

# LANDMARKS

THE UNDERGRADUATE GEOGRAPHY JOURNAL  
volume four | 2018



# LANDMARKS

THE UNDERGRADUATE GEOGRAPHY JOURNAL  
volume four | 2018

**cover art**

Miriam Tingle

Online version available at: [geography.utoronto.ca](http://geography.utoronto.ca)  
Contact us at: [landmarks.journal@gmail.com](mailto:landmarks.journal@gmail.com)



Geography & Planning  
**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**

# EDITORIAL TEAM

---

## **editors**

Billie Rose Owen  
Alison Zhou  
Alexis Green  
Anne James  
Kimberly Hill-Tout  
Oi Lai  
Tina Lee  
Hafsah Siddiqui  
Shailee Shah  
Elsie Lewison

---

## **contributors**

Jordan Ali  
John Connor  
Lucy Fang  
Atif Khan  
Fay Lin  
Ally Mair  
Aayesha Patel  
Hayley Roberts  
Daniel Romm  
Ghazal Sobhan Sarbandi  
Daniel J. Vanderhorst

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Hydrogeomorphic Responses Following Dam Removals <i>John Connor</i>	6
American Empire and "New Imperialism": How Geographers Approached the War on Terror from 2001-2006 <i>Jordan Ali</i>	14
The Colonial Present: Guantanamo Bay, Legality and American Empire <i>Atif Khan</i>	22
Redirected Dominance and the Female Chinese International Student in Vancouver <i>Lucy Fang</i>	30
Your Body or Your Life: Trans Acceptance Over Queer Exclusion in Contemporary Iran <i>Ally Mair</i>	36
Public Commentary on Ontario's Parks System: Nature Narratives and Where They Come From <i>Daniel Romm</i>	44
Is Home Where The Land Is? In Search of Green Living From Contemporary Eco-Homes to the Back-to-the-Land Movement of the 1970s <i>Fay Lin</i>	54
Critical Analysis of Gentrification in South Parkdale <i>Ghazal Sobhan-Sarbandi</i>	62
Spadina Ave: How the Public and Private Support of the Creative Economy Has Shaped the Fashion District <i>Daniel J. Vanderborst</i>	70
Dismantle Not Reform: Confronting The Regressive Effects of Canada's Supply Management <i>Hayley Roberts</i>	80
Behind the Blooms: Contradictions in the Cut Flower Global Commodity Chain <i>Aayesha Patel</i>	90

# INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The social sciences and humanities have taken a spatial turn in the last several years. Concepts such as “space” and “place” are being recognized as analytical instruments useful not only for geographers and planners, but for anyone curious about better understanding the world they live in. Scholars in disciplines ranging from Critical Race and Women and Gender Studies, to English, Health, and Economics, are writing and thinking in their respective disciplines spatially. Meanwhile, growing attention to the social dimensions of natural processes and, conversely, the materiality of social relations, is troubling long-standing disciplinary boundaries. In this moment, geography is coming into its own as a versatile site of engagement across fields of study.

*Landmarks: The Undergraduate Journal of Geography* captures this convergence of different modes of scholarly inquiry. The fourth volume features a sample of the exemplary work being done by our students. Some authors engage creatively with environment-society relations through a single object or case study, such as the cut flower or agricultural commodity chains. Others focus instead on the embodied and aspirational dimensions of geographies in Iran and Vancouver, Canada with articles on the politics of race, gender, and sexuality. Others focus on physical forms, be it the architecture of One Spadina Crescent or hydrology. And others yet contributed theoretical discussions and critical media projects that examine how place is embedded with psychic and cultural meaning. Together these pieces are threaded by issues of power and social justice, as well as concerns for the implications of the analysis, whether it be directed to policy makers, academics, or community members.

We want to thank the many students who submitted their papers for publication this year. As always, 2017-2018 presented us with an overwhelming selection of papers that reflect the breadth and talent of the UofT community. All were a pleasure to read.

This volume is the product of a great deal of collaboration and dialogue between our authors, editors, and managing editor. We thank everyone involved for the work, care, and generosity they placed in this project. We would also like to extend our appreciation to the Toronto Undergraduate Geography Society, the Department of Geography & Planning, and the Arts & Science Students Union at the University of Toronto for their ongoing support to the journal.

The Landmarks Editorial Board

# HYDROGEOMORPHIC RESPONSES FOLLOWING DAM REMOVALS

By John Connor

---

Current studies on dam removals include a combination of empirical, conceptual, mathematical, and flume models that provide a theoretical basis for understanding post-fluvial regimes following the removal of a dam. The geomorphic effects of dam removals involve many upstream and downstream parameters that vary considerably depending on reservoir size, degree of filling, and sediment characteristics (Connor et al. 2012). Furthermore, removal approaches must organize and control the style and rate of removal. Following a dam removal, functional connectivity reestablishes over time between the upper and lower reaches of a river. Upstream and downstream responses are coupled into diverse multifaceted systems that make up the post-fluvial regime occurring after a removal (Grant & Lewis 2015). As such, this paper will examine related hydrogeomorphic responses involved in post-removal fluvial regimes by discussing key parameters considered in theoretical models and empirical observations. The paper will also investigate examples of how riparian vegetation responds in this context, as well as some of the theoretical limitations discovered from field results.

## Hydraulic Geometry

Temporal variations throughout a river channel are observed at given locations where cross-sectional parameters – channel width, depth, and velocity – are measured to compare rates of change between sites and characterize how these parameters fluctuate in relation to discharge rates (Wohl, 2014). In other words, changes in these parameters are recorded and examined at multiple stations over time to compare hydraulic responses throughout a given river system. Hence, this conceptual model, also known as at-a-station hydraulic geometry, is useful for investigating changes at the site of a dam removal and provides a systematic field technique for observing geomorphic changes and responses in a post-fluvial regime. By incorporating the model, spatial and temporal changes can be examined by observing changes in downstream hydraulics. For instance, field studies measure changes in channel morphology at multiple cross-sections above and below a dam to examine temporal variability of hydraulic geometry throughout different reaches of a river's longitudinal profile. Thus, hydraulic geometry provides an important investigative tool for assessing temporal variations in upstream and downstream geomorphic responses following a dam removal and characterizing the post-fluvial regime.

## Upstream Reservoir Erosion

Construction of a dam disconnects the upper and lower reaches of a river system by restricting or preventing water flow and inhibiting sediment discharge into the lower reaches. Sediment accumulates in the reservoir that forms upstream following construction. Over time, sediment consolidates. A change in base level occurs and creates a base level drop to the lower reaches of the river.

A knickpoint forms. When a dam is removed, changes in channel gradient and sediment discharge impose a new flow regime. Particularly, a knickpoint consolidates in the upper reach of the dam before removal and leaves a vertical discontinuity between the upper and lower reaches following the removal of a dam. Moreover, knickpoints become subject to abrasion from driving forces. In short, dam removals induce changes throughout a river's longitudinal profile by influencing base level, rate of migration, and sediment load from developing headcuts or stepped knickpoints (Sawaske & Freyberg, 2012). Water and sediment discharge then incise or cut into the alluvium deposits of the knickpoint wherever driving forces exceed resisting forces.

Initial responses are attributable to the method and rate of dam removal. They can be either instantaneous, staged, or phased. Instantaneous dam removal occurs all at once, whereas staged and phased removals incrementally remove sections of a dam over a given period of time in order to mitigate any adverse effects from excessive water and sediment inputs. O'Connor, Duda, and Grant (2017) note that the two methods result in very dissimilar post-dam fluvial responses. Rapid removals result in a stabilized regime within months or years whereas phased removals are continuously subject to perturbations over decades. However, smaller increments field studies have also shown smaller dams do not substantially impact long-term channel morphology. Thus, despite long recovery rates that may occur as a result of drastic changes in the flow regime, rivers have shown to be resilient to changes induced by a dam removal. However, the extent of hydrogeomorphic changes will vary greatly from one removal to the next depending on a river's surrounding topography and the duration of a dam's existence. In effect, topography and channel geometry are important for water and sediment discharges.

The rate and magnitude of reservoir erosion are controlled by discharge volumes and sediment properties (Stewart & Grant, 2005). Incision processes are intensified throughout the delta and up-stream channel as a result of increases in flow velocities that depend on discharge rate and channel slope. This is supported by Lane's Balance, a conceptual model used to understand cross-sectional parameters in channel adjustment and stated that a river's channel gradient (S) and discharge rate (Qw) are proportional to the sediment load (Qs) and grain size (Ds) (Wohl, 2014). If the parameters are not in equilibrium, aggradation or degradation is resulted. Dust and Wohl's equation expands on Lane's Balance by accounting for geometric adjustments in channel cross-sections, planforms, and bedforms (Equation 1). Specifically, the equation indicates that the slope of a channel is proportional to changes in elevation ( $\Delta z$ ) and corresponds inversely with sinuosity (P), bedform amplitude (Ha), and width/depth ratio (w/d). We can apply this concept to predict how channel geometry would adjust following the removal of a dam.

$$Q_w \left( \frac{\Delta z}{P H_a} \right) \propto Q_s D_s \left( \frac{w}{d} \right)$$

*Equation 1.* Dust and Wohl's expanded equation to account for geometric changes in a channel's cross-section, planform, and bedform (Wohl, 2014).

For example, researchers observed significant discharge rates resulting from substantial incision into sediment fill and subsequent base level lowering immediately following a removal on Pelham River in Washington (Magillingan, Nislow, Kynard, & Hackman, 2016). In other words, the channel gradient decreased from mobilized sediment incising into the alluvium and lowering base level in the upper reaches while causing aggradation downstream. Moreover, fluvial studies indicate it is



not uncommon for fine sediment particles to transport beyond predicted downstream reaches. As such, the influence of discharge and grain size can result in exaggerated responses downstream aggradation that have not been measured in many field studies (Gartner, Magilligan, & Renshaw, 2015). Nevertheless, Dust and Wohl's expanded concept of Lane's Balance provides a useful model for predicting potential responses in post-removal fluvial regimes.

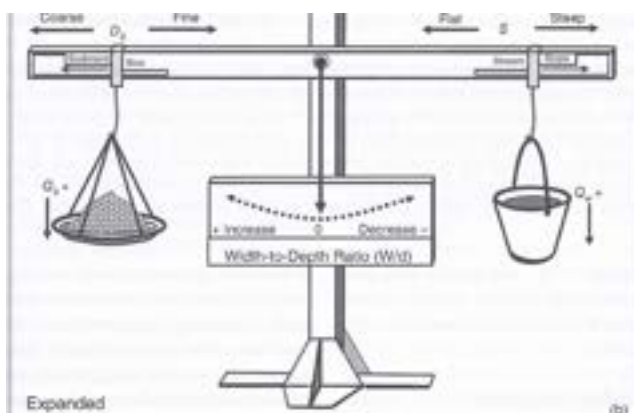


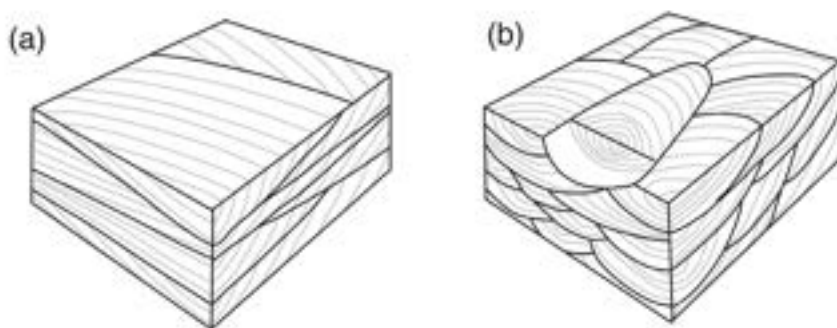
Figure 1. Conceptualized illustration of Dust and Wohl's extended interpretation to account for hydraulic geometry in channel cross-sections, planforms, and bedforms (Wohl, 2014, p. 131).

Incision at exposed knickpoints changes the step height and rate of migration, creating a temporary positive feedback loop that increases discharge and channel slope (Pizzuto, 2002). Moreover, channel deepening from incision processes may cause channel margins to become unstable and susceptible to bank failure; this can lead to increases in channel width and aggradation along channel margins (Kim, Toda, & Tsujimoto, 2015). Incision rates depend on the volume, level of cohesion, and grain size of stored sediments (Sawaske & Freyberg, 2012). In particular, the measure of cohesion in sediment particles - the degree of resistance to erosion - influences incision processes related to bank instability and knickpoint migration (Sawaske & Freyberg, 2012). For example, Sawaske and Freyberg (2012) demonstrate cohesive or consolidated sediment exhibited much lower ranges of eroded volumes compared to non-cohesive or unconsolidated materials following a removal. In other words, cohesive materials exhibited a higher erosional threshold compared to non-cohesive deposits. In addition to cohesiveness, the manner in which alluvium deposits are layered can influence the rate of erosion in the post-fluvial regime (Sawaske & Freyberg, 2012). For instance, all rivers with cohesive or layered deposits in Sawaske and Freyberg's study (2012) showed lower rates of knickpoint migration over time compared to unconsolidated, un-cohesive alluvium deposits. This conclusion supports the Lane's Balance model as their results show that peak and average flow rates, and channel gradient were related to sediment load and grain size (Sawaske & Freyberg, 2012).

However, it is important to consider erosional processes are not uniform as they vary over space and time depending on topography, vegetation, and seasonal patterns. For instance, Gartner et al. (2015) emphasizes that the physiogeographic setting of Ashuekot River in New Hampshire caused variable resistances to erosion along the bed and banks of a channel's longitudinal profile. Particularly, no knickpoint migration occurred in the upper post-fluvial regime due to the presence of glaciofluvial bed materials. In other words, bedrock material resisted the driving forces that facilitate incision and knickpoint migration. Moreover, field studies consistently show bedrock

materials exhibit high resistances to erosion (Gartner et al., 2015; Magilligan et al., 2016). Together, lithology and rock structure influence erosional resistance as materials can vary greatly in chemical composition, texture, and material strength. All these factors influence the degree of fracturing, shearing, and deformation (Bierman & Montgomery, 2014).

In addition to incision processes, erosion can also mobilize layers of sediment. In effect, the planimetric morphology consists of both planar and trough cross-stratification (Figure 2). Although dams are typically dominated by incision following a removal, erosional processes are important for impacts on the downstream reaches. Particularly, increased sediment yields facilitate particular bed configurations such as ripples, dunes, and antidunes, and can substantially increase grain resistance when substrates mix with larger grain sizes (Wohl, 2014). The resulting bedforms are the first control on local flow resistances (Wohl, 2014). Thus, driving processes and subsequent geomorphic effects of upstream erosion are closely related to responses in the downstream reaches of a river, and the presence or absence of resistant elements depends on flow and depositional history.



*Figure 2.* Planimetric morphology illustrating (a) planar cross-bedding, and (b) trough cross-bedding (Wohl, 2014, p. 26).

### **Downstream Geomorphic Responses**

A change in base level may increase the longitudinal discharge velocity and intensify abrasion processes that begin cutting into the knickpoint's alluvium deposits. In other words, changes between the width and depth of a river's longitudinal profile occur as a result of incision processes entraining alluvium deposits at exposed knickpoints following a dam removal (O'Connor et al., 2017). Hence, width and depth ratio is an important hydraulic parameter for measuring changes in channel morphology. Major controls on width/depth ratios include discharge, grain size, channel slope, and vegetation density (Wohl, 2014). Moreover, Wohl's (2014) extension of Lane's Balance indicated that discharge facilitates aggradation and reduces sinuosity, bedform amplitude, width/depth ratios, grain size, and channel slope. These relationships are important indicators of hydrologic variability and would be used to demonstrate geomorphic responses downstream.

Downstream responses immediately after a dam removal are regulated by sediment influxes along and above the channel. Suspended and bed load flux are determined by sedimentation dynamics such as grain density, shape, and size, as well as the sorting and imbrication of particles (Wohl, 2014). In addition, sediment mobilization along the bed depends on how particles rotate, slide, and saltate (Wohl, 2014). Particle structure and velocity are closely related to processes governing

entrainment. Field studies have demonstrated that different sedimentological conditions can produce highly dissimilar effects on post-fluvial regimes. The importance of sediment properties on knickpoint migration following dam removal was further exemplified by Sawaske and Freyberg's study (2012). Their study results demonstrated that differences in sediment structure and texture dictate the magnitude and the extent of erosion and deposition downstream. Again, upstream erosion regulates downstream reaches.

Regardless of a rapid or staged removal, substantial volumes of sediment fill are temporally entrained, transported, and distributed to various longitudinal reaches downstream (Cui et al., 2016; Grant & Lewis, 2015). Downstream deposits cause aggradation and sedimentological changes throughout the bed and floodplain. These changes depend on the coupling of upstream and downstream reactions controlled by multifaceted behaviors and processes. Transient sediment loads are one way to examine these dynamic processes. For instance, changes in vertical velocity and turbulence can cause sudden increases in energy that disintegrates particles. In effect, these perturbations cause waves of sediment to become entrained, also known as pulses of sediment (Pace, Tullos, Walter, Lancaster, & Segura, 2017).

Downstream responses are controlled by two forms of sediment pulse behaviour. Translational behaviour is characterized by uniform sediment transport and constant wave amplitude; whereas dispersive behaviour is associated with concentrated sediment pulses that diminish with time (Pace et al., 2017). Flume experiments, modelling results, and field studies conclude that dispersion dominates sediment transport (Pizzuto, 2002; Pace et al., 2016). As a result, influences throughout the downstream reach are determined by the magnitude of sediment wave dispersion and volume of sediment supply in proportion to channel transport capacity. Moreover, pulses of sediment result in a heterogeneous sediment stratigraphy and facilitate the formation and degradation of bedforms, bars, pools and riffles, and base levels (Pizzuto, 2002). For example, a staged removal at the Elwha River in Washington resulted in low sediment concentrations which impeded downstream migration (East et al., 2015). Channel morphology encountered minimal changes from aggradation during the first year; however, during the second year, sediment pulses from the former Lake Mills reservoir increased sediment yields in the regime, thereby resulting in planform adjustments. Particularly, aggradation – especially throughout the middle reach – covered riffle crests and formed numerous bars to the extent that downstream reached a change to a braided channel morphology. Thus, East et al. (2015) concluded that changes in morphology were dominated by sediment-wave dispersion resulting in pool filling, mainstream bed aggradation, and bed sediment fining due to excess sediment supply in relation to transport capacity.

### **Potential Riparian Vegetation Development**

Riparian vegetation can facilitate the stabilization of exposed sediments and reduce downstream transport volumes (Kim et al., 2015). Initial upstream channel incision and subsequent bank failure supplies mostly fine sediment to depositional reaches downstream as stream power dissipates (Kim et al., 2015). In turn, downstream aggradation facilitates the formation of bars, bedforms, and new flood plains depending on the duration, frequency, magnitude, and timing of inundation (Kim et al., 2015). Hence, these hydrologic gradients are the primary factors that inhibit or enable riparian colonization and subsequent succession. However, long term riparian responses can also be dictated by other temporal and spatial changes downstream. For instance, channel planforms typically adjust from a meandering morphology to a braiding morphology in relation to increases in stream power, bank erosion, grain size, and bedload transport rate (Wohl, 2014). In effect, the downstream planform controls and adjusts to upstream changes and a new flow regime provides

opportunities for vegetation to establish and propagate.

Results from a field study on the Kootenai River, in Idaho, Montana, and Flathead River in British Columbia demonstrated the differences between braided and meandering channel planforms on riparian propagation and succession in reaches impacted by the dam removal (Egger et al., 2015). The study suggested that braided rivers are more likely to have unstable conditions that impede plant growth compared to rivers that are more sinuous. Their results confirmed this hypothesis as lower success rates for colonization and succession were observed in the braided reaches, and indexes of shear stress and inundation durations were considerably higher compared to the meandering reaches. In other words, stream power rates were much higher in the braided reaches and were more vulnerable to bank erosion. In addition, bed formations in the braided reaches have less resistance to erosional forces due to temporal changes in the flow regime. Overall, the study concluded that high sediment turnover rates in braided rivers would inhibit long term plant growth. Moreover, current fluvial literature shows that sinuous channels have higher rates of successional growth in contrast to braided rivers, particularly with native shrubs and trees (Kim et al., 2015). Studies also indicate that this is closely related to the balance between discharge and slope, and sediment load and particle size, also referred as the river equilibrium (Sawaske & Freyberg, 2012).

The state of equilibrium in a river, which means a balance in the flow regime, results in lower sediment turnover rates. This is closely related to the success of riparian development. In addition, strategies to remove dams largely impact the magnitude and frequency of perturbations. For example, staged removal methods mitigate changes in base levels and reduce erosional processes downstream which can stabilize exposed sediments and permit riparian colonization (Sawaske & Freyberg, 2012). More importantly, dam removals can reconnect native plant communities from seeds entering the river before dispersing throughout the lower bed and floodplain reaches. Future studies may provide new insights into the impacts of hydrochory dispersal and riparian vegetation responses. For instance, Cubley and Brown (2016) sampled hydrochorous seeds following two dam removals at Elwha River, and their predictions of dispersal throughout the downstream reach of

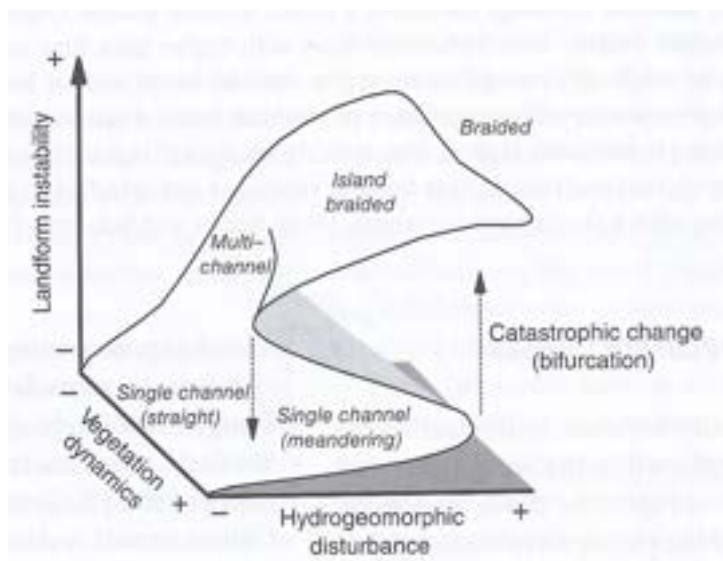


Figure 3. Distinction in planform thresholds with respect to discharge, slope, width and depth. (Wohl, 2014, p. 145).

their study highly underestimated the number of successfully germinated seeds and the number of developing species recorded. In turn, this led to higher rates of connectivity. For instance, the continuity concept states that discharge is equal to the product of a channel's width, depth, and velocity. Hence, as channel width and depth increase from bank failure and incision processes following a dam removal, aggradation and subsequent bedforms may begin to support plant communities dispersed from upstream. In short, the post-dam fluvial regime stabilizes over time and reestablishes functional connectivity between the upper and lower reaches.

### **Limitations of Empirical Observations and Theoretical Models**

Field studies have indicated predictive models do not always account for particularly important parameters affecting geomorphic responses. For instance, the Shields number quantifies the entrainment of non-cohesive sediments, particularly sand-bed channels, by dividing the critical shear stress by the approximate weight of a substrate particle (Wohl, 2014). This dimensionless critical shear stress can vary greatly depending on how studies define and measure sediment entrainment and determine their range of average conditions. Moreover, empirical values can also vary due to changes in sediment distribution and flow roughness (Wohl, 2014). Gartner et al. (2015) showed that dam removals can vary from conventional knickpoint migration and incision process models to spatial variations in bed materials affecting sediment supply. Moreover, their results demonstrated that Shields criteria did not successfully predict depositional zones. Data collected from a one-kilometer reach indicated that calculated Shields values exceeded the critical threshold predicted for entrainment, yet were observed as depositional zones. More interestingly, results showed that the depositional reach exhibited equal or greater Shields values compare to reaches where erosional processes were dominant. O'Connor et al. (2017) argued that synthesis between empirical and theoretical models require studies of longer durations and a wider range of locations, specifically, locations of latitudes that are important to biological and physical responses. Moreover, sediment transport beyond a survey boundary can underestimate downstream responses, and this is common in many empirical studies (Kim et al., 2015).

### **Conclusion**

Hydraulic geometry provides important empirical methods for examining changes at a channel's cross-section. These in-situ approaches are used to measure temporal and spatial changes throughout a channel's longitudinal profile, and provide the most accurate and reliable means of assessing geomorphic effects that follow a dam removal. Sudden increase in concentrated sediment loads induces incision processes typically with subsequent knickpoint migration. Changes in width and depth affect the channel's morphology downstream depending on the volume of sediment discharged. Lane's and Wohl's conceptual equations are important hydraulic models of hydrogeomorphic changes and are supported by fluvial field studies that have examined dam removals. Moreover, hydrogeomorphic processes are important for producing alluviums that facilitate bank stabilization and riparian vegetation propagation further downstream, as well as restoring a river's functional connectivity between the upper and lower reaches following a dam removal. The style of removal, sediment structure, grain size, and volume of sediment supply characterizes important hydraulic parameters involved in the primary hydrogeomorphic processes associated with dam removals. However, rivers are highly dynamic and are influenced by many other factors at the watershed scale. Thus, future empirical studies need to observe longer downstream reaches over larger scales for extended durations to provide new insights into post-fluvial regimes.

## References

- Bierman, P. R. & Montgomery, D.R. (2013). Key concepts in geomorphology. New York: W.H. Freeman & Co.
- Cui, Y., Booth, D.B., Monschke, J., Gentzler, S., Roadifer, J., Greimann, B. & Cluer, B. (2016). Analyses of the erosion of fine sediment deposit for a large dam-removal project: An empirical approach. *International Journal of River Basin Management*, 15, 103-114.
- Cuble, E.S. & Brown, R.L. (2016). Restoration of hydrochory following dam removal on the Elwha River, Washington. *River Research and Applications*, 32, 1566-1575.
- East, A., Pess, G., Bountry, J., Magirl, C., Ritchie, A., Logan, J., Randle, T., Mastin, M., Minear, J., Duda, J., Liermann, M. McHenry, M., Beechie, T. & Shafroth, P. (2015). Large-scale dam removal on the Elwha River. Washington: River Channel and Floodplain Geomorphic Change.
- Egger, G., Politti, E., Lautsch, E., Benjankar, R., Gill, K.M. & Rood, S.B. (2015). Floodplain forest succession reveals fluvial processes: A hydrogeomorphic model for temperate riparian woodlands. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 161, 72-82.
- Gartner, J.D., Magilligan, F.J. & Renshaw, C.E. (2015). Predicting the Type, Location and Magnitude of Geomorphic Responses to Dam Removal: Role of Hydrologic and Geomorphic Constraints. *Geomorphology*, 251, 20-30.
- Grant, G.E. & Lewis, S.L. (2015). The Remains of the dam: What have we learned from 15 years of US dam removals? *Engineering Geology for Society and Territory*, 3, 31-35.
- Kim, S., Toda, Y. & Tsujimoto, T. (2015). Geomorphological and riparian vegetation responses following a Low-Head Dam Removal: A study based on literature review. *International Journal of River Basin Management*, 13, 315-324.
- Magilligan, F.J., Nislow, K.H., Kynard, B.E. & Hackman, A.M. (2016). Immediate changes in stream channel geomorphology, aquatic habitat, and fish assemblages following dam removal in a small upland catchment. *Geomorphology*, 252, 158-170.
- O'Connor, J., Duda, J. & Grant, G. (2015). 1000 dams down and counting. *Science*, 348, 496.
- Pace, K.M., Tullios, D., Walter, C., Lancaster, S. & Segura, C. (2017). Sediment pulse behaviour following dam removal in gravel-bed rivers. *River Research and Applications*, 33, 102-112.
- Pizzuto, J. (2002). Effects of dam removal on river form and process. *BioScience*, 52, 683-691.
- Sawaske, S.R. & Freyberg, D.L. (2012). A comparison of past small dam removals in highly sediment-impacted systems in the U.S. *Geomorphology*, 151-152, 50-58.
- Stewart, G. & Grant, G. (2005). What can we learn from the removal of little dinky dams? *Watershed Management Conference 2005*. 1-7.
- Wohl, E. (2014). *Rivers in the landscape: Science and management*. Singapore: Markono.

