounts. The community of explorers has created its own dialog about vacant and ruined sites. Urban explorers self admittedly have an “appreciation for the whole picture” and “a genuine interest in the narrative that surrounds what were once simply cool tunnels” (About Sub Urban 2010). Sub Urban spends time discussing the history
The interplay of light and landscape is a hallmark of the picturesque in the related field of landscape painting, such as the Hudson River School. Darley (2003) attributes early factories with a connection to the sublime in art. The factory gave the sublime new subjects of interest other than those of “stormy landscapes” (Darley 2003, 15). Early forays into factory architecture created works that “vied with the mansion, church or ruined castle nearby as as suitable subject for artists” (Darley 2003, 21).

The connection between ruderal sites and exploration through a picturesque lens is not new, and can be seen in parks created from previously ruderal sites. Parc des Buttes Chaumont in Paris, constructed in the 1830s, was built on an old quarry in such a way as to maximize the potential of the drastically changed landscape for a picturesque aesthetic. The quarrying activity is now largely unreadable, but serves as a framework for the changes made to the place. Visitors can experience the quarry excavation as cliffs, lakes and drastic topographic changes.

Later parks show more of their industrial pasts, incorporating them directly into the aesthetic. The connection between ruderal sites and exploration through a picturesque lens is not new, and can be seen in parks created from previously ruderal sites. Parc des Buttes Chaumont in Paris, constructed in the 1830s, was built on an old quarry in such a way as to maximize the potential of the drastically changed landscape for a picturesque aesthetic. The quarrying activity is now largely unreadable, but serves as a framework for the changes made to the place. Visitors can experience the quarry excavation as cliffs, lakes and drastic topographic changes. The connection between ruderal sites and exploration through a picturesque lens is not new, and can be seen in parks created from previously ruderal sites. Parc des Buttes Chaumont in Paris, constructed in the 1830s, was built on an old quarry in such a way as to maximize the potential of the drastically changed landscape for a picturesque aesthetic. The quarrying activity is now largely unreadable, but serves as a framework for the changes made to the place. Visitors can experience the quarry excavation as cliffs, lakes and drastic topographic changes.

Beauty in Decay: Who would guess that decaying buildings could portray such beauty? Ask any urban explorer. Most of the time it is dark and dingy, but then an essence of light turns the darkness into a fascinating display of light.

(Urban Explorers Network 2010).

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Gas Works Park in Seattle, opened in 1975, is built on the site of an old coal gasification plant. Due to being an early attempt at dealing with soil contamination, the site is simple in design. Rolling hills, whose soil has already been removed and capped, feature lush grass. From this beautiful setting, the more sublime, towering remnants of the gas plant rise up in sharp contrast. The structure houses a couple of pieces of park program but is largely unused.

A more involved reuse of a ruderal site is seen in Landschaftspark Duisburg Nord in the Ruhr Valley, Germany. Duisburg Nord is located on the grounds of an old metalworks, and incorporates the structure of the park into its design heavily. The park is filled with plant life, in contrast with Gas Works. The towering structure of the plant emerges from thick surrounding vegetation. Smaller compartments, that are too contaminated to inhabit, house small intimate plantings that can be viewed from a walkway. The structure of the plant is partially inhabitable; the occupiable areas carefully kept away from contaminated spaces.

History and aesthetics feature large in the exploratory based view of vacancy whether it is expressed through park design or the trespassing of explorers. In this mindset ruins as places of exploration do not function a priori, such as in European dialogs about the new world, but instead engage history as a part of the experience. Aesthetics captured through photography and the writings of the experience create a product, which is shared on-line. Products created from the act of exploration serve as a vehicle for further consumption of the experience and reproduction of a community of individuals who pursue the hobby.

3) The Potential

Previous mindsets of the derelict and exploratory contain limited ideas about the potential of what a site can become. The derelict understands sites as having potential only when cleared and re-built. The exploratory sees uses in exploration and as a tool to understand history. A third mindset “the Potential” understands that a greater variety of activities and possibilities can be developed from ruderal spaces. These potentials transcend boundaries such as legal and illegal, formal and informal. The labeling and terminology associated with vacancy directly reinforce this view.

Berger and others identify ruderal spaces as being “liminal”, existing a state of being neither one thing or another. He cites the “in-between” state of these sites as belonging to their position
in a cycle of occupancay, use and disinvestment. In times of non-use, vacant sites can be “inscribed” with value and status because of an inherent lack of classification a non-determinant state of place (Berger 2006, 29). The liminal is a different concept from the tabula rasa. While both concepts allow for new values to be written onto space, in the liminal it is not because of an inherent blankness, but rather a malleability. Instead of sites meaning nothing, they can carry different things. Like the smooth and striated spaces of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), blank space and liminal space are similar. Blank space is like unto the striated, a space which is constrained in the way of a woven fabric, limited in certain directions (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 475).

Because it is more rigidly controlled in its meaning, or lack of meaning by society’s views it has a more rigid structure and future of use. Blank land has been cleared for a purpose. Liminal space is like smooth space, its texture is not constrained by warp and weft (Delueze and Guattari 1987, 476). Instead it is like felt, composed of overlapping fibers which are not constrained to any dimension or form, it is a space which may be limitless in dimension and form (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 476).

In further explanation of liminality Berger (2006) associates these spaces with the ritual of a rite of passage. In this rite the participants are first detached from their everyday experience (Berger 2006, 29). Next they are placed into a liminal state wherein they are awakened to revelations. Finally the participant is reintroduced to context and meaning, or the daily world. In this way Berger (2006, 29) sees that waste sites exist in transition between former and future contexts.

Franck and Stevens (2007, 17-18) are interested in the potentials, or adaptability, of sites seen in their term “loose space”. Loose and liminal occupy similar semantic roles. Indeterminacy of a site offers people the freedom to pursue activities that flourish in realms outside the conventional, providing room for activities that have nowhere else to exist (Franck and Stevens 2007). Although not explained as explicitly, temporary use is similar in nature to these ideas (Kohoutek and Kamleithner 2006).

In a more development oriented view Bowman and Pagano (2004) understand vacant land represents opportunity, sometimes as simple as having more land that can be developed. They recognize that cities without enough developable land can cause a bottleneck in growth, which
can limit economic potential (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 10). Their term “terra incognita” assigns qualities of the unknown to these spaces and that mystery contains a variety of possibilities (Bowman and Pagano 2004).

Edensor (2005, 21) explores how vacant ruined sites offer possibilities not allowed in increasingly regulated, demarcated spaces. He discusses uses such as adventure, play, home-making, and as an informal source of materials (Edensor 2005, 22). Vacant space becomes a way to “broadcast” alternative views of the future of the city (Edensor 2005, 50).

Liminal, loose, terrain vague, and temporary are all a part of a mindset that allows for many different options. Unlike the exploratory, these are not constrained to passive history, and unlike the derelict the mindset is not intrinsically fearful. Potential views allow for any possibility including the other mindsets. It offers a chance to imagine ruderal sites as productive or positive for the city. This seed of imagination challenges us to germinate ideas about marginalized spaces that are new and more productive than previous mentalities.

The labeling of these sites reproduces the way that people interact with them. Derelict views legitimatize behaviors such as reuse, but inadvertently label these spaces as sites for negative behaviors. Negative perceptions have basis in fact, as do positive and exploratory ones. If spaces were reconceptualized in a way that privileged the potential and growth possibilities within them, they might not become sites of iniquity. These three generalized categories are made up of dozens of sub-terms and ideas about vacancy; but do not encompass all the ways that these places are conceptualized. These easily heard dialogs of space help to explain the how we treat vacant spaces, but should not be read as the entire story. To best understand mentalities, they should be observed on a site to see how history, problems, and potential use all play out in the understanding of a place.

E) Application of Mentalities

A specific site is useful to ground theory in the urban history. The site of the Columbus Coated Fabrics business in Columbus, Ohio, is a prime example of a complex and tumultuous place. Columbus Coated Fabrics (CCF) has a richness of history and is well publicized, which lends it to being a good example. The site had a previous industrial use, a long period of disuse, and now is part of a large redevelopment effort in the neighborhood. When viewed through different lenses,
the different mentalities can start to be understood.

1) Columbus Coated Fabrics History

Columbus Coated Fabrics site is a 17 acre campus of buildings that forms its own block. The property has an extensive history. Established in 1902 and known as Columbus Oil Cloth at that time, the company made waterproof oiled fabrics (Pramik, 2001). In 1929 the name was changed to Columbus Coated Fabrics (CCF Campus Partners 2010). The site of Columbus Coated Fabrics is located near what was once the New York Central/Big Four railroad. This industry and others were built in the area because of the proximity to rail and local highways (Hunker 2000, 116). Columbus Coated Fabrics was one of Columbus’ largest employers (Hunker 2000, 116), and has been cited as the world’s largest manufacturer of coated materials (Hunker 2000, 180). Through the 1930s and 1940s, Columbus Coated Fabrics was innovative; it opened a laboratory and supplied a variety of products for use in World War II (Pramik, 2001).

After its early heyday, Columbus Coated Fabrics shuffled ownership from the 1960s -1990s. In 1961 Borden bought Columbus Coated Fabrics. 1992 saw a 120 jobs laid off (Porter, 1992). Borden was acquired in 1995 by another company (Carter, 1998); the acquisition eventually led the company to divest itself of various products. This round of restructuring was accompanied by employee attitudes that were a mix of optimism and skepticism (Blackford, 1994). Finally in 1998 Borden sold the company to Decorative Surfaces International, Inc, the new firm was owned by investors and employees (Pramik, 2001). The transfer was the last sale, and effectively marked the end of Columbus Coated Fabric’s life.

An account written in 2000 describes the Columbus Coated Fabrics site and a neighboring factory as “shells of their former selves” (Hunker 2000, 118). It was little surprise in 2001 DSI found itself unable to keep up with debt in a slumping market. It stopped manufacturing and went bankrupt closing the Columbus Coated Fabrics site (Pramik, 2001). Most of the assets were bought or moved to other sites (Pramik, 2001). Closure of the plant came abruptly leaving workers locked out of the plant in July, in an angry and confused state (Porter, 2001).

Throughout its history, environmental problems pervaded Columbus Coated Fabrics. In 1973, the United States District Court threatened to shut down the plant because over a hundred workers stricken with a “mysterious nerve and muscle damaging disease” (US Dist Ct, 1973). Ventilation
and sewage in the factory were dubbed “completely inadequate”, with solvents being the primary suspect (Textile Workers Union, 1973). As of 1994, CCF was listed as being the largest source of pollution in Franklin County, with a count of 1.3 million pounds of organic compounds released into the air (Powers, 1994). It held the title of the worst air polluter in the county for six years (Ferenchick, 2006a). Even after the close of the site, in 2004 July the U.S. EPA removed hundreds of barrels of hazardous waste (CCF Campus Partners 2010). In addition the abandonment of the area caused secondary risks because of fires. As of 2006, the fire department had been called to CCF thirty seven times since the site closed, twenty two of the visits were for fires (Ferenchik, 2006b).

Figure 2. Columbus Coated Fabrics Redevelopment Plan. (CCF Campus Partners 2010)

The early 2000s began the process of re-envisioning the site. In 2004 Campus Partners started the process of buying the site. Campus Partners is a non-profit group created to create urban community redevelopment near the main campus of Ohio State University. Campus Partners has been involved in other projects in the area, buying and redeveloping properties. Its signature project to date is the South Campus Gateway site where Campus Partners was instrumental in removing previous structures and building the new development, it is a mixed use development containing higher-end stores, restaurants; it jumps in physical scale compared to adjacent neighborhood housing.

Pollution on the Columbus Coated Fabrics site carried through all the way to re-development. Contamination caused delays in redevelopment, with estimates ranging around $3 million dollars (Marx, 2004). Campus Partners and the city reached an agreement to divide costs of cleanup and purchase of the site (Ferenchik, 2006b). The development was part of an overall plan for the
Weinland Park neighborhood, which was initiated in 2004 (Ohio State U 2006).

By the late 2000s the redevelopment plan was under way. In 2007 City of Columbus took ownership of the site, and began demolition in April (CCF Campus Partners, 2010). By July funds came from the Ohio Department of Development for its clean up. In March 2008 the city reached an agreement with Wagenbrenner Developers to develop the site with market rate housing (CCF Campus Partners, 2010). Current plans display development to be constructed, which consist of 369 condo units and 138 apartment rental properties (CCF Campus Partners 2010).

2) Dialog

The discussion of vacancy surrounding Columbus Coated Fabrics responds both directly and indirectly to the history of the site. The dominant dialog is one of dereliction and redevelopment, but it has been a place of exploration as well. In the later years of vacancy now, on the verge of re-use, the discussion of potential has just started to emerge. Rather than dereliction reaching a critical tipping point, redevelopment plans are likely the cause of the attitude change.

After three years of vacancy 2004 marked the beginning of the published dialog about the derelict. The first print mention of the site with reference to its vacancy occurs in 2003. The report is a straightforward accounting of a fire, which happened on the site. The account does not say anything about the site except for a mention that the business closed in 2001 and that it operated for 100 years (Fire at Warehouse Suspicious 2003). It is unknown from the sources, whether or not the site was seen as a problem at this time or previously. It is an interesting coincidence that the year the site begins to become publicly vilified, 2004, is the same year that the Weinland Park plan was started. At this point the floodgate of discussion about Columbus Coated Fabrics is opened.

The terminology used in publications fits into patterns of the derelict. In one article, the site is termed “vacant” while at the same time contrasted with activities that are occurring within it. The irony is not lost on the Columbus Dispatch’s newspaper editor who mentions it as “an old factory that’s supposed to be vacant” citing metal thieves and remnants of use left on the site such as graffiti and trash (Ferenchik, 2006b). Brief mention is given to the aesthetics. “It’s an eyesore” says Ferenchik (2006b).
Another familiar set of considerations revolving around dereliction concern the safety of the site. Some of the danger is associated with fires and the resultant structural problems of the buildings. One author writes that the buildings were actively hazardous; the streets had to be closed lest the buildings collapse (City Gets a Hand 2006). The environmental legacy is still fresh in people’s minds with mentions of asbestos and cleanup that needed to happen (City Gets a Hand 2006). The dialog hints at the dangers of social problems such as gang warfare and thievery (Gebolys, 2006).

A major theme in the discussion is blight itself, phrases include: “neighborhood blight”, “blighted factory”, “the most blighting influence”, “blighted Weinland Park”, “blot on the landscape”, and “a scourge” (Ferenchik 2006b), (Ferenchik 2006a) (City Gets a Hand 2006) (Gebolys 2006). The description of blight applies to both the site and neighborhood. The language forms an argument that properties of the site and structure have a direct effect on the surroundings. A connection exists between vacancies and its spread to adjacent properties, but the argument does not engage that connection as the reason for the problems. One article says directly that “crime can’t begin to decline until blight is dealt with and people start to care about their neighborhood” (Gebolys, 2006).

The focus on how individuals ought to change their actions to improve their circumstances is interesting, but is likely not valid. Alice Mah (2009) investigated different communities in post-industrial neighborhoods. She found that an awareness of the local “devastation” pervaded these areas, residents had a strong connection to the place as “home” (Mah 2009). Place attachment is not necessarily congruent with the decline of an area (Mah, 2009). Positive place attachment has been attributed to Weinland Park. In an article in the Columbus Dispatch, the author explains the strengths of the community mentioning a local religious organization. Quotes from a resident include statements such as how she feels that her neighborhood is “really safe”, “we have streets where the kids come together add play”, and “We’re striving to have a real neighborhood” (Ferenchik, 2009b). Gebolys (2006) does not cite contrary evidence about the coherency of the community so the subjectiveness of the comment places it in the realm of a dialog rather than fact, yet another part of a constructed mentality.

Another instance of the mentality becoming apparent appears in the discussion of blight and
crime. A seemingly logical connection might be drawn between crime and a lack of employment. However within the discussion of Columbus Coated Fabrics, the two are not drawn together. An odd disjunct exists when the two issues are mentioned in the same discussion. The mayor said in a 2008 speech that, “Columbus Coated Fabrics was once a job center, but since shutting down in 2001, it’s brought blight and decay to the neighborhood” (Coleman, 2008). The statement clearly implies the property, rather than a lack of opportunity, has brought blight.

The operations of Columbus Coated Fabrics have had an effect on the mentalities that surround them. It had a rich history as a place of production, a local employer, and innovator. Its history is echoed in a quote from the president of the Weinland Park Civic association (Ball 2009). In a discussion of a factory near to Columbus Coated Fabrics she recalled “fond memories” of the days of production of the factory. She mentions “It employed people in the community. When it closed down, people in the community lost their jobs.” (Ball 2009). What these comments begin to hint at is a nostalgia of the site and its days in use. Columbus Coated Fabrics is a large physical anchor that takes up 17 acres; its size contrasts with neighboring properties. The long axis of Columbus Coated Fabrics is bordered by small row houses. The size and activity on the site makes the resulting abandonment all the more stark. Jakle and Wilson (1992) understand the psychology behind dereliction and production.

But nothing strikes a sense of pathos more than the ruined factory. Nothing seems so senseless as the neglected industrial plant rundown and abused. Perhaps it is scale. Massive walls and towering stacks, and other paraphernalia of industrialism speak of technological and organization sophistication. To see them derelict is to see failed dreams: prosperity gone awry not just for the entrepreneur, but for the collective of dependent individuals.


The other large factors in the history of the site – the corporate restructurings, continual shifting of employment, and contamination – represent more negative histories. The recurring attitude of anger directed at the site, may be a way to channel the frustration that people feel with the problems, both current and past, surrounding Columbus Coated Fabrics.

Finally, the dialog of vacancy wraps up into a discussion of the future of the site. The removal
of the old buildings is framed as an automatic way to improve the area (Ferenchik 2009a). The mayor describes the process as a way to “transform that tainted rubble into homes, jobs, life and hope” (Coleman 2008). Early sentiments expressed the hope that the site could be cleaned up, made safe, and turned into “something good for the neighborhood” (Ferenchik 2006a). A “tainted past” can be envisioned as a “building block for a better future” (Gebolys 2006). The site is contrasted as a focus of negativity and a vehicle for hope. Columbus Coated Fabrics is a modern-day, urban Pandora’s box, containing all the good and evils that we can imagine. The fact that the discussion turns to a removal and clearing of the site is not surprising. DeCerteau (1984) specifically mentions that every “urban renovation” prefers a “tabula rasa” in order to create a discursive space, which centers around it and nothing else. In his opinion it is characteristic of a space of production to not want share a history. The site affects history by “reject(ing) the relevance of places it does not create” (DeCerteau 1984, 201).

The dialog of dereliction at Columbus Coated Fabrics is constructed on both fact and perception. It is rooted in feelings of anger, pride, and connection to the site as well as responding to issues of development, capitalism, and urban struggle. The concurrent rise of crime and the fall of industrial sites appear to be correlated, but not with an empirically supported causality. The dialog created is recorded in the media, such as government reports and newspapers; it is not the realm of the hobbyist or the academic, but of the residents, workers, and politicians.

A second and less well published dialog about Columbus Coated Fabrics is that of exploration. A site of large size and diversity of structures could not be ignored by urban explorers. The site is well known to a number of people. Lost and Found Ohio, a site devoted to the paranormal and abandoned locations in Ohio, has two galleries of Columbus Coated Fabric pictures (Passed Away Ohio 2010). A user group on Flickr contains pictures of nothing but the Columbus Coated Fabric site previous to clearance of the buildings (Columbus Coated Fabric Group 2010). Illicit Ohio describes a trip to the site, and gives a brief history. The main impression it gives of the site is of the vastness: it “seemed to go on forever” causing disorientation (CCF Illicit Ohio, 2010). The most overwhelming feelings one author describes relate to the demolished buildings, which he associates with to the post-apocalyptic film “Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome” (CCF Illicit
Ohio, 2010). The writing describes an overall feeling of awe, much associated with the sublime. The connections here reflect history, aesthetics, and the site in the usual trend of exploration. Columbus Coated Fabrics contains mentalities of dereliction and exploration. The site is complex and dialogs are heated. There is fear attached to the fires, and contamination, the buildings even being seen as dangerous, but there are moments when it is revered as well, with neighbors having nostalgia over the site. Columbus Coated Fabrics even becomes a place where neo-Victorian attitude towards poor communities plays out. In the end the site has been cleared in accordance with the most well-publicized mentality. How the site plays out in the long run has yet to be seen.

