table of CONTENTS

Welcome
from the Student Editorial Board,

From the undergraduate staff of the editorial board, we would like to first and foremost thank you for your interest in The Journal for Undergraduate Ethnography! Being of the same mold (so to speak) as the authors published in this journal, we hold this experience particularly near to our hearts. After having spent the majority of our college careers flooding our brains with knowledge about a variety of cultures, schools of thought, guidelines for ethical treatment of humans when conducting research and theory after theory after theory …all in an attempt to unravel the phenomenon encompassed within the social world- it is fulfilling to finally have a place where this overflowing toolkit can be put to use for all to see.

The first edition of The Journal for Undergraduate Ethnography offered an impressive array of topics, methodology and analysis from peers within our disciplines; giving light to the predominance of brilliant young minds that illuminate collegiate classrooms and lecture halls. The second full issue of The Journal for Undergraduate Ethnography is evidence that this light is certain to endure. Submissions were once again received from both domestic and international stages, and comprised of varied topics from across the social sciences and humanities spectrum. Through an extensive review process, we have narrowed down the articles submitted to only six, that we are confident, highlight some of the best ethnographic work authored by undergraduate students today and are proud of their accomplishments and to call them our peers.

In the first issue's welcome from the editor, it is stated that the goal of the journal is to create an engaging new set of ethnographies and to encourage current undergraduates. A second issue is confirmation enough that this goal is being achieved, but furthermore we offer ourselves as evidence to this claim. While simultaneously acting as student editors, we too were conducting our undergraduate research. And so we became the epitome of the multi-faceted identity explored in W.E.B DuBois' theory on "Double Consciousness". For we not only identify as editors, but also as seniors embarking on our own journeys to scholar.

We would also like to offer special thanks to our editor-in-chief, Dr. Jason Patch for not only taking the initiative in jumpstarting this journal, but for his direction and support throughout the editorial process. To the other members of the senior editorial board, we also give many thanks, for without you we could not publish. And finally, thank you to all of the undergraduate ethnographers who submitted their essays; it is you who gives life to this journal and it was truly a pleasure to have read your work.

We hope that the articles in this issue continue to inspire the next generations of undergraduate ethnographers as deeply as they have us and that each future edition shines brighter than the last.

The Manchester Military Academy Weight Room: A *Cult* within a *Cult*

Sean Barret Murphy

Virginia Military Institue, murphysb10@mail.vmi.edu

ABSTRACT

T hrough analysis of behavioral patterns such as language and social norms, this ethnographic study explores the role of masculinity in a unique culture, the weight room, within an exclusive environment: a military school. The findings come from numerous interviews, both formal and informal, hours of observation, and the use of a double-entry journal. This study reveals a masculine, military cultural group's attitudes about gender as it relates to exercise. These attitudes significantly relate to broader cultural themes at the military institution and offer a revealing look at how a cult of masculinity undergirds day-to day life there.

Keywords: masculinity, military, weight room, culture, institution

> **" I froze, utterly confounded by the scene before me. Here was a room full of people pulsating with what seemed like some mysterious, erotic force. The collective grunting and swaying… the hyper intimate preoccupation with the body proved disconcerting…Why were its inhabitants not self-consciously monitoring their behavior in accordance with modesty?"** – Alan M. Klein

THE FOCUS

As one of the premier military colleges in the nation, Manchester Military Academy boasts the ability to produce quality citizens-soldiers. An "alpha male" attitude often informs cadets' perception of this claim. To explore this attitude, I sought out a subculture at MMA that produces an even greater degree of masculinity than the corps itself: the MMA weight room in Jordan Hall. By immersing myself in this culture, I wanted to discover if there was a connection between ordinary MMA life and the weight room atmosphere. Does the weight room culture significantly resemble the same values held within the Corps of Cadets, or are the traditions of MMA left at the top of the stairs of Jordan Hall? Through my observations, I got an enlightening look at a hidden culture within an already unique college experience.

Manchester Military Academy has a history of masculine dominance, in which it has faced gender issues since its acceptance of females in the past fifteen years. The issue made it to the Supreme Court in which Congress threatened to remove public funding unless females were accepted into the academy. Even though females were allowed in, there still remains discrimination against females and an ongoing presence of the alpha male attitude. Although many years have passed since the legal decision to allow females in to MMA, male students still remain unaccepting towards the presence of females, which has developed into a deep history of controversy. Because of this issue with female bias, especially in the weight room, I felt uncomfortable over the course of my study revealing identities of my informants, my own personal feelings, and the real identity of the school in which I am referring to.

I am a sophomore here at MMA, brought here by the unique reputation of a disciplined and distinguished school that would allow me to pursue a career in the military. Having been an avid exerciser for many years, I was naturally drawn to the weight room here at the academy. As a military school, MMA already had a strong feeling of masculinity common in its students, but even more so within this unique arena. Throughout this study, I was hesitant to include my own personal feelings toward different aspects of the gym due to the sensitivity of some of my issues addressed and implications that could emerge from my comments. That did, however, not keep me from including the opinions of my informants and asking about the issues.

Although I did not include my own direct opinions, I found that those who I interviewed had the same feelings and opinions that I have, which allowed me to voice my personal feelings through outside sources.

THE METHOD

There were three specific areas from which I recorded my observations. They were my outposts that I returned to when I started a new day. In the front area, which I classified as the "beginner section" because newer participants congregated where the less intimidating machines were stationed, I would sit on the leg machine and try to blend in and not look so obvious in my intentions. This area also provided me with a good view from the help of the mirrors, which reflected the open gym around me. In the back half, which I called the "veteran section" because it was where the free weights were located and where stronger lifters tended to stay, I sat within a power rack, where I had a wide range of view. Finally, in the back corner there was a designated place for abdominal exercises. From this vantage, I was not part of the action out in the weight room floor, but I could observe the action from afar.

I liked to be reserved in my observations and to not interfere with the natural atmosphere by walking around with a notebook. People were there to workout, not to be interviewed, and I did not want to disrupt the authenticity of my observations. In order to blend into my environment, I carried my normal workout log down to the room along with my field journal to make it seem as if I was just recording entries into my normal workout log. I conducted my interviews outside of the weight room in a more comfortable environment so that my informants would be more open and thorough with their answers. I set up a time and met with the cadets in barracks, the living quarters of all students at MMA.

I brought my field notebook with me to the weight room and would occasionally do an exercise in between my observations so that I could gain a fresh perspective and realign my thoughts. Often times, I could make a connection to a thought I had in one part of a weight room to another time a few days later. For example, I wanted to find something that I could work with about the rules of re-racking your weight after you are done with it. A week later one night, I was finishing up my own personal workout when I looked over and on the back of the cadet assistant's sweatshirts was stenciled "Rack Your Weights."

With outside reflection, the culture of the weight room began to culminate into something I could begin to record. What really helped me develop my research was the use of a double-entry journal. I would record my observations within the weight room, and then I could go back and record what I was thinking and how connections were made between varying aspects of the culture.

I did not have a strict regimented plan to my observations. I would go during the day when I had at least thirty minutes I could devote to observations. Sometimes I would make it in the morning, when there was minimal activity but provided a different perspective to the culture. Mid-afternoon was usually the busiest periods for the weight room. The environment became very loud and hectic to observe all at once. I was also able to observe at night time after Supper Roll Call, which is the time cadets march down to the chow hall to eat.

My study lasted the course of four months during the fall semester of 2011. Having a full semester to observe this culture, I feel that I was able to gain a complete perspective of the unique atmosphere that is the weight room. I devoted at least thirty hours to being in the weight room, and I spent many hours afterwards reflecting and comparing my observations.

I used several informants during my study of the weight room that I site throughout my research. Jason Allen[1] was one of the most helpful resources. He was very personable and willing to provide a deeper meaning to the questions I asked. Jason is a third classmen, a sophomore for civilian colleges, and a regular attendee of the gym. I had known him from my first year at MMA, and he was very accessible whenever I wanted to discuss the weight room atmosphere. He explained many aspects of the culture, varying from physical characteristics, accepted behavior, and similarities between traditional MMA and weight room culture. I was able to discuss questions I had with Jason to really understand some of the confusing customs in this culture. Eric Ward [2] was also another informative interviewee, who provided a different outlook compared to Jason Allen views. Eric came across more accepting and indifferent, while Jason had a more direct and aggressive opinion of weight room culture.

I often had unplanned encounters and brief segments of communication that I would catch during my time in the weight, which added more genuine perspectives.

THE WEIGHT ROOM

Located one hundred and twenty-five steps down into the basement of Jordan Hall, the fitness facility at MMA, sits the old, run-down, Steve B. Wright Weight Room. Renovated in 1983, the weight room has seen minimal improvements over the years, which is obvious due to the paint chips hanging from the ceilings and walls, old water pipes that protrude from the ceilings, and the old radiators that still clang and click every time the heat turns on. The machines and equipment are painted in MMA colors: red, black, and yellow. However, there is a fine layer of rust covering nearly every part of the weights and stations. Specifically,

the ordinary weighted plates look rustic. These old plates seem to be the oldest equipment in the room, but are involved in almost every exercise. It is because of the history and amount of use that these weights take that they caught my attention.

There are dents and chips across the face of the plate where it has been dropped and slammed into bars and other weights. The edges, which are normally sharp and precise, have been rounded off from continual use. The face of the plate is smooth and the engraved letters have faded away, whereas the newer plates still maintain their coarse feel and the painted letters are bright white. Talcum powder is cemented into the crevices of the lettering and cracks. Lifters commonly put the powder on their hands to absorb the sweat, which allows for a better grip on the bar. When the weight is picked up with sweaty hands, a black residue is left over from the collected dirt, grease, and dust that have permanently covered the rusty weight. The plate itself is always cold to the touch, which gives off a harsh depiction about the weight and its similarities to the intimidating environment that is the weight room.

Although the plates are such a vital part of the weight room, cadets overlook their significance. They are stacked in the corners, thrown from shoulder height, and treated with little care. It could be that they are made for the abuse, but one would think that a piece of equipment that makes up such a large part of the weight room would be treated with better care.

THE NOISES

I had no idea that such a small environment could produce so much internal noise. Old rotating fans that are connected to the brick walls produce a cringing noise with ev-

[1] The names of informants have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

[2] The names of informants have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

ery oscillation, probably from a lack of lubrication on the old ball bearings. The open windows that line the exterior wall let in street noises from passing cars and other outside events. One of the more modern day upgrades, the speaker system, blasts loud music in all corners of the weight room, which puts a background wave of noise to all the other sounds of the gym. The actual noise that comes from workout equipment and participants is just as varied as environmental noises. Lifters moan and groan under the heavy loads on their backs and then quickly slam the iron barbell against the steels racks, producing a snapping clash. When the barbell is placed back on its stand, the plates on either side of the bar smash into one another, producing yet another scraping noise of iron metal.

Everywhere you look you can find a producer of noise. Cadets who are able to hold a conversation stand close together, purposely talking into one another's ears to be heard over all other noises. One of the regular attendees I interviewed, Eric Ward, said he does not go to the gym to be social and hold conversations. He comes down there to work out. I can understand why this culture does not value verbal communication.

Cadets bottle up personal emotion at MMA. Personal expression is subdued and looked down upon outside of the weight room, so visiting the weight room provides a release. The noise level does not seem to bother anyone, and has actually come to be expected. When the room is silent, the normal atmosphere of the gym is lessened. I enjoy walking into the weight room and immediately become drowned out by the noise. I do not want to stand out, but rather mix into all the action and perform my own workout without having to worry about what others are thinking. The noise is a distraction, but a good one that allows you to become engulfed in the environment and forget about everything around you. One night, around thirty minutes before closing, the staff turned off the radio, and an unusually quiet dullness swept over the weight room. People awkwardly looked around and said, "What happened to the music?" Cadet Ward discussed the issues he has with people in the weight room who are too loud. He said, "I hate it when people are loud and obnoxious, and they don't really have to be. They just have to make their presence known." He later shared that he goes to the weight room by himself because the gym is not a place to socialize. To Cadet Ward, the excess noise that comes from cadets is an annoyance in the weight room. For others, maybe

the ones who choose to wear personal headphones, noise does not seem to bother them.