# AMERICAN EMPIRE AND "NEW IMPERIALISM": HOW GEOGRAPHERS APPROACHED THE WAR ON TERROR FROM 2001-2006

By Jordan Ali

---

Soon after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 came the war in Afghanistan, and then the war in Iraq. Prominent scholars including David Harvey, Derek Gregory, Neil Smith, Edward Said, Michael Ignatieff, Niall Ferguson, and Noam Chomsky were among the first to approach these event in their work. I focus on publications from these scholars and others between 2001 to 2006, a period that covered 9/11 through to the early years of the wars. What makes this period important is the urgency of that moment in time. This was an opportunity to hypothesize, observe, and make conclusions as history was unfolding. Through these works, I argue that geographical scholarship at this particular moment in question—the terror attacks of 9/11—represent a culmination of anxieties regarding the efficacy of American liberal diplomacy moving forward. I demonstrate how these authors make visible the underlying contradictions of coercion and consent practiced in the making and maintenance of American empire, and grapple with what it means for the universality of American liberalism to be challenged on the world stage.

## Introduction

Soon after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 came the war in Afghanistan, and then in Iraq. As these wars unfolded, some geographers and others writing with varying degrees of attention to spatiality critically engaged with the existence of an American empire in the face of a nation in denial, and worked through what these wars might mean for the future of American imperialism. Prominent scholars including David Harvey, Derek Gregory, Neil Smith, Edward Said, Michael Ignatieff, Niall Ferguson, and Noam Chomsky were among the first to take up this work, particularly from 2001 to 2006, a period that covered 9/11 through to the early years of the wars. This paper focuses on select publications from these authors during this period for two reasons. First, the overwhelming amount of related scholarship published during this time and thereafter speaks to the impact of these events and the influence they had. Second, although some of these authors have vastly different analytical frameworks, political leanings, and backgrounds, there is consensus on many of the major points raised; they are clearly talking about the same imperialism. This allows for meaningful cross-analysis where these texts converge and differ.

In the following sections, I recount how cases for the existence and implications of American imperialism were argued in select publications between 2001-2006 through the use of key themes such as American liberalism and its relationship with globalization Heartland theory, and imaginative geographies of terror. I situate these works within discussions of the ways in which geographers have discussed American imperialism prior to and after this period to demonstrate its influence. By no means is this an exhaustive reading of how geographers have treated imperialism as

this period is not unique for dealing with imperialism, or even American imperialism at that (Bowen, 1985; Said, 1978), What makes this period important is the urgency of that moment in time. This was an opportunity to hypothesize, observe, and make conclusions as history was unfolding. I argue that geographical scholarship at this particular moment in question—the terror attacks of 9/11—represents a culmination of anxieties regarding the efficacy of American liberal diplomacy moving forward. I demonstrate how these authors make visible the underlying contradictions of coercion and consent practiced in the making and maintenance of American empire and grapple with what it means for the universality of American liberalism to be challenged on the world stage.

### **Politics and Economics: Globalization as the Vehicle for American Liberalism**

Smith's *End Game of Globalization* investigates liberalism past the confines of twentieth century America. The squabble between neoconservatives and neoliberals in the US under the singular title of liberalism is a testament to the triumph of this ideology. Smith noted that through writing classical liberalism into the US constitution, a “natural liberalism”, a term which he credits to Louis Hartz, emerged as “an appeal to liberty, equality, and freedom that root[s] its claims in a philosophy of natural rights... common to all man” (Smith, 2005, p. 31). As such, the US constitution was conceived as the antithesis of the British Empire the the US wrestled their independence from. To be American is to be naturally of these “universal,” liberal ideals, supposedly, and these ideals form the basis for American nationalism.

Bishai (2004) explored the contradictions built into the liberal imperialism imposed by America to discuss the ways in which the tenets it holds, such as plurality and toleration, are achieved through coercive force which undermine those same universal values it stakes claim to. She also explained how liberalism produces the exceptionalism of American identity, the cultural driver of empire, and prevents citizens from recognizing their nation as an empire. The plurality and tolerance that liberalism champions in theory is limited by the global dominance of the empire that keeps outsiders to the margins. She said, “...[it] ought to be a globally beneficial and acceptable model... [but] policing must occur to marginalize dissent that departs from the moral core that is obvious to all rational people” (Bishai, 2004, p. 52). Further down, she unpacks the “supreme irony” of liberal empire, which is that its universal liberal identity is predicated upon normalizing difference within. This appears to be neither plural nor tolerant.

Some other key elements of liberalism are “economic openness – free trade, free labour movement and free capital flows” (Ferguson, 2004, p. 184). Through organizations like the IMF, the World Bank, and the US Treasury Department, all of which the US has significant influence within, the rules of global economic engagement are set and these rules have consistently supported free markets. This has been problematic for developing countries that are coerced into opening their markets in exchange for debt-financed assistance. Reforms through these means have had little success in those countries. Through this highly unequal power dynamic, a global economy conducive to American exploitation is produced. In this way, globalization only appears to operate as a deterritorialized expansion of the American empire.

The lack of formal empire suggests that territory is not so important to the building and maintenance of American empire, but territory is still critical to the imperial project. The use of this deterritorialized facade is explained in many ways, but one of which is as an aversion to grand colonial projects. Not only are these costly, but they give the outward appearance of empire, a title



that Americans have staunchly rejected. This rejection may be because empire and by extension, colonialism stand contradictory to the liberal values that American Nationalism is founded upon (Smith, 2005, p. 49). This approach achieves imperialist control while adhering to the above. Smith is careful not to say that power becomes deterritorialized. Instead, Smith asserts that power “is always specific to particular places” (p. 51), which is echoed in Harvey’s New Imperialism. Harvey points to similar tensions between the liberal capitalist imperatives to break down market barriers and promote individual rights and freedoms, and the territorializing drive to capture and control resources and territories.

Smith and Bishai, along with others like Harvey, Ignatieff, and Ferguson, are cognizant of a shift in the approach of the American empire that begins with the events of 9/11. First, diplomacy is carried out by garnering international support through the espousal of a universal liberalism. Thereafter, it is traded in for a model of coercion backed by military might. Though the approach was transformed, what remained unchanged was the hegemonic power of the American empire and its claim to morality. The transformation is cyclical and made visible by the works of Harvey, Nourzhanov, and Chomsky, who illustrated the continued presence of coercive territorial strategies of empire that harken back to the imperial geopolitics of the turn of the twentieth century.

### **Reviving the Heartland Theory: Heartland Theory within the Broader Field of Geopolitics**

At the turn of the twentieth century, Halford Mackinder, geographer and defender of British Empire, published one of his most influential works, “The Geographical Pivot of History.” Imperialists like Mackinder were concerned by the changing geopolitical landscape in which Britain’s power appeared to be increasingly compromised by rising powers in Asia. Mackinder’s publication, often referred to as Heartland theory, divided the world into geographical sections of influence, or stepping stones to global power. This theory designated a large swath of land central to Eurasia (Mackinder, 2004), despite vast regional differences throughout, as the geographical pivot of history and goes on to justify its control as of the utmost importance to European stability in the future. He worked to portray a cohesive and ordered Europe, with Britain at the helm of course, locked into a timeless war with an ever-changing horde of Asian forces. The concerned language he used hints that he felt Britain’s supremacy could be up-ended by the awakening of Germany and Russia. Mackinder’s strategic geographies of influence gave way to the emerging body of work that would become geopolitics. In so doing, he embedded an ever-present threat of a chaotic and savage Asia encroaching upon a just and righteous Europe.

In discussing the geo-strategic importance of oil in relation to Iraq’s position within the Middle East in his book, *The New Imperialism*, Harvey evoked the language of Mackinder’s Heartland theory. He said, “...whoever controls the Middle East controls the global oil spigot and whoever controls the global oil spigot can control the economy...” (Harvey, 2003, p. 19). He used this to explain why toppling Saddam Hussein’s regime and gaining further ground in the region would be of interest to the American empire if oil was to be its primary concern. Likewise, Chomsky explained that Iraq, by having the second largest oil reserves in the region and the ease by which it can be accessed, is an advantageous position to hold for the US (Chomsky, 2005, p. 6). Intentionally, it would seem, Harvey’s phrase was almost identical to one found in Mackinder’s *Democratic Ideals and Reality* which read: “Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; Who rules the World-Island commands the World” (Mac-

kinder, 1962, p. 106). Although Harvey's language obviously called upon the geopolitical writing of Mackinder, Harvey's analysis was more sophisticated in its approach. While Mackinder's conceptualization of global power was limited to a vague control of territory alone, Harvey considered more deeply the economic dynamics underlying Heartland geopolitics. Comparing Mackinder and Harvey's simplification of their respective geopolitical landscapes, parallels are drawn between Britain-Eurasia and the US-Middle East. However, further readings of the geopolitics underlying Mackinder and Harvey's pieces bring forth questions about Russia's relatively fixed position across both contexts.

Nourzhanov (2006) mentions that even after the Cold War was over, the US had extended new containment policies aimed at preventing Russian control in the Middle East. In substituting the American for the British empire, he explicitly called upon the logic of the Heartland theory to explain that US global dominance was dependent on keeping "continental powers [Russia, Iran, and China] from forming an alliance capable of challenging US hegemony" (Nourzhanov, 2006, p. 65). Nourzhanov's analysis was a departure from Mackinder's more simplistic models of territory as power and like Harvey, he noted that oil played a role in so far as it represented a superficial justification for American occupation in the region, and that "oil [was] merely a pretext for a struggle for domination that really belong[ed] to the bygone era of the Cold War or even classical nineteenth century imperialism" (Nourzhanov, 2006, p. 64). Harvey recalled how Henry Kissinger, once Secretary of State and National Security Advisor of the US, claimed the global power alignments at the start of the War on Terror resembled that of the nineteenth century, and that Kissinger was genuinely concerned that the US could not challenge a powerful Eurasian block (Harvey, 2003, p. 85). Nourzhanov suggested that the danger in pursuing Mackinderian geopolitics in the region, which arguably find resonance with Kissinger, was that it would likely be counterproductive in fighting the War on Terror by bringing further instability to the region. The parallels drawn between the containment strategies used by the US during the Cold War and thereafter, and the geopolitics of Mackinder are evident in both Nourzhanov and Harvey's analyses. However, both Nourzhanov and Harvey diverged from Mackinder in important ways. For example, they work through Heartland theory to explain the unfolding of events rather than to prescribe particular foreign policies. Additionally, their analyses add depth to the simplistic narrative of the Heartland by investigating historical precedence and economic dynamics alongside each other. This speaks to the lingering influence of the Heartland theory and its cyclical revival during these major geopolitical moments stretching from the fin de siècle, to the World Wars, the Cold War, and then in Iraq and Afghanistan.

### **Imaginative Geographies: The War on Terror**

Borrowing heavily from the work of Edward Said, Gregory discussed the ways in which imaginative geographies produce spaces that enable war through case studies of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine. The concept of imaginative geographies refers to the ways in which places and by relation, people are socially constructed and represented because of their positions within hegemonic relationships (Said, 1979). Gregory said, "[p]eople go to war because of how they see, perceive, picture, imagine and speak of others: that is, how they construct the difference of others as well as the sameness of themselves through representation" (2004, p. 20). This implied that cultural differences produce conditions under which one "type" can be cast as superior or inferior to another, thus justifying whatever treacherous actions might ensue. By extension, imaginative geographies portray culture as a passive collection of attributes that can be manipulated to fit some agenda.

Gregory made a point of stressing that culture is not just a reflection of the world, but that “culture underwrites power even as power elaborates culture” (2004, p. 8). Understanding that culture is constructed rather than a naturally occurring phenomenon highlighted the power dynamics within hegemonic relationships responsible for doing so.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 became a platform for constructing, or at least revisiting the previously established constructions of the Middle East and Islam, an exercise that Said (2003) explains, has been continually practiced after the 18th Century invasion of Egypt by Napoleon. In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, Bush used terms like “barbarians” and the “civilized,” and characterized the impending war as a “crusade” (Gregory, 2004, p. 19). This language has roots in liberalism and the Christian crusades. Gregory quoted Fareed Zakaria who said in an essay, “America remains the universal nation, the country people across the world believe should speak for universal values” (2004, p. 23). Later in this same passage, Gregory quoted Veena Das’ analysis, which similarly argues that America is constructed as the privileged site of universal values. Smith also tapped into the far-reaching influence of America as a value system when referring to the phrase, “We Are All Americans Now”, which made appearances in solidarity movements across the world post-9/11 (2005, p. 8). Referring to the previous section in this essay, the model of diplomacy rooted in liberalism that is articulated through global institutions like the UN, the IMF, the World Bank, and others played a crucial role in producing these moments of solidarity. The construction of the US as the site of universal values has allowed American imperialism to globalize the geographical imaginations of a barbaric Afghanistan and Iraq, and by extension through Islam, the entire Middle East.

From Said’s Orientalism, Gregory borrows the concept of folding distance into difference, which is precisely what is done in the making of the War on Terror (2004, p. 17). Ignatieff echoed this sentiment, stating that “[t]error has collapsed distance, and with this collapse has come a sharpened focus in imperial capitals on the necessity of bringing order to the barbarian zones” (2003, p. 21). Gregory explained that within this context, imaginative geographies work in concert with a strategy of locating, opposing, and casting out to conduct a large-scale dehumanization of these spaces (2004, p. 248). The dehumanized occupants simply become targets representing the monstrous and as a result, their deaths have no meaning. In constructing these countries in such ways, the events of 9/11 became not only an attack on America, but an attack on universal values, thus justifying war in these places for a greater good.

### **Conclusion: Coercion and Consent**

The works in question have portrayed America as a liberal empire struggling with the use consent versus coercion to maintain its position as the dominant imperial project. Consent was typically garnered through international diplomatic institutions in the past, but the decision to go to war with Afghanistan and Iraq was unfavourable and isolated the US. In pursuing these wars without the support of the international community, America made it clear that they were willing to use coercion to achieve their goals. This conflict over consent and coercion is shown to arise from the internal contradictions of liberalism which are intensified through its integration with imperialism (Harvey, 2003; Smith, 2005; Ignatieff, 2003; Ferguson, 2004).

One way these contradictions have played out is through spreading democracy by force. Ignatieff noted that “true democracy cannot be ruled by foreigners” (2003, p. 113). In attempting to install

US-friendly regimes in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, then exiting shortly thereafter, the liberal empire attempts to reconcile the contradictory nature of such a project, which extends its control at the expense of the freedom of its subjects, by only doing so for a limited time. Another contradiction at play is nationalism. While empires have often used nationalism to drive their ambitions, America included, it has also been a tool used by their opponents to resist their power. Ignatieff explained that the American campaign in Vietnam that was meant to contain the spread of communism was ultimately thwarted by the nationalism of the Vietnamese people, the same force that fuels American empire and obscures its true nature from its citizens (2003, p. 117).

Coercion through warfare and colonialism was profitable and readily used by empires before this one (Ignatieff, 2003, p. 113; Ferguson, 2004, p. 20), but in the case of America, resorting to those tactics represents the failure of diplomacy and hegemony through globalization. As such, carrying out the War on Terror is a shift towards coercion. Resultantly, America ultimately fails to reproduce the liberal empire as it has defined itself prior to 9/11 (Harvey, 2003, p. 201; Smith, 2005, p. 206). Underlying the struggle of coercion versus consent, there is the question of why anyone might consent to be exploited and oppressed. Through a similar line of questioning, Gregory delivers a witty undoing of “voluntary imperialism”, a concept developed by Robert Cooper that describes “the imperialism of neighbours”. Gregory says, “I have no idea what Cooper’s own neighbours are like, but if they are forever interfering in his life and imposing their own ‘voluntary’ disciplines, then I’m surprised he has not moved” (2004, p. 254). What Cooper seems to be trying to get at is the idea that the world needs the order that imperialism claims to bring. For the American empire, that is the “universal values” of liberalism, the same values that this empire consistently contradicts to further its imperial ambitions. To the idea that empires can be benevolent or well-intentioned, Said remarked, “Every single empire in its official discourse has said that it is not like all the others, that its circumstances are special, that it has a mission to enlighten, civilise, bring order and democracy, and that it uses force only as a last resort. And, sadder still, there always is a chorus of willing intellectuals to say soothing words about benign or altruistic empires” (Said, 2003, preface).

The American empire can be explained and understood in a variety of ways. Despite their differences, the authors this essay examines acknowledge the imperialist nature of the nation that Americans would rather not confront. They all arrive at a pondering of what comes next. Even today, this is still not clear. Beneath our main story line, however, is one of geography’s deep relationship with imperialism. Geography has long served as a tool of the imperialist – cartography, environmental determinism, colonialism. This lives on in some of these works. Despite being critical, some of them openly support imperial projects. However, we also see geographers challenging that type of work and getting beneath that history of the discipline to oppose imperialism and literally intervene.

## References

- Bishai, L. S. (2004). Liberal empire. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 7(1), 48-72.
- Chomsky, N. (2005). *Imperial ambitions: Conversations on the post-9/11 world*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Ferguson, N. (2004). *Colossus: The rise and fall of the American empire* paperback. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Gregory, D. (2004). *The colonial present: Afghanistan. Palestine. Iraq*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Harvey, D. (2003). *The new imperialism*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Ignatieff, M. (2003). *Empire lite: Nation building in Bosnia Kosovo Afghanistan*. London: Vintage.
- Mackinder, H. J. (1962). *Democratic ideals and reality: With additional papers*. New York: Norton.
- Mackinder, H. J. (2004). The geographical pivot of history (1904). *The Geographical Journal*, 170(4), 298-321.
- Nourzhanov, K. (2006). Caspian oil: Geopolitical dreams and real issues. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 60(1), 59-66.
- Said, E. (2003, August 2). A window on the world. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/aug/02/alqaida.highereducation>
- Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. 1st ed. New York: Vintage Books.
- Smith, N. (2005). *The endgame of globalization*. New York: Routledge.



# THE COLONIAL PRESENT:

## GUANTANAMO BAY, LEGALITY AND AMERICAN EMPIRE

By Atif Khan

---

The United States' operation of Guantanamo Bay--a naval prison in Cuba--has been the subject of consistent moral criticisms over the course of the "war on terror". However there has been significantly less attention to Guantanamo Bay as a crucial site for new articulations of American sovereignty in relation to space, law and power. This paper analyzes how national and international architectures of law facilitate and materialize violence that is sanctioned through the institutions of law. I argue that the law is a site of political contestation through which the United States asserts sovereign power to operate legal regimes supporting the operation of Guantanamo Bay, in a period of a national emergency. The interpretation, manipulation and implementation of national and international law has allowed the United States to legitimate its expansion of sovereign power past mainland territorial boundaries.

### Introduction

After the attacks of September 11, President Bush 'directed all resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice' (Elden, 2007, p. 823). The significance of September 11, 2001 was to trigger international emergencies in which non-state actors directly challenged and threatened state sovereignty in the twenty-first century. At the center of the American emergency was Guantanamo Bay, a naval prison in Cuba withholding captured detainees' in the 'global war on terror' (GWOT) since 2002. According to The New York Times, there have been 780 inmates held on site (Koren, 2016). The inmates hail from multiple countries including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Morocco. The GWOT is therefore conducted in a transnational and de-territorial frame.

There has been consistent criticism of Guantanamo operations by the United States by multiple international organizations such as the United Nations, however there has been significantly less attention to how Guantanamo Bay offers a site through which to investigate how sovereignty interacts with space, law and power (Blomley and Bakan, 1992, p. 665). This paper will not consider moral implications of the Camp but rather analyze how national and international architectures of law facilitate and materialize violence. This violence is sanctioned through institutions of law, such as legal categories, through which the United States legitimizes not only its presence in Guantanamo Bay but also in the GWOT.

Broadly, this paper is categorized within the field of critical legal geography. This approach is able to highlight the political use of law as an instrument of violence in international relations that is not fixed to or within nation state borders. Rather than assuming international law to be a codified and objective category, I argue that the law is a site of political contestation through which the United States asserts sovereign power to operate legal regimes supporting the operation of Guantanamo Bay in a period of a national emergency. The 'crisis' of the threat of terrorism to

the security of the nation state has resulted in the collapse of distinct lines between national and international spheres of law used to isolate potential or perceived threats to United States hegemonic power. The implementation, manipulation and interpretation of national and international law has allowed the United States to legitimize its expansion of sovereign power past mainland territorial boundaries and into Cuba. Derek Gregory (2006) has argued, international law is not only reflective of a colonial past but in ‘our colonial present marks a site of political struggle of state legitimacy’ (p. 409).

This paper is divided into two sections; first, I will unpack the key principle of state sovereignty in the Platt Agreement that has dictated the sovereign relationship between the United States and Cuba. Second, I will focus on the law of armed conflict within international humanitarian law in which legal categories are articulated as exclusive to certain bodies as the crisis of state emergency requires. In this way, the United States is able to appropriate national and international law to justify the operation of Guantanamo Camp for the purpose of national security as legitimized through the law. Said differently, the legal structure allows the United States to operate the Cuban base and derogate from established practices of liberal statehood. Rather than the United States, it is the law that prioritizes the security of the state. Thus, terrorism is but one threat to the security of not only the state, but also the established legal political order.

### **De Jure American Sovereignty, Territory and Power**

Sovereignty is the core legal framework on which the international state system rests. Originating from European geographies, the Westphalian model is characterized by a territorial state having the ability to govern its populace within defined marked territories without any external/foreign interference within or on a fixed territory of land (Minkinen, 2007, p. 34). Article 2, Section 1 and 7 of the Charter of the United Nations explicitly codify the principle of sovereign equality and the principle of non-intervention. Stuart Elden (2007) writes that sovereignty enshrined in the United Nations Charter has upheld ‘that preservation of territorial status quo’ and thus the relationship between sovereignty and territory is crucial ‘to global stability’ (p. 825). The state is therefore the international actor that is afforded the highest level of protection in the international legal system.

In both national and international laws, the sovereign state is the only legitimate actor that can deploy instruments of violence (the army, police) in order to preserve itself. Three days after September 11, 2001, President Bush declared a National Emergency ‘by reason of [those] attacks and the continuing and immediate threat of further attacks on the United States’ (Gregory, 2006, p. 407). The ‘grave acts of terrorism’ presented ‘the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy and economy of the United States’ (Gregory, 2006, p. 407). The national emergency of the United States allowed for the blurring and derogation of national and international state practice. Legal scholar Kal Raustiala argues that ‘sovereignty has become progressively ‘unbundled’ from territoriality’ (Gregory, 2006, p. 407). It is through territorial detachment or ‘unbundling’ of sovereign law and sovereign territory, the operation of Guantanamo Bay is legitimized.

Since the arrival of the Spanish in Cuba in the fifteenth century, the geography of territorial Cuba and within Guantanamo Bay has been subject to colonial rule. The third anti-colonial struggle in 1895 by the Cubans, against Spain led the United States Marines to intervene and ‘win a key battle’ at Guantanamo (Kaplan, 2005, p. 834). In 1901, the United States agreed to ‘leave the government and control of the island of Cuba to its people’ in exchange for amending the Cuban Constitution. The amendment, known as the Platt Amendment declared, ‘the United States may exercise the



right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence’ (Kaplan, 2005, p. 835). Article III of the Platt Agreement was explicit to the legal clause of sovereignty:

“While on the one hand the United States recognizes the continuance of the ultimate sovereignty of the Republic of Cuba over the above described areas of land and water, on the other hand the Republic of Cuba consents that during the period of the occupation by the United States of said areas under the terms of this agreement the United States shall exercise complete jurisdiction and control over and within said areas with the right to acquire (under conditions to be hereafter agreed upon by the two Governments) for the public purposes of the United States any land or other property therein by purchase or by exercise of eminent domain with full compensation to the owners thereof” (Agreement Between the United States and Cuba for the Lease of Lands for Coaling and Naval stations, 1903).

This agreement operates on two contradictory legal geographies (Gregory 2006). There are hierarchies of sovereignty operating within the legal language of the agreement, restricting sovereign action by Cuba while the United States continues to maintain its presence in Guantanamo Bay. When the Naval base initiated detainment of prisoners in 2002, the Bush Administration selected the site due to the territory being outside the judicial reach of United States national law (Kaplan, 2005, p. 833). Thus, architects of the GWOT recognized from the beginning the legal implications of withholding prisoners in Cuba. Guantanamo Bay exists both ‘inside and outside’ domestic and international jurisdiction (Hernandez-Lopez, 2010, p. 472). John Morrisey (2011) writes that this form of ‘lawfare’ is a continuation of the GWOT through legal means (p. 291). The operations in the war on terror have prioritized United States national security at the expense of both national and international legal obligations. For the United States, territorial borders remain mobile and flexible as reflected in the following two court cases.

In 2004, the landmark United States Supreme Court Case *Rasul v. Bush* held that foreign prisoners held in Guantanamo Bay could petition United States federal courts for writs of habeas corpus to challenge their detention (Reid-Henry, 2007, p. 633). Similarly in 2008, in *Boumediene v. Bush* the Supreme Court held that prisoners had a right to the writ of habeas corpus under the United States Constitution (Reid-Henry, 2007, p. 633). Amy Kaplan (2005) argues that the extension of United States jurisdiction was not only an extension of empire in which sovereign jurisdiction transcended American borders but also produced in ‘creating new categories of persons before the law’ (p. 834). Under the Bush Administration, the Republic of Cuba possessed ‘ultimate sovereignty’ and therefore the United States Constitution or United States international obligations did not apply to the detainees (Kaplan, 2005, pp. 835-836). The two landmark cases (above) interpreted the jurisdiction of United States Courts extending into Guantanamo Bay as territory operating as *de facto* (in fact) under American sovereignty. Through legal jurisdiction, the Court was able to extend American legitimacy and territorial borders for occupying and detaining suspects in the wars abroad.

Guantanamo Bay is an example in which United States *de jure* (in law) sovereignty has precedence over Cuban *de facto* (in fact) sovereignty. Through national Court jurisdiction, American borders were extended into the sovereign territory of Cuba. The National Emergency of September 11 sought to indefinitely justify the presence of an American base as a practice of expanding sovereign power. In order to securitize national security, American expansion is able to dictate territorial transgression on international territory. This cartography does not assume the fixed nature of borders and led Amy Kaplan (2005) to ask ‘Where is Guantanamo?’ In the Platt Agreement, Cuban sovereignty was implicitly residual in comparison to the United States. As Judith Butler

(2004) argues, Guantanamo Bay is an ‘extra-legal sphere’ maintained by ‘extra-judicial power’ of an American hegemonic state (p. 92). David Kennedy adds that ‘it [law] structures logistics, command and control’; ‘it legitimizes and facilitates violence’ and ‘contribute[s] to the proliferation of violence rather than to its containment (Morrissey, 2011, p. 291). Thus while the United States seeks to ‘contain’ suspect bodies detained in Guantanamo, its use of military and armed force abroad creates its own national emergency.

### **The Violence of Legal Categories: Unlawful Combatants**

On September 14, 2001, The United States Congress ratified the Authorization of Use of Military Force Against Terrorists (AUMF) authorizing the use of force against those responsible for the attacks (Human Rights Watch, 2011). The Wars in Afghanistan (2001-2014) and Iraq (2003-2011) were recognized armed conflicts and thus International humanitarian law would have applied to the duration of the conflict (Morrissey, 2011, p. 283). International humanitarian law seeks to govern and conduct the law of armed conflict. International law requires all prisoners taken hostage in armed conflicts to be designated as ‘prisoner of war’ (POW) status in which they are entitled to all rights under The Hague and Geneva Conventions (the United States signed the Conventions between 1900 to 1909) (Third Geneva Convention).

‘The plight of the Guantanamo detainees is less an outcome of law’s suspension or evisceration than of elaborate regulatory efforts by a range of legal authorities. The detention camps are above all works of legal representation and classification. They are spaces where law and liberal proceduralism speak and operate in excess’ (Gregory, 2006, p. 416).

In the prison of Guantanamo Bay, prisoners are stripped from the legal category of ‘prisoner of war’ (POW) to ‘unlawful combatant’ status. This status is defined as a violation of the law of war of participants who the United States deems to be engaging in armed conflicts, even if they are non-state actors rather than high-contracting parties, to which the law of armed conflict explicitly applies such as the nation state. The Geneva Conventions stipulate that in times of armed conflict and between high contracting parties, the conventions apply to the conduct of armed conflict. Butler writes, the Geneva Conventions and the United States operate on a ‘questionable practice of distributing rights of protection differentially’. The Conventions apply a selective basis that is ‘soaked in bias towards the nation-state’ (Butler, 2002, p. 1).

