Social Science

Policy Prophecies: A closer look at the disparity in violence between El Salvador and Guatemala

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The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/2r36tz48t

Introduction

Latin America has been plagued with violence of various types for the majority of its history, yet some countries have been able to develop and escape the cycle of violence while others remain incredibly dangerous and violent. This paper will attempt to answer the question: What explains the disparity in violence between El Salvador and Guatemala? Gang violence in Guatemala and El Salvador limits development and is a daily threat to individuals in gang-controlled regions. The experience of violence in El Salvador and Guatemala follow similar levels of violence and history, yet in 2017, El Salvador had 42.23% more homicides per 100,000 individuals than Guatemala (World Bank, 2017). Beyond the cost of human lives, the epidemic of gang violence has led some to flee to other neighboring countries, resulting in questions regarding how to accommodate the influx of refugees. Previous research has primarily focused on the narrative of violence, yet there remains to be little investigation of the violence disparities between Guatemala and El Salvador. Through obtaining a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the disparity in violence between the two cases, it may be possible to use the information to develop impactful policies that will curb the violence and improve safety in the region. By increasing safety in the region, Guatemala and El Salvador may be able to further develop rather than lag behind neighboring countries.

According to a 2019 study on global homicide conducted by the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC), of the 30 cities with the highest violence rates, 26 were in the Americas (UNODC, 2019). The Northern Triangle region of Central America, composed of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, has particularly high levels of violence in comparison to the rest of Central and South America (Eguizàbol, 2015; UNODC, 2012; Ingram & Curtis, 2015). In this region, violence is pervasive and takes many forms, ranging from international drug trafficking to structural violence, which disadvantages already marginalized populations. The violence in El Salvador and Guatemala impact the citizens in each country, endangering their lives and livelihoods that have resounding effects on the individual countries and the region as a whole. Some individuals have had to flee their country and seek refuge in the United States and Mexico, resulting in an international problem of how to accommodate such individuals. Gang violence is one of the largest contributors to the overall high levels of violence in the Northern Triangle with two major gangs, or *maras*, Barrio 18, also known as the 18th Street Gang or M-18, and Mara Salvatrucha, also known as MS 13, engaging in extortion of citizens, violence against women, and forced recruitment of civilians (Insight Crime, 2018; Seelke, 2016). With origins in the United States and factions of the gangs in other Central American countries, such as Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and the United States, the gangs have been classified as "transnational." Even so, the *maras* continue to focus

on local interests (Seelke, 2016; Olson, 2015).

In this thesis, I argue that the government policies each country has chosen to combat gang violence better explain the difference in violence between Guatemala and El Salvador than the demographic characteristics, history of violence, or level of development of each country. More specifically, the *mano dura* (iron fist) policies, which allow police to arrest individuals with suspected ties to gangs without evidence of criminal activity, that El Salvador continues to implement, results in a cycle of violence due to the environment of corruption that the policy creates, perpetuating gang violence. Although Guatemala has used some anti-gang policies that resemble *mano dura* ideology, its focus on decreasing corruption and impunity has been more effective in reducing gang violence, resulting in the disparity of violence between Guatemala and El Salvador. The International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), introduced in 2007, has focused on reducing corruption in the country and has led to lower levels of violence. Despite CICIG being an international commission that investigates and prosecutes crime and corruption in Guatemala, its authority is limited and must receive approval from the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Judiciary (Schneider, 2019). Any investigation, policy development or reform, and prosecution must be approved by the Guatemalan Public Prosecutor's Office; therefore, it remains a government policy decision to renew the CICIG mandate and accept CICIG's reform proposals.

To investigate the disparity in violence between Guatemala and El Salvador, a direct case study will be conducted. The similarities in terms of demographics, development, and sources of violence between the two countries will first be explained to demonstrate why the difference in homicide rate is significant and worthy of examination....

The central focus of this paper lies in the overwhelming similarities between El Salvador and Guatemala with differing outcomes of violence. The two countries host the majority of MS 13 and Barrio 18 members. Guatemala has an estimated total of 22,000 gang members (17,000 Barrio 18 members and 5,000 MS 13 members) while 20,000 gang members were estimated in El Salvador (8,000 Barrio 18 members and 12,000 MS 13 members) in 2012 according to UNODC statistics (Seelke, 2016). However, these statistics may have changed and reports including the 2015 Unwilling Participants report by the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States estimates that El Salvador had as many as 60,000 total gang members in 2014 (de Waegh, 2015). Besides similar gang demographics, the two countries have a shared history of civil war violence, and similar levels of development. The United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) has ranked El Salvador 124th in the world and Guatemala 126th, demonstrating similar levels of economic, social, and political development (UN Human Development Index, El Salvador, 2019; UN Human Development Index, Guatemala, 2019). There are three key dimensions that the UN uses to calculate the HDI ranking for each country: a long, healthy life measured by life expectancy; access to education measured by expected years of schooling and the mean years of schooling among adult populations; and a "decent standard of living" measured by Gross National Income per capita and adjusted to the country (Rosner, 2019**)**. In terms of social development, El Salvador ranks higher than Guatemala in multiple categories, with an expected 12 years of education, compared to 10.6 years in Guatemala, a skilled labor force making up 37.4% of the population, compared to 18.1% in Guatemala, and multidimensional poverty making up 7.9% of the population, compared to 8.9% of the population in Guatemala (UN Human Development Index, El Salvador, 2019; UN Human Development Index, Guatemala, 2019). Since the two countries share similar population demographics and levels of development, we cannot conclude that the disparities in violence

are caused by social factors such as unemployment or education.

Despite the data depicting El Salvador as economically and socially stronger, El Salvador has the highest level of violence, quantified through homicide rates, in the Northern Triangle region whereas Guatemala has the lowest level of violence. El Salvador has been called "a nation held hostage" due to its high homicide rate largely attributed to the gang violence between MS 13 and Barrio 18 (Whelan, 2018). Even though Guatemala faces homicide rates significantly above the world average of 6.1 homicides per 100,000 individuals, its HDI ranking would suggest that it would experience higher levels of violence than El Salvador due to worse social and economic conditions (World Bank, 2017). The reality of gang violence in El Salvador and Guatemala compared to what may be expected based on the UN HDI data and the similarities between the countries demonstrates that there is another factor that makes El Salvador more vulnerable to gang violence that has caused the disparity in violence between the two countries.

[...]