F) Conclusion

On the site of Columbus Coated Fabrics in Columbus, Ohio, one can read different dialogs and histories of site. Threads from the history of a site include pollution and contamination, pride in production, betrayal of industry, fire, and disaster interweave through dialogs in what is said and as well as what is not said. The day-to-day presence of vacant spaces shapes these dialogs, illicit use, or merely the presence of vacant structures may cause negative associations or suggest exciting explorations. The future of what these sites can become changes the ways people view them. Potentials of vacant spaces may be written into the discussion of a site. Different dialogs surround ideas of dereliction, exploration and future potential. These dialogs result from complex histories, realities of a site in the day to day, and the hopes for future change. Dialogs are complex, resulting not from an empirically provable truth, but rather from subjective understandings of a site. They exist to create a construction of the environment that makes sense based on the experiences and needs people have. Through an understanding of what dialogs of ruderal sites are, and how people construct them, one can begin to shape ideas of how a site can be used responsibly. These ruderal, vacant sites are demonstrably not vacant, being occupied with history, uses, and projections of the future.
Chapter 3: Two Patterns of Use

A) Intro

Out of the different mentalities surrounding ruderal space, real physical uses take root on site. Some of the activities are tenuous, weedy, and pioneering, proving the term ruderal to be apt. The pioneering, or bottom-up, uses are most closely related to the mindset of explorers. These users of ruderal sites are individuals or small self-organizing groups. Other activities are top-down and focused on rebuildings of a site. Rebuilding may necessitate a complete clearance because top-down mentalities about blight include a totalizing argument for wiping a site clean. This scenario is one extreme; there are also less absolute top-down actions. The top-down and bottom-up are not discrete categories, but are general groupings that relate to the scale of size and power of the actors involved. There are many cases in which small actors partner with larger ones, or where large entities seek out small ones.

By breaking down ruderal patterns into the top-down and bottom-up, even admitting that these are not absolutes, we can gain useful insight. The top-down is perhaps the more familiar category, and needs to be understood both because of its dominance, as well as conflicts it may cause with the bottom-up. Bottom-up users are particularly important because the every-day actions of these people are relatively unstudied, innovative, and efficient properties which can be used to better harness the potentials in sites. The ways in which people turn ruderal spaces to a productive economic use by bottom-up actions can serve to improve the way we can deliberately use our cities. Ruderal re-use also operates on a varying scale of formality. Actions may be formally recognized by the power structure, or they may be subversive and illicit in nature. As with bottom-up and top-down, ruderal actions usually occupy ground in between the extremes of formal and informal use, having both moments of legitimacy and subversion.

After acknowledging that ruderal reuse operates on different scales it is important to see the
patterns that emerge. The uses of ruderal space are as multiple and diverse as the mentalities that surround them but contain useful convergences in their typologies.

The examples of bottom-up use cited in this chapter come from a diversity of places, including developed countries outside of the U. S. It is important to use the non-US examples because bottom-up ruderal uses are less well documented in the U. S. The majority of the literature focused on the bottom-up comes from Europe, usually Germany. Rather than discard the information, it will be considered carefully and examined through qualities of use. In categorizing the actions of ruderal space both actors — the top-down and bottom-up — as well as formality of actions will be considered.

B) Definitions

1) Top-Down and Bottom-Up

![Actor Scale](image)

Figure 3. Actor Scale

Top-down and bottom-up categories of actors, refer to the scale at which an entity functions. Actor here does not necessarily mean an individual person, although in the case of a single property owner, or a bottom-up actor, it might. At the far side of the spectrum top-down actors can be multi-country organizations, international corporations, national, or regional governments. On the other end, individuals, or small groups of people constitute bottom-up actors. The middle ground can become somewhat confusing. For example a single developer, who has little in the way of financial resources is not much different than a well-to-do artist using a warehouse for her business.

Setting a division for the top-down and bottom-up is difficult. If we are to ask the question of
what the property is used for, it still fails to answer the question of where the dividing line lies. A bottom-up actor may choose to commandeer a space for profit, or for rental to other bottom-up actors. Distance of the actor from use does not clarify the distinction. A sense of autocracy accompanies top-down acts, but is difficult to analyze. An individual renting a long-vacant warehouse may have complete say in whom he lets inhabit his work space. For clarity, a sense of agency may be applied to the distinction of the top-down and bottom-up. Top-down actors typically have a larger amount of agency than bottom-up ones; they have more money, political clout, and overall ability to leverage capital in their possession. Bottom-up actors typically have a dearth of the same forces. A group of bottom-up actors may band together, gain legal standing, and achieve more agency for their interests, but power has to be worked for and is no easy task. In short, top-down actors are those entities which operate at large scales, and can make autocratic decisions with a minimum of effort to control a space. Bottom-up actors are those entities which operate at an individual level, or as self-organizing individuals, who have little power to make official changes in a space.

2) Formality of Action

Difference in the formality of action taken by an involved party is another measure for ruderal actions. A bottom-up actor can work legitimately, obtaining permits and legal structures, or illegitimately, operating outside of the normal taxing structure. Top-down actors have the same choice as the bottom-up in whether or not they work formally or informally. It is less likely that a top-down actor will need to resort to unsanctioned actions, because of the fact that those forces intrinsically have more power to change the social and physical environment to suit their desires. There are cases where it is easier to act informally, and top-down actors do. For instance, a “slumlord” may evict tenants without due cause when property values get high enough to attract higher paying customers. Even actors as large as multi-national
corporations have been cited with deliberate policies of tax evasion and illegal market practices. Laws have also been invoked in their specifics to do something which violate the overall meaning of the law. Racial discrimination and segregation has been practiced long after the fifteenth amendment gave equal voting rights, for instance, the red-lining of urban neighborhoods often discriminated against minority areas (Jakle and Wilson 1992, 159). Consequently there are degrees of formality and informality, just as scale of actor has degrees.

An act of using, reusing or appropriating ruderal space can operate at any scale of formality. At the most formal, people may act both within the letter and spirit of the law, create new laws, or act in widely accepted legal ways. On informal levels, a person may act with great informality, in ways that are illegal, disliked and harmful to others. A person may also act at lesser levels of informality, such as doing something technically illegal, but which is largely accepted by those that it directly impacts. A variety of examples are shown in the diagram below.

There are reasons for acting informally and formally. Formal behavior has the benefit that is upheld by the structure of society. Home-ownership is widely supported by the US government; first time home buyers reap many benefits. Formal actions have the downside that they often take more resources. A business run legally must pay taxes; even home ownership with all its benefits still requires a hefty amount of money to afford. Informal behavior lacks these costs, but often has a greater risk in the form of punitive repercussions. If an actor is caught and punished, they may face fines, incarceration, or loss of rights. Beyond that of the practical there are important social reasons for informal behavior.

Informal behavior, also sometimes called subversive, is a reaction to social repression. Actors without much agency often react with informal or subversive behavior. Subversion is both a way to equalize emotions created by oppression, as much as it is a survival technique for those without options. Subversive behavior serves as a way for actors to find agency outside of a system which has rejected them. The desire for power and rights is a part of a long struggle that often results in conflict, subversion, and resistance (Turiel and Perkins 2004). There is a strong link between ruderal space and subversion as previously mentioned. Edensor (2005) mentioned that vacant spaces can be understood as “challenging” the order of a culture. Franck and Stevens (2007) corroborate this, saying that loose space creates uncertainty that “stands opposite” to order and
homogeneity.

Formal action has a sense of stability associated with it, just as the informal has as quality of flexibility. Top-down forces have a greater social stability, perhaps because of their grounding in a greater sense of agency. As actions move from the bottom-up and informal to the top-down and formal, stability and permanence of actions grows, although this is not to say that it is an absolute value. Top-down developments will lack stability if they do not fit well in overall systems, and bottom-up uses can be very tenacious.

As different examples are examined, a variety of actors may be involved in a given place. A judgment will be made as to the overall focus of an example, and a plotting made on the scale axis. Diagrams are used to locate each example within the varying scales of top-down/bottom up and formal/informal. The plottings will be done primarily for the bottom-up examples, because they are examined on a case-by-case basis. The top-down forces are looked at in a greater overview, because of the excellent documentation of those trends.

When appropriate the top-down forces will also be graphed. The scale and agency of actor is one axis upon which the ruderal forces are gauged. The level of formality at which they operate, is another.

This method will be employed throughout this thesis to better explain that instead of categorizing an action as one type or another, there is a more nuanced approach to analyzing actions within ruderal space, and it is important to do so because of the inherent complexity of these spaces.

C) Top-Down Patterns

Top-down forces are often officially endorsed and legal. They have a focus in creating spaces
that are profitable, either for an owner or for government; the voices that create the new vision for a site are usually a small number of actors. In the new vision, top-down re-use of sites rewrite the place heavily in a way that it loses its value as ruderal. Top-down patterns of development restart the cycles of capital investment, halting the ruderal hiatus. Identifying the activity as a rewriting is not meant to be a value judgment, but an understanding of how top-down forces change a site.

Top-down restructuring has shown a tendency to favor private interests (Gotham 2001) (Kleniewski 1984), but the situation is not just a result of one party pushing for their interests. In order for top-down forces to act, a multiplicity of authorities must sign off on an action. The government will look out for its interests even if constituents and lobbyists are working for theirs. A number of conditions and forces fuel top-down development, as outlined below.

1) History: Development, Real Estate, and Capitalism

Forces that transform spaces into ruderal sites have been discussed earlier in this thesis: disinvestment, sprawl, and blight. Reactions to problems of urban vacancy, both by real-estate, development, and the government are seen in the widespread patterns of top-down reuse.

The U. S. first saw a degradation of its cities in the 1930s. The degradation continued on through subsequent decades. At that time period persons associated with NAREB, the National Association of Real Estate Boards, lobbied for policy which would allow the government to acquire and clear “blighted” land (Gotham 2001, 286). The intent was that the real-estate developers would later gain control of the land, and ownership would be accompanied by tax write offs and subsidies (Gotham 2001, 286). The Housing Act of 1949 started the urban renewal program (Kleniewski 1984, 205), but the hand-off of land ownership was facilitated in large part through the Housing Act of 1954 (Gotham 2001, 287). Support for urban renewal came from the real-estate interests and other actors, who stood to benefit from reallocation of blighted properties. Other interested parties included bankers, retailers, newspapers, the hospitality industry, construction companies, and developers (Kleniewski 1984, 212). The forces at work here are a moderate size of actor, working through official means to enact new legislation.

The NAREB founded a group called the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to research urban blight and try to combat problems of decentralization in new development (Gotham 2001, 294). It became apparent that the government would need to subsidize land acquisition and clearance in
was supported by the mentality that private organizations are superior to public ones (Barnekov et al. 1989, 1). One of the forces at work during this time was an anti-communism sentiment; privatization was conceptualized as being in direct opposition to socialist notions. The drive for privatism operated not only in the U. S., but also found expression in Britain although Britain has been less focused on that as a sole solution to urban regeneration (Barnekov et al. 1989, 2). In contrast to what was expected, private development typically continued a trend of inequality in the market (Gotham 2001, 290). The losses of businesses were subsidized publicly while keeping profits in their own hands (Gotham 2001, 291). Due to NAREB lobbying, public housing acts of the 1950s were largely unsuccessful at creating a sufficient amount of low income housing (Gotham 2001, 297). Over time urban revitalization changed such that it started to incorporate the needs of the marginalized and poor, rather than “brushing them aside” (Hays 1985, 190).

The 1970s saw a fundamental change in policy with the creation of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) (Hays 1985, 193). During the 1960s funding from the federal government trickled down to the local government level in ways which engendered conflict between agencies competing for funds. The policies for how recipients interfaced with the government were widely dissimilar; there was little coherency from place to place (Hays 1985, 193-5). In response to issues of efficiency, the concept of revenue
sharing was created. Now the Federal government would continue funding local projects, but delegated control to local and state governments (Hays 1985, 196-7). The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 was passed and linked urban renewal to housing once again, as well as advocating for low income groups and historical renovation (Hays 1985, 204-5). Further policies under Kennedy and Johnson were fractured in nature. It was easier to garner support for small policies because larger ones automatically gathered opposition (Hays 1985, 206). Working at a small scale was seen as a way for policy makers to get policies passed at all (Hays 1985, 206). Carter changed funding yet again in 1977, and created Urban Development Action Grants. Action Grants gave money to projects larger than CDBGs, and could be residential, commercial, or industrial in nature, so long as they improved employment and the tax base (Hays 1985, 216). Because of local control over CDBGs, they survived the heavy budget cuts of the Reagan years (Hays 1985, 251). The 1980s and 1990s still saw a reduction in Federal funds for local economic development; since then localities have been forced to find their own solutions to urban problems, usually involving private investors (Gotham 2001, 308). The CDBG program is still in use today and is known as one of the “longest continuously run programs at HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)” (Community Development Block Grants 2011). Beyond real-estate and revitalization another top-down motivation deals with site problems.

One of the specific types of top-down development involving ruderal sites that has grown in recent years is the reuse and cleanup of brownfield sites. Contaminated sites are often associated with post-industrial uses, as well as commercial enterprises (Fitzgerald and Green Leigh 2002, 70). “Brownlining” or designation of a site as a brownfield can inhibit reuse of a site, and become a hindrance to the tax base (Fitzgerald and Green Leigh 2002, 69). Redevelopment of contaminated sites has problems of liability, lack of information, large costs, lengthy time commitment, and uncertainties in the process (Fitzgerald and Green Leigh 2002, 73). Current federal legislation such as CERCLA – the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act – can hold involved parties responsible for the cleanup of a site (Fitzgerald and Green Leigh 2002, 75). Unfortunately the liability scares off investors. Owners can be held responsible even if they did not contribute to the pollution in question (Bowman
and Pagano 2004, 144). Because of the heavy investments involved, cleanup requires an entity with a large financial presence to work on polluted sites; the contamination keeps legal use from occurring. Smaller sites are seen to be less marketable, leading to an environment which favors larger investors (Fitzgerald and Green Leigh 2002, 98). Brownfields are one small part of a larger understanding of top-down functions.

The top-down reuse of sites has long been connected to issues of blight, slums, and regeneration. An early push in regeneration connected land reuse and clearance to that of the real-estate industry. Over time funding for urban issues has consolidated, while becoming more controlled by local interests. Top-down interests still dominate the reuse of ruderal sites. Some of these issues are long-standing, and others are more recent, but all of the above constitute how the U. S. has constructed views about regeneration and the re-shaping of its cities. The most current trends continue some of the older policies but are still changing and responding to current conditions.

2) Present Day: Neoliberalism, Cultural Competition, and Modern Regeneration

The trend toward private real estate based development of the central city has continued to the present day, but with modifications. The redevelopment of city spaces not only benefited certain actors financially but also restructured the way the city was used. Kleniewski (1984, 209) maintains in her research on Philadelphia that the urban renewal changed the structure of the city from that of industrial development to the “corporate era”. When cities changed from industrial to corporate through early urban redevelopment, investments also shifted from wholly private, to a mix of private and public (Kleniewski 1984, 218). Currently a trend exists of locational branding and consumer oriented development in central cities.

Aspa Gospodini (2006) has analyzed the land use patterns of post-industrial cities and discusses how development has changed. The new ways that cities are shaped are a part of a set of changing priorities. Instead of trying to make the city appealing for business by reducing costs of operation or improving infrastructure which businesses desire, cities are now looking to improve their amenities (Gospodini 2006, 311-312). The focus on amenities is part of a new mentality that the city itself is a commodity, used to compete with other cities, marketed to a discerning public (Gospodini 2006, 312). In order to create a product that is appealing cities are
using their physical features, often in the form of the built environment and natural environment, in innovative or traditional ways to shape the city into an object of consumption (Gospodini 2006, 312).

Gospodini (2006) breaks down the patterns of development into more specific forms, all of which are top-down in nature. The examples are drawn from city centers that have been redeveloped, large projects, which have required cooperation of governments and developers to enact. Her forms of development create an experience of the city which can be commodified and sold to visitors and residents (Gospodini 2006, 312). Within that general analysis she has several taxonomic categories of city development. Of two greater categories, one is “signifying epicenters” in the central city, coming from a new trend to de-segregate city areas previously isolated by zoning to create mixed-use development. In addition Gospodini (2006, 313) sees the signifying epicenters forming just outside of the central business district. She separates signifying epicenters into four sub-types (Gospodini 2006, 325). The first is the “entrepreneurial epicenter”, which caters to high level tech and service industries with sidelines for housing and upscale amenities. Second are the “high-culture epicenters” that are dominated by museums, galleries, theater, and other more expensive cultural venues. Thirdly, the “popular leisure epicenter” caters to a more middle class budget offering eating establishments, bars, music clubs, and retail. Lastly Gospodini (2006, 325) describes the sub-category of the “culture and leisure waterfront epicenter”, which combines aspects of the second and third types, while taking advantage of a location near a water resource. Some notable examples of these epicenters are: Potzdamer Platz – entrepreneurial; the Museum Quarter in Vienna – high culture; Westergas-fabriek – popular leisure; Southbank, London – culture and leisure (Gospodini 2006, 325). Through the four types she describes a variety of renewal and redevelopment schemes that are used to create the physical spaces, ranging from new-build to rehabilitation of older structures (Gospodini 2006, 325).

Gospodini is not the only one to have drawn the conclusion about current development trends in city centers. Marling et al. (2009, 864) call the phenomenon the “experience city”. They see the experience city as a result of competition globally between cities, fueled by the increasing mobility of residents, with a shift towards “immaterial” types of production. Cities have developed a new “relation to capital”, the attributes of local places are being used to market
the city to “potential capital” (Rogerson 1999, 969). Marling et al. (2009, 864) expand the idea of what is occurring in cities to include not only experience environments but also “urban transformation, new knowledge centers and cultural institutions”. The factors being enhanced in experience environments are a part of the quality of life levels, which Rogerson (1999, 971) identifies. In short, cities are redefining the amenities which they are promoting to attract capital. Amenities are now attributes such as quality of life and “experiences”. Top-down developments are a major tool in how cities are leveraging changes as they involve the creation of amenities such as large shopping districts, movie theaters, new pedestrian zones and other experience and consumer activities. Wright (1997, 87) notes the increase in amenities in the city, particularly for the middle class; he connects changes with increasing public-private partnerships which benefit developers.

Summing up all of the recent trends, top-down developments have begun to form a new pattern. Developers are partnering with cities to reshape downtown districts into areas of middle class amenities. Cities are using amenities to attract business and populations according to a new formula of urban revitalization. Here the motives of top-down action are attributed not only to developers and real-estate, but also to municipal government. For this reason local government motives relative to re-use of land needs to be examined.

3) Motives of the Government

In the history of urban renewal we can see a variety of actors and mentalities at play. Private investors, real-estate interests, powerful local capitalists all have their part, but one of the largest key actors is the government. It has motivations and needs which are independent of the interests of individuals or groups. The motivations explain why development has happened in certain ways; they are important to understand when constructing new framework of how to use ruderal space.