This selective basis of legal application favors armies and prisoners who belong to a nation state. Stateless organizations such as Al-Qaeda are not territorially fixed and do not belong to one state. Thus the Geneva Conventions place Guantanamo detainees as legal ‘outsiders’ through American sovereign derogation. For the United States, the GWOT is not a legally defined ‘ordinary war’ because it ‘is not primarily a battle between recognizable nation-states’ or ‘High Contracting Parties’ as explicit in the Geneva Conventions (Butler, 2002, p. 2). The general premise of law operates on the language of precision as codified through explicit language in the agreements and treaties signed by representatives of the nation state. Non-state actors, such as potential or suspect terrorists are a threat to the nation state, and in creating the legal category of unlawful combatant, United States sovereign power is able to dictate who will be, can be or is a national security threat. By privileging the state as the primary actor in international law, the law permits exceptional circumstances that challenge state sovereignty to derogate from the established legal codes explicitly defined in the law itself.

In addition, the Geneva Conventions only accept conventional forms of war in which actors such as militias or organized resistance movements must 'conduct their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war' (Geneva Convention 39). In an attempt to delegate legal rights, the Conventions also implicitly frame 'legitimate' warfare from 'illegitimate' forms of conflict. John Morrissey (2011) writes 'we need to remember what it means to say that compliance with international law 'legitimizes'. It means, of course, that killing, maiming, humiliating, wounding people is legally privileged, authorized, permitted and justified' (p. 292). In effect, as Judith Butler (2002) argues, the Convention provides and legitimizes the political power of the state in armed conflict while framing 'legitimate and illegitimate' violence (p. 5).

The nation state is able to conduct legitimate warfare in which the state is afforded complete legal rights in international law while the GWOT and unlawful combatants 'not affiliated with state-centered military actions [are designated] fewer [legal] rights than those who are' (Butler, 2002, p. 5). Thus the United States is able to bypass legal categories while creating new legal categories that contradict, bypass or undermine with codified legal rules in international law.

Judith Butler argues the Geneva Conventions were 'not designed to handle this [GWOT] kind of war' (Butler, 2004, p. 81). Legal frameworks with the help of Supreme Court decisions arbitrarily extend judicial power into Cuba undermining Cuban sovereignty. The GWOT is legally framed as a 'new' war that creates a legal space of intervention where the current legal structure is incompetent. Non-state actors are not legally protected when conducting armed conflict within this framework of the GWOT. The authorization of force after September 11, 2001 permitted force to bring terrorists to justice ironically also through mechanism of the law. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, commented that 'these [Guantanamo Prisoners] aren't military people. They don't belong to a country, they don't wear a uniform, they're not part of an army. It's a unique situation and we'll have to deal with it in a unique way' (Butler, 2002, p. 6). This justification to deny the prisoners international legal protections draws on the legal framework. The period of National Emergency exposes the contradictory and unstable international legal regime.

By withholding bodies through detainment in Guantanamo as a threat to the legal and social order, law is utilized as an instrument of excess sovereign power (Butler, 2004, p. 62). In effect, sovereign power is extended with creation of legal categories such as 'unlawful combatant' rendered visible at the site of Guantanamo Bay in the GWOT. In a state of emergency of an endless, transnational war, Butler (2004) argues there is an 'indefinite extension of lawless power' (p. 65). The ability to derogate from international and national legal obligations is explicitly provided in the legal structure of the United States. For example, the United States Constitution permits the suspension of 'Writ of Habeas Corpus' through Constitutional emergency powers in which 'Public Safety may require it' (Constitution, Section 9, Article 2). In the Supreme Court Cases of *Rasul v. Bush* (2004) and *Boumediene v. Bush* (2008), the Court held that Guantanamo prisoners were able to submit a Habeas Corpus (person under arrest has a right to be brought before a judge or into Court). In this way, the GWOT is no longer a particular moment of emergency but an intrinsic condition of the twenty-first century. The events of terrorism against state security around the world help the United States in manipulating legal architecture to create boundaries of 'insider' and 'outsider'. By extension, Guantanamo Bay is therefore not a site of lawlessness but rather a site in which United States legal frameworks across territorial borders warranting sovereign power in national emergencies (Butler, 2004, pp. 62-63). It is this exercise of arbitrary sovereign power that denies Guantanamo bodies' international legal rights.

In changing categories from ‘prisoner’ to ‘detainee’, sovereign power removes any assumption of internationally recognized rights pertaining to the treatment of prisoners (Butler, 2004, p. 64). As terrorism is not a historically or geographically contained threat to the state, sovereign power is able to expand transnationally. The cases of *Rasul v. Bush* and *Boumediene v. Bush* are examples in which the Supreme Court of the United States extended national jurisdiction into Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. In doing so, the United States increases national judicial authority in legitimizing national law over extraterritorial jurisdiction of Cuba.

State sovereignty is only accountable through legal frameworks that dictate legitimate sovereign action. Guantanamo Bay is one site in which United States judicial overreach materializes through policing, accountability and legitimacy. When Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld was questioned on why prisoners were detained in inadequate legal and material conditions, he claimed ‘if they were not restrained, they would kill again’ (Butler, 2004, p. 73). In a press conference with reporters, Defense General Counsel Haynes responded: ‘the people we are detaining, for example, in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, are enemy combatants that we captured on the battlefield seeking to harm US soldiers or allies, and they’re dangerous people’ (Butler, 2004, p. 79). Only the United States executive branch that is able to deem which, who and how which detainee is a threat to United States national security. While the writ of habeas corpus did not apply to detainees until 2008 with *Boumediene v. Bush*, sovereign power of the executive branch justified the indefinite detention of detainees as their sole prerogative. In fact, it was only after the state instrument of the judiciary held the motion, habeas corpus was administered. Rather than established national and international obligations, the GWOT required sovereign power to operate by extension of legal excess.

By constructing the legal category of ‘unlawful combatants’, the sovereign power of the United States has justified indefinite detention by arguing that detainees have violated the laws of the war and therefore cannot be provided POW status, as they are not legitimate international actors. The logic of illegality has constructed the category of unlawful combatant in which exceptional threats to United States national security require the denial of certain legal obligations while adopting or tweaking legal structures and standards in support of state security. When asked how the American government could withhold ‘these people [Guantanamo prisoners] without charging them indefinitely’, Counsel Haynes replied ‘we are within our rights’ (Butler, 2004, p. 79). Thus, the language of law operates as both legal excess and legal possibility. The action of a state is justified through the language of legal rights though the state is the only actor able to apply its discretion in creating legal exceptions in the GWOT.

### **‘Guantanamo Is Everywhere’**

Since the declaration of the National Emergency of September 11, 2001, the United States has been able to manipulate physical geography, national and international legal frameworks in a ‘twisted cartography of power’ (Gregory, 2006, p. 406). By creating legal black sites such as Guantanamo Bay, there has been simultaneous implementation and erasure of both United States national law and international law. Guantanamo Bay is only one example of such sites, among a global network of war prisons such as Abu Ghraib in Iraq.

In this paper, I have used Guantanamo Bay as an example of American securitization through legal mechanisms. In order to assert the protection of the American homeland in a global war field, Guantanamo Bay articulates a physical space of containment of detainees captured in this war around the world. Rather than law being an objective, written category of rules, through hegemonic assertion of American national security, law facilitates as an instrument of violence. Law,

often assumed to be a body upholding civil order, is also simultaneously upholding disorder. The operation of Guantanamo Bay is only one example in which the contradiction arises between the law, space and power.

Rather than fixating international law as ‘fact patterns’, this paper unpacks genealogies of law and empire that are closely intertwined. State sovereignty has always operated on scales and a language of ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’. The practice of the United States reflects the use of sovereign power in legal excess to legitimize the colonial present of the American national emergency. By silencing critical narratives, the theory and practice of international law will remain structurally weak to contemporary challenges in the international state system.

It is imperative to ask questions in how genealogies of global history and geography ‘shape the logic of its [international law] operation in the present’ (Reid-Henry, 2007, p. 634). Neither sovereignty nor jurisdictions are objective categories. When imbued with sovereign power, the law is constructed to legitimize and preserve the state, through violence if required. I conclude with this insight by Jacques Derrida in which he states ‘the most perverse and violent of all ‘rogue states’ must surely be the United States and its allies. However, the ‘rogue’ abuse of power is an internal element of sovereignty. There are only ‘rogue states,’ either potential or actual. The ‘rouge’ is the state itself’ (Minkinen, 2007, p. 47).

## References

Aalberts, T. (2014). Rethinking the principle of (sovereign) equality as a standard of civilisation. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 42(3), 767-89.

Agreement Between the United States and Cuba for the Lease of Lands for Coaling and Naval stations, U.S.-Cuba February 23, 1903. Retrieved from [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/dip\\_cuba002.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/dip_cuba002.asp).

Blomley, N., & Bakan, J. (1992). Spacing out: Towards a critical geography of law. *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 30(4), 661-90.

Butler, J. (2004) *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. New York: Verso.

Butler, J. (2002, March 14). Guantanamo limbo. *The Nation*.

Elden, S. (2007). Terror and territory. *Antipode* 39(5), 821-45.

Gregory, D. (2006). The black flag: Guantánamo Bay and the space of exception. *Geografiska Annaler*, 88, 405–427.

Gregory, D. (2011). The everywhere war. *The Geographical Journal*, 177(3), 238-50.

Gregory, D., & Pred, A. (2006). *Violent geographies: Fear, terror, and political violence*. New York: Routledge,

Hernández-Lopez, E. (2010). Guantanamo as outside and inside the U.S.: Why is a base a legal anomaly? *American University Journal of Gender, Social Policy, & The Law*, 18, 471-501.

Kaplan, A. (2005). Where is Guantanamo? *American Quarterly*, 57(3), 831-58.

Koren, M. (2016, May 12). Who Is Left at Guantanamo? And who can never leave? *The Atlantic*.

Minkinen, P. (2007). The ethos of sovereignty: A critical appraisal. *Human Rights Review*, 8(2), 33-51.

Morrissey, J. (2011). Liberal lawfare and biopolitics: US juridical warfare in the war on terror. *Geopolitics*, 16, 280-305.

Reid-Henry, S. (2007). Exceptional sovereignty? Guantanamo Bay and the re-colonial present. *Antipode* 39(4), 627-48.

United Nations, Charter of the United Nations, 24 October 1945, 1 UNTS XVI, Retrieved from: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3930.html>

U.S. Constitution. Art. I, Sec. 9.

# REDIRECTED DOMINANCE AND THE FEMALE CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IN VANCOUVER

By Lucy Fang

---

Vancouver of the 2010s is home to a thriving EFL (learning English as a Foreign Language) industry, cultivated by city planners and corporate actors. Chinese international students arrive in Vancouver to learn English, seen as a sign of prestige and academic or professional success. This paper will explore the socioeconomic dynamics between Vancouver and Chinese cities that produce the international student. In this process, I will also examine the power dynamics exhibited through age, gender, and the conflation of Canada and China as East and West. This paper will ultimately reveal these dynamics as Vancouver's exploitation of individual international students through tuitions, discrimination, and unfulfilled expectations. Ultimately, I argue that white Vancouverites exert their power as hosts onto individual bodies in public space, wherein female Chinese international students receive redirected domination meant for the general East.

## Introduction

In a new era of Vancouver's relationship with Chinese immigrants, city planners and corporate actors use Vancouver as an EFL (learning English as a Foreign Language) market. Park (2010) considers EFL an industry in Vancouver, alluding to how city officials, policies, tourism, and education businesses help cultivate the Vancouver landscape to be friendly and attractive to potential EFL students and parents. EFL industry supporters and members market the city as an attractive place for EFL students who are part of the greater group of Chinese immigrant "wealth actors" in the neoliberal moment (Park, 2010, p. 349). EFL students come to Vancouver alone as "satellite" children in pursuit of education and social status as part of the "transnational strategizing of Chinese immigrant households" (Waters, 2005, p. 370). Using the gender lens as outlined by Silvey (2004), I reveal further unequal relations between the East and West that shape international student experiences in Vancouver; the gender lens also shows political and sexualized processes that trouble Vancouverite and international student interactions. Thus, socioeconomic conditions for middle- to upper- class families and Vancouver's calculated EFL conditions produce the EFL international student; transnational family planning and local racial tensions between Chinese and Vancouver communities further shape the international student experience. The gender lens further highlights power relations between key agents in Vancouver and the female international student in particular. This paper will ultimately reveal these dynamics as Vancouver's exploitation of individual international students through tuitions, discrimination, and unfulfilled expectations.

Broader dynamics such as push conditions from the Chinese city and pull factors of studying abroad motivates produces the Chinese international student. In recent times, Chinese cities have experienced more enrollment in higher education institutions which leads to the de-valuing of

undergraduate degrees and subsequent unemployment and job insecurities (Waters, 2005). These conditions in major cities generally lead to pessimistic assumptions regarding career paths for youth and recent graduates (Waters, 2005). In this landscape, foreign education and credentials are particularly desirable and valuable as commodities—obtained for status, employment and bargaining power; an already-existing idealization of foreign culture and imported goods further encourages this view. Learning English as a foreign language is particularly popular for Chinese youths as the English language (especially North American accented) is associated with “social upward mobility”, “westernization” or progress (Park, 2010, p. 343). In China, English fluency also brings to its bearer confidence, “cosmopolitanism”, social capital and connection to transnational social and economic networks (Waters, 2005, p. 363). These conditions reduce domestic education prospects in light of international education, which is deemed more promising for the individual student and their family. While choosing to study abroad is not an easy life decision for any student, this decision is further influenced by hierarchies between domestic and the West and media marketed for the purpose of gaining tuition and registration fees from prospective international students. The Chinese international student is thus produced by way of motivation and desperation for their own prospects in improving their quality of life and social status.

The EFL industry and city officials take advantage of the conditions described above by framing Vancouver as a desirable destination for foreign education as compared to other Western cities. As a destination for foreign education and EFL courses, Vancouver takes advantage of broader dynamics in the education industry to encourage capital flow in the form of tuition. Park notes that Vancouver is promoted as a place that “best cater[s] to Asian needs”, a “space in which Asian students can cultivate a United States accent without...United States crime rates” (Park, 2010, p. 343). Chinese universities such as Northeast Normal University see UBC as a “gateway to the Pacific Northwest” (Fang, Clarke & Wei, p.155). Simultaneously, prestige and tuition revenue motivate UBC and other Vancouver education institutions to accept international students (Fang et al., p. 155). Vancouver thus takes advantage of push and pull conditions in Chinese cities to draw international students to the EFL and foreign education market for tuition.

Transnational family strategies and local Vancouverite communities further contribute to the international student experience including the desperate need to succeed in a foreign institution, loneliness and cultural barriers, and racial tensions between communities. Waters (2005) describes family strategies as transnational, using foreign education and immigration as a way to negotiate social and economic statuses. Middle- and upper- class families use foreign education to account for a child’s “perceived failure” in light of very high academic and career expectations combined with increasingly competitive yet devalued domestic education (p.362). International students then bear the family’s aspirations to rise above domestic social and economic conditions; they must navigate an unfamiliar country and culture alone and have the decision to either stay in their “comfort zone” with other Chinese students and not practice English, or to “assimilate” for a more successful learning process (Cao, Zhu, & Meng, 2017; Fang et al., 2016). Assimilation is difficult especially in Vancouver where locals already have fixed perceptions of Chinese bodies, which can lead to new students “being locked out” of integration (Cao et al., 2017). Local communities associate “the Chinese”<sup>1</sup> with Vancouver’s rising real estate prices, brought in part by “spoiled rich Chinese kids”

---

1 Locals’ perceptions of Chinese (conflated to “Asian”) bodies are at once nuanced and generative. Locals recognize the “FOB” (once stood for Fresh Off the Boat, but now refers to a newly-landed immigrant) by performed social and cultural status through accent, niceties, fashion, and accessories (on the university campus, international students are known for nice cars and luxury



打造温哥华第一留学教育品牌  
打造温哥华第一留学生服务平台

## 智明国际 留学服务

**免费院校申请** 公立私立大学及大专院校申请  
公立私立高中院校  
UBC SFU 名校申请辅导

**快速签证申请** 大小签证续签 疑难案例续签  
毕业生工作签证 美国签证  
父母探亲签证

**免费教育规划** 100%院校奖学金  
免费咨询评估 教育移民规划  
暑期实习 义工机会推荐

**免费生活服务** 留学生退税服务 保险服务  
特价机票订购 寄宿家庭安置

We Make Your Future  
**BRIGHT**  
智明 成就更好的你

联系我们 咨询电话: 778-783-0123 新浪微博: 温哥华留学生之家 客服QQ: 181023993

扫一扫 加入微信平台  
随时随地 随心 找到你的 留学移民贴心专家  
<http://www.natpeople.com/zhinfo.aspx?w=311070>

Figure 1. Advertisement by agency for international student registration, marketed towards Chinese-speaking students (www.vanpeople.com).

and their parents; locals respond to sentiments ranging from simply “hat[ing] the rich” to racialized “resentment” (Bula, 2016). Even though a temporary international student may have little to do with those conditions, students also react to discrimination in ways that raise the tension. Discrimination contributes to lowered self-esteem and anxiety or aggression, which are worsened by loneliness, the pressure to succeed abroad, and possibility of failing to do so (Grayson, 2014). Thus, Vancouver is not at all “safe” from racism despite EFL industry framings; the international student experience in Vancouver contrasts with expectations from China of Vancouver for foreign education, social capital and brighter futures.

In addition to these pressures and difficulties for the international student, a gender lens calls attention to further vulnerabilities for the female Chinese international student. The female international student is more vulnerable as both a product of transnational gender dynamics and political and cultural hierarchies. The experience of female gendered and racialized international students embodies the concept of mobility and corporeal experiences as highly political, calling attention to how power dynamics exploit personal vulnerabilities in daily life (Silvey, 2004). In urban Chinese societies, the female student is encouraged to be more subdued, quiet, “ladylike” and less egre-

gious, which makes them less willing to assimilate than male students<sup>2</sup> (Cao et al., 2017). brands). While not all international students are ostentatious or wealthy, locals and Chinese-Canadians (such as myself) can differentiate Chinese bodies into newly landed, partly integrated, or homegrown. However, non-Asian locals, while attuned to these class differences, are also quick to presume the nationality of any Asian body and employ (often misdirected) microaggressions if not discriminations.

2 These traits are especially visible in classrooms and public settings, where female Chinese stu-

Unequal power relations between China and Canada further permeate as gendered dynamics, often in the form of microaggressions or violence between locals and Chinese international students. Park (2010) speaks to transnational power dynamics between Vancouver and China with her analysis of sexual assault cases on Asian female international students. The recent rise of Asian industry and economic power correlates to increasing Chinese presence in Vancouver and reflects the fear and “threat of Asian invasion” (Park, 2010, p. 348). Orientalist discourse reassert “gendered scripts” of racial, cultural, and national elevations of the West over the East to assuage the “fear of Asian domination” (Park, 2010, p. 349). This unfolds through tensions between growing Chinese presence and Vancouverites, where local populations feel untitled to retaliate with gendered sexual violence.<sup>3</sup> Park implicates the international student experience as produced by not only neoliberal narratives, but also processes of threat and domination on Vancouver’s (and the West’s) terms. These encounters reflect Western xenophobic tendencies regarding immigration, rationalized by national security and fear of domination, for which a growing Chinese presence is alarming. Thus, the gender lens illuminates different vulnerabilities in Chinese international students and Vancouver’s exploitation of power; as the EFL industry ensnares capital by accepting Chinese international students, locals assuage the fear of domination with aggression upon individual students.

While multi-scalar processes shape migrant motivations, underlying gendered and racialized cultural hierarchies ultimately reveal Vancouver as exploiting the migration pattern of Chinese international students. Vancouver’s EFL industry, including media, institutions, and businesses, take advantage of push and pull factors in China that paint foreign education as desirable and necessary, drawing international students to Vancouver with the promise of an English-learning environment safe from crime and racial discrimination. However, while Chinese international students are accepted for their tuition, they must remain diminished and vulnerable. This points to a redirection of dominance, wherein accepting Chinese capital feels threatening and must be alleviated by dominating young, vulnerable Chinese bodies in daily interactions. The international student experience is then shaped by the pressure of success, tensions between communities in Vancouver, and hierarchies between Vancouver and Canada that are conflated to inequalities between the East and West. Ultimately, the international student experience leads to uncertain success, achieved only by overcoming barriers of discrimination and culture by students themselves. Inequalities thus shape the international student experience to be one of exploitation and unmet expectations.

---

dents in both China and Vancouver tend to be quieter, less social, and therefore less “threatening” or more vulnerable compared to their male counterparts

3 Cases of sexual violence targeting female Asian international students point to the vulnerability of the young Asian female as locals deem them less threatening and treat them with more carelessness or aggression—especially by the older generation of white Vancouverites. These aggressions permeate the everyday on the scale of personal interactions. As a female Asian student who has lived in Vancouver, I regularly experience people teaching me to cross the street, pointing me to where to stand in line, and other “social cues” that I apparently “don’t get” even if my same-aged non-Asian friends or even older family members also deviate from social cues with no comment.

## References

- Bula, F. (2016). The dragon in the room. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/real-estate/vancouver/meet-the-wealthy-immigrants-at-the-centre-of-vancouver-housingdebate/article31212036/>.
- Cao, C., Zhu, C. and Meng, Q. (2017). Predicting Chinese international students' acculturation strategies from socio-demographic variables and social ties. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, 20(2), 85–96.
- Fang, W., Clarke, A., & Wei, Y. (2016). Empty success or brilliant failure. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 20(2), 140-163.
- Grayson, J. P. (2014). Negative racial encounters and academic outcomes of international and domestic students in four Canadian Universities. *Journal of International Students*, 4(3), 262-278.
- Park, H. (2010). The stranger that is welcomed: Female foreign students from Asia, the English language industry, and the ambivalence of 'Asia rising' in British Columbia, Canada. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 17(3), 337-355.
- Silvey, R. (2004). Power, difference and mobility: Feminist advances in migration studies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 28(4), 490-506.
- Waters, J. L. (2005). Transnational family strategies and education in the contemporary Chinese diaspora. *Global Networks*, 5(4), 359-377.
- Vanpeople. (n.d.) Retrieved from <http://www.vanpeople.com/c/311070.html>.



# YOUR BODY OR YOUR LIFE: TRANS ACCEPTANCE OVER QUEER EXCLUSION IN CONTEMPORARY IRAN

By Ally Mair

---

This essay discusses queer and trans Iranian identities and how power (re)produces normative binary understandings within Iranian society. Using a Foucauldian framework of power, categorization, and identity, this paper shows how different types of power produce gendered norms and differential vulnerabilities of queer existence in contemporary Iran. The paper analyzes the function of different forms of power in three spaces: the home, the hospital, and the society in contrast with the political. The site of the home is used to show how familial powers enforce transition through both disciplinary and sovereign means of coercion, emphasising that rejection shapes the queer and trans experience in Iran. The hospital space is used to show how queer identity is rendered medical and thus a medical gaze is used to police queerness, normalizing a binary which restricts queer identity and rewrites one's own history to de-queer Iran. The space of the society in contrast with the political debates how differing views between the public and their state create sites of exception in which queer Iranians are placed; this is further analyzed through Agamben's notion of homo sacer as queer Iranian identity begets precarity and profound marginalization. Overall, this paper contends that queer Iranian biopolitics (re)produce a rigid normative binary of gender and sexuality, which although is productive for some, remains increasingly restrictive for queer and trans individuals.

**Author's Note:** I unconventionally use the terms trans and queer as separate ways of being, with the latter not including the former. I do so because Iran's enforcement of transition, and thus the (re)production of binary notions of gender, seek to de-queer the space.

## Introduction

Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iran's stance on queer issues has been complex, conflicted, and contradictory; despite having zero tolerance towards homosexuality in the state's laws, transitioning is perfectly legal. Moreover, it is even encouraged and subsidized by the government (BBC World Service, 2014; Schumacher, 2016). This bizarre contradiction of partial political acceptance, which exists alongside a state of social exclusion, leads many to choose between their body or their life. The contradiction stems from Ayatollah Khomeini reissuing his 1967 *fatwa*<sup>1</sup> in 1985, allowing for transition under Islamic law, as his status allowed him to implement this *fatwa* uncontested (Terman, 2014, p. 30). However, although this may seem like a progressive stance, especially in the context of Islamic theocracies, it is fundamentally problematic and geared towards reinforcing a masculine power and the gender binary (Bluck, 2012, p. 61). This essay will contest the superficialities of this progression, showing how the processes of transitioning have manifest-

1 A religious edict

ed themselves in exploitative and sinister ways within a nexus of gender, sexuality, and coercion. It will argue through a Foucauldian framework of power that forced or coerced transitions create power plays within different societal spaces that generate a state of trans acceptance over a broader queer exclusion. Firstly, this essay will provide context of the historic and contemporary understandings of what it means to be queer in Iran. This essay will then mobilize a Foucauldian lens and framework to analyze how issues of gender, power, and force establish themselves within different spaces to generate positive and negative queer discourses; this will be done by looking at the settings of the home, the hospital, and society and the government as distinct spatial bodies of power.

### **Queer Identity in Contemporary Iran**

The history of what it means to be queer in modern Iran is inseparable from the aforementioned *fatwa*. This *fatwa* was decreed after years of communication and eventually a meeting with Maryam Molkara, a trans activist, who is regarded as a pioneer of Iran's transgender movement (Terman, 2014; McDowall & Khan, 2004; Fathi, 2004). As a result of this meeting, Khomeini differentiated between what it meant to be gay and what it meant to be trans (Fathi, 2004), seeing the latter as admissible in the eyes of God on the proviso that those who transitioned from male to female obeyed all the Quranic rites that come with being a woman (McDowall & Khan, 2004; Bluck, 2012, p. 61). Although many members of the clergy objected to his stance, due to Khomeini's position of authority not only as the head of state but also as the "highest religious authority" and "the leader of the most massive revolution in the second half of the 20th century" (Terman, 2014, p. 30), his words carried weight and were swiftly put into practice. However, homosexuality has remained a crime punishable by lashes and, in some circumstances, by death (ISHR, n.d.).

As a result of Khomeini's legacy of trans acceptance and queer exclusion, shifting societal dynamics of power, sexuality, and gender have formed (Bluck, 2012, p. 60-61). Iran has become a society where power plays at all levels to push queer people to either transition, leave, repress and risk their lives or, more often than not, a combination of all three of these processes at different points in their lives (BBC World Service, 2014). Essentially, queer Iranians either must choose between sacrificing their body or their life. Power exists at three main levels to enforce the transition processes: familial, medical, and societal in contrast with political.

Often it is the case that friends and families force their queer relatives into transitioning with threats of violence, disowning, and even death (BBC World Service, 2014; Euronews, 2015). Iran is a state framed on masculinity where men would rather forego their masculinity completely than be seen as a gay man or, as it is framed in the Iranian context, feminine and therefore less of a man (Karimi, 2016). It is important to note that the masculine framework of Iranian society especially neglects trans men and lesbians as, they are not seen to exist to the same degree as gay men and trans women. However, they are acknowledged in the legislative system (BBC World Service, 2014; 6 Rang, 2015; Karimi, 2016).

### **Framework of Inquiry: A Foucauldian Lens**

In order to analyze how power functions spatially with the concept of trans acceptance against queer exclusion, a Foucauldian lens will be adopted in this essay. This is done as a Foucauldian interpretation of queer studies sways from looking at why queer and trans communities are oppressed to how socio-political power produce sexual and gendered norms which thus enable discrimination. This perspective will be taken to show how people are categorized, acknowledging the powers which shape, rather than treating these categories as naturally occurring (Foucault, 1978).

Much of Foucault's work on power examines identity and categorization, and the processes which compartmentalize communities (Foucault, 1978; 1991; 2010); this theorization of how power functions to generate categories of others, and thus shapes them, is an apt framework with which to analyze the Iranian context of trans acceptance over a more general queer exclusion. Foucault's belief of queerness as an identity, as was expressed in his lack of participation in gay rights movements, was that it was nothing more than an invention of those who held power, believing that to accept categorization and then ask for equality is to acknowledge that a differentiation exists in the first place (Bartky, 2002, p. 46-68). Foucault's idea of power being used to queer people by controlling their bodies and gender expression will be used to analyze how queering functions differently in different spaces of Iranian society. Much like Agamben's homo sacer (1998, p. 71-74), a Foucauldian analysis of queer Iranian biopolitics discusses the geographies of those integrated into society yet somehow still placed on the margins of their community (Gutting, 2005, p. 88-89); those acknowledged by the state yet often socially and legally abandoned.