Maras versus Pandillas

The gangs MS 13 and Barrio 18 are classified as *maras,* more recent to the Northern Triangle than the historically prevalent *pandillas*. The existence of the *maras* is specifically tied to U.S. deportation policies which began in the 1990s while *pandillas* have been present long before the U.S. deportations and tend to be more localized than the *maras* (Seelke, 2016). The two *maras* themselves have evolved into sophisticated criminal organizations with transnational characteristics, however, maintain "rooted in urban marginality" (Wolf, 2012). Members of MS 13 and Barrio 18 have been reported in neighboring Central American states including Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Panama, along with factions in the United States (Seelke, 2016). Despite the "transnational" term associated with the *maras*, it is important to recognize that the subgroups known as "*cliques"* or "*clicas*" across countries are semi-autonomous and usually associated with a certain territory (InSight Crime & The Center for Latin American and Latino Studies - CLALS, 2018). There is no formal hierarchical structure that characterizes the *maras*; instead, each *clique* follows the local leader or "*primera palabra,*" even though the *cliques* associate themselves with the larger *mara* identity (InSight Crime, 2019, MS 13). The *mara* phenomenon along with extreme violence of the gangs has garnered international attention as well as local governmental initiatives to combat the organizations.

[...]

U.S. Deportations to Central America

The spread of MS 13 and Barrio 18 to Central America is largely attributed to the US implementation of policies to deport immigrants with a criminal record back to their home countries (Stoll, 2017; Zilberg, 2011). Mass deportations of criminals from the United States to their country of origin began without consulting the home countries, which destabilized the already fragile and broken countries (InSight Crime, 2019, MS 13). Due to the increasing rates of violence and homicide between the gangs in Los Angeles along with the riots and looting that followed the Rodney King trial in 1992, which involved many Latinx gang members, officials looked to return undocumented immigrants to their home country (Stoll, 2017). Statistics from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) recorded 1,763 people deported back to Guatemala in 1995 (Jones, 2013). However, the number of deportees to Guatemala increased to 4,543 in 2000, peaking in

2011 with 30,313 Guatemalans deported, demonstrating a rapid increase after the implementation of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996 (Jones, 2013). The IIRIRA facilitated the deportation of immigrants which included gang members, individuals with minor and extensive criminal records, and undocumented immigrants more generally (Seelke, 2016; Legal Information Institute).The deportation of gang and non-gang affiliated criminals back to Central America is said to have "exported a Los Angeles gang culture to Central America," facilitating the expansion of MS 13 and Barrio 18 territory to the Northern Triangle region (Seelke, 2016; Stoll, 2017).

The deportations of gang members and undocumented immigrants with a criminal record has not stopped, with a documented 129,726 ex-cons and criminals returned to Central America from 2001 to 2010 (InSight & CLALS, 2018; DHS, 2011). Over 90% of the deportees were sent to the Northern Triangle specifically (InSight & CLALS, 2018; DHS, 2011). Further deportations statistics show that between fiscal years 2014 and 2017, an additional 45,851 people with criminal records were returned to Guatemala and 29,249 to El Salvador (DHS, 2014; DHS, 2015; DHS, 2016; DHS, 2017). The practice of deporting individuals to their country of origin with little communication between national governments put further strains on the weak governments in Guatemala and El Salvador. The influx of individuals with little cultural or emotional ties to the country, many of whom did not even have a strong grasp of the Spanish language, required state support to reintegrate into society, support that was not available (Stoll, 2017; Bruneau et. al., 2011). Combined, the lack of economic opportunity, distrust of government, and individuals looking for a social connection with the abundance of weapons post-conflict provided incentives for returnees to fall back on the familiar gang lifestyle and for non-members to join the organization (Bruneau et. al., 2011).

[...]

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Evaluating the Capacity of Green Infrastructure Projects to Facilitate Empathy with Nature in their Users

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The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/wh246t01z

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Urban places are built by humans around human needs and desires and are driven by global and economic growth and access to advanced technologies (Clark, 2020). The result of this building and re-building has been so profound that it has been granted its own name: the anthropocene. This term specifically refers to the "massive and rapid human-induced global ecological change" (Clark, 2020) seen in contemporary times, and implies that the over extraction of resources, rapid extinction of species worldwide, and anthropogenic climate change (Clark, 2020) will disturb not only the "planet's health" but human health as well. Amidst current global efforts to prepare for and mitigate the effects of climate change, many questions arise: What if we focused on developing cities while prioritizing climatic and ecological health? What if we harnessed the influence places and spaces have in shaping the ways we live our lives? Could we influence people to act with more compassion and understanding, or empathy, towards nature? What would this look like? And finally, does this behavior already exist, and if so, what urban designs would embody it?

The first step in exploring these questions was to select an appropriate psychological framework through which to understand the relationship between humans and their environment, specifically the connection to nature. The phenomenon of empathy, or an interpersonal understanding of another's internal or subjective state, gave this study a psychological direction with both substantial literature and various metrics. Empathy is, additionally, an important characteristic of building and maintaining relationships. Theoretically, when one empathizes with another, they begin to appreciate and understand this other.

Next, when refining a design type, designs were chosen that display an understanding and appreciation of nature. Green infrastructure design types were thus selected as they consistently weave together aesthetically-pleasing design and natural elements while mitigating, or solving, urban environmental problems. They are also usually public and often interactive. The consistent presence of nature in these designs offers the greatest opportunity to study how a design can influence a user's perception of *such* nature. This is followed by the assumption that the presence and robustness of these "empathy influencers" within a design will be strong indicators as to whether users feel empathy towards nature as a result of the design and, consequently, change their behavior towards nature overall. Despite great variability in purpose, green infrastructure designs are always human constructions that incorporate natural (i.e. 'green') elements. These designs are often long-term, ecologically inspired solutions to ecological issues within the built environment. Once better identified, the marriage of the similar values within nature-based designs and nature-focused empathy could be strengthened and could beget exciting prospects for long-term,

ecologically-optimized and resilient design solutions.

This study's initial goal is to assess the presence and strength of nature-focused empathy elicited in users from designs. This paper defines users as those that employ and interact with a green infrastructure design —American, public, and generalized in scope. Before this can be done, however, elemental stimuli that facilitate empathy with nature must be identified within existing research and literature. With the limited scope and time of an undergraduate research project, surveying and assessing individuals' invoked empathy when interacting with a green infrastructure design was not feasible; it did, however, provide valuable insight that humans were not necessary to answer the question posed. Consequently, this study uses a combination of existing empathy metrics (e.g. aforementioned triggers, interpersonal surveys) and design literature to create a framework with which to measure the capacity of a green infrastructure design to facilitate empathy with nature for users. This framework is then applied to two green infrastructure projects that appeared most likely to embody the upper and lower bounds of possible empathy elicited from a single design. I, the researcher, was the sole contributor to the preliminary research, creation of the framework, and subsequent analyses.

[...]

GEOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES

The concept of *place* underlies the intersection of empathy, nature, and design. In geography, a sense of place denotes "the [contested and constructed] specific feelings, perceptions, and [unique] attitudes generated in people by the particular qualities of a locality, or the events that they experience there" (Castree et al., 2013). A study by Walker and Chapman (2003) about 258 visitors to a Canadian national park found that a sense of place influenced both empathy and perspective-taking, while perspective-taking also influenced empathy. Places, tangible and perceptual, are the medium through which people connect to their environment. While this does not transfer well when measured objectively, metrics such as the consistency of a design's nature with the regional biome help inform the topic.