THE RESPECT OF SPACE

Depending on the time of day when you go to the MMA weight room, the amount of personal space you are able to keep, and hold, will vary. In the mornings and late evenings, when few cadets are working out, it is easy to maneuver from one machine or exercise to another. With plenty of open power racks, dumbbells, and benches, there is even enough room to leave a "courtesy spot" between you and another lifter. Many times I have observed a person, who just entered the room, make his way over a bench and select one that has at least one open spot on either side of the bench. According to Allen, leaving space when available shows respect and courtesy. With all the pieces of equipment down there, it's hard for lifters to find enough space to perform their exercise, so it would make sense for everyone to be cognizant of their surroundings to make the functioning of the room go smoothly.

One of the best examples of cadets negotiating personal space happens around the water fountain. Located in the middle of the weight room on the wall next to the main office, the water fountain is the central location of all activity in the weight room. Whether or not a participant is actually going to the water fountain to a get a drink, fill up a water bottle, go to the bathroom, or pass to the other side of the weight room, a participant will pass the water fountain numerous times during his or her workout. As a central location for activity, the water fountain leads to several issues with personal space. Those who are waiting in line usually leave a two to three foot gap in between the next person. There is a mirror in front of the fountain, which allows everyone who is waiting to use the fountain to awkwardly look at everyone around them. To me, with the combination of the mirror, the water fountain takes on a "watering hole" sense. While drinking, or waiting to drink, everyone can look up at the mirror and see everyone around them waiting and staring. Because of this potentially unsettling situation, the respect of personal space keeps the awkwardness level down. It is one of the few "gentleman" behaviors that are incorporated into this harsh and rigid environment.

Usually when two people cross paths at the water fountain, both participants will very generously insist on the other person

to go first. Usually someone will go first just to hurry up and not make an awkward situation of back and forth gesturing of who will go first. Other times when a participant is filling up a water bottle or protein shaker bottle and notices someone waiting behind him, he will let the waiting person go in front of him because it will take him longer to finish filling up his bottle. It is unusual to see a cadet continue to fill up his bottle even though someone is waiting. From observing, I have seen the disgusted and annoyed looks of cadets waiting for someone to finish filling up their bottle. This practice has developed into an unwritten expectation of courtesy.

Although the impact is low, the respect of social space helps keep the atmosphere of the weight room positive. By keeping as much personal space and making an effort to help other participants keep theirs, participants create a healthy atmosphere for working out. Back in the barracks, cadets live with a range of two to four other people, so they value any personal space they are able to get.

THE BODY LANGUAGE

To first time guests and outside observers, the weight room can be an intimidating place. As you walk down six flights of stairs, you gradually begin to hear the sounds of the weight room. For someone entering this culture for the first time, there is a sense of "earning your place." This is not, however, a hazing type of initiation. You will fit into this culture if you are comfortable and knowledgeable about exercise, and if you are able to follow the guidelines of the weight room. It is easy to distinguish the newbies from the veteran participants. For instance, on a Sunday afternoon, about one o'clock, I was sitting in the weight room and in walks a broad-shouldered rugby player. The temperature in the room was at least seventy-two, pretty comfortable. But he was wearing a sweatshirt and a black beanie cap on his head, with headphones. Quickly behind him followed what looked like his girlfriend. He strutted from machine to machine, continuing to wear his sweatshirt and winter cap. The common participant would not wear this outfit in the gym, lest the rest of the room judge him or her. This rugby player was physically huge and very intimidating. Some people have a way about them that warns others to keep their distance, and he had it. He showed no concern for being judged by those around him, mainly due to the respect he already commanded.

This seemed significant to me because the rugby player embodied the alpha-male mentality that is common in this culture. At first I thought he was very arrogant by the way he strutted around and had the audacity to bring his girlfriend into the gym. Who would parade their girlfriend in front of all these males, especially here at MMA where males are restricted in their access to female interaction? However, I realized that this behavior was the essence of the MMA weight room: breaking the norm. After considering this cadet and comparing it to past observations, I understood that this behavior was not abnormal at all.

However, not twenty minutes after my experience with the rugby player, in walked a tall, skinny, and timid cadet. He immediately went to the machines, right past the dumbbells and free weights. From my experience, the cadets who are stronger or more comfortable in the gym will bounce from machine to free weights, showing their experience with both types of equipment. Those who are new to the gym, however, stay with the machines and do not venture out into the area with power racks, dumbbells, and squat racks. Two ordinary attendees who I was able to quickly ask about this stigma in the gym both said that some people do not want to be judged and have not gained the confidence to try new things yet. The weight room is a very scary place for newcomers, and it takes some time to become entirely comfortable in this culture. I do not think this type of behavior only applies to the MMA weight room, but is part of human nature. This military environment that is dominated by masculinity and alpha-male personalities amplifies it.

The stronger, more confident rugby player took on the typical persona of a masculine cadet in the weight room. He showed little concern for how he was viewed and broke some of the formalities of traditional weight room behavior. The skinnier cadet, however, showed how hard it is to blend in to this culture. Gaining confidence and transferring that to one's behavior is how one will be accepted into the MMA weight room, shown by the rugby player and the struggle of the timid cadet.

Cadet Jason Allen pointed out that eye contact can be awkward in the weight room. He says people stare at one another because "they want to see how they match up to other people" and that it is "weird because it's obvious that you were either staring at him or he was staring at you." Eye contact and watching other people, to Jason, are not necessarily negative, but rather a self-reflecting action that can create satisfaction

and motivation. Jason says it is okay to see how you stack up to others and how much you are lifting and how others are doing an exercise, but you have to be cognizant of not starring and being awkward. You cannot mentally invade others' spaces. Although Jason seems to emphasize these strict guidelines of watching others and how carefully people tend to avoid obvious eye contact, he says people do it every day and even admits to doing it himself. I found it ironic that even though Jason was able to point out this cultural abnormality, but he openly admits to doing it himself. In a more judgmental culture, it becomes impossible for cadets not to compare themselves to their peers in an effort to gain reassurance or motivation.

By examining body language and the way people carry themselves in the MMA weight room, I was able to examine the different type of personalities in this culture and how those personalities develop. It is a process for cadets to become completely comfortable in the gym and put the possibility of judgment behind them. The weight room is a very physical and harsh environment, and personal judgment is all part of that. Those who have confidence prosper, while those who are still trying to find their niche in the culture have to put forth effort physically or else face being judged.

THE GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

At MMA, cadets live with strict rules, guidelines, and regulations. As far apart as the weight room is from typical MMA standards, there are ways in which these cultures collide. Even in the weight room, there are unwritten, written, and implied regulations in which participants are expected to follow. After cadets are finished with a machine, station, or dumbbells, they immediately put the weights back on the correct rack or the dumbbells back in their proper place on the shelf. Why? "It shows responsibility and respect to the facility" according to Cadet Ward. Cadets are encouraged to be model citizens at MMA, which translates to cleaning up after oneself and making the weight room presentable and ready for the next person to use. It shows decent behavior and responsibility.

One of the written rules in the weight room states "Do not drop the weights. Purposely dropping the weights can lose you your weight room privileges for the rest of the semester!" Although the entire weight room is covered in rubber mats to protect the floor, the weights are still very old and subject to

breaking if dropped with too much force. During my time spent in the weight room, I have seen cadets treat the dumbbells with great care and respect. There are designated places for cadets to throw weights on the ground and drop them from shoulder height. The stations are designed for this abuse. These power racks are elevated off with the ground with three inch rubber mats and outfitted with specific rubber weights that help absorb the impact during exercise that require dropping weights.

Those cadets who see other cadets leave weights out when they are finished often give them disgusted looks. Those who leave the weights out are not even paying attention to what they have done, and hardly ever catch the negative looks they get from other cadets. One afternoon I was observing the back half of the weight room in the corner when I saw a cadet about to leave a bench press machine. He had left forty-five pound plates on both sides of the bar. Usually when the bench press is used, having one forty-five pound plate on each side is typical. Right after this cadet left, another one jumped right on that machine and proceeded to use the machine. Instead of hindering the next cadet by leaving the weight on the barbell, it actually speeded up the process of changing weight over for the next person. "Could this be an exception to the standard?" I thought. After I observed the bench press machines specifically, I realized more cadets would leave the weights on the bench press machines. Not once were cadets confronted for leaving the weights, and I saw one cadet actually thanking another one for leaving the weights on the barbell for him. This exception shows the complicated nature and systems of the MMA weight room culture that can only be understood through in-depth observation and assimilation.

THE CHANGING ATMOSPHERE

The atmosphere of the weight room changes as the time of day progresses. Early in the morning when the room opens at nine, the weight room has minimal activity. I have seen, at most, ten people at once in the weight room in the early mornings. It is significantly quieter in the morning. The sense of urgency to move from one exercise to another is gone, which says a lot about the type of people who choose to work out early in the morning. There are not a lot of fast paced moments, and cadets take their time and seem to enjoy this slower pace of exercise. In contrast, as the afternoon approaches and classes end, there could be one hundred cadets in the weight room at one time.

Because there is competition for equipment, there is an urgency to get done quickly, and I can see the subtle stress level rise in the faces of cadets as they try to maneuver their way around the weight room. Personal space is invaded, and cadets then have to make compromises on their specific routines that are broken up by the availability of equipment. Oddly enough, I have not once observed a conflict between cadets over usage of a machine, which points to the maturity cadets have in dealing with one another and solving conflicts.

After supper roll call (SRC) at 1900, and by the time cadets eat, there is usually one hour left in the day before the weight room closes at nine o'clock p.m. During the last hour, cadets move around the weight room with a calm and relaxed manner, but with a sense of purpose. The cadet assistants, who help take care of the weight room, walk around cleaning benches, sectioning off space that have been cleaned, and re-organize the weight stacks to make sure all equipment is back to its original place for the night. It is odd to see that this important facility to MMA is actually ran and tasked to cadets. Normally, janitors or MMA staff would be in charge of cleaning up and locking down any property that is owned and has a significant amount of valuable merchandise. It shows the level of trust that MMA has in the cadet assistants, which speaks volumes for these cadets' personal knowledge of exercise, managing skills, and maturity.

The time of day in the weight room impacts the changing atmosphere of this gym in a way that is almost impossible to fully describe through written text. It is similar to an overhead view of a city street. Early in the morning, traffic is minimal, but as the day moves on, more and more people enter the area until it becomes congested to the point of being unproductive. Eventually, the amount of activity will die down, and by evening there are only a few stragglers finishing up their daily routine.

THE LANGUAGE

When I decided to focus on the language used in the weight room, I was immediately disappointed. I was expecting to hear a type of language unique to this culture. After much time spent specifically listening to conversations and word choice used in the weight room, I felt as if I had wasted too much time. It was not until after I went back to my barracks room and reflected on what I had heard that I realized the significance of the comical dialogue that I had ignored. I recalled a conversation between a cadet and myself who I was familiar with, in which he came up to me, put his finger into my chest and said "Ain't nothin' but a peanut, Murphy!" I playfully batted him away and asked him what that was from. He said Ronnie Coleman, a famous bodybuilder said that after deadlifting "like a thousand pounds." It was not until I thought about this playful dialect that I realized that masculinity breaks out in informal exchanges in the weight room. Joking in manner, but referencing something a massive bodybuilder said in the weight room shows this cadet's mindset about his personal image in the gym. Obviously, he felt as if he was getting stronger and wanted to flaunt it to others. Big-headedness is a reoccurring theme in this weight room. According to a study conducted by Susan Alexander, an author for the Pacific Sociological Association, "Masculinity, then, stems from the fear of being seen as sissy, feminine, or anything less than a man (Alexander, 2003)." Going to a military college brings with it the expectation that everyone who attends will be physically strong and capable, which sometimes results in cadets over-compensating for their lack of manly attributes.