### Familial Powers and the Home Space

In forcing transitions, power functions very intimately within the home space, usually initially in a private and concealed fashion before becoming more disclosed as internal tensions build (Bluck, 2012, p. 64; BBC World Service, 2014; 6 Rang, 2015). Power generally takes place through rejection, with families severing ties from queer relatives (Bluck, 2012, p. 64). However, as spatially restricted as rejection is, having the two dimensions of the home and the external, it often functions on different temporal scales depending on the family and thus generates different aspects of familial, societal, and even legal power. For some, rejection comes before gender affirmation (though often reassignment is more apt) surgery is discussed, others experience it during these discussions as they reject the idea of needing the surgery, and for others, the family will support them until after the surgery before rejecting them. In any case, familial acceptance is a rarity (Bluck, 2012, p. 64; BBC World Service, 2014; Euronews, 2015; 6 Rang, 2015).

One case from Euronews (2015) shows a trans woman who had full support of her family but was then rejected after her surgery. Another case, documented by the BBC World Service (2014), shows a gay man who was told by his father and two other relatives that if he did not transition they would kill him, being told: "you need to either have your gender changed or we will kill you". Consequently, he agreed to the surgery but fled the country the night before. This idea that the family would have killed him out of anger and shame without fearing consequences is a prime example of how queer Iranians are rendered homo sacer (Agamben, 1998, p. 71-74), as they exist within a category which enables rejection and violence without the fear of legal consequence as the police partake in this othering and lessening of queer individuals too (Bluck, 2012, p. 64; 6 Rang, 2015).

Further to the lessening of queer individuals, within the home space an artificial transformation between victim and perpetrator can occur. A power shift between parent and child, chiefly generated through an imposed guilt, can make queer individuals believe that they are at fault—that they are the ones who have brought shame and humiliation on their families and therefore the family members are the victims (Bluck, 2012, p. 62). This is a unique manifestation of power, as it is the only time during the three tiers of society discussed in this essay where guilt is explicitly used to coerce transition. It is possible to postulate that the base of this guilt comes from the idea of homosexuality being *haram*<sup>2</sup>, but the manifestation comes from how the family reacts to the "sins of youth": either with tolerance or punishment (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). The former allows only for the religious guilt, whereas the later contributes to guilt of hurting one's own family. Thus, power

---

2 Not permissible under Islamic Law

functions in different ways, sometimes violent and sometimes subtle, within the home space to generate a result usually based on rejection, guilt, and a coercion to change (Bluck, 2012, p. 64).

### **The Hospital and Powers of Medicalization**

The model of power within the medical context for transitioning functions through a "panopticism" (Foucault, 1991, p. 195-231) of social control which is not imposed from above through coercion, but rather by disciplining people into serving power themselves; a method of control which encourages people to reinforce a gender binary and restrict sexual diversity (Bluck, 2012). The idea of a medical gaze in this context (Foucault, 2010, p. 89) focuses on constant regulation which, instead of the violence that is used legislatively to police queerness, modifies behavior through medical procedures, counselling, and religious advisement to render *halal* (Bluck, 2012; BBC World Service, 2014; Terman, 2014; 6 Rang, 2015; Schumacher, 2016).

The form of power in the hospital is extremely intimate and seeks to control not only how the body presents but also how it functions. While people function with individual identities that are fluid in nature, power operates here to produce and reinforce a hegemonic culture that excludes queer identity (Valentine, 2007, p. 19; 6 Rang, 2015). Medical power seeks to generate a narrative of normalcy (Davis, 1995, p. 24) and thus creates a problem with being queer. The act of making queer people transition reinforces normative binary ideas of gender and sexuality, categorizing to what is understandable in Quranic thought whilst ignoring the lived realities.

Power functions within the Iranian medical context, "to ensure that binary gender distinctions remain firmly in place" (Bluck, 2012, p. 63); it is a power which not only controls the body but manipulates and rewrites one's own history. This form of biopolitics seeks to control through maintaining a construct fundamental to the extremely gendered Iranian identity. The medical authorities are required to alter all histories of their patient's previous gender within fifteen days of the operation (Bluck, 2012, p. 63); a mandatory procedure which reaffirms queer exclusionary practices of the state and controls the idea that queerness does not exist in Iran as one cannot maintain a legacy of being transgender or gender queer, rather one is either a man or a woman and has always been regardless of how they personally identify (Bluck, 2012, p. 63-64)

Referring to Foucauldian thought, it should be noted that the biopolitics of rewriting the body's histories and the idea of rendering medical stem from the very same processes which generated the categorization of sexuality in the West: with queerness becoming an area of study, something that should be analyzed and categorized (Foucault, 1978; Sawicki, 1991, pp. 21-24). The intimate knowledge of productive power that Foucault (1978; 1991; 2010) discusses is seen here, as being transgender became a medical variable. Queerness has become a form of discourse within Iranian medical practices, with its own production of knowledge and its own categorization of peoples within Iranian society which is productive yet increasingly restrictive to the gender binary and notions of non-heterosexuality. Thus, power functions within the hospital to produce, "the heterosexualization of desire" (Butler, 1956, p. 23) and consequently reproduces and reinforces binary ideas of what it means to be male and female.

### **Socio-Political Power Dynamics and Differentiations**

In a legislative context differential powers are used to police varying queer identities. A sovereign power (Foucault, 1991, pp. 32-69) is used to make a visible and violent example of homosexuality



if transition isn't sought, whereas disciplinary power (Foucault, 1991, pp. 170-194) is used for those choosing to or being coerced to transition; this power is seeking to correct rather than to punish. The sentence, or treatment, of transition is no longer about violent punishments to cause physical pain which is used as a deterrent, but rather it is now an exercise in rectification, training, and a significantly more intimate and meticulous control of the body to reinforce ideas of normalcy (Davis, 1995, p. 24).

Disciplinary practices are used to generate binary divisions of male and female, which as a result of an, "authoritative status, is used as effective means of normalization and social control" (Sawicki, 1991, p. 22). This way of living against oppression that seeks to control and regulate how one acts is placed within Foucault's (1978) concept of "juridico-discursive" power which is a negative relation persistently maintaining order to represent the power and thus forming binary systems of social categorization (Mohanty, 1988, p. 79). This enforced binary is what has caused a societal ignorance to gender fluidity, which has in turn stigmatized those who transition whilst excluding those who don't. Thus, queer and trans individuals are rendered homo sacer (Agamben, 1998, pp. 71-74), as even if they are acknowledged within society, a result of transitioning, they remain on the margins, facing discrimination (Bluck, 2012, pp. 64-66); those who transition exist in the contradictory world of political acceptance without acknowledgment which, in turn, allows for exclusionary societal practices to persist.

In a societal sense, as previously noted, many who transition are still not accepted by the majority, thus implying a perceived "in-between" gender in Iranian social thought (Bluck, 2012, p. 65). This idea of an "in-between" gender, is the only explicit time where gender is seen to break the binary in Iran. The adherence of Iranian society to a fixed gender binary contends with Foucault's (1978; 1991; 2010) ideas of fluidity and lack of fixity and is therefore noted by Bluck (2012, p. 65) as being restrictive and, "problematic for liberty" as it reveals, "a wholesale disaffection for change".

The notion of perceiving this "in-between" has led to those who are known to communities for having transitioned facing intense discrimination and legal abuse (Schumacher, 2016). As those who transition now exist outwith the realms of Iranian society, they often cannot find work other than work that fetishizes the concept of "in-between" (Bluck, 2012, p. 64). Many trans Iranians struggle with societal integration and leaving the home space out of fear of harassment (Bluck, 2012; BBC World Service, 2014; 6 Rang, 2015), which shows differential spatial vulnerabilities that come with being queer in Iran, as both sites are spaces of restriction and danger, yet the most intimate tends to be favoured. This is most likely due to queer individuals being rendered homo sacer (Agamben, 1998, pp. 71-74) and consequently fearing the very authority that is meant to protect them upon leaving the home space (6 Rang, 2015). Therefore, social space is seen as a contentious area for trans people as, although they have been politically recognized, the recognition of rights from the government doesn't trickle down, reinforcing a binary and leaving trans individuals in a contradictory state of progressive politics against discriminatory societal views.

## Conclusion

As a result of the Iranian state being more concerned with, "fixing sexual identity, rather than accepting sexual diversity" (Bluck, 2012, p. 66), it has generated a setting of political trans acceptance over a more general socio-political queer exclusion. The state of "juridico-discursive" power (Foucault, 1978) helps to generate a fixed binary of male and female which, in turn, motivates powers functioning at all levels of society to police queerness—that is, anybody who does not fit into this binary. This policing is done with the aim of using disciplinary power to "correct" and regulate

bodies to fit into the established binary through processes which not only control the individual's body, but also rewrite their legacy to fit with normalcy. Thus, people are led to choose between their body or their life. Overall, power functions spatially and intimately with the body in Iran to (re)produce rigid notions of gender which, although productive for those who can fit within this binary, remain profoundly restrictive for many others.

## References

Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo sacer: Sovereign power and bare life*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bartky, S. (2002) "Sympathy and solidarity" and other essays. 1st ed. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

BBC World Service (2014). Iran's "sex-change" solution. [video] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wg51RnpGn9k> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2017].

Bluck, S. (2012). Transsexual in Iran: A fatwa for freedom? In C. Pullen, (Ed.), *LGBT transnational identity and the media* (59-66). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Butler, J. (1956). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. London: Routledge.

Davis, L. (1995). *Enforcing normalcy: Disability, deafness, and the body*. New York: Verso.

Euronews (2015). In Iran, you can't be gay but you can be transgender. [video] Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NsJGHVHF1ss>.

Fathi, N. (2004). As repression eases, more Iranians change their sex. *The New York Times* Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/02/world/as-repression-eases-more-iranians-change-their-sex.html>.

Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality: Volume 1*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1991). *Discipline and punish*. London: Penguin Books.

Foucault, M. (2010). *The birth of the clinic*. London: Routledge.

Gutting, G. (2005). *Foucault: A very short introduction*. 1st ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

ISHR (n.d). *Homosexuality in Iranian criminal law*. International Society for Human Rights (ISHR). Retrieved from <http://www.ishr.org/countries/islamic-republic-of-iran/homophobia/homosexuality-in-iranian-criminal-law/>.

Karimi, A. (2016). Iranian homosexuals; social identity formation and question of femininity. *Culture & Psychology*, 22(2), 296-313.

McDowall, A. and Khan, S. (2004). The Ayatollah and the transsexual. *The Independent*. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/the-ayatollah-and-the-transsexual-21867.html>.

Mohanty, C. (1988). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Feminist Review* 30(1), 61-88.

Sawicki, J. (1991). *Disciplining Foucault: Feminism, power, and the body*. London: Routledge.

Schumacher, K. (2016). Iran's treatment of trans people: A double edged sword. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/irans-treatment-of-trans-citizens-a-double-edged\\_us\\_5819f53de4b0cb89fdff2a89](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/irans-treatment-of-trans-citizens-a-double-edged_us_5819f53de4b0cb89fdff2a89).

Terman, R. (2014). Trans[ition] in Iran. *World Policy Journal*, 31(1), 28-38.

Valentine, G. (2007). Theorizing and researching intersectionality: A challenge for feminist geography. *The Professional Geographer*, 59(1), 10-21.

6 Rang (2015). Akan's Testimony revāyat-e āka [video] Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cRBP2YwJZg>.



# PUBLIC COMMENTARY ON ONTARIO'S PARKS SYSTEM: NATURE NARRATIVES AND WHERE THEY COME FROM

By Daniel Romm

---

A nature narrative is a conceptualization of the value of nature. 'Nature', however, is socially constructed so that ontological constructions of nature determine understandings of nature's value. A germane expression of nature narratives is found in parks because of the historical importance of parks in environmentalism and parks' connection to the concept of 'wilderness'. Commentaries on parks then reflect particular nature narratives. To map the nature narratives of parks, this study conducts a deductive discourse analysis of public commentary on Ontario's parks system found in the Environmental Registry, an online database of proposed changes to the parks system in which the public may comment. The analysis deconstructs commentary to deduce their discursive underpinnings and identify pervasive nature narratives. This study argues that comments on entries regarding parks on the Environmental Registry reflect nature narratives that alternatively see nature's value as instrumental for recreation, intrinsic for preservation, instrumental for work and habitation, or multifaceted and varied. Further, this study argues that various actor-groups enlist their constituent actors to mobilize narratives towards particular ends. In this way, a discourse analysis of comments reveals the narratives of actor-groups more than those of individual actors. These findings problematize an understanding of the 'public' as either too homogenous and too heterogeneous, highlighting the importance of nuance in analysis.

This land like a mirror turns you inward /  
And you become a forest in a furtive lake; /  
The dark pines of your mind reach downward... /  
There is something down there and you want it told.

– Gwendolyn MacEwan, Dark Pines Under Water

## Introduction

Nature is reflexive for MacEwan<sup>12</sup> and other nature commentators, many of whom understand that “nature is never just nature” (Eisenberg, 1998, p. 244). This understanding is not uncommon; many scholars explore “nature” as a social construct (Robbins, Hintz, & Moore, 2014, p. 121).<sup>3</sup> “Nature”, understood as a social construction, then defines conceptualizations of humans’ ideal role in nature (Proctor, 1996, p. 284). Commentaries on human-nature relations inevitably reflect these ideals through nature narratives. Parks and attitudes towards them are especially germane expressions of nature narratives because of the historical importance of the parks movement in environmentalism as well as parks’ connection to the concept of “wilderness”. This has led many authors to examine the discursive underpinnings of parks oftentimes as a surrogate for all of nature, allowing commentaries on parks to reflect particular nature narratives.

I examine such commentaries through Ontario’s Environmental Registry, an online database of proposed changes to legislation, regulations, and instruments of Ontario’s environmental regime, on which the public may comment to the authority behind the proposal (SO 1993, c28). Using a deductive discourse analysis of the Environmental Registry, I assay the ideals presented within public commentaries to identify common nature narratives. The discursive underpinnings of comments reveal a set of pervasive narratives about parks, and importantly, connote the historical construction of these narratives. I categorize comments on entries regarding Ontario’s parks in the Environmental Registry into one of four nature narratives that see nature’s value as: instrumental for recreation, intrinsic for preservation, instrumental for work and habitation, or multifaceted and varied. A discourse analysis of comments reveals the narratives of actor-groups more than individuals. I therefore argue that various actor-groups enlist their constituent actors to mobilize narratives to fulfil particular objectives.

I begin by defining my methodology. Following this, I examine the findings of my analysis. I consider the ontological construction of two nature narratives before discussing each narrative individually. I then discuss the important role of actor-groups in shaping discourse as discovered

---

1 Cronon (1996a) introduces *Uncommon ground: Rethinking the human place in nature* with an appeal for the humanities to be given more clout regarding the environment. Similarly, Roos and Hunt’s (2010) *Postcolonial green: Environmental politics and world narratives*, and DeLoughrey and Handley’s (2011) *Postcolonial ecologies: Literatures of the environment* are grounded in the humanities. As LeGrace (2011) notes within DeLoughrey and Handley’s collection, arts play a formative role in ecology (63); Neumann (1998) also makes note of the importance of images of nature (15). Many authors, including Cronon himself (1996b: 72) note that the roots of ecological narratives are partially within the arts (Handley, 2011; Kirk, 1969, p. 6; Grove, 1995, p. 11). It is with respect for this tradition, as well as for the pomp of the seminal texts of ecological critique, that I begin with MacEwan’s *Dark Pines Under Water* poem, and subsequently explore the connection of this poem to my arguments.

2 MacEwan’s full poem is as follows: “This land like a mirror turns you inward / And you become a forest in a furtive lake; / The dark pines of your mind reach downward, / You dream in the green of your time, / Your memory is a row of sinking pines. / [paragraph break] / Explorer, you tell yourself, this is not what you came for / Although it is good here, and green; / You had meant to move with a kind of largeness, / You had planned a heavy grace, an anguished dream. / [paragraph break] / But the dark pines of your mind dip deeper / And you are sinking, sinking, sleeper / In an elementary world; / There is something down there and you want it told.”

3 Many authors explore proofs for the social construction of nature. See Cronon’s (1996b) *Uncommon ground: Rethinking the human place in nature* for a collection of essays on the subject.

through my analysis. I conclude by reflecting on the significance of my findings, problematizing an understanding of the "public" as either too homogenous or too heterogeneous, arguing instead for further nuance.

### **Methodology: Constructing Discourse**

To construct my arguments around discourse, I use three source types: comments made on the Environmental Registry, proposals on the Registry, and secondary sources.<sup>4</sup> Dryzek (1997) offers that discourse is composed of an ontology, assumptions of human-nature relations, actor-groups and their objectives, and key rhetoric (p. 16). Using a deductive approach, it is possible to identify one of these factors if the others are known; in this way, one may determine actor-groups and their objectives if ontology, assumptions of human-nature relations, and key rhetoric are known. I use this approach to explore the reoccurring narratives within the comments. My argument is built from an analysis of all available comments on the Environmental Registry under the "parks" category, the count of which is 1088 representing 11% of the total comments made between April 20, 2005 and February 22, 2017. This analysis only reflects online comments and does not include in-person consultations.

The structure of my analysis was a three-step qualitative process. I first gathered and reviewed all available comments to form the four aforementioned coding categories for nature narratives. From my observations, I identified the assumptions of human-nature relations and the key rhetoric used within narratives. Second, I categorized comments by their sources: individuals, actor-groups, and government bodies. Actor-groups denote an organization of some collection of actors outside of governmental bodies that mobilize discourse through nature narratives to affect desired change. While actor-groups are often non-governmental organizations, they may also be businesses, hobby associations, or informal networks – families and friends. Following Dryzek's (1997) construction of discourses and Eisenhardt's (1989) recommendation (p. 544), I use secondary sources to detail the ontology of the narrative. Third, I carefully re-read all comments from individuals and noted trends in the respective coding categories in which they fell. Whenever a narrative trend was observed within a case, I attempted to locate the source of that narrative within comments from actor-groups using the deductive method. Through this process, I identify some actors and the motives behind their narratives to construct as complete a picture of discourse as possible.

### **Nature Narratives: Pines in a Lake**

As MacEwan's pines delve into the reflective lake, so too are our understandings of nature formed reflexively. Nature is made to matter in relation to ourselves, so that nature is most often defined in contrast to humans (Robbins, Hintz, & Moore, 2014, p. 122; Neumann, 1998, p. 25). Accordingly, of the four narratives I identified within comments made to the Environmental Registry, all but one depend on a dichotomous view of nature as separate from human. With this in mind, I define the narratives in terms of their understanding of human-nature relations. Secondary sources help to identify commonalities between comments within a narrative by outlining the ontology of a narrative. For example, a comment mentioning "beauty" and a comment mentioning "wilderness" connect through the "wilderness as sublime" narrative identified in various texts (for example: Grove, 1995; Slater, 1996). Through this process or narrative definition, I identify and operationalize four nature narratives: nature as having instrumental value for recreation, intrinsic value for

---

4 To refer to entries on the registry, I cite the registry number associated with each case, beginning with ER#. To refer to comments on entries on the registry, I cite the comment number associated with the comment, beginning with C#, followed by the registry number.

preservation, instrumental value for work and habitation, and nature's value as multifaceted and varied. The same historical ontological construction underpins the former two narratives—that is, the "objects" or "entities" upon which the narrative acts. I begin by discussing this ontological construction—the national park ideal—and continue by exploring the first two narratives that rely on this construction. The two remaining nature narratives, which do not share that historical ontological construction are discussed afterwards.

### *National Park Ideal(s)*

It may surprise both hunters and “planet fetishers” (Eisenberg, 1998: 283) that the narratives they embody share the same historical ontological construction. Historical ontological construction here refers to a social construction, undergirded by historicity, of “nature” as a knowledge domain. The construction of such an ontology may be conceptualized as a three-step process: first, the “wilderness” imaginary is constructed through an erasive frontier;<sup>5</sup> second, this “wilderness” is made sacred, legitimizing its protection; third, the “wilderness” imaginary is protected, commonly through what Neumann (1998) defines as the “national park ideal” (p. 9).<sup>6</sup> These narratives differ in the particular “national park ideal” they pursue, which is related to their understanding of the value of nature—as either instrumental or intrinsic. Both narratives, however, remain underpinned by the history of this construction.

The construction of the “wilderness” imaginary through an erasive frontier emerged from the American frontier mythos, discourses of primitivism, and the colonial erasure of Aboriginal occupation. The American frontier mythos “imagineers” wilderness as a frontier for heroic men to conquer and domesticate. As America’s remaining “wilderness” became increasingly scarce, the imperative to preserve the “frontier experience”—one of rugged men and primitive living—emerged (Cronon, 1996b, p. 76-78). Eisenberg (1998) argues that notions of primitivism, through cultural reference to primitive wilderness myths, serve an imaginary of a pristine landscape (p. 284). The pristine imaginary remains prevalent: one commenter, supporting the prohibition of landing aircrafts in park grounds, argues that landing planes “does [not] inspire to mind the pristine and serene environment that Ontario Parks has worked so hard to protect” (C#115319:ER#010-4507). Neumann (1998) notes that the discourse of the pristine is fundamentally erasive (p. 122; also Handley, 2011, p. 117). In the Canadian colonial context, conceptualizing land ownership through European definitions served to classify land occupied by First Nations as wilderness, justifying appropriating land for European settlement (Blomley, 2004). To make this point, Eisenberg (1998) refers to a Tuscarora Indian chief’s quote: “The West wasn’t wild until the white man got there” (p. 307).

This newly constructed wilderness became the subject of the Romantic movement, which abandoned a portrayal of wilderness as frightening in favour of a portrayal of wilderness as sacrosanct.

---

5 Here I draw on Pow & Neo’s (2013) understanding of imaginaries as social and political aspirations, based on which landscapes can be “imagineered” towards particular desired landscapes

6 Neumann (1998) defines the national park ideal as “the notion that ‘nature’ can be ‘preserved’ from the effects of human agency by legislatively creating a bounded space for nature controlled by a centralized bureaucratic authority” (p. 9). Neumann continues, arguing that “national parks are historically and culturally contingent representations of a particular nature aesthetic” (p. 11). I appropriate Neumann’s term slightly (though Neumann might not disagree with this adoption) to allow for multiple ‘national park ideals’ that depend on different understandings of the value of nature



This legitimizes regimes protecting the now sacred wilderness (Cronon, 1996b, p. 72-75). The use of sacred is intentional – Romanticism’s religious elements prominently feature in this shift in sentiment. Many scholars identify the biblical fable of Eden as formative to Romantic nature.<sup>7</sup> As such, the Romantics interpreted wilderness as a closeness to God (Cronon, 1996b, p. 73). Slater (1996) notes that narratives evoking Eden remain prominent in conservationism (115), though often this is evident through the rhetoric of the sublime rather than direct religious references. One commenter mentions “the feeling of wilderness on these lakes” (C#140718:ER#011-5560); another writes “serene surroundings and purity of air, quiet time for contemplation and natural beauty” (C#160757:ER#011-9984). Through this discourse, wilderness is made sacred and what is sacred must be protected.

To protect the wilderness imaginary, conservationism often pursues a national park ideal. Kirk (1969) identifies one early national park ideal, noting that Canada’s parks system originally aspired to establish elite tourist resorts (p. 72); the same is true for America’s early parks (Cronon, 1996b, p. 78). Kirk identifies another early national park ideal as aspiring towards protecting a pristine nature, quoting Canada’s first Parks Commissioner, who argued that because of parks, “primitive beauty may remain untouched and unscarred” (1969, p. 70). Despite sharing the same historical ontological construction, here are two disparate park ideals: the former understanding nature’s value as intrinsic, the latter as instrumental for recreation.

#### *The First Narrative: Nature’s Value as Instrumental for Recreation*

The first narrative sees nature as having instrumental value for recreation. This narrative aspires towards a national park ideal that Eisenberg (1998) might classify as “planet management,” an approach that “sees the earth as a garden that we are to dress, keep, and humanize” (p. 286). This narrative construes recreation as a means of knowing nature. One commenter agrees, arguing against a cycling ban, suggesting that “mountain bikers cherish the opportunity to explore [nature]” through that activity (C#104206:ER#PB05E6008). Along the lines of understanding nature through recreation, another commenter refers to “activities such as angling, hunting, and trapping” as “natural heritage activities” (C#813123:ER#012-4102). Appeals to “heritage” and “tradition” are common and central to this narrative, perhaps because of the prominence of the aforementioned frontier mythos and the primitivism discourse, which historically were reflected through the national park ideal.

Indeed, recreation activities are the “traditional uses” (as one commenter puts it; C#115813:ER#010-4911) that parks were designed to preserve as part of the “frontier experience”. In tandem with appeals to tradition and heritage, this narrative’s intimate connection to history serves to place wilderness in a liminal position outside of history (Cronon, 1996b, p. 79), so that (re)experiencing the garden of Eden—through recreation—is particularly plausible. To obtain this liminal position, instrumentalists understand the “wild” in a teleotic sense. Eventually, the “wild” is to be domesticated through the West’s project to recover a lost Eden (Merchant, 1996, p. 147, 134). Domestication in this case means making wilderness an Edenic garden in which to play.

---

<sup>7</sup> Many authors cited within this essay consider the fable of Eden in different ways. Merchant (1996), for example, walks the reader through the justifications for domination and management of nature through Genesis (p. 134). Neumann’s (1998) refers to the role of Eden in subjugating Africa’s ‘wilderness’ several times (see p. 128, p. 177). Grove (1995) looks at “Edenic island discourses” throughout the book and even more directly considers Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* as connecting nature and Providence. Eisenberg (1998) produces a tome dedicated to the subject. This is said to highlight the popularity of considering Eden in environmental discourse.

### *The Second Narrative: Nature's Value as Intrinsic for Preservation*

The second narrative sees nature as having intrinsic value, aspiring towards a national park ideal that endeavours to dichotomize activities as "natural" or "not natural". The distinguishing of activities between the two is often arbitrary. One comment remarks about the natural wilderness of park grounds in support of conservation, only to request altering this nature: "anything you could do to get rid of the fragmites would be a bonus" (C#142544:ER#011-6833). Another comment compliments a park's serenity, stating that they "prefer it the way it is" only to later request more picnic tables and the introduction of wild turkeys (C#160757:ER#011-9984). Comments following this narrative lean towards a diametric opposition of what they perceive as inappropriate instrumental uses of nature. One comment proclaims that "ATVs do not belong in these places of serenity and natural [sic]" (C#115925:ER#010-4911). The question, of course, is what uses of nature are permissible within this framing.

As Proctor (1996) notes, that humans should not intervene in nature "is not just some conception of nature; it is also a conception of the ideal role of humans in nature" (p. 284). By defining some activities as intervening and some as permissible in nature, commenters within this narrative rely on a constructed "nature" as "a stable external source of nonhuman values against which human actions can be judged without much ambiguity" (Cronon, 1996a, p. 26). Such judgements are many and clear in comments. Referring to policy permitting horseback riding and biking, one commenter argues that: "Such non-conforming and incompatible uses should not be allowed as they threaten park values" (C#110994:ER#PB01E3003). Persistent through comments within this narrative is a value-laden dichotomization of natural and not natural activities.

### *The Third Narrative: Nature's Value as Instrumental for Work and Habitation*

The third narrative sees nature as having instrumental value for work and habitation. Comments following this narrative tend to either consider the objectives of environment and development as reconcilable, or scorn environmental protection in favour of other land uses. The former has roots in Pinchot's resource management approach (Dryzek, 1997, p. 10) but today manifests mainly through the sustainable development movement. One commenter argues that "Algonquin Park Leaseholders have a... history of environmental responsibility, and have always prided themselves on being 'stewards of Algonquin'" (C#206080:ER#012-8560). Here, habitation within a park is seen as supportive of conservation goals. Proctor (1996) similarly quotes a logger who asserts that "[loggers] have probably gained a respect for the forest and the land that few people will ever know" (p. 270-271). White (1996) agrees that working and/or living in nature provides a means of knowing nature, recognizing the merit in an instrumental valuing of nature.

At the same time, White (1996) also warns against a romanticism of work and habitation in nature, offering that doing so does not necessarily ensure environmentally responsible behaviour (p. 185). Most comments following this narrative do not strive towards the happy coupling of environment and economy. One comment argues that "The focus appears to be on... [appeasing] environmentalists in Southern Ontario instead of supporting the people who live (sic) and use these lands in the North" (C#114755:ER#010-2514). At the same time, the work deemed acceptable in parks oftentimes depends more on colonial impositions of what work is "traditional" rather than any ecological basis (for example see Neumann, 2003, p. 248). The Canadian parks system similarly permits work and habitation within parks, provided that it conforms to certain standards.