The use of empathy in this study is highly phenomenological as it focuses on the experience humans have while experiencing green infrastructure designs (via measuring the aspects of the designs themselves). The study of experience can be narrow in scope, focusing on one element or object as introduced by Edmund Husserl; broad in scope, using imagination of an object's potential (and constraints) as advocated by Jean-Paul Sartre; or in-between examining meanings and uses as did Martin Heidegger (Simpson & Ash, 2020). The frame of phenomenology used for this research is broad and more contextual, and thus closer to Sartre and Heidegger's perspectives. Individual experiences *will* be biased by their previous experiences. Human emotions are, furthermore, recognized by geographers as able to "transform the way we think about the local and the global, enable us to connect with different lifeworlds, and encourage us to appreciate the emotion present in spaces and communities" (Lucherini & Hanks, 2020). Aside from seeing emotions as ways of knowing, they are also confounds in scientific replicability and highly dynamic in meaning and context.

[...]

Wherever people exist, clues of their "philosophical arguments, critical and political agendas, and understandings [of nature]" remain inscribed on the landscape. In geography, landscape can be analyzed as a process by which our national, social, and subjective identities are formed, as a spatial form and artistic genre which encode specific historical narratives and political practices, as a site of visual appropriation, of historical

memory, or as the medium in which body and world affectively encounter each other" (Dubow, 2009). This "body and world" encounter is often explored using structuralism, an approach that examines the human beliefs, ideas, and behaviors behind phenomena and how they perpetuate those phenomena (Smith, 2020). "The structuralist approach was invented and developed by several key thinkers—e.g., Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Barthes, Foucault—and many others across several disciplines" (Smith, 2020). Criticisms of this have given rise to poststructuralist epistemological and ontological analyses. In other words, not only should we look into ideas that beget reality but how those ideas came to be (Woodward, et al., 2020).

Recent studies regarding geographical possibilism have opened up new theories that counter environmental determinism – exploring the "possibilities that exist in nature and especially on those that are effectively used through human activities in various times and places" (Berdoulay, 2020). When applied to issues of the anthropocene, possibilism implies that humans have agency in the way the environment manifests. This agency, when framed within contemporary anthropogenic behaviors, forms the foundation for this study's assumption that humans do not currently actively empathize with nature.

Another important consideration when investigating the interactions of humans with their environments is subjectivity. For "most of geography's history, subjectivity has meant understanding the role of various social locations (such as class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality) on the construction of the individual's relationship with the world, which shapes their knowledge and understanding of the world" (Sharp, 2020). Recognition of subjective variances in the perceptions of both research participants and researchers themselves has led to more profound and conscientious studies; this occurs though considering the "effects of less visible or conscious markers of identity such as psychological and emotional characteristics, the influence of bodily knowledge, and the subjectivity of things external to the individual: networks, collectivities, technologies, and nonhuman animals" (Sharp, 2020).

When these theories are reified, they create and uncover structures of power throughout landscapes and interactions among them. This brings up questions such as: Who has the authority to be making choices about nature? Who decides who gets to experience nature? Who gets to decide what is natural? Who can access this nature or design? Are ecologists the best, or only choice? It is important that these systems of inclusion *or exclusion* are weighed when concluding the ability of designs to facilitate empathy with the public. People, designs, and natural elements vary across places; this requires more stringent controls to extract valid results but also provides great potential in personalizing and diversifying design criteria and analyses.

Additionally, geography has set precedents of correlations between environmental and human health, and employing the landscape as therapy. While knowledge on the effect of environmental health on human health is highly sought by governments and academics, the actual impacts of the environment of human health are difficult to measure, verify and, thus, impossible to translate into policy (Elliott & Thompson, 2020). Research on physical, social, and symbolic dimensions of places and spaces that were associated with healing has helped develop theories of "relational understandings, of life courses, bodily abilities, and critical policy to show how specific places and spaces can be harnessed to enable human health and flourishing" (Foley, 2020). This implies that urban planners could harness the healing power of certain spaces to ameliorate issues for and enrich the quality of life of all urban users.

[...]

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

SUMMARY

To assess the capacity of a green infrastructure design to facilitate empathy with nature in its users, the researcher developed a new metric, the END framework, to assess observable elements within green infrastructure projects. These elements were initially based on the DEN survey and then expanded upon with input from other empathy surveys and other literature on elements shown to help stimulate empathy in human users. END was developed as a research tool for consistency in evaluating designs and its similarity to the survey-format used to measure empathy. It is then applied to two green infrastructure designs that are most likely to embody the upper and lower bounds of possible elicited empathy; this is used to infer the overall effect these designs have on how their human users perceive nature. The END framework presents a novel tool for others to use when assessing design.

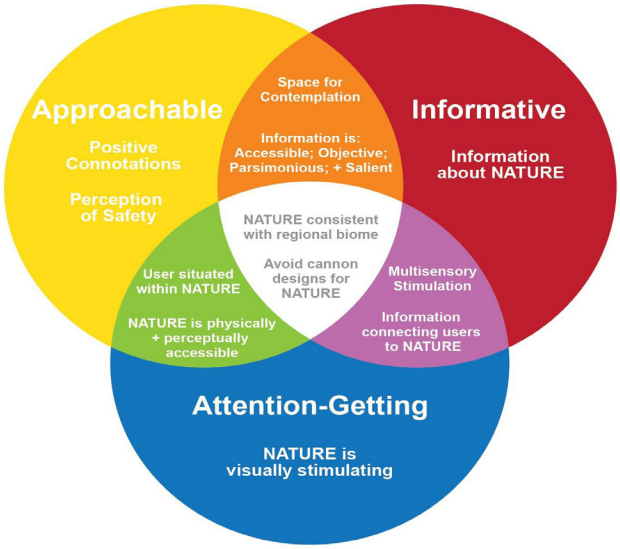

FIGURE 3.3 The Connection of END Criteria

The END criteria, as illustrated above, are broken down into three main categories: Approachable, Informative, and Attention-Getting. An approachable design ensures that the user feels safe and comfortable near and within the design. An informative design, by END standards, includes information about nature, nature as it relates to users, and space for this deliberation to take place. Finally, an attention-getting design captures the user's attention and continues to engage them with the design. When this is brought together, the process of empathy is mimicked in that users are drawn to the design, feel comfortable and willing to interact with the design, users can understand the state of nature in the design, and then users can apply this nature state to their own state. The process is not necessarily linear but is largely iterative and is likely to follow in this general sequence.

[...]

