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FOREWORD

With the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022 we entered an era of suspicion about student essay writing. *Trail Six* makes it clear why essay writing needs to remain at the center of our teaching and learning. This journal is the work of UBC geography undergraduate students. This year twenty-two editors participated in the peer review and editing process. When I received the draft papers to prepare me to write this foreword I was inspired by the care and quality of the peer reviews, evident in the comments written by the editors. There were many comments like: "You need to support this claim", along with supportive cheering from the margins: "I really like this opening sentence". The peer critiques were detailed, serious, intelligent, informed, supportive and caring, a combination that we should all model.

Like the discipline of geography, the papers are wide-ranging. Still, they read well as a collection, in conversation with one another. For instance, several articles focus on the ways that the discourse of sustainability is being deployed by real estate developers around the world, as a marketing strategy in partnership with pro-growth governments. In Vancouver, Joshua Bransford details the use of sustainability discourse to market *Oakridge Park*, a luxury housing mega-development. In fascinating juxtaposition, Tracy Tan outlines how a similar rhetoric dominates the marketing of *The Line* in Saudi Arabia. *The Line,* a mega-development – of two parallel linear skyscrapers, housing 9 million people in a 74 km long building – is being marketed as a form of climate action. Through this development, Saudi Arabia is attempting to rebrand itself as a sustainable business hub, in ways that also increase its geopolitical legitimacy. Both articles are attentive to the geographies of exclusion that are so exuberantly built into these developments – indeed one brags that it will house among the wealthiest residents in Vancouver (the top 10%) and the other "the best and the brightest." Tan suggests that social justice must be recognised as a core tenet of sustainability. Although this is undoubtedly correct, Ulysses Workman's assessment of another real estate development, the *Senáḵw* in Kitsilano in Vancouver, adds complexity to this suggestion. He asks in relation to this Indigenous-led real estate mega-development: "can it be credibly differentiated from general neoliberal growth machines?" Their answer: "Probably not". But Workman reasons that a critique of *Senáḵw* is made complex by the fact that the development allows the Squamish Nation to profit from an economic system that has been a dominant force of dispossession. This paper suggests that assessing social justice is not a simple matter. Olwyn Matthews raises a similar dilemma in relation to Indigenous communities participating in and profiting from lithium extraction in Chile. This seems to me to be good evidence of an excellent university education: there are no simplistic answers and judgement must be contextualised in the specifics of place.

A cluster of other papers move around the theme of borders and bordering, from different angles at different scales. Zainab Sayedain documents exclusionary practices

at the US-Mexican border that magnify migrant vulnerabilities. Nadia Vukicevic retells her father's story as a refugee from Yugoslavia, parsing state power from nationalism. Recognising that membership within the nation is always grounded in exclusion, Vukicevic also documents the complex geographies of this membership, sometimes grounding a poignant sense of belonging that can persist long after leaving the nation. Other authors show bordering practices at different scales.

Daniel Blackmore, for example, analyses the peace walls built in Belfast to divide Catholic and Protestant communities, and conceives these walls as infrastructural technologies of division exacted by the British nation-state. These walls, Blackmore argues, reduce opportunities for Catholic and Protestant communities to build a common community that could challenge histories of British colonialism. Other papers show us how national borders inflict violence not only on people but ecosystems. Tova Gaster details the failures of Canada-US transboundary water governance systems to assess and address cumulative effects of extractive development as they move across national borders.

Bordering practices are conceptual as well. Olwyn Matthews details the impacts in Chile that come from not classifying the brine flats where lithium is mined as part of the freshwater system. This allows mining companies to elude the regulations regarding water resources. Conceptual borders partition the world in ways that allow us to ignore the interconnectedness of ecological systems, directing attention to short-term rather than cumulative impacts. In quite a different context, Regina Hipolito discusses the work of the conceptual division between public and private spheres, analysing how discourses of motherhood sometimes break out of the private sphere to mobilise women in public space – sometimes to conservative and sometimes to transformative ends.

The articles in this collection level incisive critiques of our world as it is. At the same time, most offer up visions of alternative futures. Emma Pham finds inspiration in the home gardens cultivated in Managua's poorer neighbourhoods. Rather than spaces of leisure, these gardens provide cooling, increased food security, and possibly resilience to natural disasters. Both Gaster and Matthews see in Indigenous traditional knowledges of ecological systems some hope for more sustainable practices. In other papers democratised urban governance coalitions offer hope for more equitable cities. My thanks to Amelia Creemer, Editor-in-Chief of Trail Six and to the team of 22. Well done!

Geraldine Pratt

Head, Department of Geography

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This year's volume of Trail Six emerges in a time marked by political unrest and human rights abuses. The climate crisis, the plight of women and girls in Afghanistan and Iran, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the Israel-Palestine war are just some of the injustices that have weighed heavily on the minds of many UBC students. These issues sparked protests, walkouts, and vigils across campus. To refer to these complex and tragic events as mere "wars" feels inadequate. The articles contained in this journal offer a much deeper, more nuanced understanding of many of these situations than I could possibly express in a short letter.

In a time of so much uncertainty, I've found reading the well-researched and written papers in this volume to be a source of comfort. While the challenges we face are profound, the discussions and analyses presented here give me hope. As Geography students, we are taught to look past the problem on the surface – to explore root causes, solutions, outcomes, and long-term impacts. This volume provides a window into the thinking of the future leaders, policymakers, and citizens who will shape our world. The skill and tact with which the topics contained herein are addressed reassures me that the issues our society is facing are not insurmountable. They can –and will– be addressed.

To the incredible authors and editors who dedicated so much time and energy to this journal—thank you. Your commitment and hard work are deeply appreciated, and it has been an honour to be part of this process alongside you.

I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to our faculty editors, who generously volunteer their time and expertise to ensure that this journal meets the highest standards of professionalism and accuracy.

Finally, a special thanks to the Geography Students' Association for their continued support of Trail Six and for fostering such a welcoming and inclusive community for all students in the geography community.

So, as you read through this volume, I hope you will find the same sense of inspiration and confidence that I have. The future may be uncertain, but I hope the work in this journal reminds you of just how prepared we are to create the world we want to live in.

Amelia Creemer

Editor-in-chief, Trail Six Volume 18

Belfast's Peace Walls: Accepting Segregation

By Daniel Blackmore

Belfast is home to a number of peace walls: structures created with the purpose of dividing Catholic and Protestant communities in the name of security. This paper will attempt to politicize such infrastructure by examining the ways that peace walls have ensured the futurity of the settler colony and prevented reconciliation across religious and cultural bounds. A brief history of Northern Ireland's colonial past and the creation of politicized identities will be used to understand present-day relationships between Protestants and Catholics. Theories of ecological violence will be applied to Belfast and the ways in which peace walls reduce the city's resilience and prevent settler solidarity. Similarities between Belfast's peace walls, Palestine's Fabric of Life roads and the ways that these schemes paradoxically improve native lives while still advancing the colonial agenda will be examined. Finally, this paper will conclude with a proposal for the future of Northern Ireland and the approach that Catholics must use in their pursuit of decolonization.

Introduction

Peace walls are physical barriers that divide Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland. Originally, the structures were a temporary measure in reaction to a surge in violent riots targeting Catholic families in majority Protestant neighborhoods (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013). I argue that today, Belfast's peace walls are a strategy of Britain's nation-state that perpetuates colonial power structures using political identities upheld by physical divides that reduce settler solidarity. This paper will examine the history of British colonialism in Ireland to understand present-day Belfast, peace walls, and the potential for decolonization. A theory of colonial ecological violence, termed vicious sedimentation, will be used to examine peace walls and the influence they have upon Belfast's social resilience and settler solidarity. Peace walls will be examined as a technology of division used by the nation-state to segregate Catholic and Protestant communities, enforce political identities and obfuscate the root cause of Belfast's sectarianism. Similarities between Israeli and English colonial strategies are also discussed. This paper contends that both peace walls and Israeli infrastructure in Palestine subdue subjugated minorities to ensure settler futurity. Although intended to reduce inter-community violence, peace walls create divisions between communities that arguably reinforce discrimination against Catholics. This paper concludes that Belfast's peace walls reproduce centuries of prejudiced ideology that justifies the oppression of Catholic people, and their collapse is of great importance to the decolonial project in Northern Ireland.

Belfast's Past

British colonizers in Ireland used the control of identity and land to divide Ireland between the Protestant North that is loyal to Britain, and the Catholic South that rejected British occupation. Ireland has been the subject of invasion for over 900 years beginning with the

Norse Vikings in the 8th century, and followed by the Anglican Normans in the 12th century (Boland et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2017). Britain's strategy of divide and rule was cemented after the Battle of the Boyne in the late 1700s when the penal Laws were placed into effect (Rahman et al., 2017). The laws implemented a complete ban on Catholics from owning land, holding public office, or raising children as Catholic. The politicization of religious identities was, and continues to be, used to justify political violence against Catholic people. By placing Catholics and Protestants in oppositional positions, each citizen became a pawn in Britain's experimental colonial project (Rahman et al. 2017).[1] Catholics living in the province of Ulster were displaced by Protestant settlers from the Scottish Lowlands, who eventually created a Protestant majority (Rahman et al., 2017). This caused a divide across Ireland between the agrarian, poor, majority Catholic South and the elite, wealthy, majority Protestants in the North, a pattern that persists in some forms today.

Settler control over the land was a form of ecological violence that created the conditions for the Irish Potato Famine in the mid-1800s. Catholic tenant farmers were forbidden from farming for subsistence, and instead were forced to grow potatoes to be sent to Britain (Rahman et al., 2017). This reliance on a singular crop stripped soils of their nutrients and made the population vulnerable to the eventual potato famine.[2] The 7-year-long famine resulted in mass starvation, disease, and over 1 million people fleeing the island. Despite not having enough food to feed their families, Catholic farmers were still forced to export "grain, meat, and other high-quality foods to Britain" (Mokyr, 2023, para. 5) as they starved.

In the modern era, direct British control now only applies to Northern Ireland. The Irish War of Independence in 1920, and the following Governmental Act of Ireland divided the island into two (Wallenfeldt, 2023). This change was a great step forward towards the decolonization of Ireland, however, many Catholics are dissatisfied with the result. In Northern Ireland, Catholics were tolerated as long as they were loyal and submissive to colonial power structures. As Mamdani (2020) would argue, this is the defining relationship between minorities and majorities in a Nation-State. Cultural differences, and politicized identities made for a turbulent political ecosystem in the North. Irish history and language was left out of school curriculums, flying the Irish flag was illegal, gerrymandering was used to underrepresent Catholic communities, and most well-paying jobs were reserved for Protestants (Wallenfeldt, 2023;

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[1] Some might argue that Protestantism and Catholicism are naturally opposed, given that Protestantism was originally created "as a reaction to medieval Roman Catholic doctrines and practices" (Bainton, 2023, para. 1); however, the greatest disagreements between Protestant and Catholics today are largely socio-political in nature.

[2] A significant part of the Irish potato famine is a result of the ecological violence of colonialism, an environmental crisis created by the demands of capitalism; this concept is described in Hickel's (2021) article, *The anti-colonial politics of degrowth*.

O'Hearn, 1985). The exclusion of Irish history and culture from school curriculums is not an oversight, but an intentional attempt at "demeaning history and thereby concealing political modernity" (Mamdani, 2020, p. 21).

In 1968, the American civil rights movement was in motion and inspired civil protests in Northern Ireland (Wallenfeldt, 2023). The Battle of the Bogside, a two-day riot that erupted from a Loyalist march through Catholic neighborhoods in Derry (Londonderry) can be considered the beginning of the *Troubles*.[3] The Troubles were feud between majority Protestant Loyalists, who believe Northern Ireland to be a part of the UK, and the majority Catholic Republicans, who believe in a united Ireland (Wallenfeldt, 2023). The 30-year conflict was characterized by the emergence of paramilitary groups, violent sectarian protests, and sporadic public bombings (Wallenfeldt, 2023).[4] In the summer of 1969, 3,570 families were intimidated into leaving their homes by violent demonstrations from Loyalist and Republican groups; of these families, 83% were Catholic (as cited in O'Hearn, 1985). In response to these targeted attacks and the insufficient response from the British military, the Irish Republican Army was created. This paramilitary group would become a major part of the Troubles, and is responsible for the killing of 1,832 people (Sutton, 2002). It was during this period

that peace walls emerged to divide communities and increase security (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013). Although the Good Friday Agreement brought an end to the Troubles in 1998, peace walls continue to segregate Belfast's neighborhoods.

Belfast's modern peace walls are a tool that perpetuates colonial power structures by intentionally dividing Protestant and Catholic communities. Constructed as a temporary security measure at the beginning of the Troubles, the number of walls have since increased five-fold from just 18 barriers in 1979 to 99 barriers in 2021 (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013). Despite promises to remove all of Northern Ireland's peace walls by 2023, they remain largely intact today (Moriarty, 2013).

Peace walls were advertised as temporary structures, but have since become permanent fixtures in Belfast. Originally constructed by civilians in 1969, the first peace walls were created informally using old cars, furniture, and barbed wire (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013). Such structures were necessary due to the violent and targeted attacks that forced thousands of families out of their homes (O'Hearn, 1985). Symbolically, these barriers represented the intense disorganization of Belfast at the time, and the complete failure of both the government and police service to protect its people from sectarian

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[3] The name of the city varies depending on your persuasion. Protestants often call the city "Londonderry", while Catholics simply call it "Derry".

[4] Heightened militarization also affected the daily lives of those living in the North. One

example is when the author's father, a Protestant visiting from the Republic of Ireland, was held at gunpoint and searched by the British military while on a hiking trip.

violence. Nevertheless, the barriers inspired the construction of the first official peace walls by the British Army. With open gates during the day and closed ones at night, the peace walls instantly reduced the amount of crime in the surrounding area (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013). For Catholic communities particularly, this new sense of security was welcomed. As the political climate in the 1970's stagnated, peace walls were further accepted by local policy makers and investments were made to solidify the structures. During this time, it became increasingly apparent that peace walls were not temporary structures as originally promised.

By the 1980s, further investments were made to legitimize peace walls and the segregation of Catholic communities. Trees, shrubs, and murals were added by the British military to disguise the barriers as an acceptable part of the urban fabric (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013). An investigation into peace wall policy in the 1990s concluded that "segregation had to be accepted" (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013, p. 364) by planners until the social situation improved. Despite the monumental IRA-Loyalist Paramilitary Ceasefire in 1994 and the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, 7 more peace walls were constructed between 2000 and 2012 (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013). Social improvements in Northern Ireland did not bring an end to the peace walls.

Belfast's peace wall policies are controversial, however, some residents are open to change. Over the 2000s, increased media attention was placed on Belfast and its future. A 2012 survey of

Fig. 1: *Map of Belfast's partition, 1974–2008*

Note: Woods et al. (2009). *Map of Belfast's partition, 1974–2008* [map]. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Belfast's residents living in proximity to peace lines found that just 22% of respondents "like things how they are" (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013, p. 369). The same survey found that 44% want the peace walls to come down in the future, and 14% would like them to come down now. Despite mixed opinions on the future of peace walls, one fact remains: Belfast's peace walls threaten the city's social resilience, and discourage inter-community integration and solidarity.

Belfast's Present

Peace walls are both a result and a cause of settler colonialism in Northern Ireland as they perpetuate and legitimize British occupation through ecological violence that prevents settler-native solidarity. Vicious sedimentation is the result of settler environments overlaying the existing ones in such a way that reduces indigenous visibility and interaction (Whyte, 2018). This is usually done inconspicuously; however, in the case of Belfast's peace walls, the entire goal is to divide communities and limit interaction. This divide prevents Loyalists from grappling with colonial structures that they actively benefit from, and Catholics from healing centuries of generational trauma. Divisive infrastructure creates a clear "Us versus Them" paradigm that encourages prejudicial heuristics about the other groups. To Protestant children, the peace walls send a clear message that the Catholic kids on the other side of the street are intrinsically different from themselves. While growing up in this environment, how can one expect the next generation of Protestants to be sympathetic to Catholic struggles?

Interdependence, the acknowledgement of an entity's reliance on other parts of the ecosystem, is weakened by peace walls (Whyte, 2018). Peace walls disguise the interconnected nature of Catholics and Protestants in the city. Now splintered, Belfast is weakened as peace walls degrade trust, diplomacy, and the overall resilience of communities; all of which are essential for a society's self-determination and social resilience (Whyte, 2018). Peace walls are a deliberate policy decision, leading to ecological violence that divides Belfast and obscures the connected relationships between Catholics and Protestants (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013).

Peace walls are a tool of British colonialism that homogenizes Belfast's communities so settlers may tolerate Catholic existence without confronting the true cause of their tension. Just as Native Americans are corralled into reserves by European settlers and Palestinians are forced into isolated pockets of land by Zionist Israelis, Catholics are segregated into isolated neighborhoods (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013; Rahman et al., 2017; Salamanca, 2016). Northern Ireland is a colonial state that depends upon the relationship between subdued Catholic minorities and Protestant majorities made ignorant. Should either of these groups question their place in the system, the thinly veiled façade of control would unfurl.

I would argue that just as the concept of nation-states draws a contextual, but ultimately arbitrary, border indicating exactly "here" as the divide between "us" and "them," peace walls trace the areas indicating where one belongs based on religion. Both such concepts reject the continuum that hundreds of years of racism and xenophobia created for the purposes of exploitation. It is indefensible. So long as peace walls remain, British settlers can avoid addressing the root cause of Belfast's problems: colonialism.

Belfast's Peace Walls and Fabric of Life Roads in Palestine have clear similarities that are helpful in understanding colonial strategies.

Despite an objective display, all forms of infrastructure are inherently political as planners make conscious decisions about who to benefit. In Israel, Palestine, and Northern Ireland, where there is an explicit link between identity and political affiliation, "diversity is never viewed as an asset but instead as a source of competing territorial claims" (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013, p. 359). For this reason comparisons can be made between Belfast's peace walls and Israel's motor infrastructure in Palestine. Both cases are examples of

Fig. 2: *Palestine POW Solidarity on Belfast Peace Wall*

Note: (2023). *Palestine POW Solidarity on Belfast Peace Wall* [Photograph]. Anadolu Ajansi. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/history-of-solidarity-why-ireland-stands-out-in-eu-as-fierce-defender-of-palestinian-rights/3024978

"development" being used to pacify subjugated minorities to prevent further uprising. For decades, Israel has segregated major highways and created roadblocks to restrict Palestinian movement in the West Bank (Salamanca, 2016). To remedy this problem that they created, the Israeli government made the "Everything Flows" plan to upgrade infrastructure between fragmented Palestinian communities. The scheme still segregates Palestinian drivers while lending "legitimacy to the frenetic expansion of colonies… and relentless Israeli encroachment of Palestinians lands" (Salamanca, 2016, p. 68). In creating this infrastructure the Israeli and British governments are performing a "move to innocence" that relieves blame, while sustaining colonial endeavors (Tuck and Yang, 2012).[5] Just as in Belfast, segregation becomes an

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[5] In fact, many residents of Belfast recognize the connection between Northern Ireland and

Palestine. This is reflected by the many pro-Palestine murals painted on actual peace walls

urban infrastructural policy to ensure the futurity of settlers and the colony as a whole. The settler of the modern day understands that they must pacify the colonized, as "the peasants alone are revolutionary, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain." (Fanon, 1961, p. 61). Both Britain and Israel use infrastructure to ensure settler futurity, and prevent the melting pot of revolution from boiling over.

Belfast's Future

Peace walls reduce sectarian violence in the short term, but I argue the price of accepting segregation is allowing for violence in the future also. "Rationalist" arguments that justify peace walls based on the conceptions of security, despite holding truth, fail to acknowledge the actual cause of the problem. As discussed, peace walls had an immediate effect in reducing violent crime when first built in the 1970s (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013). It also cannot be dismissed that, should the walls come down, 90% of surveyed residents in proximity to peace walls expect at least some increase in sectarian violence. This creates a catch-22. Violence will likely spike if the peace walls are torn down, but the justification for violence will be further engrained should the peace walls be maintained. Residents of Belfast must consider: what is the price of accepting segregation? And

how "polite" can Catholics be in their decolonial mission?

For Protestants, segregation is a necessary price to pay for peace. Although large improvements have been made in Belfast, such as improved horizontal economic equality and multiculturalism in the city center, Catholics still face systematic injustices in the form of disproportionate incarceration rates, targeted physical attacks, destruction of property, and antagonistic Orange Order walks that make it clear that Catholics mere presence is still controversial (Balcells, 2016; Holland, 2022; Murray 2023; Nagle, 2009).[6] For Catholics, segregation solidifies colonial power structures and their continued oppression. A lack of mobility, unsightly walls, and reduced collective continuance negatively affect both Catholics and Protestants alike; however, Catholics pay a much greater price as segregation perpetuates their continued subjugation. Peace walls provide security; yet most residents understand that these barriers are not "*good*" (Gormley-Heenan et al., 2013). Division today only ensures division tomorrow, and displaces suffering upon future generations. Just as there are no perfect victims, there will be no perfect time to dismantle the peace walls.

It is easy to say what the Northern Irish government *should* do for the decolonial mission, the question is what

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(Figure 2) (Bicer). Political solidarity is also evident with Ireland showing steadfast support during the ongoing genocide in Gaza (Bicer).

[6] Orange Order walks are demonstrations held by the Orange Order, a Protestant, loyalist, fraternal organization (Hewitt, 2023). The order

prefers to march through Catholic majority neighborhoods on July 12th each year to celebrate the Protestant victory over the Catholics in the Battle of the Boyne. The marches are intentionally provocative and often lead to various forms of sectarian violence (Walsh, 2015).

Catholics and good conscience Protestants *can* do. In a just world, the colonizers would acknowledge their colonial past, build intercommunity relationships, tear down the peace walls, and give the land back to those from which it was stolen; but it is clear that this will not happen without Catholics fighting for it. The burden of decolonization should not be placed upon the people it subjugates, but such is the nature of settler colonialism and the nation-state. Nevertheless, effective actions can still be taken for the benefit of future generations.

During the Troubles, the Irish Republican Army and its splinter groups led a long, violent, and unsuccessful fight to unite Ireland. The Fanonist belief that colonial violence "can only be called in question by absolute violence" (Fanon, 1961, p. 37) justified the killing of 2,058 people (Sutton, 2002).[7] The result was an uncountable number of lives afflicted, decades of trauma, and newfound justification for segregation. I argue that a violent approach is not the way forward for Belfast. Although unjust, Catholics and good conscience Protestants must be polite in their desire to end segregation, but fierce in their fight. This is not to say that Catholics must be the perfect victims; I advocate for the relentless pursuit of decolonization using strategies of connection and not division. To many this might seem naïve, after all, "the only language [the colonizer] understands is that of force" (Fanon, 1961, p. 84); however, Northern Ireland is in a unique position. Descendants from the original settlers have lived on in Northern Ireland for centuries, fostering their own genuine heritage and connection to the land (Rahman et al., 2017). Regardless of if their belief is justified, it is clear that Protestants believe in their belonging to Britain as strongly as Catholics believe in their belonging to Ireland.

The mind of the hateful Protestant, the one that marches each July 12th through Catholic neighborhoods, is not one of reason but one of emotion.[8] This is why Catholics can no longer use violence in their pursuit of decolonization. Any use of violence by the colonized will be used as justification for their further subjugation. The colonized must be patient and friendly, but unrelenting, in their pursuit of freedom. They must themselves rid the notion of politicized identities, and shed the Manichean thinking that justifies violence against the other and walls between communities. Catholics must prove that they are above their oppressors, break the endless cycle of political violence, and create a better future than the colonizer ever could.

Conclusion

Peace walls in Belfast reinforce political identities, prevent settler solidarity, and delay decolonization in Northern Ireland. British colonization introduced an ideology that places Catholic and Protestant people in opposition and justifies segregation. As a

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[7] In fact it is almost certain that Fanon's work was read by political prisoners of Long Kesh prison, where many prominent IRA members were imprisoned (Gibson, 2019).