The fourth narrative sees nature as having multifaceted and varied appeals resulting from a complex understanding of nature. The ability to address environmental topics with a high degree of nuance is enabled by this complex understanding of nature. For example, one commenter notes that people “may value a variety of tangible and intangible aspects of protected areas” (C#120718:ER#010-5767). A comment from Conservation Ontario begins by stating that “Land use negotiations involving diverse interests can be a complex and challenging task” (C#114765:ER#010-2514) and continues to consider the diverse interests of multiple stakeholders. For these commenters, nature is not understood in any one way; nature is, in Ellis’s (1996) words, non-essentializing.

Comments within this category largely come from organizations—from Conservation Ontario, from Stewardship Councils, from government departments, and other such groups—who may have the positionality and wherewithal to incorporate nuance and complexity. Individuals who make such comments seem to have some educational background on environmental topics. One such commenter notes their background in fire management within the Ministry of Natural Resources after arguing for the consideration of First Nations’ interests within the policy framework (C#130419:ER#011-1892). Comments within this narrative are typically long-form and present several specific policy recommendations.

### **Discussion: Who Is the Individual? Troubling the Source of Narratives**

Above I have identified the historical-ontological sources of the four nature narratives found within public comments. The question, then, is what publics embody these narratives. Through my analysis, I found that comments from individual actors seemingly acting independently instead often originate from and reflect the narratives of actor-groups. In this way, actors often should be considered constituents of distinct “actor-groups” rather than independent actors. To determine whether an actor should be considered a “constituent” or independent, I considered the rhetoric and ontologies of comments.

Usually, this determination is glaringly obvious and the “parent” of an actor-group’s narrative is easily identifiable. One case, for example, has all available comments challenging a ban on mountain biking (ER#PB05E6008). Comments in this case share similar language, presenting mountain biking as “sustainable”, “low-impact”, and healthy. For another case, the source of the comments is a conservation organization titled “Ontario Nature”. This is easily found as Ontario Nature’s comment is echoed in other comments: one quoting Ontario Nature, another sharing the same argument, and all others including “the Carolinian zone of Southern Ontario” (ER#PB01E3003). Evidently, some actor-group is enlisting its constituent actors to promote a particular narrative. This trend is common among all cases reviewed; for most cases, the majority of comments belong to an identifiable actor-group.

In this way, understanding public comments as representing “the public” becomes problematized—instead, it is some publics pursuing particular interests such that the line between “individual” and “actor-group” is blurred. Occasionally, this result in actors, linked via an actor-group, overwhelming the public commentary on an entry. The most blatant case is regarding the Proposed Amendments to the Algonquin Park Management Plan (ER#010-4911). For this case, 93% of the 234 comments were nearly identical. This case has the fifth most public comments submitted and the second most online comments submitted. This demonstrates the potential for an actor-group

to enlist enough constituents to drastically alter the discourse of a topic. While I began my analysis with the a priori assumption that public comments constitute public opinion, expecting to discern "a" public opinion on parks, and by extension on nature. Evidently, it is rather that nature narratives are rife with history and that comments made by actors also reflect their actor-network.

### **Conclusion: Pervasive Narratives and a Multiplicity of Pines Under Water**

Explorer, you tell yourself, this is not what you came for /  
Although it is good here; and green /  
You had meant to move with a kind of largeness, /  
You had planned a heavy grace, an anguished dream.  
– Gwendolyn MacEwan, *Dark Pines Under Water*

This paper examined public comments on parks in Ontario's Environmental Registry and identified four conceptualizations of nature's value that form the narrative landscape of the parks system: as instrumental for recreation, intrinsic for preservation, instrumental for work and habitation, or multifaceted and varied. By integrating literature, this analysis foregrounds the history of these narratives. Furthermore, by identifying discourses using Dryzek's (1997) construct, the actor-networks behind comments are revealed. This analysis first identified different conceptualizations of nature's value. That these are varied demonstrates a heterogeneous public, or publics. Concurrently, the finding that many seemingly independent comments share one source demonstrates some degree of homogeneity within the public.

Following the geography adage that "everything is infinitely complex", there are limitations to understanding the public as overly homogenous or as overly heterogeneous. The comments are linked both to larger nature narratives flush with history, and also often to an actor-group to which the commenter belongs. MacEwan's poem begins with a reflection through nature ("This land like a mirror turns you inward") and concludes with a grand realization of some deeper, latent meaning ("There is something down there and you want it told"). It is fitting that for geography, we begin by reflecting on nature, but in place of a grand realization we instead conclude with an acknowledgment of many meanings, implicit and explicit, and sources historical and contemporary. Perhaps we should take the liberty of homage to MacEwan's *Dark Pines Under Water*, and alter the last line to read: "Many things are down there and you want them told". For publics' perceptions of parks, and on nature by extension, we recognize the influence of history, the intricacies of understanding "a public", and most significantly, the importance of nuance in analysis.

### **References**

- Blomley, N. K. (2004). Land and the postcolonial city. In N. K. Blomley (Ed.), *Unsettling the city: Urban land and the politics of property* (128-161). New York; London: Routledge.
- Cronon, W. (1996a). Introduction: In search of nature. In W. Cronon (Ed.), *Uncommon ground: rethinking the human place in nature* (23-68). New York: WW Norton.
- Cronon, W. (1996b). The trouble with wilderness; or, getting back to the wrong nature. In W. Cronon (Ed.), *Uncommon ground: rethinking the human place in nature* (69-90). New York: WW Norton.

DeLoughrey, E., & Handley, G. B. (2011). Introduction: Toward an aesthetics of the earth. In E. DeLoughrey & G. B. Handley (Eds.), *Postcolonial ecological: Literatures of the environment* (3-39). New York: Oxford University Press.

Dryzek, J. (1997). *Politics of the earth: Environmental discourses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eisenberg, E. (1998). *The ecology of Eden*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532-550.

Ellis, J. C. (1996). On the search for a root cause: Essentialist tendencies in environmental discourse. In W. Cronon (Ed.), *Uncommon ground: rethinking the human place in nature* (256-268). New York: WW Norton.

Environmental Bill of Rights, Statutes of Ontario 1993, chapter 28.

Grove, R. (1995). *Green Imperialism: Colonial expansion, tropical island Edens and the origins of environmentalism, 1600-1860*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Handley, G. B. (2011). The postcolonial ecology of the New World baroque: Alejo Carpentier's *The Lost Steps*. In E. DeLoughrey & G. B. Handley (Eds.), *Postcolonial ecological: Literatures of the environment* (117-135). New York: Oxford University Press.

Kirk, S. M. V. (1969). *The Development of National Park Policy in Canada's Mountain National Parks* (Graduate Thesis). Edmonton: The University of Alberta.

LeGrace, B. (2011). Haiti's elusive paradise. In E. DeLoughrey & G. B. Handley (Eds.), *Postcolonial ecological: Literatures of the environment* (62-79). New York: Oxford University Press.

MacEwan, G. (1972). *Dark Pines Under Water*. In G. MacEwan (Ed.), *The Shadow-Maker*. Toronto: Macmillan.

Merchant, C. (1996). Reinventing Eden: Western Culture as a Recovery Narrative. In W. Cronon (Ed.), *Uncommon ground: rethinking the human place in nature* (132-169). New York: WW Norton.

Neumann, R. P. (1998). *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Neumann, R. P. (2003). The production of nature: Colonial recasting of the African landscape in Serengeti National Park. In K. S. Zimmerer & T. J. Bassett (Eds.), *Political ecology: An integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies* (240-255). New York: Guilford Press.

Pow, C., & Neo, H. (2013). Seeing red over green: Contesting urban sustainabilities in China. *Urban Studies*, 50(11), 2256-2274.

Proctor, J. D. (1996). Whose nature? The contested moral terrain of ancient forests. In W. Cronon (Ed.), *Uncommon ground: rethinking the human place in nature* (269-297). New York: WW Norton.

Robbins, P., Hintz, J., & Moore, S. (2014). The social construction of nature. In P. Robbins, J. Hintz, & S. Moore (Eds.), *Environment and society* (120-135). Wiley Blackwell.

Roos, B., Hunt, A. (2010). *Postcolonial green: Environmental politics and world narratives*. London: University of Virginia Press.

Slater, C. (1996). Amazonia as Edenic narrative. In W. Cronon (Ed.), *Uncommon ground: rethinking the human place in nature* (114-131). New York: WW Norton.

The Government of Ontario, Canada. (ongoing). Environmental Registry [Database]. Retrieved from <https://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/>

White, R. (1996). "Are you an environmentalist or do you work for a living?": Work and nature. In W. Cronon (Ed.), *Uncommon ground: rethinking the human place in nature* (171-185). New York: WW Norton.

# IS HOME WHERE THE LAND IS?

## IN SEARCH OF GREEN LIVING FROM CONTEMPORARY ECO-HOMES TO THE BACK-TO-THE-LAND MOVEMENT OF THE 1970S

By Fay Lin

---

The 1970s “back-to-the-land” movement is frequently associated with romantic ideals of living self-sufficiently off the land and with its call for radical social change and political resistance to consumer capitalism. While contemporary “eco-homes” can be traced to “back-to-the-lander” homesteads, I investigate popular periodicals and publications to show how the original dream of getting “back to the land” and “living with nature” has not endured in the new symbolic form of the eco-home. In dialogue with Robbins et al. (2014) and Escobar (1995), textual analysis will reveal how terms such as “nature,” “environment” and “development,” have transformed discursively. Accompanying these discursive changes has been a shift of the back-to-the-land movement from the public to the private realm. As public engagement, social values, and consumer culture are consequently recast around conceptions of eco-development, the eco-home has emerged as a site for modernizing, improving, developing and consuming—as a site of depoliticized consumption rather than radical potential.

### Introduction

The 1970s “back-to-the-land” movement is frequently associated with romantic ideals of living self-sufficiently off the land, and is also recognized for its call for radical social change and political resistance to consumer capitalism. Shelter is a key necessity for the movement, and the “home” or “homestead” is a symbolic focal point upon which we can read these motives and practices of self-sufficient living. This iteration of sustainable living persists today in the form of the “eco-home” or “green” housing. But has sustainable living changed, and if so, how and why? In this paper, I investigate popular periodicals and publications to map out the different narrative voices contesting whether the original dream of going “back to the land” and “living with nature” has endured in a new symbolic form, or if the eco-home, rather than embodying ecological potential, has turned into something else entirely.

While contemporary eco-homes can be traced back to the homesteads of the 1970s, I argue that the lineage between these two symbolic homes has not stayed the same. I show a distinct shift in the romanticization of land and home from the public realm to the private realm, reflecting a corresponding recasting of public engagement, social values and consumer culture surrounding conceptions of ecological sustainability. What are the factors behind this change? I argue that this overall transition from “public” ecological engagement to “private” is driven by the evolving discursive categories of “nature,” “environment” and “development.” These categories are co-opted in such a way that nature has given way to environment, and from environment emerges development, which ultimately has led to the rise of eco-home as consumption embedded in develop-

mental logics. In contrast to the “back-to-the-land” movement, I will show how this contemporary configuration of the ecological home is actually de-politicized, as opposed to the radical potential of the 1970s movement.

## Methodology and Theoretical Background

The roadmap of my paper is as follows: after outlining my methodology and theoretical background, I briefly introduce the back-to-the-landers before proceeding to analyze popular periodicals and magazines sequentially over time. I start from the 1970s with *Whole Earth Catalog* to the 1980s with *Mother Jones*, and finally move to the 1990s and 2000s with *Popular Mechanics* and *Popular Science*. I have assigned these periodicals to distinct decades in order to group their themes into a coherent narrative trajectory. My methodology is adopted from Sharp’s (2000) method of characterizing *Reader’s Digest* as a “voice” of “American-ness” during the Cold War, which creatively fashioned the “Russian character” so crucial to the geopolitics of the time (Sharp, 2000, p. x). In the same way that Sharp argues the popular magazine created “a picture of a corresponding place—‘America’” (p. xi) for the magazine’s readership, I argue that the voices in publications such as *Whole Earth Catalog* or *Popular Science* are similarly important points of inquiry. The articles do not present only events and hard facts but also embedded values, ideals and beliefs couched in particular word choices, phrases and symbolic focuses. Like Sharp’s analysis of the *Reader’s Digest*’s “foundational myths and stories” (p. xiii), my selected articles serve as artifacts; through close reading we can assemble from their contents a traceable evolution of the characters of “land” and “home,” depicted through corresponding discursive categories of nature, environment and development all bound in a changing narrative of sustainability.

I now discuss the concept of a discursive category. “Nature” rather than held still as a singular authentic subject is a constructed idea that is “a product of social processes, beliefs, ideologies, and history” (Robbins et al., 2014, p. 121). For the purposes of this paper, I emphasize that these discursive categories obscure themselves and the layers of ideas that culminate in their formations in order to masquerade as obvious and authentic. Discourse is a useful concept for understanding that “nature” as it pertains to the back-to-the-land movement is constructed in different ways over time to serve particular purposes for particular actors. In order to illustrate the transition from homestead to eco-home, I cite Escobar’s (1995) work, which provides an essential framework for demonstrating how the discourse of nature transforms into environment, and how environment solicits and in fact necessitates development. I highlight four distinct stages that Escobar outlines in this discursive transformation: a) in order to justify the extraction of natural resources, the discourse of environment “becomes an indispensable construct”; b) in this construct, “the human and his/her creations” gain an ever more powerful role as nature is diminished to “an ever more passive role”; c) consequently, environment discourse not only causes the “physical deterioration of nature” but its “symbolic death”; d) finally, this process that merges the economic and the ecological is affirmed by “ecosystems analysis and ecodevelopment” (Escobar, 1995, p. 196).

Relying on Escobar’s work, I argue that the discursive trajectory of nature, environment and development is the propelling force that has brought the homestead into the realm of the eco-home, and the public into the realm of the private. Escobar writes that “discourses do not replace each other completely but build upon each other as layers that can only be partly separated” (Escobar, 1995, p. 195). From the 1970s “back-to-the-land” movement to now, this myth making is precisely what I will explore next.



## Who Were the Back-to-the-Landers?

?

The “back-to-the-landers” movement largely consists of well-educated members of the middle-class who, in groups as small as an individual or family and as large as a commune, are characterized by their investment in alternative technologies such as gardens, wood stoves, solar energy and other renewable energies. Overall “back-to-the-land” is defined as a large-scale, collective social movement that involves urban to rural migration (Jacob, 1997). During the 1970s and into the 1980s, the movement prioritized “a return to simple living” (Shi, 2007, p. 267), an “ideal of self-reliance,” “fragility of the earth’s ecosystems” (Jacob & Brinkerhoff, 1986, p. 44), “rural romanticism” (Miller, 1997), and an “apocalyptic mind-set”—that is, a retreat from financial crisis and climate change (Vlahos, 2009). However, important to acknowledge is the fact that far from a singular community, the “back-to-the-landers” should be understood as numerous communities, if even a community at all, with different and often contradictory ideals and practical challenges. Nevertheless, an interesting feature of the larger overarching group is the symbolic object of “home” central to the movement. Tellingly, memoirs written by the movement’s children-turned-adults are centred around the structure of the built home (Coleman, 2011; Strayed, 2008). The geodesic dome in particular, designed by Buckminster Fuller, became an iconic home structure of the time. Dubbed a “house of the future,” the dome structure was meant to provide an energy efficient shelter with natural cooling and heating capabilities that mimicked “the natural system of humans and trees” (Fuller, 1998). Indeed, homesteaders come to “live” upon the land, and the structure of shelter is the symbolic constant, so to speak, that holds throughout this narrative exploration.

### Whole Earth Catalog: “Nature” as Enabling Public Engagement and Radical Political Disruption

While different homesteaders were politically invested to varying degrees (Wilbur, 2013, p. 149), the countercultural back-to-the-land movement succeeded in empowering broader agendas. Whole Earth Catalog, a publication centred around self-sufficiency and ecological consciousness displays how the back-to-the-landers envisioned their actions not only as personal lifestyle change but more-so as a resistance to growing capitalist consumer culture, environmental depletion and collective disempowerment. How was this mobilization possible if they were not overtly an organized political group? One Whole Earth writer provides a salient metaphor: Meadows (1997) aligns ecosystems with living bodies and economic and political systems to describe how a small change can ripple and produce large-scale changes in complex systems. My goal is not to determine whether the movement succeeded or failed in producing these large-scale changes, but to draw out readings of “nature” that enabled political resistance, radical social change or disruptions to consumer culture. That is, how did a particular discourse of nature empower and sustain the public and political vision of the back-to-the-landers?

“Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front” by Wendell Berry (1974) captures the movement’s spirit and is a useful artifact for exploring the discursive rhetoric that empowered the political imaginaries of the back-to-the-landers. To the urbanites, Berry warns, “Your mind will be punched in a card / and shut away in a little drawer.” In contrast, coupled with strong religious imagery, he calls on homesteaders to “plant sequoias” and “put your faith in the two inches of humus / that will build under the trees every thousand years.” Berry’s writing positions the homesteaders as being in service to nature and he hails them to “denounce the government” and condemn the “politicos.” “Manifesto” shows a discursive reading of nature as a living entity and a sacred site of return for life and radical hope. Meanwhile, Rosemary Menninger’s “Community Gardening” is a more practical example. She explores community gardening not as a hobby but as a “program

of the future” by aligning it with nature (1976). Menninger writes, “Nature is a relentless force... given time it also begins to realign human behaviour” (1976). Thus to return to the land and to self-sufficiency was to return to a politically awakened and spiritually conscious collective life, rather than an increasingly individualizing consumerist culture. The discursive category of nature lends itself to the movement’s romanticization of land-as-home that is steadfastly and perhaps morally entwined with the public realm.

The maintenance of this discourse and its ideological values was crucial for sustaining the alternative rural narrative of the back-to-the-land movement (Jacob & Brinkerhoff, 1986, p. 44). Appropriately, architect and theorist Buckminster Fuller’s “Thoughts of Buckminster Fuller” opens with himself “standing by the lake” (1998). His position in nature acts as an entry point to self-sufficiency not only as practice but also as principle. He calls upon his readers, writing, “You and all men are here for the sake of other men” (Fuller, 1998). The back-to-the-landers in effect are upholding “our future” (Fuller, 1975). In these contexts, the foregrounding of nature discourse as living, sacred and universal grants the back-to-the-land movement and homesteading a deeply public and political function.

### **Mother Jones: The Emergence of “Environment” and a Turn to Private Life**

By the 1980s, the revolutionary rhetoric found in *Whole Earth Catalog* was losing momentum in Mother Jones. As Ronald Reagan’s policy to shut down the Department of Energy gained traction in the United States, for example, the Solar Energy Research Institute and its alternative energy study was “quashed” and “killed” (Allen, 2000, p. 64). The fall of the “Solar pioneer” runs parallel to what Keene (2015) calls an unmaking of the rural moral economy and by extension the unmaking of anti-capitalist resistance. In an analysis of homestead agro-culture, Keene argues that the values central to the 1970s movement became diffuse as second generation children often held different aspirations from their parents. She points out that people were more interested in what the land had to offer rather than the land itself. “Living off the land” became attractive for its profit (Keene, 2015). Here, the narrative pivots to reveal an emerging dual discourse of nature and environment: “back-to-the-land” in the public realm begins to veer into the private realm.

The social and spiritual concerns seen in *Whole Earth Catalog* are recast as more technical and environmentally centred. Escobar (1995) claims environmental discourse is crucial for urban industrialization and “what circulates are raw materials, industrial products, toxic wastes, ‘resources’” (p. 196). Indeed, parallel to Escobar’s observation, environmentally-minded writers prioritize “remaining cultivable acres, erosion, salt contamination, water shortages, air quality problems and runoff pollution” (Brechtin, 1996, p. 38). The diction of these articles revolves around resource-based concerns, more so than public consciousness. Furthermore, whereas Berry imagines the homesteader as the servant of a greater nature, the discourse of environment in Mother Jones is subjugated to human management and regulation, making apparent the increasingly skewed relationship between a dominant “human agent” and a “passive nature” (Escobar, 1995, p. 196). As illustrated by this discursive shift, nature undergoes not only a physical death but also a symbolic one (Escobar, 1995, p. 196)—land is recast as an exploited subject and discursively bound as “resource.”

As land and land-as-home are reconfigured as resource, individual needs transcend possibilities for collectivity and contestation. As the collective values of the back-to-the-land movement eroded, those who believed urban life was too crowded and polluted pursued green-living for other reasons, propelling the growth of commuter suburbs (Harkinson, 2010). This changing realm of home from public to private brings us to Keizer’s critical examination of a disabling of polit-

ical participation: “The pull of private life,” he writes, “proved irresistible” (Keizer, 2005, p. 69). Despite a growing investment in environment and climate change awareness, those invested in green-living and self-sufficiency began domesticating these agendas to remain within the private house rather than the public realm. As environment discourse overtakes nature in homesteading culture, does the narrative for action, empowerment or mobilization become inert? In the next cluster of magazines, I will take up this question and its implications for the ideals of the back-to-the-land movement.

### **Popular Mechanics and Popular Science: The Rise of Development Discourse and the “Eco-home”**

In a special edition of *Popular Mechanics* published in February 2017, the issue revisits the “back-to-the-land movement” with the editor’s introduction: “The new self-sufficiency” (D’Agostino, 2017, p. 4). D’Agostino’s use of the word “new” gestures to the changing contours of green-living values. As environment discourse becomes the centrepiece of ecological activists, self-sufficiency enthusiasts and green-oriented families, Keizer reminds us that “beginning the revolution at home is not the same thing as retreating into domesticity. The personal is not automatically the political” (2005, p. 69). Indeed with the rise of “environment” and “environmental sustainability” discourse, development discourse moves to the forefront, requiring consumption and growth. The essential recognition we must make here is that the resurgence of interest in green living is not a reincarnation of the radical spirit embodied in the “Manifesto.” Instead, only a lifestyle is “back in vogue,” a way of living centred around consumer logic that gains in tandem with sustainability initiatives harboured in the private sphere. Ironically, this depoliticized and domesticated consumption of green-living is precisely what the radical 1970s movement had sought to resist.

Sustainability no longer resides in Fuller’s vision of systemic change, but is taken up in the confines of private life. Tracking this narrative demonstrates the changing trends of how we value ecological sustainability, what we think is important about it and how this is contained in the built home. As one example of this tense duality, I compare a 1970s wood homestead and a contemporary steel homestead both designed to ward off Montana bush fires. My intention is not to suggest that one is more “authentic” than the other but that the ideological underpinnings of these two houses are symbolic of the trajectory I have been tracking thus far. The log house is not only a shelter but grants its builder a certain orientation to the world and a profound “engagement with life” (Henderson, 2017, p. 66). Despite living in the remote wilderness, the builder feels connected to a greater collective of people in service to nature. Conversely, the modern homestead is “equipped with vacuum-sealed doors, a steel frame, and an exterior clad only with steel and concrete” (Wardell, 2004, p. 24). The diction signals that the material is not only literally different but also symbolically so: the steel is designed to ward off mold, mildew, and bacteria that do not belong in a modern home (Wardell, 2004, p. 24). Land and nature are no longer romanticized but read as intrusive and requiring domestication by the built home.

Importantly, the symbolic eco-home, some replete with \$2 million home systems (Ashley, 1986, p. 90), is not portrayed as alien, removed or inaccessible. Rather it is a “living, homeostatic organism” (Ashley, 1986, p. 90). The rhetoric is still centred around an invocation of “nature,” but one that is overlaid by the tenants of development. Demanding advancement, modernization and regulation, development discourse necessarily requires material growth and capital accumulation in order to sustain an exploitative “capitalist market expansion” (Escobar, 1995, p. 195) that masquerades as environmental sustainability. Indeed rather than wood beams, the modern eco-mansion is constructed from stone and stucco and boasts, among other luxuries, a “flat screen television...a

baby grand piano...and granite countertops [that] could land a small plane” (Vlahos, 2009, p. 56). Ecodevelopment, embodied in the contemporary eco-home, successfully inscribes economics onto the ecological.

### Conclusion

In the written piece, “2025, If...,” Buckminster Fuller envisions a mythical portrayal of “planet Earth, its 200 million square miles of surface...[and] nature in her formulation” (1975). The human beings and the humanity Fuller imagines are aware of their critical responsibility to each other and the Earth as their shelter. Time and time again, Fuller situates this revolutionary image within the walls of the homestead. In an equally striking passage, Vlahos describes the 5800-square-foot spread of an eco-mansion with a 270-degree view of Rocky Mountain National Park. Though also portrayed as a home for the green-minded, Vlahos characterizes the structure as a “biodiesel-powered Hummer” (Vlahos, 2009, p. 56). 2025 for sustainable living it would seem, may not be heading in the direction Fuller anticipated.

In our arrival at the contemporary “eco-home,” home has become a site for modernizing, improving, developing, and consuming. But the intersection of land and home has not always resulted in the de-politicization of ecological initiatives. By sampling different popular periodicals and magazines as artifacts, I traced the narrative roots to the original back-to-the-land movement of the 1970s, exploring the imaginings of the homestead as imbued with radical potential, and its gradual erosion into depoliticized consumption. Referring to Robbins et al. (2014) and Escobar (1995), I argued that conceptions of land, home and ecological engagement transformed in tandem with discourses of “nature,” “environment” and “development, which ultimately drove possibilities for green-living from the public vision of the back-to-the-land movement to the private realm of the eco-home.

### References

- Allen, A. (2000). Prodigal sun: Solar energy was a rising star in the '70s--until it was banished by the powers that be. Are we ready for its return? *Mother Jones*, 25, 64-69
- Ashley, S. (1986). The homeostatic home. *Popular Science*, 229(3), 90-92.
- Berry, W. (1974). Manifesto: The mad farmer liberation front. *Whole Earth Catalog*. Retrieved from <http://www.wholeearth.com/issue/1170/article/207/manifesto.the.mad.farmer.liberation.front>
- Brechin, G. (1996). How paradise lost. *Mother Jones*, 21, 38-43
- Coleman, M. (2011). *This life is in your hands: The story of my family's dream*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- D'Agostino, R. (2017). The new self-sufficiency. *Popular Mechanics*, 4.
- Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the third world*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Fuller, R. B. (1975). 2025, If... *CoEvolution Quarterly*. Retrieved from <http://www.wholeearth.com/issue/2005/article/94/2025>.

Fuller, R. B. (1968). Thoughts of Buckminster Fuller. Whole Earth Catalog. Retrieved from <http://www.wholeearth.com/issue/1010/article/198/thoughts.of.buckminster.fuller>.

Harkinson, J. (2010). Yes in my backyard—Memo to urban environmentalists: don't fight development—embrace it! Mother Jones. Retrieved from <https://www.motherjones.com/environment/2010/06/urban-density-environmentalists/>

Henderson, S. (2017). The art of staying alive. Popular Mechanics. Retrieved from <https://www.popularmechanics.com/adventure/outdoors/a24399/the-art-of-staying-alive/>

Jacob, J.C. & Brinkerhoff, M.B. (1986). Alternative technology and part-time, semi-subsistence agriculture: a survey from the back-to-the-land movement. *Rural Sociology*, 51, 43-59.

Jacob, J. (1997). *New pioneers: The back-to-the-land movement and the search for a sustainable future*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Keene, S. (2015). Up in smoke? The making and unmaking of a rural moral economy. *Focaal*, 2015(73), 12-27.

Keizer, G. (2005). Left alone: On the lure of private life in a time of public peril. Mother Jones. Retrieved from <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2005/11/left-alone/>

Meadows, H. D. (1997). Places to intervene in a system. Whole Earth Catalog, 91, 78-84.

Menninger, R. (1976). Community gardening. *CoEvolution Quarterly*, Fall. Retrieved from <http://www.wholeearth.com/issue/2011/article/364/community.gardening>

Robbins, P, Hintz, J & Moore, S. (2014). *Environment and society: A critical introduction* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Sharp, J. (2001). *Condensing the Cold War: Reader's Digest and American Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Shi, D. E. (2007). *The simple life: Plain living and high thinking in American culture*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Strayed, C. (2008). Splendid isolation. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/07/08/AR2008070801929.html>

Vlahos, J. (2009). The new homesteaders: More people are choosing to cut their dependence on the power grid, the grocery store and the fuel pump. But are seeds and solar panels enough to lead us into a new, sustainable future? *Popular Mechanics*, 186(10), 56.

Wardell, C. (2004). Fire-resistant germ fighter: A California couple build their safe house. *Popular Science*, 264(2), 24.