Government at any level is interested in leveraging resources to carry out its functions and keep it continuing as an institution. Bowman and Pagano (2004) summarize the motivations of city governments. They explain that governments want to increase the economic viability of an area to increase leverage in implementing government actions (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 35). In addition they want to improve the conditions to garner support for officials in reelections.
Governments achieve support by trying to maximize fiscal and economic conditions, land values, and the image of the city while minimizing social disruption (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 35). In short, the motives of the government are primarily economic and social, with the end result of improving revenue and support.

i) Economics and Tax Base

Bowman and Pagano (2004) break down actions of government into three basic categories, two of which are applicable to the discussion of ruderal space. The first category of action is the desire to enhance the fiscal viability of the city and its communities. Enhancement is usually done through the creation of housing and higher end stores – often chains. The government can best improve the quality of life of its citizens if the tax base is large enough to fund its operations (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 39-40). It creates what the authors call the “Land-Tax Dynamic”, which is the desire for a government to choose a land use which gives it the best tax return for the space (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 40). The strategy of the government will be different depending on the type of taxation from which it derives funding. Property tax governments want to maximize the assessed value of the property and will make decisions which try to increase that value. Likewise, sales tax governments want to increase buying and selling functions on their territory. Finally, income tax governments look to increase the overall earnings of their areas (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 41). All governments want to maximize benefits for residents while decreasing costs by finding ways by which costs can be borne by areas outside of their jurisdiction (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 41). Secondly, the authors explain that government has an imperative to develop its lands (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 44). They maintain that development is done often for economic reasons.

Economic motives play out in urban renewal actions in direct ways. Kleniewski (1984, 208) maintains that the urban renewal of Philadelphia in 1948 was motivated for reasons of economic enhancement rather than producing housing, corroborated by the development increasing the property values of the central city. Older spaces of production were replaced with newer ones because of the argument for achieving a “maximum investment potential” (Kleniewski 1984, 209). Gotham (2001, 293) cites how articles and editorials of the 1940s constructed an argument that the “blighted neighborhoods” of Kansas City, Missouri were directly threatening
the “financial viability of the CBD (Central Business District)”. Again we see the argument of dereliction and blight emerge. It is established that “blighted” areas have less tax revenue, and require more services and support for reasons such as fire, crime, poverty, and disease (Sogg and Wertheimer 1966, 126-7). The disproportionately high burden of ailing neighborhoods led some cities to disinvest themselves from services in order to try to balance their budgets (Jakle and Wilson 1992, 163-5).

ii) Social Concerns

Bowman and Pagano’s second government imperative is the motive to consider social conditions that occur because of land use. They mention that land may be used for open space or barriers, which are necessary for the functioning of the city, even though their immediate economic use is greater elsewhere. The development imperative of Bowman and Pagano (2004, 44) also has a “perceptual or symbolic” augmentation of the image of the city. The argument is supported by Kleniewski’s (1984, 209) interpretation of Philadelphia’s 1948 renewal which created a new “symbolic nature of the city”. The old forms of architecture, such as narrow streets and low crowded buildings, were replaced by tall skyscrapers and open plazas (Kleniewski 1984, 209). Hays (1985, 179) also agrees, saying that during the 1950s and 1960s, many different actors wanted to preserve the image of downtown, and believed that it was worth a public subsidy.

The overall priorities of the government are a portion of top-down forces that are necessary in order to understand some of the hybrids of private-public work going on as seen in Gospodini’s examples. Both the government and private actors have their motivations and needs, but these may not always represent the best use of ruderal space. There are a number of problems that are associated with top-down action.

4) Problems with Top-Down Development

The ideal result of the top-down use of space is to create a new set of functions that are profitable. In reality the results of top-down actions often include problems and do not always live up to the optimistic promises of developers. Top-down development is fashioned by a limited number of participants and does not respond well to the complexity of sites; many voices make up the cacophony or euphony of culture. In the case of top-down development, a few
voices overrule the others; the result is not always harmonious. Not all users agree on the vision given by the few. Problems result from the ways in which top-down development rewrites sites. The priorities that a developer imposes on a site do not always accommodate existing needs. A lack of nuance in the structure of use can result in secondary problems, or the failure of developed sites to function as planned, seen in new-build vacancies. Top-down action tends to push out other uses and appropriate space for itself.

i) Displacement

Top-down development often will wipe an area clean of previous use before committing to a new one. It creates a number of different problems, one of which is displacement. Displacement is also a result of gentrification; the heart of that problem is discussed later under the issue of inequality. At first glance, it seems as if displacement has less to do with ruderal lands because of their lack of formal occupation. In further examination displacement applies to ruderal landscapes because non-ruderal places will often become attached to or affected by top-down forces being applied to the more marginal areas.

Lands adjacent to the ruderal, such as run-down neighborhoods, may be grouped in with them. The reuse of a vacant site sometimes ends up subsuming adjacent parcels. A recent proposal in Columbus, Ohio, on the former Timken Roller Bearing site required that “200 modest homes” next to the site would be appropriated with eminent domain in order to accommodate the project in question (Gebolys and Andes 2004). While the proposal was not accepted, a blanket reworking of the urban landscape is far from hypothetical.

When housing is torn down there has historically been a lack of replacement housing. Acts of urban revitalization in Kansas City, Missouri, worked to reuse vacant and occupied “slums” at the same time, and ended up displacing thousands of residents (Gotham 2001, 302). Hays (1985, 181) notes that while demolished units are often of substandard condition, they still provide an important function in housing people who have few choices. Ruderal sites provide similar functions: “vacant” structures are sometimes used as shelter. While it should not be condoned as a healthy
way to live, it is also important that reuse of ruderal sites consider what the unofficial uses are. Destroying ruderal sites may deprive people of any shelter.

Displacement not only physically removes people, but also causes greater financial instability. There has been a decline in the availability of affordable housing in the U.S., and a concurrent increase in makeshift, rather than steady, work, which means that displaced people are unlikely to return to a state of stability (Wright 1997, 82). People who were homeowners in a low-value condition may have to become tenants because of the value of properties where they relocate (Hays 1985, 182). The issue is compounded because displacement destroys support networks which low income residents create to survive. Moving people from an area destroys connections they have, which are used to mitigate the difficult conditions (Hays 1985, 188). New-build developments, even if they are aimed at helping a similar group of users, will fail to preserve valuable networks if they disrupt the patterns of daily life. For example in Kansas City, the stable black neighborhoods were destabilized by the loss of clientele for established businesses when residences were cleared (Gotham 2001, 304).

Beyond the simple economic argument that displacement deprives residents of housing, displacement also carries with it negative psychological effects. Moving people from an area where they have been located for a long period of time has been found to create grief similar to that of losing a friend or family member (Hays 1985, 182).

ii) Loss of History

Another loss when a site is cleaned up is its connection to history. Severcan (2007, 677) argues that the loss of historical places, or conversion to private uses which also constitutes a loss deprives people of the history of a place. These spaces serve to educate people about a time period of human history; how spaces were structured and produced, and what was produced in those spaces, are a part of understanding them (Severcan 2007, 680). In addition he is concerned that properties have important “symbolic and monumental character” which is being lost. Debate exists on how much sites should be valued, and whether or not re-uses disconnect people from history (Severcan 2007). Some understandings of heritage protection piggyback the restoration and preservation of sites while finding new uses to aid the site’s survival (Alfrey and Putnam 1992). Diedrechsen (2006) connects the desires of people currently occupying a site to the
He maintains that a site with history intact will inspire and shape the future better than any newly developed “tabula rasa” ever will (Diedrechsen 2006, 331). John Friedman (2007, 991) enumerates the city’s “heritage of its built environment and the distinctiveness and vibrancy of its cultural life” as one of the major assets of an urban area. When development clears a site completely, no room exists for any possible interpretation of the site’s past; it is simply gone. Clearance has secondary problems associated with it; once a site is re-built in a cleared area, the resulting development is often much more uniform and homogenous.

iii) Homogenization

Another issue that results from the top-down rebuildings of ruderal sites is homogenization. Homogenization can be seen in the way that cities commodify their spaces. The re-marketing that Gospodini (2006), Marling et al. (2009), and Rogerson (1999) describe has a tendency to simplify places. Rogerson (1999, 972) cites the London Docklands, and how “multifaceted lifestyles” have been simplified to be “packaged and sold”. In a lengthy discussion about quality of life, and how cities use that standard to market themselves, Rogerson (1999) comes to the conclusion that the definitions being used are too narrow. It privileges characteristics that capital holders desire and marginalizes qualities which other groups may need or want (Rodgerson 1999, 982). A limited view of what the city ought to become indicates the inequalities raised by top-down development.

iv) Inequality

A fourth development is that the top-down does not benefit all parties equally. Top-down development has a tendency to recreate and reinforce social differences. Displacement, mentioned earlier, is also a characteristic of gentrification. Displacement itself can be a way to further reinforce inequality, but the entire structure of gentrification serves to privilege one group over another. Gentrification was understood originally to refer to the buying and
rehabilitation of residences by the middle class, which disadvantaged the lower classes (Atkinson 2004, 108). Since its inception the concept has been expanded and contested concerning how it is significant, generalizable as well as its causes and effects (Atkinson 2004, 108). A new interpretation of gentrification is that of “new build gentrification”. The phenomenon occurs when new development occurs on vacant or brownfield parcels, which values the land at such a rate that lower incomes are unable to “access property” – it is a sort of exclusionary displacement (Davidson and Lees 2009, 389). While new build gentrification does not force someone out of a community that they already live in, it denies them the ability to live there in the first place. New-build problems are particularly relevant to ruderal sites because a net gain of housing is more likely than a replacement.

Unequal development has been seen many times; the renewal of Kansas City disadvantaged the poor and black communities disproportionately, putting residents in segregated and substandard housing (Gotham 2001, 304). The trend in downtown renewal also privileges middle class consumers with the investment in luxury townhouses, shopping, and entertainment seen in places like Chicago, where nine billion dollars have been put into such developments (Wright 1997, 87). A side effect of gentrification is the destruction of the social fabric of the area; conflict within communities can occur because of it. Residents in some cases identify new arrivals as the source of the problem, and target them with violence or aggression. It has been seen in the “mug-a-yuppie” campaigns of London and San Francisco (Atkinson 2004, 116). The neighborhood of Old Town East in Columbus, Ohio has seen similar violence with new residents being beaten or shot at (Bryant and Poitras, 2003). The prevailing attitude is one of hostility between long time and newer residents.

The current fear is that the trend of neo-liberal downtown redevelopment as seen by Gospodini and others is part of a pattern of “socially divisive regeneration” (Atkinson 2004, 108). The pattern not only discriminates against social groups, it is also inherently narrow in focus potentially setting up areas for future weakness through a lack of diversity and resilience.

v) Financialization

A fifth issue, financialization, is the increased valuing of properties to the point where it becomes prohibitive for non-affluent populations to buy or rent them. The phenomenon
is associated with top-down development and gentrification. Jane Jacobs wrote about financialization when describing how various New York City neighborhoods had changed. As locations became more popular to live in it became more profitable to build in “excessive and devastating quantity for those who can pay the most”; in the New York City cases it was childless households who displaced families (Jacobs 1961, 325-6). In the case of ruderal spaces, the effect happens to uses that were once informal or marginal, rather than to well established neighborhoods, however, the end result is the same. Financialization affects sites which are developed as well as surrounding areas. The problem can push out existing residents, and prohibit less profitable businesses from starting. A business which used a run-down site as low overhead to start without a large capital investment will now have to move elsewhere or perhaps not even start up. Neighbors of a vacant property may find their apartments being renovated and re-priced to an amount that prohibits them from living there.

vi) conclusion

Top-down forces will often wipe ruderal spaces clean. Smith (2007, 54) explains that indeterminate spaces are “revalorized” by urban policy regimes as a part of clearance. In order to create a new order, the mindset of top-down regeneration often thinks that it must blank the slate, although this is not always the case, it is frequent enough to merit note. Clearance wipes out both history and current uses, further marginalizing any individuals who were able to find a productive use of the site. The resultant development does not typically benefit a diverse range of people, but instead services only a narrow sector. Bowman and Pagano (2004, 119) mention that although cities may have social agendas for land, agendas can become secondary to the financial when cities need to make choices about how to use that land. Despite the desire for financial success, top-down development is not assured of creating that. The Detroit Renaissance Center, a huge work of revitalization, was largely disconnected from its surroundings: “[it] was a powerful symbol of distance and dissonance” (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 119). As top-down forces use up the ruderal space in new development, it limits the options for marginal or counterculture movements (Smith 2007, 54). Opportunities possible within other forms of development cannot be realized if top-down forces control the entirety of ruderal space. From the details of top-down problems we can inform our decisions to restructure site use, and perhaps develop a more
comprehensive and functional alternative.

D) Informal/Bottom-Up

Top-down forces dominate the ways in which ruderal space is re-used and conceptualized, but they do not represent the only way these spaces are used. Bottom-up practices pervade ruderal sites, creating an alternative set of spatial uses. Alternatives represent needs that individuals or small groups have expressed through the daily actions of how they informally, or formally, appropriate spaces. Because a diversity of actors undertake these actions, a definition of what constitutes bottom-up is difficult; however, the scope and scale of bottom-up forces are different from the top-down. Top-down actors apply a dominant paradigm of governmentalities to rework space, typically at a large scale. Bottom-up actors work at smaller scales, and have less ability to use dominant paradigms to their advantage. Their actions are more need-based; ruderal spaces often provide an opportunity that is necessary for the action to occur.

For this thesis examples have been drawn from many different countries and conditions. A homogeneous set of examples would be nearly impossible to find, and provide no external validity, instead, the examples used here are focused on developed countries. The patterns of use are similar within these places, although they need to be considered carefully when looking at specifics of site planning. They are still worth considering because of the overall rarity of bottom-up documentation and analysis.

Bottom-up activities are harder to understand than the top-down; they are not well recorded because of the often-informal, and sometimes illegal, nature of the actions. Although evidence is largely anecdotal, it supports the existence – and importance – of bottom-up uses. Categories are used to analyze uses for structural similarities and key points about how they function.

An infinite number of bottom-up uses exist of ruderal spaces, but those of interest are the ones that have a significant, positive, economic role. Some activities are directly economic, and fit into dominant capitalistic trends. Other activities are more nebulous and do not generate any capital. Free activities are still worth consideration because they have taken the place of services that would normally be paid for. In the following examples different uses of bottom-up activities are divided into the categories of agriculture, housing, recreation, and cultural production.

1) Agriculture
Urban agriculture is a longstanding trend in the use of vacant urban properties. The middle of the 20th century saw an upswing in agricultural trends in the U. S. through Victory Gardens (Reinhardt 2011). Recent years have experienced resurgence in city based agriculture, using the now pervasive vacant parcels. Urban gardening in its modern incarnation came into being, in the 1970s. Bonham et al. (2002, 16) list the following seminal organizations: the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society’s Philadelphia Green, New York’s Green Guerrillas, Seattle’s P-Patch, San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners, Dayton’s Grow With Your Neighbors, Louisville’s Operation Brightside, and Hartford’s Knox Park Foundation; as of 2002 there were over 350 programs nationally.

Urban gardening has taken place in the backyards of already occupied land, but also finds significant space in vacated land. Gardens in Baltimore took over the 1800 block on Duncan Street, covering forty-four lots (Dewar, 2011). New York City’s movement started in the 1970s, when there were over 10,000 city-owned vacant lots; the lots often leased from the city (Gittleman et al. 2011, 6). Recently a couple in Detroit moved to particularly derelict area of the city, bought a house, and “adopted” surrounding vacant lots (Archambault 2010). Boston’s Dudley Street program was based in an area with 21% rates of vacancy in the properties (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 117). Cleveland area gardens have turned abandonment into “new opportunities”, which is helping to change the perceptions of land from “blighting” to
“productive” (Lefkowitz 2008). The majority of these examples are legitimate, but not dominant in their legitimacy. Often a lease can be up in as little as a year, leaving urban gardeners without land.

The types of spaces used for urban gardening point to bottom-up use, a few entities have attempted to categorize information about urban gardening. The RUAF Foundation states that most of the people involved in urban agriculture are poor and city residents, not rural migrants, in addition they acknowledge middle class and more affluent individuals are sometimes involved (What is Urban Agriculture 2011).

At a larger scale than that of the individual, a large network of support groups has sprung up. Green Guerillas in New York City was formed by gardeners, and Operation Green Thumb was started by a city council (Gittleman et al. 2011). The pattern is consistent with many other cities having support programs for local urban gardening. Philadelphia’s urban gardening is supported by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 184). Urban gardens in Columbus, Ohio, are aided by the Franklin Park Conservatory (Growing to Green 2011). Other organizations are broader in nature; the American Community Gardening Association works with not only the U. S., but Canada (About ACGA 2011). RUAF itself is an “international network of seven regional resource centres and one global resource centre on Urban Agriculture and Food Security” (About RUAF Foundation 2011). Urban gardening organizations proliferate on-line; a casual search turns up endless amounts of informational sites.

Urban gardening is an opportunistic activity. It creates resources badly needed at low cost. Some of activities are entrepreneurial. Archambault (2010) cites young people in Brightmoor (Detroit area) who made $2,000 in summer sales in 2009. GLIE farms in Bathgate Industrial Park in the New York City area employed 85 people before it closed (Bonham et al. 2002, 28). Greensgrow farm in Philadelphia was supplying restaurants while using above ground growing methods to deal with central city soil conditions (Bonham et al. 2002, 28-9). Other ventures are used to substitute labor.
for capital that is missing in the neighborhood, as well as creating opportunities for residents to have goods – fresh food – that they otherwise would not, bringing food to “food deserts” (Dewar 2011). Gardening ventures combat both urban poverty and food insecurity (Why is Urban Ag Important 2011). It uses labor of individuals who have flexible schedules, and does not require a large time commitment. Labor is much more intensive in urban gardening because of physical restrictions and scale, only small equipment can generally be employed at all.

Agriculture promotes networks of social capital. The supporting organizations and funders exist at one level, but the interactions of people within the gardens themselves occur at another and are of great importance. The Philadelphia Green program is designed to “awaken community spirit and commitment” (Bowman and Pagano 2004, 117). A project in Waterview, Victoria, British Columbia, used community gardening to work with tenants that had a variety of mental disabilities and addictions (Stott 2010, 3). The project was not only able to help empower participants, but tied the community to the project with donations and support. In the same vein, the Exodus Collective, which hosts free rave parties, has expanded its work to include agriculture (Exodus Collective 1998, 41). Its activities are operated for “the betterment of the whole community”, with the group being interested in “harnessing the energy of the dance” to this end (Exodus Collective 1998, 41). One enterprise that the group has started is the Long Meadow Community Farm, a 17 acre site which is located near Chalton, just outside of Luton, UK. The farm serves to employ people who cannot find work, and whose skills were “being wasted” (Exodus Collective 1998, 44). The site also acts as an inexpensive place of recreation. The property itself was derelict; volunteer labor and donated materials were able to keep it from becoming completely defunct (Exodus Collective 1998, 44).

In addition to empowering residents through labor, many gardens donate food to interested parties or charities. The couple farming in Detroit has considered selling for a profit but explain that they have a greater interest in trying to “provide food for anyone who needs it” (Archambault
Baltimore farms, which could profit greatly from the sale of heirloom vegetables are instead giving away produce to churches and food kitchens (Dewar, 2011). Two Coves and Greens for Queens give food to a local food pantry, and other gardens also food to “curious and hungry passers by” (Gittleman et al. 2011, 14). “No activity has greater potential for realizing economic justice than urban agriculture if city land is made available on a widespread basis to residents to help meet their nutritional and economic needs” (Archambault 2010).