[8] July 12th is a holiday in the North celebrating the Protestant victory, and Catholic defeat, in the Battle of the Boyne (Hewitt, 2023).

result, Belfast continues to be divided physically and culturally in such a way that reduces the society's collective continuance and prevents settlers from understanding Catholic struggles. This is done intentionally, as Northern Ireland is based upon a colonial regime that demands minorities made compliant, and majorities made ignorant. Peace walls uphold the status quo by limiting interactions between Protestants and Catholics; interactions that would put into question the politicized identities that the walls enforce. Both Britain and Israel used infrastructure to subdue the colonized and ensure settler futurity while failing to address the root cause of the problem. In the fight for decolonization Catholics must be friendly and patient, or else risk further justification for segregation. Dismantling peace walls will relieve oppositional positioning, increase settler solidarity, and depoliticize Catholic-Protestant identities while moving towards a decolonized future.

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Socio-ecological Home-making:
Growing Resiliency in *Barrio* San Augusto

By Emma Loveday Pham

Informal urban spaces spotlight community reactions to state provisional failures by the state, including the lack of access to food. Observing Nicaragua's fragile dependency on global food distribution, dictated by international affairs and domestic corruption, we explore the role huertos caseros *(home gardens) play in cultivating marginalized communities' rights to space and food. This essay urges the importance of reclaiming the process of home-making in the face of state abandonment and ongoing/coming global climatic changes. Co-constructed cycles of reliance between urban communities and ecology expand on the notion of sovereignty through ecological interdependence, rather than systemic dependency. Focusing distinctly on Dr. Laura J. Shillington's (2007, 2008, 2011, 2013) research in* Barrio *San Augusto, we critique approaches to food security that impose modern-industrial production. We decenter the role of dominant state actors by way of revaluing autonomous informal participation among the community network, at the household level and within the corporeal scales.*

Introducing San Augusto

The rights to space and food in the urban environment continue to be some of the most pertinent issues facing the urban poor in the Global South (Davis, 2006; De Schutter, 2009; Goldman, 2015). Throughout the 1970s and '80s in Nicaragua, the urban population greatly increased as people were displaced from the countryside by the mechanization of export-oriented agriculture (Rodgers, 2008) and the war-like mobilization of the anti-imperialist revolution (Rodgers, 2008). The residents of *Barrio* San Augusto, an informal settlement on the outskirts of Managua, Nicaragua, engage with the struggle for the right to space and food through a self-determinant style of homemaking. The *huerto casero*, or home garden, is an essential area of each home in *Barrio* San Augusto and hosts a unique ecology: fruit trees, medicinal herbs and other flora attract symbiotic fauna that allow residents to produce their own food and provide structure and maintenance to their homes (Shillington, 2008).

Huertos caseros are not unique in Managua, which is scattered with many *barrios* and vegetative overstories. The multifaceted effects of fruit trees and living plant systems arrange a means of reclamation for these urban residents of the Global South (Braga & da Silva, 2013; Rodgers, 2008). Drawing from political ecology, this essay examines how communities and households in adaptation, such as informal settlements, create environmental relations and shape urban nature (Shillington, 2011); this essay will urge that the residents of *Barrio* San Augusto reclaim their rights to food and space through the interactive process of home-making and tending to *huertos caseros,* co-constructing a cycle of reliance. This first requires historicizing the source of Managua's widespread poverty and continual food insecurity, in light of imperial occupation and struggle. Then, we compare

industrial-capitalist's form, function, and figment of gardens to the *huertos caseros* of San Augusto. Zooming into the interaction of natural spaces among individuals, we focus on the ways in which *huertos caseros* necessitate spatial and corporeal existence. Finally, we confront changes in global climate patterns and how these events might alter relationships with the informal food sector. We pose a shift in priorities from industries structured on an import-export global economy to informal, local, self-determinant projects rooted in climate adaptation.

Imperialism, Insurgency, & the Struggle for Food Sovereignty

In Nicaragua, people's roles in food systems and access to the necessary quantity and quality of food have been restrained by autocratic rule (Margulis, 2013; Vilar-Compte et al., 2021). To understand patterns of modern repressive regimes is to mention the constant bombardment of foreign influence and reinstatement of dictators under the title "president." The United States acts as a regional superpower through the overt assertion of authority, such as the foreign policy opposing European colonialism in the Americas (Monroe, 1823), and covert criminal conspiracy, such as the coordinated national intelligence of Operation Condor (Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, n.d.) that maintained a compliant, non-communist regime in Nicaragua.

The Somoza dictatorship (1937-1979) saw the rule of Anastasio Somoza Gracía, head of the National Guard in close cooperation with the U.S. marine force, then succeeded by his two sons,

also groomed in U.S. military academies (Pearlman, 1994). This hand-picked dynasty began after the assassination of Augusto Cesar Sandino, a mestizo resistance leader against the U.S. occupation of Nicaragua, whose armed defense and political manifesto fought for national sovereignty, generating a revolution from a grassroots movement (Rodgers, 2008). Under the Somoza dictatorship, the large population of landless peasants and urban poor received very little social support from the kleptocratic government (Brown, 1974). Witnessing a conservative structure under privatized ownership, we observe a system in which the issue of food security is ever-present due to the accumulation of land and industry by the hands of the Somoza family and their political allies, including the export market of the United States. Linkogle (1998) describes the agro-export model as a feedback loop that diverts resources from subsistence agriculture to large-scale agriculture (initiated by technologies of the Green Revolution), which further consolidates the land holdings and wealth of owners, incentivising continued industrialization of food system (p. 95). Like many countries in Latin America, Nicaragua underwent the national transformation from net exporter to net importer, shifting from food self-sufficiency to food dependence.

Meanwhile, Carlos Fonseca Amador, among others inspired by the success of the Cuban revolution in 1959, transitioned the Partido Socialista Nicaragüense (Nicaraguan Socialist Party) to the radicalized Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front) in

1963. This anti-imperialist insurgency was issuing statements of redistribution loudly by 1969 (Berth, 2020). During the revolutionary period, food production was stalled throughout the entire country, and when the Sandinista government rose to power in 1979, they put forward an ambitious initial goal of reaching self-sufficiency by 1982. However, Berth (2020) details how "the lack of foreign currency further undermined production as the government was facing serious difficulties in importing necessary agricultural inputs, such as tools and fertilizers" (p. 69) to Nicaragua's recently industrialized food systems. From market-oriented development approaches, in the eyes of the international 'expertise' operating with industrial-capitalist imperatives, food production was understood as a means of restimulating a fallen economy (Aravena, 2000). Additionally, food aid and cheap U.S. food imports "undercut the profitability of growing basic grains and push[ed] growers towards the agro-export model," contributing to food dependency and disintegrating self-sufficiency (Linkogle, 1998, p. 95).

To pursue their idealized goals of actual self-sufficiency, the Sandinistas launched an urban gardening campaign, eliciting collective participation with the slogan, "Let's all sow the land" (Berth, 2020, p. 63). In 1987, the Nicaraguan Constitution addressed the issue of food insecurity, asserted as a right to be protected from hunger, through food policy that "laid the groundwork for the food sovereignty debate by prioritizing locally produced food and demanding the right to shape the local food system" (Berth, 2020, p. 76). The concept of food

sovereignty in Nicaragua gained traction after the 2001 World Forum on Food Sovereignty as well as initiatives of the transnational peasant movement La Via Campesina (Wittman, 2009).

Huertos caseros resemble perennial intercropping of diverse native vegetation that actualize local food systems and the potential to provide further natural amenities. International institutions, such as the FAO and the Food Security Assistance Program, launched several campaigns (1990s-2001) to alter *huertos caseros* (Shillington, 2008). This included deformed development discourse that promotes "cash crops (to secure foreign exchange, according to capital and technological imperatives) and not food crops; centralized planning (to satisfy economic and knowledge requirements) but not participatory and decentralized approaches" (Escobar, 2012, p. 43). The imposition of modern-industrial production onto the everyday environment via the dominant assumptions that "food production could become a technical procedure along the lines of industry" (Braga & da Silva, 2013, p. 157) resulted in the conversion of food forests and 'shade ecologies' into 'productive ecologies' based on annual agriculture. This threatened the effectiveness and greater function of the *huertos caseros* and the autonomy that they provide (Linkogle, 1998; Shillington, 2007). In this way, the involvement of foreign institutions encroaches on sovereign food systems; this is a continuation of imperial dependencies and control which necessitate the reclamation of urban food systems. In Nicaragua, disembedded development attempts are confronted

with local resistance as residents restore their food systems in the face of imposed agro-export models and the "guise of food aid" (Goodman & Redclift, 1991, p. 135).

Perceptions and Functions of Gardens for the Informal

With the Sandinista government's efforts to grow past the autocratic dispossession and privatization of the previous administration, land reform relocated many of Managua's poorest residents (Aravena, 2000). This resulted in the creation of *Barrio* San Augusto, located directly south of the capital city (Shillington, 2007). Although a swift redistribution of resources and social services was intended by the new interim national assembly, the inherited circumstances of debt, precarity, and emerging leadership barred actual urban amenities to reach San Augusto. However, the communities of urban poor that established the *barrio* naturally continued the revolutionary act of autonomy, revealing the role of human-nature relations in this story. *Huertos caseros* are sites that facilitate the reclamation of space, food, and a degree of self-determination via interaction with ecosystems, "generating different ways of (r)existing" (Braga & da Silva, 2013, p. 160).

Huertos caseros form life, the living basis of home, extending beyond the leisure function promoted by the Global North garden industry. Relating to the right to food, a prominent function of gardens is of course the daily nutritional provisioning of fruits and herbs themselves. Community-grown food, commonly in the form of *refrescos*

naturales (fruit beverages) and medicines such as *culanto* (used to treat gallstones) or *flor de mango* (cough remedy), requires very little maintenance compared to labor and resource intensive industrial- agriculture, the systems deemed 'productive ecologies' by the international food discourse (Crews et al., 2018; Shillington, 2008).

Above- and below-ground, garden ecology substitutes for amenities typically lacking in informal urban settlements. Aesthetic masking of unattractive walls by ornamental plants in gardens lends to the beauty and tranquility of the home. Large trees work as partitions for private activities such as taking showers or washing clothes (Shillington, 2008). The cooling provided by overstory shade regulates an entire micro-climate containing the neighborhood of San Augusto. Importantly, in a place with a heavy tropical rain season, subsurface root networks stabilize the land (Or et al., 2021), function as rainwater and sewage drainage (Corrêa et al., 2022; González-Rosado et al., 2023), and recycle organic waste through in-home compost systems (Shillington, 2007). Despite lacking infrastructure and services in informal urban settlements, *huertos caseros* help compensate for the residents' seemingly unsupported existence, considered the grounds for revolution (Fanon, 1963). In this way, the natural processes of ecosystem services that support their homes also support revolutionary acts of autonomy.

The concept of gardens serves different ideologies and functions. In the Global North, gardens often provide an escape from the built environment and largely consist of aesthetically designed

flower beds, walkways, and neatly trimmed lawns. Evidently, the meaning of gardens have distinct class dimensions (Bhatti & Church, 2001); however, in Managua, poor households have more trees than wealthier households (Shillington, 2013, p. 103). Within the garden industry, "leisurely activity" within "private place(s)" (Shillington, 2008, p. 758) are often separated from the house. This separation is perpetuated by the commodification of nature, even for experiential consumption, which some have argued to be the primary social dysfunction stemming from capitalism (Büscher & Fletcher, 2019; Heynen et al., 2006; Wittman, 2009). Examples include exotic horticultural exhibitions, the lack of food-bearing trees in urban spaces, and city parks dedicated exclusively to human recreational activities.

In stark contrast to the leisure-oriented, decorative green spaces present in wealthy urban settings, *huertos caseros* in San Augusto are perceived and experienced as an essential part of people's livelihoods. Indeed, Shillington (2008) asserts that "the everyday activities of home in San Augusto are intertwined with the plants and trees in patios" (p. 772). Infrastructurally, the 'inside' section of houses tend to be small, consisting of only a living room and one bedroom, while the kitchen, washing space and bathroom are outside (Shillington, 2008). Community collaboration with/in gardens is a type of reform which supports civic empowerment and access (Ross & Cabannes, 2014) and is therefore a revolutionary act against the forces of imperial exclusion. In post-revolutionary Nicaragua, the harms of commodification and privatization are soothed by the expanded conception of and interaction with natures, themselves, as sites of autonomous living.

Community Building, Home–making, & Corporeal *Acogedor*

Home is the "most mundane and everyday space of the city" (Shillington, 2013, p. 104); as well, the communal nature of *huertos caseros* rivals typical urban spatial segregation and national privatized autocracy. These gardens create opportunities for the exchange of goods, services and practical knowledge amongst neighbors and friends (Shillington, 2008), elevating a sense of self-respect, purpose and contribution in the organic process of community building. Braga and da Silva (2013) also advocate for cooperative relationships in "living forms of community and solidarity with one another in an immediate relationship with the environment" (p. 164).

Home-making, similarly, "is an active and dynamic process" (Bhatti & Church, 2001, p. 369) of secure household functioning in the pursuit of sanctuary—in this case, including the maintained ecology of the household. This integrated perspective, parting from the dominant nature-culture dichotomy, physically enacts gardens as a living foundation in the home-making process. Through *huertos caseros*, we can reimagine physical and conceptual configurations of domestic space, of how to consider home and belonging. There is a cycle of reliance in which each fruit tree and medicinal plant of a *huerto casero* is tended to by the human inhabitants, who in turn rely on their nature for food, shade, healing, sanitation, stabilization,

and comfort. A significant form of this comfort reported by residents is *acogedor* (homeliness). As bodies form the space of home, the degree of human belonging in/to nature is an indicator of *acogedor*. Shillington (2008) considers this corporeal socio-ecology, or the "interactions between the so-called perceived 'external' nature of physical plants and animals, and the (internal) human body," blurring the reductive boundaries of 'nature'. This interaction is a mutually beneficial co-produced the cycle of reliance (Braga & da Silva, 2013) that is corporeally sensible, as the human body is its own environment that necessitates certain conditions for operation, health, belonging, and comfort—the pillars of home-making.

Managua's daily temperatures can exceed 35°C throughout the year ("Nicaragua Geography," 2024); without cooling technology, a microclimate provided by shade ecologies in San Augusto is necessary to maintain livability. Conditions of bodily comfort in one's own *huerto casero* demonstrates the nature-integrated home-making of San Augusto. Socio-ecological relations between individuals (bodies) and gardens are suggested to be understood "as neither casual nor representational, but intimately connected and co-constructed... entangled in their daily (re)productions of themselves" (Shillington, 2008, p. 764). With this vital corporeal effect, along with the multifaceted ecological services previously described, the reclamation of space (home and body) by inhabitants of San Augusto rejects perceptions of nature-human dichotomies and discourages notions of nature as commodity subject to unsustainable

industrial processes. Reclaiming the right to space within ecologically relational homes leads not to human self-reliance but to a cycle of reliance among human and non-human actors. This exercise of autonomy is meaningful particularly when political instability and foreign influence reinforce dependence on global markets and industrial food systems, disregarding the peoples fundamental corporeal needs, which on the most basic level are experiential thermally.

Resilient Informal Systems & Disaster Preparedness

Geographically, Nicaragua is extremely susceptible to landslides, hurricanes, volcanoes, and destructive earthquakes ("Nicaragua Geography," 2024). A notable event, infamous for bringing the once vibrant capital city to a catastrophic state, is the 6.3 magnitude earthquake of 1972. The lack of aid, due to the Somoza regime's corruption and upfront embezzlement of relief funds (Pearlman, 1994), contributed to the general inability to absorb the 300,000 inhabitants left homeless (Brown et al., 1974). The 1972 earthquake destroyed a significant amount of infrastructure, specifically in agricultural sectors and poorer neighborhoods. In the midst of this social, political, and economic strife, localized cultivation and interaction with the still-providing urban ecologies likely were important support systems, substituting state dependencies with a floral reliance.

In September 2007, Hurricane Felix made landfall on the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, ultimately causing 100 deaths and extensive damage to infrastructure including the homes of

220,000 people who were rendered houseless. Again, the hurricane destroyed vast amounts of agricultural land (Weisshaar, 2007), creating an issue larger and longer lasting than what could be resolved through immediate international aid (McKeeby, 2007). In commodity-based production models enforced by neoliberal food policy (Linkogle, 1998), domestic food production declined and the agricultural job sector entered recession; the following year (2008), food inflation in Nicaragua reached an all-time high at +35.25% ("Nicaragua Food Inflation," 2021).

As global climate patterns change, temperatures are projected to increase in the latitudinal tropical band, along with the frequency and intensity of natural disasters (such as Hurricane Felix/droughts/floods) (Lee & Romero, 2023). The strong evidence supporting these projections reminds us of the need for transformative collective action to enhance the ability of natural systems, both human and non-human, to absorb impact, apart from economic modes of dependency. The destabilization of climatic conditions has been shown to significantly impact food security (Lee & Romero, 2023). Extreme weather events such as drought and tropical storms commonly damage if not outright destroy agricultural regions, upsetting monocrops in cultivation, which exposes the vulnerability of increasingly global, interdependent agro-export systems (Bryant et al., 2023; Linkogle, 1998). *Huertos caseros*, with perennial intercropping of diverse native vegetation, demonstrate how a natural agroforestry system provides resiliency to the impacts of destabilizing climate patterns, increases capacity to absorb the effects of hurricanes and storm surges, and functions as an informal provider of food (Braga & da Silva, 2013).

Conclusion

Barrio San Augusto in Managua, Nicaragua can reshape perceptions of urban socio-ecological living and the way functional relationships with the natural world can increase a community's self-reliance and resiliency. *Huertos caseros* allow individuals to maintain not only their access to food, but also their independence as a community with nature-integrated services. In this way, they offer an alternative to industrial hegemony and exclusive privatization while facilitating adaptation in times of state neglect and natural disaster. This re-configuration, beginning with a higher valuation of the informal food sector and expanded conception of nature's functionality, may re-recognize potentials of home-making and food production "to highlight the great distance between what modernity understood by autonomy and freedom and the freedom that emerges from the deepening of the relationship with nature mediated by agroforestry" (Braga & da Silva, 2013, p. 171). A relationship with natural systems that supports informality is in itself a means of autonomy and a form of resistance. It should also be noted that the element of informal home-making and local food sectors is in no way unique to Nicaragua, but is taking place on many fertile grounds. The re-integration of nature into community and household functioning provides a vision of resilient systems. Informal socio-ecological home-making is fortified against urban

resource limitations and better-adapted to natural disasters through communalism with natural processes, reorienting the role of human beings as one of many processes of ecology's metabolism. In the struggle for autonomy under dictatorship or unsustainable industrial systems, the process of home-making asserts urban residents' basic needs. Resistance movements can defend foundations—supportive channels towards socio-ecological belonging and safety—when we only allow our feet to take root in living land.

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The author declares no potential conflicts of interest.

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Oakridge Park and Postpolitical Environmentalism: Consensus, Contradiction, and the "Sustainability Fix" in a Vancouver, B.C. Megaproject

By Joshua Bransford

When complete in 2029, Oakridge Park will become the latest in a string of 'subcentres,' luxury enclave-like megadevelopments popular across Metro Vancouver. Oakridge Park stands apart from the rest because of its highly visible association with 'sustainability.' For this reason, I argue that Oakridge Park represents a new model of subcentre that fits within Vancouver's "sustainability fix." This 'sustainable' subcentre promotes Vancouver's global 'brand' of environmental leadership while attracting real estate investment to the city. However, Oakridge Park's vision of ecological 'sustainability' is a depoliticized, consensual one that masks Oakridge Park's very political consequences and contradictions. As a quintessential product of neoliberal and entrepreneurial urban governance, Oakridge Park encloses space for real estate investment, exacerbates housing inaccessibility in Vancouver, and subordinates the local state further to property capital. Its ultimate contradiction stems from the reality that long-term continuous replication of the ecologically 'sustainable' subcentre model across the region is fundamentally unsustainable socio-politically.

Introduction: The Subcentre

Dense, disparate clusters of high-rise glass towers punctuate the urban landscape of Metro Vancouver, rising starkly from the uniform surface of surrounding single-family homes and low-rise apartment blocks to create the appearance of many downtown cores scattered across the region. Jamie Peck, Elliot Siemiatycki, and Elvin Wyly (2014) refer to these copy-pasted developments as "subcentres" (pg. 393). I define the subcentre as distinct from other high-rise Vancouver megaprojects like Concord Pacific Place or Olympic Village because it is a spatially-segregated enclave (Caldeira 1996), with recognizable boundaries. Its high-rises are situated around a central common space and house primarily luxury residences. Adjacent to the common space is a massive mall and often a rapid transit station. Subcentres are conceived of by real estate investment trusts (REITs) and built by property developers for a global audience of investors.

At the heart of Vancouver's Oakridge neighbourhood lies Oakridge Park (Figure 2); the region's newest subcentre. I argue that Oakridge Park represents a novel 'sustainable' subcentre model that fits into the City of Vancouver's version of what Aidan While, Andrew E. G. Jonas, and David Gibbs (2004) call the "urban sustainability fix;" a policy orientation wherein city governments aim to appease the interests of the private sector while responding to socio-environmental pressures. Subcentres like the Metrotown, The Amazing Brentwood, and The City of Lougheed (Figure 1) have been depicted by their developers as innovative and investable; Oakridge

Park's developers QuadReal and Westbank heavily advertise their project

as also being synonymous with environmental progress.

Fig. 1: *The City of Lougheed — a typical 'subcentre'*

Note. From Shape Properties (2023). The City of Lougheed Vision and Master Plan. https://thecityoflougheed.com/vision-and-masterplan/

Fig. 2: *Rendering of the Oakridge Park development.*

Note. From Henriquez Partners Architects (2020). Oakridge https://henriquezpartners.com/projects/oakridge/

Political ecologists have studied the urban "sustainability fix" either by examining how city governments have localized it (While et al. 2004; Temenos & McCann 2012; Long 2016; Winter & Le 2020), or by investigating how urban farms, community gardens, or parks can function as its spatial applications (Walker 2016; McClintock 2018; McClintock et al. 2021; McCann et al. 2022; Sax et al. 2022). I add here that the 'sustainable' subcentre paradigm shift introduces a type of built-environment real-estate megaproject into Vancouver's "sustainability fix"—the 'sustainable' subcentre attracts real estate investment *and* furthers Vancouver's environmental goals. That said, I argue that this depiction of Oakridge Park as 'sustainable' is disingenuous and inaccurate—rather, Oakridge Park is a project of environmental gentrification.

More specifically, by discursively framing Oakridge Park as 'sustainable', QuadReal and Westbank are taking advantage of a postpolitical consensus (Swyngedouw 2007b; Raco 2014) on that term's inherent virtuousness to obscure its socio-politically detrimental contradictions.

Fundamentally, Oakridge Park exists for property investors. Its condominiums are investable market commodities before they are spaces of social reproduction—their high exchange values render them inaccessible to the majority of Vancouver residents. Because a predominant neoliberal definition of 'sustainability' facilitates these harms, contesting it is imperative for contemporary struggles for urban democracy, especially as REITs rapidly replicate the 'sustainable' subcentre across Vancouver.