Wilbur, A. (2013). Growing a radical ruralism: Back-to-the-land as practice and ideal. *Geography Compass*, 7(2), 149-160.



# CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GENTRIFICATION IN SOUTH PARKDALE

By Ghazal Sobhan-Sarbandi

---

According to Hulchanski (2007), Toronto's neighbourhoods have become increasingly divided due to the income polarization and segregation among and between neighbourhoods. In response to such persistent trends, Cowen et al. (2011) state that policy makers, planners, and politicians sometimes assume that "gentrification" could be a solution to bring prosperity to disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Gentrification is a term given to series of related processes tied to an up-ward shift of the socio-economic status of residents and the cost of land and housing. Walks et al. (2008) argue that the neighbourhood upgrading is associated with declining housing affordability and the shortage of "adequate housing" which cause the issue of involuntary displacement of low-income households. This paper is centered on the question of how the government responds to the tension between the need for redevelopments to accommodate the growing population, and the issue of involuntary displacement associated with gentrification. Using the case of gentrification in South Parkdale, this paper explores the process of gentrification and the impacts of stigmatization relating to mental health issues on low-income residents. I argue that "transformative" and holistic approaches are important in terms of facilitating communities to build capacities to prevent involuntary displacement.

## Introduction

Toronto is becoming a "divided city" with increasing income polarization and segregation among wealthy neighbourhoods and numbers of disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Hulchanski, 2007, p. 1). Poverty has been concentrated in the inner suburbs of the northeastern and northwestern parts of the city (Hulchanski, 2007, p. 1). In response to such persistent trends, policy makers, planners, and politicians sometimes argue that "gentrification" could be used to bring prosperity to disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Cowen et al., 2011, p. 3). Gentrification is a term given to series of related processes tied to an up-ward shift of the socio-economic status of residents and the cost of land and housing. The neighbourhood upgrading is associated with declining housing affordability, a shortage of "adequate housing", and the issue of involuntary displacement of low-income households (Walks et al., 2008, p. 1). This paper is centred on the question of how the government responds to the tension between the need for redevelopments to accommodate the growing population, and the issue of involuntary displacement associated with gentrification. Using the case of gentrification in South Parkdale, this paper explores the process of gentrification and the impacts of stigmatization relating to mental health issues on low-income residents. I argue that "transformative" and holistic approaches are important in terms of facilitating communities to build capacities to prevent involuntary displacement.

According to the National Household Survey (2011), South Parkdale's total population is approximately 21,000 with 34% of people being low-income and 21% being on social assistance. The neighbourhood is unique for five reasons; first, it has a significant number of people living with mental illness due to its proximity to the large mental health institution, Queen Street Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), second, it boasts relatively affordable housing prices, third, it has unique architectures, fourth, it has convenient access to transit, and lastly, it lies close to the downtown area which attracts gentrifiers (Slater, 2004, p. 314).

Owing to the growing interest in Parkdale, many of the existing “bachelorettes” and rooming houses have been upscaled out of affordability. Additionally, Victorian mansions were converted from rooming houses to single-family homes (Ferguson, 2017, p.02). A bachelorette “is a self-contained mini-apartment, often converted from a rooming house unit—one room that simultaneously contains sleeping, living, and dining space, with a separate bathroom within the unit” (Slater 2005, p. 3). The conversion of cheapest forms of permanent accommodations is framed as of being “emancipatory” and glorified with bringing economic prosperity, businesses, and capital into the area while they exacerbated the existing costly housing market (Slater, 2004, p. 314). Neighbourhood upgrading is assumed to benefit everyone, however behind this admiration of the process of gentrification is the displacement of low-income residents (Fincher et al., 2016, p. 534).

The growing population of Downtown Toronto demands increasing housing supply through redevelopment projects. This article draws on work that I did with the Parkdale Community Economic Development project (PCED), which recently conducted an 18-month community-based study in Parkdale and developed a strategic neighbourhood plan for equitable development. The objective of the PCED's plan is to support the people of Parkdale in having a say over the way that the neighbourhood changes through the creation of a community benefits framework. The PCED project is led by Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (PARC) in partnership with many other community initiatives.

### **Framing the Issue**

In order to understand the issue of gentrification and involuntary displacement of low-income in South Parkdale, I need to review material and symbolic dimensions of space established by theorization of Lefebvre (1991). He argues that space is not neutral and empty. According to him, “conceived space” is a socially constructed space through processes of representation which involves symbolic constitution based on ideas, symbols, and stories (as cited in Razack 2002, p. 9). It has impacts on how people perceive themselves in the space and how they are perceived in the eyes of outsiders. Lefebvre argues that capitalism and powerful groups reproduce the existing hierarchical power relations based on “abstract space” constructed through the processes of representation (Razack, 2002 p. 9). Such practices of representation of space can be perpetuated through media, which plays a crucial role in delivering information that feeds local action and eventually causes neighbourhood change (Lindgren, 2009, p. 77). Given the importance of socially constructed space, in the following section I will explore the conceived space in South Parkdale and its impacts on processes of neighbourhood change and people.

#### *The History of South Parkdale*

In 1922, as a result of the construction of major amenities in Parkdale, the neighbourhood became known as the “Village by the Lake” (Slater, 2004, p. 309). However, the image of the neighbourhood of Parkdale changed dramatically in the 1950s, when it underwent a period of decline due to



economic slowdown associated with the Second World War and the housing demolition associated with Gardiner Expressway's construction in the 1960s (Slater, 2004, p. 309). The neighbourhood was significantly impacted and lost its privileged location when the highway construction disconnected it from Lake Ontario.

The shifting politics of the government in the 1980s toward a neoliberal economy profoundly impacted vulnerable neighbourhoods such as Parkdale (Mayer, 2013, p. 7). Such politics were manifested in actions of cuts to social programs. This was particularly problematic for Parkdale neighbourhood since the close proximity of the neighbourhood to the large mental health institution, Queen Street Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and its affordable housing prices made it a perfect destination for discharged patients. As a result of the radical global shift towards deinstitutionalization—finding community-based alternatives to psychiatric hospitalization—the discharged psychiatric patients lacked supervision, access to adequate medication, and services to acquire skills for daily activities (Statistics Canada, 2009, p. 2). As a result, many patients became homeless and/or settled in rooming houses or bachelorettes in South Parkdale (Slater, 2005, p. 3). The settlement of significant numbers of deinstitutionalized single low-income disabled patients contributes to ongoing stigmatization. South Parkdale became represented as a “service-dependent ghetto” or a “little ghetto of misery” in the late 1970s and 1980s (Slater, 2004, p. 309). The stigma mainly stemmed out of the presence of a significant population of people living with mental illness in the neighbourhood. It is perpetuated by the media, which offers negative portrayals of mental illness (Ma et al., 2017, p. 90). For example, movies, television, newspaper articles and books often present patients with mental health issues as dangerous, unstable, abnormal, childish, useless, and less intelligent (Hampton et al., 2014, p. 172). Such representation is harmful and contributes to “territorial stigmatization” associated with rooming houses in South Parkdale (August, 2014, p. 1163).

The South Parkdale neighbourhood has yet to become entirely gentrified. Parkdale Planning Study report (2016) verifies that the demographics of the neighbourhood are changing, showing a clear pattern of gentrification. The number of people living in poverty rates in South Parkdale decreased while those rates in Toronto increased. This shift is an indication that low-income residents have been displaced by their high-income counterparts (Parkdale Planning Study, 2016, p.18). Despite the continuous stigmatization, the unique architecture, relatively affordable housing prices, and proximity to the downtown core act as magnets which attract a middle-income population (Slater, 2004, p.311). However, according to Walks et al. (2008), gentrification is complete “when the average income ratio is greater than that for the metropolitan area as a whole” (p.2). In the case of South Parkdale, the average individual income in 2012 was less than that for the whole city of Toronto (Parkdale Planning Study report, 2016, p.35). In other words, there is still hope that low-income residents can continue living in the neighbourhood.

### *South Parkdale and Gentrification*

Bringing higher-income to Parkdale neighbourhood through gentrification would not help the poor. Advocates of “social mix” as an urban policy argue that socially mixed redevelopments in disadvantaged neighbourhoods would bring middle-income households and consequently deconcentrate poverty. The assumption is that middle class would act as “role models” who can educate working-class on “appropriate behaviour” and provide mobility and social networks to marginalized population (August, 2014, p. 1161). While a social mix policy is meant to represent the city as being “livable” with a foundation of inclusivity, diversity, and tolerance, it creates tensions in terms of day-to-day living due to the differences between the life styles of working-class and middle-class

residents (Rose, 2004, p. 281). In other words, “gentrification is not creating social mix but what the academics call ‘social tectonics’ where two groups exist in the same space and don’t mix, or when they do mix, the mixing is conflictual” (Carnegie Community Action Project, 2009, p. 16). Therefore, although social mix policies promise healthy and balanced neighbourhoods, the result of such practices is increasing tensions between low income and middle income in the neighbourhood (August, 2014, p.1161)

The processes of neighbourhood revitalization and gentrification in South Parkdale are not “emancipatory”. According to Slater (2004), emancipatory processes unite “different people in the central city, creating opportunities for social interaction and tolerance” (p. 305). Upgrading the neighbourhood would mean improving the decaying urban infrastructure, buildings, and neighbourhood services. However, gentrification causes the displacement of low-income residents who cannot afford increased housing prices due to neighbourhood upgrading. Also, gentrification and revitalization cause some residents to become strangers in their neighbourhoods. Jonathan Montpetit (2016) shows that, based on the case of St-Henri in Montreal, while gentrification improves the neighbourhood, the way the neighbourhood has changed segregates low-income residents since the incoming businesses would not serve their needs (p. 1). Although gentrification beautifies the neighbourhood, it is at the expense of a vulnerable population who cannot afford to stay (Slater, 2014, p. 322).

The process of gentrification entails upgrading the neighbourhood and making it more appealing to upper-class residents while at the same time removing the “undesirable” population (Slater, 2004, p. 314). Policies targeted to revitalize and improve the inner cities are successful when they satisfy residents’ desires for safety. Considering the socially constructed fear of homelessness, such practices involve “socially sanitizing” the homelessness (Rose, 2004, p. 282). For example, in the case of South Parkdale, Slater (2004) states that the City passed new zoning restrictions in which rooming houses/bachelorettes are licensed and property standards are defined to improve living standards for tenants (p. 314). However, such practices would motivate landlords who cannot afford the money to meet the required property standards to convert their properties from rooming houses into single family houses (Spurr, 2015, p. 2). Bearing in mind the tension between low-income households who are threatened by displacement and middle-class households who are concerned with the effects of rooming housing on their property values, the city of Toronto’s new regulation favours middle-class households and encourages the conversion of rooming houses into single-family houses. It attracts families rather than singles and reduces the percentage of single-person housing in the neighbourhood.

### *South Parkdale and Stigmatization*

In South Parkdale, landlords keep units in unbearable conditions and fail to carry out routine maintenance and/or repair in an effort to evict low-income tenants so they can rent out their units at higher prices (Ferguson, 2017, p. 2). The process of denying essential maintenance/repair leaves the aging structures in poor condition, which in turn represents poverty to outsiders, justifying legal intervention (Razack, 2002, p. 8). In the eyes of outsiders, the government’s intervention is necessary to “rescue” the low-income population.

Moreover, the stigmatization associated with rooming houses—which are disproportionately home to people with mental illness in South Parkdale—disempowers low-income residents. Gentrification is “a product of political and cultural struggle” in which powerful groups seek to defend their privileged position and maintain their entitlement to desirable areas in the city (August, 2014, p.

1162). They attempt to reproduce their existing hierarchical power relations and their entitlement to space through practices of redevelopment and neighbourhood upgrading in desirable areas. In the case of South Parkdale, due to stigmatization, the position of low-income households is degraded and their opposition to the incoming projects might be disregarded and denied (August, 2014, p. 1163).

### **What can be done?**

Bringing economic growth through private investments into the neighbourhood is challenged by the idea of “right to the city”, meaning that it is not merely about the inclusion of low-income into the city, but about democratizing the decision-making processes (Mayer, 2009, p. 371). With this in mind, successful urban revitalization projects such as the Tower Renewal in Kingston Galloway-Orton Park (KGO) show that a collaborative approach to community development would advance social justice (Cowen et al., 2011, p.44). Moreover, we need to take a “transformative” and holistic long-term approach to build capacities in the community through community-based engagements and developing “social infrastructure”, which would connect residents to a range of skills, knowledge, and networks (Cowen et al., 2011, p. 6). Such practices would facilitate communities to build capacities.

I interviewed Mercedes Zayas who is the Workforce Planning Coordinator at PCED Project. She stated that the efforts of PARC organization are mainly concentrated on bringing equitable outcomes for all community members. They focus on equity, inclusivity, diversity, and affordability. One of their main strategies for addressing the issue of poverty and displacement is “collective ownership and community ownership” through utilizing a “land trust” model of ownership. She argues that change in neighbourhoods is inevitable, but we can potentially have a say in the way the change occurs. She commented that “if you are able to create more ownership over land, labor, and money then you could actually potentially change the way the neighbourhood is going and create more equitable change in the end” (Zayas, 2017).

### **Conclusion**

South Parkdale’s bachelorette buildings and/or rooming houses have upscaled out of affordability and Victorian mansions have been converted from rooming houses to single-family homes. Such conversions have furthered the problem of inadequate housing supply in the neighbourhood. While planners, politicians, and policymakers sometimes argue that gentrification through revitalization and social mix policies would help the poor, using the literature on gentrification, I showed that such practices would eventually displace the poor if no collaborative approaches were defined to involve all parties in the processes of redevelopment and neighbourhood upgrading. Also, based on Lefebvre’s theorization of space, I argued that space is not neutral. In the case of South Parkdale, the processes of stigmatization disempower low-income residents in decision-making process. Also, the representation of poverty through the denial of essential maintenance/repair by landlords works to justify legal interventions by the government and upcoming redevelopment projects. While the growing population in downtown Toronto makes neighbourhood change inevitable, PARC organization shows that practices of collaborative ownership and neighbourhood ownership help to tackle issues of poverty and displacement in the neighbourhood. The government should be involved and enforce more holistic long-term approaches to increase the capacity of communities by engaging community members and giving low-income marginalized groups a say in processes of neighbourhood change.

## References

- August, M. (2014). Negotiating social mix in Toronto's first public housing redevelopment: Power, space and social control in Don Mount Court. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38(4), 1160-1180.
- Carnegie Community Action Project. (2009). *Our place and our words: Mapping downtown East-side community assets and challenges*. Vancouver: CCAP.
- Cowen, D. & Parlette, V. (2011). *Inner suburbs at stake: Investing in social infrastructure in Scarborough*. Research Paper 220. Toronto: University of Toronto Cities Centre.
- City of Toronto (2014). *Neighbourhood Demographic Estimates: South Parkdale*. 1- 5.
- City of Toronto (2014). *Neighbourhood Demographic Estimates: South Parkdale*. [Digital Image].
- Ferguson, L. (2017). Community fights back against Parkdale's rooming house crisis. *NowToronto*. Retrieved from <https://nowtoronto.com/news/fighting-parkdale-s-housing-crisis-parkdale-neighbourhood-land-trust/>.
- Fincher, R., Pardy, M., & Shaw, K. (2016). Place-making or place-masking? The everyday political economy of "making place". *Planning Theory & Practice*, 17(4), 516-536.
- Hampton, N. & Sharp, S. (2014). Shame-focused attitudes toward mental health problems: The role of gender and culture. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 57(3), 170 -181.
- Hulchanski, D. (2007). The three cities within Toronto: Income polarization among Toronto's neighbourhoods. 1-32.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lindgren, A. (2009). News, geography and disadvantage: Mapping newspaper coverage of high-needs neighbourhoods in Toronto, Canada. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, 18(1), 74-97.
- Ma, Z. (2017). How the media cover mental illnesses: A review. *Health Education*, 117(1). 90-109.
- Mayer, M. (2013). First world urban activism. *City*, 17(1). 5-19.
- Montpetit, J. (2016). How Montréal's St. Henri Neighbourhood has become a battleground in Canada's gentrification debate. *CBC News Montréal*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/gentrification-st-henri-montreal-toronto-vancouver>.
- Parkdale Planning Study Report. (2016). *Parkdale Community Planning Study*. 1-95.
- Razack, S. (2002). Introduction: When place becomes race. In S. Razack, (Ed.), *Race, space, and the law: Unmapping a white settler society* (1-20). Toronto: *Between the Lines*.
- Rose, D. (2004). Discourses and experiences of social mix in gentrifying neighborhoods: A Montreal case study. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, 13(2), 278-316.

Spurr, B. (2015). Troubled rooming house exposes problems with city licensing. *The Star*.

Slater, T. (2004). Municipally-managed gentrification in South Parkdale, Toronto. *Canadian Geographer*, 48(3), 303- 325.

Slater, T. (2005). Toronto's South Parkdale Neighbourhood: A brief history of development, disinvestment, and gentrification. Centre for Urban and Community Studies.

Statistics Canada. (2009). Section A: Overview of issues—Mental health and the criminal justice system.

Walks, A. & Maaranen, R. (2008). Neighbourhood gentrification and upgrading in Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver. Research Bulletin 43. Toronto: University of Toronto Cities Centre.

Zayas, M. Personal Communication, Nov. 2017.



# SPADINA AVE:

## HOW THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SUPPORT OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY HAS SHAPED THE FASHION DISTRICT

By Daniel J. Vanderhorst

---

Urbanism models that favour the creative economy have revived post-industrial districts, like Toronto's lower Spadina, from urban decay and disinvestment by encouraging and attracting new mixed-uses to its historic industrial lofts. This paper examines factors that left the industrial district abandoned in the post-war period, and the introduction of new policies and practices on behalf of both the public and private sectors that granted the area, and its historic architecture, new life. While originally this involved a hands-off urban entrepreneurialism approach from the government, which was primarily concerned with deregulating the area to attract private investment, it eventually shifted to a type of urbanism that branded the historical district in order to attract the creative class. The paper also explains how shifting cultural ideals of young North Americans, who grew to favour cosmopolitan living much more than their previous generations, along with the versatility, authenticity, and elegance of the existing industrial architecture created the ideal conditions for the redevelopment to occur along lower Spadina. The revitalization of lower Spadina has brought immense social and economic advantages to Toronto. However, it also created a superficial enclave within the city that has brought negative consequences to the Greater Toronto Area.

### Introduction

After years of deindustrialization and suburbanization emptying the downtown cores of cities across North America, the migration of people and money has returned to post-industrial cities like Toronto in what has been called an urban renaissance. Over the past 30 years, the abandoned and derelict formerly industrial area along lower Spadina Avenue has been transformed into a thriving mixed-use neighborhood due to the public-private support of a creative-economy urbanism. Effective government policy and planning tools enabled real estate developers and investors to adapt the historic factories and warehouses for new purposes and also construct new developments that adhere to the existing industrial loft architecture. Through this redevelopment, the public and private sectors have been able to give the area an identity, branding it as the Fashion District—a high-density, historic, cultural district in the inner-city with many transit options, that appeals to a young creative demographic. While the influx of the creative class to lower Spadina has transformed an abandoned industrial area into a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood and has attracted many individuals and businesses that enhance Toronto's economy, it has also created a social and economic enclave that contributes to class stratification.

## Spadina's Industrial History

Prior to new government policies that led to the revitalization of the lower Spadina in the 1990s, planning tools and lack of investment kept the area derelict and abandoned. Originally the area had been a thriving industrial district home to Toronto's growing garment industry in the early 20th century (Donegan & Salutin, 1985; see Figure 1). Economic prosperity allowed for the construction of many large new factories along Spadina, which were typically employed and owned by Toronto's rapidly increasing Jewish population (Donegan & Salutin, 1985; see Figure 2). Since industries were often located in cities at the time, planners in the first half of the 20th century were concerned with the pollution, congestion, and poor living conditions that resulted from living near noxious and loud factories (Grant, 2002). To enhance the living conditions of urban residents, Toronto's planners and politicians adopted a view of urbanism based on segregation of land use, which was made possible through zoning laws that kept areas, such as Spadina's garment factory area, single-use industrial districts (Grant, 2002). However, as larger, cheaper properties, and more efficient transportation access became available after World War II, Toronto's garment industry migrated to the suburbs to maximize their profits (City of Toronto [a], 2017). While the public sector restricted Lower Spadina for industrial use, the private sector was not interested in the area since it was not economically profitable, causing disinvestment, abandonment and urban decline in lower Spadina during the second half of the 20th century.

### Adoption of Urban Entrepreneurialism Approach

By creating new opportunities for private development, the new government policies in the 1990s served as key factors behind the revitalization of the area in subsequent years. In 1994, Barbara Hall, the mayor of Toronto, stated her new economic development policies aimed at deregulating the area "to attract a mix of uses that would retain the physical and heritage character of the area, reuse existing buildings, enhance public space, create jobs and encourage a synergy between employment and residential uses" (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2002). Along with the support of Paul Bedford, Toronto's Chief City Planner of the time, Jane Jacobs, Ken Green-



*Figure 1.* At the turn of the 20th century, lower Spadina was a thriving industrial area home to Toronto's garment manufacturing trade and was filling in Lake Ontario to gain more land.



*Figure 2.* An advertisement displays the technological advancement and architectural grandeur of the Balfour Building, one of lower Spadina's many garment factories that manifested the economic prosperity of Toronto's garment industry at the time.



berg and other prominent architects and urbanists, the 2 Kings plan was created shortly afterwards (CMHC, 2002). This plan removed the industrial land-use zoning and density restrictions from the King-Parliament and King-Spadina areas, rezoning them for mixed-use so that conversions of existing buildings and newly constructed buildings allowed for maximum flexibility of uses (CMHC, 2002). Through the deregulation of the area, the public sector worked together with the private sector in an urban politics strategy known as urban entrepreneurialism, which involves minimal government regulation to allow for the maximum amount of intervention from private developers (Wieditz, 2001). Many viewed the strategy as a great success, since it did not require any major public spending, but rather only altering the zoning to create opportunities for private sector investment in the inner city (CMHC, 2002). The urban entrepreneurialism approach to urban politics marked a distinct evolution of thought from Toronto's formerly strict and rigid planning and zoning laws, which were now perceived as outdated, given the rapidly changing real estate market conditions of the time (CMHC, 2002). Not only did the deregulation create the opportunity for development, it encouraged and attracted investment. Barbara Hall's support for new economic development policies for King-West was perceived to be a leading influence in inciting real estate interest to return to the inner city during the 1990s (Wieditz, 2001). The government was making decisions based on a neoliberal form of market economy urbanism in which private investment without regulation was thought to have the power to revitalize neighborhoods and generally improve the entire city.

By deregulating the industrial zoning laws, the government anticipated and encouraged mixed-use development due to the positive effects it was expected to have on lower Spadina and the easy ability for its implementation in that location. Stemming from Jane Jacobs' critique of modern planning in North American cities during the 1960s, scepticism of zoning and land-use segregation gained traction throughout the latter half of the 20th century (Grant, 2002). Eventually this movement, which advocated for mixed-use development, gained mainstream support and worked its way into the planning departments of cities across North America (Grant, 2002). The emphasis was not only on mixed-use, but also on transit-oriented development as opposed to unsustainable suburban growth amid growing environmental concerns in the 1990s (Grant, 2002). Planners realized that mixed-used development would foster an urban environment that would be active throughout the day, meaning it would be more vibrant and result in an optimal use of infrastructure (Grant, 2002). In addition, mixed-use development would permit residents to live close to where they shop, work, and play, so that these neighborhoods would be more pedestrian friendly and less reliant on the automobile (Grant, 2002). Planners in Toronto recognized the economic, social, and environmental benefits that could be gained through transit-oriented mixed-use neighborhoods and so promoted these ideas in both the King-Parliament and King-Spadina areas (City of Toronto [a], 2017). The existing factories along Spadina provided excellent opportunities for mixed-use purposes due to their open-concept floor plans and large floor-to-ceiling heights, meaning that they were flexible and could be creatively adapted for wide variety of land uses, including light industrial, commercial, entertainment, retail, residential and live-work combinations (McHugh, Bozickovic, & Pahwa, 2017). To fully attain the environmental benefits of mixed-use in the area slated for redevelopment along lower Spadina, the city approved a plan to reintroduce the Spadina streetcar in 1992, which had been out of service since 1966 (Bow, 2017). The existing built form on lower Spadina and new public policies created the ideal conditions for transit-oriented, mixed-use development that could revitalize the unused inner-city district—all that was still needed was private investment.

While the government policies and practices set up the ideal conditions for redevelopment to occur, it was the injection of investment and capital from the private sector that transformed and revitalized lower Spadina. When discussing urban revitalization, Neil Smith (1979) argues that although



*Figure 3.* The historic grand entrances of many of the factories have been preserved, and the intricate level of ornamentation is often visually appealing to the creative class, who Richard Florida states have an appreciation for historic architecture.

cultural factors play a part in what he calls the “urban resurgence,” economic factors are the primary drivers behind the transformations of urban cores in many post-industrial North American cities. Rather than simply a return of people to the inner city, urban revitalization is a return of investment back into the city when it becomes more profitable (Smith, 1979). In the current capitalist economy, the desire of developers, the real estate industry, and landlords to earn profit follows a cycle, where capital continuously migrates to areas that grant the greatest returns (Smith, 1979). During the mid-20th century, it was more profitable to develop in the suburban areas, which at the time were often unused fringes of the city. As a result manufacturing jobs and workers migrated out of the inner city (Grant, 2002). This led to a lack of investment and therefore the deteriora-

tion of the inner city, which in turn worsened the situation, since investing in the city now offered higher risks and lower rates of return than suburban areas for investors (Smith, 1979). However, as suburban areas continued to develop, it became either more expensive to build, or further away from the city as sprawl increased (Smith, 1979). Since the former garment industry buildings along Spadina were conveniently located in the inner-city, sitting empty, and recently rezoned for mixed-use, the area became a more lucrative site of investment for the real estate industry than anywhere else in the region (City of Toronto [a], 2017). This immense investment was only possible due to the change of government policies. With the public sector’s support and encouragement of mixed-use development, the private sector was enabled to provide the investment needed to revitalize lower Spadina.

Despite economic factors serving as the main agents in lower Spadina’s revitalization, underlying cultural factors and societal changes helped create the demand that attracted private sector development investments back to the inner-city. Towards the end of the 20th century, changing trends in lifestyles and values in society led many predominantly young people to resent suburban life and its association with traditional family-oriented values (Podmore, 1998). Young professional middle-class adults were having fewer children, marrying less, and divorcing more often, so they no longer desired the family-oriented lifestyle that came with a single-family detached home in the suburbs (Smith, 1979). Many of these young adults still wanted children, but not as many as families during the postwar era. Thus, they did not require large suburban houses, opting instead for

small inner-city houses or apartments that would be more suitable for families with fewer children (Moos, 2016). Another factor causing young adults to move downtown is that while many still anticipated suburban lifestyle, marriage, and children, they postponed these events until later in life because they desired to live and work downtown for some years after graduating post-secondary school (Moos, 2016). Living downtown also had many economic benefits for young people, as there are jobs in Toronto's downtown core that are not available in the suburbs or smaller Canadian cities (Moos, 2016). With increases in the prices of gasoline and transit fare, it became less economically viable for young people to commute far distances from Toronto's suburbs to their jobs in the downtown core (Smith, 1979). Living close to the workplace is not purely an economic motive for the young adults participating in the downtown resurgence. Markus Moos notes that many people who grew up in the suburbs now desired an urban lifestyle and would rather depend on transit and bicycles than automobiles (Moos, 2016). At the end of the 20th century, the ideal of suburban life was no longer the preference of many young people and their desire for a new urban lifestyle contributed towards the revitalization and resurgence of people to inner-city districts, such as lower Spadina.