Gardens can also overcome problems resulting from a lack of official green space. They can reduce the urban heat island effect (Dewar 2011). New York City gardens have been found to slow stormwater, provide habitat for birds, and remove organic waste from municipal streams because of composting (Gittleman et al. 2011, 31). Baltimore’s gardens are cited as increasing the safety of the area “now people will garden there at all hours. They feel safe there. It’s like the people’s caring, the people’s presence, stays even when they’re not there.” (Dewar 2011). Gardens have been also found to help with physical and psychological health benefits (Gittleman et al. 2011, 31).

Urban agriculture is a ruderal use with a number of different benefits. The goods produced and grown, whether they are sold or exchanged, are substituted for otherwise expensive fresh produce. Gardening raises the quality of living with finite resources not just physically but also socially. The networks that are created from the activities spill over into the communities, and connect and empower as much as they feed. However much labor urban gardening requires, it is amply supplied by underemployed city populations. Urban gardening fixes problems in the city with its own resource, what is available in quantity: land. It is a prime example of what ruderal activities can accomplish.

2) Housing

Examples of reuse include actions of reinhabation or inhabiting structures for the first time. Inhabitation is often done for reasons of cost, but residences made in informal ways have other benefits. Inhabitation can be an activity of conflict between bottom-up and top-down forces. Kohoutek and Kamleithner (2006) see the conflict because of the type of temporary use. They contrast art and more political uses, such as inhabitation. Art, they posit, is allowed to play in space because it challenges and questions in a way that is less threatening (Kohoutek and
Moral and political challenges, unlike art, are directly the responsibility of the state and inhabitation reminds top-down forces that it has failed the individuals doing the inhabiting (Kohoutek and Kamleithner 2006, 34). For that reason, the needs of the inhabitants, it is a category of ruderal use which can have an economic benefit for those involved.

An interesting example of semi-formal residential occupation are the houseboats of Shoreham-by-Sea in England, an case studied by Darren Smith (2007). A group of individuals moved to the area in the 1960s, and developed a community on boats which had been abandoned in the Adur River (Smith 2007, 55).

Differences exist in the physical location compared to typical urban sites. The river is a more loose concept of space than a typical urban parcel, but still takes advantage of abandonment through the reuse of boats. Owners of the boats had been leasing access through the city, when the property went up for sale, the owners banded together and bought the “mud” for 66,000 pounds distributing shares to each owner for their mooring (Smith 2007, 55).

The properties gave a way in which the people could afford to own their own housing. Houseboats are cheaper than conventional residences, especially in comparison with “gentrified” housing markets nearby; The boat housing option requires less intensive careers on the part of the owners to meet needs to maintain the structures. Fewer financial restraints allow individuals who have “limited earning potential” have an opportunity at self-sufficiency (Smith 2007, 56-7). Costs were also kept down by use of recycled materials (Smith 2007, 58). Instead of being money-intensive, this type of residence is labor-intensive to maintain. Residents spend a great deal of time fixing the boats because of the salt water of the estuary (Smith 2007, 57). Some of the labor is spent constructing the boats in creative and innovative ways. Smith (2007, 59) attributes the opportunity for creativity partly to the lack of regulation on design codes for the boats. The houseboats of Shoreham give residents an alternative to traditional home ownership without significantly rewriting the experience of living in a private domicile.

Another act of inhabitation was done by the Exodus Collective at Haz Manor, who used a
A similar project to Haz Manor is the Kraftwerk 1 project. It was enacted in 1993 in Zurich, Switzerland, used an abandoned factory near the Sulzer Escher-Wyss area. It provided housing and space for work, as well as providing services for a fee, to residents (Tobler 1998, 57). The project was aimed at using the skills of local workers, a large number of whom found themselves out of work because of economic shifts (Tobler 1998, 53).

Ruderal spaces have long been used formally and informally as places of inhabitation. They require a great deal of labor to be of practical use because of the dilapidated conditions of the structures that are inhabited. Because of the low cost of ruderal places, they provide a chance for people with little or no money to find affordable housing. The participation in the construction and maintenance of informal housing gives residents a connection to place which would not exist otherwise. Ruderal spaces represent an opportunity to express skills and creativity in the building of a place. People who use ruderal space for housing have found that they gain more than simply a roof over their heads.

3) Recreation

Ruderal space is often used for recreation; the remnants of some forms can be seen in the presence of graffiti, trash left after reveling, or in acts of vandalism. More conventional types of recreation occur in ruderal places as well and mimic formal activities. Spaces provide outlets for hobbies which may otherwise be expensive or prohibitive in the urban area otherwise.

Use of ruderal space for motor vehicle use is a common theme. Tim Edensor (2007, 237-8) mentions that ruins make excellent areas for joyriding automobiles or motorcycles, the slopes and
the obstacles providing challenges for the driver. Vehicular activity is found in Columbus, Ohio, behind a Walmart on the South side of town, where a wide and muddy track cuts through varied terrain. All-terrain vehicles have shaped the weedy and vacant space with an equally emergent series of paths. The course includes a long open straight-away, steep hills, woods, and alternative routes up piles of fill or around a quarry lake. Locals frequent the place to the chagrin of the quarry that technically owns the land and has attempted to curb the use for fear of litigation, but still have not managed to stop the use.

Another type of use is that of exploration Edensor (2007, 239) also says that ruins invite a sort of “informal tourism”, otherwise known as urban exploration; instead of a clean and prescribed route, the visitor experiences an “unpredictable space”, “unidentifiable objects, texts, and scenes”. Informal tourism is also known as urban exploration, previously mentioned in this thesis. Groups of people often trespass into ruderal areas, using the sites as places to explore, photograph, and experience history. The culture is one of wonder and reverence for ruderal places. Part of the interest seems to come from the excitement of illicit use, although participants are not looking to damage or vandalize the spaces.

A number of other sports are linked to urban areas, and often ruderal ones. Paintball and laser tag both take advantage of the city as a site to wage non-lethal battles. In places such as Germany, sufficient restrictions exist that finding places to play is difficult (von Borries 2006, 445). Industrial ruins and factories are popular for recreational activities.
X-golf is an alternative form of golfing, which uses the city as a course and often vacant properties (van Borries 2006, 443-4). Turbo golf is a more destructive form where structures or cars may be targeted and destroyed as a part of play.

More interactive than golf or tag, parkour - whose enthusiasts are also known also as traceurs - find alternative ways to cross the landscape. They take a straight line in urban terrain and find a way to transverse it without deviating from the line or destroying property (van Borries 2006, 448). Another hobby which may find expression in ruderal space is geocaching. Geocaching uses GPS to hide and locate objects in the real world, and gives clues as to their location online (Geocaching 2011). The objects are usually containers that have information, or items left by previous hobbyists. Ruderal space offers an ideal place for recreational activities because of a relative lack of enforcement of site uses.

Recreation in ruderal urban sites creates the opportunity for lower cost involvement in sports with high fees. It also creates a landscape which is unique to itself and lends itself to exploration. Urban places give a site of creative solutions to prohibitive costs and a different way of envisioning sports and recreation. Activities while avoiding costs, may still generate money flows. This paradigm is used in some local leagues, such as kick-ball, where participants register to play and pay a fee to the league, although sites may not charge (Sportsmonster 2011).

4) Cultural Production

Cultural production is a large topic and is connected to current discussions of the creative economy. Cultural production here is categorized as the creation of products, services or experiences which are valued primarily because of the social significance connected to the thing in question. Gibson (2003, p. 203) explains that “specific forms of value are attached to the creative component of ‘cultural’ industries”. Activities may include music, art, consumer goods or even hospitality. It is also important to recognize culture not as a single overbearing force, but as something which can manifest in many ways and in fact pervades the economy throughout (Massey 1997, 35).

Music is a common type of cultural use for ruderal landscapes. Fraser and Ettlinger (2008) studied the Drum and Bass (D&B) culture of England, a music sub-industry which is intimately tied to ruderal spaces. D&B music came about in the 1990s as a part of the larger rave culture.
The performances of music typically happen in places which are not designed for the music, with the exception of a couple weekly, weeknight events; the majority of the action occurs at raves and events (Fraser and Ettlinger 2008, 1649).

A marginal location seems to be necessary for the illegal activities which happen on the margin, as well as keeping costs down in a tenuous industry. Not only are dance party events the focus of the interaction between the producers, the DJs, and the consuming public, they also represent the places where new samples of music distributed on “dub plates” make their way to the DJs. They are competitive areas where DJs try out new music (Fraser and Ettlinger 2008, 1649). The spread, consumption and innovations behind D&B music all occur in the temporary spaces in which it is performed. The space in which interactions happen is important because it “keeps the buzz going” (Fraser and Ettlinger 2008, 1649). The industry has created its own record labels and a set of support jobs such as web designers, promoters, agents, and sound engineers (Fraser and Ettlinger 2008, 1650-1).

The D&B music industry of England has several defining characteristics. The industry relies on a “buzz” that surrounds its events. Whether through distribution of new dub-plates, establishing contacts or hearing new mixes by a DJ, the industry thrives on a connection to place for the exchange (Fraser and Ettlinger 2008, 1649). The D&B industry also has the trait of localized ownership. Many of these record labels are small and owned by individuals rather than having been sold to a large name such as Sony (Fraser and Ettlinger 2008, 1650). Not only does D&B culture rely on informal spaces, but it creates informal labor, the industry “enables some participants to survive without relying on wage labor” (Fraser and Ettlinger 2008, 1650). The creation of jobs is also seen in the rave culture that of Exodus, where a great deal of networking is needed to organize the events which are entirely volunteer based (Exodus Collective 1998, 42).

The connection between ruderal sites and electronic music is reinforced by other sources. The Exodus Collective in the UK hosts a series of free raves, typically in abandoned warehouses, quarries or open land (Exodus Collective 1998, 41). A work of fiction, the movie “Groove” offers some further explanation of the ways in which ruderal sites help activities to function (Harrison
The movie centers on the running of a rave and depicts the early stages of set up, from the illegal occupation of an abandoned warehouse, the stealing of electricity, and improvised decorations.

Looking at the bigger music scene, the indie and punk scene of 1970s and 1980s Britain were connected to the post-industrial areas of Liverpool and Manchester. The sites of the local music scene, the clubs and shows, as well as the recording and practice spaces were all held in empty industrial buildings (Strachan and Cohen 1998, 398). The run down residential buildings in the area also served as affordable housing for musicians. A similar situation occurred in Leipzig, Germany, as the vacant spaces there housed a budding punk scene (Strachan and Cohen 1998, 426). Strachan and Cohen (1998, 427) associate the rise of the punk music scene in ruderal areas with a do-it-yourself mentality that characterized the problem-solving and aesthetics of the group. The authors assert that not only does the functional affordability of run down spaces fuel to the music scene, but so does its aesthetic; the run down nature of the spaces adds to their appeal (Strachan and Cohen 1998, 428). Strachan and Cohen (1998, 429) go as far as to hypothesize that the act of partying in the ruins adds to their impact, such as the post-communism raves of Eastern Germany.

In a different sort of cultural production, in Budapest has a thriving niche of ‘ruin’ bars, otherwise known as “rom” which are operated out of decaying urban buildings (Lugosi et al. 2010). The businesses take advantage of the opportunities of vacant spaces not only in their location, but also in the unique aesthetic that they derive from the conditions of dereliction (Lugosi et al. 2010, 3081). The aesthetic, Lugosi et al. (2010, 3081-2) argue, represents an “alternative form of symbolic capital”; the bars create a means through which they can be consumed as an experience. Some venues mix the ruin aesthetic with artwork that decorates the spaces (Lugosi et al. 2010, 3088). The rom also feature overtly cultural events such as exhibitions, concerts, fashion shows, literature nights, artist work space, and one venue also had a cinema (Lugosi et al. 2010, 3087).

The rom show an “opportunistic entrepreneurialism”, which
benefits not only the owners of the bars, but also the area in general. Some bars that rent are able to bring in revenue for the owners on structures which otherwise would not generate money; other bars with little to no rent benefit local businesses by bringing people into areas with poor reputations (Lugosi et al. 2010, 3098-90).

Rom requires connections and networks in order to survive. Lugosi et al. (2010, 3093-4) provide anecdotal accounts of how different bar owners used networks of friends and contacts to solve problems such as decoration, lack of equipment, websites and architectural surveying; networks also show a characteristic entrepreneurial nature in that the participants are often paid in informal ways.

Different from the more far-flung points of the music world, or the specificity of the rom, some creative annexation happens in nodes. The Wonder Bread Factory in Columbus, Ohio, vacant for nearly a year was bought at the beginning of 2010 by a collaborative of artists with the intent of turning the 65,000 square foot building into a variety of spaces for artists and associated retail (Artists Musicians Take Over 2010). The project involves both artists and developers, one of the actors arguably more firmly associated with top-down activities (Ball 2010). Despite the influence, the project appears to be geared for users in a way that is more responsive to bottom-up trends. The space will be subdivided into areas for artist rental and will be geared toward the price range of that group (Ball 2010).

Reminiscent of the aesthetics of the rom, the Wonder Bread factory will be keeping the sign the logo, perhaps adding to its appeal (Ball 2010). It is anticipated that the project will become a part of other arts related efforts in the Columbus area (Ball 2010).

Similar to Wonderland, although operating at a larger scale, the Rote Fabrik – Red Factory – in Zurich also houses a number of creative and cultural activities. It is an old silk factory which was converted into new use for a variety of artistic and community uses (Oswalt et al. 2007, 272). It currently houses studios for over 50 artists, a free art school, theater, practice rooms, a bike shop, kindergarten, a meeting place and a sailing school (Oswalt et al. 2007, 272). The uses of
the space are diverse, but have a distinctive trend toward that of cultural production. It is interesting to note that 80 permanent jobs have been created because of the activities in the space (Oswalt et al. 2007, 272).

Groth and Corijn (2005, 507) describe a place of informal use, which is the site of former railway sheds in Helsinki known as the Makasiini. The site was abandoned in 1989, and reoccupied by two artist collectives. Subsequent unplanned development followed and the area became a popular city location known as the “living room” of Helsinki (Groth and Corijn 2005, 508). The space “allowed for certain things to happen which would not have happened anywhere else in this city”. Activities of the Makasiini involved creative, cultural production as well as a 400,000 person flea market (Groth and Corijn 2005, 510).

Oswalt et al., (2007) describe another European location, the site of RAW, or the railway improvement works. It fell vacant in 1994, and found new life through leases to “alternative cultural and social projects” (Oswalt et al. 2007, 272). The activities of the site were non-profit in nature and benefited a variety of community activities, including a childrens’ circus, forums and a planning meeting (Oswalt et al. 2007, 272).

In Amsterdam a group of artists resided and worked in a 270 hectare area which was abandoned (Buchel et al. 1998, 76-7). The low overhead was attractive as well as the opportunity for the artists to be self empowered. Artists created an association called the “IJ Industrial Buildings Guild” (Buchel et al. 1998, 77). Members were creatively focused, but included both traditional and modern avenues such as web-design. The artists were drawn to the area after having been kicked out of the city center, the abandoned buildings provided low rent and let the artists have an opportunity to live without having to find a replacement for lost

Figure 23: Rote Fabrik

Figure 24: Makasiini

Figure 25: IJ Industrial Buildings Guild
government subsidies (Buchel et al. 1998).

The association was created to deal with forces in Amsterdam who wanted to re-develop the harbor area. In dealing with overarching powers, the artists created a model of urban development which embodied the way they wanted to use the space. The model has three main principles. One: the built environment is to be largely unchanged on the outside, the interiors being shaped to the needs of the users instead. Two: the users are responsible for not only the management of the structures but also of their upkeep. Three: the structure of the development will be economic in nature, and that spaces will encourage production, consumption, and commerce in a flexible diverse way (Buchel et al. 1998, 79-80).

Through the various examples of cultural production, common themes emerge. All the activities are centered on creative enterprises, which in the end are economically productive. The activities that occur, and the products made, typically require a high input of labor and particular skill sets. The outputs may not create high wage jobs, as evidenced by the need for low overheads, but they employ people in a more sophisticated way than low-end retail or factory work. The affordable cost of living and work space lets people operate their own enterprises and create entrepreneurial hubs for which they might not otherwise have the capital to start at all. In the case of the ROM, it is certainly the case as owners cite that they often run on tight budgets.

Despite the alternative nature of how spaces are used, the end product fits into the overall structure of capitalism and development. While the individuals engaged in cultural production are often seen as being alternative to mainstream culture, their actions are no different than the majority. Artists function as entrepreneurs, creating small creative economies in colonized ruderal spaces. Artistic economies also create employment which is tailored to the people involved. Industries and economies grow around the individuals, rather than jobs growing from the industry and forcing individuals to fit the structure of a top-down determined employment. Cultural activities inherently harness diversity.

E) Conclusion

The top-down forces have been seen to represent a long history of actors pushing for regeneration to produce a certain way. In this, private and governmental actors have been motivated primarily by profit. It is not to say that the motivations are wrong – in a capitalist
society they are certainly understandable. However, the end result of top-down policies in the U.S. is that urban revitalization and control over the re-use of ruderal spaces is dominated by forces whose motives do not always represent the local population’s needs well. Current trends include downtown districts oriented only toward the middle and upper classes. Top-down development can cause a number of serious problems, displacement, loss of history, cultural homogenization, inequality, and financialization are all a part of these.

Bottom-up uses provide many different choices of employment. They are just as motivated by survival and capital as the top-down, but bottom-up actors work with different resources. The ruderal space itself creates opportunities that would not happen without the physical space to occur within. By using ruderal spaces, the city can leverage its inherent resources to improve its, housing, jobs, recreation and even new industries which can come about because of the use of ruderal space. It happens without tearing down the area: ruderal spaces are fixed, maintained or shifted, but not wiped out wholesale. History has a chance to evolve without being removed from a site.

Bottom-up actions take skill rather than capital. A surplus of labor and skill is more likely to be found in current times of post-industrial recession. The use and further development of skills will enrich the city and add to the strength of its labor pool. Ruderal activities are shaped to the skills, needs and desires of individuals who creates jobs and industries that are themselves more heterogeneous and unique to an area. Ruderal use answers fears of a homogeneous landscape with a diversity of use. Ruderal uses have strong tendencies to create opportunities for empowerment and the enhancement of social capital, as people use their skills to the best advantage. Ruderal spaces harbor moments of charity and social activism, phenomena too infrequently seen in top-down development.

The benefits of ruderal use include both these results and others, patterns such as the agglomerations of certain types of use, the creativity and social networking, all are benefits that can aid the greater region. The inherent knowledge of site users can help places become important nodes of creativity and generative forces.

Bottom-up use is not an answer to all of the issues of top-down development, and has its own problems: lack of legitimacy, and associations with negative mentalities. This suggests that if
cities were to embrace both types of development, there would be fewer issues and more growth than otherwise. Just as ruderal spaces are diverse and complicated, the solutions for how and when to use them should be just as individual. A more nuanced approach to site uses can avoid many of the problems of top-down tabula rasa. In the next chapter a detailed consideration of why ruderal sites function as they do as well as a structure for how to best harness the bottom-up energies and integrate them into the current operations of cities is presented.
Chapter 4: A New Framework

A) Introduction

As discussed in chapter 3 careful look at top-down and bottom-up actions on ruderal sites reveals patterns and issues. Top-down forces create problems when they make monocultures of development; such as wiping out history and context on sites. Homogenization of culture alienates a large portion of the population and perpetuates difference, or exclusion. Displacement and financialization, two symptoms of gentrification, further reinforce difference and eliminate diversity and potential from urban sites. In contrast bottom-up use is poised to negate problems; it is more sensitive to the details of place, such as historical structures and marginalized populations. Bottom up use represents a population that is self-selected, not preselected. Bottom-up actors choose their involvement individually; they are not chosen from a pool of workers by a top-down actor. Despite their benefits ruderal uses have not been used as a planning tool because of a lack of formal understanding of these bottom-up actions. To fully understand how to wield ruderal use for the benefit of a city, in this chapter ruderal opportunities are put into an overall framework.