IMPLICATIONS + CONCLUSION

Finally, I want to explore issues that this research can help to solve. First, it is worth noting that both social norms and empathy beget positively reinforcing feedback loops that can be used to designers' and policy makers' advantages. Social norms influence behavior and are proven to be the number one influence on human behavior. Similarly, the process of empathy (neurological and cognitive) promotes itself – coming back to commonly-accepted neurological theories that one can "rewire" the neurons in their brain to be easier and faster each consecutive time. Consequently, incorporating empathy in design would serve two positively reinforcing purposes: 1) catalysing the process of empathy (and following processes) in each user, and 2) establishing social norms of empathy-with-nature in design that would promote a social spread of empathy.

This study supports the largely untouched heuristic of empathy in solving urban issues. Through curating information on the intersection of empathy, nature, and design, the researcher was able to design a tool with which to measure indices of empathy in green infrastructure projects. This tool, a framework of 26 questions regarding design form and characteristics, outlines triggers of cognitive empathy to be accepted or rejected and was applied to designs likely to embody the upper- and lower-limits of design-evoked-empathy. These analyses indicated the intrinsicness of safety and prioritization of ecological aesthetics in minimum design requirements and the feasibility of creating a green infrastructure project that comprehensively facilitates empathy in users. Immediate applications of these findings would include informative material in designs while longer reaching policy and studies would require human feedback on the causes and potency of experienced empathy for nature.

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Olympic Legacies: A Comparative Analysis of Olympic Vision Planning

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The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/ww72bc34h

Introduction

Brief History of the Olympic Games and Olympism Movement

Historically, the Olympic Games have centered on the principles of inclusivity, competitiveness and facilitating international cooperation through Olympic sport. In addition to fostering this ideal, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and their respective host sub-committees mutually agree to discuss, plan, and prioritize specific financial, social legacies and goals to be upheld by hosting Olympic Games. Oftentimes, countries who seek an Olympic bid will aim to improve their economy through restructuring the city's image in a way that capitalizes on the city's marketability and often encourages higher levels of tourism and highlights marketable parts of the city's image. Additionally, many bids believe that hosting the Olympics can provide a boost to the local economy via increased revenue surpluses and improved image of the city and its respective country framed as a tourist destination (Wilson 2015). However, many Olympic bids rarely result in the vision a city wants from hosting the Games. Oftentimes, lack of funding, political turmoil, disorganization of the Olympic committee or other issues can tamper with the lasting outcome hosting an Olympics can have for the country who wishes to host. This issue is the heart of why the Olympic Movement's structure needs further examination. The backbone of the Olympism Movement is the doctrine that international sports can be used to facilitate international cooperation through sport, in the spirit that friendly competition can promote peace and mutual understanding between nations. This doctrine has been essential in countries securing bid approvals from the International Olympic Committee, who governs the planning and structure of a city's Olympic vision and encourages spending for the construction of Olympic venues, athlete villages and other infrastructure that is necessary to receive the "Olympic seal of approval." However, these construction projects have had a direct impact on the profitability and sustainability of previous Olympic Games and have historically had the biggest impact on overall Olympic profitability and the permanence of Olympic venues after the Games' conclusion.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has sought to recognize and prioritize host countries that value universal rights to play sports and have democratic ideals inserted into its purpose and mission statement. The IOC has tended to favor countries with democratic ideals, high GDP levels, and who recognize universal human rights for all citizens. Additionally, the IOC requires bidding hosts to submit a "vision statement" which outlines a city's goals from hosting. This includes financial targets, such as renovations to existing infrastructure, merchandise and image marketing strategies, and projected long-term economic growth expectations following the conclusion of the games. However, many cities often overspend during the planning phase, channeling funding from

public sector streams of income such as tax revenue and sponsorships. However most budgets average merely $1 to $2 billion in costs on paper. In practice, costs tend to be much more, and can be attributed to IOC regulations requiring host cities to construct brand-new venues and provide public funding, resulting in higher overall costs. As a result of this, most hosts have not profited from the Games consistently throughout Olympic history. The only exception to this had been the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, who have managed to circumnavigate planning costs and the 1992 Barcelona Olympics who had a clear post-Olympic vision via boosts to tourism. Under these costs, previous Olympics have traditionally always constructed new venues to house Olympic stadiums, such as Olympic pools, Track and Field and other venues. However very few of these monuments have tended to remain after the Olympics' conclusion. For example, the 2016 pool stadiums from Rio 2016 were constructed for swimming events throughout the Olympics, and the Rio Organizational Olympic Committee (ROOC) had plans to revitalize the venue as a new educational facility. However, the plan failed due to further escalated debt accrued from hosting the Olympics, including a lack of surplus revenue, profit and the correct structures needed to manage the upkeep of venues, such as pool construction workers to manage upkeep and the replacement of pool infrastructure needed to endure permeability of the venue.

This paper will analyze the sociopolitical structures needed to assure the permanence of "Olympic Legacies" as tangible, sustainable, lasting impacts to host cities as a result of hosting an Olympic Games (MacAloon 2002). MacAloon defines this term in the context that Olympic legacies have an impact on a city's image, but lacks a definition to a hard and tangible legacy in terms of infrastructure. Historically, legacies have been referred to in terms of the lasting impact that media coverage, a city's vision, or the public's view of a host city has impacted people's understanding of the host city after a games conclusion. China, as an example, structured its image to frame its vision of its Olympics as a modern utopia that seeked to "revolutionize" the public's view of the Olympics, which until then, had been losing popularity. China, after finishing its construction, had completed the "birds nest stadium," with estimates totaling about $2.3 billion US dollars. Annual expenditures on Olympic infrastructure has increased every year due to inflation. How a country chooses to frame its image directly can also have an impact on sustainability. Barcelona 1992 chose to frame its image in a way that encouraged tourism, by highlighting aspects of its beaches, people, food, and other qualities directly linked to tourism.

Few studies have examined the political structures of governments who have hosted in comparison to economic and social factors that have had lasting impact on city hosts. By comparing historical Olympic data gathered from individual country's Official Olympiad reports, I would hope to synthesize the data into a framework that will provide a model for how a host country can likely retain their Olympic venues through strategic planning with the IOC.

[...]

London, England 2012

London's regeneration planning operated on three levels: local, city-wide, and national. Among these, the most crucial was the national level, which had power in directing urban policymaking to appropriate smaller city and local sub-committees. The DCLG, a national planning policy institution for the Olympics of Britain's national government was the main source of funding towards the Thames Gateway Development Corporation (LTGDC) which according to Smith's research on London's regeneration planning, was formed to regenerate large parts of East London (Smith 2014). Acting under the authority of the LTGDC,

then mayor of London Ken Livingstone emphasized East London was the only area that could meet IOC requirements and leave a positive impact on an economically crippled area of London. The nomination of a site in Stratford of the Lower Lea Valley was critical to the revitalization of East London due to its immense size and proximity to the city's center. Additionally, this area had ongoing urban initiatives to reconstruct transportation and housing constructions but had lacked the funding necessary to complete its projects. Therefore, by combining these factors, the urban regeneration plan constituted a construction proposal that would use the Olympics to construct new railways between the area and downtown London, new housing units, roads, parks, tourist attractions, and various businesses.