Greening Luxury

A leasing advertisement brochure claims "Oakridge Park is being created with a view and commitment to demonstrating global leadership on a sustainability front," and goes on to tout it as "one of the most sustainable projects of its kind in the world" (QuadReal Property Group 2023, pg. 27). A promotional video equates Oakridge's innovative, 'green' construction to "the equivalent of planting 160,000 trees, or taking 1,300 cars off the road" (Oakridge Park 2022) compared to a hypothetical development at a similar scale. QuadReal and Westbank aim for the megaproject to be certified LEED Platinum, exceeding the City of Vancouver's standards for new constructions on rezoned sites as outlined in its "Greenest City Action Plan" (City of Vancouver 2011, 2013). All of this comprises a set of calculated design choices that have qualified Oakridge Park for inclusion in QuadReal's "Green Bond Framework," which the firm prominently advertises (QuadReal Property Group 2022). This offers 'environmentally-minded' client firms the opportunity to progress towards their environmental and social governance (ESG) goals by investing in Oakridge Park. Depicting Oakridge Park as environmentally progressive like this furthers the city's "global reputation for clean and green leadership" (Vancouver Economic Commission 2018, pg. 5), a reputation valued at CA$31.5 billion (Brand Finance 2015). The City of Vancouver holds a capital-friendly conception of 'sustainability' similar to that of QuadReal and Westbank (City of Vancouver 2002, 2011, 2013, Kear 2007; Quastel 2009; Quastel et al. 2012). These 'sustainabilities' sit at the intersection of profit-seeking and ESG. Continuous mutual reaffirmation of these conceptions between such public and private actors produces a neoliberal consensus on 'sustainability' that serves to advance socially 'unsustainable' projects like Oakridge Park.

Oakridge Park will exist for a highly exclusive audience. It will add 3,134 new financial assets to the global real estate investment market (Coakley 1994; Moos & Skaburskis 2010) in the form of luxury condominiums worth anywhere from $2,800 to $3,100 per square foot, making for a whopping average unit listing price of $3,000,000 (Oakridge Park Leasing 2022). The ultra-rich owner-investors of these units, when they choose to reside in them, will have immediate access to a nine-acre forest park and 850,000 square feet of retail space. A SkyTrain station steps from their door provides them easy access to the rest of the city should they opt against taking advantage of Oakridge Park's luxury car-share program (QuadReal Property Group 2023). Oakridge's condominiums thus represent new, attractive assets for ultra-wealthy property buyers the world over to invest in, not homes for Vancouver locals to live in.

Fig. 3: *Oakridge Park within Vancouver*
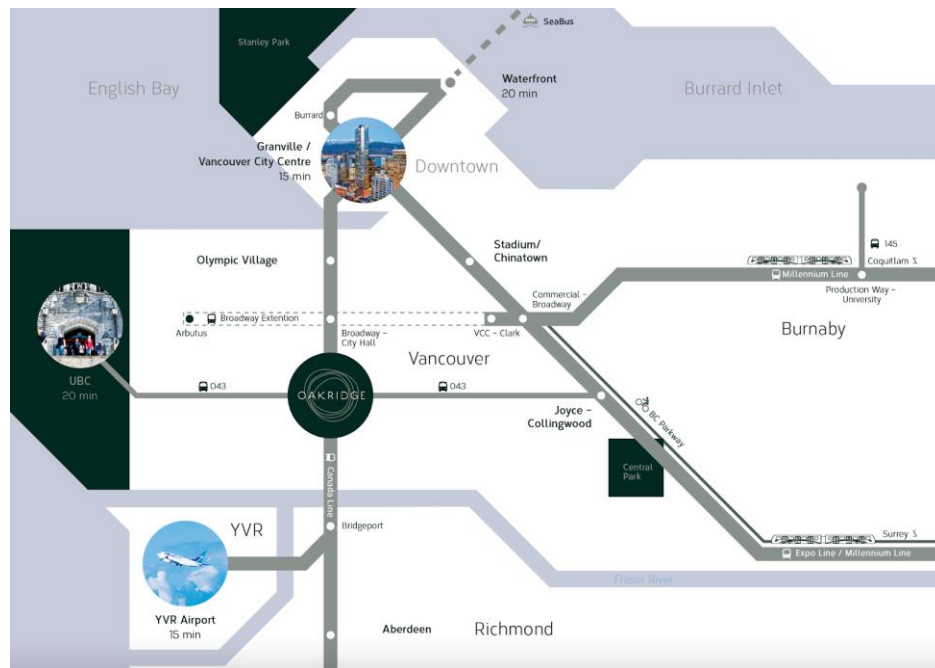
Entrepreneurialism and the "Sustainability Fix"

To the majority of Vancouver residents, who are not Oakridge Park's intended customers, the megaproject's existence is counterintuitive. This is especially true in the context of the systemic housing unaffordability that plagues the city (Ley et al. 2017; Tranjan 2023). Past luxury megadevelopments have entrenched the inaccessibility of Vancouver's real estate market to the middle and lower classes (Moos & Skaburskis 2010; VanWynsberghe et al. 2013; Grigoryeva & Ley 2019); gentrifying the neighbourhoods in which they are built (Quastel 2009), and leading to displacement (Jones & Ley 2016). It follows that Oakridge Park, the latest iteration of the subcentre, will bring about similar results.

Conversely, Oakridge Park makes perfect sense to the Vancouver and British Columbia governments. It spatially exemplifies a neoliberal urban governance paradigm described by David Harvey (1989) as "entrepreneurialism," wherein urban elites, through "public-private partnerships" (pg. 7) prioritize private-sector attention and economic growth in their urban development strategies; ultimately aiming to carve out a distinct role for their cities as indispensable nodes within the global circulatory system of capital (Jonas & While 2007; Sparke 2013). The Vancouver municipal government specifically aims to attract property investment (Olds 1998, 2001; Mitchell 2004; Siemiatycki 2013; VanWynsberghe et al. 2013), which is epitomized in the Oakridge Park context by the presence of REITs at the project's helm. Developments like Oakridge Park, that beckon investment

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on a global scale, are the ideal end results of the British Columbia's deregulated real estate policy (Olds 1995, 1998; Quastel 2009; Ley et al. 2017). Oakridge Park thus represents an entrepreneurially- motivated move to encourage real estate investment activity in British Columbia; serving the city government by strengthening Vancouver's position within the global real estate economy.

Fig. 4: "Environmental pressures and the urban sustainability fix"
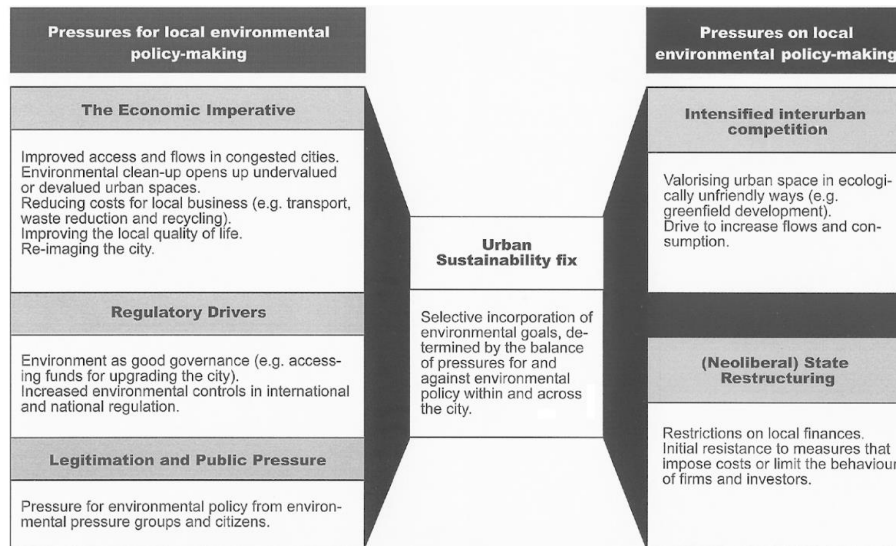
Note. From "The Environment and the Entrepreneurial City: Searching for the Urban 'Sustainability Fix' in Manchester and Leeds." A. While, A. E. G. Jonas, & D. Gibbs, 2004. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 28, pg. 552. Copyright 2004 by Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Depoliticization & Environmental Gentrification

Oakridge Park's inclusion within Vancouver's "sustainability fix" reflects how 'sustainability has become depoliticized in the neoliberal era. As Erik Swyngedouw (cf. 2007b, 2009) argues, there exists a socio-scientific consensus that an environmental crisis is occurring which requires the urgent reconfiguration of existing techno-managerial institutions, practices, and modes of power distribution. This consensus converges with the emergence of a seemingly universal hegemonic neoliberalism (Peck & Tickell 2002) to result in the 'postpoliticization' of environmental crisis management (Swyngedouw 2014, 2018). In other words, the reconfiguration of environmental policy regimes under neoliberalism takes on a technocratic, administrative approach that prioritizes certain 'expert' knowledges (Rancière 1995, 1999; Swyngedouw 2009) while delegitimizing dissenting popular opinions. It is through this process that a nebulous, malleable 'sustainability' has become universally understood as a solution to environmental crisis (Heynen et al. 2006; Swyngedouw 2007a; Dooling 2009), which renders 'sustainable' luxury megaprojects like Oakridge Park rational and even necessary.

Oakridge Park, as a spatial outcome of postpolitical environmental

governance, exemplifies what Melissa Checker (2011) calls "environmental gentrification." This term refers to a process by which property developers advocate for and carry out projects that enclose urban space for the wealthy by discursively framing them as 'sustainable.' It can be understood as a larger processual mode of practice resulting from the ideological depoliticization of environmental management. With its unaffordable condominiums, low-carbon architecture, and enclave-like separation from the surrounding neighbourhood, this enclosure-as-environmentalism is everywhere in Oakridge Park and even extends to its 'common' spaces. With names like 'The Meadow Gardens,' 'The Woodland,' and 'The Common,' the six constituent parks at Oakridge Park's centre (Figure 5) superficially seem to be environmentally-friendly public spaces, but Oakridge Park is inherently exclusionary: its intended residents are the ultra-wealthy, and thus the project indirectly forecloses egalitarian access to them. As such, the project's parks represent "exclusionary commons" (Harvey 2013, pg. 71) akin to the High Line in New York City (Rice et al. 2019)— public spaces operating under a restrictive and elitist conception of 'the public.'

Contradiction, Repoliticization, & Urban Democracy

Despite the fact that QuadReal and Westbank invoke a consensual
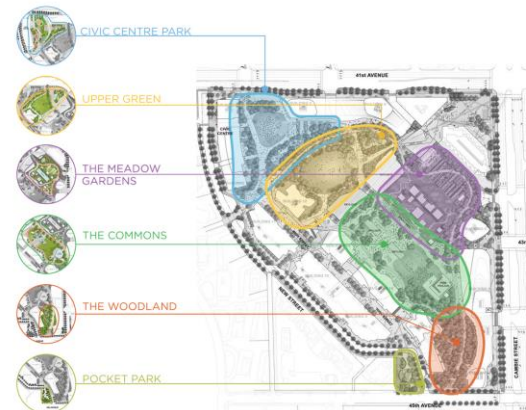
'sustainability' to justify Oakridge Park, the project in practice will not produce universal socio-ecological benefits. Oakridge Park will create enclosed spaces for only a small, elite demographic and privatize even the 'public' space at its centre. It will spatially represent and consolidate a neoliberal urban governance paradigm (Peck et al. 2009) locally characterized by the prioritization of real estate investment interests. Disruptive, destructive contestations of neoliberal urbanism from New York (Smith 1996) to Paris (Žižek 2007) demonstrate this paradigm's long-term socio-political unsustainability. Vancouver residents seeking a democratic alternative to the 'sustainable' subcentre can organize to subordinate their governments to the interests of the urban public instead of to real estate investment. However, Vancouver is not evenly divided between a real estate investor class and everyone

else: antagonisms abound in the city (Mitchell 2004; Tranjan 2023), and just as in urban popular movements in similar socio-political contexts (Featherstone 2005; Novy & Colomb 2013; Hölzl & Verwiebe 2020), a mass movement for democracy in Vancouver cannot pretend that homeowners, tenants, students, unhoused people, etc. all share the same goals. Consolidating stable, powerful interest groups with similar normative visions for urban space will be difficult, but could meaningfully contest the currently- hegemonic "public-private partnership" arrangement in a way that leads to qualitative democratic changes in urban governance.

One such change could be the creation of new types of 'exclusionary commons,' which would grant access to residents yet restrict it from speculative investment. David Harvey (2013) argues that this alternate form of enclosure is necessary to shelter new democratically-produced urban developments from market pressures. Publicly owned housing developments built to be accessible to residents could exemplify these new 'enclosed-yet-common' spaces.

Creating new commons is not the only option: another method of democratization is to reclaim currently-enclosed spaces for public use. The groundwork for this struggle was laid in 2016 when the B.C. government passed Bill 28, which included a vacancy tax and an additional tax for foreign buyers in the Lower Mainland, parts of Vancouver Island, and Kelowna (Government of B.C. 2016) (Figure 6). Passed after significant public pressure for government intervention in the housing market (Cooper 2016), this measure aimed to re-assign use value to housing in the province by converting vacant units into homes for B.C. residents. The addition of a 15% property transfer tax for foreign real estate owners with either foreign nationalities or primarily foreign incomes aims to update the tax system to a time when the wealth disparity between foreign real estate investors and Vancouver locals is beginning to have politically salient consequences.

Fig. 6: *Areas affected by Bill 28's ‘Speculation and Vacancy Tax'*
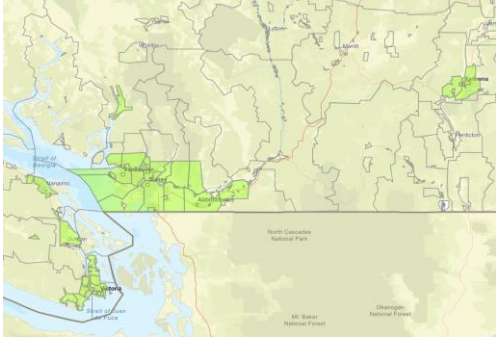
Note. From the Government of British Columbia (2016). Speculation and Vacancy Tax (SVT) Location Map. https://map-spec-tax-areas.apps.gov.bc.ca

Fig. 7: *Pearson Dogwood redevelopment plan*

Note. From the City of Vancouver. (2014). *Policy Statement: Pearson Dogwood*. Land Use and Development Policies and Guidelines, pg. 51. https://guidelines.vancouver.ca/policy-statement-pearson-dogwood.pdf

Bill 28 represented a counterintuitive step by the provincial government towards urban democracy. Its anti-entrepreneurialist objectives demonstrated a clear clash of interests between the global real estate economy and Vancouver residents, and it is a reminder that a provincial government beholden to global capital is not inevitable. This is not to say that Bill 28 resulted in or intended for the full democratization of urban development processes. Oakridge Park—an exclusionary project of environmental gentrification—has not been hindered in the slightest by Bill 28's provisions, and the fact that it represents a new ‘sustainable' subcentre model that fits within Vancouver's "sustainability fix" will only reinforce the format's popularity. Even now other REITs are racing to ensure that Oakridge's time in the spotlight is brief. Just 1.5 kilometres to the south of Oakridge, another REIT — the Onni Group of Companies—is spearheading a new ‘sustainable' subcentre known as ‘Pearson Dogwood'

(Figure 7), which includes "sustainability and green infrastructure" as one of its "guiding principles" (City of Vancouver 2014, pg. 65). Even more visibly ‘sustainable' is the East Fraser Lands subcentre, located in Vancouver's southeasternmost edge, where property development firm Wesgroup Properties "is in the process of delivering a vibrant and sustainable mixed-use neighbourhood," composed of 81% market-rate housing (Wesgroup Properties 2021). Clearly, for the time being, the ‘sustainable' subcentre—and the elite class it caters to—is here to stay.

It is clear, then, that repoliticizing ‘sustainability' is essential to urban spatial democratization. Denaturalizing the predominant neoliberal conception of ‘sustainability' would allow for critical examination of its use to justify gentrification. Continuous production and reproduction of new ‘sustainabilities' informed by popular dissensus would enable the emergence of more democratic, contested environmentalisms. Together with

political power, this could lead to the production of urban forms that are more inclusive and socio-ecologically sustainable.

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The Nation-State and Nationalities: How they Influence Mobilities and Identity

By Nadia Vukicevic

Nation-states and national identities significantly shape the geopolitical landscape, having the power to both constrain and foster movements across borders. Through the formation and dissolution of Yugoslavia, borders were redrawn, nationalities were dispersed, and forced migrants sought refuge elsewhere. These mobilities, inescapably intertwined with state sovereignty, influence the migrants' identity through complex and nuanced ways. Drawing from personal narratives, this paper explores profound and lasting impacts of shifting borders on individual lives, including challenges in identity-formation.

Introduction

Our lives and mobilities are molded by our relationships with the state, manifesting both with our consent or lack thereof. Mobilities in the context of borders are often conceptualized as voluntary, transgressing across and within borders of nation-states, dictated by the permeability of the boundary. This conception can remain unquestioned, as we, in the Western world, visualize our world in a colourful mosaic of "unities" (Khosravi, 2007, p. 321) – homogenous entities, peaceful, static. Within these entities, there is an identity, one that each person is automatically assumed to have (Anderson, 2006, p. 5). However, what happens when that identity is torn across space and time? What happens when that which has the agency to move is not the person themself, but rather the borders around them?

My father's story is one that has been defined and redefined by the fluidity of 'nation-states' and their borders, of peace and of war. The state of Yugoslavia where he resided at the time served as the determinant of my father's forced mobility – becoming a refugee – while simultaneously constraining his prospects for future mobility. His story illustrates that the state can be the reason for movement, while having the agency to significantly alter the political landscape within its borders as it tries to define itself as a homogenous entity with a single identity. In essence, the state performs in ways which serve itself (MacDonald, 2002, p. 54). Through retelling part of my father's personal migration journey and identity formation, I argue that the state and conceptions of national identities significantly influence the geopolitical landscape, having the power to both foster and constrain movements across borders. Effects of the morphing landscape are felt long after the tumultuous redefining of states, influencing the development of one's personal identity.

I will start by providing the framework through which I will examine the performative role of nation-states, followed by examining the paradoxes of nationality in Yugoslavia. I will then retell my father's experiences as a refugee and the migrations that occurred post-Yugoslavia. Lastly, I will incorporate the

hurdles of documentation that my father encountered as they relate to the sovereignty of the state, before concluding with final remarks.

Framework

It is helpful to have an encompassing definition of the nation-state, as its description will guide my argument. The nation, through a contemporary Western perspective, can be defined as an "imagined political community" that is both limited and sovereign (Anderson, 2006, p. 6). Each dimension of this definition will be further elaborated in conversation with my father's personal experiences of the nation-state, emphasizing the lasting effects of nation-building. Importantly, I stress the agency of the state since it continuously invents and reinvents itself and its imaginary, changing its delineated boundaries for its own purpose (Anderson, 2006, p. 6). This has immediate effects on one's identity.

My father's trials and tribulations with developing his identity, and framing it in a manner accepted by the state, is an example of the ways identity formation is influenced by – and actively influences – one's belonging and affiliation with the state. Through viewing identity as a palimpsest of histories, memories, and emotions, national identity reveals itself as an important component of identity-construction. I will examine the intersections of nationality and identity, delving into how they construct one another.

The Nation as Imagined Political Community: Paradoxes of Nationality in Yugoslavia

As Anderson (2006, p.6) states, the nation is an imagined political community. It is invented, and it portrays a deceiving notion of closeness to fellow members of the same political community. The state uses symbols and imagery to further portray this seeming communal identity of the state (MacDonald, 2002, p. 54). In the context of Yugoslavia where my father was born, a region where borders were drawn and redrawn time and time again, what nationality did he hold? How did nationality influence the development of his identity and sense of belonging?

The attempt to create a single nationality by the unification of Yugoslavia was an overly visionary goal as there was no basis on which to create a singular communal identity for the state. This was an impossible goal since the mixed population brought their own conceptions of nationalities into the creation of this new state (Arendt, 1973, p. 270). Nationality manifests here at various scales, from the individual, to the proximate community, to the state. Ultimately, nationality provides holders with a sense of purpose and belonging, bound by a sense of intimacy and familiarity (Wodak et al., 2012, p. 45). National identity as part of one's multiple interwoven identities produces a collective set of meanings one can identify with emotionally, which positions the individual within the social world in a meaningful way (Wodak et al, 2012, p. 23). In the case of Yugoslavia, notably, nationalistic tensions quickly escalated and many individuals were caught in the crossfire – my father being one of them. He claims that his generation didn't feel the ethnic divisions

like the older generations did, and yet, they felt the violent consequences.

My father was born and lived his first 18 years in Yugoslavia, all the while maintaining that he was Serbian. His great-grandfather had moved to then-Croatia due to war and colonization from the Ottoman Empire. Although he and his family had lived there for their entire lives, my father and his family believed their nationality remained within a nation that, at the time, no longer existed – that of Serbian. This was the view of the vast majority in Yugoslavia; each person identified with a nationality tied to regions that no longer existed, and this caused significant conflict which led to individuals, like my father, becoming refugees. These nations existed as a component of identity far after their dissolutions, as the sense of holding nationalities symbolically also held their culture and community. Through this narration of nationhood and nationality, defining exactly who belongs in this limited community actively dismisses others who do not hold the same lineage. This exaggerates differences, villainizing the supposed other.

Consequently, conflicting nationalities were dispersed throughout Yugoslavia, and people put their national interests above the interest of the state (Arendt, 1972, p. 274). In this way, the stability of the state was challenged. The state was created to serve its own political and economic interests, while the people it attempted to homogenize clashed significantly, leading to an unstable country (Arendt, 1973, p. 274). Instability, through my father's eyes, was marked by a lack of safety and an increase in criminal activity. "It became

unsafe to leave the house at night" (Vukicevic, personal communication, 2024), he stated, as there was a possibility of you not returning. People were violently targeted solely due to ethnic divisions, illustrating the deceiving nature of the 'Yugoslavian nationality'.

My father fled in 1991, at only nineteen years old, alone. When I asked him if he would have moved had he not been persecuted, he shook his head. Life in the so-called "gap," as my father puts it, between the end of communism and the start of the war was one brimming with freedom (particularly in terms of movement), of safety, of accessible culture, and of community. He moved because of the nationalistic tensions and the civil war.

Both the Serbians and Croatians defined themself in line with their past nationalities; each side was obsessed with their self-perceptions and fought for this imagined political community they once belonged to (MacDonald, 2002, p. 124). Essentially, Yugoslavia failed to create a national identity that would have allowed for peaceful coexistence of a mixed population, and this fostered migratory flows – some voluntary, some forced, like my father. Arendt (1973, p. 268) stresses these tensions, claiming it was not just the Serbians versus the Croatians and vice versa, but rather, it was nationalities versus the state. These deleterious nationalities held by older generations proved to be the most important factor in determining one's trajectory. My father's partner at the time, a Croatian woman, remained with her own ethnic group, while my father fled with his, putting an unforgiving end

to their relationship – this, unfortunately, was not an uncommon occurrence.

The Nation as Limited: Experiences as a Refugee

The nation is inherently limited (Anderson, 2006, p. 6), meaning it is defined by boundaries. We see the relevance of borders not just in their material sense, but as a theoretical entity that remains in one's mind after the boundaries have changed. Borders don't just signify our physical belonging to a particular nation, but also shape our perception of the world (Khosravi, 2007, p. 332) – we define who we are by what we are not, meaning our understanding of ourselves is influenced significantly by where a nation's boundaries lie.

This is representative of a struggle with migrant classifications, particularly ones resulting from failed nation-states – how can we classify the type of migrants that are crossing borders, and what borders are they crossing? To this question, Bianchini (2017, p. 81) brings in stateless persons, those who have lost the protection of their government and don't belong to a single 'nationality'. My father was lucky in this sense, unlike his friends who fled to Western Europe for refuge. They struggled significantly with defining themselves in ways their new states would accept and understand, as the majority of the world saw ex-Yugoslavian countries as tumultuous, resulting in scrutinized claims of nationality. A relative, for example, fled to Germany and faced significant obstacles in proving his nationality. My father, however, fled to Belgrade, Serbia, where he wasn't expected to 'prove' his nationality.