When I had my interview with Cadet Allen, I got an unexpected lesson on language when he explained why he goes to the gym: "to get yoked, to get swoll…to get my Allen on." He was referring to improving his physique, but by comparing getting into shape to his last name shows the humorous and cocky attitude of cadets in the gym. There are many odd terms that cadets reference in the gym and have become universal slang across many gyms. Lee Monaghan, an author for *Sociology of Health & Illness*, quoted Arnold Schwarzenegger on one of his most famous descriptions of the weight room:

This type of vocabulary shows the similarities that weight lifting can have to physical appearance and manly characteristics. Seeing outward improvements in physical physique can really motivate a man, or cadet, to act flamboyant and big-headed.

It is bad enough to be at a military school where alpha males reign, but the attitudes that can develop in the weight room are an even further extreme. The language that is the result of big-headedness can range from crude joking to big-headed cockiness. I have, however, never seen this type of attitude go further than playful joking between friends. The unique language that belongs in the weight room is left behind as cadets leave the weight room. They know how to turn it on and off and return to their polite and mature behavior upon leaving the gym.

THE FEMALES IN THE WEIGHT ROOM

Historically, one of the most disputed topics at MMA has been the issue of female presence in the Corps of Cadets. It was only within the last twenty years that females were legally allowed admittance into MMA. The female stigma, however, has still not gone away. Focusing on this stigma, I wanted to see how cadets viewed females in a weight room, which is a predominantly male culture outside of MMA, as well. My personal observations of female cadets in the weight room are just as varied as the comments I received from cadets.

> The greatest feeling you can get in the gym or the most satisfying feeling you can get in the gym is the *Pump.* Let's say you train your biceps: blood is rushing into your muscles and that's what we call 'the pump'. Your muscles get a really *tight feeling*, like your skin is going to explode any minute. You know it's really tight like somebody is blowing air into your muscles. It just blows up and it feels different, it feels fantastic. (Monaghan, 2001)

One Wednesday afternoon I was in the weight room when I saw a female sports team walk in. I had been waiting for an opportunity to see female interaction in the gym and this was a perfect opportunity. Immediately the team congregated around a power rack. They stood around, talking and being social, which was very different from the secluded majority of the rest of the room. At least ten minutes had passed and still no one from the team was working out. The only working out I observed was someone getting on an exercise bike and slowly peddling. I noticed other cadets around them with annoyed looks on their faces as they maneuvered around the impeding blob in the middle of the pathway. Others gave subtle glances in their directions and then raising their eyebrows and shaking their heads. No one on the team was doing anything productive except taking up space. Finally the lifting coach entered the room, and the team dispersed. Ironically, the noise level in the gym decreased significantly.

Although the team's intentions of exercising might have been good, their presence did not fit within the weight room culture. They were overly social: it was weird to see so much laughter and "softness" in the weight room. It is not my place to say who deserves to be in the weight room, but from the typical culture that I have seen, female presence does not blend well in this masculine atmosphere when they choose not to exercise quietly.

A cadet, who preferred not to be named, very blatantly stated that "it doesn't matter if you're a guy or girl…if you're gunna stand there with five pound weights, go away, just get out." It was from this comment that I understood that this dissatisfaction was not solely linked to females. Yes, females typically lift lighter weights, but that is not to say that male cadets always lift heavy weights. The problem cadets have is not over females, but rather the issue of productivity.

The cadet noticed that a lot of females came to the weight room without being serious about what they are doing. The cadet did contrast two different females, in which one of them, according to the cadet, stood around the weight room just flirting with other guys and was just annoying to be around. The other female "blended in with everyone else" and "did work." From this cadet's perspective and the attitudes observed from other cadets, most male cadets are fine with females in the weight room as long as they are being productive and not disrupting the culture. They believe it is not a place to be overly social, but rather a place to exercise and get things accomplished. There are many female cadets who productive in the gym, and even women sports teams.

During another observation after my evening meal, I was finishing up my own workout and I noticed a few of the female members of a different team working out. Their attitudes and appearance were completely opposite from that of the previous team. They were not noisy. They did not congregate into a large group. They were not aimlessly walking around. They worked out like everyone else and were very productive. I almost missed them entirely because it did not seem abnormal to me. Maybe the attitudes of the two different sports teams have an effect on the female's actions in the weight room. Regardless, if a cadet comes down to the weight room to be productive, he or she blend well with the culture and does not stick out. If he or she comes down to the gym to over-socialize and take up space, most of the cadets I observed seemed to feel that he or she then did not belong, male or female.

There have been many studies on female presence in male-dominated gyms. Maxine Craig and Rita Liberti, both from the California State University, stated that women's "comfort

was provided by an organizational culture of nonjudgmental and noncompetitive sociability and that the foundation of that culture was the organization's use of technology and labor." Their study focused on an all-female weight room and the differences that made it appealing to females instead of a co-ed gym. A place of "nonjudgmental" and "noncompetitive" attitudes is not to be found at MMA (Craig and Liberti, 2007). Female cadets have dealt with a predominantly male environment ever since they matriculated and have learned to cope with it. A place where someone faces no social pressure would be ideal, but impractical at a military institute. That is not MMA culture, and definitely not the MMA weight room culture. From my observations of the weight room, I have concluded that, for most, the sexist attitude that females do not belong there is not universal among males. The same discontent applies to males who choose to be unproductive, not just females.

THE CONNECTION

As an avid attendee of weight rooms, I had developed my own personal attitude of typical weight room culture. I always assumed the gym to be a primarily male-dominated place, but understood growing female participation. My experience in the MMA weight room has only supplemented this view. I judge whether or not someone belongs in the weight room by their, not their sex. The weight room participants I interviewed took a similar view as well. MMA teaches cadets to be productive with their time, and the same is expected in the weight room. Someone earns their place in this culture by their level of effort and productivity, which is supplemented by the way he or she carries themselves in the room.

To some extent, cadets have incorporated MMA traditions into the culture of the weight room. Specific aspects, such as the dress code and lack of outward aggression, are left behind and exceptions are made to facilitate an environment that cadets can enjoy when they exercise. Cadets have taken other aspects, particularly respect for personal space and property, from the MMA way of life and carried them into the weight room. From these additions and exclusions, the MMA weight room embodies a unique culture that is both necessary and beneficial to the Corps of Cadets and the MMA system.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alan M. Klein, "Of Muscles And Men." *Sciences* (1993): 32.

Frank Meintijes, "Men, Feminism and Masculinity." *Agenda* (1991): 11-14.

Jesse Berrett. "Feeding the Organization Man: Diet and Masculinity in Postwar America." *Journal of Social History*: 805-825.

Lee F. Monaghan, "Looking good, feeling good: the embodied pleasures of vibrant physicality." *Sociology of Health & Illness* (2001): 330-56.

Marlene Dobkin De Rios and Fred Katz, "Some Relationships between Music and Hallucinogenic Ritual: The "Jungle Gym" in Consciousness." *Ethos* (1975): 64-76.

Maxine L. Craig and Rita Liberti, "Cause That's What Girls Do.": The Making of a Feminized Gym," *Sociologists for Women in Society* (2007): 676-99.

Susan M. Alexander, "Stylish Hard Bodies: Brained Masculinity in Men's Health Magazine." *Pacific Sociological Association* (2003): 535-54.

Tim Carrigan, Bob Connell and John Lee, "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity." *Theory and Society* (1985): 551-604.

An Autoethnography of Fuencarral 43:
Women in Masculine Public Space

Liz M. Rush

St. Louis University, Madrid, liz@lizmrush.com

ABSTRACT

In An Autoethnography of Fuencarral 43, semiotic analysis and feminist urban geography critiques are balanced with the use of autoethnography and personal narrative to present a study of women in public space. Through a feminist lens, a small plaza in the heart of Madrid, Spain is presented as a case representing the inequalities women experience through both architecture and the spatial ideology of urban geography, as well as through social conditions such as advertising, violence, and the privatization of public space. In addition to personal narrative, journaling and field notes are used as data sources along with participant observation and interviewing.

Keywords: autoethnography, Madrid, public space, feminism, urban geography

*"It is not just that the spatial
is socially constructed; the social is spatially
constructed too. "*

(Massey 1994, 6)

INTRODUCTION

Madrid's plaza de Fuencarral 43 is a curious space. It lies like an eddy in the current of pedestrians shopping on Calle Fuencarral, a street famous for its alternative vibe and location in a markedly hip part of the city. Unlike the many other spaces within Madrid's urban labyrinth, the open public square of Fuencarral remains without the title of "plaza" and is officially known as Fuencarral 43, which is simply the street address that spans the many shops and one home entrance. However, there are many other names that people use, including "Mercado de Fuencarral", which is actually the collectively owned group of expensive boutique lifestyle shopping stores that form one of the plaza walls. Another name that is sometimes used is "Plaza de Fuencarral", although you will never see that posted on a plaque in the traditional manner nor on any official documents. Thus when talking about the plaza, it is necessary to specify that it is the plaza space that is next to the Mercado de Fuencarral, often describing the franchise eateries that inhabit the space.

This autoethnography seeks to describe and recreate my experience of being a woman within this public space, which is a markedly masculine environment. Through the use of feminist urban geography critiques and semiotic analysis of the images within the plaza, this paper seeks to construct a full analysis of the ways in which gender is reinforced and defined by the cultural and physical structures within the plaza. It is considered a public space, but by analyzing the various ways that masculinity is acted out upon and dominates this space, it becomes evident that calling it a "public" area negates the very exclusion that women experience within Fuencarral 43.

> **"A vision of universal truth is really just a dream of power over others ... liberatory, emancipatory projects are better served by alternative knowledge production process."**
> (Wall 2006, 3)

LEGITIMIZING AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

I chose to study Fuencarral 43 in a cultural research methods class, in which the students were asked to choose any one of the numerous plazas in Madrid. At first, this space did not stand out to me because it was so central to my everyday life. I lived close by and spent a lot of my social time in the neighborhood, and yet because it wasn't officially a "plaza" it didn't come to mind when I first set out to choose a plaza. Upon analyzing other plazas and public spaces, this apparent invisibility of this public space piqued my interest and I decided that the many layers of Fuencarral 43 would be a perfect subject. When I first began to study Fuencarral 43, I assumed that although I was experiencing the plaza, I would be able to prove or show the nature of the plaza through my analysis of observable, repeating events. I spent hours upon hours writing in my field log, and little by little the "I" began to pop up in my writing. I had also started keeping a personal journal around the same time, with the express purpose of documenting my recovery from a male-perpetrated rape. I mentally separated them into "Things I See" for the field log and "Things I Think" for the journal. After three months, I realized that I was no longer writing about Things I See or Things I Think, but that my writings had become indistinguishable from one another; saturated with "Things I Feel".

Feeling has never been in my vocabulary as a process of science, exploration, knowledge, or even truth. Despite a strong feminist background, I had indeed fallen into the trap that Andrea Dworkin describes in Woman Hating: "[O]ne can be excited about ideas without changing at all. [O]ne can think about ideas, talk about ideas, without changing at all. [P]eople are willing to think about many things. What people refuse to do, or are not permitted to do, or resist doing, is to change the way they think" (Dworkin 1974, 202). I have always known that "objective" science has an undeniable masculine and anti-woman bias, but I was unable to free myself from the idea that my feelings were invalid or unrelated in regards to my time in Fuencarral 43. They are not countable, measurable, repeatable, or even verifiable to an outsider, and yet I kept coming back to the way I felt in the plaza. I knew deep down

that my feelings, even if "unrelated" as I was trained to believe, were legitimate. Upon recognizing this legitimacy, I realized that I was on my way to the most radical act I could imagine within science and society: refusing to silence a woman's (and in this case, my own) voice.