Both the public and private sector worked together using a creative economy urbanism to brand lower Spadina as a historic, cultural district that has an appealing identity for creative young people. Richard Florida's book on the creative class served as a precedent that the public and private sectors based many of their policies and practices on during the redevelopment of lower Spadina (City of Toronto [b], 2017). In his book, *Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida mentions the many benefits that creative young people have on the entire city. He also argues that these people need a specific environment that supports their urban lifestyle: an environment that has historic architecture, authentic street life, and a vibrant arts and culture scene (2002). Rather than building stadiums and concert halls and attempting to attract large corporations to the financial district, Florida's belief was that cities should focus on sidewalk cafes, thriving music venues, and art galleries to create a bohemian character that would attract the creative class (2002). While the public sector's urban



Figure 4. A City of Toronto planning map shows the properties that they deem as heritage and that make a significant contribution to the historic identity of the district.

entrepreneurialism policies in the 1990s were mostly geared towards deregulation with minimal government involvement, they did include laws to preserve the exterior form of the architecture in order to retain the historic appearance of the neighborhood in hopes of attracting the creative people Florida describes (CMHC, 2002; see Figure 3). The city also created and required private developers to fund Community Improvement Plans (CIPs), which focused on enhancing the heritage character, improving the quality of public spaces, and increasing public safety (CMHC, 2002). Apart from the CIPs, the government practiced a relatively hands-off approach at the time, allowing the private sector to do as it desired as long as it preserved the existing industrial buildings.

### Transformation to Creative Economy-Style Urbanism

More recently, there has been another change in policy approaches in lower Spadina. After realizing that residential development was more profitable for investors and was overtaking and threatening existing cultural spaces, the public sector has since shifted its policies from focusing primarily on deregulation to focusing almost entirely on attracting the creative class by protecting the cultural identity of the area (City of Toronto [b], 2017). Since arts and culture are vital ingredients that attract creative people and tourists to lower Spadina, the city wants to protect these cultural spaces from private development, and even help fund more of these spaces for artists, designers, and cultural entrepreneurs to work (City of Toronto [b], 2017). The public sector's support for cultural spaces is evident in their regulation of new construction. As a city planning document states, their ambition is “to ensure non-residential space in King-Spadina is best suited to cultural (or creative) work, several building attributes could be promoted (through design guidelines or otherwise) including: high ceilings, large windows providing ample natural light, flexible/adaptable ‘brick-and-beam’ layouts (all appealing features of the area’s historic commercial warehouse buildings)” (City of Toronto [b], 2017, p. 16). In a further attempt to brand this area and enhance its identity, the City of Toronto planning department recently recommended that the King-Spadina area be designated as a heritage conservation district, citing its strong historical and architectural values “reflecting Toronto’s period of industrial and manufacturing growth and economic prosperity at the turn of the 20th century” (City of Toronto [a], 2017, p. 14; see Figure 4).



*Figure 5.* The “Fashion District” brand appears on all the street signage throughout the area. Also, a trendy coffee shop and residential lofts across the street fill what was once an abandoned neighborhood, revealing the impact of the redevelopment.

*Figure 6.* A plaque on Spadina commemorates Benjamin Brown, a notable Jewish architect that contributed much to the architectural and cultural significance through his many elaborate designs of garment factories in the area

The branding of the area has led to the addition of “Fashion District” street signs (see Figure 5), commemorative plaques marking the architectural and cultural history of the area (see Figure 6), and restoration of building façades (see Figure 7), all of which help grant the area a cultural significance and creative identity, appealing to potential residents and tourists alike. The private sector also contributed much to the branding of the Fashion District and commodified the lifestyle of



*Figure 7.* The front façades (blue) have been restored to a much higher degree than the rest of the structures (orange), producing a consistent historic street wall along Spadina that presents a superficial image of a pristine and immaculately restored neighborhood.

the creative class by marketing the redeveloped lofts to artistic and creative people. After the first industrial loft conversions took place in SoHo New York in the 1970s, mass media portrayed these living arrangements as stylish and cosmopolitan places that were home to the loft lifestyle of artists and designers (Podmore, 1998). As this lifestyle became increasingly desirable among the young adults who resented suburban life, the real estate developers converting these industrial lofts targeted design professionals and marketed these lofts as ideal for people that were stylish, adventurous, and wanted to live in an avant-garde area with strong artistic capital (Podmore, 1998). While the public sector had been working hard to brand the area as the Fashion District, a safe, artistic, and cultural hub in a historic area, the private sector capitalized on this opportunity, using this identity as a means to attract buyers and revitalize the neighborhood.

### **Effects of the Creative Class on Lower Spadina**

The creative economy urbanism practiced by the public and private sectors was largely successful at attracting creative individuals and businesses, which has had a substantial economic and social impact on the surrounding area and entire city of Toronto. Many tech and software companies, artists, designers, media companies and other knowledge-based workers and industries currently fill up the redeveloped brick factories (see Figure 8). These industries along lower Spadina constitute a large portion the creative economy, which boosts economic activity through cultural tourism as well as exported cultural products, including design products, published media, music and film

(City of Toronto [b], 2017). The economic benefits of lower Spadina's revitalization reflect Richard Florida's prediction, that cities need creative people to prosper because creativity generates new ideas, economic and technological innovation, and therefore economic growth (2002). Since changes in the North American economy mean that cities are transitioning from manual industrial to creative knowledge-based work, it is vital that post-industrial cities attract creative people to move their cities forward (Florida [b], 2002). The high-skilled, innovative, and entrepreneurial knowledge workers that the Fashion District has successfully attracted have provided a strong economic base for Toronto, and have transformed it into a global city (Wieditz, 2001). Yet the Toronto planners recognize how arts and culture also "bring social benefits to cities above and beyond the purely economic: they enhance quality of life by providing spaces for beauty, dialogue, expression, critique, reflection, celebration, inspiration, education, civic engagement and social change, and the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage" (City of Toronto [b], 2017). While the entrance of these affluent young creative professionals is often associated with the displacement of former residents in the process of gentrification, the creative class did not displace any residents during the revitalization of lower Spadina since it was already an abandoned industrial district (Wieditz, 2001). Ultimately the creative class that was enticed to lower Spadina by the identity created by the public and private sectors helped revitalize the area and brought social and economic impacts that benefited the entire city.

However, despite bringing benefits to the entire city of Toronto, the creative economy urbanism that led to the redevelopment of lower Spadina created a social and economic enclave within the city. In his recent book, Richard Florida details "the new urban crisis", which he describes as the income and class stratification that occurred in many cities across North America after mayors adopted his previous policy recommendations on how to attract the creative class (Florida, 2016). With the re-entrance of the creative class, which is typically comprised of well-educated and affluent individuals, came rising rents and the growing gap between the rich and the poor (Florida, 2016). This inequality separated areas like the Fashion District from the rest of the urban fabric, creating an idealized yet superficial bubble that does not truly represent the city. The public and private sectors have both worked hard to brand the area as a creative hub, and through the policies of CIPs, they created a safe environment for wealthy tourists and the residents (CMHC, 2002). While lower Spadina is certainly mixed-use, it still caters to a very specific demographic, namely young, upper-middle class adults, and in doing so excludes others, such as lower-income people, the elderly and families (see Figure 9). Richard Florida has critiqued his earlier work by stating that through the public sector's work to attract the creative class to support of the downtown core, came neglect of other areas such as the inner-suburbs in Toronto (Florida, 2016). This led to growing inequality and resentment towards cities that Florida believes gave rise to Rob Ford style anti-urban politics and ideologies (Florida, 2016). What started out as an attempt to deregulate the area and allow for more opportunities from the private sector, which garnered support from figures like Jane Jacobs due to the re-use of old buildings, eventually turned into a profit-oriented scheme which allowed the entrance of chain stores and trendy expensive restaurants (see Figure 8). The resulting neighborhood became a bubble within the city, where wealthy professionals have priced out many of the original artists and designers, undermining many of the ideas that Jacobs vehemently advocated.

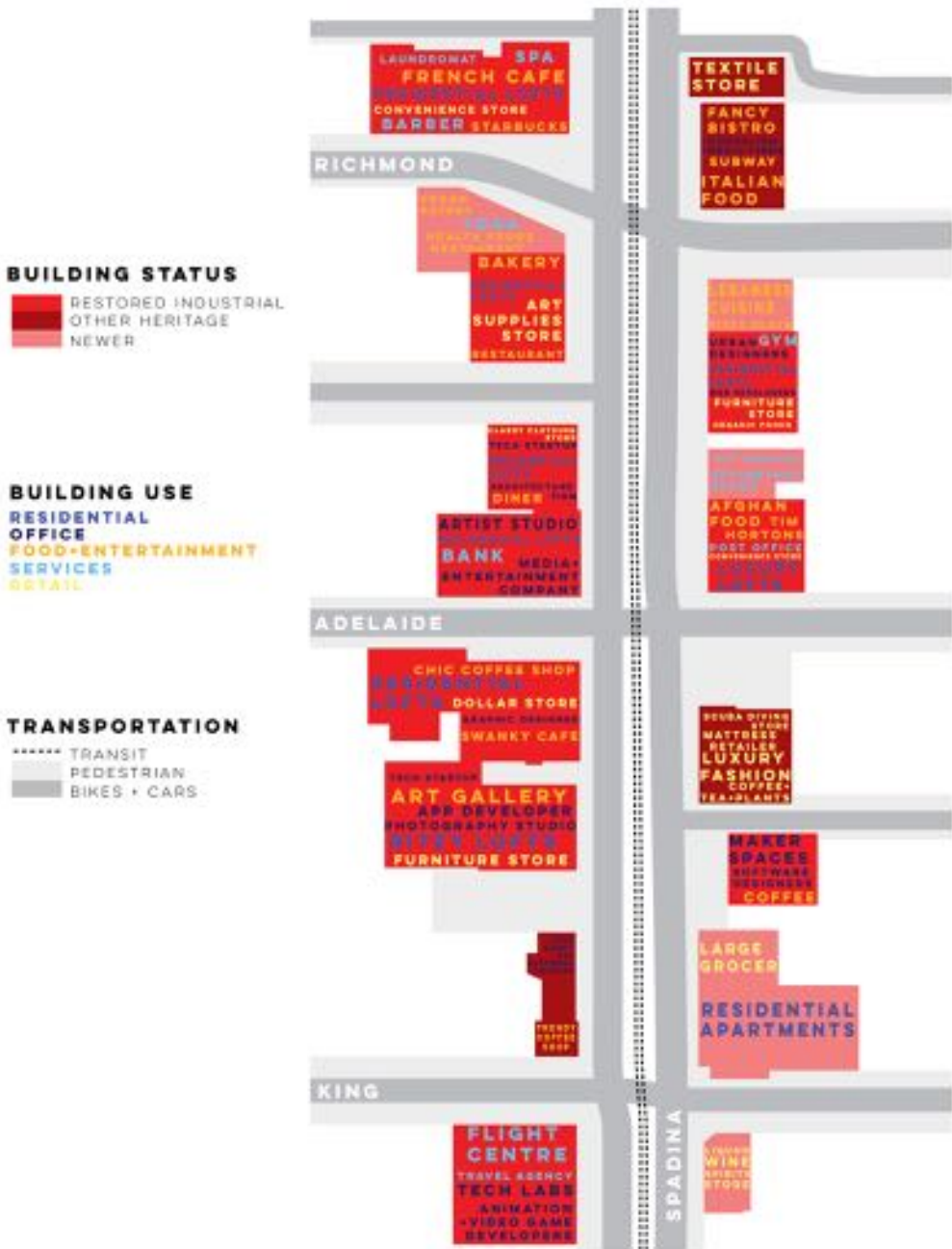


Figure 8. While the historic structures are filled with a wide variety of different uses, most of these are geared towards affluent people that work in creative industries. The streetcar line running throughout makes this neighborhood a prime example of transit-oriented mixed-use development.



Figure 9. The District is fairly busy and full of activity throughout the day and night (much more than the former single-use industrial district would have been). The large amount of nightlife in the area corresponds with it catering towards young adults rather than children or the elderly.



## Conclusion

The creative economy urbanism practiced by the public and private sectors not only brought new life and vibrancy to an abandoned neighborhood, but also brought economic prosperity to Toronto as well as the social and environmental benefits of transit-oriented, mixed-use development. However, the success of the Fashion District is anchored to its creative identity produced from the policies and practices of public and private interests, which caused the area to be branded into a superficial district that caters towards a constructed lifestyle rather than the true way of living in the city. When analysing the redevelopment of the area, the many benefits that it brought cannot be ignored, but neither can its constructed image, superficial identity, and inequality relative to the rest of the GTA. The revitalization of lower Spadina is a testament to the shifts in North American society from preferences of living in suburban areas to preferences of living in the downtown core, and also the economic changes as Canada transforms from a resource-centred industrial economy to a knowledge-centred creative economy. With the redevelopment of areas like the Fashion District, the question posed for the public and private sectors is no longer how to attract the creative class, but rather how to create spaces that balance the needs and desires of the creative class with the rest of society and to what extent the public sector should be involved in this process.

## References

- Bow, J. (2017, September 5). Route 510: The Spadina streetcar. Retrieved from <https://transit.toronto.on.ca/streetcar/4108.shtml>
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2002). Residential intensification case studies: The “Kings Regeneration” Initiative. Toronto: City of Toronto.
- City of Toronto Planning Department [a]. (2017). Designation of the King-Spadina Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act (Canada, City of Toronto, Planning and Development). Toronto: City of Toronto.
- City of Toronto Planning Department [b]. (2017). King-Spadina cultural spaces retention study: Strengthening the creative economy in Toronto’s downtown core (Canada, City of Toronto, Planning and Development). Toronto: City of Toronto.
- Donegan, R., & Salutin, R. (1985). Spadina Avenue. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre.
- Florida, R. (2016). The new urban crisis: How our cities are increasing inequality, deepening segregation, and failing the middle class—and what we can do about it. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Florida, R. (2002). The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Grant, J. (2002). Mixed use in theory and practice. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 68(1), 71-84.
- Jacobs, J. (1961). The death and life of great American cities. New York: Random House.
- McHugh, P., Bozikovic, A., & Pahwa, V. (2017). Toronto architecture: A city guide. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.

Moos, M. (2016). From gentrification to youthification? The increasing importance of young age in delineating high-density living. *Urban Studies*, 53(14), 2903-2920.

Podmore, J. (1998). (Re)Reading the loft living habitus in Montreal's inner city. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 22(2), 283-302.

Smith, N. (1979). Toward a theory of gentrification: A back to the city movement by capital, not people. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 45(4), 538-548.

Wieditz, T. (2001). Condominium development and gentrification: The relationship between policies, building activities and socio-economic development in Toronto. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, 18(1), 140-161.

## Figures

Figure 1: James, W. (1909). Spadina Wharf [Photograph]. Retrieved from City of Toronto Archives, Toronto.

Figure 2: Contract Record and Engineering Review, Hamilton (1930). A Tribute to Greatness [Drawing]. Retrieved from City of Toronto Archives, Toronto.

Figure 3: Author photograph

Figure 4: City Planning Division. (2017). King-Spadina Heritage Conservation District Map of Contributing Properties. [Map]. Retrieved from Designation of the King-Spadina Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, 24. Toronto: City of Toronto, 2017.

Figure 5: Author photograph

Figure 6: Author photograph

Figure 7: Author photograph and diagram

Figure 8: Author-created annotated map

Figure 9: Author-created timeline

# DISMANTLE NOT REFORM: CONFRONTING THE REGRESSIVE EFFECTS OF CANADA'S SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

By Hayley Roberts

---

The current framework of supply management has controlled the production and distribution of dairy and poultry products in Canada since 1971. While supply management is intended to protect Canadian farmers and consumers by insuring stable prices that reflect the cost production, in recent years it has become clear that the framework has produced a variety of unintended consequences. The increasing cost of quota units have discouraged new and small farmers from entering the system and have contributed to the consolidation of the industry by large farms. This form of protectionism has also resulted in higher commodity prices, acting as a regressive subsidy that disproportionately harms poor consumers. Thus, while the following paper accepts the premise that Canadian farmers may need some support, it argues that supply management is not the means to accomplish this. After nearly fifty years of this system, it has become clear that supply management does more harm than good and that it is time to be dismantled.

## Introduction

Let us begin this paper by assuming that you the reader have recently decided you would like to become a Canadian dairy farmer. Furthermore, let's say you have a friend who is a cheese producer in New York who specifically wants to buy your milk at a higher price than the going market rate. This sounds great. Unfortunately, you cannot do this. In fact, not only are you not allowed to sell your milk to your friend in New York, but you must also first give the government \$25,000 for each cow you want to own. This is not the price of the cow; rather, it is the price of the right to own it. In other words, before you buy the cows, the land, the machinery and any other inputs you may need, you must first pay \$25,000 for each cow you want to buy. If you are beginning to think you no longer want to become a dairy farmer, I would not blame you.

While the above description is certainly an oversimplification of a very nuanced system, it illustrates Canada's model of Supply Management. However, this depiction is only highlighting the more negative side of it. In reality, supply management has done a great job ensuring that Canadian farmers in the dairy, egg and poultry industries maintain good wages and do not get taken advantage of in the neo-liberal market place. This is important because farming is an essential component of Canada's rural economies. Furthermore, many Canadians enjoy buying Canadian products and supporting local farmers even if it costs them a bit more. So, while the following paper accepts the premise that Canadian farmers may need some support, it argues that supply management is not the means to accomplish this. Indeed, after nearly fifty years of this system it has become clear that supply management does more harm than good for Canadian farmers and consumers and that it is time to be dismantled.

## What is Supply Management?

Canada's supply management (SM) framework is based on three pillars: (1) cost of production pricing; (2) import controls; and (3) quota production. Cost of production pricing means that the prices for SM commodities are set by an external marketing board, rather than the free market, and reflect the full cost of production as well as enough profit for farmers to make a living (Cardwell, 2015). This measure is meant to ensure that Canadian farmers make a "fair wage". Because of cost of production pricing, the cost of SM commodities in Canada are generally a bit more expensive than foreign products. Thus, for supply management to work, import controls must be established to prevent cheaper foreign products from undercutting the marketing boards administered price (Hart, 2005). These import controls generally take the form of tariffs, which range from 168% for eggs, 238% for chicken, 246% for cheese and 299% for butter (Coyne, 2011). These extraordinarily high tariffs serve to keep virtually all cheaper foreign products from entering Canada. The third pillar is the quota production system. This entails that a supply management committee determine the domestic demand and then divide this production among farmers who have quotas (Findlay, 2012). Under this system farmers are only allowed to produce what his/her quota allows for.

As we will see in the following sections, not only does the pricing system of SM lead to higher prices for Canadian consumers; the quota system has also led to a variety of market distortions, many of which have prevented the system from accomplishing the very goals it sets out to achieve.

## The Case for Supply Management

While supporters of supply management acknowledge that the system has some downsides, they ultimately conclude that these downsides are an acceptable price to pay for the benefits it produces. Most obviously, by insuring that Canadian farmers can sell their products at a price that reflects the cost of production you ensure that farmers make a livable wage. It is argued that if the government did not support farmers in this way they would not be able to make a steady income competing in the free market and would thus leave farming. This would be problematic, not only because people like Canadian products, but also because farm revenues represent a significant portion of rural economies.

Underlying this argument is the assumption that SM must address two issues that the free market has produced: the cost-price squeeze and price volatility. The cost-price squeeze refers to the fact that the cost of producing farm commodities is increasing while the price at which these commodities can be sold (in the free market) is decreasing. Thus, if the government can create stable prices then this will insure stability in the farm sector and decrease the number of farmers driven out by low prices. Finally, supporters of SM often argue that it is precisely because of SM that the Canadian government has not had to spend millions of dollars in subsidies or bailouts – something common in farm sectors not under supply management (Girouard, 2014; Paikin, 2011; McIsaac, 2008). However, it should be noted that proponents of this argument generally frame SM as not being a subsidy; many disagree with this noting that government mandated price increases are equivalent to subsidies.

## Does Supply Management Protect Small Producers?

While Canada's supply management set out with the goal of protecting family farms, in reality SM has harmed small producers, serving as a central mechanism for keeping new and small farms out of agriculture. Much of this has to do with the quota system. Since the only way to either become a SM farmer or to increase production within the system is to buy the right to fulfill new quotas, these quotas have taken on value (Girouard, 2014). As seen in Table 1, the value of quotas has been steadily increasing. To enter the SM system, not only do you need to purchase these increasingly costly quotas but you also must produce a minimum number of units. For example, in order to be a SM dairy farmer in Ontario the minimum number of cows you must own is ten units (Girouard, 2014). What this means is that if you are a new farmer wanting to get involved in dairy production you must invest \$250,000 to acquire the quotas before even buying the cows, land and machinery (Girouard, 2014). With chicken farming the price of quotas in Ontario was \$130 per unit and the minimum units you must have is 14,000 (Girouard, 2014). This means to become a chicken farmer in Ontario you must invest \$1,820,000 just to buy the quota. As noted by France Roy of the Quebec poultry company Ferme Du-Roy enr.; "When you add to this the prohibitive cost of quotas, you have all the ingredients necessary to discourage small-scale producers, even the most tenacious" (Girouard, 2014, p. 7). Union Paysanne further note that "The model seems to have imploded. It is no longer a means to share the wealth but has become a way to keep it. The coming generation no longer has access to it and it allows no place for niche markets and new ways of farming" (Girouard, 2014, p. 10).

The high cost of quotas has made it extremely difficult for new and small farmers to enter the system, and has allowed large farms, which have the financing to purchase these quotas, to dominate the market (Holtslander, 2016). In other words, it has led to the concentration of large farms which is the exact opposite of what it set out to do. For example, when supply management was first established in 1971 there was around 145,000 dairy farmers (Findlay, 2012). As of 2011 there were only 12,746 dairy farms in Canada, representing a 91% decrease (Findlay, 2012). This consolidation has occurred much faster in the supply management sectors than in Canada's non-supply-management agricultural sectors (Findlay, 2012).

**Table 1. Price of Milk Quotas in Canada. (Girouard, 2014)**

PRICE OF MILK QUOTAS IN CANADA									
Annual means between 1998 and 2013									
	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario	Quebec	New Brunswick	Newfoundland	PEI
1998	\$14,747		\$10,026	\$12,478	\$15,463	\$17,282	\$16,882	\$20,767	\$14,586
1999	\$18,250		\$12,883	\$17,329	\$19,549	\$22,445	\$21,422	\$26,805	\$18,071
2000	\$17,438		\$14,871	\$16,591	\$18,728	\$21,213	\$21,913	\$26,294	\$18,589
2001	\$16,626		\$14,719	\$15,227	\$20,792	\$24,370	\$14,537	\$28,396	\$20,548
2002				\$15,589	\$22,412	\$28,400	\$26,492	\$28,729	\$22,673
2003	\$23,344		\$17,880	\$17,881	\$25,701	\$28,822	\$28,259	\$31,829	\$25,408
2004			\$22,920	\$29,800	\$30,640	\$26,768	\$32,078	\$26,320	
2005		\$32,489							
2010	\$38,718	\$36,884			Around 2010, these provinces capped their quota at \$25,000.				
2013	\$42,500	\$37,426	\$32,850	\$31,586					
% Increase	188 %	15 %	227 %	158 %	91 %	78 %	78 %	54 %	108 %

The value of a milk quota is based on the formula 1 kg butterfat/kg which represents the daily production of a dairy cow.  
Source: Federation des producteurs de lait du Québec. Online version of information bulletin, 2007/02

## Supply Management – A Regressive form of Taxation

Supporters of supply management also claim that; (1) the price Canadians pay for SM commodities are not very different from the price of these commodities in countries without SM; and (2) even if, say, the price of milk was a bit cheaper in the US, that this is not a fair comparison because their milk is subsidized by tax payer dollars. Thus, if we did an "apples to apples" comparison the prices would be very similar. Both points would be strong arguments if they were true. To begin, countless studies have demonstrated that Canadians do in fact pay more for SM commodities than they should be (e.g., Findlay, 2012; Paikin, 2011; Barichello, 2009). For example, Martha Hall Findlay (2012) claims that the price of butter and cheese in Canada is two and a half times that of the US price. Furthermore, the Dairy Farmers of Canada website notes that Americans pay the equivalent of an extra 31 cents on one litre of milk when taking into account that the price you see in US supermarkets is subsidized by tax dollars (Dairy Farmers of Canada). However, even when we add this extra 31 cents on to the price differences seen in Table 2, Canadian are still paying more!

Even if you accept the premise that paying more for SM commodities is an acceptable price to pay to support Canadian farmers; what must be understood about SM is that it disproportionately harms poor consumers. A 2015 study conducted by Cardwell, et al., found that Canada's SM policies are highly regressive because SM results in a situation in which "Households in the lowest income quintile face an implicit tax of 2.3 percent of household income, whereas households in the highest income quintile pay an implicit tax of 0.47 percent" (Cardwell, 2015, p. 2). In absolute terms, SM imposes an implicit tax on the poorest households that range from \$466 to \$592 per year (Cardwell, 2015). This amount of money can certainly be a determining factor in whether you are food insecure or not. What is also important to note is that SM products, such as butter, cheese, yogurt, milk and eggs, are staple foods. Given this, it is not surprising that several scholars have called supply management regressive. Thus, not only should SM be viewed as a form of taxation, but also a form of taxation that disproportionately harms poor consumers who already struggle to feed themselves and their families.

**Table 2.** Comparison of Several United States & Canadian Food Commodities

Country	Milk (1L)	12 Eggs	Cheese (1kg)	Chicken (1kg)
Canada	\$2.19	\$3.11	\$12.28	\$11.31
United States	\$0.88	\$2.63	\$10.77	\$8.56

The above data was obtained NUMBEO Database which was last updated in March 2017.

### Reform Not Dismantle

Recognizing some of the unintended consequences of supply management, Canada's National Farmers Union and Union Paysanne have issued separate reports in which they call for SM to be reformed but not dismantled. In their report, Union Paysanne acknowledges that the "current system does harm small producers and new farmers and thus it does need to be reformed but not dismantled since farmers do need support" (Girouard, 2014, p. 10). Union Paysanne's biggest critique of SM has to do with the prohibitive effects of the quota system. The main solutions they given to address this problem are as follows: cap the price of quotas and attempt to diminish their cost to a reasonable amount; limit the number of quotas a single producer can hold to prevent

concentration; and, allow farmers to be able to have a certain amount of animals on their farm without needing to buy quota (see Girouard, 2014).

Canada's National Farmers Union (NFU) have also offered several recommendations on how to reform the system, which, like Union Paysanne, exclusively focus on the prohibitive effects of the quota system. However, the NFU is directly against Union Paysanne's recommendation to allow farmers to be able to have a certain number of units of production without having to enter the SM system. They write, "Cost-of-production prices paid to farmers with quota provide a benchmark for non-quota producers, making it possible for them to obtain higher prices than would be the case in the absence of supply management" (Holtlander, 2016, p. 6). This argument seems to suggest that the NFU feels this course of action would be unfair to SM producers. Thus, their recommendations largely focus on ways to "increase opportunities for smaller scale producers while avoiding the risk of over-production" (Holtlander, 2016, p. 6). In their report they offer several possible alternatives that certain provinces are currently experimenting with (see Holtlander, 2016).

### **Dismantle Not Reform**

As noted in the previous section, Canadian farmer unions admit that SM has resulted in some negative outcomes; however, whereas they call for a reform of the system, this paper takes the position that it should be dismantled. What is interesting about the reports by the NFU and Union Paysanne is that neither of them address SM's impacts on the consumer. Instead, they exclusively discuss the prohibitive effects of SM on farmers while failing to acknowledge the fact that Canadian consumers are paying more for staple goods than they could be. Perhaps this is not surprising considering the reports were written by farmers unions who have a vested interest in preserving this support system. However, this system is regressive. As noted by Cardwell, supply management relies on "higher prices generated by SM policies [to] transfer income from a large number of lower-income (on average) consumer households to a small number of higher-income producer households" (Cardwell, 2015, p. 3). This is referring to the fact that while the average Canadian household income is around \$68,000, the average dairy producer makes \$110,000 and the average poultry and egg producer makes \$119,000 (Cardwell, 2015). Given that nearly 4 million Canadians are affected by food insecurity, it seems that we should be fighting to put an end to any system that disproportionality harms poor consumers.

All this is not to say that Canada must stop supporting dairy and poultry farmers, but rather that it should reconsider how it is doing so. Rather than supply management, a system that harms small producers and consumers, Canada should provide support through a taxed subsidy. Whereas SM has discouraged new and small farmers from entering the system, a taxed subsidy would encourage these farmers. Furthermore, while SM places the biggest burden on poor consumers, direct income support through a tax would receive most of its capital from the upper income level since taxes are proportional to income (Paikin, 2011). This is just one alternative that will need to be further researched, although it appears to be a better course of action considering it would protect both farmers and consumers, rather than one or the other.

### **Creating a Just Transition**

Recognizing that Canadian dairy and poultry farmers are extremely vested in the current system, Canada will need to develop a plan for SM to be dismantled in a just manner. Writing in the Canadian Public Policy Journal, Barichello et al. (2009) offers several possible transition options. They

make it clear that the most important thing to understand is that the sum value of SM quotas currently represents \$2.6 billion dollars. Therefore, these quota values represent a significant fraction of the wealth of producers who currently own them. For example, an Ontario milk producer who currently has 100 cows has about \$3.0 million invested in that quota. As would be expected, farmers with these quotas are quite literally banking on the fact that when they retire they will be able to sell them.