To broaden the perspective on the migration that resulted from the division of Yugoslavia, I introduce Betts' (2010) concept of the survival migrant. Survival migrants are defined as persons who face an existential threat to which they have no domestic remedy; importantly, all refugees are survival migrants but not all survival migrants are refugees (Betts, 2010, p. 362). The existential threats include not just a threat to life, but also to the core elements of dignity such as liberty, security, and subsistence (Betts, 2010, p. 365). Because Yugoslavia created its boundaries overlooking ethnic divisions, many survival migrants within various ethnicities arose and left to neighbouring countries and those in Western Europe for refuge. My father, again, was one of the lucky ones – his plight was immediately recognized and got refugee status.

The Survival Migrant: Loss of a Life

Arendt (1973, p. 293) claims that the first loss a migrant experiences is the loss of a home, explained as the loss of the "social texture into which they were born" and the place they'd established as their own in the world. Expanding on this premise, the loss of a home inevitably entails a fragmentation of one's identity. Home is not solely the physical existence of a dwelling, but also the personification of belonging and acceptance – the profound loss, then, is also in the individual's sense of self, security, and belonging. These losses challenge old perceptions of identity as the individual navigates a foreign playing field, leaving the survival migrant disoriented in a landscape of morphing, disappearing,

and limiting borders. This is mirrored in my father's recollection of his journey and his emphasis on the losses he faced. Since leaving, my father has not spoken to anybody he knew from Croatia again. All of the social networks my father had built of friends and family were erased when he crossed the border, and to this day he's never reconnected with anybody – if they're even still alive. This was the hardest part for him, he stresses; he says he "[lost] a life" (Vukicevic, personal communication, 2024).

I want to further highlight the importance of social networks and safety nets that help facilitate migration, which give the refugees significant security and confidence (Khosravi, 2007, p. 329). These social safety nets were critical in my father's migration. He completed part of his journey by train, where he was met by his Croatian friends who drove him secretly across the border to Bosnia. He was then met by family that helped him get to Belgrade where he applied for a refugee card. There he met his brother, who had left before him, and his parents later followed the same route. The states' borders are manifestations of the sovereign and surveillance, personifying the differences between the states they divide. The migrant thus embarks on a treacherous journey in hopes of not being recognized by the state.

The Nation as Sovereign: During and Post-Yugoslavia Migrations

The nation-state transforms the legal landscape – the supremacy of its will becomes universally accepted (Arendt, 1973, p. 275). Essentially, the state defines itself and the laws and rights follow this perpetuation of

identity. The law is on the side of those who support the goals of the nation-state – only nationals are to be citizens, and if one isn't, they are completely "assimilated and divorced from their origin" (Arendt, 1973, p. 275). Yet, in the creation of Yugoslavia, the lack of a common nationality blurred the boundaries between nationals and foreigners. Thus, the legal institutions disintegrated quickly, leading to the collapse of the nation (Arendt, 1973, p. 275).

Defining Oneself: Journey of Documentation in Face of State Sovereignty

The migrant in this case can be described as an actor, as a performer that must prove to the state their nationality, as their identity is valid only if confirmed by the state, shaping mobility and rights. For example, there was a distinction between "Krajina Serbs" and "Serbian Serbs," which demonstrates that, although both are ethnically considered 'Serbian,' one is considered superior To claim the rights of a "Serbian Serb," one must prove this lineage (MacDonald, 2002, p. 123), or risk becoming rightless.

Upon arriving in Serbia, my father had nothing – all of his documents were either lost or had been left behind with his past and identity in Croatia. Once he received his refugee card, however, he was able to access basic rights, including the right to continue his education. This documentation only went so far, though, and he – along with other refugees – was met with a choice following the termination of the war: become a citizen, or go back to the country they had come from. This is illustrative of Arendt's

(1973, p. 275) notion that those who possess a different nationality than the one the state has declared their own were met with laws of exception (ex. refugee card) until they were made to choose between leaving or naturalizing. For my father, going back to Croatia was not an option – not only did he have a new intimate social circle in Serbia that he did not want to abandon, but his home in Croatia had been robbed and entirely destroyed throughout the war; there was nothing to go back to.

These two choices – naturalizing or returning – pose several problems, the first being the question of where one is to go back to. Although some refugees, from countries such as Albania, Bosnia, and Croatia, took the journey to return to their homes, for some (especially stateless persons) this is exceedingly difficult. Here again, the migrant must prove themself to the sovereignty of the state. Even if the migrant recognizes their home state and returns, they must then enter a judicial dance of proving themself as belonging to said state. My father chose to become a naturalized citizen of Serbia, and was thus granted legal documents that assured his access to the rights offered by citizenship.

After living in Serbia for 10 years, meeting my mother, and starting a family there, my family made the decision to leave Serbia mainly for better opportunities; they decided to apply to migrate to Canada. My father expressed frustration at all the papers he needed to supply – the papers from Serbia weren't enough and he had to provide documentation from his life in Croatia before he became a refugee. "It was a country I hadn't gone back to since the war" (Vukicevic, personal communication, 2024) he protested, but he had to cross the border once again and attempt to get copies of all his required documents. The state asserts its power in an international playing field, constraining mobility through restrictive and sometimes intrusive documentation requirements. The exclusivity of the state creates the need to prove oneself as worthy of becoming a resident within the state. Thus, we see the lasting effects of state formation, power, and control, and how their boundaries influence national identity. Ultimately, it demonstrates how states restrict or facilitate mobilities of its residents and of migrants.

Currently, my father holds a Canadian passport and a Serbian one, a metaphor for scattered identities. He claims his life here has significantly improved; his prospects for employment are more just and there is political safety and stability. Interestingly, however, the urge to return 'home' has never left. Once I asked him exactly what he meant by this – by 'home' – since his life was lived in a tumultuous and changing context. He answered with Serbia. The phenomenon of "leaving [home] but staying there" (Espiritu, 2003, p. 90) describes the symbolic nature of the 'home' and its physical manifestations within the nation while showing its flexible nature of being taken abroad to wherever the migrant decides to reside.

Conclusion

This paper details the influential role of the state in shaping the conditions that drive individuals to become migrants, all while simultaneously imposing limitations on the mobility of

its own citizens. The state exercises its authority by constructing a 'national identity' – a practice that has historically failed in Yugoslavia – leading to the drawing and redrawing of borders. Through my father's journey from refugee to his subsequent residence in Canada, we witness his resilience in navigating the restrictive measures imposed by various nation-states. Currently, he reflects on the first two decades of his life as though they are captured in a mental scrapbook, where people and connections exist as mere narratives. This underscores the state's formidable ability to shape migratory patterns, significantly altering the course of individuals' lives.

My father's story demonstrates the complexities of identity formation and its intersection with geopolitical realities, showcasing that one's identity is constituted by various intertwined fragments (Wodak et al, 2012, p. 16). The conflicting national narratives craft a turbulent landscape where the individual has to reassess and reformulate their identity, just as my father did. Ultimately, the state exerts its power by controlling mobilities and influencing the migrant's sense of self and belonging, illustrating the interplay between state authority and personal identity.

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Green Extractivism, Lithium Mining and Water Management in Chile

By Olwyn Matthews

Through the lens of green extractivism and colonial hydrology, this paper will evaluate the case of lithium mining in Chile and its implications on local water management. Neoliberal political and economic imperatives allow for the deregulation of the environment in support of market rule. This involves the commodification of natural resources, turning away from traditional knowledge systems, in order to create and maintain a capitalist system to support extractivist processes. Constructing the conception of lithium brine to be viewed separately from freshwater resources enforces neoliberal imperatives that discredit 'brine' as part of an interconnected ecosystem, but instead as a commodity to be used in the lithium extraction process. The colonial history of Chile and its governance structures will be examined in regard to its influence on lithium mining and the impacts on water management. Alongside the rise of lithium extraction in Chile is the increasing recognition of Indigenous governance. Indigenous activism and the integration of traditional knowledge in lithium mining processes can evolve to more sustainable practices for affected residents and the ecosystem.

Introduction

The production and utilisation of the mineral lithium is deemed by the Global North to be a step towards "green" energy and technologies for a more sustainable future, however lithium mining activities create harmful, adverse effects to local ecosystems and communities. Areas such as the Lithium Triangle, a South American region rich in lithium brine, are central to the supply of mineral markets (Petavratzi et al., 2022). Due to a growing demand by states in support of the transition to renewable energy, the extraction of lithium minerals is positioned as required, thus showcasing extractivist practices for a "green" purpose. Foundational ideas in colonial hydrology are also present in green extractivism. Colonial hydrology illustrates the incorporation of neoliberal and capitalist principles into the hydrological landscape, with the purpose of deconstructing traditional knowledge and thus traditional governance of water spaces (D'Souza, 2002). Green extractivism reproduces structural inequalities through the exploitation of mineral rich areas, thus exacerbating inequalities on human and non-human life forms (Jerez et al., 2021). This paper will evaluate how lithium extraction, driven by ideas of colonial hydrology and neoliberal economic and political imperatives, impacts water management in Chile. In the context of the Lithium Triangle the colonial history of Chile will be addressed, as well as regulations that are necessary to understand the drive of neoliberalism in its water management policies. This includes a consideration of the Chilean government's exclusive mining concessions for select corporations. This is a critical area of study, as the neoliberal agenda is implemented in the international sphere to maintain sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Petavratzi et al., 2022).

Obtaining the lithium mineral is significant in powering electro-mobility, a trend that incites hope for the reduction in greenhouse-gases (Dorn and Gundermann, 2022). With SDGs' reliance on lithium mining, its adverse effects must be addressed to sustain this mineral extraction.

This paper will also consider how dominant perspectives of water management exert colonial and neoliberal ideas that water is managed as a commodity. Through this singular lens it ignores the multiple dimensions through which water can be understood, thus disregarding issues such as the human rights around water, its overexploitation, impact on biodiversity and Indigenous land and water rights. The dominance of neoliberal perspectives of water management is prevalent in the legal definition of 'brine', which does not acknowledge brine as a freshwater resource (Jerez et al., 2021). This manipulated conception allows corporations to ignore brine as a part of an interconnected ecosystem and thus neglect the negative externalities that may arise, such as depleting water resources and degrading biodiversity (Fernández & Alba, 2023). These shifts in the ecosystem can harm communities that are dependent on the surrounding landscape. For example, Indigenous Peoples have lived in the Salar de Atacama for thousands of years, relying on pastoralism and agriculture for their economic livelihoods. This comes under strain as negative externalities from lithium mining activities create a water-stressed region. The response of Indigenous activism in affected communities is necessary to investigate, including the role that Indigenous communities have in future practices of lithium extraction.

The influence of neoliberalism in lithium mining has shaped this "green extraction" method to take on a certain form of water management. The dominant understandings of water management dictate how water is treated in lithium extraction, and therefore how the various impacts on humans and non-humans are addressed.

Colonial Hydrology and Neoliberalism

The concept of colonial hydrology captures the imperial attempt to merge the hydrological environment with neoliberal economic and political imperatives of rule, so as to implement a capitalist framework in a region (D'Souza, 2002). D'Souza constructs this idea in the context of colonial hydrological control in India. The economic and political imperatives impacting India's water landscape and systems support the Imperial state and take away control from local communities. These processes attempt to replace traditional knowledge with colonial conceptualizations of water as a commodity and as a means of furthering the extractive imperial agenda. This is maintained as the commodification of waterways deconstructs traditional knowledge, transforming the hydrological environment into a space that supports extraction methods. The control over waterways display the social and physical imposition of colonial rule, harming landscapes that are integral to local and traditional ways of life (D'Souza, 2002).

Neoliberalism, in terms of water management, can be understood as the "politically guided intensification of market rule in the public realm" (Ciplet & Roberts, 2017, p.149). This idea can also be defined as a "narrow set of economic policies" drawn by domestic and international elites, including deregulation of environmental protection, specifically water regulation (Riofrancos, 2020, p.38). Policies and commitments to the SDG 12, which call for a transition to responsible consumption and production, promote the exploitation of lithium minerals as an input to produce renewable technologies (Petavratzi et al., 2022). However, these projects framed under commitments to renewable energy reproduce colonial extractivist and hydrology frameworks. Raw materials in the Lithium Triangle are deemed valuable in alignment with the SDG 12's commitment to renewable energy and work to replace traditional knowledge and water frameworks with understandings that support this neoliberal agenda. Through analyzing the case study of lithium extraction in Chile's salt flat ecosystems, it will be shown that neoliberal objectives continue to drive extraction processes.

The Lithium Triangle

Lithium extraction is becoming increasingly relevant and sought after in the Lithium Triangle, under global decarbonisation agendas. This vast area houses lithium brine, spanning across three states in South America: Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile (see Figure 1) (Petavratzi et al., 2022). The lithium mineral deposits in salt flats across this region are integral to support SDGs, by enabling battery production for electric vehicles. According to the International Energy Agency, the demand for the lithium mineral is expected to rise by over 40 times in the Sustainable Development Scenario by 2040 compared to 2020 levels, as states committed to the SDG 12 move to tackle clean energy development (2022).

Despite the emphasis on sustainable practices, the lithium brine evaporation process involves the overexploitation of salar (small lagoons) systems which raises concerns of wetland degradation, further harming local communities already experiencing water scarcity and insecurity (Jerez et al., 2021). Lithium brines are pumped to the surface into ponds where 95% of the water evaporates over a 14-month production cycle (Fernández & Alba, 2023). The evaporation from this production process, in turn, contributes to "ecological exhaustion" of the region (Blair et al., 2023, p.8). This continued exploitation can result in the degradation of these wetland landscapes, posing a significant threat to wildlife and vulnerable species.

The Lithium Triangle is crucial to study as it holds more than 50% of the world's lithium mineral resources, the majority of which are within brine (Dorn & Gundermann, 2022). This region has and will continue to see a large amount

Figure 1

Triángulo del litio
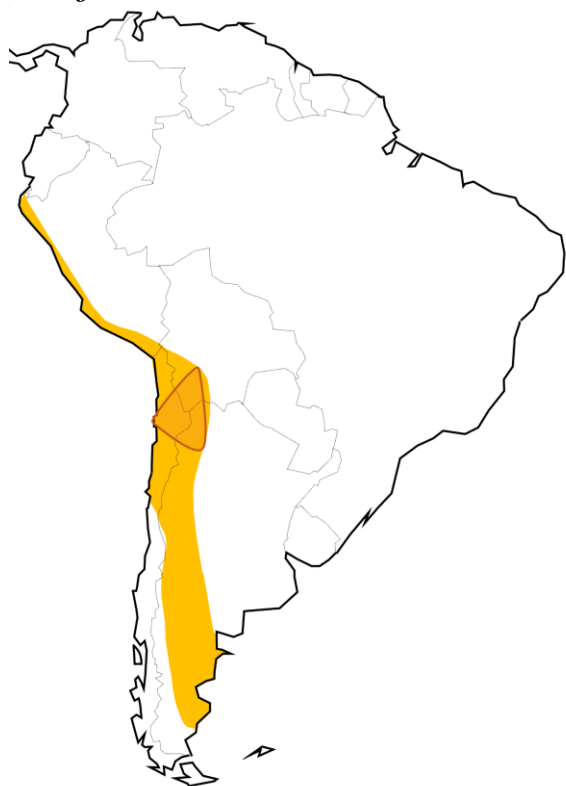
Note. From Mamayuco [Map], 2020, Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=97363295) CC BY-SA 4.0.

of water and land exploitation, and as the Global North applauds the sustainable direction to clean energy technologies, it is necessary to address the impacts of "green" exploitation on the region (Jerez et al., 2021). Faced with the same overwhelming challenge of rapidly increasing global demand to support a transition to clean energy, each nation-state consists of different governance strategies, legal systems and Indigenous community responses to the management of water and lithium mining. In the following sections, lithium extraction and the impact on water management will be evaluated more closely to view how neoliberalism and colonial hydrology determine knowledge of water management in local communities.

Chile and Lithium Mining

The reliance on, and promotion of, neo-extractivist project developments in the state of Chile can be characterized by a turn to neoliberal strategies implemented through the Pinochet regime (Klubock, 2021). Over the past two centuries, Chile has witnessed many structural political transformations. Since gaining independence from Spain in 1818, Chile experienced a series of authoritarian regimes, a turn to democracy in the mid-20th century, and a dictatorship under the Pinochet regime from 1973 to 1990 (O'Faircheallaigh, 2023). During the Spanish colonial era and in the 20th century, occupying powers gained control over natural resources, including through copper mining in Chile. The mining of copper by US companies in the 20th century, for example, shows Chile's participation in the international neoliberal framework, as the government gave precedence to profit-driven mining activities (Calderón-Seguel & Prieto, 2023). Pinochet's government identified lithium as a strategic resource, and the mineral was therefore reserved for the state as a national resource. Since the Law Decree 2886 in 1979, lithium mining has been reserved for use by the state and companies that previously held lithium mining concessions (Dorn & Gundermann, 2022). Regulations on lithium mining and salt flats are present in the Constitution of 1980 and the 1983 Mining Code (Fernández & Alba, 2023). The privatization and commodification of water and land resources in Chile reflects the neoliberal perspectives on

resource extraction and allocation. This move towards the deregulation of the sector attracted nine out of twenty-five of the biggest investments in mining in Chile from the period in 1990 to 2001 (O'Faircheallaigh, 2023). Such investment in the region demonstrates the underlying neoliberal economic and political imperatives that exist in water and mineral resource allocation in the mining industry.

The Chilean Water Code reflects the interests of political and economic elites, allowing for the direction of water to natural resource industries (Hernández & Barra, 2022). This code displays the "market perspective" guiding water governance systems (Quevedo et al., 2022). There are many concerns regarding this document, as its creation disregarded the perspectives of hydrologists, leaving little room to integrate water resources management (Hernández & Barra, 2022). The water code does not explicitly define mineralized-groundwater brines as waters, for example (Fernández and Alba, 2023). Quotas for brine extraction are obtained through the Environmental Impact Evaluation System (SEIA), and the licences are distributed based on the impacts determined by mining companies' assessments (Fernández & Alba, 2023).

Neoliberal imperatives are prevalent in the definition of 'brine' and its use to promote economic benefits whilst neglecting to acknowledge the interconnectedness of the salt flats as a water-based ecosystem. Companies are allowed to extract from salt flats with little knowledge on the impacts that this extraction and evaporation process has on the surrounding landscape. While freshwater resources are governed under the Chilean Water Code of 1981, the extraction of brines is managed separately due to its unsuitability for human consumption (Fernández & Alba, 2023). The different treatments of freshwater resources and brine allow for mining companies to make the legal argument that since the extracted brines are not considered a freshwater resource, mining companies therefore are not contributing to any water consumption in a water-scarce ecosystem. Jerez et al. find that by regarding brine as a mining resource rather than an interconnected part of the broader water system, mining companies are able to neglect the hydrosocial impacts of lithium brine exploitation, and the changes to the water source are left invisible (2021). For example, in 1994, Sociedad Química y Minera de Chile S.A. (SQM) used the definition of brine to separate impacts on brine sources and freshwater sources. This enabled them to argue that, since their activities do not drastically impact local water resources, they are also not related to any adverse impacts on biodiversity and Indigenous communities in the region (Fernández & Alba, 2023). This manipulation of the definition of brine treats it as a separate commodity to be extracted from the land and does not recognize it as an integral part of a complex ecosystem of salt flats.

Current frameworks of water and mining rights and regulations sustain neoliberal systems, giving precedence to ideals and concepts of separate water landscapes that support economic benefits to the elite over local frameworks. The separation of brine

from freshwater further demonstrates the prioritization of neoliberal economic and political paradigm, at the expense of traditional understandings which recognize ecosystems as interconnected. The sustained lack of attention to these relationships will only exacerbate environmental and social impacts in the region.

In water-stressed regions such as the Salar de Atacama, communities depend on aquifers, salars and springs as water sources for cultural and economic purposes (O'Faircheallaigh, 2023). Indigenous Peoples in the Salar de Atacama have lived and existed within the ecosystem for at least 6,000 years, economically relying on pastoralism and agriculture with dependence on these water and irrigation systems (O'Faircheallaigh, 2023). The existence and increased production of lithium in this salar can be viewed as a concern to Indigenous Peoples as a result of neoliberal imperatives. As a highly intensive extraction zone, mining operations place continuous pressure on the already limited water sources in the region (Babidge et al., 2019). This experience and awareness of the landscape displays the importance of considering how various actions interact and create cumulative effects on the ecosystem. The prioritization of water resource commodification and viewing lithium brine as separate from the environment, ready to extract for 'green' technologies, will continue to worsen ecological exploitation and exhaustion. In response to these concerns, ideas such as 'riverhood' can be useful in considering water spaces as an interconnected, continuous, unified being. In response to transforming river systems in face of domestication and commodification, for example, 'riverhood' entails the unification of water justice movements and water spaces as "socio-natural entities" (Boelens et al., 2023, p.1127). This further exemplifies the need to include traditional knowledge systems while also showing how these perceptions are similar to that of colonial hydrology, enforcing set understandings to further a particular capitalist, neoliberal agenda at the expense of traditional ideals and frameworks.

Indigenous Activism and Lithium Mining

The global push for lithium extraction in the Lithium Triangle coincides with Indigenous communities' continued pursuit to retain sovereignty over their traditional territories. In the 1800's, Indigenous territories were seized, and land rights of Indigenous communities were not recognized by the colonial settler state (Dorn & Gundermann, 2022). Throughout the Pinochet regime, many Indigenous leaders and community members were imprisoned and murdered as the government set out to devastate Indigenous communities (O'Faircheallaigh & Babidge, 2023). With the eradication of this regime, agreements were made with Indigenous communities in the 1990s to recognize their sovereignty and in 1993, Chile began the process of acknowledgement with the Indigenous Act No. 19.253 (O'Faircheallaigh & Babidge, 2023). In 2008, Chile ratified the International Labor Organization Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, giving hope

to Indigenous communities that the government would amplify Indigenous voices in the assessment and participation process of mining development projects (O'Faircheallaigh & Babidge, 2023). However, this was mostly performative, as although Indigenous jurisdiction was recognized, this came secondary to the protection of mining companies' private property claims, especially for areas that supported "national development interests" (Gentes & Policzer, 2022, p.6). This national interest is shaped by private sector values, maintaining the conception that resources are commodities to be used in alignment with neoliberal imperatives (Gentes & Policzer, 2022). The overlapping legal codes and norms, the performative implementation of Indigenous sovereignty and a system of privatized water rights create an uncertain framework for communities to navigate water claims.

Indigenous activism in the face of lithium extractivism acts in opposition to neoliberal conceptions of water management. This resistance can be influenced by concepts driven by Indigenous traditional knowledge, such as the prioritization of Indigenous self-determination and a shift in focus towards the dismantling of colonial frameworks that currently dominate water management practices (Seefeldt, 2022). With the recognition of land rights, Indigenous community members find that the environmental impact assessment system is biased, as mining companies choose to neglect adverse effects through their understanding of brine not as water, but as a mining

resource. Furthermore, a representative of the Environmental Unit of the Council of Atacama Peoples raised concerns that the online platforms to evaluate the ecological and social impacts in the region were "insufficient" (Seefeldt, 2022, p.347). In the face of these discrepancies, the privatization of water, and ecological exhaustion from drought, it is crucial to address the benefits of traditional knowledge in understanding the impacts to the ecosystem. The Plurinational Observatory of Andean Salt Flats (OPSAL) works to do this, amplifying Indigenous activists' messages and calls to protest against current lithium mining practices (Seefeldt, 2022). It is important to note that calls against extractivist processes are not explicitly opposed to these activities, but instead argue that decision-makers should prioritize the participation of Indigenous Peoples to enable traditional knowledge to create more sustainable practices for the ecosystem (Riofrancos, 2020).