While I am aware of the critiques of the autoethnography and personal narrative, and will address them, I have never tired of the mantra "The personal is political" and believe it rings true. In this case, I might say that the personal is cultural since this work is about how Fuencarral represents, reflects, and reinforces cultural ideologies. I have no intention of denying the extremely personal nature of this work, but I also know that my experiences are not unique or aberrations from the norm. In An Autoethnography on Learning about Autoethnography, Wall argues that "those who complain that personal narratives emphasize a single, speaking subject fail to realize that no individual voice speaks apart from a societal framework of co-constructed meaning. There is a direct and inextricable link between the personal and the cultural" (Wall 2006, 9). I do not live in a vacuum removed from society and culture, and as such, I am situated to recount my experience. However, this is not merely a retelling of the time I spent in Fuencarral 43. I used my field log and personal journal as my data sets and also integrated other techniques of qualitative research. At times it became difficult to tell when I was "objectively" looking at some phenomenon within the plaza and when I was experiencing it. I began to question my ability to properly conduct research. When I looked at an advertisement of a woman, was I upset personally or was I upset because of what the analysis of that image evoked? Was there a significant difference? After writing the first draft of this paper, I realized that when I was excluding those personal feelings, I was excluding a major part of what it means to exist within and experience Fuencarral 43. As Ellis describes the autoethnography in Heartfelt Autoethnography, "Distinctions between the personal and cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition" (Ellis 1999, 673).

Other forms of research seek to present an analysis wherein the presence of the researcher is minimized or non-existent, as if one can study culture without experiencing and interpreting it. This façade of objectivity hides the interpretation and subjectivity that exists with all qualitative research. With the personal narrative, a falsified assertion of objectivity is rendered moot. In this autoethnography I seek to construct and evaluate my presence, rather than construct my absence.

Another critique of the autoethnography is that because it is personal, it is not verifiable and can't employ the traditional validity checks that other forms of qualitative researchers use. However validity can be checked through other means. In this personal narrative, I seek to recreate Fuencarral 43 in such a way that the experiences ring true to the reader. As Ellis puts it, "Validity means that our work seeks verisimilitude; it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable and possible" (Ellis 1999, 674). I believe that upon reading my analysis, many will find that it inspires reflection of how their own experiences are related.

METHODS

To research this project, I spent several months in the plaza spanning from January 2011 until May 2011. As previously mentioned, I kept a field log as well as a personal journal during this time, in which I wrote about not just what I saw but also the experiences of my use of Fuencarral 43. I also took several hundred photographs of the space and spoke to several of the employees of the plaza shops. I made sure to visit the plaza during different times and days in order to get a good feel of the various ways people occupy the space. Recent sexual violence lead to insomnia and social withdrawal which I thought would hinder my research but actually allowed me to experience the plaza with an unexpected dedication. Fuencarral 43 became my go-to site whenever I found myself struggling with my recovery. On average I would visit 4 to 5 times a week and would stay for two hours to specifically take notes and observe, however I often found myself visiting for pleasure and social gatherings. I patronized all of the establishments, both inside and on the terraces if available. I later went back to my field log and journal to categorize recurring themes and pick out experiences that were exemplary of common occurrences, as well as unique but potent events.

This analysis is divided into two sections. The first deals with the spatial realities of Fuencarral 43. Through the use of feminist urban geography critiques, the physical structures are analyzed to reveal the underlying ideologies behind the architecture. While the concept of space, especially public space, is social in nature, it is critical to look at the ways the physical realities reinforce gender relations. The inescapable nature of the actual space and architecture are necessary components of how people experience the plaza.

Second, this paper discusses the socio-psychological architecture of the plaza. Through analyzing the images that appear, as well as the people and interactions of Fuencarral 43, I emphasize how a psychological element is always present when discussing public space. I suggest the value of rejecting the romanticized Greek agora to understand how gender differences function within and also as a result of the socio-psychological structure.

By using autoethnography as a means to explore these two very different approaches to studying the plaza, I seek to understand how women are affected by these realities of public space. Thick descriptions of personal narrative are intertwined with the critiques of the physical space and the critiques of the social space in order to illustrate and draw conclusions about women within the specific context of Fuencarral 43 and extrapolate a new understanding about women in public space.

> "Contemporary feminist urban theory draws on post-structrualist ideas and theories of subjectivity, identity and meaning…Space is seen as fragmented, imploding, imaginative, subjective, unknowable and fantastic. Space is linked with power and difference."
>
> (Watson 2005, 101)

FEMINIST URBAN GEOGRAPHY AND THE INVISIBILITY OF MASCULINE IDEOLOGY

Early feminist work on urban studies focused on the spatial boundaries with regard to classic gender roles. The most well known example is that of the two spheres: the domestic/feminine and the public/masculine. This simple binary reduces the complexity of space and architecture; however, it is not invalid. Fuencarral 43 is a public space through which many women move and occupy but the simple practice of using a space does not render it free of gender nor does it mean that the use of these spaces is free from inequalities. In this section, I analyze the architecture of the urban space in order to tease out the underlying ideology and uncover its ever-present, yet seemingly invisible, masculinity.

Introducing gender to architecture studies is relatively recent, however it would be naïve to think that gender was not a key player in how we design and conceptualize space. According to Sophie Watson in "Bodies, gender, cities," "Feminist perspectives on space have moved a long way from their early preoccupation with gendered forms of exclusion and marginality in the city. Over time these have become less and less located in simple binaries of public and private and home and work, and less and less analyzed in terms of a simple functionalism" (Waston 2005, 104).

Architecture is not just about constructions, but also a reflection of our ideologies. Jane Rendell argues that "radical practice should not only concentrate on solving problems in a practical way but also critique architecture as a form of representation consisting of images and writing…Architecture is no longer considered only in relation to the mode of production, but rather in relation to its reproduction through

Figure 1: Residential Access 43

WWW = Branded Terraces
🌳 = Tree

Figure 2: Layout of Fuencarral 43

cultural representation, through consumption, appropriation and occupation" (Rendell 2000, 230). This is to say that we must not only analyze architecture and spatial arrangements for the physical inequalities and exclusions they create, but we must also take care to understand what those arrangements symbolize and how such symbols are implicated in the production and reproduction of unequal gender relations.

This is not to argue that function no longer holds an important spot in critiquing urban geography and it is perhaps the most evident example of ideology within Fuencarral 43. There is only one access to the residences, in the southwest corner of the plaza (Figure 1). It is designed in such a manner that access is severely restricted. By having stairs right in front of the door, people with limited mobility have a much harder time reaching the door. Anything with wheels must go around the stairs to a small ramp that is mostly blocked by the terraces of Lateral and Starbucks. This is problematic from a gendered perspective because women still shoulder the majority of domestic and child-rearing responsibilities.

Once I began researching the theories of feminist urban geography, I felt that the aspects of gendered space they described were very relatable however I couldn't quite pinpoint exactly what within Fuencarral 43 might make it a masculine space. My field log for the first few weeks in April of
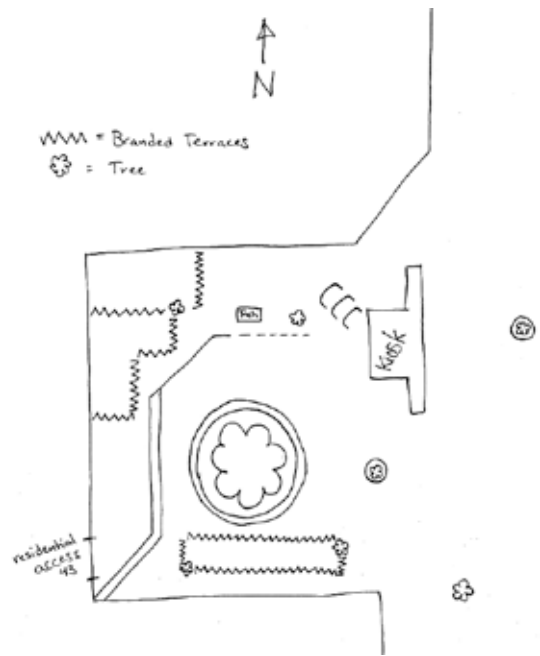
2011 were supposed to be filled with my notes of masculinity in the architecture, but it ended up being filled with doodles and observations such as, "This is sooo boring. What am I supposed to be seeing? If this masculinity is so invisible, how am I supposed to SEE it?" (Field log, April 13). The stairs to the residences were the first visible aspect to the ideology of the plaza that I was able to see clearly. The ramp access to the residences is marked by the dashed line (Figure 2), tucked away behind the kiosk and partially blocked by metal bars for locking up bicycles. Over the course of my time in the plaza, I only saw one instance of a man restricted by the stairs as he was bringing groceries to the door in a shopping cart. However, the number of women who were restricted was uncountable. Many domestic activities were limited because of the necessity of wheeled shopping carts and strollers. I began to treat this observation as a game, making little tick marks on a page of my field log that I divided into two columns: "Men who use the ramp" and "Women who use the ramp" (Field log, April 16). After a mere two days of being in the plaza, I had filled the "Women" column and decided that the game was too predictable to continue. In fact, on more than one occasion, when a heterosexual couple with a child would leave the residence, the man would take the direct route down the two stairs and wait for the woman to push the stroller

around and down the ramp to meet back up with him. This example of limited mobility based on gendered domestic practices communicates to women, especially mothers, that their movements within Fuencarral 43 are counterintuitive, unnatural, and must be accommodated.

One of the most traditional definitions in architecture is the distinction between feminine and masculine constructions. In "Male space: architecture subtly reinforces gender stereotypes - not only for women, but for men", Joel Sanders argues, "In addition to spatial boundaries, architecture employs other formal means to shape masculinity - by identifying manliness as "genuine" and womanliness as "artifice," architects since Vitruvius have associated the ornamented surface with femininity, not masculinity" (Sanders 1996, 77). Decoration is seen as an embellishment, or in other words, unnecessary. Because these feminine attributes of design are considered superfluous, they reflect the values a culture places on femininity. These embellishments are considered less valuable, and this attitude reflects cultural ideologies about women as superfluous and less valuable, or serving as decoration and accentuation to the masculine environment.

From the selection of the classic unadorned columns as "masculine" to the obsession with functionality in minimalist architectural works, masculinity in architecture is a construct that has been normalized into invisibility. It is not innate to the way space is developed, but because of the saturation of masculinity in Western architecture, this ideology remains hidden by sheer volume and exposure. Using Le Corbusier as a prime example of modernist architecture, the masculine is meticulously created through the minimization of decoration. As Mark Wigley points out in his analysis of modernist architecture "White-out: Fashioning the Modern [Part 2]", masculinity can be found in "the thin coats of whitewash painted on the pristine walls of modern buildings and associated with such 'masculine' traits as logic, hygiene, and truth. Despite its apparent invisibility, this whitewash functions as a layer added to the surface of buildings" (Wigley 1993, 11). This example highlights just one of the ways the masculine in architecture and urban studies is attributed to and forms part of so-called "neutral" spaces.

Sanders goes on to examine the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs as a prime example of the way the masculine is constructed: "More often than not architects fabricate masculine environments by seeming to undress building surfaces: less is more masculine" (Sanders 1996, 79). The building is free from any "softness" or superfluous decoration in an attempt to communicate and reinforce the ideologies of masculinity and imbue them in the cadets. He describes the building as "conspicuously lacking in detail, obeying a logic of absence, or austerity – a logic implicitly predicated on the eradication of 'feminine' excess or ornamentation" and that these characteristics, from the clean lines to the pure functionality of the building, "represent a masculinity that pretends to be natural, but is in fact consciously produced through carefully conceived environments" (Sanders 1996, 80).

The materials used in constructing the plaza are markedly masculine. It is constructed entirely of angular stones, with no embellishments whatsoever. Masculine environments are created not just through the design and arrangement of space, but through the very materials from which the architecture is derived. As Sanders explains, "Materials are made to bear the weight of all the cultural values that masculinity purportedly connotes…Because of their hardness, durability, and strength, materials such as glass, steel, and stone are ascribed masculine properties" (Sanders 1996, 78). Like Sanders's description the Air Force Academy, Fuencarral 43 consists of "undressed" forms. The cold, severe lines of the stone constructions communicate a minimalist, or masculine, ideology. The plaza is obsessively free of adornment (aside from branded installations that are added by the eateries that inhabit it) to such an extent that any marking of femininity is excluded. Nature is often associated with femininity, and the only significant plant life consists of a few trees that are encircled by cement markers and are virtually inaccessible.

This produced masculinity within architecture is so prominent that it often goes unnoticed or is considered an organic form of art, removed from the cultural ideologies about gender. However, recent developments in feminist urban geography and critiques of architecture demonstrate that these environments are highly developed reflections and reinforcements of gender differences.