With this in mind, the first option for assistance in transition is for the government to reimburse people for these quotas based on their book value. In other words, since the Canadian Government made it a requirement for farmers to buy quotas, they should be responsible for reimbursing them. Paying them back the book value implies that the government will only reimburse however much the farmer paid for the quota at the time of purchase, as opposed to how much the quota is currently worth. However, many feel that this is too generous considering SM farmers have already benefited greatly from higher incomes because of SM. Critics of this solution often turn to the Australian transition model (see Barichello, 2009).

In 2000 Australia dismantled their SM system and introduced what many believe is a strong transition model. This model involved assistance payments that totaled to about \$150,000 per farm, which represented about three years of income loss due to the reform (Barichello, 2009). These assistance payments were financed by an eleven-cent tax on milk for a ten-year period (Barichello, 2009). Importantly, even with the new eleven-cent tax on milk, Australian consumers were still paying less for milk than they were under SM (Barichello, 2009). This is because the dismantling of the system led to a 35% decrease in the price of milk (Barichello, 2009). Barichello, et al., write “The financing arrangement was a ten-year tax that meant consumer prices would actually only fall by one-half of the expected amount during those ten years, after which the full decline would be enjoyed” (Barichello, 2009, p. 212). As they further note, “this kind of scheme would be cheaper than simply buying out quota. It also shifts the financial burden of this assistance to consumers and away from government” (Barichello, 2009). Furthermore, rather than drive Australian dairy farmers out of business, dismantling SM has led to increases in export revenue in the dairy industry, all while saving consumers an estimated \$118 million annually in supermarket dairy purchases (Findlay, 2012). This clearly illustrates the potential benefits Canada is missing out on. It also suggests that Canadian policy makers should look to the Australian model for guidance in how to create a transition that will work best for farmers, consumers and tax payers.

## Conclusion

Nearly fifty years ago the Canadian government set out with the goal of protecting their dairy and poultry producers through the system of supply management. Today it has become clear that this system has done a poor job at accomplishing the very goals it set out for itself. Since its establishment in 1971, the number of Canadian dairy farms has decreased by 91% (Findlay, 2012). This is a faster rate of decrease than in Canada’s non-supply-management sectors and clearly demonstrates that SM has done a poor job at protecting small farmers. It has also become clear that the quota system has served to keep small producers out, allowing large producers who can afford these increasingly costly quotas to dominate. Furthermore, Canadian consumers have been forced to pay more for staple food products. Worse yet, unlike a direct tax subsidy which is proportional to income and thus receives most of its capital from high income consumers; supply management disproportionately impacts poor consumers. Those in the lowest income quintile face an implicate tax of 2.3% of their income, while those in the highest quintile only pay a 0.47% tax on their income (Cardwell, 2015). Given that nearly 4 million Canadians are affected by food insecurity, it



seems that we should be fighting to put an end to any system that makes staple commodities more expensive. Thus, alternatives that seek to dismantle supply management and instead offer Canadian farmers support through a flat tax subsidy should be strongly considered. This would allow us to continue to support Canadian farmers while alleviating some of the burden faced by consumers. The Australian experience has demonstrated that it is in fact possible to dismantle supply management in a manner that is better for farmers, consumers and tax payers. Thus, it is time Canadians start demanding that their government put an end to supply management.

## References

Barichello, R., Cranfield, J., & Meilke, K. (2009). Options for the reform of supply management in Canada with trade liberalization. *Canadian Public Policy*. 35(2), 203-217.

Cardwell, R., Lawley, C., & Xiang, D. (2015). Milked and feathered: The regressive welfare effects of Canada's supply management regime. *Canadian Public Policy*. 41(1), 1-14.

Coyne, A. (2011). The \$25,000 cow. *Macleans*. Retrieved from <http://www.macleans.ca/general/the-25000-cow/>

Dairy Farmers of Canada. (n.d.). Supply management: The facts. Retrieved from <https://www.dairyfarmers.ca/what-we-do/supply-management/the-facts>

Findlay, H. M., & Gres, M. (2012). *Supply Management: Problems, politics - and possibilities*. Calgary: School of Public Policy, University of Calgary.

Girouard, B. (2014). *Toward supply management 2.0 in Canada*. Union Paysanne. Retrieved <http://archives.unionpaysanne.com/publications/Toward-Supply-Management-2-0-in-Canada.pdf>

Hart, M. (2005, April). Great wine, better cheese: How Canada can escape the trap of agricultural supply management. Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute.

Holtslander, C. (2016). *Strengthening supply management: Defending Canadian control of our market space and advancing food sovereignty*. National Farmers Union. Retrieved <http://www.nfu.ca/sites/www.nfu.ca/files/Strengthening%20Supply%20Management.pdf>

McIsaac, A. (2008). The case for supply management. *Canadian Parliamentary Review*. Retrieved [http://www.revparl.ca/31/3/31n3\\_08e\\_McIsaac.pdf](http://www.revparl.ca/31/3/31n3_08e_McIsaac.pdf)

NUMBEO. (2017). Cost of living. Retrieved from [https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/country\\_result.jsp?country=United States](https://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/country_result.jsp?country=United States)

Paikin, S. (Interviewer). (2011 November 23). Food and the market [Television series episode]. In *The Agenda with Steve Paikin*. Toronto, Canada: TVOntario.

Wiebe, N. (2017). Crisis in the food system: The farm crisis. In M. Koc & J. Sumner, & A. Winson (Eds.), *Critical perspectives in food studies* (2nd ed.) (270-284). Ontario: Oxford University Press.



# BEHIND THE BLOOMS: CONTRADICTIONS IN THE CUT FLOWER GLOBAL COMMODITY CHAIN

By Aayesha Patel

---

This essay investigates the global commodity chain of cut flowers starting from their production on Colombian farms, through a time-bound distribution network, and finally to their consumption in the supermarkets and florists of Toronto. The contrasts between exploitative conditions in the Colombian flower industry and flower consumption practices are highlighted using the Marxist theory of commodity fetishism – the substitution of social relations between people with relations between objects. Cultural practices related to flowers have become so normalised that the commodity fetishism in their consumption draws attention away from where and how flowers are produced, allowing them to be preserved as natural, uncontaminated symbols of femininity, romance, and aesthetic enjoyment. The highly industrialized production process, hazardous manual labour, and complex speed of distribution networks that allow flowers to reach our local florist are pushed from consumer consciousness. This essay works to make transparent the exploitative labour conditions behind our blooms which have been obscured by social customs of consumer society.

## Introduction

In the rural outskirts of the Colombian capital of Bogota, women work up to 16-hour days on flower farms, bent over bushes, measuring stems, clipping thorns, and delicately packaging flowers. In just 72 hours, those flowers will be displayed in buckets lining the sidewalks of Toronto's flower district and purchased as a gift for a loved one or an act of self-care, likely ending up on an Instagram feed by the end of the day. In 2016, Canada imported \$103 million of roses, carnations, chrysanthemums, lilies, and orchids from Colombia (Statistics Canada, 2017). As with most commodities, the consumption of fresh-cut flowers is a part of social relations and practices that are tied to global geographies of power (Mansvelt, 2013). Although used as means of expressing identity, few consumers are aware of where their flowers originate from or the identities of those who produce them. In this study, I follow the global commodity chain of cut flowers from a production site on Colombian farms, through a time-bound distribution network centered in Miami, and finally to their consumption in the supermarkets and florists of Toronto. I argue that the commodity fetishism embedded in the consumption of flowers works to mask the exploitative labour conditions within the cut flower industry. My analysis works to expose these exploitative origins which have been hidden behind the social customs of consumer society.

## Theoretical Background

The relationship between processes of production and consumption in the context of global inequality involves exchanges that typically favour the global north or the dominant, industrialised regions (Ziegler, 2007). During northern winters, millions of fresh blooms are delivered to Canada, allowing people to express culturally accepted forms of social relations year-round. The global commodity chain analysis provides a lens through which we can examine the processes and networks that allow these flowers to be grown, delivered, and consumed more than 4000 km away. Consumption consists of a range of social relations, practices, and meanings “centered on the sale, purchase, use, and disposal of commodities” (Mansvelt, 2013, p. 379). In the 19th century classic *Capital*, Karl Marx first conceptualized commodity fetishism as the substitution of social relations between people with relations between objects (Bohm & Batta, 2010). Under commodity fetishism then, the social labour involved in the production of an item is objectified once the product enters the capitalist market and is given an exchange value. Today’s capitalist society is dominated by commodity fetishism, “producing a modern subject that constantly desires to consume more in order to constitute itself” (Bohm & Batta, 2010, p. 345). Through consumption practices shaped by desire, pleasure, and self-expression, consumers in the global north actively take part in the reproduction of capitalist social relations and exploitative labour conditions such as those in the Colombian Flower Industry (CFI).

Billig (1999) argues that social customs related to consumption work to erase the production process from general awareness. When buying flowers, consumers are often not told who produced them, the location of the farm, or the conditions of their labour. Marx argues that capitalist markets impose this impersonal objectivity by assigning monetary value to products, so that consumers only recognize a bouquet of flowers as a commodity and not as the product of human labour (Bohm & Batta, 2010). From this perspective, I analyse the consumption of flowers in contemporary industrialised societies as a practice of commodity fetishism. I focus specifically on Columbia because it has the second largest flower export industry in the world after the Netherlands and constitutes the largest share of flower imports in Canada (Ziegler, 2007; Statistics Canada, 2017). In the following section, I explore the range of exploitative labour practices used in the production of Colombian cut flowers.

## Production

The high savannah area surrounding the Colombian capital of Bogota has rich soil, an abundant groundwater supply, 12 hours of daily sunlight, and consistently moderate temperatures, producing an ideal climate for growing flowers year-round (Ziegler, 2007). This eliminates the need for expensive greenhouses, costly heating, and artificial lighting, avoiding the seasonal and climatic challenges limiting North American growers. The large supply of labour accustomed to working for low wages due to high unemployment rates was another main attraction for the establishment of flower farms in Colombia during the 1960s (Patel-Campillo, 2012). Over the 1970s and 1980s, flower growing declined in the US and Canada as cheap imports increased through the development of a global flower trade made possible by jet transportation, new cultivation and communication technologies, and international financial arrangements (Ziegler, 2007). In the 1980s, the flower industry shifted from its historic center in the Netherlands to Colombia, and by 2004 the CFI had grown to export more than US\$703 million annually (Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007). However, high annual sales revenues and increases in productivity were made at the cost of worker’s rights (Balch, 2015).

Labour represents 50% of production costs in the flower industry, as human labour is required for cultivation, selection, and cutting where machines cannot be used in the narrow, delicate spaces of greenhouses (Miller, 2012). The industry employs over 100,000 people, 70% of whom are women who are the sole earners of household income or supplement their family income (McQuaid, 2011; Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007). Gendered divisions of labour on CFI farms allocate women to jobs involving detail and obedience in the production and care of flowers, whereas men are concentrated in management, supervision, and technical positions. Most field workers are racialized peasant migrants escaping violent conflicts and rural poverty, from indigenous, mixed-race, and African backgrounds, whereas middle and upper-class workers in administrative and managerial roles are from urban areas, of European descent, and are western educated (Friedemann-Sánchez, 2006; Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007).

Pressures of the highly competitive global flower trade drive employers to exploit their workers. Long shifts of up to 15 hours ignore women's roles in the private sphere, as they balance paid labour with unpaid social reproduction work. Workloads are intensified by the absence of government support systems such as daycare, health care, and schooling (Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007). Although women are happy to be wage earners, dangerous working conditions, instability, and low pay do not allow for the advancement of their own or their children's socioeconomic status (Patel-Campillo, 2012; Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007). The hard work at plantations leaves women little time to take care of themselves or their children and participate as social beings in the wider community, thus the ability of these jobs to empower women is highly limited (Friedemann-Sánchez, 2006; Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007). Although labour power has been key to the growth of CFI, minimum wage salaries of field workers are below the poverty line, at \$0.48 an hour, covering only 40% of a family's monthly expenses (Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007).

Labour conditions in the CFI are also a source of numerous health complications. The heavy use of chemical pesticides and lack of protective clothing in closed greenhouse environments are a major cause of higher rates of miscarriages, stillbirths, and birth defects among female workers and the wives of male workers (Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007). 21% of the chemicals used in the Savannah are carcinogens and toxins that are banned in the US, while employees chronically suffer from asthma, carpal tunnel syndrome, and posture problems due to cramped working conditions and the quick pace of production (Miller, 2012). Women also face psychological issues due to long hours, verbal abuse, extreme pressure from supervisors to be more productive, and instances of sexual harassment by male coworkers (McQuaid, 2011; Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007). High temperatures and humidity, low levels of clean air circulation, and little drinking water produce a harsh work environment (Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007). National labour rights standards are not enforced on CFI farms, and workers can be fired for falling ill, organising a union, complaining to government authorities, showing high levels of pesticide exposure, or requiring maternity leave (Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007; Miller, 2012). As workers are given short-term contracts to maintain employer flexibility, the fear of not being granted an extension of contract creates instability and insecurity which disempowers workers and inhibits them from forming labour movements to demand better standards (Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007).

The CFI has destroyed many attempts to unionise by refusing to bargain with unions, firing unionised workers, declaring bankruptcy, and abandoning plantations without unemployment compensation when workers attempt to organize (Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007). The Florverde Sustainable Flowers seal is an association of Colombian flower exporters marketed as being environmentally and socially responsible through employment protections, health and safety requirements (Balch, 2015). However, enforcement is lax and voluntary codes dependent on

each farm owner provide little protection. Florverde workers report 15-hour work days, unpaid pensions, and no health insurance (Miller, 2012). The financial success of the cut flower global commodity chain thus relies on the underpaid, precarious, and exploitative work of Colombian women, while plantation owners sell flowers at low prices. The following section explores the highly efficient and profitable distribution networks that allow these flowers to be sold to consumers in the global north.

### Distribution

Cut flower circulation is a race to cheat death in which low temperatures and high humidity must be continually maintained to slow flower metabolism and delay the decaying process (McDaniel, 1999). Retailers want to receive cut flowers as soon as possible after harvest to lengthen vase life and increase customer satisfaction. Cut flowers are distributed through a “cold chain” in which transportation, handling, and storage are temperature controlled in order to make the supply chain as long as possible. Flowers are cut at dawn and set in buckets of preservative solution in cooling warehouses to condition them for shipment (McDaniel, 1999). Tied bunches of flowers are then packaged into boxes, loaded into refrigerated trucks, and sent to El Dorado Airport in Bogota from which 20 daily cargo planes fly shipments to Miami (Haragan, 2015). After inspection by U.S. customs for pests and drugs hidden in flower stems, flowers are shipped to wholesalers and distributors across North America (Ziegler, 2007). An extensive cold chain infrastructure is located in Miami with 24-hour inspections, fumigations, and distribution (Haragan, 2015). Flowers typically take 48 hours to travel from a field in Colombia to a warehouse in the US, and one or two more days to reach a retailer (McQuaid, 2011).

Because of the perishability of flowers, timely sale is critical and requires tight buyer-supplier coordination (Raynolds, 2012). Wholesale florists and importers are essential to the process as they unload shipments into cold storage, divide large quantities of flowers into smaller bunches, and deliver them to local florists, supermarket chains, and convenience stores in refrigerated trucks (Ziegler, 2007). The flowers arrive dry packed, which means they have been dormant during the journey and must be “woken up” using a hydrating solution that preserves freshness (McDaniel, 1999). To account for this expensive flower logistics while also maintaining low retail prices, growers often cut wages to reduce overall costs (Ziegler, 2007). Thus, at the expense of Columbian flower producers, consumers are able to perform their relationships with fresh, inexpensive, imported flowers, without having to acknowledge the inequitable conditions behind their blooms.

### Consumption

Commodity fetishism not only obscures the social labours of production but also works to mediate relationships with special social meanings tied into flower consumption. With the widespread availability of cheap South American imports, Ziegler (2007) argues that although still a luxury item, flower consumption has been “democratized” to include more working-class people. Today, women are the primary consumers of flowers, and most flower purchases occur in supermarkets and street vendors, destabilizing elite spaces of traditional florists (Ziegler, 2007). Although cut flowers are not necessary to life and have no utilitarian function, they are used to express cultural and social meaning, shape class status, relationships, and self-presentation of identity. Flowers are used for domestic decoration, romantic gifts, and marking important life events such as births, weddings, funerals, and graduations (Patel-Campillo, 2012). Because these cultural practices have become so habitual and normalised in consumer society, the com-

modity fetishism in their consumption draws attention away from where and how flowers may have been produced.

Using flowers to communicate emotion to others and nurture relationships makes their consumption embedded in processes of cultural reproduction of social relations. Relationships are thus mediated by objects, rather than by social relations between people, in the process of commodity fetishism. Consequently, the labour behind flowers is transformed into objective monetary value, as “custom, or habit, fixes a price to commodities and in consequence, the hidden secret [of labour] disappears from awareness” (Billig, 1999, p. 316).



Figure 1: The flower-saturated Instagram feed of a popular Toronto based lifestyle blogger with over 100,000 followers (Instagram: @thiswildheart, 2018).

Several ironies exist in the contrast between flower consumption and the lived realities of production. Whereas Mother’s Day is a major holiday for flower purchases, the CFI treats motherhood as a means for dismissal, as female workers who become pregnant are fired or must continue working in toxic chemicals out of economic necessity, often leading to miscarriages and stillbirths (Sanmiguel-Valderrama, 2007). This link between custom and lack of awareness conceals the labour involved in the production of commodities, which Marx argued to be the process of “social forgetting” (Billig, 1999). Commodity fetishism confirms that objects such as flowers have symbolic value, allowing consumers to convey meaning in their relationships (Ziegler, 2007). Advertising campaigns for Valentine’s Day perpetuate gendered gifting practices which work to normalise consumer behaviour. Pressure on workers is intensified before major holidays such as Valentine’s Day, during which women must work 16-hour shifts under

strict monitoring with little opportunity to rest while working at incredible speeds to keep productivity high (Balch, 2015). The social amnesia, however, allows these exploitative origins of one's Valentine's Day roses to be pushed from collective awareness and forgotten (Billig, 1999).

In recent decades, the global commodity chain of cut flowers has responded to new needs and desires in consumer culture, as more people now purchase flowers for themselves and for domestic decoration (Ziegler, 2007). These needs relate to conceptions of the self and the way consumer goods are employed in identity expression. Advertising and marketing industries promote the necessity and desirability of goods with personal and cultural value, as consumption provides a medium for identity to be shaped and reproduced (Mansvelt, 2013). Ziegler (2007) argues that identity creation is fundamental to mainstream flower consumption practices as individuals search for reassurance about who they are and how they fit into contemporary society through their purchasing choices. Her interviews with flower consumers showed that women bought flowers to change their emotions and ideas of themselves, and to make one's space their own by choosing a product that represents their tastes.

New flower consumption practices are also a consequence of media industries' emphasis on individual identity and self-expression. People's choices to consume flowers are influenced by magazines, movies, and social media; structural cultural forces which encourage flower consumption through "images of flower-saturated existences and celebrity lives" (Ziegler, 2007, p. 14). Although Ziegler's research during the early 2000s identified magazines as a major influencer of flower consumption, today that impact can be seen more strongly in the exhibitionist world of social media. A search for flowers on the popular social media platform Instagram produces over 116 million image results (Instagram, 2018). Fresh-cut flowers are commonly used imagery to beautify the online portrayal of daily life by fashion and lifestyle bloggers, who are often labelled as "influencers" within the sphere of online, social media-based marketing (Abidin, 2016).

Successful influencers also recommend fresh-cut flowers as props that aspiring bloggers should include in their feeds to increase follow counts and user engagement (McKillop, 2017; Happy Grey Lucky, 2017). These depictions of flowered life indicate a particular social status and a disposable income able to afford the luxury of flowers, making visible the intangible signs of status, wealth, and cultural capital (Ziegler, 2007). The burgeoning literature on identity creation on social media shows that users partake in conspicuous consumption of goods online in an effort to express their class identity (Abidin, 2016; Taylor & Stratton, 2015; Sinanan et al, 2014). Through such practices, flowers assist in creating and sustaining individual identities and become a part of the stories used to "tell ourselves and others about who we are, where we belong, and the lives we would like to live" (Ziegler, 2007, p. 194).

Since commodities are consumed as a means of pleasure and identity creation, their continued circulation is dependent on rendering invisible the exploitative labour conditions involved in their production (Billig, 1999).

Commodities must be separated from the bodies which have created them in order for the object to truly be "mine" and enjoyed as such. My sense of possession and drive to consume more would be diminished if I imagined the exploitative conditions which have produced my flowers. Billig (1999) views consumer capitalism as a form of repression in which such disturbing thoughts are pushed from consumer consciousness. By looking at a beautifully arranged bouquet of flowers, it is difficult to discern the living conditions of the Colombian women bent over rose bushes, developing repetitive strain injuries, and breathing in toxic chemicals. Such images



would interrupt the consumer's enjoyment of the commodity, so the flowers must be viewed objectively by only their exchange value. This forgetting at the core of commodity fetishism is socially shared and engrained into the daily patterns of life in capitalist societies (Billig, 1999). Ziegler's ethnographic research on the cut flower consumer market in the New York Metropolitan Area confirms many of these arguments:

“Very few buyers of today's flowers know their origins. Sidney Krauss's comments were typical: “I never think about where the flowers come from,” he responded, surprised by my question. “I assume they are grown locally. There are a lot of nurseries. Where do they get flowers?” (Ziegler, 2007, p. 226).

This ambiguity of flowers' origin allows consumers to imprint their own notions of pleasure and luxury onto the commodity. Sanctioned by capitalist relations, this pursuit of pleasure demands a repression of the social realities of flower workers in order to erase a moral and ethical guilt which would spoil the act of consumption (Billig, 1999). Ziegler argues that the conception of purity in naturally grown flowers is transferred onto commodified flowers, turning them into objects that seem to exist beyond the realms of capitalist production. Consumers thus fail to see the highly industrialized production process, exploitation of the environment, difficult manual labour, and complex speed of distribution networks which have allowed the flowers to reach their local florists. These processes are objectified once the flowers become a commodity in the market. Masking the production of cut flowers allows the commodity to maintain its cultural meanings and be preserved as sublime, uncontaminated symbols of femininity, love, romance, and aesthetic enjoyment (Ziegler, 2007). It is this commodity fetishism engrained in the consumption of flowers that allows the exploitative production process to be hidden from awareness and to continue quietly.

### Conclusion

The availability of fresh cut flowers is intimately tied to the exploitation of workers in the global south. When commodities are objectified and seen only for their monetary value, the human labour involved in their production becomes hidden in the process of commodity fetishism. The CFI is plagued by meager wages, precarity, occupational hazards, forced overtime, gender discrimination, and lack of union representation (Reynolds, 2012). Commodity fetishism in the consumption of flowers drives the global commodity chain and allows the exploitation of labour to persist. The future of socially responsible flowers however, should not consist entirely of locally grown flowers. Miller (2012) found that Colombian women urged Northern consumers not to boycott their flowers since the industry provides employment and helps sustain some livelihood for themselves and their families. Instead, they asked consumers to demand retailers to supply flowers with better social responsibility and certification seals such as Fairtrade which has been shown to improve working conditions, labour rights, social benefits, and the standard of living for workers on Ecuadorian flower farms (Reynolds, 2012). However, Fairtrade farm owners question the commitment of mainstream consumers as low demand for certified flowers has inhibited the sustainability of their ethical practices and decreased interest in fair trade (Reynolds, 2012).

This speaks to the power of commodity fetishism in flower consumption which has obscured the realities of production so much so that consumers have failed to support ethical flowers despite their availability. The cut flower global commodity chain is driven by consumer demand and making this process more transparent can impact the lives of CFI workers if consumers

make informed choices to purchase fair trade flowers. Furthermore, this exemplifies the importance of global commodity chain research as a means of exposing exploitative labour conditions, breaking down commodity fetishism, and bringing greater awareness to consumers. Further research on the cut flower commodity chain should examine the role of wholesalers, importers, and other distributors in controlling the demand and availability of socially responsible flowers. We must remember that the fetishized commodities, which are integral to our sense of self and the expression of our relationships, are produced by unnamed "others" under conditions of exploitation.

### Acknowledgements

Thank you to Professor Lia Frederiksen for your understanding, patience, and encouragement and for giving me the chance to write this paper.

### References

- Abidin, C. (2016). Visibility labour: engaging with influencers' fashion brands and #OOTD advertorial campaigns on Instagram. *Media International Australia*, 161(1), 86-100.
- Balch, O. (2015, February 12). The women suffering for your Valentine's Day flowers. *The Guardian*.
- Billig, M. (1999). Commodity fetishism and repression: reflections on Marx, Freud and the psychology of consumer capitalism. *Theory & Psychology*, 9(3), 313-329.
- Bohn, S. & Batta, A. (2010). Just doing it: enjoying commodity fetishism with Lacan. *Organization*, 17(3), 345-361.
- Bonarriva, J. (2003). *Industry and Trade Summary: Cut Flowers*. Washington, DC: United States International Trade Commission.
- Friedemann-Sánchez, G. (2006). Assets in intrahousehold bargaining among women workers in Colombia's cut-flower industry. *Feminist Economics*, 12(1-2), 247-269.
- Happy Grey Lucky. (2017, April 14). 25 ways to grow your instagram account quickly and organically. [Blog post]. [www.happygreylucky.com/how-to-grow-your-instagram-account-quickly-and-organically](http://www.happygreylucky.com/how-to-grow-your-instagram-account-quickly-and-organically).
- Haragan, B. (2015, February 13). Colombia's Bloom Boom. *Slate*.
- Instagram. (2018). Image search: #flowers." <https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/flowers/>
- Instagram. (2018). Account: @thiswildheart. <https://www.instagram.com/thiswildheart/>
- Kashinsky, I. (2011). The Secrets Behind Your Flowers. [Photographs]. *Smithsonian Magazine*. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/the-secrets-behind-your-flowers-53128/>
- Mansvelt, J. (2013). Consumption-Reproduction. In *Introduction to Human Geographies*. Routledge.

- Marx, K. (1964). *The economic and political manuscripts of 1844*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- McClain, M. (2018). In rose beds, money blooms: How the rose trade lifted colombia – and nearly erased an american industry. [Photographs]. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/business/wp/2018/02/10/feature/colombia-rose-trade-industry-valentines-day>
- McDaniel, A. (1999). *Cut flower distribution and handling: Packing and shipping*. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.
- McKillop, J. (2017, September 3). How to Take Instagram Photos like a Lifestyle Blogger. [Blog post]. Well+Good. [www.wellandgood.com/good-advice/how-to-take-instagram-photos-like-a-lifestyle-blogger/](http://www.wellandgood.com/good-advice/how-to-take-instagram-photos-like-a-lifestyle-blogger/).
- McQuaid, J. (2011, February). *The Secrets Behind Your Flowers*. *Smithsonian Magazine*.
- Miller, C. M. (2012). Fresh Cut Flowers and Exploitation. *Perspectives on Global Development & Technology*, 11(1), 88-98.
- Patel-Campillo, A. (2012). The gendered production–consumption relation: Accounting for employment and socioeconomic hierarchies in the Colombian cut flower global commodity chain. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 52(3), 272-293.
- Raynolds, L. T. (2012). Fair trade flowers: Global certification, environmental sustainability, and labor standards. *Rural Sociology*, 77(4), 493-519.
- Sanmiguel-Valderrama, O. (2007). The feminization and racialization of labour in the Colombian fresh-cut flower industry. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 23(1-2), 71-88.
- Sinanan, J., Graham, C., & Zhong Jie, K. (2014). Crafted assemblage: Young women’s ‘lifestyle’ blogs, consumerism and citizenship in singapore. *Visual Studies*, 29(2), 201-213.
- Statistics Canada. (2017). Imports: Table 990-0006 - Live trees and other plants; bulbs, roots and the like; cut flowers and ornamental foliage. *Canada International Merchandise Trade Database*.
- Taylor, D. G. & Strutton, D. (2015). Does facebook usage lead to conspicuous consumption?: The role of envy, narcissism and self-promotion. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 10(3), 231-248.
- Watkins, K. (2001). *Deadly blooms*. *The Guardian*.
- Ziegler, C. (2007). *Favored flowers: Culture and economy in a global system*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