One of the attributable factors of why London succeeded in creating its own Olympic vision could be attributed to the lack of political and organizational dissonance experienced by planners from members of Parliament, organizers, and funders. Generally speaking, all groups directly impacted by the venue, housing, and infrastructure construction were in favor of revitalization, including most London inhabitants, business owners, and political parties, due to the increased international media attention and potential profits that tourism and infrastructure could bring to both the national and local economies. However, not all plans for London resulted in positive outcomes. One outcome noted by Giulianotti emphasized the lack of mobility in London during the Olympics as conducive to the undermining of London's goal for a positive media image. Analysis by Giulianotti, Armstrong, Hales, and Hobbs (2015) of mobility in the London 2012 Olympics highlights two specific and recurring issues faced during the games, transportation and resulting housing vacancies. Giulianotti notes transportation mobility during Olympic events caused sharp increases in inefficiencies in traffic, in a large part due to elitism.... Gentrification seemed to be a more persistent and long-running issue facing London's ability to fulfill its terms of success outlined in the "London Plan," specifically in terms of the impact urban regeneration had on local residents.

The other issue was the vacancy of housing around Olympic Park constructions. Giulianotti et al. noted that Olympic preparations in the district of East London's Newham, required that over 400 residents and 200 businesses owners vacate their homes and businesses on the Clays Lane Housing Cooperative to make way for the construction of the Olympic stadium and surrounding roads (Giulianotti et al. 2015). Displaced persons were not compensated for this removal and the action represented the first "fundamental shift" in political control over the local lands in East London during this stage of planning. Paul Watt's (2013) interviews conducted in the Newham Borough's Clays Lane and Carpenters Estate areas of the Greater Lea Valley Project centralized around the socioeconomic impact gentrification had on its residents. Older, more long-term residents in Newham reported a greater sense of belonging and community, resulting in overall discontent at the city's gentrification process of "revitalization" for the construction of the Olympic Park. However younger residents reported less discontent due to community and more frustration at rising housing costs associated with the construction of new housing units surrounding their residences located near the Olympic Park construction areas (Watts 2013, 113).

[...]

Rio, Brazil 2016

[...]

Reasons as to why Rio failed could be attributed to a variety of factors, specifically varied economic,

social and political issues that made planning for Rio particularly difficult, and undermined the ability of the Brazilian government to create institutions that could support their sustainability goals listed in the SMP. Economic issues that influenced the Olympic policymakers' ability to implement the Games included the impact of the 2016 recession on the market and the debt accrued from hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2014. The main social issues facing Rio mainly involved public health, being the outbreak of Zika-Virus and media pressure to address pollution issues and health threats to athletes competing in water events. Finally, political pressures from Brazil's largest corruption scandal in history, the Petrobras Scandal, contributed to the distrustful image the public had towards the government and contributed to the crippling economy. Combined, these issues created a climate of economic uncertainty, driven by Brazil's pride at producing the image of an up and coming world economic actor via a "BRIC nation" (O'Neil 2001; Nobre 2016, 5). yet leaving the country in a weakened economic and political state rife with problems.

Between 2015 and 2016, Brazil slumped into a wide-spread economic recession, resulting in a contraction in the total economy, and causing rampant unemployment. At the beginning of 2016, Brazil's GDP growth rate shrank by 3.6%, slightly lower than the 2015 shrinkage of 3.8%. This contraction of the economy was persistent for 8 consecutive quarters, increasing the unemployment rate to 12.6% by January 2016 according to CNN, leaving over 13 million Brazillians out of work.

The cause was a decrease in exports to China, whose growing economy required fewer commodities from Brazil. Additionally, since Brazil is a mostly commodity-based economy reliant on oil and agriculture, prices of goods are vulnerable to instability due to competitive world prices. As a result, in 2016, Brazil's commodities of oil, sugar, coffee, and metals all dipped in value. Lastly, the media attention of the Petrobras scandal undermined investors' trust in the Brazillian investment market, causing investment to plunge 12% and the value of the Brazillian real to fall about 12%....

All of these drops in value across the economy likely contributed to Brazil's desperation to implement its Olympic vision of a "revitalizing" Games, in an effort to gain public enthusiasm and support for boosting Brazil's international image and likely contributed to Brazil's franticness to create an image of a sound and impressive South American economy which it emphasized as a part of its mission statement for its Olympic bid.

Additionally, regarding health crises during 2016, the largest proved to be the outbreak of Zika Virus, a novel virus originating from Uganda which spread through mosquito bites and was found to cause "microcephaly" or brain shrinkage and death of babies born from pregnant females who harbored the virus. The IOC in collaboration with the WHO recognized the threat Zika posed to athletes and provided a statement to the world warning pregnant women should not travel to Brazil during this time, in an effort to curb infections. However the outbreak contributed to the general unease harbored by athletes and officials planning for the Games who were already concerned about issues with water quality and being able to train for aquatic events safely without contracting other viral or bacterial infections. Hamilton's study of the Zika Outbreak during this time suggests, even with international academics urging the IOC to move or cancel the Games for safety concerns, urged that the Games would continue as planned (Hamilton et al. 2017, 523). As a result, the WHO released a second statement in June 2016 stating the Games would continue as planned, outlining that the threat of further outbreak was limited and that containment measures were put in place, meaning containment of infected individuals and testing provided by the state. The overall outbreak of Zika threatened the welfare of Brazil

in ensuring it could host a successful Games, and Brazil as a result of this was adamant at ensuring everything would be okay to continue as planned. The Library of Congress's Report of the 2016 Games outlined the Brazil Committee's Plans to fumigate public areas, reducing mosquito population and quelling fears of outbreak, likely in an attempt to preserve its vision and avoid financial pitfalls of postponing or canceling the Games entirely. Additionally, the outbreak put further financial strain on hospitals and medical officials. Secondly, international pressures to contain pollution were wide and numerous. As noted earlier, the contamination of human faces brought an international image of underdevelopment to Brazil's current state of the Guanabara Bay and concerns were raised over the athlete's abilities to train and compete in polluted waters. The widespread media attention pressured Brazil into developing measures to improve its water quality, as stated, by implementing barriers to catch waste and investing in water treatment facilities. This international pressure likely contributed to the rushed construction of these facilities and pollution containment measures, preventing the government from delivering the image of environmental sustainability outlined in its proposal.

[...]