> **Space is not merely a surface where social practice takes place. Rather, space is produced in social practices; it is a social category in itself. Space is simultaneously the medium and the outcome of social practices.**
>
> (Watson 2005, 101)

SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ARCHITECTURE OF THE PLAZA

To speak only of the physical masculine properties of the Fuencarral 43 plaza would be a frivolous attempt to divorce the space from experience of culture. I've chosen the phrase "socio-psychological architecture" because women's interactions with space, especially public space, are colored by many factors that create a masculine environment of not just external interactions with the space and its inhabitants, but also the internal psychological and emotional realities women face within the space. There are many in-depth studies describing each of these phenomena individually, but my focus is to touch on several different things that take place in Fuencarral 43. I will illustrate how an abundance of misogynistic advertising cannot be separated from street harassment or from violence against women in public and in private. All of these factors operate together, in an organized system, to affect women in the plaza of Fuencarral 43. In my conception of socio-psychological architecture, "architecture" is the key word; chosen to remind that the social and cultural practices that form ideas about space are constructed and not innate. The word architecture deliberately invokes an image of an elaborate, purposeful, structured system with interdependencies. The physical structures that are created, called architecture, and deemed neutral despite evidence to the contrary are analogous to the socio-psychological structures that affect and reinforce gender differences. It is important to note that these socio-psychological structures are not independent of and separate from one another, but rather this analysis will focus on several key characteristics in order to illustrate the overarching ideology of the structured system.

ADVERTISING

When Catherine McKinnon developed the earliest definitions of sexual harassment, it was in response to the growing numbers of women in the workplace being exposed to degrading images of women. McKinnon argued that because the women are captive audiences in the workplace, these images have a distinct function. Not only do they serve to please a voyeuristic male gaze, but they also reiterate to women their status as less-than-equals. Sexual harassment laws are now in place in an attempt to create more egalitarian work places; however, the same analysis can be applied to outdoor advertising. As Rosewarne argues in "Pin-ups in public space: Sexual outdoor advertising as sexual harassment," "In the workplace for example, pin-ups are deemed problematic because employees are held 'captive' to them in that their exposure is made unavoidable. This exact same situation is played out in the outdoors: A commuter cannot avoid seeing a sexist billboard" (Rosewarne 2007, 314). The public nature of the plaza means that the only way to avoid exposure to offensive material is to self-exclude.

Advertising does not exclusively portray women, but all too often *sex* and *violence* in advertising are euphemisms for *women* and *violence against women* in advertising. Rosewarne argues in "The Men's Gallery Outdoor advertising and public space: Gender, fear, and feminism":

> *"The sheer number of women portrayed in outdoor advertising far outweighs men, and therefore on a cursory level, advertising can be interpreted as contributing to the gendering of public space through its continued use of women as "artifice". When women are relegated to the background - as artifice, as decoration - it is evident that the masculine nature of public space has placed limitations on their inclusion. The negative, disempowering effect of this kind of objectification extends beyond the "ornamented surface" and can be interpreted as having harmful ramifications on the mental and physical safety and prosperity of all women in public space."* (Rosewarne 2005, 70)

The manner in which women are portrayed in outdoor advertising, as sexualized decoration, is distinct from the manner in which men are often portrayed. Men's presence is generally used to give authority to a product, while women's bodies are used as adornment (Rosewarne 2005, 71). The use of women's bodies in advertising communicates the belief that a woman's primary role is as sexual ornamentation. This highly sexualized imagery reminds women of their status in society and due to the public nature of these advertisements, they cannot be avoided. Women, in this sense, are a "captive audience" upon each venture out into public space.

Figure 3: CK ad in Fuencarral 43 (March 2011]

Figure 4: TH ad (April 2011)

The above Calvin Klein ad (Figure 3) was replaced by this Tommy Hilfiger ad (Figure 4) on a façade in Fuencarral 43, where both have loomed over the plaza. The man in the second ad is not sexualized and the layout even includes text with his name and occupation. His presence is there to lend a voice of authority and endorsement to the product. On the other hand, the woman is nameless and has no context. Rosewarne expands this idea by comparing images of women in advertising in Australia to the classic pin-up images of women from the 1950s. One of the important themes in the pin-up is the removal of "distractions" from the image. The woman's body is a "free-floating" non-entity (Rosewarne 2007, 318). Without reference to personality, identity, or individuality, the woman represents all women.

Dworkin expands on what the aesthetic of the pin-up means in her piece Vargas' Blonde Sambos. These images, especially of white women upon white backgrounds, push the "boundaries of nonexistence … there [is] no fat because there is no flesh" (Dworkin 2000). We can see the blurring between the distinction of background (nothingness) and body (woman). By blurring these lines, the represented woman becomes a non-entity. Rosewarne argues that the pin-up aesthetic equates "woman" with "absence": without reference to anything but the body, and even then erasing the distinction between body and nothing, the image represents a lack of intellect, a lack of challenge, and a removal of distractions from the woman's primary role – to instigate sexual arousal (Rosewarne 2007, 318).

Within this Calvin Klein ad, the aesthetic is clearly one of violence. The defensive position, the nudity, the darkened eyes and tousled hair all point to the mainstreaming of sexualized violence against women in the media. It is a prime example of Dworkin's analysis of the pin-up aesthetic.
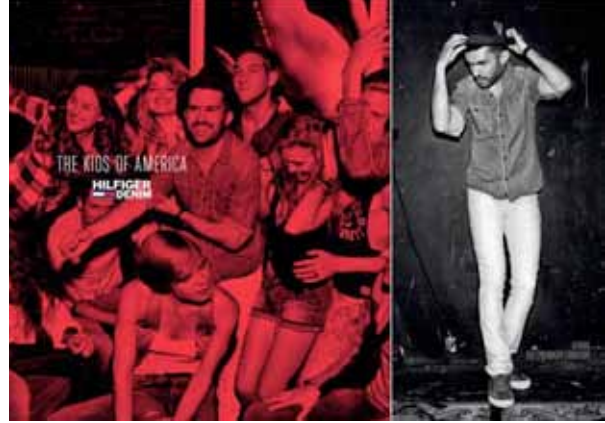
The only part of her body that is defined in contrast to the background of nothingness is her breasts, drawing the eye to focus on the part of her that "exists" in comparison to her white body that melts into the background. These violent images in public mark the plaza as a highly masculinized space. "Just as the pin-up excites the soldier and reinforces his masculinity, the sexist advertisement can be understood to excite the male passers-by, marking the space as a male domain" (Rosewarne 2007, 321).

Before starting this project, I had previously patronized the tattoo and piercing studio within Fuencarral 43 and had met many of the workers of the studio, including a friendly piercer. We struck up a friendship and he introduced me to several of the other workers in Fuencarral 43 and gave me an in with the workers of the skate shop, restaurant, and Starbucks. One night we agreed to meet up at the plaza when the sudio closed, and when I arrived I stood around waiting for him to lock up the studio. It was the first time I looked up and saw the previously mentioned Calvin Klein ad. I immediately took out my field log and started writing:

CK ad Fuencarral 43:

- *White, blond woman in defensive position*

- *Looks like a battered woman*

- *Breasts as focus*

- *No product in the ad*

- *Sexxay[1] , sexxay violence"* (Field log, March 14)

[1] "Sexxay" and other spelling variations of "sexy" are part of a common lingo I have picked up from many feminist blogs, deliberately exaggerated to mock popular cultural representation of women's sexuality.

When the piercer, ALM, asked me what I was writing about, I showed him my notes and told him that I was really uncomfortable. He told me to not take it "so personally" and that the woman in the ad had nothing to do with me. I explained to him that actually, yes, she did, and later wrote about our conversation in my journal:

> Seriously though, how can men not see that ads which have sexxay violence against women are problematic? I told ALM that I was violently raped in January and that seeing those images makes me think about things that happened to me. He was all, 'Well, you know, you have to deal with your own problems and not think of this as related. The ad has nothing to do with what happened to you'. Really, ALM? You're sure that your diet of pornified violence and violent porn has nothing to do with what's acted out against me/millions of other women? It's not like I'm the only one (or that it's happened just once, for Christ's sake). Plus, does it fucking matter if that picture has anything to do with me personally? Shouldn't the fact that it makes me feel physically ill when I look at it be enough to warrant some sort of change? Ugh, this kind of shit makes me want to not go outside ever. I can't avoid it and it's not fair.

(Journal, March 15)

When reading the images of the plaza, I came to realize that not including this voice and reaction was inherently an omission of one of the aspects of experiencing the plaza. And yet, even at this point I was still struggling to recognize that this was a valid part of my research. When I spoke with my peers who were also studying plazas in Madrid, time after time we would end up discussing these parts of what it means to be in public space. Many of my female peers were enthusiastic about sharing similar misogynistic propaganda within their plazas, and yet none of us were including this in how we read the plaza as "public space". During one of our small group discussions, one peer told me that I wasn't being objective enough because of my history of sexual violence. I asked her, "But if it's something like one in four college-aged women have been victims of sexual violence, isn't it actually anti-woman bias to omit those voices?" (Journal, April 2). The pieces of this project were beginning to fall into place.

VIOLENCE AND FEAR IN PUBLIC SPACE

Violence in public space is not just relegated to representations through media and advertising. Fear of violence against women creates gendered exclusions in the plaza. Despite the fact that most violence against women is perpetrated domestically, fear of violence in public dramatically alters the way women inhabit public space. According to Koskela in "Gendered Exclusions: Womens fear of violence and changing relations to space," "Urban space is produced by gender relations, and reproduced in those everyday practices where women do not - or dare not - have a choice over their own spatial behaviour. Experienced violence, threat of violence, sexual harassment and other events that increase a woman's sense of vulnerability are reinforcing masculine domination over space" (Koskela 1999, 112).

Koskela asserts that use of space is often considered on an individual basis. That is, because of such a strong ideology of individuality, we consider our actions in public space to be seen as free choices, despite the fact that they are products of social power relations (Koskela 1999, 112). "Because of fear, women are restricting their access to and activity within public space. Collectively, women constitute an example par excellence of the unequal victim because they are socially and physically vulnerable to victimization" (Koskela 1999, 113). It is important to note that while men can also be victims of violence, women as a social class are far more likely to be victimized and fearful of violence in both private and public. Of course, domestic and public violence cannot be separated spatially. Addressing women as a class of victims in a violent culture, Koskela argues that "there is no separation of the dimensions of fear. A culture of domestic violence in private leads to fear across all spatial boundaries" (Koskela 1999, 112).

The culture of domestic violence ties back into advertising in public spaces. The issue of whether one fuels the other is outside the scope of this project, though is it certain that violent imagery feeds women's fear of violence. As Rosewarne argues in "The Men's Gallery," "The issue of fear of attack is two-fold: (i) there is the understanding that the potential would-be criminal comes to view ordinary women as subordinate based on their media diet of sexually objectified women; and (ii) there is the understanding that women come to see themselves as bestowed with female sexuality above all else" (Rosewarne 2005, 73). Relating this to women's exclusion in masculine public space, Rosewarne asserts, "This exclusion stems from highly sexualized imagery reminding them of their sexual vulnerability that, in turn, has them fearful for their safety and alters their behavior to compensate" (Rosewarne 2005, 68).

Despite the many hours I spent in Fuencarral 43 over the course of several months, I have never become completely comfortable in that space. I would dread leaving the comfort of my apartment, as is exemplified by this journal entry: "I should go to Fuencarral today, and I know I should force myself, but I just want to be left alone and every time I go out there some guy tries to talk to me. It doesn't matter if I'm writing and have my big headphones on, some dude invariably feels the need to talk to me and invade my time and space." (Journal, April 2)

In mid-April I came to realize that these entries in my journal highlighted a very important aspect of what it means to be a woman in public space. I had decided this year that I would stop being silent about sexual violence and rape in my life, especially around men. The more I talked about it, the more I heard men tell me that they had never met another rape victim before. I find this impossible to believe. Unsurprisingly, the more I talked about it with women, the more I heard about their victimhood. I learned about painful amounts of sexual violence that my peers had experienced and that many of them also felt the same way I did when seeing these types of advertisements. It wasn't until I was rereading my field log and realized that these common experiences are integral to understanding Fuencarral 43:

So I had coffee with a friend in Fuencarral today. Some guy who looked to be about 30 came up to us in the terrace and just stood there and said "guapaaaaas" [2]. *After he left, she seemed to laugh a bit nervously, but I was not having any of it. I said, "The fuck was that?" and she told me how much she hated it when men cat-called at her. It was a relief to hear that it bothers her too. It's obviously not about sex because they know they aren't going to get sex by doing those things. It's about control, dominance, and power. It's like they want us to know that they are judging us constantly, every time we go out in public.* (Field log, April 7)

[2] 'Guapa' means beautiful or pretty.