A handful of authors have discussed a framework for bottom-up development while a useful starting point these discussions need expansion. Many sources support the thinking presented in this chapter’s amalgamated framework, but the sources have not been well linked to ruderal use specifically. In connecting details of existing but unrelated scholarship a picture emerges: locational and spatial generators of bottom-up use reveal the conditions that need to be preserved to harness ruderal space’s generative force. The ways in which bottom-up use unfolds create unique networks and resources which can be beneficial to the region; support for ruderal use as a bolster for the regional economy exists in local growth, capital expenditures, and labor opportunities. The nature of ruderal use enables it to fix problems that created the site, potentially
healing urban places if properly used.

B) Framework

Few authors have looked at bottom up forces and drawn the conclusion that they are worthwhile for the economy. The few who have written on the subject recognize patterns that are now familiar, such as the tendency for bottom-up use to colonize ruderal spaces, and the potentials for those uses to be beneficial for the city. Some authors are more thorough than others. Lacing together the works of the more comprehensive authors, and a few other sources, a comprehensive picture begins to take shape.

Ruderal use constitutes a wide variety of actions that arise from urban spaces for reasons of place and space - both forces inside and outside of the location. The bottom-up uses are in turn beneficial to the areas that generated them, but are often marginalized because authorities are not aware of their value, and instead associate them with subversion, which is common to informal situations.

Saskia Sassen (2009) connects the top-down and bottom-up forces in an analysis of current, urban, land-use patterns. Sassen (2009, 59) first describes the “the high-income professional class and high-profit corporate service firms” as a subset of top-down forces. There has been growth in corporate service firms recently, which she attributes to a increasing demand for corporate services. The corporate service industry accommodates the needs of complex, globally operating corporations (Sassen 2009, 56). She does not cite why the trend has become so strong recently, but that factor can be explained by the work of Scott (2004). The increased demand for business services is a part of new patterns of flexible accumulation systems, which are a part of both product and services oriented firms (Scott 2004, 129). A drive for increased profit through reducing internal costs helped motivate firms to subcontract out supply chains and earlier stages of production. The growth of corporate service firms is another manifestation of this trend.

When service firms look for an office location, it affects demand for urban spaces. Cities, Sassen (2009, 56) notes, accrue savings through agglomeration. The phenomenon is the clustering of businesses within the same industry. Efficiency through agglomeration is not news; the work of Scott and Storper (2003) confirms the trend.

Agglomerations are the source of growth throughout many areas of the world, a trend which
is growing, rather than diminishing with time and globalization (Scott and Storper 2003, 581). Firms that provide corporate services take advantage of a rich environment of labor and formal and informal information present in cities. The environment is necessary to create speed and efficacy the businesses need to survive (Sassen 2009, 56).

After finding a location convenient for the agglomeration, the corporate service industry creates demand for “state-of-the-art office buildings” as well as residences and services needed for workers (Sassen 2009, 59). Corporate growth feeds the pattern of Gospodini’s (2006) epicenters. Her “entrepreneurial epicenters” are the locations for corporate service businesses’ offices (Gospodini 2006). Other areas, “high-culture”, “popular leisure”, and waterfront epicenters provide spaces to live and play for the people who work in the corporate service industry (Gospodini 2006). The top-down portion of Sassen’s trends explains why renewed interest has been seen in the ruderal spaces of the city. The growth of corporate service firms is a significant change in the means of production, which has created a spatial demand well served by amenities of the central city. While the trend has provided an important source of revenue for cities, it has also put the top-down forces into direct conflict with bottom-up ones over the availability of ruderal space because both need the access to labor and information present in cities (Sassen 2009, 59).

Sassen (2009) explains the second half of the puzzle as another urban pattern forming. The second half is the growth of “urban manufacturing” (Sassen 2009, 65). Urban manufacturing requires a heavy connection to an industry network (Sassen 2009, 65). That need put the activity within cities the same way as the corporate service industry. Other features of urban manufacturing are customized work and close proximity to customers (Sassen 2009, 65). Urban manufacturing is also seen as a flipping of the traditional the service-manufacturing relationship (Sassen 2009, 65). Instead of services being tailored to the needs of a manufacturer, manufacturing is tailored to the service industry. Sassen (2009, 66) gives urban manufacturing examples such as jewelry and furniture design, architecture, theater set construction, and custom building work like cabinetry. Sassen’s activities are familiar from the categories of ruderal uses, and would easily overlap cultural production. The cited examples also are requiring a skill and labor intensity familiar to that category and others. Urban manufacturing not only shares
characteristics with the various bottom-up uses, but is, in fact, a part of the same trend; ruderal space attracts small entities because of costs, networking, aesthetics, and other place based factors. Sassen’s argument needs to expand from the concept of urban manufacturing to a more inclusive set of activities. Urban manufacturing is a subset of the bottom-up uses found in ruderal space. Urban manufacturing is perhaps better understood through an example such as the Agile Web, in North-Eastern Pennsylvania: a network of small specialized industrial fabricators (Greis and Kasarda 1997, 59).

Rudolph Kohoutek and Christa Kamleithner (2006) have described the issue of bottom-up use. They approach the topic through a focus on temporary uses. They explain use, and conclude that it is, “not a quality that is inscribed in things, buildings or spaces but rather a social relationship in the triangle of property, possession and right of use” (Kohoutek and Kamleithner 2006, 26). Kohoutek and Kamleithner (2006, 27) argue that over time use has become less connected to specific places, but deterritorialization has not lessened the conflict over who gets to use space. In fact, more types of uses exist than current legislation allows for. The breadth and depth of uses have grown past what private markets can accommodate (Kohoutek and Kamleithner 2006, 30). Kohoutek and Kamleithner (2006, 30) say that because uses are more plentiful than available space, and official status is lagging behind current patterns of use, most spaces tolerate alternative activities only as “temporary use”. Temporary uses typically occupy structures that are otherwise vacant (Kohoutek and Kamleithner 2006, 30-1). The authors arrive at the now familiar conclusion that vacant, or ruderal, spaces are often occupied by informal uses. Kohoutek and Kamleithner (2006, 31) also say that users are apt to take advantage of “gaps and niches”.

Ruderal spaces serve to give informal and bottom-up industries a location to operate. Without that space, low end economic activities would have nowhere to go. Similar to top-down activities, urban manufacturing and ruderal activities depend on having a complex network and support system found in cities (Sassen 2009, 66). Where advanced corporate services are more dynamic, so is urban manufacturing (Sassen 2009, 66). Sassen (2009, 66) argues that the two are in fact connected; the growth of one part of the economy aids the other. The assertion is not surprising. Analysis of the informal economies of the Emilia-Romagna in Italy found that the growth of informal economic activities cannot be studied or understood as an independent entity.
The informal and formal economies are a part of a single economy, in which all activities intersect. The growth of the informal was due in part to the successes of the formal economy, and eventually the informal grew into industries that operated formally. The labor for one was never separate from the other, and the interplay of both systems cannot be viewed without the other.

Because both industries need urban space, and their growth and development are linked, the forces come into conflict with each other over the space they need to operate. Urban manufacturing requires marginal spaces to escape corporate pressures and allow for the creativity that is at the heart of the activity (Sassen 2009, 67). Not only does urban manufacturing require the city, the city has need of it. Sassen (2009, 67) argues for the importance of creative labor in the economy, citing examples from New York City as being an important example of what the informal creative activities can become. In addition she brings up the aforementioned importance of informal economies and their role in the overall economy. Sassen (2009, 67) says that informal work often helps people achieve better jobs. She concludes that the policy of cities should be reshaped to accommodate the need for urban manufacturing within its land uses (Sassen 2009, 69). Contrary to what seems logical, Sassen (2009, 69) finds that the policies of urban areas have been supportive of large, standardized, manufacturing businesses, which do not need an urban location. The policy for many places is to offer subsidies to large employers, often in the form of tax cuts, to encourage them to locate in a particular area. The reason why this is necessary is that these businesses do not operate most efficiently within the city and typically locate themselves in areas further from the urban core. Policies such as this are counterproductive because not only do they defer economic benefits for a city, the businesses wooed do not typically provide high-wage jobs, and have little incentive to stay in the long-run.

In a discussion of how to apply this knowledge, Kohoutek and Kamleithner (2006, 31) recommend informal use as an innovative way for cities to stay “locationally competitive”. Kohoutek and Kamleithner (2006, 32) see that instead of waiting and re-regulating the city while it sits vacant, another choice would be to keep it de-regulated and capitalize on temporary uses to effectively use the city. The authors (Kohoutek and Kamleithner 2006, 36) discuss various barriers to planning, trying to consider how a “positive concept of urbanity” can be created from
temporary use phenomena. Kohoutek and Kamleithner (2006) conclude that it is a possible way to deal with the failures of planning but do not offer suggestions as to how it might occur. The article offers a more theoretical take on the same phenomenon that has been described through Sassen. It is a good introduction to the concept, but it does not offer any more details of value for the framework, and except for mentioning a need for planning it does not enumerate details of how to enact it.

In a rare case of applying theory, in 2001-2003, a group called Urban Catalyst acted on the hypotheses that, “spontaneous, temporary uses can have positive long term effects” and “unplanned phenomenon of temporary uses can be successfully incorporated into the planning and management of cities” (Oswalt et al. 2007, 273). In case studies, which followed, Urban Catalyst found support for its hypotheses (Oswalt et al. 2007, 273). Temporary use created opportunities for new forms of “art, music, pop culture, economic development, technological invention and startup businesses” (Oswalt et al. 2007, 273). In conclusion, the group stated that in order for places to function turning, temporary use to an advantage, the government would have to intervene and change the way that existing real estate law works (Oswalt et al. 2007, 287). Unfortunately while a few authors mention Urban Catalyst’s work, it has not produced a volume of data that is readily accessible.

The framework for how bottom-up ruderal uses function is complex. Bottom-up use draws on many aspects of ruderal space: low overhead, proximity to labor, connection to “buzz” settings and knowledge creation, aesthetics and reputation. The nature of bottom-up uses and their dependence on the city requires an urban location. But ruderal use is concurrently evolving with top-down forces which are in conflict through their demand for the same sites. The two forces are linked, the economic gain of one sector influences the other. Both bottom-up and top-down have a role to play in the economy, but the bottom-up forces are likely to be marginalized. The loss of space for bottom-up use to function will be detrimental to the overall economy if an intervention is not made.

The combination of the previous authors provides a rough framework but the details are not thoroughly explored. To develop a finer grained understanding of how the framework functions and is linked to the phenomenon of ruderal use in a comprehensive way, the following issues are
critical.

C) Place as a site for growth

Ruderal spaces are critical for the growth of informal activity. Phenomena occur in ruderal sites for specific reasons. Some reasons have been mentioned in the discussion of bottom-up examples, such as the low cost of overhead. Other reasons are less obvious, such as the potential for knowledge creation that occurs in the communities which inhabit ruderal spaces. A more careful examination reveals the necessity of informal places, and sheds light on qualities of ruderal places that need to be preserved.

1) Entrepreneurial Factors

Bottom-up economic uses have the property of being entrepreneurial. The manufacturing and culturally productive uses of ruderal space are an attempt to create a source of income. The rom, which use space directly to generate profit and the artist who occupies a low rent space to produce are part of the same pattern (Lugosi et al. 2010). People creating residences from ruins are also in essence, entrepreneurs, circumventing rent and mortgage by means of labor. Occupiers produce and consume a residence with the sole customer being themselves. The benefit of looking at uses through the lens of entrepreneurial activity, is that it is a well-studied category of economic behavior. A variety of identified factors influence entrepreneurial activity and can be applied to ruderal space.

Structural opportunities and barriers exist for any entrepreneur, and include factors such as market access, capital and entrepreneurial skills (Hackler and Mayer 2008, 282). Market access is the ability of a business to reach its market of consumers; it may be a social or cultural constraint, but it can be physical as well. The inability to find affordable space can be crippling for businesses that require overhead. Nodes of bottom-up development often cater to businesses that operate on limited budgets. Nodes can be seen in Wonderland (Artists Musicians Take Over 2010), Rote Fabrik (Oswalt et al. 2007), the Makasiini (Groth and Corijn 2005), and RAW (Oswalt et al. 2007). Wonderland in Columbus has the understanding that artists need resources, but cannot afford high rents, and has specifically chosen to operate as a non-profit to keep costs down (Oliphint 2011). Wonderland’s stated mission is, “To provide the creative community with the facilities, resources and education needed to become more efficient, productive and
economically sustainable.” (Wonderland 2010). The structure of spaces as a collection of smaller enterprises makes it more likely for customers to find the place and adds to the efficiency of doing business there.

Starting and operating capital is a struggling point for many entrepreneurial businesses. It is a standard business axiom that, “Cash is king”. Without the ability to pay regular bills a business will cease to function immediately regardless of size, age, or demand for its products. Conversely, any factor that helps alleviate financial demand on a business will aid its survival. Ruderal space helps stretch capital through the discounted cost of operations. The price of overhead is low, which is often enough to encourage users to overcome other obstacles of a site. A study on creative enterprises found that reduced cost in a locality was important to workers (Drake 2003, 517). Anecdotal evidence from Crewe et al. (2003), who interviewed a number of “retro retailers” a subset of creative and cultural fields supports it as well. Shopkeepers were better able to start up and take risks because of the low costs of the post-industrial area they operated in (Crewe et al. 2003, 85). A study of re-inhabited vacant industrial spaces (Ball 2002, 98), in Stoke-on-Trent, UK, found most reoccupation was done by “small, vulnerable and uncertain businesses operating in cheap workspaces”. Examples in all four categories of housing, recreation, cultural production and agriculture have taken advantage of low-cost conditions.

Entrepreneurial skills are not a factor which a site directly influences. However, entrepreneurial skills can be affected indirectly, by the way that space physically connects a network of people. When a node or agglomeration of similar activities exists, information will pass more easily through the group. The phenomenon is discussed more thoroughly in D: Place, Space and Networks, so is only briefly mentioned here.

2) Aesthetics, Creativity, Credibility

Places have inherent, less tangible qualities, which help encourage ruderal use. Aesthetics, atmosphere, and history all can play into a connection between use and place. Drake (2003, 513) writes that places are “subjective, imagined and emotional phenomenon as well as objective and ‘real’ entities” in his examination of creative fields and place. The aesthetics of ruderal landscapes can serve to inspire the creative activities within them. In Drake’s (2003) study on the
creative impact of localities, he found that post-industrial areas in the UK had various effects on workers in digital and fabricating industries. Specifically one way he identified them having an effect was as “a resource of visual raw materials and stimuli” (Drake 2003, 518). Edensor (2007, 245-7) writes extensively about the aesthetics of ruins, he argues that the disorder they contain is a part of its aesthetic and adds to its textures, colors and richness as well as its psychological appeal.

More specifically, in reference to music, Diederichsen (2006, 324) draws the connection between place and creativity. He hypothesizes a connection between abandoned industrial wastelands and a “romanticization” of the city (Diederichsen 2006, 324). The site is connected to a concept of a “lived-life” and while well-grounded in the past, still remains open in how it can be envisioned and conceptualized (Diederichsen 2006, 324). Diederichsen (2006) describes a connection to place that motivates the creation of music. Furthermore, culture and creativity are a part of the way in which place becomes commodified (Diederichsen 2006, 328). He says that, “nothing occupies, tortures, and motivates capital more than the priceless, the invaluable” describing the desire money-makers have for ephemeral qualities that can be marketed (Diederichsen 2006, 328). He ascribes a “concrete pricelessness” to the “artistic and mental raw materials of abandoned or neglected neighborhoods” (Diederichsen 2006, 328). Commodification is the same concept behind the rom in Budapest (Lugosi et al. 2010). The aesthetics of the ruined neighborhoods have been commodified into the ambiance of a bar where patrons consume not only the food, drink, and entertainment, but also the milieu.

A way that location was found to be important to cultural activity is in the reputation and tradition of the area (Drake 2003, 518). He had respondents who used the reputation of the areas as a source of quality goods, to bolster the reputation of the products they were making. Businesses used this tactic (Drake 2003, 520) even when the products and enterprises were not directly related. Diederichsen makes a connection to the importance of history of the site.

An urban space that speaks of history, that shows traces of history, will at the same time naturally suggest that important historical events will take place in it again at some point. People like to live their lives in a framework that places these lives within a larger community.
The history of the site becomes valuable for bottom-up activities, in contrast with top-down development’s wholesale removal of history.

Shifting scale, reputations and milieu connect to larger systems. Gibson (2003, 206) writes that various music scenes in North America and Europe are both generated by and affected by properties of the area, such as physical, social, and economic conditions. Activities such as music are inherently tied to place, and will likely never operate independently from them. The millieu that generates a creative activity is particular to space and place. The ultimate benefit in bottom-up activities is in how products and services flavor the areas that created them. The regional connection between cultural products such as music, and place are used a marketing tool, and a source of pride in places like Austin, Texas, and Nashville, Tennessee. The connection of music to place can lead to increased credibility for performers when they travel (Gibson 2003, 210) (Fraser and Ettlinger 2008, 1654). Scott (2006) writes that about the importance of place within creative industries.

An additional ingredient in this rich creative mix of production networks and local labor markets is place itself, not only as a collection of industrial capabilities and skills, but also as a stockpile of traditions, memories and images that function as sources of inspiration for designers and crafts-workers, and that help to stamp final products with a unique aura.

(Scott 2006, 13).

Place is important to culture and culture is important to place, reminding us of Lefebvre’s (1991, 37) concept of spatial practice; space is both a product and a process.

Place carries with it qualities that attract bottom-up use. A person’s response to a place can affect the outputs they create there. Inspiration can be drawn from the unique visuals of ruderal spaces. The ruinous aesthetic also serves to create a commodity that cannot be produced from scratch, although it can be consumed. The history of places can also be harnessed to give a sense of credibility products of the place, which can help users to shape their products or reputations. The inexpensive nature of ruderal sites is attractive to enterprises. Eliminating or reducing costs

(Diederichsen 2006, 329).
for risky start-ups increases the likelihood that businesses will survive. Having a physical space also creates a physical connection to markets that is often needed by many places. The aesthetics, history and reputation of a place, are important to the formation of ruderal use. Cleaning up ruderal sites, or increasing the cost of use will stifle many uses and inhibit the efficacy of using place as an incubator.

D) Place, Space, and Networks

Spaces occupied by bottom-up functions will often contain or connect to a burgeoning network of individuals. The phenomenon is another reason why Sassen (2009) explains that urban manufacturing needs cities to survive. Networking seen in the Drum and Bass industry (Fraser and Ettlinger, 2008), the rom of Budapest (Lugosi et al. 2010), or the current social media awareness that Wonderland uses, are good examples. Drake (2003, 521) identified that locality has a role in bringing together creative workers and positively impacting the outputs of workers in an area. The effect is even seen in the internet communities of urban explorers (Urban Explorers Network 2010), (Urban Exploration Resource 2010) as they share knowledge about sites, safety, legal issues, and personal stories. Networks, either born on a site, or arising because of one, become important to the activities in question as well as the larger region. Local networks become resources, which cities would be wise to take advantage of and market to. Networking, knowledge creation, and knowledge transfer are topics that have been well researched; the details of how knowledge processes work belies their importance.