Analysis

Analyzing the comparative qualities of these case studies including differences in vision, planning, implementation, and preparation reveals how the institutions that govern these factors also influence their outcomes in respective host cities and their Olympic Plans. Of note, in each case certain economic and political structures; joint state and local planning committees, sound corporations to crowdsource public and private funding, and non-corrupt bodies of authority were in place that made the handling of political issues more manageable for each planning committee in cases that were successful. These structures had profound influence on how the outcome of higher-authority decision-making was executed or ignored regarding the use of funding, sustainability planning, and the regeneration planning and construction goals of each state were conceived and implemented, with special focus on goals each country had for improving physical aspects of its host city. Overall, this research identifies the presence of a strong collaborative state and local governing authority, good sources of funding, stable economies, and a presence of secure, non-corrupt institutions allows a hosting state an ideal institutional model for hosting an Olympics and achieving the city's Olympic vision. Therefore hosts with less stable institutions, institutions that do not control corruption, that inhibit economic growth, that fund spending through debt, and that lack a combined state and local authority therefore have a more difficult time implementing their legacy plan, as demonstrated by Rio.

[...]

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Experiencing Religious Change: Latter-day Saint Women's Perceptions of Church Policy Changes and their Impact

Kathryn Halverson

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/mg74qn13g

ABSTRACT:
This honors thesis examines how women in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints understand and experience policy changes occurring in the Church, specifically in how they relate to their position as members of a traditionalist religious institution. Past research on traditionalist women has relied upon the victim/empowerment paradigm, which tends to ignore the complex theological worldviews women engage in when navigating their religious and social lives. This thesis used qualitative interviews with seventeen current and former female members of the Church to analyze their ideas and experiences in a non-reductionist way. The results showed that women tended to be satisfied with the gender-segregated roles in the Church due to an acceptance of doctrine that preaches essentialized differences between men and women, as well as conceptualizing their religious duties as service, rather than status symbols. These women understood religious change through four rational frameworks: the "living church," "global church," "women-focused," and "critical" explanations. Participants reported using two main strategies to cope with inconsistencies in the doctrine, called the "separation strategy" and the "eternal perspective." Overall, these women were generally appreciative of the changes happening in the Church, which they saw as evidence of the patriarchal hierarchy acknowledging their experiences. Women's positionality was not a factor that caused many to struggle with their faith; however, for some the LGBTQ+ policy changes were a tipping point that led them to disassociate from the Church. This project seeks to amplify Latter-day Saint women's voices and to better understand their experiences in the context of change within traditionalist religions.

[...]

DISCUSSION
Previous research on women in traditionalist faiths has relied on a paradigm of victimization versus empowerment, in which traditionalist women are conceptualized either as inherent victims or as individually empowered objects of their religious institution (Hoyt 2007). As a relatively young Christian sect, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is of particular interest because it is currently undergoing a phase of rapid change in which many of its conservative policies—particularly those concerning women—are becoming more in line with notions of gender that exist in the broader progressive society. This study used qualitative interviews with Latter-day Saint women to examine how these changes affect the lives of typical female members of the Church. Overall, the data revealed that women in the Church of Jesus Christ are satisfied with their gender roles and power dynamics, and that policy changes, while appreciated, did not strongly influence their attitudes

toward the Church in general. There is tension within the Church of Jesus Christ as it is transitioning from one generational ideology to the next and are caught in a balance between *accommodation* and *intransigence* (Iannaccone and Miles 1990). The following sections will analyze the results of the interviews and demonstrate how they fall within the existing literature.

Gender

To Latter-day Saints, "womanhood" is generally interpreted in terms of biology (female sex and reproductive characteristics) and familial roles, specifically motherhood. The Church's doctrine espouses essentialized beliefs about innate, binary gender characteristics. These "divine gender" characteristics are heavily ingrained within the belief system, meaning there is little contention around gender-segregated work and expectations because this belief system is so widely accepted and unquestioned. This could be a reason why there is so little dissatisfaction surrounding the different roles for men and women, as one might expect there to be in a social context where it is a much more contested issue. In other words, most women do not question why they are held to a different standard from men because they believe that, at the core, men and women are naturally different by design. This belief demonstrates the institution's influence in shaping gender identity, as discussed by Sumerau and Cragun (2015). Another reason for the relatively high satisfaction with gender role division was the conception of religious duties as a service, rather than a status symbol. Women were not concerned with the segregated nature of their roles within the Church because they saw their roles as doing their part, not as a reflection of their power within the system. The few women I spoke to who were concerned about gender inequality in the Church stated that ultimately it was a small issue that did not influence their decision to stay or leave the faith. Former Church members acknowledged that gender inequalities existed, but that it was not a major reason in their decision to leave the Church. Gender is such an influential force in the institutional Church that it works almost as a silent backdrop—ever-present, yet seldom recognized.

The most defining characteristic separating men from women in the Church is the ordination of men and the exclusion of women from the priesthood. One might perceive this as a structural inequality which devalues women and gives men all the governing power (Sumerau and Cragun 2015). However, the women in this study did not see it that way. The priesthood was not conceived as a status symbol or a power to be used for personal gain. Similar to the women in Beaman's study, interviewees conceptualized it as a shared power even though it is officially only held by male members. Many agreed that it was unlikely that women would ever be ordained, even in light of recent changes being made. Most were content with that, which suggests that members tend to be more accepting of a religion's "eternal truths," even when changes are made that could suggest the Church is moving in that direction (Iannaccone and Miles 1990). In other words, even though the Church has changed to allow women to be baptismal witnesses—a duty formerly reserved for priesthood bearers—members do not think the doctrine will ever allow women to have the priesthood because that has been declared an "eternal truth" as opposed to an administrative policy.

The roles of women in the Church have changed drastically over the past few generations. Participants talked about the ways in which doctrine has shifted to be more accepting of nontraditional families, and how leaders now emphasize women's personal agency to choose whether they choose to be stay-at-home mothers. The Church is still a family-focused organization, but it appears to be more accepting of nontraditional families to avoid alienating those who choose not to have children. What was once perceived as a rigid expectation of all women is now understood

as being a more personal choice. This attitudinal shift is reflected in more recent changes, as will be discussed in the next section.

Changes

Due to the sectarian nature of the Church of Jesus Christ, members often need to rationalize policy change in order to maintain consistency with their religious beliefs (Dunford and Kunz 1973). Changes to "eternal truths'' can be the cause of cognitive dissonance. The Church has long set itself apart from secular society, proclaiming itself to be God's "one true church." However, it is easy to see similarities between the changes in the Church and the issues going on in broader Western society in terms of recent feminist and LGBTQ+ rights movements. Clearly, leaders' revelations have a complex relationship with society, and women in the Church have various ways to understand and perceive that relationship. Ultimately, the reasons for the changes and their timeliness are up to individual interpretation—something openly encouraged by the Church, as a means of "[exercising] flexibility...while maintaining purity of doctrine" (Iannaccone and Miles 1990). Questions about the position of religious doctrine amidst broader society are not unique to members of the Church of Jesus Christ. It is interesting to see how members of this religion rationalize change in comparison to people from different eras and faiths.[1]

The Church of Jesus Christ has thus far been arguably successful in navigating social pressures by changing its policies to be more in-line with progressive social norms, while staying true to its core doctrine. Does this mean that the Church is on a path leading out of sectarian retrenchment, toward denomination status? Not likely. According to Mauss and Barlow, to transition from a sect into a church requires an "deemphasis of the exclusivist, millenarian, and eschatological themes that were once so prominent" (1991). Loosening of the commitment mechanisms that appeal to so many members would allow the Church to assimilate, but at the risk of forming yet another sectarian schism of those who reject sweeping change. The Church has indicated it is comfortable with its status as a "peculiar people" and remaining true to its traditionalist, counter-cultural policies.