Koskela argues, "Violence inflicted on a woman by one particular man becomes fear of violence from any man. This fear of any man in the street turns space into a highly masculine field" (Koskela 1999, 116). This passage struck me with such force that I suddenly felt a wave of nausea. I realized that I had omitted, perhaps out of denial or self-protection, experiences that made the first two months of my research extremely difficult. I never wrote these feelings down because they were fleeting, painful, and above all, something I didn't want to be subjected to. These feelings came from a rape in the January before starting this research: an abusive ex-partner caught a plane to Madrid and showed up at my door without warning. He forced his way into my home in order to coerce me to return to the relationship and failing that, rape me.

On many occasions, I would sit in Fuencarral 43 and catch a split-second glimpse of a person who had similar features as the man who raped me. In that fraction of a second, my heartbeat would dramatically speed up and I would freeze. Despite all the rational thoughts I had at my disposal to calm myself down and realize that I was not in immediate danger, those small moments of panic added up to quite a bit of time. While my rape did not take place in public, the fear and culture of violence is not bound to the physical location in which it took place. To repeat Koskela, "There is no separation of the dimensions of fear. A culture of domestic violence in private leads to fear across all spatial boundaries" (Koskela 199, 112).

PRIVATIZATION OF THE PUBLIC

A critique of plaza Fuencarral 43 would not be complete without a mention of privatization. My initial plans for studying this plaza revolved around the privatization and advertising within the public space because it seemed curious to me that the plaza was well known for the Mercado de Fuencarral, a high-end alternative fashion shopping center, and its franchise eateries such as Starbucks and Lateral. However, upon researching privatization critiques, I came to "Introducing Gender to the Critique of Privatized Public Space" by Kristin Day, which brought to light the issues regarding gender within privatization and anti-consumerism discourse.

Day argues that privatization critiques by and large ignore gender all together, and yet at the same time reinforce negative stereotypes of women and femininity:

The prevailing critique of the privatized space is, in some ways, a critique of the supposed 'feminization' of public space. Passive participation, consumption and fear – these characteristics have been attributed to women's use of public space… the characterization of consumption and other supposed ills of public life as "feminine" is problematic. In reality, consumption, passivity and fear - negative attributes ascribed to modern public life - are often particularly constraining for women. These shortcomings are better understood not as pathologies emanating from women, but as impediments to women's participation in public space. (Day 1999, 174)

The plaza of Fuencarral 43 is linked with conspicuous leisure, with three private terraces that take up most of the public space. The street Fuencarral is itself known for its alternative, yet upper-class retail stores. It features well-known brand names from within Spain and worldwide. I was originally drawn to critiques of the consumerism of this public space because it was rare to see anyone enjoying the space without having some sort of shopping bag or take-away cup with them from one of the nearby shops. Most of the clothing shops on Fuencarral are targeted towards women, with the exception of a few skate shops. High-end makeup stores, such as MAC, feature prominently on the paths towards the plaza. However, as Day discusses, analyzing such spaces without taking into consideration the impact of and upon gender is "to tell only half the story. Many privatized spaces reproduce gender oppression by reinforcing the association of women with frivolous, status-oriented consumption… Beyond the obvious emptiness in a public life focused on buying and owning, spaces that reinforce women's engagement in frivolous consumption marginalize women and trivialize their role in public life" (Day 1999, 168).

Privatization critiques that ignore gendered exclusions and reinforce associations of femininity with shopping, consumerism, and conspicuous leisure have anti-woman ideology at their heart. None of these things is inherent within women, but are social constructs of femininity. In fact, they cause women a double-bind: by associating consumerism with women, they become trained to take part in harmful practices and yet also oblige women to use this formulation of femininity as a primary form of identity construction. As Day points out, "Ubiquitous store windows and mannequins are common sites of female identity construction, first making women dissatisfied with their own appearances, and then promising more perfect figures and faces, attainable with the right commodities. Though specific projected images may change, even dramatically, the focus on beauty and its basis in consumption remain the same. Women's use of such spaces often fuels dissatisfaction with themselves… Privatized public spaces often market women's sexuality for consumption, thus constraining women through sexual objectification" (Day 1999, 169). Fuencarral 43 is not exempt from this practice that limits women; in fact, despite its status as an "alternative" scene, the focus on consumption as means to obtaining and maintaining status as a woman is central.

The advertisement for the Mercado de Fuencarral and Beefeater (Figure 5) is a prime example of using consumption to define women's sexuality. Although the woman portrayed is covered in tattoos, the basic beauty ideals are present: skinny, white, submissive, and without context. The ad copy is also problematic. It reads, "What happens in the changing rooms will be our secret". Of course, the problem is two-fold: that of associating women's sexuality with clothes shopping and that of the underlying threat of secrecy regarding sex and women – secrecy that could potentially include the sexual violence evoked in the surrounding ads.

Figure 5: Mercado de Fuencarral Ad

> **"Space is organized in ways that reproduce gender differences in power and privilege. Status is embedded in the spatial arrangements, so that changing space potentially changes the status hierarchy and changing status potentially changes spatial institutions. "**
>
> (Spain 1992, 233)

CONCLUSION

My goal in this autoethnography was to document not just the theoretical aspects of how gender functions in the plaza, but also to give voice to the experience of being a woman within this public space. Because the research and writing itself have taken me in all different directions, upon reflecting about Fuencarral 43 my biggest disappointment is not being able to continue and go more in depth with the topic. My experiences have lined up with the theory reviewed in this paper, but I believe it is necessary to further study the ways in which gender is reflected and reinforced in this specific public space. I would have like to have conducted interviews with other women, especially women who are victims of recent sexual violence or rape, in order to see to what extent they identify with the experiences I've presented here. I believe that it is not only necessary to study how women recount their personal experiences of public life in relation to gender and power, but also to urge them to give themselves voices and to tell their stories in their own words.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that Fuencarral 43 is a masculine space, I would in no way consider or suggest avoiding it. As Weisman writes in Discrimination by Design, "The denial of women's rights as citizens to equal access to public space- and of the psychological and physical freedom to use it in safety- has made public space, not infrequently, the testing ground of challenges to male authority and power" (Weisman 1994, 79). That is to say, although women are victimized by masculine public space, that very space can be where women dismantle the anti-woman ideology in the built environment, refuse to accept an exclusionary status in masculine spaces, and assert our right to a truly inclusive public space. This researcher, for one, plans to do just that.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WORKS CITED

Bondi, Liz and Damaris Rose. "Constructing Gender, Constructing the Urban: a review of Anglo-American feminist urban geography". Gender, Place and Culture, 10, no. 3 (Sept. 2003): 229 – 245.

Day, Kristen. "Introducing Gender to the Critique of Privatized Public Space". Journal of Urban Design, 4, no. 2 (1999): 155 – 178.

Dworkin, Andrea. Vargas' Blonde Sambos. 2000. http://www.nostatusquo.com/ACLU/dworkin/vargas.html

Dworkin, Andrea. Woman Hating (Plume, 1974): 202.

Ellis, Carolyn. "Heartfelt autoethnography". Qualitative Health Research, 9 (1999), 669 – 682.

Koskela, Hille. "Gendered Exclusions: Women´s fear of violence and changing relations to space". Geografiska Annaler., Human Geography, 81, B2 (Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography, 1999): 111-124. http://www.jstor.org/stable/491020

Massey, Doreen. Space, Place, and Gender (University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 6.

No author. "Hilfiger Denim Spring/Summer 2011 Campaign- The Kids of America". http://www.labdailyblog.com/?p=17321

Rendell, Jane. Gender, Space, Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction (London and New York: Routledge, 2000): 230 – 235.

Rosewarne, Lauren. "Pin-ups in public space: Sexual outdoor advertising as sexual harassment". Women's Studies International Forum, 30, 4 (University of Melbourne, July-August 2007): 313 – 325.

Rosewarne, Lauren. "The Men's Gallery: Outdoor advertising and public space: Gender, fear, and feminism". Women's Studies International Forum, 28, 1 (University of Melbourne, January-February 2005): 67 – 78.

Sanders, Joel. "Male space: architecture subtly reinforces gender stereotypes - not only for women, but for men". Architecture, 85, no. 6 (June 1996): 77 – 81.

Spain, Daphine. Gendered Spaces (The University of North Carolina Press, 1992): 30 -233.

Wall, Sarah. "An Autoethnography on Learning about Autoethnography". International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 5, no. 2 (June 2006): 1 – 12.

Watson, Sophie. "Bodies, gender, cities". City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action, 4, no. 1 (2005): 101-105.

Weisman, Leslie. Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment (University of Illinois Press, 1994): 67 – 87.

Wigley, Mark. "White-out: Fashioning the Modern [Part 2]". Assemblage, 22 (MIT Press: Dec. 1993): 6 – 49. Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3171168

The Governmentality of Municipal Politics: Neoliberal Consensus at the Port Moody City Hall

Michael McDonell
Simon Fraser University, mbm7@sfu.ca

ABSTRACT

My ethnographic research project presents analysis of local municipal council decision-making and discourse in the context of neoliberalism, understood as an ideology and practice privileging efficiency and profit-driven growth over policies of social justice. In the City of Port Moody, I observed processes of consensus-formation at four Council meetings and multiple small committee meetings, and interviewed three Council members and three candidates in the months of October-November 2011, leading up to the Nov. 19th municipal election. I employed content and archival analysis to interpret City-produced meeting minutes and official publications, candidate-produced campaign brochures, and media-produced local newspaper articles, including how campaign photos were visually presented. Discourse at City Hall centered on the role of state planning of infrastructure and services to stimulate economic growth, yet also centered on the need for prudent financial management and fiscal discipline, framing the citizen as tax-payer. The articulation of a 'smart growth' paradigm sought to increase quality of life by synthesizing notions of sustainability and capitalist growth in a legitimate way. Finally, Port Moody's adoption of the "City of the Arts" label was associated with the accumulation of cultural capital and the preservation of 'small town charm,' which would lead to tourism and investment, increasing the municipal tax-base of the City.

Keywords: local governance consensus, neoliberal project, smart growth, governmentality, cultural capital accumulation

INTRODUCTION:

While "neoliberalism" has been a common theme in accounts of state activity since the 1980's, there is some doubt regarding how this political-economic ideology and practice may affect the activities of local-level decision-making, such as municipal councils. In the context of state policy and government, neoliberalism advocates market-based solutions to social problems and a prudent, austere approach to managing state resources, especially in times of crisis. Given that North America is in the middle of an historic world recession, that Port Moody has won several awards for "fiscal sustainability," and that a municipal election was taking place on November 19th, 2011, the City Hall at Port Moody constituted an excellent research site to observe the articulation and 'micro-politics' of the neoliberal project. In my ethnographic research carried out over a period of ten weeks, I explore the nature of the relationship between the discourse of my local municipal government and the ideology and practices of neoliberalism, seeking to show how the actions of the City Council may contradict or conform to the neoliberal project as a whole.