Negotiated agreements in Chile are made between Indigenous communities and extractive industries. These agreements aim to negotiate the contract of development within Indigenous jurisdictions and to negotiate any mutual economic benefit that may arise from these project developments (O'Faircheallaigh & Babidge, 2023). Despite criticisms that these agreements may create divisions within Indigenous communities (Seefeldt, 2022), it cannot be ignored that they simultaneously allow the involvement of said communities in the decision-making processes of development projects. This means more Indigenous control over the

lithium mining extraction that occurs in their territories (O'Faircheallaigh & Babidge, 2023). Further, this allows for the integration of traditional knowledge into social and environmental governance, the very systems from which extractive industries and their harms originated (O'Faircheallaigh & Babidge, 2023). Negotiated agreements can, therefore, provide an option for Indigenous Peoples to manage the impacts of neoliberal economic and political imperatives by using this system to their advantage.

Conclusions

The case study of lithium mining in Chile can help to understand how key ideas of colonial hydrology and neoliberal economic and political priorities shape water management strategies. Dominant neoliberal perspectives in extractivist industries control the understanding of water and minerals as separate from the ecosystems in which they exist, allowing for the continued exploitation of natural resources. This is clear in Chile, as regulations regarding lithium brine allow for the evaporation and extraction of brine while neglecting the adverse impacts this has on the ecosystem. The manipulated definition of brine does not provide any recognition of it as part of an interconnected ecosystem and exemplifies the prioritization of neoliberal economic and political imperatives over traditional ideals. Through the examination of the government frameworks over time in Chile, this paper has demonstrated that colonial and neoliberal values motivate the government to prioritize economic benefits of lithium mining industries over the rights of Indigenous community members. Despite this, accompanying the rise in lithium mining practices, there has been a wave of Indigenous activism to ensure the participation of community members, incorporating traditional knowledge and community interests in project developments. This Indigenous activism can be understood as an opposing force to underlying colonial and neoliberal values currently present in the extractivist industry.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

This author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Mother-led Coalitions and Domestic Activism:
The Effectiveness of Motherhood in Social Organization Through Frameworks of Safety, Security, and Reclamation

By Regina Hipolito

Mobilizing on the basis of their maternal responsibilities, both to their families and by extension to society, mother-led coalitions have created significant social changes worldwide. Despite these transformations, mothers, motherhood, and mothers as political actors too often remain confined to discussions of the private. For geographers, this is a spatial limitation that constrains understanding of social roles and domesticity. In this essay, I explore different coalitions spearheaded by mothers, such as security moms and Mothers Reclaiming Our Children, in order to analyze the notion of motherhood and its social impacts. I argue that motherhood — as a social movement — is framed within the politics of vulnerability and security/safety and is a site where the public and the private interact and intersect in polarizing, but also materially effective ways. I turn to Foucault's biopolitics and the concept of biopower to examine how security moms shape electoral politics and act as good citizens and caretakers of the nation. I also study how affective-discursive practices of collectivizing an experience can form organizations such as Mothers Reclaiming Our Children. I conclude by investigating how these social forces operate and fit into the neoliberal city. Ultimately, I hope to incite discussion about how these universalized responsibilities of motherhood still pave the way for dialectical worldviews and approaches to activism.

> "If it takes a village to raise a child, it certainly takes a movement to undo an occupation."
>
>   - Ruth Wilson Gilmore, in Mothers Reclaiming Our Children p. 238

The city is not made for women — as is the case with most social spaces. Though the city does pose opportunities for advancement, it is still spatially organized under western, colonial hierarchies. According to Kern (2019, p. 6) in *Feminist City*, "women still experience the city through a set of barriers... that shape their daily lives in ways that are deeply... gendered... The city has been set up to support and facilitate the traditional gender roles of men and with men's experiences as the "norm"... This is what I mean by the 'city of men'." However, mothers have learned to operate in space in unique ways without entirely disrupting their assigned social obligations in the "private". It is no doubt that mother-led coalitions and movements have changed the sociospatial organization of the public realm. Like the city, motherhood, "as a conceptual object, presents a number of contradictions... it is both constraining and liberating, constructed through emotional experiences and imposed structural forces" (Robertson, 2007, p. 539). In this essay, I explore the notion of motherhood as a force of social mobilization. Through their designated roles in the household (private) and in fostering the family to produce participating political bodies for the public, mothers are, to some extent,

allowed to pervade and cross the boundaries of the private/public. This is not to say that women as mothers are essentially bound to domesticity, rather they are able to utilize "affective-discursive" practices[9] of maternal responsibilities to enter the political space, transcend the domestic realm, and gain autonomy.

I argue that, in spite of their association with the private, the reproductive role of mothers gives them input into who is able to inhabit the spatial domains of the public and the nation. I also compare two polarizing mother-led delegations/movements: the conservative "security mom" and the predominantly working-class and racialized Mothers Reclaiming our Children (ROC). Finally, I examine this activism in relation to the rights of mothers in the city, their place and their "value" within a neoliberal framework.

My aim is not to further institute these dichotomies; however, it is important to recognize how these spatial differences between the public and the private realm reinforce understandings of social responsibilities. Our popular understanding of the public and private are predominantly framed within a universalized worldview that supports the rising middle-class and a western conception of gender and space. According to Ariés (as quoted in Madanipour, 2003, p. 68), the boundaries between "professional and private life" were essentially non-existent, the home acting as a "meeting

place for a range of activities", such as cooking, cleaning, and even conducting businesses. Over time, with changes to education and social obligations, the family became a site of sentimentality instead of a "moral and social reality", where civility and sociability were taught in the intimacy of the home, developing into what we now know as the "private" realm (p. 70). Therefore, the modern family, built on the model middle-class nuclear family dynamic, pioneered a process of societal change where the public sphere simultaneously represented labour and the "lower-class". The separation of the private and the public has therefore been integral to the development and normalization of patriarchal, western ideologies, and supports the dualistic premise of women belonging in the private sphere of "nature, nurture, and the non-rational," while men belonged in the "rational, independent, self-directed, autonomous" sphere of the public (Baker, 1999, p. 3).

Public and Private

The notion that the public and private spheres are entirely separate has been largely contested. It is worth noting that the division of the public and private were not a reality for many racialized, working-class groups, but I delve into this concept to highlight how it continues to be powerful in how it shapes the way we socio spatially organize our realities — especially in tangent with mother-led coalitions. With the rise of neoliberalism, the public and the private spheres are constantly interacting with each other

[9] The relationship between affect, or the emotion, in discourse or meaning-making (Wetherell, 2012).

with the mother, I argue, as its boundary. As caretakers of the home, mothers embody the affective-discursive practice of politicizing the family. Their concern for the protection of the future and their children enables them to participate within the affairs of the public. Distrust in the public allows these women to necessitate private interference to enact change. Successful mother-led coalitions, such as the "Militant Mothers of Raymur Overpass"[10] in Vancouver, have utilized their "[frustration] and fear for their children's lives" (Reimer, quoted in Larsen 2020) to defy authority and rally for the creation of an overpass bridge for their children's safety. Here, we see how these women embody their roles as mothers, and although they are typically associated with the private, their responsibilities and socially constructed role of safety allow them to demand changes in the public sphere. I will elaborate on the methods to which these politicizations are enacted by two mother-led coalitions/groups: security moms and the Mothers ROC. Although security moms are not necessarily a cohesive public group, they are important to consider when looking at the political power of mothers in electoral politics. While these two groups differ in their advocacies, both politicize the vulnerability of familial relationships and leverage their responsibilities for life and security to achieve their goals.

Security moms

In exploring the security of life, I pose the question of what it means to have power over life. Grewal's "'Security moms' in the twenty-first century U.S.A." (2012) looks at how the militant mother-subject of "security moms" embody Foucault's idea of biopolitics and their inward roles in domestic care to enact political influence. "Security moms" are not a tangible mother-led organization, but instead a "female citizen-subject" concerned with the safety and preservation of the US nation-state from "non-citizen subjects — such as the undocumented immigrant, the racialized Other, the foreign terrorist" (O'Tuathail, quoted in Grewal, 2012, p. 201). For Michelle Malkin, a conservative commentator and self-proclaimed security mom, "nothing matters more to me right now than the safety of my home and the survival of my homeland... I am a citizen of the United States not the United Nations" (Malkin, quoted in Grewal, 2012, 196). Malkin has extended the spatial dimensions of the private to the nation (the USA, the homeland), where her children — who are national citizens of the US — operate in their daily lives. By including the nation as part of her domestic responsibilities, she is justified in managing the public realm against these external forces which she deems a threat. Foucault's biopolitics is enacted through motherhood in the:

> regulation... about which groups [Malkin believes] can be let die, where the "let die" and the "make die" cannot be distinguished, or where "making live" or "denying life" merge... the security mom reveals the interaction between

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[10]A group of lower-middle class mothers in Vancouver protesting the development of a train track that barred their children from safely going to school, and mobilized for the creation of an overpass bridge (Larsen, in CBC news, 2020).

sovereign power, biopower and biopolitics [by] making the mother into both the subject and the agent of security, motherhood becomes governmentalized. (p. 201)

By embodying motherhood in the political arena, Malkin embodies a polarizing positionality involving distrust in state security, while also cooperating with the state to become "both the subject and agent of security" (p. 198). She appeals to the conservative public's concerns about security and appears "empowering" under the guise of feminism. Sarah Palin, a Republican politician, expressed the "unique role that motherhood plays in helping women understand national and international economic principles" through kitchen table politics, which are everyday concerns permeating into the political realm. In running the government "like homes are run" (Atal, as seen in Scholwater, 2012, p. 39), Palin employs her reproductive biopower as a mother to "financialize the family", supporting the removal of social welfare programs (biopower) in favour of "white, middle-class, heterosexual nuclear families" who "properly manage their finances" (Scholwater, 2012, p. 52).

It is important to note that this security, and the fluidity of the public-private in this framework, is not extended to the mother. Biopower in the form of the mother-subject further subjugates women into neoliberal patriarchal paradigms that support their suppression and determine their value based on what they can contribute socioeconomically under the guise of empowerment. Women's admission into the public is still highly governed by men. Regardless of the effectiveness of these organizing efforts, women are still limited to "features that bound them to the private sphere" (Baker, 1999, p. 9), such as their domestic tasks and activities. In framing the violence of the family on external threats and appealing to state legislature on immigration, domestic violence is dismissed by the nation-state and women still enter the public as "embodied individuals"[11] where they are at risk of sexual harassment and are not taken as seriously as their male counterparts. Therefore, as the mother leans into their socially constructed control of domestic affairs and pervades the public in the name of protecting the future, they only cycle back into their role within the confines of the private.

Mothers Reclaiming Our Children

I want to shift the dialogue into how this shared maternal responsibility resonates through socially constructed hierarchies of identity and class and how it is enacted through an intersectional lens. As previously mentioned, mothers' involvement in state security benefits a specific criteria that caters to a traditional, patriarchal, and neoliberal representation of middle-class family values, but what about the mother-led coalitions who choose to rally against these systems while employing affective-discursive practices of care into their activism? Working mothers are adaptive, moving fluidly between their domestic

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[11] I interpret Baker's "embodied individuals" here as women entering the space where the public still views them the way they perceive the private.

identities and their need to assert themselves through labour into public space, especially Black working-class women who "could not echo, on behalf of their sisters, the rhetoric of home and dependency espoused by white women reformers" (Gordon and Giddings, as seen in Gilmore, 2007, p. 188). Unlike security moms, who need not mobilize to convey their concerns, marginalized women are visibilized through their "regular passage through public space" (p. 190). These women are constantly "taming space", a term coined by Leslie Robertson (2007) to describe the way unhoused women actively resist, control, or accommodate these spatial regimes through their work in domesticity but also their work in the public, urban spaces of mobilization.

Mothers Reclaiming Our Children (Mothers ROC), a group of predominantly BIPOC working-class mothers, was founded by Barbara Meredith and Francie Arbol in response to the "intensity with which the state was locking their children, of all ages, into the criminal justice system" (Gilmore, 2007, p. 181). It was sparked by the murder of George Noyes, a former gang member, by a police officer. His death also led to the 1992 LA gang truce, an agreed ceasefire between rival LA gangs against police brutality. Mothers ROC has "tamed space" through the use of emotion to "challenge, disrupt, and reconfigure… [dominant] structures" (Pritzker, 2020, p. 251) of a hostile state that is intent on incarcerating their children (Gilmore, 2007, p. 184). Pritzker refers to Butler (2016) when she explores the importance of vulnerability in political agency, reframing vulnerability not as "weakness", but as potential grounds for "collective political action" (Pritzer, p. 242). Women employed emotion and vulnerability to incite the one-day LA gang truce in 1992 to organize a funeral for George Noyes. The men came together not only for the funeral but also in recognition of the "mother's pain at losing a child" (Gilmore, 2007, p. 201). By emanating vulnerability, the Mothers ROC rallied the public by expressing a pain distinct to motherhood, highlighted in their posters: "Mothers suffer a special pain when their children are incarcerated" (Mothers Reclaiming Our Children 1995 Flyer, as seen in Gilmore, 2020 p. 196).

Mothers ROC also incorporated elements of domesticity into their engagement activities: the mothers and members brush and braid each other's hair and teach each other social manners "to the police, to strangers, [and] to each other" (Barbara Meredith, as seen in Gilmore, 2007, p. 198). They stress the importance of "collective mothering", of reclaiming their child starting from the foundations of the home, as they fear their neglect incited their children's passage to incarceration. By projecting the principles of domesticity into activism, Mothers ROC revitalize the meaning of home, not isolated from the public realm but as a site of familial and collective intimacy. Mothers ROC exhibit a version of motherhood not built on division or identification of an Other, such as the security mom's opposition to "illegal aliens", but instead on unity based on the experience of loss. Carcerality severs racial communities, but these everyday domestic practices performed by Mother's ROC are a

political yet intimate response to the government's management of life through carcerality.

Conclusion

Feminists have pointed out some of the ways the public and private realms are fluid, but a certain kind of flexibility between these two spheres is also important for the maintenance of the neoliberal nation-state. For security moms, private intervention under the guise of motherhood allows women to extend their socially assigned powers from the private into "the suburb, the gated community, and the shopping mall" to prevent the "external" threat (Grewal, 2012, p. 204). Within this framework, the state works through mothers to impose power in the private sphere (Grewal, 2012, p.198). Therefore, the mother is valued based on how much they lean into the masculine, militant models of security and their own oppression. Their citizenship is based simultaneously on how they "embody" the private and how they utilize their concern for security to protect these bourgeois, middle-class dichotomies of the public-private. Kitchen table politics both reinforce these public-private boundaries under the guise of public reform, reinforcing the idea that women are bound to private, domestic affairs (Morgan, quoted in Baker, 1999, p. 9). Under neoliberalism, the state values the private sphere as a space "to produce soldiers and patriots" (p. 198) who possess citizenship and are continuously loyal to the nation-state. Mothers are framed as human capital who are rewarded "with the psychological benefit of knowing they raised children who will be successful in the working world"

rather than any wage or financial benefit. (Scholwater, 2012, p. 40). The intimacy of the home allows for "basic patterns of social relations [to be] forged, reproduced and changed" (Madanipour, 2003). In a different manifestation of activism and motherhood, Mothers ROC sought to challenge the state and its systems through "cooperative self-help" (Gilmore, 2007, p. 183) and community solidarity. The mothers' "right" to the city is ultimately dependent on how *well* they lean into their socially assigned function in the "private". Archetypes such as the security mom are recognized in electoral spaces due to their role as caretakers and protectors in the private, while organizations such as Mothers ROC are hyper-visible due to their positionality as racialized, working-class mothers who took to the streets and brought together communities under a collective experience of loss and reclamation.

Ultimately, motherhood and activism is a paradox, dialectically separated along similar lines of care, security, and protection of the future. Hateful and discriminatory politics stem and prosper under the guise of motherhood, but domestic activism by mothers can also unify even the most polarized groups for a common cause, such as the 1992 LA gang truce.

In conducting this analysis, I am not reducing these maternal experiences to a fascinating examination of the mother-subject. The pain, concern, compassion, and worry of the mother for their family is a tangible and *real* experience which needs no inherent, "embodied" experience to be recognized. I do not essentialize the experiences of women to these experiences of

motherhood. Every experience of motherhood is unique, based on situated experiences and intersectional lines, as I have demonstrated throughout this piece. My intention here is not to essentialize women as mothers but rather show how mobilizing motherhood alongside the politics of care and vulnerability is an effective - if complicated - pathway to political participation. "Risking difference" (Baker, 1999) or recognizing these dichotomies of the public and the private and the designated role of female-subjects does not mean we hold these paradigms true. Instead, I acknowledge how the enactment of these paradigms plays out in our social and spatial realities. It is through considering truths that we can aim to achieve a better understanding of the world and obtain real, effective social changes.

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Captured States, Captured Data: Transboundary Mining Pollution and Water Justice in the Kootenay Watershed

By Tova Gaster

The Kootenay River, a tributary of the Columbia River, is the site of one of the largest longstanding transboundary pollution disputes in North America. Since the 1990s, British Columbia's coal mines have released toxic levels of the mineral selenium, which accumulates in Lake Koocanusa reservoir, Montana. On both sides of the border, the Ktunaxa/Kootenai Nation has advocated against development regimes which subordinate their traditional lifeways. Legal scholars have argued that pollution disputes in the Basin reveal flaws in the ability of US-Canada transboundary water governance to respond to environmental injustice. However, there has been less research that critically addresses the power dynamics which inform these regulatory failures. This essay argues that industry capture of both regulatory frameworks and scientific monitoring processes enables a reframing of mining pollution as an isolated technical issue of chemical concentration, rather than the cumulative effects of a century of downstream coal mining and colonial development. Transboundary Indigenous-led governance could propel more just processes of healing from watershed contamination.

Introduction

For the past two decades, residents of the Kootenay River Basin which extends from BC to Montana to Idaho (see Fig.1.) have noticed fewer fish, and those that remain are more frequently deformed (Sexton et al., 2020). According to Jason Louie, chief of Yaqan Nukiy, Lower Kootenay Band, rivers are "the veins that connect all Ktunaxa people" (in Louie & Chung, 2021). Those veins are contaminated with pollution and divided by a colonial border. To Indigenous Peoples on both sides of the border, including the Ktunaxa Nation in BC, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in Montana,

and the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, decimation of fish populations is a blow to food security and cultural identity (Bullock, 2023). Scientists have traced the declining populations of white sturgeon and westslope cutthroat trout — a genetically unique species not found anywhere else — to waste rock contamination from coal mines, owned by Vancouver-based mining company Teck,[12] in BC's Elk Valley (Sexton et al., 2020). Selenium and calcite from waste rock, while harmless at low concentrations, can cause genetic abnormalities, delay reproduction, damage streambed morphology and otherwise harm aquatic organisms (Lemly, 2004; Sexton et al., 2020). In

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[12] In February 2023, Teck announced a split in its operations between coal mining and "transition metals mining," with its coal portfolio siphoned off to shareholders (including Swiss-based transnational mining company Glencore) under a new company called Elk Valley Resources. ([Teck, 2023](#)). 90% of profits of Elk Valley Resources will continue to flow to Teck ([Cruikshank, 2023](#)). I will refer to Teck Cominco, Teck Coal, Teck Resources Ltd., and Elk Valley Resources interchangeably as "Teck" due to their continuous profit from the same mining operations.

Sparwood, BC, selenium concentrations have also accumulated to the point of jeopardizing safe drinking water (Maldonado, 2023).
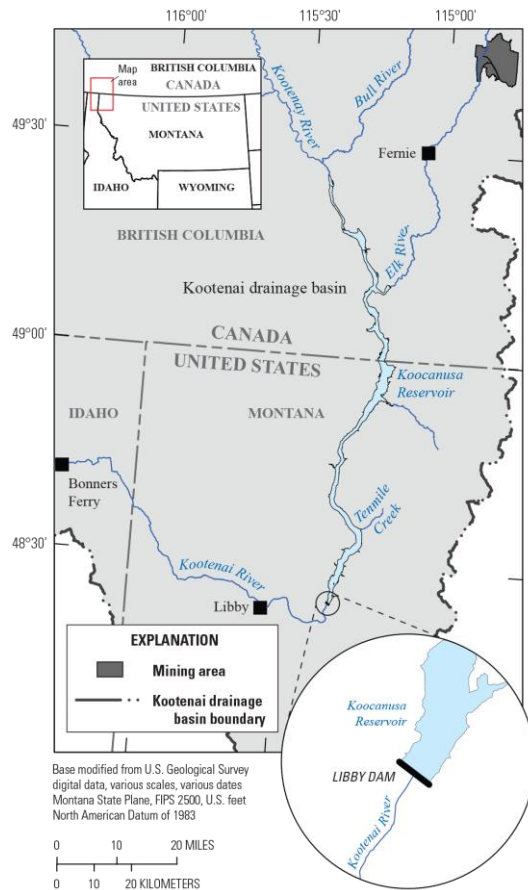

Fig. 1: *Map of the Kootenay/Kootenai Watershed (Selenium in the Kootenai River Basin, Montana and Idaho, United States, and British Columbia, Canada, 2022)*

In 2021, Teck pled guilty to the biggest environmental fine ever issued by Environment and Climate Change Canada under the Fisheries Act following a federal complaint by the Ktunaxa Nation in 2012 (Cruickshank, 2023). Despite corporate apologies and commitments to clean up the watershed, as of 2022, Elk Valley waterways showed selenium levels 267 times higher than the levels determined "safe" for aquatic life

(Cruikshank, 2023). Water quality information has only been made available to journalists via Freedom of Information requests (Cruickshank, 2022) and attempts to address pollution in the region have faced decades of similar opaqueness from companies and government regulators alike (Juric, 2018; Sexton et al, 2020). The US and Canada are widely regarded as having a relatively successful diplomatic relationship regarding their shared watersheds (Norman & Bakker, 2014), so what makes this transboundary water crisis so intractable?

Through an environmental data justice lens, I analyze how industry capture of BC regulatory processes and pollution monitoring have impacted transboundary water justice in the Elk Valley from 2012-2023, the period in which Teck has come under legal scrutiny. Using the Elk River as a case study, I build upon legal arguments to argue that the Canada-US transboundary water framework is insufficient to address the multiscalar, cumulative, and inequitably distributed nature of mining pollution (Simpson & Collins, 2022; Parrish, 2003). Tackling transboundary pollution requires a foundational restructuring of both international watershed governance and domestic regulatory regimes, in line with historically-rooted systems of Indigenous water governance (Norman, 2015).

Context and theoretical framework

Theorists of transboundary environmental politics describe how ecosystems present a complex challenge to nation-states' imagined sovereignties

(Karkkainen, 2005). Waterways exemplify the necessity of international environmental analysis, as they tangibly carry matter and power across jurisdictions. However, environmental regulation generally remains limited to state's direct jurisdictions, rather than assessing cumulative effects of extractive development across borders (Juric, 2018; Kapell, 2019).

Since 1860, the US-Canada border has split management over the Columbia and Kootenay watersheds. It has also split ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa—the Ktunaxa traditional territory[13]—between American and Canadian settler-colonial control (Kapell, 2019; Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, 2023). Ktunaxa National Council natural resource manager Nicole Kapell writes that under ʔa·knumuȼtiⱡiⱡ (Ktunaxa natural law), "Ktunaxa carry an obligation to protect and preserve the lands and resources within their homeland for future generations" (Kapell, 2019, p. 15). According to an oral history presentation from Ktunaxa Knowledge Holders, the Kootenay River Basin is inseparable from the Ktunaxa people (Kapell et al., 2016). In their origin story, a battle against the monster Yawunʔik formed the Kootenay by separating the tributary from the Columbia River, and people were created from the monster's remains (Echo-hawk, 2000; *Creation Story: Ktunaxa Nation*, n.d.).

The Ktunaxa watershed holds tremendous hydroelectric and agricultural resources, and one of BC's largest coal deposits (Loodin et al., 2021).

ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa has suffered overlapping environmental and cultural harms from settler-colonialism from Canada and the United States since the 19th century (Coleman, 2013). Canadian settlers began mining copper and bituminous coal in the region in the late 1800s (Juric, 2018). Open-pit mining began in the 1960s, dumping over 7 billion cubic meters of mine waste-infused rock into the watershed (Juric, 2018). Today, Elk Valley produces 80% of Canada's steel-making coal exports. Representing a crucial source of the region's income, half of Sparwood's municipal budget comes from mining (Clarke et al., 2021; Tardieau, 2021). While Indigenous Peoples such as the Ktunaxa suffer the majority of development and extraction-related harms, they do not gain a majority of the profits (Maldonaldo, 2023).

Political ecology and data justice extend understandings of environmental harm past the inequitable distribution of impacts to include the hierarchized knowledge systems that enable them (Escobar, 1998). Flawed data can create flawed water policy. In the case of Elk Valley, Juric (2018) found that Teck has historically played a significant role in manipulating the production and distribution of information about the socio-environmental impacts of its mines. Despite legal action and multiscalar advocacy, this continues, through three related mechanisms: BC's deregulated mining sector, corporate capture of pollution monitoring on both

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[13]"Ktunaxa" refers to the Nation (composed of four Bands) on the Canadian side, while the two Tribes on the American side use the spelling "Kootenai".

sides of the border, and industry influence on academic research.

A critical review of Canada-US transboundary water governance

The first line of defense in transboundary pollution issues is international law. Waters shared between Canada and the US are governed by the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty (BWT), which states that "boundary waters … shall not be polluted to the injury of health or property of the other." If pollution occurs under the treaty, a nonpartisan dispute resolution body, the International Joint Commission (IJC), arbitrates. To convene an IJC hearing on issues of transboundary water pollution requires the consent of both states.

The BWT reflects the explicitly colonial values of the time it was constructed, and it has not been amended since (Simpson & Collins, 2022; Ettawageshik & Norman, 2020). The initial framing of the BWT specifically guided the IJC not to engage with First Nations or Tribes, and still does not recognize them as sovereign state participants who can invoke the IJC (Ettawageshik & Norman, 2020). The treaty also lacks ecological analysis — instead focusing on states' rights to maintain their territorial integrity from another jurisdiction's industrial economic activity (Simpson & Collins, 2022).

The BWT's narrow and colonial scope informs its ineffectiveness in addressing the Kootenay pollution (Strube & Thomas, 2021). Since 2012, the Ktunaxa Nation in BC, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation in Montana, and Kootenai Tribe of Idaho have advocated to invoke the IJC over mining pollution stemming from the Elk Valley (Scott, 2022). However, neither the US or Canadian State has made a decisive move to do so (Scott, 2023). Documents obtained by the Ktunaxa Nation Council through an FOI revealed that Teck and the BC government lobbied federal officials to oppose invoking the IJC (Cruickshank & Fionda, 2022). Canada's unwillingness to invoke it reveals the profound failure of the BWT process to fulfill principles of Indigenous sovereignty and reconciliation. Further, when international law fails, transnational industry interests can more easily take advantage of weak domestic frameworks to impact ecosystems both within and beyond the state they technically operate within (Maclean, 2018).

When one jurisdiction in a transboundary dispute has a weaker regulatory framework over environmental monitoring, that jurisdiction's regulatory framework can take precedence over the health of the entire watershed (Lidskog et al, 2011). I argue that this occurs not only through corporations' ability to pollute without legal accountability, but also to collect and communicate water quality data to shape specific narratives.

Deregulated mining sector

BC's environmental monitoring system is notably deregulated, sometimes termed a "wild west" for extractive industry (Nikiforuk, 2017). The BC Liberal Party in the early 2000s codified deregulation via the professional

reliance system, which effectively placed industry in charge of its own monitoring and compliance (Thomson, 2018). A 2016 Audit of Compliance and Enforcement in the Mining Sector used the Elk River as an example to reveal professional reliance as environmentally disastrous (Bellringer, 2016). BC mining industry interests have been found to influence non-binding water quality guidelines, weakening the state's regulatory system over mining waste (Juric, 2018).
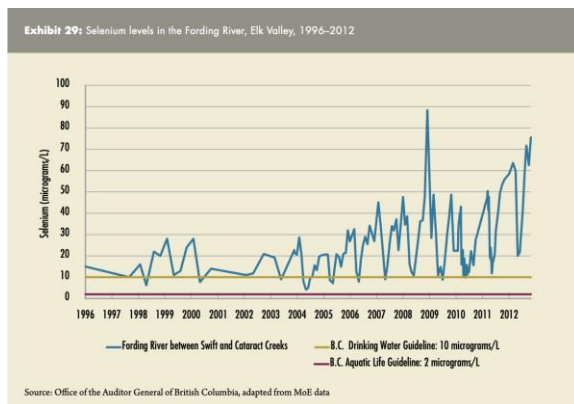

Fig. 2: *Selenium levels in the Fording River in the Elk Valley (Bellringer, 2016)*

The corporate capture of environmental standard setting can transcend state boundaries. A 2015-2020 assessment of selenium pollution by scientists for Montana's Department of Environmental Quality in partnership with local Indigenous people, including Kootenai representatives, proposed a selenium standard of 0.8 pg/L based on existing research, which Lake Koocanusa exceeded (see Fig. 2) (Juric, 2018). BC's guidelines meanwhile set acceptable selenium standards to 2 ug/L. The Ktunaxa Nation Council established a new limit of 0.85 pg/L, which Montana officially adopted in 2020 (*Selenium in the Kootenai River Basin, Montana and*

Idaho, United States, and British Columbia, Canada, 2022). Teck lawyers opposed the Montana standard as targeting their operations specifically, which would represent an attempt to regulate a company outside of Montana's jurisdiction (Eggert, 2023). While the federal Environmental Protection Agency supported the new standard, the Montana Board of Environmental Review (the body with ultimate jurisdiction over corporate regulation) ultimately rejected the proposed standard (Eggert, 2023).

This clash over environmental standards is also a battle to determine which forms of knowledge about environmental health are legitimated. According to Michif environmental scholar Max Liboiron, state environmental policy often bases standard-setting on thresholds which frontline communities must negotiate down (Liboiron, 2021). These are "premised on the logic of assimilative capacity, in which a body— water, human, or otherwise— can handle a certain amount of contaminant before scientifically detectable harm occurs" (Liboiron, 2021, p.5). Selenium, a nutrient required in trace amounts by many organisms, poses a threat to both individual bodies and entire ecosystems when present in excess (Sexton et al., 2020). Manipulating thresholds is a core strategy through which corporations capture pollution narratives, and these narratives can slip between borders to pervade regulatory regimes across jurisdictions (Grey, 2023).

Corporate capture of pollution monitoring

Corporate framing of the science of environmental impact tends to favor a narrower approach towards defining environmental harm, in terms of both toxicity and timescale (Marks and Miller, 2022). Critics argue that this has been the case with the Lake Koocanusa Monitoring and Research Working Group, a commission established by BC and Montana (Juric, 2018; Tobin, 2016). The group agreed to focus their efforts on selenium levels in Lake Koocanusa — not on the mine waste that produces it or on the rest of the watershed (Tobin, 2016). Teck is on the commission, and even if the outcome is not their doing, it arguably reflects their interests: wastewater treatment, rather than ceasing to produce and manage the safe disposal of more waste rock.

To address selenium levels, Teck has spent over a billion dollars building four wastewater treatment plants, as mandated by the 2012 Elk River Valley Water Quality Plan (*Teck Reports Unaudited Fourth Quarter Results for 2023,* 2024). This frames pollution as a surmountable and technical issue, rather than a long-term structural danger of an unsustainable industrial activity. Mass fish die-offs in 2014 and 2019 revealed its shortcomings (Cruickshank, 2023), but documents from Teck still present surface water treatment plants as a successful solution, with the company "on pace to … stabiliz[e] and reduc[e] the selenium trend in the Elk Valley" (Teck Reports Unaudited Fourth Quarter Results for 2023, 2024, p.20). An appendix states that their treatment plan projections "include assumptions that additional treatment will be effective at scale, and that the technology and

facilities operate as expected" (Teck Reports Unaudited Fourth Quarter Results for 2023, 2024, p.52). These assumptions may be unfounded: 2023 research found that treating surface water does not stop selenium, nitrate, and other key contaminants from discharging into groundwater (Storb et al., 2023).

Industry influence on research

When considering corporate capture of environmental contamination narratives, scholars argue that it is important to trace industry funding to academic research (Supran, 2021; Oreskes and Conway, 2010). Fossil fuel companies strategically donate to universities, which has been found to impact direction and quality of research agendas (Cabral & Adkin, 2020; Graham, 2020). This includes fossil fuel companies directly paying researchers to produce studies aligning with lobbying priorities (Boudjikanian, 2018).

Teck has invested significantly in research at the University of Montana on a new method to filter selenium: saturated rock fill technology *(Mining Connection,* 2020). Documents from Teck and other mining publications celebrate saturated rock fill as a "milestone" which forms the basis of wastewater treatment goals going forward (Teck, 2018; Parizot, 2018). However, other experts are less sure, as it remains untested (Cruickshank, 2023; Storb, 2023). Investing research into remediation technologies may reinforce a similar technocratic narrative of pollution management. By appearing to value cleaning up their mess, companies can justify continued extraction from

vulnerable ecosystems (Cabral & Adkin, 2020).

Companies funding research into their own pollution is often framed as reparative. As an extension of the polluter pays principle, the actor causing the damage should contribute the funds to address it, and fixing a problem starts with understanding it. Even if studies contracted by polluting companies can be useful, they raise concerns about conflicts of interest. For example, Teck scientists in 2006 assured investors that the release of gallons of toxic slag into the Columbia River basin was safe, and that high concentrations of mercury were not a health threat (Parrish, 2005, p. 375). Can a corporation be trusted to conduct independent research into its own transboundary environmental infringements?

Conclusion: Transboundary futures in the Columbia River Basin

To heal the watershed system requires a holistic assessment of the cumulative impacts of extraction—a goal impeded by corporate capture of environmental knowledge and power in both Canada and the US. Under the Elk Valley Water Quality Plan, BC enables Teck to continue operating its mines as long as the company is working toward a long-term plan to stabilize selenium levels by 2023 and reduce levels after 2030. However, as of 2022, there were four mine expansions and one new mine planned (*Elk Valley Mines.*, n.d.; Wildsight, 2022). While global shifts towards decarbonization place the future of mining, pollution, and jobs in the region into uncertain territory, in the short term, there is no clear end to extraction in sight.

To further complicate the picture, these mines may not be owned by Teck at all. In December 2023, Teck sold 77% of its stake in the Elk Valley coal mines to Glencore, as part of its decarbonization and environmental social governance strategy (Teck, 2023). While this allows Teck to clean up its portfolio on paper, on the ground, it simply shifts accountability.

Both the BWT and BC's regulatory frameworks are failing the Ktunaxa, the fish, and the waterways—so what other governance tools exist to provide restitution for transboundary pollution within a flawed and colonial system? Environmental groups and legal scholars have advocated for the IJC to intervene (Parrish, 2005; Simpson & Collins, 2022). While this has been unsuccessful, it is perhaps the most impartial option to disrupt damaging corporate influence over environmental contamination narratives—including deep-rooted flaws in BC's regulatory process, and facilitated institutional secrecy.

In November 2023, representatives from the Ktunaxa, Kootenai, and Coast Salish groups met with US and Canadian government officials to discuss the ongoing pollution issue, including how to pursue independent science, contamination standards-setting, and corporate accountability (Scott, 2023). The Ktunaxa Nation Council also continues to pressure BC to invoke the IJC, while on the US side, environmental groups and Indigenous stakeholders have filed a lawsuit against the Montana Board of

Environmental Review and Teck Coal Limited for failing to uphold sound water quality standards (Eggert, 2023). In the absence of transparency and impartial investigation from colonial governments, Indigenous governance continues to advocate for the health of lands and waters. Transboundary water justice solidarities may not break the border, but they can bridge it.

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Constructing the Neoliberal Line: Sustainability as a Tool for Developmental State Legitimacy in the Gulf

By Tracy Tan

Sustainability is an increasingly ubiquitous concept in urban governance. Saudi Arabia's government has embraced sustainability in the development of its high-profile eco-city 'The Line,' which is advertised as a new urban model of sustainability built upon new eco-smart technologies and renewable energy. I argue that The Line is a manifestation of Saudi Arabia's political, economic, and social ambitions that deploys sustainability as a tactic for securing state legitimacy, while obfuscating ongoing environmental degradation and social inequalities. I analyse the neoliberal model of spectacular development embedded in The Line in order to highlight how the vagueness and malleability of sustainability as a concept support its widespread adoption but is limited in meaningful progress towards sustainable development goals. Claims of sustainability should be given higher scrutiny or risk being undermined as a political tool used to greenwash neoliberal development.

In 2021, Saudi Arabia announced the construction of 'The Line' — a new, futuristic emission-free city along a horizontal axis 170 kilometres in length. Advertised as 'a revolution in urban living,' the new city straddles the line between utopia and dystopia in the northwest desert of Saudi Arabia. It is envisioned as two 170-kilometre parallel skyscrapers across the Tabuk province with no cars, streets or carbon emissions, and is set to house a dense urban community of 9 million people on 34 square kilometres (NEOM, n.d.).

***Fig. 1:** Artist's Concept of The Line (NEOM, n.d.)*

Central to the development of The Line is the concept of urban sustainability, which frames global urbanisation as a planet-wide ecological

phenomenon and the city as a means of taking climate action (Sze, 2020). The Line seeks to redefine urban development in line with Saudi sustainability goals. Self-stylized as "the future of urban living', promotional materials highlight its ambitious targets of being run by 100% renewable energy and having 95% land preserved for nature (NEOM, n.d.). This model of sustainability is centred around explosive growth and funded by the petrodollars of a country traditionally reliant on its oil reserves - and yet planners in Arab Gulf states have been increasingly adopting it to mobilise sustainability as a tool of urban governance. This paper seeks to critically examine the narratives of sustainability employed in The Line, placing its construction within spaces of transnational flows of ideas and technology and recognizing the spatial inequalities it generates. Ultimately, I argue that The Line is a manifestation of how Saudi Arabia uses sustainability as a tool of state legitimacy to achieve its political, economic, and social ambitions for global recognition while obfuscating the challenges and practicality of The Line's local implementation. In doing so, I contribute to a growing literature on 'actually existing sustainability' that analyses approaches toward sustainability within capitalist systems of development (Krueger & Agyeman, 2005; Davidson, 2013; Davies & Mullin, 2011), and to a growing body of urban scholarship in the Gulf (Koch, 2014; Luciani, 2012; Zaidan & Abulibdeh, 2021), a region which has seen explosive growth and social transformation in recent years.

Sustainability is a ubiquitous concept in urban policy that has drawn traction in the wake of growing climate anxiety. Calls for sustainability seek action towards limiting environmental degradation caused by urban growth, which has been ratified by international conventions and agreements (Brundtland, 1987). Yet, a precise definition remains elusive. Sustainability's conceptual ambiguity has contributed to its large-scale acceptance as a framework for environmental and social action, loosely linked to the environment and evoking positive connotations (Seghezzo, 2009; Whitehead, 2010; Davies & Mullin, 2011). Sze (2020) criticises this conceptualization of sustainability as an empty 'plastic' word, whose malleability serves agendas of real estate development and authoritarian approaches to urban planning. The drive towards sustainability has also been criticised in the observed phenomena of urban spectacles that mobilise the rhetoric of "greenness" while obfuscating ethics questions and erasing the political implications of large-scale developmental projects (Ruth, 2012; Koch, 2014). This reflects how sustainability as a discourse is co-constituted with other powerful discursive apparatuses of neoliberalism and capitalism that seek continued urban expansion and economic growth (Davidson, 2013; Swyngedouw, 2009). Cities have increasingly been conceptualised as spaces of opportunity for solutions to the global challenge of climate change, with the private sector foregrounding urban development (Heynen & Robbins, 2005; Davies & Mullin, 2011; Cook & Swyngedouw,

2012). Sustainability in the context of urban development can thus be understood as a discourse that is shaped by capitalist logics and pushed by private and public urban actors pursuing 'green' economic growth.

In Gulf states, planners and politicians have increasingly been using the language of sustainability and urban greening to design and frame spectacular city-building agendas (Luciani, 2012). The development of The Line is preceded by other similarly branded developments in the region such as Masdar city in Abu Dhabi and Lusail City in Qatar, self-described as 'a ground-breaking sustainable urban community' and 'the sustainable city of the future' respectively (Murray, 2018). Within Gulf States, the branding of such projects has been instrumental toward nation-building narratives (Koch, 2014). In the arid desert conditions of the Arabian Gulf, the development of state-of-the-art technologies is celebrated as a means of overcoming seemingly insurmountable challenges and reinforcing state capabilities (ibid.). The sustainability drive of Gulf States is thus one that emphasises pushing scientific frontiers and technological intervention that celebrates an urban conquest over nature. This narrative echoes Ebenezer Howard's Garden City model popularised in the West, in which nature is harnessed and incorporated into the built infrastructure as a means of achieving the political aims of 'civilising' the population and curing social malaise (Clevenger & Andrews, 2017). The success of The Line is also particularly important for Saudi leader Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman as a means of

building a reformist image and creating a legacy through a flagship project (Guzansky, 2017). The Line is a part of the broader 'NEOM' urban development in Saudi Arabia, which also includes Oxagon, a floating industrial complex on the Red Sea, Trojena, an outdoor skiing destination, and Sindalah, a luxury resort complex (NEOM, n.d.). Together, these developments seek to advance 'Saudi Vision 2030,' which emphasises diversifying the Saudi economy and improving its global competitiveness as a means of positioning Saudi Arabia as an economic and political hub in the Arab world (Guansky, 2017; Mohammad, 2017). As such, narratives of sustainability bolster the image of the Saudi government. Through the re-branding of Saudi Arabia as a state which aims to reach global standards in its development, they provide it with political legitimacy.

The lustre of The Line also lies in its novelty. As a brand new city, The Line is unhindered by urban challenges and resistance to change experienced by currently-existing cities in a self-declared "legacy-free urbanism" (NEOM, n.d.). Cities created from scratch defy conventional understandings of urban growth in the rapid transfer of capital, information technologies and expert advice that compresses urban development and allows city builders to seemingly leapfrog towards modernity (Tomlinson 2007; Murray, 2018). The prominent emphasis of sustainability in The Line capitalises on global trends toward environmental consciousness and functions as a sustainable urban spectacle that places Saudi Arabia at the forefront of modernity, thereby

attracting capital investment and rebranding Saudi Arabia from an oil producing entrepot to a sustainable business hub (Buckley & Hanieh, 2014). Sustainability discourses in the Gulf are hence increasingly employed as a means of 'green-washing' environmentally harmful development agendas for an international audience (Jones, 2010; Davidson, 2013; Koch, 2014). The investment in these spectacular developments can be explained as a 'spatial fix', wherein urbanisation in the Gulf supports the continued economic growth by absorbing surplus capital away from oil rents into the physical built environment (Harvey, 1982; Peterson, 2009; Shatkin, 2011; Buckley & Hanieh, 2014). The sustainability discourse in fact is promoted by entrepreneurial urban growth coalitions of major cities around the world as a form of branding to support urban economic growth (Greenberg, 2015). Cities are eager to invest in spectacle as materialised symbolic capital that grants cultural and social recognition (Bourdieu, 1986). This is a prominent feature of neoliberal inter-urban competition which seeks the accumulation of capital through urban restructuring (Peck et al., 2013). The Line's emphasis on sustainability thus serves to 'green' Saudi Arabia's growth trajectories and promote an investment-friendly climate aligned with promoting environmental consciousness, as a boosterist branding that enhances a modern image of Saudi Arabia.

Spectacular urbanism informed by urban sustainability discourse promotes technical innovation and rapid urbanisation in Saudi Arabia within the Gulf's decentralised planning structures.

The re-regulation of real estate markets in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states since the rise of oil prices in 2001 has sought to create foreign inflows of banking capital through creating incentives for the development of real estate megaprojects (Buckley & Hanieh, 2014). The US$80 billion NEOM Investment Fund (NIF) facilitates investment into NEOM, has an investment portfolio including nascent transportation technologies in Zeroavia, a British-American hydrogen electric aircraft developer and Pony.ai, a Silicon Valley-based autonomous vehicle firm (NEOM, 2023). Such investments signal the triumph of the new urban imaginary of cities as business enterprises under the spectre of capitalism (Murray, 2015). Yet, sustainability remains integral to these imaginaries as a framing device. It evokes a positive image of a future where planning is not only aware of impending climate change, but is also able to harness threats as opportunities to build a harmonious future (Gressgard, 2015). The malleability of sustainability as a concept has depoliticised anxieties associated with urbanisation and facilitated its widespread adoption by political elites in the Gulf, who use it to promote explosive growth and megaproject- centred spectacular development. In order to critically analyse sustainability, it is necessary, for lack of a better word, to read between the lines of Saudi Arabia's sustainability narratives. Claims of sustainability cannot be taken wholesale, but rather interrogated within the particularities of their local contexts in evaluating the local impacts and implications of its development.

The largely-agreed upon core tenets of sustainability by the international community are reflected in the United Nations report "Our Common Future", widely known as the Brundtland Report (Brundtland, 1987). The three pillars of sustainability—economic development, social justice, and the environment—are posited to be three mutually achievable goals.Sustainable development then seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising on the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. As I have argued above, the malleability of sustainability as a concept promotes its widespread adoption by political elites in the Gulf towards the development of spectacular infrastructure towards their economic and political goals. However, an analysis of the environmental trade-offs of Saudi's explosive development and social costs reveal the limits of its sustainability, which I argue is a result of neoliberal development policy prioritising economic growth.

Sustainability in The Line is embedded within a neoliberal pro-growth development philosophy that drives exploitation. This reflects Harvey's (1989) concept of urban entrepreneurialism, wherein urban governance is preoccupied with methods to foster and encourage economic and employment growth. The Line, as part of the wider NEOM urban development, is advertised as a "unique investment opportunity" that allows Saudi Arabia to "(build) a new model, a living laboratory for entrepreneurship, a home for an international community of dreamers and doers...." (NEOM, n.d.). The ambition of The Line creates a strong

developmental imperative that is sustained by the soft budget constraints of the Saudi government. Funding is largely provided by Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, the 'Public Investment Fund,' which has committed US$500 billion to NEOM as the primary developer rather than supporting the private sector. This points to the assertive state-led development strategy that defines the Line (Smith, 2021). Marketized urbanisation has also played a significant role in simultaneously urbanising and internationalising capital through the employment of foreign consultants and architects in the design and planning of Gulf State developments (Zaidan & Abulibdeh, 2021). Creating projects based on environmental, social, and governance concerns capitalises on the global turn towards environmental consciousness that spurs further investment (Hawkins et al., 2015). The pro-growth brand of sustainability resembles the concept of ecological modernisation, a body of work that seeks to "green" capitalism via the mobilisation of more "ecological" production techniques (Murphy & Goldson, 2000; Gibbs, 2006; Baker, 2007). Unlike the developmental push of the global north marked by privatisation, Saudi Arabia's marketisation of urbanisation is driven by its absolute monarchy in line with state priorities of modern development. The Line thus reflects a unique brand of neoliberalism in the Gulf, characterised by significant foreign involvement but retaining a dominant state presence.