What does this mean for typical Latter-day Saint women? Based on interview responses and previous literature on the subject, Latter-day Saint women are not in need of liberation. They are comfortable with their assigned roles and the gender dynamics of their institution. Gender dynamics do not seem to be a major factor that causes women to dissociate from the Church. However, these women do see a need for evolution in the doctrine to broaden the roles of women and to make them feel more involved. Changes for women are welcomed and interpreted as confirmation that the patriarchal hierarchy sees and receives revelation on their behalf.

Generally, Latter-day Saint women's attitudes towards religious change were positive. Many said they improved their overall experience and made them feel more visible as members of the Church. Given this welcome reception, it is fair to predict that the Church will continue to evolve in similar ways. The only change that evoked controversial opinions was the policy change in 2015 that made it so children of gay parents could not be baptized or given baby blessings, and which was later reversed in 2019. Understandably with the trend of Western society becoming more and more accepting of homosexuality, the 2015 change touched a nerve with many individuals who saw it as a step backwards in the progress of the Church. There were many others who perceived it as the Church

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1 For more information on change in other religious contexts, see: Seidler, John. 1986. "Contested Accommodation: The Catholic Church as a Special Case of Social Change." Pp. 847-874 in Social Forces, 64(4). University of North Carolina Press.

standing by its word and not changing its doctrine at the whim of society. Ultimately, the fact that the policy was eventually undone after public outcry reveals that the Church is not immune to social pressures any more than other religions.

As for the future of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is likely that this current phase of evolution will follow similar patterns as it has undergone before, and that many other religions have experienced it as well. It is impossible to separate one social institution from the influence of the society in which it is located, but interesting to observe their relationship to one another. It is obvious that, to some extent, the Church is responding to broader questions taking place in society regarding gender, sexuality, power, and the ways they intersect. It is also navigating the same social trends observed in other religions with the younger generations' changing views on religion and spirituality (Riess 2019a). The fact that the Church is undergoing a minor upheaval of the "old ways" to make way for the new does not necessarily indicate the start of its downfall, as some have predicted (Riess 2019a, 2019c). Rather it is demonstrating, yet again, its ability to evolve with the changing times and culture according to the needs of its members. That being said, with the younger generations being more conscious of gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights than previous generations, the Church will likely continue to evolve in ways that demonstrate acceptance and prioritize equality. This brings up the question of whether younger generations of Latter-day Saint women currently feel differently towards the Church's progress than their parents' generation does, and what their hopes for the Church's future are. Future research might look at other conservative religions as they navigate this period of change, and how they are influenced by the youngest generations as they are coming of age.

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Where the Wild Things Roam: A Semiotic Study of Wildlife in the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge

Sabela Vasquez-Rey

The following is an excerpt from a longer piece. For full text, please visit https://scholar.colorado.edu/concern/undergraduate_honors_theses/6w924c99t.

Chapter One: Introduction

Background

Nestled among burgeoning suburban developments with the Denver skyline backdrop, the 15,000-acres that constitute the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge (or the Arsenal) currently maintains the title of being the largest urban wildlife refuge in the country. To the enjoyment of wildlife enthusiasts and curious visitors, one does not need to travel far to leave the bustling city and discover the iconic animals of the prairie ecosystem along Colorado's Front Range. The American bison (*Bison bison)*, Ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*), black-tailed prairie dog (*Cynomys ludovicianus*), and white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are just some of the animals found among the vast tall grasses and cottonwood trees. It may come as a surprise then that what is now a wildlife refuge that both locals and out-of-state visitors enjoy used to be a site of intensive wartime and pesticide manufacturing that produced dangerous and harmful waste.

Only 43 years ago, *The Denver Post* described the Arsenal as being one of "the most polluted pieces of ground in America" (Purdy 1995, 1). The U.S. Army seized 20,000 acres of farmland for military operations in 1942, rationalizing that the land offered various strategic benefits such as being far from foreign threats, close to railroads, and near the growing city of Denver, which provided labor and resources. The thousands of "empty" land acres would provide an adequate buffer zone for the operations that would occur at the center, or core, of the site (Edson et al. 2011). The Army established and operated two main plants—the South and North Plants—along with other infrastructures and buildings, a majority of which would be demolished in the future remediation stage (Coady, Jones, and Giesy 2001). During World War II and until the late 1960s, the Army manufactured and stored various chemical weapons for projectiles and rockets on site, such as blister agents (e.g., mustard gas), incendiary bombs (e.g., napalm), nerve agents (e.g. Sarin), and pulmonary agents (e.g. phosgene) (Edson et al. 2011). Although the majority of weapons were stockpiled at the Arsenal (Edson et al. 2011), some of the weapons were deployed, such as the napalm bombs dropped on Japan in 1945 (Salcido 2014). Due to the excessive production of weapons on site, the Arsenal also became a site for dismantling and disposing "obsolete" weaponry.

From 1946 to 1982, the government found a new purpose for the Arsenal by leasing portions of its facilities to private industries producing pesticides, most notably the Shell Chemical Company, which is a division of the Shell Oil Company (also known as Shell) (Coady, Jones, and Giesy 2001). During this period, the Arsenal was the site for the mass production of dieldrin, chlordane, aldrin, and other organochlorine compounds, including all of their just-as-toxic byproducts (Coady, Jones, and Giesy 2001). Although the Army and Shell stopped manufacturing in 1969 and

1982 respectively, the products and byproducts that resulted from manufacturing were disposed of on site in natural depressions and trenches, resulting in the so-called 'witches brew' from years of pesticide and chemical munitions production (Edson et al. 2011).

.... Areas of waste disposal released harmful chemicals in the surrounding groundwater, air, soil, and natural water formations (Salcido 2014). It is estimated that 136,000 tons of contaminants were released by Shell alone, not including the 24,000 tons that the Army produced (Edson et. al 2011).