LITERATURE ON NEOLIBERALISM, THE CAPITALIST STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Since the late 1970's, the redistributive and welfare functions of the Canadian state have significantly declined and a neoliberal model has become a common project to most levels of state governance. At a basic level, neoliberalism has effected a shift toward privatization, economic deregulation, regressive taxation, and individual self-responsibility in public agendas, debates, policies, and programmes (Teeple 2000). The state, in the present moment, is primarily concerned with assisting the process of capital accumulation, i.e., the ever-expanding production, appropriation and re-investment of surplus-value (profit) through contractual relationships of private property on the market. The political-economic practice of neoliberalism depends on an emergent mode of production based on computers and information, organized through supra-national circuits of capital circulation and economic institutions or frameworks, e.g., WTO, World Bank, IMF, and Bank of International Settlements, which are capable of tapping new forms of (economic, cultural, social, human) capital for expanded reproduction. At the paradigmatic level, Alison J. Ayers and Alfredo Saad-Filho (2008) suggest three economic axioms that underlie all neoliberal political projects: first, that at the microeconomic level, the market is considered more efficient than the state in decision-making, and simply requires a legal foundation to be put in place; second, that at the macroeconomic level, processes of globalization and uninhibited capital flows constrain domestic policies to the short-term interests of market growth; and third, that the authority of financial markets should be institutionalized in the form of monetarist macroeconomic policies, with interest rates serving to effectively discipline national and sub-national populations (122-3).[1] Neoliberalism is the dominant theory and practice of capitalism

after the demise of effective welfare state policies; but while it is often associated with de-regulation, it in fact involves practices of rationalized state intervention to manage economic crises, by stimulating growth and capital accumulation, as well as normalizing self-discipline.

In order for the capitalist mode of production to 'function' in the interests of capital accumulation and the capitalist class, according to some neo-Marxists, a relatively independent state is required to lay the foundations for market exchange and provide opportunities for achieving legitimacy through consensus. The state is crucial in its capacity for providing infrastructure, a legal framework, and a deliberative body for capitalists to organize their general interests. Despite its coercive capacities, the state seeks consent from its citizens in the form of a hegemonic "illusory general community" where disagreement is tamed, minimized, or overcome (Marx 1978, 160). However, this does not imply that state policies are always able to successfully reproduce the ideal conditions of capital accumulation. As Wright (1978) points out, the state may be forced, under certain circumstances, to implement policies and assume forms that are contrary to the functional reproduction of the capitalist system, because it is locked into a "mode of determination" by class struggles and changing class structures (22). In the Marxist view of politics, the state is an essential dimension of class relationships and central to the process of accumulation: while it may have a degree of independence, it does not operate in a separate 'sphere' with its own internal logic. Others have pointed out that the neoliberal state is involved in constructing political identities, or in governing self- and self-other relationships in civil society: e.g., the

[1] Monetary policies are also known as "supply-side," anti-inflationary, and market-based policies designed to foster capital accumulation via minimizing unproductive capital allocation. Fiscal policies, by contrast, characterize the "demand-side," or Keynesian, welfare state era of capitalism, which emphasized the origin of capital accumulation crisis in the inability of workers and citizens to consume sufficient amounts of products to avoid overproduction, and sought to generate full employment. They are marked in the period of neoliberalism by the appointment of Paul Volcker to the United States Federal Reserve (Harvey 2005, 23-5).

2 Other authors working in this theoretical tradition note the resurgence of the concept of 'civil society' in connection to the proliferation of non-governmental organizations (NGO) in the governance process, e.g., non-profit and not-for-profit organizations, citizens' associations, interest groups, policy institutes, and 'expertise' (Sinha 2005).

3 Formal rules are immediately visible in the Council Chambers: the Mayor is formally referred to as "Your Worship" while wearing a Mayoral insignia over his shoulders, bylaws are referred to in number format, and the Council as a whole follows Robert's Rules of Order very closely, e.g., requiring that all proposals be read three times, and "Moved, Seconded, and Carried," among other examples. In my experience as an undergraduate student union in the Department of Sociology/Anthropology, RRO tended to be unpopular and to prevent meetings from having attractive qualities that would draw greater numbers of undergraduates to attend. I was one of the small handful of undergraduates who volunteered to work within these formalities. However, in Port Moody City Council meetings, I was continually surprised by how strictly and abstractly RRO were followed.

re-conception of the individual's role in 'their own' welfare (as self-responsible) and in shaping economic processes as consumer-citizens (cf. Foucault 2008; Larner 2003; Munck 2005, 65). Analyses of governmentality, inspired by Michel Foucault, are ultimately consistent with those from the Marxist tradition in their analysis of the ways in which governmental rationality legitimizes itself (in the modern liberal period) with reference to the "rational" behaviour of the economic agents in civil society (Foucault 2008, 310-12). The ever-present assumption guiding neoliberal activity is that people are always self-interested capitalists (homo economicus), and that therefore, the state is irrational unless it intervenes to preserve this internal logic.

While neoliberalism is made possible by a changing global division of labour that has increased mobile capital's power to demand political concessions, there has also been an emphasis in the literature on uneven geographical development, and hence, local contingency. For example, Hackword and Moriah (2006) detail how, despite the ideological force of neoliberal doctrines, some contingency existed in the formulation of social housing policy in Ontario. Although the municipal form of the state has limited autonomy, and is burdened with increased decision-making responsibility (McBride and McNutt 2007), it is potentially more responsive to grassroots, local concerns than other forms of governance and administration. In practice, at least in England, it has served a site where socialist experiments were implemented (Harvey 2005; Teeple 2000, 108).[2] Due to the contradictory need to rationally oversee economic growth at the same time as to limit state revenues and capacities, 'programmatic' policy consensus should not be assumed, as governance strategies may be more dependent on civil society organizations, or as Munck (2003) conceives it, "the 'post-political'

steering of the political process toward less directive, more networked, modalities than in the past" (67; cf. Harvey 2005, 64-86). While there is no shortage of research on neoliberal governmentality in cities (Keil 2002), there is insufficient attention to neoliberal municipal governance strategies, despite some notable examples (e.g., Slater 2004). Ethnographic research can reveal the contradictions in the different applications of neoliberalism in concrete political settings, comparing a collection of qualitative 'data' with neo-Marxist and Foucauldian theories of the capitalist state.

RESEARCH SITE AND METHODS

The site of my research was the Port Moody City Hall. The City Hall is a large building connected to the City Library and at the crossroads of the major roads and residential shopping centres in the city of Port Moody. The Council Chambers is a 200-seat, sloping auditorium with a speaker's desk at the front of the audience, a press gallery on the right side in front of the audience, and a raised platform in the front stage, with two rows of Councillors' tables on either side of the Mayor's seat.[3] The Councillors' tables slant toward the center of the room and hide several councillors and City staff members from full view of the public. Council and Committee meetings are both open to the public, allowing me to easily gain access as a citizen and avoid needing signatures of consent for observations. I had no history of prior meeting attendance and was frequently the youngest person in the room. Thus, while I 'participated' by attending as a citizen, I was a distant observer in this context. It was also not possible to spend extended lengths of time observing in the main lounge of City Hall, since the night Receptionist

(security guard) appeared visibly agitated whenever someone spent too much time in the lounge area - whistling, tapping his hands, and glancing over – whenever I attempted to make sustained observations.

Observations, a total of eleven hours over eight weeks, in the context of bi-weekly City Council meetings held in the Council Chambers and monthly committee meetings on the third-floor Brovold Room of City Hall, were based on a convenience sample of scheduled meetings.

The majority of meetings were an hour long or less, but involved many agenda items and speakers. During observations, I sought to note key figures who exercise political agency in decisions. This was part of my larger objective to understand the unfolding governance process, and the extent of consensus and participation to show how ideas were legitimated or taken for granted in municipal discourse. I attended two Council meetings in person (October 25th and November 8th), and analyzed the video footage of two additional meetings by watching them on Shaw Cable's 9 AM broadcast for roughly two hours of observation time. While I was generally an inactive observer, alienated from the jargon of meetings, during one Arts and Culture committee meeting I was called on by Councillor Geoff Neil to reveal my name and purpose of attending. Embarrassed at attending late, I blurted out that I was a Port Moody resident studying "how decision-making outcomes takes place at the municipal level, who is active, and what are the main concerns." Because one candidate did not textually indicate whether she wished her name to be revealed in the write-up, all Councillors and participants I interacted with were given pseudonyms except where (in the case of Mayor Trasolini) names were revealed through the titles of bibliographic sources. This was the case for Rachel Hudson, Lisa Onduron, Katherine Robertson, Amanda Wilson, Dave

Kaldor, Geoff Neil, and Ben Eastwood but not for the other election candidates.[5]

With three then-current Council members, I used semi-structured interviews, which allowed me to engage questions of identity/biography, governance theory and practice, views on socio-economics, and overall ideology in relation to their discursive associations between ideas. Due to their socialization as Council members in strict question-and-answer styles of analytical discussion, this was the most practical interview method. I selected Mayor Joe Trasolini, who has served in Council for 15 years, and two other long-term councillors representing what I perceived were "left" (Katherine Robertson) versus "right" (Amanda Wilson) political ideologies to examine the extent of ideological differences expressed at City Hall. The direction of the interview with Amanda Wilson, which emphasized sustainability initiatives in the context of rapid economic growth, also served as a cue to guide my selection of election candidates for interview toward those concerned with notions of 'smart growth.'

With candidates for the November 19th who had been answering questions on a range of issues and providing in-depth answers during campaigning activities, I conducted three less-structured interviews.[6] For two candidates, Dave Kaldor and Lisa Onduron, I conducted autobiographical interviews in which I asked them to narrate their biographies, in order to get a sense of the trajectory and life chances of individuals who seek positions of political authority at the municipal level. I also conducted one "oral history" interview with the Green Party candidate Rachel Hudson, asking her to narrate the major developments in governance in Port Moody in the last 15 years. Unfortunately, the candidate's memory of specific events was inconsistent at times, but overall, the unstructured interviews were as successful as the semi-structured interviews in revealing what concerned and motivated local municipal political agency.

[4] Two election candidates – Rachel Hudson and Lisa Onduron – also shared their frustration at the inaccessible nature of meetings to the non-participant, especially in the way bylaws are formally referred to in agendas and minutes with very little explanation of their content. Candidate Hudson proposed holding weekly drop-in discussion with residents of the city to help them make sense of issues and learn how to participate in Council decisions, but was not elected.

[5] Interviewees were asked to sign a consent form to share their background information (demographics) and views with me. Because on candidate did not textually indicate whether she wished her name to be revealed in the write-up, all participants were given pseudonyms except where (in the case of Mayor Trasolini) names were revealed through the titles of bibliographic sources.

[6] Again, interviewees were given "face sheets" to fill out about their demographic information, e.g., education level, household income level, and ties to different associations.

One of the most useful methods I undertook was archival and content analysis. I selected six articles from the local Tri-Cities and Now newspapers which mentioned Port Moody politics or government in their titles, as well as two pre-election editorials from residents. Moreover, I selected twelve (out of twenty-three) election candidate brochures from those received in my family's mailbox or as part of local Now and Tri-Cities newspapers. Meeting minutes and agendas from all City Council and committee meetings of Oct.-Nov. 2011 were available online through the City of Port Moody's archive, in addition to reports such as the Official Community Plan (2011), the Mayor's Inaugural Council Address (2008) and Annual Address to Council (2011), which I analyzed for content relating to neoliberal governance strategies. The ways in which political-economic ideas and decisions were presented and justified to the public was most clear through content and archival analysis.

Visual analysis was also conducted on the brochure photos submitted by candidates for the municipal election and the photos of the history of past Port Moody Councils at City Hall. The purpose of analyzing the self-presentation of municipal candidates was to understand how similar semiotic approaches might reflect similar concerns and contexts. The purpose of analyzing past City Council membership was to understand how the current City Councillors fit into the overall history and power structure of City Council. This would widen my understanding of the significance of their actions in context.