Paradoxically, the focus on sustainable investment runs the risk of undermining the very sustainability it seeks to promote. The inevitable

environmental degradation caused by the pursuit of capitalist modes of production is scarcely addressed by neoliberal approaches toward sustainability (Cook & Swyngedouw, 2012), wryly described by Koch (2014) as a logic of 'building glass elevators in the desert' with ambitious targets unlikely to be fulfilled by ecologically viable means. In Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince Bin Suleman announced that 50% of national electricity would be produced by renewable energy by 2030. With seven years left, only 0.1% of those targets have been attained, casting doubt onto the plan's feasibility (Ahdad et al., 2023). In other parts of the country, Saudi Arabia relies primarily on the energy-intensive process of desalination for their water supplies, with scant control of local energy usage or environmental policies congruent with the eco-narratives of The Line (Koch, 2014). In a similar vein, the environmental costs of The Line will be considerable; its construction is estimated to generate around 1.8 gigatons of CO_2 (Ahdad, 2023). In analysing Masdar city, an eco-city in the UAE that echoes The Line, whose huge sustainability targets ultimately fell short of their goals, Cugurullo's (2014) concept of 'Frankenstein Urbanism' critiques the development as a city cobbled together with different clean-tech and architectural experiments that do not organically feed into an overarching sustainability strategy, thereby compromising the original vision of the architects and planners behind the master plan. The Line's image as an emissions-free city centred around ecological sustainability can only have a meaningful impact insofar as Saudi Arabia is able to sustain its commitment to its ecological goals. Regardless of the sincerity of Saudi Arabia's commitment to sustainability, without any fundamental change towards their approach towards energy consumption, the huge environmental costs associated with the development of The Line may limit the benefits they seek to accrue through developments in renewable energy.

Moreover, the lack of social sustainability in The Line also undermines its long-term viability. Social sustainability is the least examined pillar within sustainability discourse and commonly divorced from environmental issues (Sze 2014). Not dissimilar to criticisms of environmental sustainability, social sustainability as a tool of planning has largely been centred around creating fantasmatic narratives of a common abstract future, bearing promises of a shared prosperity exclusive to elites and isolated from challenges facing marginalised groups at urban peripheries (Gressgård, 2014). Due to a lack of normative criteria, urban social sustainability risks falling into the trap of loosely addressing concerns of equity and social cohesion policy concepts without more deeply interrogating social justice (Davidson, 2010). The Line is marketed towards an urban community defined vaguely as the 'best and brightest', touting visions of livability and offering itself as a new model for urbanism in the twenty-first century (NEOM, 2023). However, this urban community is limited in its place-making due to its lack of attention towards the local. Place, as theorised by Doreen Massey (2009), is a relative concept shaped by the political, social and

historical context. In the development of giga-projects in the Gulf, the pursuit of global citydom has seen Gulf states outsource planning towards western consultants, a majority of whom with scant familiarity of connection to the local dynamics (Zaidan & Abulibdeh, 2021). The result is a rendering of cities that are devoid of a sense of place, characterised by an 'uncanny effect' wherein the city is not seen as real but artificial creations like a Disney theme park (Koch, 2014).

Fig. 2: Artist's Concept of The Line (NEOM, n.d.)

The ideal urban communities that Saudi Arabia wants to live in The Line are centred around geographies of exclusion. This term refers to social inequalities that are expressed in spatial boundaries (Sibley, 1995). This is made possible by the fact that new cities like The Line lack the histories and collective memories that shape and characterise conventional urban settlement patterns (Hubbard & Lilley, 2004; Elsheshtawy 2008; Koch 2014). where The Line is built upon land traditionally inhabited by the Howeitat tribes, who have alleged that their forceful evictions from the land and lethal silencing of dissent by the Saudi state amount to human rights abuses (United Nations Humans Rights, 2023). In Saudi Arabia, the political reconstruction of the land by the state allows for the strengthening of the state's control through a process of territorial nationalism, wherein national territory is imagined and constructed by the nation-state through banal acts that reconstruct the geographical imaginaries of place (Benwell & Dodds, 2011). The Line's development provides a prime opportunity for consolidation of state power via creative destruction (Elsheshtawy, 2008). By severing the ties between tribal peoples and their land, the state is able to project its territorial ambitions in space; creating new luxury

developments for the elite classes and prime investors. The right to the city within The Line —the right to engage in social reproduction— is determined by global flows of economic capital. The Line is a new, exclusive space that targets the rich and cannot be entered easily by the marginalised.

The Line seeks to place itself as an aspiring global city premised upon globally celebrated values of ecological attentiveness and technological modernity. Yet, it fails to live up to the sustainable ideals it ostensibly promotes because of its inattentiveness towards deeper social and environmental concerns, as well as its shallow approach toward sustainability as a tool of economic growth. Discourses of sustainability ingrained within The Line obfuscate the flaws of Saudi's neoliberal development; a growth paradigm marked by environmental degradation and dispossession of marginalised communities. While the Line is situated within global flows of policy mobilities, marked by a globally oriented push towards sustainability and involving transnational capital and developers, its construction is being done via the carefully centralised control of the local state as a means for it to achieve its own political and economic agendas. The empty spectre of sustainability conveniently divorces master plans from their geopolitical contexts and erases histories of environmental degradation, allowing the neoliberal, speculative urbanism of The Line to serve as a powerful tool of political legitimacy by creating a developmental imperative for a modern, state-led, technologically forward city. Rather than an innocuous, plastic word, The Line demonstrates that sustainability can instead be weaponized to facilitate immense damage to the natural environment and drive social fragmentation. As cities and states throughout and beyond the Gulf continue to navigate the green transition, meaningful definitions of environmental and social justice should be mobilised in order to hold them to higher scrutiny and critically evaluate the global images they seek to project.

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The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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2. NEOM. (n.d.). *The line*. a revolution in urban living. https://www.neom.com/en-us/regions/theline

"Walking in Two Worlds":
Indigenous-led Real Estate Development in a Settler-Capitalist Ecosystem

By Ulysses Workman

Near Vancouver's Kitsilano neighbourhood, the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) Nation has embarked on a mission to transform a small sliver of reserve land into 11 rental highrises capable of housing up to 10,000 residents. Although Kitsilano residents critical of the Sen̓áḵw development have been dismissed as self-interested NIMBYs, critiques of the Squamish Nation's design plans and collaborative partnership with a luxury real estate development corporation merit consideration. While steps toward Indigenous agency and self-determination are laudable, such progress remains constrained by wider economic forces and fails to quell perceptions that Sen̓áḵw and similar Indigenous-led real estate ventures perpetuate exclusivity. Nevertheless, criticisms targeting these projects which omit discussion of non-Indigenous megadevelopments indicate a hypocritical and prejudiced double standard against the right of Indigenous communities to participate in the economic system to which they have been subject by the dominant settler state.

Introduction

As Indigenous peoples mobilize with increasing organizational capacity to redress systemic barriers incurred by settler colonialism, a growing number of Indigenous nations in Canada have won legal victories mandating increased autonomy and the restitution of expropriated territory (Tulli, 2019). The question of what these communities should do with regained land looms large, especially as these parcels, upon return from the Canadian state, remain adrift on a sea of global capital. This quandary is particularly salient in the case of Sen̓áḵw. Previously a village on the shores of Vancouver's False Creek, its land was regained by the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) Nation through a multigenerational legal effort a century after its residents were forcibly evicted by the BC provincial government.

Operating within the confines of settler capitalism, the new custodians of Sen̓áḵw have enlisted the help of Ian Gillespie's Westbank Corp to construct a series of luxury megatowers with a capacity of 10,000 residents (Bula, 2022). These ambitious plans have prompted backlash from residents of the surrounding Kits Point area, who cite concerns regarding the infrastructural stressors and negative aesthetic implications of the project. This "Not In My Backyard" or "NIMBY" obstructionism seeks to deny Squamish people agency over their territories and distracts from more substantive critiques of the project.

At the crux of the issue is the question of whether Indigenous-led development can be credibly differentiated from general neoliberal growth machines. No such differentiation between comparable megadevelopment projects is discernible

in the case of the Sen̓áḵw project. While Squamish agency exercised over the project should be celebrated, Sen̓áḵw looks set to be a fundamentally exclusionary endeavor capable of accelerating the frenzy of luxury development in Vancouver. At the same time, selective critiques that target this Indigenous-led project while omitting wider criticisms of general neoliberal megadevelopment projects and artificial land speculation constitute an intrinsically racist and hypocritical bias against the prerogative of Indigenous peoples to participate in the prevailing economic system.

Contextualization

Upon passage of the 1876 *Indian Act*, the Canadian federal government set aside 30 hectares of land at the head of the False Creek inlet for use as an "Indian" reserve by members of the Squamish Nation (Sterritt, 2019). Prior to this designation, roughly 20 large families had already resided on the territory encompassing the reserve in a small fishing village known as Sen̓áḵw in the Squamish language (Miljure, 2022). Over the following decades, the federal and provincial governments gradually expropriated reserve land for industrial and military purposes (Miljure, 2022). In 1913, the province forcibly displaced the reserve's remaining residents, barging them to North Vancouver and razing Sen̓áḵw's remaining residential structures (Halliday, 2020).

The 1960s saw the Squamish nation prepare legal proceedings with the end goal of land reclamation at the former site of the Sen̓áḵw village (Nch'ḵay̓ Development Corporation, 2019). In 2002, the BC Court of Appeal ordered the provincial government to return a portion of the original reserve lands to Squamish control (DeRosa, 2022; Bula, 2022). This ruling followed a series of legal victories for Indigenous nations across British Columbia (Tulli, 2019), many of which granted Indigenous nations "geographic proximity to valuable real estate" (Sroka, 2019). Located adjacent to Vancouver's affluent Kitsilano neighbourhood, Sen̓áḵw is situated at the epicentre of the Canadian property bubble, and consequently well-placed to exploit the remunerative potential of a real estate venture on its territory (Nch'ḵay̓ Development Corporation, 2019).

From 2011 onward, the Squamish nation drafted plans to construct a series of rental towers on their regained territory. In 2020, 87% of Squamish voters approved finalized plans to erect 6,000 units across 11 highrises (Mackin, 2023; DeRosa, 2022). At a cost of $3 billion, the Sen̓áḵw redevelopment would simultaneously constitute Canada's most expensive "net zero" residential project and the country's largest Indigenous economic development initiative on record (Tl'aḵwasiḵan Sxwchálten, 2021). 250 below-market units would be set aside for Squamish citizens (DeRosa, 2022), while 20% of total units would remain below-market (Fumano, 2022). Construction of the four-phase project is expected to reach completion in 2033 (Chan, 2022) and yield long-term profits of $8-10 billion for the nation and its developer partner (Nch'ḵay̓ Development Corporation, 2019). Sen̓áḵw's unique jurisdictional autonomy enables its towers to scrape

the skies unencumbered by municipal zoning regulations and bylaws (Bula, 2022; Halliday, 2020). This has engendered strong support from the economically libertarian Fraser Institute, whose affiliates praise the project's circumnavigation of "onerous regulations" (Filipowicz, 2019).

Locational conflict

The City of Vancouver has historically struggled to construct the type of "hyper-densification" envisaged for Sen̓áḵw in predominantly residential neighbourhoods, and attempts to reform zoning laws have been met with fierce resistance at public engagement meetings (Keil, 2015). The primary blame for this perceived stagnation has been attributed to the NIMBY phenomenon, shorthand for "Not In My Backyard" (Derosa, 2022). NIMBYism pejoratively describes local residents opposed to the siting of development projects in their immediate neighbourhoods, even when such projects objectively ameliorate the common good (O'Hare, 2010). The Squamish nation's plans for Sen̓áḵw have attracted a cacophony of local opposition from residents citing a variety of aesthetic, infrastructural, and procedural concerns, much of which has been dismissed as thinly veiled NIMBY-type activity (DeRosa, 2022).

The backlash to Sen̓áḵw has been spearheaded by the Kits Point Residents' Association (KPRA), who sued the City of Vancouver over its services agreement with the Squamish Nation in 2022, alleging a lack of public transparency in contravention of the Vancouver Charter (Mackin, 2023). Other concerns cited by the KPRA include anticipated traffic congestion from the influx of new residents (DeRosa, 2022), which would purportedly create a "future transportation nightmare" (Bula, 2022). Vague vacuities about the project's "environmental impact" were cited but not expounded upon. The KPRA also took issue with the scale of the project, which it claimed would normalize hyper-densification across Vancouver (KPRA, 2021).

KPRA-articulated concerns surrounding Sen̓áḵw have been echoed by Kitsilano.ca, an online community website serving as a cross between a neighbourhood listserv and a local news publication, and the No Road Through Vanier Park website, formed in opposition to the Sen̓áḵw project's plan to utilize a strip of public parkland to connect the development to Vancouver's road network. The latter website rhetorically asks whether it's "fair... to sacrifice public park space for the benefit of a private development," a decision which it characterizes as a "giveaway" to the development industry ("No Vanier," n.d.). In general, opponents to the Sen̓áḵw "boondoggle" lamented perceived consultative injustices (Braude, 2022; KPRA, 2021; "No Vanier," n.d.), and accused the Squamish Nation and the City of Vancouver of pursuing a "steamroller approach" designed to bypass legitimate critiques of the project design (Bula, 2022).

Sen̓áḵw proponents, including BC Premier David Eby, have dismissed Kits Point residents' concerns as "NIMBY nonsense" (DeRosa, 2022). The BC First Nations Leadership Council went

further, characterizing the obstructionism as "tone deaf for the reconciliation agenda" (Chan, 2022). The language employed by opponents mirrors stereotypically NIMBY discourse: Jeremy Braude, the founder of the Vanier Park protest website, rationalized his antipathy to the project by claiming to be "worr[ied] about what's happening in [my] backyard... frankly, this is my backyard and it's also the people of Canada's backyard," blatantly erasing the historic Squamish connection to the land (Miljure, 2022). Baude claimed allegations of NIMBYism have become a "slur... intended to silence the discussion" (DeRosa, 2022). He acknowledges that there may be a "slight case of NIMBYism" underpinning opponents' critiques, but maintains that such critiques are legitimate irrespective of their motivating factors (Braude, 2021).

Project critiques

Not all criticism of Sen̓áḵw is overtly grounded in locational conflict. The project has also attracted critics who question its impact on the city's housing landscape and are skeptical of its choice of developer partner. Commentators such as former Vancouver City Councilor Gordon Price have voiced skepticism regarding the authenticity of Indigenous project design components. Price incurred criticism in 2022 for comments made during an interview with Gitxsan author Angela Sterritt, in which he questioned whether Sen̓áḵw conformed to traditional "Indigenous way[s] of building." Referencing Tsawwassen Mills- a mega-mall in the Vancouver suburb of Tsawwassen built on First Nation territory (Tulli, 2019)- Price rhetorically asks: "How can you say you're land defenders... and pave it over?" Turning to the Sen̓áḵw development, he critiques a perceived lack of "democratic accountability," castigating the marriage of "unelected developers" and Squamish politicians unbeholden to the Vancouver public.

Price's diatribe appears to overlook the fact that Squamish band members (to whom the Squamish council is meant to be accountable) voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Sen̓áḵw redevelopment. In Price's view, the unwillingness of the Squamish Nation to acquiesce to local residential demands can be boiled down to a retributive attitude paraphrased as "you fucked us, now we fuck you" (Sterritt, 2022). While Sterritt promptly pushed back against Price's romanticization of pre-contact indigeneity and propagation of double standards between Sen̓áḵw and similar non-Indigenous development projects, Price's critique nonetheless speaks to complex questions surrounding the uneasy fusion of traditional indigeneity and contemporary global capitalism.

Indigeneity and capitalism

In their quest to navigate the seemingly antithetical binaries of traditional indigeneity and modern settler capitalism, Indigenous peoples may find themselves "walking in two worlds" (Bunten, 2011). Partaking in global capitalism "challenges traditional values" (Hillmer-Pegram, 2016) and may render traditional territories "transfigured and degraded" (Poirier and Dussart, 2017). Still, such engagement enables Indigenous peoples to

"maintain... adaptive capacity" in the wake of unprecedented cultural-generational upheaval (Hillmer-Pegram, 2016).

Two schools of thought offer contrasting approaches to the question of Indigenous capitalism. Through the lens of sustainable development, capitalism may enable Indigenous communities to "break generational poverty traps" and improve communal livelihoods (Sroka, 2019). In contrast, radical political economics views participation in capitalism as detrimental to traditional Indigenous communitarian values (Hillmer-Pegram, 2016). Proponents of the radical viewpoint argue that the transnationalism of capital accumulation stands in such stark contrast to Indigenous localism and ecologism that the ensuing value degradation may constitute a form of "internal colonization," possibly negating the benefits of material wealth gained through induction into the capitalist system (Bunten, 2011; McCall, 2016). While the specific topic of Indigenous property development is understudied (Barry and Thompson-Fawcett 2020), this dichotomous approach to holistic Indigenous capitalism can be applied to the real estate sphere, as the "inherent exclusivity" of individualistic property ownership (Wyly, 2022) is considered alien to pre-contact Indigenous society (Egan and Place, 2013).

Developer Leviathan

Westbank, the corporation selected by the Squamish nation to lead construction on the Sen̓áḵw development, is eponymously linked to perceptions of exclusivity (Mackin, 2023). Founded by Ian Gillespie in the 1990s, Westbank has spearheaded real estate megaprojects across the Metro Vancouver region, including the planned $5 billion redevelopment of Oakridge Mall (Pearson, 2019), and Yaletown's neo-futurist Vancouver House (Wyly, 2022). Gillespie appears determined to reshape the architectural aesthetics of his hometown, which he refers to as an "insular, little fucking village... risen to a high level of mediocrity" (Pearson, 2019). Critics claim Westbank's emphasis on luxury development exacerbates a burgeoning wealth gap in Vancouver by amplifying land speculation and out-of-town investment (Pearson, 2019). The extent to which the development corporation's proclivity towards unattainable housing will influence Sen̓áḵw's unit pricing remains to be seen.

Sen̓áḵw and Indigenous agency

Detractors assert that Sen̓áḵw represents nothing more than a continuation (or even acceleration) of prevailing global capitalist flows into a metropolis already inundated by megarich land speculators. The project, however, promises to help alleviate regional Indigenous poverty rates by spurring investment into Squamish-owned land (Hua Foundation, 2020; Sroka, 2019). Squamish councilor and spokesperson Khelsilem Tl'aḵwasiḵan Sxwchálten has framed the Sen̓áḵw development as an opportunity to improve housing and healthcare access to Squamish band members (Hua Foundation, 2020) while enabling a historically underrepresented group to "rebuild [its] community" and "create[...] value for... the public at large" (Halliday,

2020). As Indigenous peoples have faced historical extirpation from Canadian urban realms and consignment to peripheralized rural reserves, Sen̓áḵw also upends the propagated but fictitious friction between "indigeneity and urbanity" (Halliday, 2020).

The disproportionate scrutiny of Sen̓áḵw when compared to other similar development projects unfolding across the Lower Mainland constitutes a double standard and unfairly casts Indigenous peoples as a monolith. Relatedly, elevating Indigenous traditions as "timeless models... require[ing] unwavering deference" constitutes an unreasonable constraint on contemporary Indigenous self-determination (Borrows, 2016). If the goal of the Squamish Nation is indeed to improve aggregate livelihoods, there can be no going back to the fishing village of pre-1913. Holding Indigenous peoples to a separate standard from the non-Indigenous population is hypocritical at best and implicitly racist at worst, sidestepping the question of how Indigenous people can be expected to pursue "traditional living" in the locus of a world city (Sterritt, 2019).

Déjà vu

While Squamish people cannot be expected to abstain from attempted amelioration of their communities via participation in the prevailing economic system, critiques of the Sen̓áḵw development should be considered, especially as the project claims to pursue "social and cultural inclusiveness" (Nch'ḵay̓ Development Corporation, 2019). Given its track record of past development projects in the city, it is worth contemplating whether Gillespie's Westbank can be trusted to fulfill this mission statement. Khelsilem acknowledges that the large majority of Sen̓áḵw's planned 6,000 units will be rented or leased at "whatever [price] the market can bear," but claims that the revenue generated by this market-rate housing will be leveraged to construct more affordable housing in the future (Tl'aḵwasiḵan Sxwchálten, 2021).

Khelsilem's argument resembles those articulated during the construction of the Olympic Village development project in the run-up to the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics. Original plans for the athlete's village would have seen one-third of units reserved for low-income residents; this figure was revised down to one-fifth, with a large proportion of units in Olympic Village rendered unaffordable to the average buyer (Nesbitt, 2021).

Ghosts of Urban Planning

Sen̓áḵw is not the only Indigenous-led real estate development on the horizon for Vancouver. Four kilometers west of the territory, the city's three primary Indigenous nations – the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh – have joined forces to reclaim the Jericho Lands, an abandoned former military garrison near the city's northwestern waterfront (Sroka, 2019; Onishi, 2022). The prospective style of both Sen̓áḵw and the Jericho Lands breaks with the traditional "Vancouverism" school of architectural design which has characterized development projects in Vancouver since the 1980s. Vancouverism aims to create "active civic spaces" (Condon, 2021) by

promoting "podium-and-tower" mixed-use developments (Halliday, 2020). In contrast, Senáḵw and the Jericho Lands more closely resemble a return to the "towers in the park" model of urban planning promoted by Franco-Swiss architect Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris (colloquially named "Le Corbusier") (Alfasi et al., 2020). The model deeply influenced mid-twentieth-century urban planning before falling out of fashion in the wake of opposition from a new wave of 1960s-era urban theorists.

Activists such as American-Canadian author Jane Jacobs critiqued the development designs of 1950s cities and called for greater walkability and resultant neighbourhood vibrancy (Alfasi et al., 2020; Condon, 2021). The uniformity and spatial distance endemic to Le Corbusier's developments undermined such aspirational cohesiveness, and the towers in the park approach to city planning fell quickly out of favour (Keil, 2015). UBC professor Patrick Condon questioned Senáḵw's attempted revival of this approach to urbanity, branding it "the fool's gold… of green parsley at the edges of overpoweringly tall buildings" (Condon, 2021). Condon's criticisms of Vancouver's Indigenous-led developments may be hyperbolic. While the 56-story skyscrapers of Senáḵw may seem out of place in residential Kitsilano, such a "cliff-drop in scale" between skyscraping towers and single-family homes is not uncommon across Metro Vancouver (Price, 2019; Todd, 2023), a dichotomous phenomenon termed "the missing middle" ("In Vancouver," 2020).

Conclusion

Executing a conclusive summary judgment on Senáḵw when the project is both unfinished and a relatively unique development initiative is a tall order. Indigenous-led development remains a fledgling (albeit growing) phenomenon (Barry and Thompson-Fawcett 2020), and is fundamentally an internal matter upon which individual First Nations must deliberate. With an estimated 375 million Indigenous peoples living worldwide today (Bunten, 2011), indigeneity is not monolithic. Indigenous peoples in Canada are inextricably tied to the all-encompassing economic regime of a settler state transplanted over a millennia-old culture (Bunten, 2011).

Senáḵw has attracted varied criticism from its detractors, ranging from largely self-interested NIMBY-type concerns from Kitsilano residents to more compelling critiques against the project's developer partner and its architectural design. In response, proponents maintain that Senáḵw encapsulates a wider reconciliatory trend, with the potential to help alleviate Indigenous poverty and imbue First Nations with enhanced agentic power. While the Senáḵw development project will unquestionably benefit the Squamish Nation and should be lauded as a positive political development, the project looks set to be a fundamentally exclusionary undertaking and may further accelerate the frenzy of luxury development in Vancouver. However, any criticism levied at Senáḵw must be consistently replicated against other development projects in the Lower Mainland of similar scale and design. Selectively critiquing the Senáḵw project would suggest that Indigenous-led

development must somehow be held to a separate standard than generic neoliberal development initiatives; in reality, no significant distinction between the two appears evident. Critiques may be more legitimately levied against general neoliberal growth machines, or the prevailing world economic system.

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Addressing the Inherent Vulnerabilities of Migrants in Crossing: The Case of The United States-Mexico Border

By Zainab Sayedain

This paper seeks to examine the ways migrants, and especially undocumented or otherwise marginalized migrants, face vulnerability as a result of the nature of international borders. Analysing first the nation-state's creation of minorities, and secondly the biopolitics of border crossing which emerge out of the nation-state's structure, this paper considers the case of undocumented migrants at the United States-Mexico border to demonstrate the ways in which the nation-state and the biopolitics of border crossing regimes create vulnerability for those in crossing. Finally, this paper highlights how radical reimagination of borders may offer insight into how to absolve processes of mobility from the systemic marginalization they impose given current border regimes.