.... The site was officially designated as a refuge under the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Act of 1992 with the signature of President George Bush. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which regulates Superfund sites, the remedy employed in the Arsenal included "boundary groundwater containment and treatment systems and off-post intercept and treatment system; long-term surface and groundwater monitoring; [... and the prevention of] human and wildlife contact with physical hazards such as unexploded ordnance" (United States Environmental Protection Agency n.d.). Landfills were created on site with protective caps and seals that now house contaminated soil and debris. The Arsenal's surface cleanup ended in 2010, and in the same year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), nestled under the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI), acquired the final acres of land for the refuge. However, despite the supposed victories of remediation and the fact that the Arsenal underwent one of the most expensive remediation efforts in the country, media sources have picked up on debates about the safety aspects of the Arsenal, including concerns about detecting lewisite, a blistering agent, in 2007 and 2008 (Krupar 2013), as well as water management and groundwater concerns (Mitchell 2019). Thus, the Arsenal not only exhibits a rich diversity of wildlife and plant communities, but also a human past that is just as complex.

Purpose

Through its history, the Arsenal has undergone drastic changes, resulting in the various ways the public has experienced and interpreted this site. While it is clear that humans played a pivotal role in the fate of the Arsenal, the wildlife on the site have been, and continue to be, significant as well. From being used in ecotoxicology studies to being photographed in tours, the wildlife contributes to the cultural and social narrative of the Arsenal that we know today. This thesis aims to focus on the power that wildlife carries in the Arsenal, which has ties to both the politics and history of the site, and the far-reaching consequences of such power. What is the social significance of the wildlife in this Superfund site, and how does this significance shape the relationships between humans and animals? Additionally, how have these human generated signs of wildlife evolved over time as the Arsenal transitioned from being a military site to a wildlife sanctuary? And what relationships exist between humans and animals during these changes? And finally, what are the current consequences of the cultural role of wildlife and human interactions? This study shows how signs have been created in the Arsenal and continue to be used in the present day, what meanings people attribute to these signs, and how these signs work together to create a coherent narrative.

[...]

Chapter Two: Theory

[...]

Hyperreality

As mentioned before, animals can easily become ingrained within the social tapestry of ordinary life and the imaginative process of human sign making. In many

cases, animals can provide a means for constructing certain realities, as well as a means for making sense of a given surrounding. Hyperreality is an outcome of such creative processes. In contemporary scholarship, hyperreality is defined as the moment when an artificially produced object or event replaces the original in question due to cultural inclinations (Berger 2005). One of the founders of hyperreality, Umberto Eco, applies this concept to the fantastical landscapes that are created throughout America and that revolve around the consumption of both the present and the past (Eco 1986). Jean Baudrillard, another founder of this theory, emphasizes that hyperreality is constructed by simulations, which are "the generation of models of a real without origin or reality" (Baudrillard 1994, 1). These simulations appear to be real, and as such they threaten "the difference between the 'true' and the 'false'" (Baudrillard 1994, 3).

Baudrillard argues that once these fabricated simulations of reality successfully take over, the simulacra, or artificial copies, can then become dominant (Baudrillard 1994). When an individual cannot distinguish between the real and the fake, one enters the realm of hyperreality, as it acts as "a programmatic, metastable, perfectly descriptive machine that offers all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes" (Baudrillard 1994, 2). In America, a "country obsessed with realism" (Eco 1986, 4), these simulacra can be favored over the original, no matter whether these copies are rational or even real (Baudrillard 1994). Hyperreality becomes successful when simulations and simulacra have been deemed as more important and real than the original reality that was copied (Berger 2005).

[...]

Chapter Four: The Hyperreal Sanctuary

[...]

Being Wild and Seeing Wild

Just as any other wildlife refuge within the general refuge system, the Arsenal deploys a wide array of conservation programs and strategies in conjunction with recreational and tourist purposes, which has drastically modified both the physical and metaphorical landscape itself. Under ordinary circumstances, these changes would not necessarily seem damaging, and indeed, in the Arsenal the conservation efforts reflect the determination and grit of workers who have a deep love for nature. However, context matters, and in the case of the Arsenal, some restorative efforts have been known to obscure aspects of the site despite attempts to retain some of its military history (Havlick 2018). In the following section, I argue that the Arsenal has become a simulacrum, depicting cultural notions of wilderness, that undermines the reality of human intervention and interaction in the site and that shapes the Arsenal's nature. This simulacrum has been created by the endangerment narrative, as the need to protect wildlife and educate the public resulted in the establishment of tours and recreational use. This simulacrum becomes indistinguishable from the original "wilderness," which leads to the hyperreality of the site's environment; that is, the simulacrum is being favored over the original.

[...]

Not only has life been protected in these lands, but also new wildlife has been reintroduced. During the tours, the employees would explain that the reason for reintroducing animals, such as the black-footed ferrets and bison, was that they used to be native to the land. As Krupar points out, the reintroduction of bison "nourishes an ecological fantasy of restoring native wilderness" (Krupar 2013, 54). While reintroducing wildlife is a typical conservation strategy backed up by

a scientific explanation, these species became part of the creation process of the Arsenal as they were meant to represent the original populations that once existed. As the notion of simulacrum implies, it is difficult to tell the difference between the copy and the original. Despite the genetic purity of the bison at the Arsenal that establishes them as being wild, they have been reintroduced through human intervention. When wildlife is seen as being completely wild and meets our expectations of wilderness, it can be easy to forget the human factors that allow them to thrive in the first place. Approaching these conservation actions through educational practices and entertainment purposes augments the simulacrum of the site and reinforces the idea of complete wilderness.

The "nature" contained within the boundaries of the Arsenal is not very reflective of today's prairie ecosystems. The landscape contains high dense amounts of wildlife species, and it is one of the few places in Colorado to exhibit xeric tall grass.... Havlick has studied naturalization in the Arsenal, as the landfills that house the remaining contamination are now mounds that can easily be interpreted as natural land formations (Havlick 2018).

[...]

Human and Wildlife Interactions

One of the main goals of USFWS is to engage people with the animals. In the end, the educational experiences bring people closer to wildlife. During these experiences, people are interacting with wildlife in ways that are not common in nature, as people experience wilderness in areas that have been heavily modified by human intervention. These close interactions with wildlife are staged as a spectacle that becomes part of the simulation process.

[...]

Chapter Five: Conclusion

By analyzing the wildlife at the Arsenal, one can discover a network of social meanings and cultural ideologies about the environment. This thesis expands on the previous scholarly work done at the Arsenal, especially Krupar's research, in order to look at the way animals act as conduits saturated with meaning. When animals are seen as signs, we are able to take one step closer to comprehending the web of sociopolitical interactions, which has implications in places such as the Arsenal. In this case, wildlife went from being a sign of toxicity, as seen through the duck, to a sign of protection and cleanliness, as seen through the bald eagle. Within the framework of education and the endangerment narrative on the site, the representation of wildlife has aided in the construction of a hyperreal space that exists today. In this space, visitors have close interactions with wildlife facilitated by the agencies on the site, which obscures the social history of the Arsenal.

[...]

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