1) Knowledge Transfer and Buzz

Storper and Venables (2004) have written about the transfer of knowledge, and speak of its importance. They explain face-to-face communication is more efficient than other means; it carries the benefit of being able to transmit explicit as well as tacit knowledge (Storper and Venables 2004, 253-4). Explicit, or codifiable, information consist of things which can be written down. Tacit information are things which cannot be written, but may be transmitted by minutia of behavior, or are implied by context and other non-spoken means. Explicit information, Storper and Venables (2004) explain, can be transmitted remotely, but the latter cannot. In addition, face-to-face contact carries other benefits such as allowing people to judge information for truth or legitimacy, evaluate the person they are interacting with, and build trust (Storper and Venables
Storper and Venables (2004, 354) say that, through contact, people will interact as a sort of performance and get a “rush” from the interaction. In part because of the benefits described, face-to-face contact will sometimes create a “buzz”. The phenomenon is a collective atmosphere of knowledge transfer and socialization that happens within an in-group of individuals (Storper and Venables 2004, 365). Buzz is important for industries where information is complicated and rapidly changing, or high in the importance of tacit knowledge. Buzz conditions are applicable to industries such as “culture, politics, arts, academia, new technologies, and advanced finance”, neatly overlapping the activities found in ruderal space (Storper and Venables 2004, 366).

Face-to-face interaction and buzz are seen in ruderal space. The structure of the Drum and Bass industry in the UK revolves around moments of face-to-face contact, where the “dub plates” that contain the music are circulated, DJs can listen to each other, and get the feedback of the crowd (Fraser and Ettlinger 2008, 1649). Crewe et al.’s (2003) interviews about retro shops revealed a community of like-minded people who would often socialize, trade ideas, and information. Interviews also revealed that the crowd was connected by friendship, playing into the trust and socialization aspects of buzz (Crewe et al. 2003, 82-3). Furthermore the retro shop trade relies on a knowledge that cannot be learned or taught, such as when fashion trends are about to take off, or other “aesthetic and stylistic shifts” (Crewe et al. 2003, 90-1). Places such as Rote Fabrik with over 200 artists in residence likely take advantage of a resulting buzz (Oswalt et al. 2007, 272). Drake (2003) also confirmed a connection between location and the milieu. In his study of areas in the UK, the intensity of social and cultural activity was a source of creativity for some artists (Drake 2003, 519). One interviewee was quoted as liking the “buzz” of the area and finding that she was able to stay on top of current trends and retain a competitive edge because of it (Drake 2003, 519).

Buzz helps people involved to be more efficient, creative and innovative. If ruderal sites can be used to generate an industry buzz, a city can benefit from the condition. Information will spread because of the nature of face-to-face contact, but remain connected to that area. The info remains in place, and plays a role in the creation of industrial “agglomerations” is explained by Scott and Storper (2003).

2) Industrial Agglomerations
Scott and Storper (2003) call attention to the continuing and growing trend for urban regions to attract “agglomerations” of industrial activity. Sectors that have seen particularly strong forces of agglomeration are “small scale indigenous manufacturing, craft-based industries and a wide array of services”, making the topic of particular relevance to rurally located activities (Scott and Storper 2003, 584). Agglomeration is more prevalent, rather than less, during the current condition of globalization (Scott and Storper 2003, 581). The phenomenon is due to factors that constitute a “friction of distance”, that consists of conditions whose costs cannot be made to decline (Scott and Storper 2003, 582). Distance related conditions are the presence of infrastructure, “inter-linkages” of firms in an industry, dense local labor markets, and “localized relational assets promoting learning and innovation” (Scott and Storper 2003, 582). All the listed conditions exist in cities, which is why agglomerations are not found in other areas (Scott and Storper 2003, 582).

Infrastructure is a straightforward consideration, it is far easier to use existing infrastructure for production than to put in entirely new systems. Inter-firm linkages are more nebulously named but relatively straightforward. Costs due to distance have decreased, but there remains a need for firms to have relatively short distances between firms in an industry, for reasons of tacit knowledge transfer, and overall efficiency (Scott and Storper 2003, 582). The connection between labor pool and industry feeds back between the two (Scott and Storper 2003, 583). Industries prefer to locate where labor exists. Labor often prefers to locate where work exists. Over time the labor pool increases cutting down on costs and risk for both parties. The relational assets of learning and innovation as Scott and Storper describe them are as described above.

The pattern of agglomeration creates benefits for cities. As Scott and Storper (2003) note, the labor pool is attractive to businesses who are looking to locate somewhere appropriate for them. Once a type of industry exists a region can begin to market itself to the industry, growing the economy even further (Scott and Storper 2003, 584). Over time the industry will become more geographically focused, only shifting when major changes in technology occur. An industry starting up today is likely to remain and provide a regional benefit (Scott and Storper 2003). The discussion of agglomeration discusses knowledge transfer, but just begins to touch on innovation. As Scott (2006, 3) himself says with regard to “multifaceted labor markets” and “dense networks
of firms”, “these are the settings within which entrepreneurial and innovative energies flourish par
excellence in the new economy”.

3) Knowledge Production.

A connection exists between the industries of ruderal space and creativity and culture. Creative and cultural uses exhibit a tendency of relying on creativity in their problem solving, whether it is in the do-it-yourself attitudes of music industries (Strachan and Cohen 2006), or in houseboats (Smith 2007). A connection also exists between innovation and entrepreneurial activity in bottom-up uses. Glaeser et al. (2010, 2) divide the “facets of entrepreneurship” into five categories, the fifth of which is innovation. The authors also mention that the hypothesis that entrepreneurial ideas can be transmitted in an area and the flow of information will enhance the zeitgeist of business creation. The concept is well liked by other authors (Glaeser et al. 2010, 4). Allen Scott (2006, 3) supports the hypothesis in his argument that the creative field is defined by activities that result in “diverse entrepreneurial and innovative outcomes”.

Nonaka and Toyama (2005, 421) have tackled the field of firm based knowledge production, although the theory is general enough to be easily applied to a place or industry. They hold that knowledge is subjective rather than objective and absolute. Participants in the knowledge-creating process share a common socialization or context, as well as objectives as for what they are trying to accomplish (Nonaka and Toyama 2005, 423-4). Socialization references an overall vision that defines and redefines the activities of the group (Nonaka and Toyama 2005, 423). It is within these conditions that they describe the existence of “ba”, which approximately means place in Japanese(Nonaka and Toyama 2005, 427). Ba is a placeless place, where the shared interactions, purpose and context is translated into the creation and use of knowledge (Nonaka and Toyama 2005, 428). They attribute ba as being able to occur at different times and places, and with a sort of motion. It is likely that the qualities of ruderal space in bringing together like-minded individuals, create the shared goals and mindset necessary for knowledge production to arise.

When place can be used to connect individuals, firms, or other groups through a face-to-face network benefits can be reaped. Face-to-face networks both allow for the efficient transfer of knowledge, but also its creation. At a small scale, sites can foster innovative and creative
thought. At a large scale, ruderal spaces can even foster industries. Once a network has been
generated or tapped into, industries like to stay in a place, giving a region a unique economic
benefit.

E) Spatial Benefits: Growing the Local Economy

It is logical that a locality will benefit from the growth of economies through ruderal space,
but the argument needs to be assured rather than assumed. Previous arguments point out that
development of the labor pool and networks within an industry will aid the regional economy.
Other ways to understand benefits for the area exist. An issue to consider is how industries
contribute to local development by means of their effect on the consumption base.

Markusen and Schrock (2009) examine how spending patterns of different industries affect the
local economic base. Their focus is on the consumption, rather than export patterns. They argue
that consumption rather than exportation is an important way to measure economic growth for
several reasons.

First, local demand for products and services can create growth without seeing an increase in
exported items (Markusen and Schrock 2009, 345). The idea includes the concept of “import
substitution”, if services or products are offered in an area, where they previously did not exist,
residents will be more likely to spend their money locally (Markusen and Schrock 2009, 348).
Markusen and Schrock (2009) argue that even if the new consumption activity is not exactly
the same as the import it is replacing, it will still cause consumers to change their behavior.
Supporting their point, Markusen and Schrock (2009) cite an example in rural Minnesota. An
individual who started an artist’s retreat in an abandoned farm house expanded his operations
to the local community, and grew the art center into a local and tourist “hub” (Markusen and
Schrock 2009, 349). The hub hosted multiple gallery shows, live performances, forums, and
visiting artists, serving to create an art community away from an urban center (Markusen and
Schrock 2009, 349). It caused the population to double in size, 17 new businesses to open, and
increase employment by 40%. Without the center of activity, none of the growth would have
happened (Markusen and Schrock 2009, 349). The growth was due to activities not previously
offered in the area before. The phenomenon explains how ruderal activities such as recreation
can begin to help the local economy.
If an activity can be changed from happening outside the city to occurring within it, spending will be directed to in that activity or in secondary expenditures around the area. In the case of recreational activities, they lack site fees, because areas are often used illegally, secondary spending such as food or travel expenses will still occur locally. The opportunity for an entrepreneur still exists to capitalize on the culture and popularity of recreational activities and turn them into a part of the formal economy.

Second, the reason Markusen and Schrock (2009) give is that specific sectors, or industries, spend more money locally. Industries that are more labor intensive pay workers more, and the money will be spent back into the local economy. Markusen and Schrock (2009, 351) argue that it does not make sense for governments to create incentives and subsidies for large scale activities such as multinationals, because the money spent on supplies will be to outside the community, and profits will be paid out outside as well. For example Markusen and Schrock (2009, 350) contrasts big-box retail with health care. In large scale retail, the majority of the money goes into paying for stock, or into the pockets of owners who may not even live locally. In the labor intensive health care industry, more of the money is paid to workers who live in the community. Furthermore, in the case of big-box stores, money spent outside the community weakens the tax base; low incomes of workers result in underpaid employees imposing a bigger burden on social systems, such as food stamps and earned income tax credit (Markusen and Schrock 2009, 351). Localization aligns with Sassen’s point (2009, 68) that cities benefit from a well off middle class. More of the middle class’s income will be re-spent within the city. Labor intensity of activity is key in determining if the activity will feed back into the local economy. In the case of ruderal uses, a majority display intensity of labor. Local ownership is important, and all ruderal uses come from the bottom-up paradigm, which is by its nature local.

Third, innovations and pioneer activities, or entrepreneurship, can grow to a point that they become an exporters (Markusen and Schrock 2009, 345). Locally focused businesses will often grow to having export markets later in their development. Markusen and Schrock (2009, 352) use the example of a brewing company. It services only local establishments at first. Later consistent local market enables the company to break into national markets.

Last, Markusen and Schrock (2009, 345) discuss how the quality of “consumption based
offerings” can attract and human capital to the area. It is the same argument that fuels the top-down development seen by Gospodini (2006). Amenities are used as a draw for cities to attract recent graduates and talented employees (Markusen and Schrock 2009, 352-3).

In local economies, ruderal use will strengthen the area in many different ways. The creation of services and products in the area create ways for locals to spend money in the area. Ruderal activities are often accessible to lower incomes, but instead of seeing accessibility as a weakness, it should be viewed as a way to equalize earning potential. Ruderal use is labor intensive and locally owned, two properties associated with owners and workers investing capital in the area. Top-down uses generate more gross capital flow, but do not capture as much for the region. Activities that begin at a small scale have been seen to grow over time, becoming larger and drawing money in from outside the area. All of the benefits explain why authors like Markusen and Schrock (2009, 346) maintain that it would behoove cities to spend more time and resources trying to attract consumptive activities that are likely to “capture the local dollar”. Specifically Markusen and Schrock (2009, 363) suggest that cities support distinctive consumption-base industries, that have a “distinctive lifestyles and ethnic” focuses. Focuses include “arts, culture, sports, recreation, and entertainment” as well as age determined services for the very old and young (Markusen and Schrock 2009, 363). The advice is reminiscent of Sassen’s exhortation (2009, 69) that cities should try to retain businesses that need to operate in cities, such as urban manufacturing, instead of large standardized production, which does not need an urban location.

With careful nurturing of appropriate industries, ruderal use can be used to fuel local growth. Small creative, high-skill, locally owned industries will then return capital nearby, financially empower their workers, provide services and products that are seeds for growth, and blossom into exports that bring more money into the area. The uses of ruderal space are poised to help, because of the inherent characteristics of the industries and activities that occur within the spaces. F) Spatial Benefits: Informal Labor

A certain amount of the labor done in ruderal spaces will to be informal in nature. Informal labor may not benefit the economy at first, because of the lack of taxation, but it has the potential to grow into formal labor. It is a stepping stone for people who lack other options, and a part of the complete economy.
The informal work in the Third Italy (Capecchi 1989) grew from informal labor into a specialized economy of its own during the last century. Informal home-based industries started in farming households that had extra labor. Developing industries operated informally for a time, but later became a prominent feature of the economy of the area. According to Capecchi (1989, 214), home based industries should not be seen as separate from the economy, but rather that both informal and “official” activities constitute aspects of a single economy.

The Drum and Bass industry of Britain helped individuals in a couple of ways (Fraser and Ettlinger 2008, 1650). Insiders were able to keep a hold of companies they had created; D+B provided an alternative to “wage labor” (Fraser and Ettlinger 2008, 1650). Strachan and Cohen (2006, 427) confirm the power of the music industry to convey the message that “anyone could be involved in cultural production”. The industry mentality is open to anyone self-motivated. The idea is seen in cultural production retail, as it allows for people to construct their own employment opportunities, letting them deal with the strengths and weaknesses of the situation on their own (Crewe et al. 2003, 79). The work is seen as more rewarding and able to be controlled better by the workers (Crewe et al. 2003, 79).

Informal labor is a bridge between conditions of need and plenty. People who have limited resources find a freedom in informal economies, which cannot be found elsewhere. The informality may alleviate pressures of finance, or of social norms. As has been seen in several examples: Drum and Bass (Fraser and Ettlinger 2008), Shorham-on-Sea (Smith 2007), Haz Manor (Exodus Collective 1998), participants in informal activities often have skills, but do not fit the shape of jobs that society provides. Informal labor tends to be shaped to the individual as it grows into new economies. Rather than outlaw informal actions, they should be allowed and developed into formal, strong, taxable industries. It is unlikely that any successful, legal business will stay unofficial for long. Legitimacy has too many advantages to ignore, both financial and social.

G) Place benefits: Inhabitation

Ruderal spaces are associated with a number of negative mentalities and issues, concerning vacancy, dereliction, blight and safety. One benefit that bottom-up use gives ruderal spaces is the ability to inherently combat vacancy problems. Bottom-up use gets people into a space quickly
and cheaply, which provides inhabitation in areas that would otherwise languish for care and occupation. The occupation of properties has important benefits for both safety and condition of the structures.

Inhabitation can stabilize or improve building quality. In the examples of Exodus’s farm reuse, and Haz Manor, even though re-users had few resources were able to fix up structures (Klaus et al. 1998). The houseboats of Shoreham, are continually maintained by their owners (Smith 2007). The Rom, Lugosi et al. (2010) describes, are characterized by art, alterations and fixed up premises. Ball’s data (2002) suggests that persistently vacant buildings are more likely to be in poor condition than reoccupied ones. Only 1% of reoccupied buildings studied were in poor condition as opposed to 26% of persistently vacant ones (Ball 2002, 99). Inhabitation and repair can lead to another benefit. Inhabited ruderal spaces can preserve the perceived value. Bowman and Pagano (2004, 100) write that as spaces becomes uninhabited and neglected, they “bring down” the rest of the area and become the target of demolition. Targeting is seen in the dialogs and treatment of the Columbus Coated Fabrics site. The problems of vacancy “obscure” the architectural value of a place (Bowman and Pagano 2004). When an area stays inhabited, it has a better chance to survive. Ball (2002) has the same opinion after having studied vacant buildings in the UK. An important re-use benefit is the ability to retain the style and character of the buildings (Ball 2002, 104). Bullen and Love (2010, 216) have seen the effect in Australia where conserving “heritage” buildings is accepted as “providing economic, cultural and social benefits”.

Returning to a bastion of urban planning, Jane Jacobs (1961, 44) writes, occupation increases the safety of an area. She says that, “A well-used city street is apt to be a safe street. A deserted city street is apt to be unsafe.” (Jacobs 1961, 45). She attributes safety to three qualities, two of which refer to inhabitation. The cityscape must both have “eyes on the street” of residents, as well as users on the sidewalk, to increase the number of eyes as well as providing a reason for residents to watch things (Jacobs 1961, 45). The safest areas will be ones that are open to people, not ones chained up and fenced off. No ruderal area will survive isolation long. Every site with a chain link fence has an entrance carefully stretched or dug into it. Walls can be climbed, or sewers navigated safely to gain entrance. It is only when people are allowed into sites, and develop an attachment to the area, that ruderal sites will become safe. Until then, ruderal sites
will continue to be the boogeymen of the urban landscape, continuing the mentality of danger and blight through actual or perceived terrors.

Inhabitation is key to stabilizing the fabric of the city so that it stops unraveling. Use and inhabitation can shore up conditions and properties physically. Eyes on an area, and occupation govern the safety of an area better than surveillance and official policing ever will. However, different ideas of inhabitation should be developed. A group of artists living and working in an area will have a different form and character than manicured condos. Regardless of perceptual differences, a ruderal area that is cared for and safe will have a chance at creating a new mentality of space, a mentality governed by use and opportunity, not fear.

H) Conclusion

The structure of bottom-up ruderal use comes from the unique opportunities ruderal sites present. Informal use is an inexpensive way to operate. Even when activities are legitimate, the sites occupied are often found difficult to manage, which reduces the costs. The site is a historical place, and a place of ruinous aesthetics, which can generate creativity, culture, and credibility, fueling the success of ruderal uses. Ruderal sites become locations that transmit and generate knowledge.

Ruderal sites can create small agglomerations of industries through their knowledge transmitting and creating properties. Industries that eventually transcend place to become a part of larger spatial networks. Businesses may succeed and aid further regional endeavors in their fields. Creativity in a city is key for innovative problems solving both in and out of the industry. Ruderal sites will eventually spill over with knowledge and industry strengths, that can only help to enrich the area. Because ruderal activities often require higher inputs of labor and skill, the labor pool will grow locally. The growth fuels knowledge and labor in the region. Agglomerations have a tendency to stick to a place, further linking economic benefit to a region.

The labor itself is a source of pride for people involved. The act of creation for many is associated with self-sufficiency. Jobs that arise from informal ruderal work have the bottom-up characteristics of being unique to the people who produce the work. Rather than homogenous urban landscapes of contingent labor and low-end service jobs, ruderal sites create heterogeneous places that respond to individuals.
Careful growth of the local economy plays to the battered mentality that pride and identity can be derived from the production of an area. The abandoned factories and industries of developed areas are blight to not only the landscape but the psychology of people who live there. The vilification of ruderal spaces is not solely due to real problems, but also to the loss that they represent. The knowledge that nurturing businesses with specific properties is a balm to soothe societal aches of post-industrialization. Reuse makes sense economically, and in how we can construct new mentalities of space.

Finally in the stability offered through occupation, we can see an alternative to clearance of abandoned urban sites. Ruderal use is a low-cost alternative to stabilizing the fabric and safety of areas. The fact explains one more way that cities can heal themselves with resources at hand. The problems of the city can be re-visited as resources and folded into the mix in a new recipe for success.

As we can learn from the preceding discussion Sassen’s framework can be expanded to include activities far broader than urban manufacturing. Bottom-up activities have grown parallel to other global development patterns, and are at odds with top-down forces in securing space to be used. Bottom-up, or ruderal, uses serve to compliment the entire economy and society in ways that top-down uses cannot hope to accomplish. Neither top-down or bottom-up can accomplish alone what both can together. The two must continue to grow together and negotiate spaces to operate, which can be difficult. In order to nurture the use of ruderal spaces for economic and societal gain, sites must be maintained in ways that preserve the qualities that fuel them as engines of growth. Cities and regions must understand the ways they benefit directly, or indirectly, from ruderal use. All of the knowledge about the functioning of ruderal space is necessary to generate a new form and mentality of urban spatial use. The new framework is the heart of the issue, but it is not the only force to be reckoned with. In order for ruderal space to succeed at its role, barriers must be overcome, a new system implemented, and deficiencies of knowledge rectified. Some authors have seen the framework, or effects, but they often stop before implementation. As outlined in the next chapter, it is in implementation that the system of ruderal use becomes viable.
Chapter 5: Emerging Mentalities

A) Introduction

Now that the benefits of the ruderal have been explored through a new bottom-up framework, what remains is to re-envision how the knowledge will change our decisions about the way we treat ruderal spaces. While the established framework is viable, most views of the ruderal stop before implementation, have too general strategies, or conversely, have a narrow interpretation of what should be done about the problem. The logical next step is to consider implementation from a wider perspective as well as specific implementable actions. Awareness about what does and doesn’t work to needs to be combined to construct new arguments, policies, and mentalities to support a new vision of ruderal space.

