# URBAN RENEWAL

HOW DO CITIES GROW AND CHANGE?

Hello! My name is Madeline Bacolor and I am an undergraduate studying Program in the Environment. My research focuses on urban planning, particularly how urban renewal policies have affected communities of color.

WHAT DOES THE WORD "CITY" MEAN TO YOU?
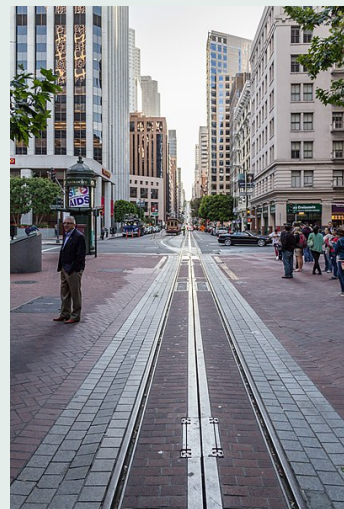## WHAT IMAGES COME TO MIND?

Maybe you live in a city, or you have visited one to see a baseball game or a museum. You might picture your neighborhood, a busy downtown street, or a subway.
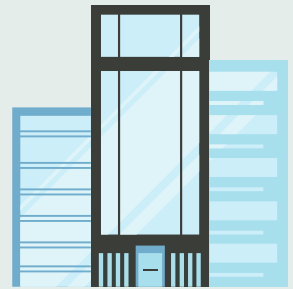
LET'S COMPARE THESE PICTURES:

San Francisco in 1914

San Francisco in 2012

What differences do you notice?
What similarities?

SO, HOW DO CITIES CHANGE?

Scholars at the Chicago school of sociology developed an *"ecological" model* for city growth. This model informed policy decisions in many cities.

"Cities were like living organisms... therefore, urban change occurred in natural patterns"

– Wendell Pritchett

THE ECOLOGICAL MODEL:

- A settlement is built
- The city grows
- Wealthier residents move from the central district to live in newer, nicer neighborhoods
- The original neighborhood becomes mixed use with industry and businesses
- Single family homes are converted into multiple-unit dwellings for the poor
- People of different racial and ethnic backgrounds move into the neighborhood
- The neighborhood becomes blighted and could become a slum

Sociologists thought this process was natural. However, blight and slums were a problem that could be solved by urban planning.

PROBLEMS WITH THIS MODEL:

- It is racist. Despite its seemingly scientific language, the model reflects racial and ethnic prejudices, as well as classism. Black communities were often blamed for blight regardless of actual neighborhood conditions
- It ignores policies that determine settlement patterns
- For example, people of color were prohibited from living in entire neighborhoods through redlining and zoning

MANILATOWN, SAN FRANCISCO

My research is about Manilatown, a primarily Filipino neighborhood found in San Francisco in the mid- 20th century. Manilatown was once a thriving neighborhood of Filipino farm workers and businesses. Eventually, the community was considered blighted by city officials and business interests, targeted for urban redevelopment, and demolished.

THE FIGHT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL

The I-Hotel came to represent Manilatown and its residents, who were mostly elderly, poor, Filipino men. Tenants and supporters held mass protests and fought eviction for years. They fought for their community's existence and their right to a safe, affordable place to live.

PHOTO BY NANCY WONG, 1977

In this picture, Joe Diones, a tenant of the I-Hotel and president of the Tenants Association looks out the window at one of the protests.

URBAN RENEWAL POLICIES
CONTRIBUTED TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE I-HOTEL

- The Federal Housing Act of 1954 required cities to have urban renewal programs before they could receive funding
- The Community Redevelopment Act was adopted in San Francisco to create said urban renewal program
- Having a "non-white population" was penalized under the city's scoring system for grading neighborhoods and determining if they were blighted

CONSEQUENCES OF URBAN RENEWAL

Neighborhoods like Manilatown were destroyed and communities were displaced. Many cities are still largely segregated, especially because of redlining and whites-only federal housing loans.

SO WHAT?

All of this happened decades ago. Most Filipino residents relocated to other parts of San Francisco, with or without help from the city government. However, the struggle for affordable housing continues in San Francisco and many cities across the country - including Ann Arbor! The story of Manilatown and the I-Hotel can teach us the importance of united communities and policies that support all people, not just the wealthy and white.

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