Introduction

The biopolitics and spatiality of transnational mobility creates vulnerability on the part of those crossing borders. International borders are a "state of exception" in which one is subject to the law, but may not claim rights, creating a limbo-state which upholds nation-state notions of belonging and threat-reduction (Salter, p. 169). This vulnerability intersects with other sorts of structural vulnerabilities that individuals in movement may be met with due to the global politicization of identity, including racial, class-based, and gender-based discrimination. As a result, the biopolitics of border interactions are determinants of who gets to cross international borders, and how.

The interaction between international migrants and borders is one which is especially precarious due to the nation-state's fundamental values of cultural and political unity, and the migrant's position as "neither a citizen nor foreigner" in the face of customs agents (Castles, 2000, p. 278; Salter, 2006, p. 169). It is to the migrants' detriment when national governments enact anti-immigration policies and rhetoric, especially given that these incursions often directly address racialized migrants, therefore disempowering migrants further (Thelen, 1999, p. 439). This problem manifests in the case of Mexico-United States border-crossing. The United States spent $35 billion on border enforcement between 1970 and 2010 in efforts to decrease undocumented migration from Mexico to no avail, demonstrating the ways in which long-standing barriers to legal migration from Mexico to the United States has manifested in one of "the most pressing policy issues facing the nation today" (Massey et al., 2014, pp. 1055-1056).

The fundamental traits which define the nation-state are often credited to Enlightenment thinker John Locke, who encouraged nation-states to tolerate minorities for the sake of maintaining peace, on the condition that these

minorities support the state and are united by national identity (Farr, 2005, p. 156). Mahmood Mamdani (2020) criticizes the nation-state for its incoherence in forcing minorities to join the political community of the nation in order to be protected by the state's determination of rights, when state law is supposedly applied equally. Mamdani highlights the paradoxical condition of the nation-state in which "the state will never exist in the image of the minority" (2020, p. 7). The state's application of law is subject to national prejudice, and forces minorities, including many migrants, to accept minority status (Mamdani, 2020, p. 7). My paper aims to address this tension with reference to the United States-Mexico border as a case study, investigating whether it is possible to reimagine border interactions to no longer facilitate the vulnerability of international migrants.

The interactions between international migrants and borders will be analyzed from a theoretical standpoint and a micro scale, considering the case of migrants from Mexico crossing the United States-Mexico border as the central example. This paper will first interrogate the nation-state structure and how it facilitates the vulnerability of those deemed 'outsiders,' before discussing the implications of biopolitics with which the dynamics of confession at the border itself is concerned. Since the nation-state's values perpetuate the collective vulnerability of migrants, radically reimagining the system entirely may offer possibilities beyond this framework.

Interrogating the nation-state

The nation-state structure, coming to fruition at the Peace of Westphalia upon the conclusion of the Thirty Years' War in Europe in 1648, is dependent on the creation of particular inclusions and exclusions (Farr, 2005, p. 156). With an emphasis on homogenisation of language and culture within a nation, the foundational ideas of the nation-state standardize the majority, and marginalize diversity (Grotenhuis, 2016, pp. 109-110). Dan Hiebert (2003), in his analysis of what a theorized borderless world could look like considering the Canadian context, anticipates that ridding the nation-state of its right to exclude nullifies its right to include, making him unwilling to "toss out the nation-state as the site of primary sovereignty" (p. 190). While scholars along Hiebert's (2003) line of thinking appreciate the nation-state as a site of primary sovereignty, post-colonial author Mahmood Mamdani (2020) deems the nation and the state, the two terms which are supposedly coexisting in the nation-state structure, as inherently "incompatible" (p. 190; p. 7). Mamdani's critique directly addresses how nation-states necessarily conceive separate majorities and minorities by dividing its population into a homogenous majority and non-abiding minorities. He explains that there is dissonance between the state being meant to apply law to all members equally, and the nation only protecting and valorizing those who are considered to be members by law (Mamdani, 2020, p. 7). The founding story of the United States highlights this theory. The dispossession of and violence towards Indigenous peoples in North America at the hands of nation-building colonizers demonstrates how those who are not

recognized as abiding members of the national imagination, are not protected under state law application (Mamdani, 2020, p. 4). The United States' formation as a slaveholding society also made for a national imagination which perpetuates the racial discrimination of African Americans, constructing social, economic, and political barriers to African Americans' access to the nation's space as a result (Gaynor et al., 2021, pp. 50-51). Both of these cases illustrate Mamdani's argument through highlighting the limitations of state protections for marginalized populations as a result of how the nation aims to operate.

Accelerated transnational mobility resulting from the globalized world continues to make visible the incompatibility between the nation and burgeoning multiculturalism. The United States is often considered a "melting pot" in which citizens proudly dissolve their individual identities to make way for one united national identity––that of an American. The nation-state ideal of homogenisation manifests in the United States via the othering which migrants and racial minorities face in the country's current 'multicultural' yet homogenizing national culture. On a broad scale, the nation-state sets minority migrants, such as Mexican migrants in the United States, up for vulnerability as a result of its characteristic identity-based structure, which guides structural efforts towards an aim of ultimate homogenisation under a specific national American identity.

The biopolitics of border crossing

The treatment of biopolitics and visible identity at the border is indicative of the nation-state's politicized separation of majorities and minorities, which creates vulnerability for cultural minorities. Through analysing the global visa regime, Mark Salter (2006) discusses how biopolitics are illustrated through the "system of control" that centers the individual's body at the border as a site for the border's maintenance of its sovereignty (pp. 168-169). He argues that state actions in the interest of their security have been justified by the migrant entering the border having come from the outside, which "both constitutes and threatens the integrity of the inside" through its definition of who belongs (Salter, 2006, p. 172). When considering the biopolitics of the global visa and passport regime, the marginalization of undocumented migrants from Mexico becomes even more evident as a result of their mobility not being state-legitimized through these global systems of security.

Documents such as visas and passports are used as tools that help to manage international populations and their mobility, while perpetuating the nation-state inclusion and exclusion of membership (Salter, 2006, pp. 176-177). However, the ability to obtain these documents has also been made to represent the image of a particular individual's body––one which is healthy, able to support themselves financially, and does not appear to pose a particular risk-–further emphasizing the body politic of border crossing (Salter, 2006, p. 177). Weak and strong passports also demonstrate this same dynamic, even when relevant documentation has been

obtained. Passports from countries in the Global South generally carry less power at the border than passports from the Global North, which serves to compound the vulnerability of racialized migrants who are granted less of a right to mobility due to discrepancies in privilege (Beck, 2023, p. 139). In addition, the process of border screenings themselves, or as Salter (2006) calls it, the "confessionary complex," is based on subtle body-related interpretations of what could be "evidence of class, social group, ethnicity, gender, [and] sexuality" and therefore affect entry into certain nation-states (p. 183). These factors at play during the crossing of the border itself create a "confessionary complex" in migrants, perhaps even before they begin the process of migrating——as a result of positionality when it comes to class, ethnic background, gender, racialization, or other diverse experiences, certain migrants face more vulnerability than others as they attempt to cross borders, and may even police themselves before the state polices them (Salter, 2006, p. 183).

The specific positionalities of many migrants from Mexico to the United States emblematize the role of biopolitics in determining experiences of migration, and enhancing vulnerability. The context of American policy towards Mexican migrants frames them as absolute outsiders who threaten United States national security (Massey, 2016). As a result of various push factors related to quality of life and restrictive migration policy, many Mexican migrants have been forced to seek a new life as "undocumented" migrants in the United States (Massey, 2016, p. 167). The

difficulty in legally crossing the Mexico-United States border for these migrants is heightened by the increasing militarization of borders, resulting in forced deportations and undocumented Mexican migrants being framed as a threat to national security (Massey, 2016, pp. 167-169). This practice focuses its energy on violently maintaining the nation-state's exclusion and inclusion for the sake of internal security (Miller, 2021). Undocumented migrants are rendered invisible to both the sending and receiving nation-states in the process of their mobility, resulting in a lack of the protections that either state could be able or willing to afford them (Thelen, 1999, p. 439). In being seen as threats due to anti-immigration rhetoric and policy in the United States, as well as through their respective positionalities, undocumented Mexican migrants face challenges and vulnerabilities in migration due to the politicized perception of what their bodies could mean to security or the national identity of the United States.

Reimagining borders

Despite the homogenous ideal of the nation-state, border injustices, and how these two dynamics interact, it seems unthinkable to discard the nation-state and dismantle this system entirely––Dan Hiebert (2003) suspects that the erosion of the nation-state would result in "institutions at other scales… [stepping] into the regulatory vacuum" and would rebuild itself as a similar dynamic in which the privileged would continue to find ways to thrive, at the expense of those without this privilege (p. 190). However, Mamdani's (2020) critiques of the nation-state and the way

we have seen its inherent injustices present themselves, justify some sort of reimagination of what global mobility could look like. Although the dynamics of hegemonic systems and how they operate as accepted truths make it difficult to imagine a replacement for the system we reside under, the nature of injustices which migrants face at borders such as that between Mexico and the United States provoke a questioning of how to mitigate them.

Harsha Walia, a prominent thinker concerned with the exploitation manifested in border systems and policies, advocates for a complete dismantling of borders and their implications, such as national identities and racial capitalism which these borders work to uphold (Walia, 2021). Like Hiebert (2003), Walia (2021) agrees that opening borders as a policy reform is not the answer to every systemic harm caused to marginalized people seeking global mobility. Instead, she advocates for the interrogation and dismantling of all global inequalities, including the border system as it exists. Connecting border systems to the global history of nation-building hinged on the subjugation of and extraction from colonized populations, Walia (2021) calls for a complete rejection of these exploitative and inhumane regimes and a reimagined vision for the future. The physicality of what this would look like is heavily theorized, and opens the global political order to a whole host of possibilities. Hiebert (2003) additionally assumes that a possibility such as that which Walia is theorizing would have to be implemented undemocratically due to existing public attitudes about migration,

and has many logistical holes to be thought through. What Walia illustrates and will not negotiate, however, is how possible and necessary it is to reimagine global mobility, as its processes currently exist at the expense and to the detriment of systemically marginalized people, thus facilitating vulnerability.

Conclusion

A migrant in the process of crossing international borders experiences a unique vulnerability in the way of belonging to neither the sending nor receiving country; this inherent existence in liminal space between two nation-states does not serve the protection of people in crossing. This dynamic, in conjunction with the body politics of what crossing a border entails, subjects the person involved in this migration to a system that they are at the whim of, and which determines their inclusion or exclusion in certain spaces based on factors such as their income, health, race, or gender. The vulnerability of migrants moving from Mexico to the United States in particular, as well as in many other contexts, hinges on migration policy which often polarizes attitudes towards migrants, while creating structural barriers to legal migration. It is evident that the nation-state structure and its global mobility processes facilitate a certain level of vulnerability for international migrants, especially those experiencing marginalized positionalities. However, this does not exclude the potential for designing a world which has dismantled the lasting and ever-present legacies of systemic injustices relating to the global nation-state model and its roots in

colonialism. The logistical ideas of what a reimagination should look like are yet to be consolidated, but, as Walia argues, the system as is necessitates a radical reimagination which prioritizes the well-being of people and recognition of humanity over the aggressive efficiency and maintenance of global systems.

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Trail Six Volume 18 Editorial Board

Amelia Creemer

Amelia (she/her) is in her fourth and final year at UBC, majoring in English Language and Literature and minoring in Environment and Sustainability. She loves nature, spending time outdoors, creating art, and sharing stories – especially when the art and stories she creates are inspired by the nature around her. She first joined Trail Six last year as an editor and loved the work she got to do, and she is very grateful for the honour of being this year's Editor-in-chief. Amelia is looking forward to continuing her work in the field of science and environmental communication following graduation, something for which her time with Trail Six has been tremendously helpful.

Alina Debyser

Alina (she/her) is in her third year studying Human Geography and Geographic Information Science, and this is also her third year editing for Trail Six. She is particularly interested in urban design, cartography, migration, and geographies of material movements. In her free time, Alina enjoys snowboarding, reading magical realism novels, and enjoying all that Vancouver has to offer.

Ambihai Akilan

Ambihai (she/her/அவள்) is a second-generation Tamil-Canadian, third-year student in the Science Po Paris/UBC Dual Degree from Toronto. At Sciences Po, she majored in Politics and Government with a minor in Law, at UBC, she is majoring in Human Geography with a minor in Informatics. Interested in human rights, transitional justice, and immigration, she also loves laughing, geopolitics, and a good metaphor.

Azélie Blanchette

Azélie (she/her) is a second-year Geography student pursuing a major in Human Geography. She loves reading, nature, spending time in the outdoors, skiing, and hiking. She is passionate about environmental justice and enjoys the opportunity that the field of geography provides to determine the underlying problems and finding solutions. Azélie joined Trail Six this year as an editor and is excited to learn from peers while engaging with their work.

Ella Sun

Ella (she/her) is a third-year UBC student, pursuing a major in Human Geography and a minor in Economics. She enjoys reading, writing, and cooking Chinese food in her spare time. She is especially interested in historical, economic, and emotional geography, which she intends to research further. She is looking forward to participating in the Tail Six as an editor and learning more about other students' insights into the field.

Ellen Wu

Ellen (she/her) is in her Year 4 at UBC, and this is her second year editing for Trail Six. She finished her Bachelor of Commerce degree at the University of Alberta in 2019 and now pursuing her geography second degree majoring in E&S and minoring in GIS. She is a big fan of Overcooked, and she also enjoys reading history in her free time.

Fraser Cameron

Fraser (he/him) is in his final year at UBC, pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Honours Geography with a minor in Urban Studies. Excited to be an editor for Trail Six, his academic interests include cities and their relationship with the environment, particularly sustainable urban development. Beyond studies, he enjoys photography, spending time in nature and travelling, further expanding his exploration of diverse environments into his personal life.

Hannah Swearingen

Hannah (she/they) is a second-year Geography student pursuing a major in Environment and Sustainability and a minor in GIS. They are especially interested in exploring human-environment interactions and have a new-found love for data science and spatial analysis. She loves finding new music, obscure movies, and collecting a wealth of fun facts. Having joined this year, they are excited to be a part of Trail Six.

Himari Honda

Himari (she/her) is in her fourth year at UBC, majoring in Geographical Sciences and minoring in Statistics. She is pursuing her geography degree with a concentration in Climatology and GIS. Himari is excited to join the GSA Trail Six as a first-time editor and is interested in using spatial and statistical analyses to investigate an array of environmental threats we face today. In her free time, she likes to bake, read and do jigsaw puzzles.

Jacob Ereshefsky

Jacob (he/him) is a fourth-year student pursuing a major in Human Geography and minor in Urban Studies. He is particularly interested in cities and how they can become more affordable, sustainable, and welcoming for all. Outside of studies, he likes hiking and skiing in the mountains and exploring the city on bike. This is his third year editing for Trail Six, and was an author in last year's volume.

Kate MacLeod

Kate (she/her) is a third-year student in the Bachelor of Media Studies program with a minor in GIS. She comes from a creative background with her interest in environmental information visualization guiding her to minor in GIS. Kate joined Trail Six to get more involved with the geography community at UBC. She also felt drawn to applying her skills

in art and design to contributing cohesive visuals for the Trail Six publication. This will be her first year as an editor and layout designer for Trail Six. In her spare time, you will find her hiking up a mountain, skiing back down it and illustrating the adventure.

Katelyn Croy

Katelyn (she/her) is a third-year student majoring in Environment and Sustainability and minoring in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies. Raised in both Hong Kong and Tsawwassen, she is deeply invested in how environmental injustice, colonialism, and politics intertwine to shape people and place, and she is very excited to showcase her peers' hard work in this year's edition of Trail Six in her second year as an editor. Off campus, you can find her on trails and in coffee shops around the Salish Sea.

Lisa Fylypchuk

Lisa (she/her) is a third-year Geography student pursuing a major in Environment & Sustainability and a minor in GIS & GC. What she loves most about this discipline is the freedom that it provides in exploring real-world topics through a multiplicity of perspectives and platforms. She joined Trail Six to become more involved in the Geography community at UBC and to be introduced to a wider array of geographical topics. She spends her free time reading horror novels, hanging out with friends and roaming the city.

Mackenzie Stewart

Mackenzie (she/her) is a fifth-year student of Geography, Environment and Sustainability who takes a particular academic interest in political ecology, urban ecosystems, and GIS. This is her first year working with Trail Six, and she is looking forward to engaging with and learning from her peers' writing. In her spare time, she loves dabbling in new hobbies and is currently invested in birdwatching, cross-stitch embroidery, and beekeeping.

Miriam Jang

Miriam (she/her) is a fourth year arts student, majoring in English Literature and minoring in Human Geography. This is her first year working with the GSA, and is excited to explore the overlap between her major and minor in the form of editing for Trail 6. Her personal interests include physical exercise and outdoor exploration.

Noah Murdoch

Noah (he/him) is in his second year, pursuing an Honours in Human Geography, whilst minoring in Commerce. He greatly enjoys spending time on the water, expeditioning and cooking. Within Geography, Noah enjoys exploring the political and economic dynamics of climate change, particularly within Europe. He's really excited to be part of the Trail Six editorial team for a second year running, and is looking forward to engaging with all of the insights of other students within the field.

Ophelia Tong

Ophelia (she/her) is a third year student majoring Human Geography and minoring Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice. She loves reading and writing, as well as using quantitative methodologies to supplement her exploration of geography and social justice. Ophelia joined Trail Six this year as an editor. She is more than thrilled to learn from peers' work while gaining deeper insights into the field.

Quinlan Cyr

Quinlan (she/her) is in her final year at UBC, majoring in Geography: Environment and Sustainability. She hopes to use the skills she has learned in her degree to work towards a more sustainable future. In her spare time, she is an avid writer and reader and also loves to ski and hike. Quinlan is enthusiastic about being an editor for Trail Six as she is excited to read the work of other undergraduate students and learn from her peers.

Ruedi Kelsch

Ruedi (he/him) is a fourth-year UBC student majoring in International Relations and Environment and Sustainability. His academic interests include clean energy transitions, marine conservation, and marine resource management, especially from the perspective of Canada and the Pacific Northwest. Ruedi intends to pursue cross-border environmental policy. He is joining Trail 6 as a first-time editor and is excited to work on undergraduate writing. His interests stem from his love for hiking, skiing, and adding to his list of observed animal and plant species.

Schehrezade Yousafzai

Schehrezade (she/her) is a fourth year UBC student double majoring in philosophy and geography. Her academic interests range from urban studies, planning and design, and architecture to south asian philosophy and theology. She hopes to upkeep the values of interdisciplinary learning and work even after she finishes her university career. In her spare time she loves watching movies; her favourites being Inglourious Basterds and Grand Budapest Hotel. She is joining Trail Six as a first-time editor to get more involved with the geography community and to promote the work of her fellow peers in their academic pursuits.

Sidonie Wittman

Sidonie (they/them) is a second year student majoring in Environment and Sustainability and minoring in Urban studies, and pursuing the Climate Action Certificate. They hope to combine their interest of sustainability and urban environments to find a career working towards a sustainable future. In their (limited) spare time they enjoy baking, knitting, drawing and spending time with friends. This is their first year with Trail Six and they are excited to get more involved with the GSA and to learn more about the academic research process.

Authors

Daniel Blackmore

Daniel Blackmore (he/him) is a third-year student majoring in Urban Studies with a minor in Geographic Information Systems and Computation. Specifically, he is interested in equitable public policy, sustainable land use, and community formation within the city. In the future, Daniel would like to pursue a career in urban planning and plans on one day pursuing a masters of community and regional planning. In his free time he takes interest in photography, cooking, and painfully clumsy ukulele playing.

Emma Pham

Emma (she/they) is a forever learner, who has attended UBC since 2019. Following along the wide pathway mapped out by the Geography department and the many students who broke trail in Environment and Sustainability, Emma participates in the collective, open, inquiry around relational existence, studying the interfaces of societies and ecologies. It is Emma's first year as an editor and layout designer of Trail 6, and her intention of involvement is to help create an educational portfolio exhibiting the work of UBC Geography students. Born in Manhattan, New York, Emma has a Vietnamese-Polish-English lineage and feels strongly about cultural recognition and re-membering, as a means of decolonizing the house of modernity, for the betterment of all beings. A creature of the mountains, rivers, agri-scapes, and community wellness circles.

Joshua Bransford

Josh (they/he) is a fourth-year Political Science and Human Geography student at UBC. This is their first year in Trail Six as an author, editor, and layout designer. Josh's main research interests include urban geography and political ecology with a particular focus on public transit and megaprojects. Other academic interests include transnationalism, border politics and anti-imperialism. In their free time they enjoy graphic design, learning languages, vegan cooking, reading, and curating Spotify playlists.

Nadia Vukicevic

Nadia (she/her) is currently in her third year at UBC, pursuing a major in Urban Studies and a minor in Human Geography. Having lived in diverse locations across the world, she has made Vancouver her home just four years ago, and can often be found exploring the city's vibrant culture and natural beauty! Nadia's upbringing deeply influenced her interests in migration, and she is especially passionate about the intersections of identity, mobilities, and equitable city planning.

Olwyn Matthews

Olwyn (she/her) is an undergraduate student in her fifth and final year at UBC, pursuing a major in Political Science with a minor in Environment and Society. Over the course of her studies she has developed an interest in the areas of resource politics, environmental activism, climate governance, and global sustainability. In her free time, she enjoys the outdoors, playing the piano, and can often be found attempting to complete her Goodreads reading challenge.

Regina Hipolito

Regina is a fourth-year Honours Human Geography student minoring in Urban Studies. She was an editor for Trail Six volume 17 and is primarily interested in notions of home, belonging, and the social construction of space and its implications. She's been all over – hailing from the Philippines, growing up in Qatar, moving to Regina, Saskatchewan and finally setting her roots down in Vancouver with a brief work stint in New York but who knows where else life will take her. She loves thrifting, collecting things for her scrapbook, and spending time with her cat.

Tova Gaster

Tova is a fourth-year UBC geography and history student. They're interested in environmental justice, specifically around energy systems, corporate accountability, and urban socioecological resilience. They're currently the science editor at The Ubyssey, UBC's campus newspaper, where they focus on climate and public health communication and connecting to community through storytelling (and writing jokes). Other passions include playing soccer, live music, and making and sandwiches.

Tracy Tan

Tracy is a third year Urban Studies and Economics undergraduate from the UBC-Sciences Po Dual Degree program. She hails from the small but mighty island of Singapore – these experiences shape her love for rain as well as her research interests in inter-urban dynamics and how urban governance can be reformatted towards more inclusive and ecologically viable trajectories of growth. You will find her out on the beach taking photos of dogs, or in the kitchen trying to perfect her grandmother's recipes.

Ulysses Workman

Ulysses (Uly) Workman is a fifth-year Honours Political Science major and Urban Studies minor. His research interests centre around public policy; specific areas of study include megaproject development, locational conflict, and land use. As an Urban Studies student, Uly holds a deep interest in the intersection between politics and cities, and wrote his undergraduate thesis on the interplay between affluent NIMBYism and the siting of mass transit projects in Vancouver, Philadelphia, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Outside of

the academic setting, Uly enjoys painting, cooking, and cycling rain or shine around the Lower Mainland.

Zainab Sayedain

Zainab Sayedain (she/her) is a fourth-year student in the dual degree programme between Sciences Po and UBC, and is majoring in Human Geography after spending two years studying in Menton, France. Born and raised in Vancouver as a second-generation Pakistani immigrant, Zainab has always been interested in the significance of relationships between people and place, especially in the context of hegemonic global systems. Outside of her studies, her greatest passions are songwriting and the people she loves.

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