Rather than discuss new actions in terms of what is a problem, or has been done wrong – too reactionary – the future will be discussed in terms of what mindsets can be constructed to do things right. The mindsets that hamper the new framework need to be changed and beneficial ones could be used more effectively. To this end a series of emerging mentalities are described here. Emerging mentalities are different from the prevailing, and although they may have refrains of old ideas, they should be understood as a new concept; they constitute new ways to understand and implement ruderal space that embody the best ideas. Interestingly, the idea of constructing new mentalities from the ruderal is not far-fetched. There is evidence for new mentalities surrounding post-industrial settings becoming viable, as described below.

The Ruhr valley in Germany is an example of a new mentality arising from ruderal conditions. A wave of de-industrialization swept through the area in the 1970s and 1980s, leaving abandoned factories in its wake. A term, specific to the German language, has arisen to describe post industrial conditions called “industrienatur” (Chilla 2007, 72). The term describes the natural reclamation of sites; the concept has been instrumental in how the sites have been deliberately
reused (Chilla 2007, 72). Sites such as Landschaftspark Duisburg Nord and Zeche Zollverein have been turned into parks with the aesthetic of “industrienatur” as an integral part of the design, the aesthetic is connected to “romantic and spectacular connotations, rather than more negative ones (Chilla 2007, 73). Chilla (2007, 73) notes that efforts include grass-roots, bottom-up, actors as well as top-down ones. If ruderal space can house a new attitude towards green space, it can house other attitudes as well.

Within each mentality, many different levels of actors need to be involved: government, private interests, and bottom-up participants. All parties need to be addressed differently, but should function together. Scott and Storper (2003, 586) write that the underlying conditions in an area and the resultant behaviors are important to the way that a region interfaces with the global economy. The ways that the region creates “interdependency between economic agents” which is the region’s competitive edge (Scott and Storper 2003, 586). Applying the concept to ruderal space, if a region is to use ruderal space as an economic generator, the resulting networks and agglomerations which result become a part of the economic positioning of that city versus other cities. Rather than letting development and privatization control the interest of land-use, both private and public interests should be balanced carefully.

Actors need to be educated about the possibilities relating to ruderal use, and information about the ways to best use it. The benefits in economic and monetary terms will be important to a large number of the actors involved. Other participants, such as bottom-up users, do not need to be convinced of economic gain, but may need help with other hurdles they face.

The qualities of ruderal space that make it generative need to be preserved, such as cost, connection to a “buzz” environment or scene, aesthetics, and reputation. Because bottom-up activities are less stable than the top-down, this issues needs to be addressed directly; bottom-up use will need a preservation of enough ruderal space for it to operate in, and enough “hands off” that the spaces can function as intended. There is the possibility that ruderal space will be left in perpetuum for bottom-up use, or it may be used as a short-term solution, understanding that top-down use will eventually succeed it. Another option is to create policies that allow for ruderal space to exist in an amount, but that location may change and relocate within a city over time. In addition, ruderal spaces that are too tightly controlled may lose their appeal for bottom-up use, so
space will need to be governed, but not too heavily that it stifles use.

The qualities and benefits that ruderal space creates need to be more effectively used and promoted. High skilled labor pools, networks, agglomerations, local economies, flexible work and increased safety are all benefits that may be considered. The amount of research already done supports these factors as beneficial. Some actors will merely need to be educated as to the benefits to encourage adoption of new mentalities. Other benefits currently exist already, but regions have not capitalized on them. In the case of new burgeoning agglomerations, cities should seek out and use them in the PR for a region.

The new mentalities and their accompanying policies will inherently respond to issues that have arisen in the past. Blight, betrayal, fear of the unknown, weakness and lack of maintenance are all problems pertaining to ruderal sites that fuel negative mentalities. Other issues relating to top-down actions such as: homogenization, financialization, displacement, loss of history, and inequality, can be addressed in new use patterns.

The newly crafted mindsets will include the actions of different levels of actors and knowledge gleaned from the operations of the top-down, bottom-up outlined in Chapter 3, and the framework discussed in chapter 4. Some mindsets will be based on ones previously discussed, others will be entirely new. Actors will hybridize their efforts so that all levels of use and the economy can continue to benefit from each other. The newly constructed mentalities that follow will do all of these things to varying degrees; they are listed in a scale of most temporary and lightly programed to the most dense and more stable, long-term plans.

B) Exploring History

1) General

A familiar mentality is that of exploration. Rather than leaving this view for informal uses, it can be used as a low-cost way to formally familiarize people with sites. What is intended here is a lightly-programmed reuse of sites, which can happen quickly and with low investment. The way to best engage the mentality is to bring people into ruderal sites and explain the history of the places to them. There is no boogeyman if you turn on the light; inviting people into ruderal spaces formally is a way to better understand what thesis sites are like in a day-to-day perspective. Formally bringing people into ruderal places may lose some of the illicit appeal of
sneaking into a place, but will maintain the connection to history, and sense of awe that exploration thrives on.

Exploration has a number of benefits. Exploration can happen in sites that have some contamination, as long as guides keep individuals away from problematic areas, or require appropriate garb. It is a light program that can be accommodated easily, a tour group does not require any infrastructure on site for amenities. Restrooms, supplies, and points of organization can all be found off-site. Tours can be used to keep an eye on dangerous activities that may be occurring; it is a type of inhabitation, if only temporary. Tours can be a source of income or play into a larger tourism initiative, enhancing overall earnings for a region. Home-tours, factory visits, and even commercial tours have success culturally; inviting people into ruderal sites operates on a similar paradigm.

The most important benefit of the mindset is not the money, but the connection to history that can be gained. A large problem with top-down development is the wholesale clearance that often happens. If people are brought into ruderal places, it is more likely that they will care about the history and places enough to keep them from being lost. Every hiatus in use kills history. Mah (2010) explains that history is part of a lived experience of a place. When active participation in a site is lost, the narrative of that place is disrupted, leaving on the possibility of a “reconstructed” past for a place (Mah 2010). Embracing the exploration of places is a way to continue that history.

2) Exploring History - Actors

Tours of ruderal sites can occur at all scales. A community organization can run them, a property owner, city, or even an individual. Governments can work exploration activities into greater plans for the city-as-amenity. Because of the low-inputs needed, tours can be temporally relevant, being activated at the same time as events near the place explored. Mid-range top-down actors such as developers, or business owners can use exposure to garner support for a connected
project. Smaller actors may simply make money, or promote their neighborhood. Exploration can combine the interests of one actor with another. An individual may gain money by running tours, but also gain public support for a top-down actor’s plans. Cities gain an amenity, and neighborhood residents feel safer. The combinations should be considered by virtue of the needs of actors, and the context surrounding the space in question.

3) Exploring History - Possibility

As an example, Columbus, Ohio, can benefit from the emerging mentality of exploring history. Places such as Columbus Coated Fabrics, the Wonder Bread factory, or Timken Roller Bearing have all closed in recent history: 2001, 2009, and 2001 respectively. In cases such as these three, it would be possible to hire a former worker to work as a guide.

Another option could be for the city to give tours of proud historical places in its more troubled neighborhoods. Franklinton is a good example; it contains the Bellows Avenue School which is slated to be demolished in upcoming highway work on the 71-70 interchange. It is a ruderal site that is unfortunately not likely to survive, but tours can take advantage of the little time it has left. Franklinton has a number of industrial properties nearby, making it an ideal site for an extended tour. The neighborhood is close to downtown and could easily tie into large events focused in that area, such as “Red White and Boom”. The tours can help the overall perception.
of the neighborhood, help support conservation, or encourage creative reuse of areas. Franklinton is only one neighborhood with historical and ruderal value. Old Towne East, Milo-Grogan, Weinland Park, Iuka Ravine, Clintonville, Grandview, are a few others that could easily use the tactic.

C) The Living City

1) General

The living city mentality is twist on a previous mindset: blight. Instead of that view, the mindset proposes that the first thing that should happen to an empty building is inhabitation. Inhabited properties bring in income, or stabilize their value through upkeep. Places that are cared for are pieces of the community, not broken windows and sites of fear. Occupancy of another company or entity creates a view of what the site can become in the future. There will be space for thoughts about success or failure for new endeavors, not the loss of past ones. Occupied spaces are alive and have a chance to keep the histories of a place alive. By reusing older places, the character of the neighborhood is retained, and new occupants benefit from having unique accommodations. However this mentality may not be applicable for all sites; not all sites are equal.

The living city is a mentality which will need to be tailored to certain locations. Large sites are unwieldy because few entities will be able to inhabit the entire area. Subdividing sites for smaller actors will be necessary. Subdivision is not possible in all sites; cleared land will not be useful for this mentality. Brownfield sites are likewise at an impasse in this regard. The best sites for a policy such as this are large campuses of abandoned structures which have a diversity of buildings or buildings that have internal subdivisions. Legal terms of use will have to be adjusted for a variety of smaller actors. Leasing and maintenance needs to be considered at the large scale. If the mentality is appropriate for a space, there are different roles for each scale of actor.

2) The Living City - Actors
Keeping the city occupied means that different actors have different roles to play. Individuals who are potential users need to become aware of the possibilities now available through this emergent mentality. Smaller landowners may have perennially vacant properties. Governments and corporations often end up holding post-industrial properties.

Governments will need to be part of the equation of reuse, whether they are landowners, or regulators. If this is a mentality that a large scale top-down actor wants to pursue, they will need to have foresight to change legislation ahead of time, so that ruderal sites are turned over quickly and do not sit empty. Legal structures need to be in place to allow inhabitation; zoning may have to be altered, building permit processes sped up, or other regulatory systems changed to be more re-use friendly.

Owners will need policies and legal protections to make inhabitation a benefit rather than a liability. Maintenance and management of the property will take time and money. The goal is to have the new tenants balance the cost. If a property owner does not want to take on the responsibility, they should instead seek out a third-party to manage the place. This type of relationship currently exists in rental companies which helps this emergent mentality become accepted a little easier.

The property may be in the possession of a smaller landowner or company. This size of actor can still benefit from keeping places occupied. Beyond the fact that any occupation of a property will bring in some money, and stabilize building condition, inhabitation and use of bottom-up actions can bring in crucial foot-traffic for other, top-down endeavors. Once people are in an area, secondary spending can occur. Residents will need a corner store, or may frequent a local bar. Partnering a bottom-up activity for low rent can help more profitable enterprises, seen in the Rom of Budapest (Lugosi et al. 2010). In one of the instances a bar owners was able benefit because “we don’t even have to pay rent, because this district has a really shit reputation. Them [the developer] building here and us being here and bringing in lots of young people was worth it for them.” (Lugosi et al. 2010, 3091). In cases where there is a secondary economic benefit, a land owner may be able to overlook immediate gains. Symbiotic development works at creating horizontal connections between actors, rather than conflict.

Planners or cities can promote partnering, by finding and publicizing examples where
developers and ruderal users have come to mutually beneficial agreements. Cities could hold organizational meetings for top-down and bottom-up entrepreneurs to meet and exchange ideas, seeding knowledge creation through some face-to-face time.

3) The Living City - Possibility

![The Living City Diagram](image)

Placing the living city mentality in Columbus is a useful tool to understand how it might play out. As a hypothetical, the Columbus Coated Fabrics site is a good choice to analyze because of the type of site it once was, and the comparison to the history which actually happened. Columbus Coated Fabrics had a long term of vacancy, and during that time the site suffered fires and degradation. Its structures were designated dangerous; the site accumulated the narrative of blight, all of which eventually ended in clearance. Today the site is free of structures or monuments except for a large pile of dirt that has been dubbed Mt Weinland by residents of the neighborhood. Rather than the somewhat bleak present, it is interesting to imagine what could have happened if long-term vacancy had never happened.

Columbus Coated Fabrics is a somewhat problematic site because of its pollution. However, the pollution on Columbus Coated Fabrics was not endemic to the entire site. If the contaminated portion has been isolated, it is possible that the rest could have been used. There is the potential that if had happened, it might have created enough draw to find alternate sources of funding to
clean up the site.

An immediate or timely re-inhabitation of Columbus Coated Fabrics would have resulted in a number of changes from what actually occurred. The structural considerations would be closer to that of Wonderland. Wonderland only stood empty for about a year. The buildings could be used for inhabitation, and that inhabitation could to pay for and help maintain the structure. The site would be safer with a stable set of occupants, which is a considerable benefit to the neighborhood because safety is a daily problem. Enterprises could have inhabited structures ill adapted for residences. The demand for goods and services created by a larger population would stimulating the neighborhood economy. None of these benefits will accrue in buildings that remain empty.

If the owner and city decided to redevelop the site, that avenue could be pursued, and written into the structure of leases. In the hypothetical case of the inhabited CCF, redesign could take advantage of industrial structures instead of needing to clear them. Top-down use would eventually be richer in built environment history and more heterogeneous, than in the case of the vacant and demolished site.

Currently the site is going to be reused as market rate housing and have a few community centers in the development, as discussed in Chapter 2. The plan is relatively homogenous with only a few different dwelling types. It is certainly better than having nothing built, or having fires continue, but the current plans are much starker than what the site could have been.

D) Open House

1) General

The mindset that space can exist in a potential state is useful, the liminal can be tapped to create a wealth of options for ruderal sites. Open house is the mentality of allowing a site to use its liminality to be a variety of things to different people. The mindset contains the idea that the best uses of a ruderal space will come from a number of different actors, and the site must be opened to them. A diversity of opinions will references many different narratives of
a site, capitalize on various strengths, and involve a diversity of actors. By incorporating non-
homogenous people, a ruderal site has a better chance of being a successful space and being incorporated into a community.

Issues of control and trust may be issues for this mentality, but are also some of the problems which the emerging mentality hopes to overcome. Because of the openness of the new mentality, the exact nature of the use may not be determined before consultation of various parties. Whatever actor is in control of a site will need to allow possibilities to occur that they may not have envisioned, and let the site be more flexible than typical top-down use allows. Bottom-up actors will need to work with top-down forces and approach projects with a certain amount of trust and openness. The concept is that by opening up dialogs about a space, different levels of actors may link efforts to use space wisely.

2) Open House - Actors

Large scale actors can benefit from a diversity of ideas being brought into a site. In the case of a government, the controlling force may not have a variety of ideas on tap, to use in creative re-use schemes. By petitioning smaller actors for ideas, large entities can quickly create a number of possible actions for low cost, an advantage in the current situation of austerity. Because of their size, large scale actors have the advantage of visibility when they announce a desire for input on a project.

One way a government can petition a larger population for ideas is to create a competition for ideas about a space. Financial compensation for competitions will be far less than doing all the work in-house. The reward of winning is part of the compensation; it ads to the reputation of the winner.

One example of similar situation comes from the dockland site in Amsterdam, which is the focus of a top-down initiated bottom-up occupation. The city wanted to use already-built space in the city that was vacant (Oswalt et al. 2007, 283). Amsterdam held a competition for ideas and accepted a proposal to turn the area into a temporary-use space for cultural users. The plan incorporated craft uses, cultural activities, sports, and leisure (Oswalt et al. 2007, 283). A large portion of the plan was involved subdividing a large structure for cultural use, the money for that construction having come from the city (Oswalt et al. 2007, 283).
Businesses and developers can work directly with communities through meetings or forums, and can be in the best interested of the development. A business can create a situation where they are viewed as an actor that is civic minded, rather than being a faceless top-down actor. Follow through is critical to the success of the mentality. Asking for opinions and then using none of them will be worse than not soliciting opinions at all. More public input means that the product or service crafted will be better suited to the end-user and better able to turn a profit.

Groups of individuals with similar priorities can benefit for this process

3) Open House - Possibility

![Open House Diagram](image)

A good site for inclusion, working again in hypotheticals is the already developed South Campus Gateway in Columbus, Ohio. The project cleared a number of old structures and rebuilt the area in a mixed use fashion. The South Campus Gateway project, undertaken by Campus Partners, has been somewhat tepidly received. Reviews of the development range from outright accusing it of gentrification which lines the pockets of “rich white men”, to being a generic “strip mall” experience (South Campus Gateway 2008). The common theme seems to be a criticism of its typical lack of occupancy in the stores and somewhat banal offerings. The development offers an interesting thought on how a top-down development could have been different with the input
of more opinions.

Currently there are a number of vacancies, and stores are priced for a upper-end market. Criticisms point out that for an area with paid parking, it does not have a significantly different set of stores than places with free parking. The movie theater is perceived to have a much poorer set of offerings after having changed ownership. There is criticism that the crowd it caters to are “rowdy college students”, which seem to be a bad condition.

If the South Campus Gateway had provided for a diversity of retail and service levels it could attract a crowd that was more diverse than just college students. Providing unique services would justify the cost of parking to outsiders, and bring in a more stable set of consumers. While students are critical to this area of Columbus, it is important to note that it is immediately adjacent to the community of Weinland Park, and contiguous to the more successful area of the Short North. Having more types of people visit the area would bring in income in times that students are not present, such as holidays and seasonal lulls. A South Campus Gateway that was full of diverse experiences would connect to the already thriving parts of High Street. A good example of a similar situation is in looking at the different types of offerings on the 16th Street Mall in Denver, CO. Denver’s downtown area features high-end boutiques, middle-of-the-road mall type stores and theaters, as well as low end retail, such as the dollar store. The area thrives even in winter weather with all classes rubbing elbows in the street. South Campus could still open up to multiple levels of input, however with stores already built, it will be harder to adapt uses and scale rentals to anything other than the expected high-income stores.

E) Location as an Incubator

1) General

Location as an incubator is a mentality for future growth. Because the conclusion is that ruderal places can have a positive economic benefit, it is an excellent choice for a new narrative of sites. Location and job formation are linked in this mentality. The mindset capitalizes on the ability of ruderal sites to develop networks and agglomerations within a type of industry or economy. “Location is an incubator”, says Scott (2006, 4). As has been discussed earlier in this thesis, agglomerations that rely on the city are particular to specific places and have a tendency to remain in an area. Agglomerations create strengths within labor pools, knowledge transfer inside
an industry, and knowledge creation.

The mentality argues that all parties should take a longer term interest in creating industries of a particular grouping. Cities should take an interest in the industries that are form in its jurisdiction. Existing businesses can look to economic growth that will benefit them. Bottom-up participants do not need to be convinced to make money, but may need a focus to enable cooperative labor.

Of note is that working with agglomerations is a tactic currently in use - cities already use tactics which embrace the “creative economy”. A focus on creative economies has worked in some cases, and makes sense based on the earlier examinations within this thesis. In the same way that there are a number of activities outside of the creative, or cultural, happening in ruderal space, there should be more foci. The interest into innovative economies and agriculture are a start. Sassen’s (2009) urban manufacturing represents another possibility. Recreation can be its own focus of agglomeration, depending on the resources and needs of the area. The best course of action will likely be to encourage cities to embrace their agglomerations in various industries and expand the notion of what types of agglomerations are possible for consideration. Location as an incubator includes current agglomerative focuses, and others yet unexplored.

2) Location as an Incubator - Actors

One way to envision how actors may take on the emergent mentality is to look at the efforts in specific agglomerative focuses that already exist. In response to one type of agglomeration, the creative economy and the creative class are part of the current theory of authors such as Richard Florida and Elizabeth Currid. Richard Florida’s web-site Creative Class, lists dozens of places: cities, countries and other locations, that are using creative class as a focus for planning efforts (Who’s Your City? 2008). An example is Columbus, Ohio, who currently has a creative class, arts-based, plan drawn up and has self-adopted the title of “The Indie Art Capital of the World” (Walker 2007). The anticipation is that in branding alone the city could make several million
dollars (Walker 2007). Other cities have also adopted agglomeration tactics. A cooperative effort between the London Metropolitan University and The Munk Centre for International Studies in Toronto has put out a lengthy document on strategies for creative cities (Evans et al. 2006). The UK is supporting music based enterprises and entrepreneurship through an organization called PALATINE (Brown, p. 162). The organization teaches practical skills that musicians need to run a business. The creative economy is only one focus that cities are looking at currently.

There is evidence that creative actions can work. Berlin’s arts scene has helped transform the city as it has become more successful. The arts and culture in Berlin formed a “critical mass” which has become important to Berlin’s image, and is now an important part of local guides (Arlt 2006, 41). The focus of the bottom-up actors in this case was businessmen.

New York City is strongly interested as well in another focus; the Center for an Urban Future put out a 45 page document on how New York can best use the innovative economy – high tech enterprises – to enhance its situation. Columbus, Ohio, has shown interest in agrarian overlays of land use. A recent research grant from the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission is looking at how urban agriculture can be used to revitalize the neighborhood of Weinland Park.

At a smaller scale than the city, there are other types of agglomeration work that can be done by middle-scale actors. Columbus’s neighborhood of Franklinton houses an organization called the Franklinton Arts District or FAD. FAD is responsible for the yearly Urban Scrawl arts festival, held in Dodge Park. The festival will be in its 5th year in 2011. The event features live art creation by locals, as well as handcrafts, live music and local food. The intent of the event is to change the mindset around the community of Franklinton from blight and dereliction to a potential new focus in the arts. The overall success has yet to be seen, but there are plans for a community organization to turn a warehouse into condos and studio space for artists (Caruso 2011). A for-profit group is looking at different warehouses for development (Caruso 2011).

Bottom-up use of ruderal space faces a number of barriers. It is inherently in competition with top-down forces for urban space. The mentalities constructed around concepts of vacancy reinforce conflict, existing problems of sites feed into that mindset. Success stories may be short-lived, and while a venture may flourish for a short while, the long term potentials are often cut short. Operations lack legitimacy and the leverage necessary to ensure it. Legal structures in
place currently operate as barriers in many locations, not allowing bottom-up use to legally exist in the majority of places. Barriers determine a significant portion of what will need to change to allow bottom-up ruderal use to be utilized in planning attempts. Here a successful hybrid of the top-down and bottom-up will be to enable bottom-up actors to gain legitimacy more easily.

3) Location as an Incubator - Issues

Bottom-up uses face a number of issues, one of which is their own success. The growth of bottom-up uses often leads to the overall improvement of an area. Bottom-up uses pioneer the ruderal sites, often seen as dangerous by more mainstream users. The original bottom-up uses are often displaced by top-down forces, once the uncertainty of an area has been cleared. The popularity of bottom-up work invites investment, and often up-scaling of the area, but pioneering often leads to ruderal use’s own demise.

The retro retailing of Crewe et al. (2003) displays the phenomenon of appropriation. The stores which were originally located in areas of low rent became fashionable. One shopkeeper cites a film made about the area, which brought the “wrong sort of people” and led to the area becoming more commercial and tourist oriented (Crewe et al. 2003, 94).

The pattern appears in Berlin in the Gründerzeit buildings. Structures were neglected and in poor repair, which attracted the attention of temporary users. Informal use fell off as the area became more popular (Arlt 2006, 40). Arlt (2006, 40) notes that the new locations were always “that fail to become the target of ‘official’ interest during a certain period.”. Unfortunately the pattern of top-down and bottom-up are a sort of cat and mouse in this case.

The “culture-driven regeneration” of Matthew Street in Liverpool of the 1980s saw the displacement of the music entrepreneurs who had occupied the area earlier. Clubs such as the Cavern and the Hacienda were re-built into different establishments of tourism and apartments respectively (Strachan and Cohen 2006, 430).

There is a tendency for the culture available through cultural production to be assimilated by more mainstream forces. In the case of retro retailing Crewe et al. (2003, 91) note that shops formed an alternative type of retailing in the 1980’s, but by the 1990’s fashion had begun to assimilate retro trends, making thier wares less unique.

The houseboats of Shorham have been facing increasing regulation (Smith 2009). Residents
hypothesize that it is because the region is now a target site for high-end real-estate development; view is corroborated by the recent growth of other high-end residences and yaht moorings in the area (Smith 2009, 62). Smith (2009) says that the houseboats are now becoming more commodified, as they are sold, leased and marketed to middle-class audiences. The houseboats, once marginal to the society, are becoming commodified; the land they are floating over is increasingly valued, all putting pressures on the ruderal site.

In order for ruderal sites to serve as incubators for entrepreneurs, the bottom-up actors must find a way to succeed. Beyond regular barriers to the formation of enterprises, actors must secure ruderal sites with a sort of legitimacy. A long standing issue with bottom-up use is when top-down use overshadows smaller actors on a site. Larger actors embracing the mindset of the incubator, may decide to set aside space or policies for bottom-up use. However, if they do not allow bottom-up use to occur, the mentality cannot succeed.

It is not to say that the bottom-up cannot succeed. ABC No Rio, an art center in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, squatted an empty building owned by the city (Hayden and Temel 2006, 255). The center was involved in social activism, arts, culture and punk. Their exhibition was disrupted by the police. The city finally talked to the artists who negotiated a lease; they exchanged the squatted building for another leased one. The houseboats of Shorham are under pressure from authorities, but they owe their continued legitimacy to a purchase of shore rights which a group of boat-owners purchased at one time (Smith 2009).

Bottom-up actors must find a structure to support their rights. Informal actions can be a way to start inhabitation, but in the end, they must gain a formal connection to a site. Small scale operators do not have large amounts of resources, or power to use on their own behalf. In order to capitalize on what they do possess, it is in the best interests of people to band together. Local actors who are interested in similar resources need to form organizations; an act which can be simplified with relatively cheap online networking. If there are larger scale actors who support this mentality, they should provide for the education and beginnings of bottom-up networking. Once the conditions are met, small scale actors can begin to create and exchange knowledge necessary to survive.

4) Location as an Incubator - Possibility
As mentioned previously, Columbus is currently interested in a couple of different agglomerative focuses: creative and agricultural. Another interesting local strength is the brewing and distilling businesses which have been opening in recent years. Columbus has a history of brewing, hence the brewery district adjacent to downtown and German Village. Recently Middle West Spirits has opened up on the corner of 5th avenue and High street, and Watershed Distillery operates out of the neighborhood of Grandview. Local breweries include: Columbus Brewing Co., Barley’s, Hoster, Elevator, and Neil House (Beer Guide for Columbus 2011). In addition to its focus on the arts along the Short North, an area of High street north of downtown, Columbus could build up other agglomerations along other major streets. Middle West operates near the Short North, and Watershed is only a couple streets north of 5th, further west. In the spirit of a wine tasting tour, the area is geographically suited to host distillery tours. The area east of Middle West is a particularly underused corridor with many ruderal sites, both vacant and with structures, and is already zoned for industrial use in for a large portion of the area. The diversification from art to consumables is wise. Even in times of economic recession, Ohio liquor stores have seen record earnings and the state Governor plans to help the growth of the industry (Fields 2011). New businesses can tap into the older agglomeration of the brewing companies and perhaps share...
the promise of jobs and money may be wooed with tax breaks from municipalities. However, large scale production is not naturally suited to urban environments. Enterprises which need the networks and labor pools of a city would be better suited for the area because they do not need artificial incentives to locate in the area.

There is potential for an area to become a center of industrial growth that can carry the region for years to come. In the region of Emilia-Romagna, Italy, growth of the informal manufacturing industries was aided by political support from the Communist party (Capecchi 1989, 190). The area is currently considered one of the most well off areas of Europe. Emilia-Romagna seems an obvious strength in hindsight, but the benefits of bottom-up activities can be less apparent when looking forward.

2) Long-Run Ruderal - Actors

For the emerging mentality of the long-run, each actor will need to defer a little for long-term success. However, each actor can also gain something in the short-run as well. Governments will risk less, property owners can find better use in existing structures, and individuals can have pride in being a part of a stronger local economy.

In many cases, governments share development costs such as site clean-up, demolition, or utilities. Bottom-up ruderal use needs much smaller inputs to operate, as evidenced by the fact that individual actors can survive without any subsidies. Small business has less risk up front, but may fail to materialize gains later. A comparison of top-down and bottom-up financial projections
should be considered for potential sites. A method for analysis has yet to be seen, but would provide a good opportunity for further research.

Governments are putting work into helping smaller entrepreneurs currently. A recent program which has come into revitalization in the United States are Empowerment Zones. The program, started in the 1990’s, focuses on both improving the physical conditions of the area as well as investing in education, business creation, services, and training (Fitzgerald and Leigh 2002, 22). Currently the Creative Space Agency is an organization in London which supports creative industries. The CSA acts as a broker for spaces and connects creative uses with available space. The organization helps to overcome barriers such as the small scale of operations of the individual user, costs, and legal problems (Haydn and Temel 2006, 211). Existing support gives further support for this new mentality. Governments will benefit immediately as well, because lowered costs for them will help balance already thin budgets.

Property owners have their own issues of long-term interest. Property owners are sometimes uninterested in having their properties used. Ball (2002, 95) identifies that the attitude of the development industry is key to understanding when properties in his area of study are reused. Oswalt et al. (2007) say that owner resistance is the most common reason that sites do not work. Owners may be interested in keeping properties unused while they wait for values to increase or in order to keep development options open (Oswalt et al. 2007, 279). Ball (2002, 99) says that owners will sit on vacant properties because they are reluctant to rent at “lower rental requirements”, owners are holding out for ideal money making conditions, however ideal conditions rarely materialize. In the case of the RAW site, the owner took back control in order to develop it, although the plans fell through (Oswalt et al. 2007, 272). It is understandable that owners are looking to return a profit, however as Ball (2002) has found that owners are passing up money in the hopes of gambling on a bigger win, it is not just necessity that drives the decision. This mentality is then faced with the need to prove profitability and increase the motivation to use properties.

The current trend of sustainability in building can be used to shape the views of ruderal space of landowners. Sustainability is a popular topic in building construction currently, with new codes such as LEED. Part of the problem with current re-use patterns is a heavy focus on short-
term profitability, either for a land-owner, developer, or government. Bridging concerns of worth from short-term considerations to longer-range sustainable ones is a possible source of change. Ellison et al. (2007) investigated how the sustainability of a property relates to its investment worth. They evaluated different categories of sustainability for properties, and then estimated the impact of the variables on the worth of the property in question (Ellison et al. 2007). The researchers focused heavily on quantifiable values of the properties such as cost amounts. The research was then applied to two properties, one outside the city in an office park, and one within the town center (Ellison et al. 2007). Findings reported that some variables such as energy efficiency were better in the office park, others such as accessibility were better for the in-town location (Ellison et al. 2007, 215). Energy consumption factors such as climate control were more easily upgraded in town-centered properties (Ellison et al. 2007, 215). If knowledge such as this is made available to property owners, they may be more apt to use a site wisely both for their own profit, and long-term benefit.

The ability to analyze properties on other financial considerations other than short-term profit, can be used to leverage ruderal sites as valuable in a way that has a bottom line. If property owners understand the money value of a vacant site in more than one way, there is a chance that they will be open to using it differently. It is known that inhabitation will help stabilize building condition. It logically behooves owners to keep their buildings occupied, possibly even at a smaller return. Occupation could keep the property from becoming a liability until such a time as upgrades could be afforded by the owner. The scenario does not allow for long-term ruderal use, but it does allow for something at least. Not all sites will be good for turning into a “wonderland”, but getting a more full use out of an area is still important. There are still other ways in which owners can be altered in the day-to-day.

Individual actors make choices that affect long term profitability. A way to translate the mentality to the small scale is through a focus on local economies. Consumer demand for products based in agglomerations is important to production. Because of the high labor inputs of ruderal industries, the cost of such products and services will be substantially more than ones outsourced to developing nations. Locally produced goods and services will put money back into the local economy.
All levels of actors can come together in attitudes of long-term sustainability, which encompasses economic viability, ecological benefit and regional pride. The current state of globalization has left regions devoid of economic power that they once had, bringing this back in a long-term way will mean something significant to all the actors in an area.

3) Long-Run Ruderal Possibility

![Long-Run Ruderal Diagram](image)

Columbus, OH, is full of various examples of top-down development. There are entire areas such as the Arena District, which is very successful, to condo developments both built and unbuilt – such as the Ibiza lot on High street. In the case of the next major development to come to the area, the city should consider the immediate versus long-run costs. If the developer is leaning heavily on the city, this should definitely be employed. In projects where the developer has fallen short of funds, such as Ibiza, the city may want to take a second look at how properties stay vacant, and look at enacting new legislation to encourage activity rather than letting a site get cleared and then forgotten.

Individual properties in the Short North would benefit from occupancy, even in a bottom-up
fashion. This has been done recently in the context of one-day weekend sales set up in vacant storefronts. Encouraging this policy of short-term rentals would improve the area. Small businesses and individuals have started to work together to spread word of local spending, and restaurants such as Mazah in Grandview currently have literature available to patrons.

G) Conclusion

The set of emerging mentalities are constructed from the mentalities, framework, and examples of ruderal uses. They represent a means through which ruderal spaces can be re-envisioned and used. The emerging mentalities encompass a general mindset, actions for different involved parties, and some potential examples to help explain how each may work. The details of how and which emerging mentalities should be used in any particular place should be determined by the details and peculiarities of each ruderal space, leaving solutions responsive to complex site conditions.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

The term ruderal is an ecological concept extended to social and economic spheres. Ruderal spaces are anthropogenic, uncultivated sites that host opportunistic and emergent actions, species, and communities. Abandoned, marginal, and underused spaces are generative sites for bottom-up activities despite the typical labeling as vacant. Amidst the problems of vacancy and dereliction, day-to-day uses of ruderal space stand out as phenomena that can be harnessed to help address some of the problems seen in the urban landscape.

A group of authors has addressed ruderal space using diversity of terms and theories. Early authors deal with urban regeneration efforts and see the spaces as dereliction or blight. Further work begins to label sites in ways that characterize it as more vague, or open to potentials. The newest work in the field labels the uses within space and does not term the spaces themselves. Ruderal authors identify the space’s place within patterns of vacancy, top-down reuse, potentials and bottom-up use, but few take the description further. The work begins to see the complexity in perception and implementation of ruderal space, but does not connect through to other research. This thesis ties the theories of ruderal space to dispersed research and mindsets to create emerging mentalities that promote implementation.

Ruderal spaces are complex in their formation and in how people view them. Different mindsets or mentalities have formed about ruderal space which shape how places are used and approached for re-use. Perceptions about ruderal space are diverse, and range from hostile views to potential and hopeful ones. This thesis has investigated mindsets that are the most relevant, and although there are many more conceptual directions, this thesis categorizes types of re-use into top-down and bottom-up by actor, and also applies a sliding scale of formality to informality of actions that can occur.

Top-down actions are more formally recognized, and are the traditionally accepted way to
approach issues of urban regeneration. Top-down actions, while somewhat more stable than the bottom-up, have a number of problems associated with them. Top-down actions represent the interests of a small subset of the population, and have been linked to displacement, cultural homogenization, financialization, loss of history on sites, and inequality. Top-down actions are not themselves a problem, but they feed a complex of issues.

Bottom-up actions are less stable, often operating in informal ways. Yet bottom-up activities create patterns of use that can be harnessed to efficiently find new uses for ruderal space without heavy investment. Through patterns of agriculture, recreation, inhabitation, and cultural use ruderal spaces provides ways for people to use create low-cost solutions for day-to-day challenges. The solutions harness heterogeneous conditions of labor in ways that are creative and empowering, drawing together networks of people to problem solve while maintaining the unique landscapes of ruderal space.

In considering all the actions within ruderal space more closely, and using the work of several authors who have the broadest perspectives, an overall pattern forms. Both top-down and bottom-up actions take advantage of the opportunities within ruderal space. Certain industries need to be present within cities because of labor pools and face-to-face communication. The low cost of ruderal space is irresistible to activities that need urban space. In addition top-down and bottom-up activities stem from more complete economic systems and are generated because of interlinking conditions. While the two are at odds for space, they are tied to each other in ways that mean neither should be privileged in the long run.

The top-down is the dominant paradigm and is well represented. Bottom-up activities need more championing, but support is easily found by looking at a number of sources which are not typically connected to ruderal space. Bottom-up use both uses and preserves the individual nature of sites, a counterpoint to top-down strategies of site clearance. Bottom-up use works in patterns of agglomeration, in the same ways that the top-down can, and serves as a way to build networks of efficient knowledge transfer and creation. The power of industry clusters and knowledge networks are an important competitive advantage for cities and regions. Bottom-up uses are clustered in industry types that cycle money back into the local economy more readily. High-skill industries are strong in this way, and will put more money back through workers and through
choice of suppliers. Bottom-up growth of entrepreneurial enterprises substitutes for imports and can be grown to a point that it itself is exported. Informal labor while not of direct benefit to the tax base can be used as stepping stone to more formal work, and gives individuals a chance to use skills that top-down enterprises may overlook. Re-use of structures stabilizes them and adds safety to areas that otherwise are deserted and ill-loved.

By blending prevailing mentalities with the strong points of bottom-up use and the motivations of each actor, a set of emerging mentalities have been constructed. These emerging mentalities represent new ways to envision ruderal space that use the benefits of the bottom-up with influence of the top-down. The hybridization is meant to gather stability and official sanction from the more top-down/formal quadrant and fuse it with the heterogeneity and flexibility of the bottom-up/informal quadrant.

The emerging mentalities suggested in this thesis are hypothetical ways to envision how to best use ruderal sites. There are potentially many other options, the examples are suggested to create thought and new visions for urban space. Mentalities created here offer a choice of different levels of permanence and programming. When looking to incorporate bottom-up use in planning, the particulars of each site must be considered. Any one mentality will not answer all urban sites and problems. Each place should be evaluated and a decision made as to whether or not a bottom-up use will be long-term, short-term, or portable. In an ecological framework, often ruderal sites eventually see the succession of more stable climax species and less weedy species.

Because ruderal use has not been applied or appreciated as much in the U.S., there is a lack of knowledge about whether or not these emerging mentalities will gain traction. What is needed next are opportunities for applications to be tested, and a concurrent set of research done to analyze information about potential actions and policy shifts. The framework is supported by research, but it is mostly anecdotal, more empirical data is needed.

The first set of data needed to be developed is how effective are the recommended policies in practice. In the case of mentalities coinciding with existing strategies, such as a focus on local economies, or cultivation of the creative class, researchers have a starting point. It is recommended that any actors undertaking some of the mentalities work with a research institution or academia as a part of their actions.
Secondly, the scope of ruderal activities needs to be explored. It would be useful to know the possible types of agglomeration present in a given set of conditions. Future research should examine current agglomerations, networks and strengths with specific locations. It will be easier for a city to work with areas where it already has a foothold, rather than building an industry from scratch.

Third, research needs to measure the benefits of bottom-up ruderal use, particularly in the case of bottom-up activity in competition with top-down actors. Monetary gains are a good place to start researching comparative benefits, but it is recommended other scales be included as well. Ruderal sites are places of creativity, self-expression and social leverage. Research will need to measure the benefits of non-economic values.
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