ANALYSIS
CONTRADICTORY IMPERATIVES OF ACCUMULATION AND STABILIZATION

Both the need to attract investment-capital to the city and to devote state revenue to constructing infrastructure projects stood out as imperatives for City Council, individual Councillors, and candidates for the municipal elections. A prime goal of neoliberal policy and economic orthodoxy is to sustain consistent growth and profitability for private owners of capital, and this becomes the object of economic development policies, mediated by the state's capacity for infrastructure and general planning (Saad-Filho 2005, 113-4).[7] A major focus of council activities in the period I observed was on maintaining and upgrading infrastructure, in order to allow citizens commuting between the suburbs and the inner city of Vancouver to travel in a reasonable amount of time, as well as to attract new investment to the city. Controlling the flow of traffic is necessary because Port Moody is the smallest city in the Tri-Cities, but the main entry-point for cars travelling between suburbs and urban metropolitan areas (Rosemary Small, campaign brochure, [3]). Yet, at the same time, municipal budgets are consistently lower because of decreases in funding from federal and provincial governments (Katherine Robinson, interview, November [9]; McBride and McNutt 2007). Moreover, Mayor Joe Trasolini has refused to raise property taxes significantly in his two terms, due to citizens' concerns during elections as well as his own rationality of governance (Trasolini 2008, 6; 2011, 5). According to a local newspaper article, if Port Moody decided to develop the connector themselves, it would cost the citizens an extra tax increase of 1.86% (Strandberg 2011). Thus, construction of both the Evergreen Line high-speed sky-train and the reconstruction of the

Murray-Clarke overpass have been significantly delayed, in the case of the latter, for over two decades. This has caused concern for Port Moody residents, yet, despite repeated promises, no Council has yet been able to implement the Murray-Clarke connector project since its policy enactment in 1991 at the regional level. Why would this be the case? Essentially, the state is called on to play roles it cannot reconcile, which is not surprising given the restructuring of local governance under neoliberalism (Teeple 2000, 107 [9]). As predicted by the neo-Marxist literature, there appears to be a gap between programmatic objectives and the contradictory manifestations of actual neoliberal policies and programmes in the case of municipal governance strategies in Port Moody.

FRUGALITY AND EFFICIENCY AS 'GOOD GOVERNANCE'

It is theoretically interesting to find that although those serving in positions of decision-making power in the city of Port Moody do accept socio-economic values of efficiency, frugality, and private enterprise, their biographies do not unambiguously lead them to such values and practices. Participation in the "American Dream" of success (social mobility) through hard work, saving, small business ownership, financial responsibility, and educational attainment can shape the later attitudes and identities of individuals in making decisions, despite their lower socio-economic position in earlier life.[9] The following is an excerpt from an interview with Port Moody Mayor Giuseppe "Joe" Trasolini (November [10]):

MM: *Did you ever worry about the poor, or experience the fear of being poor when you were growing up?*

JT: *Worry about being poor? I was poor. My father was a construction worker and my mother was a factory-worker in Italy. When you grow up like that you have to learn to save in whatever areas you can in order to make do with what you have. Then I came here, when I was 16, went to British Columbia Institute of Technology, graduated with the highest grades in my cohort, and got into the business world [with G. Trasolini Contractors Ltd. and Pug Investments Ltd.].*

MM: *Do you think that early experience of growing up poor influenced your approach to governance to a significant extent, in terms of saving resources?*

JT: *Yes, I think so. You learn to become very 'frugal,' and Port Moody was given an award for being the most frugal city in the Greater Vancouver Regional District for several years [referring to the government-sponsored Canadian Award for Financial Reporting, 2005-07, and the business-sponsored Most Fiscally Responsible City Award, 2008]. But it doesn't mean there is a limit on services. We still maintain some of the best facilities and streets around [points outside to Port Moody Recreation Centre]: it's beautiful in this city, but we've done it on fewer resources, so those two sides can be balanced.*

[9] In the film Wall Street (1987), billionaire financial tycoon Gordon Gekko tells his working class protégé Bud Fox the type of ideal person he seeks: "Give me guys that are poor, smart and hungry, and no feelings. You win a few, you lose a few, but you keep on fighting." This is in distinction to "those MBA types" who are presumably privileged and less hard-working.

If we analyze closer Mayor Trasolini's words, the idea emerges that if government operates more efficiently, like a corporation, it can provide better services with less revenue and taxation. As Trasolini says in his Inaugural Council Address (2008):

> As Mayor, I have taken the lead in the past by bringing a business approach to Port Moody's budget process and city expenditures. This approach is even more relevant today as we enter a time of financial hardship.

Trasolini, like others I interviewed, became a wealthy businessman from lower-middle class origins, in his case, after immigrating to Canada from Italy in 1963 at age 16 and attending the British Columbia Institute of Technology. Mayor Trasolini presided over several agreements (such as the Port Moody Official Community Plan) that recognized affordable housing, job opportunities, and the availability of goods and services as part of a livable, "complete community" (OCP 2010, 52). As New Democratic Party of BC leader Adrian Dix stated, endorsing Trasolini as an NDP candidate in the next provincial election: "He understands business, he understands community, he understands working people" (Strandberg 2011b). A 'frugal' approach to financial management is also echoed by more "liberal or left" politicians" such as Katherine Robinson as well, a union steward and Labour Relations Board Chair, who commented on the challenges of keeping a "financial house" in order with less assistance from higher governmental bodies in an interview on November 9th:

MM: *Do you think that there's a lot of pressure in terms of having to manage budgets now?*

I concluded that the differences between left and right ideologies which had defined the era of the welfare state were mainly formal, rather than substantial or practical, in terms of real decision-making outcomes. Despite the 'participatory' rhetoric of local politics, all political actors must work within a framework which depends on steady capital accumulation to secure state revenues, whether or not this is ultimately successful.

DEMONCRATIC PARTICIPATION

The discursive framing of citizens as taxpayers is part of an exclusionary process that exists alongside the openness of weekly Council meetings and Mayor's office hours. Content analysis of City Council candidate brochures for the Nov. 19th election showed that a major concern for the election was the allocation of "your dollar"[10] and "your tax dollars used wisely [over the next three years]."[11] To meet the citizen's needs, the successful Council member needs "a wealth of experience from corporate management,"[12] "a no-nonsense entrepreneurial approach,"[13] "strong business skills" (Zoe Royer, 2011 campaign brochure, 4), and "prudent financial management" (George Broderick, 2011 campaign brochure: 1). This is a strategy of governmentality, one which positions citizens ontologically as homo economicus: "homo economicus is an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself....being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings" (Foucault 2008, 226). This defines the "enterprise-unit," i.e., the rational allocation of scarce resources to competing ends, as the basic element of all areas of society, making subjects increasingly predictable, i.e., governable (225, 268-71). At City Council meetings themselves, I noticed that expensive-looking vehicles were parked directly in front of the City Hall, in contrast to regular citizens' cars, which tended

[10] Shane Kennedy (unelected): http://www.aprilroad.com/files/Shane_Kennedy_for_Port_Moody_Council.pdf

[11] Gerry Nuttall (elected councillor): http://www.gerrynuttall.ca/

[12] Katie Kickbush (unelected Mayor): http://www.bcdailybuzz.com/media/9064/Katie_Kickbush/

[13] Jimmy Malamas (unelected): http://www.facebook.com/JimMalamasforCouncil?sk=info

to be parked in the lot behind the library - on the other side of the building. Inside the doors of City Hall, I immediately noticed a dissonance between my 'normal' clothes and backpack, and the more expensive looking attire of the 'involved' citizens networking in a throng outside the Council Chamber doors. As expected by the neo-Marxist literature on neoliberalism, the Port Moody City Council is constrained by the pressure to maximize scarce resources and interpellates citizen-subjects to share this mentality in their activities, while involving informal barriers to full participation. While it is possible to resist the neoliberal political project through class struggle, it is also possible for citizens and workers to become more detached, i.e., 'post-political,' thus leaving political activity in the hands of 'expert' politicians, 'civil society' leaders, and program administrators.

SMART GROWTH

Agendas for Council and committee meetings, as well as statements by candidates and councillors, are eager to promote sustainability under the paradigm of 'smart growth.' In an interview with conservative Councillor Amanda Wilson on Oct. 31st, she qualified her views as moderately conservative, in distinction to the "extreme" views of neo-conservative[14] groups like the Fraser Institute think tank:[15] thus, Wilson sought to pursue other, i.e., social and environmental goods, "so as to preserve our small-town charm." After my interview with Councillor Wilson, I took home a copy of a book lent to her by a co-worker entitled Massive Change, by Bruce Mau and the Institute Without Boundaries, to explore the meaning of the phrase she had pointed to me inside the cover: "it's not about the world of design, it's about the design of the world." The book reflects on modern society's dependence on rational design principles that mimic natural eco-systems to construct seamless life-worlds. It promotes "'design economies'" based on dynamism rather than stasis (e.g., circulations

and exchanges of information), in addition to interactive collaboration between designers and users in "the global commons," a concept highlighted by Rachel Hudson in my November 14th interview with her. The book embraces the paradoxes of technological welfare and "Third Way" thinking[16], as opposed to "utopian" (i.e., left and right) political goals of improvement. As an example, it promotes urban densification, sustainable architecture (e.g., manufactured housing), digitally integrated worldwide networks, and the possibility of non-violent techno-warfare. Wilson's book openly promotes "colonizing what remains of the natural terrain" (2008, 47) but in conjunction with resource-management and systems-theory-grounded sustainability. This text is indicative of the context of municipal governance because as the Green candidate Rachel Hudson told me, Wilson was in her opinion one of the "most powerful," i.e., most socially and economically connected, politicians in the city, and she had been a member of the City Council for a considerable period of time (see Appendix below). The articulation of neoliberalism at the Port Moody City Hall is not fundamentally opposed to the state or social "intervention" as such, but against particular forms of the state which are deemed ineffective or destabilizing for general capitalist interests.

Despite her apparent enthusiasm to lend me her co-worker's book, it was initially unclear whether Amanda Wilson embraces the ideas inside it, or the ideas she speaks about (such as sustainability, green initiatives, etc.), as her first priority in Council meetings. Port Moody Mayor Joe Trasolini describes environmental issues as "in vogue and more important" in the last two decades. The book Massive Change promotes the idea that Wilson's principles of market growth and sustainability are indeed compatible, and Wilson enthusiastically shared her efforts to ban

[14] I understand "neo-conservative" and "neoliberal" to be very closely related phenomena, due to the fact that both advocate private ownership and a market economy with a social division of labour between workers and supervisors, managers, and investors. The only difference is in how the two ideologies achieve this goal: whether through 'modernizing' or through quasi-traditional values and strategies.

[15] The Fraser Institute is a policy institution based in Vancouver advocating "a free and prosperous world through choice, markets and responsibility": http://www.fraserinstitute.org/.

[16] A "Third Way" approach to governance and development is an "irenic ideology" which synthesizes values of liberty (private property or capitalism) and equality (social welfare or "socialism"), the needs of both the global system and local contexts, and order and contingency. It resembles syntheses such as that found in contemporary

[19]Katie Kickbush interview: http://www.bcdailybuzz.com/media/9064/Katie_Kickbush/

[20]At the very prolonged Arts and Culture committee meeting on November 7th, committee members in attendance debated how to get young citizens and parents of Port Moody involved in running the Youth Festival, in response to Manager of Cultural Services (Devin Jain's) concern that responsibility for the interdisciplinary theatre festival would be delegated to his administrative department. The uncertainty of volunteer support caused the committee to rescind its request for $5000 of funding from City Council which it had previously agreed on. By contrast, the Tri-Cities Homelessness Task Force meeting of October 7th brought twenty-two people together from non-profit organizations such as Purpose Society, Laurel Foundation, and St. Andrews United Church. Homelessness represented a serious demographic concern for candidates such as Tom Bell and re-elected Councillor Bob Elliott. However, according to Teeple (2000, 112-4) and Sinha (2005, 163-9), this represents the increased reliance on private organizations to solve problems of social reproduction and reduce the demands of "social citizenship" in the context of the general decline of local government ability form substantive social policy under neoliberalism (2000, 107-8).

cosmetic pesticides and develop a community sustainability plan as evidence of her moderate governance philosophy. Another candidate and small businessperson, Dave Kaldor, whose green platform also embraces Port Moody's sustainability goals, told me that he had spoken on good terms with Wilson before our Nov. 15th interview. In our interview, he advocated local food autonomy as "good for economic development," an idea that was shared by other candidates, such as Mayoral candidate Katie Kickbush, who said that Port Moody needs to maintain "the overall look and feel [of a small town]" yet simultaneously to ensure "that economic growth that will help the sustainability of our community."[19] One rationale for controlled growth is that construction of the Evergreen Line rapid transit station threatens small businesses with a loss of revenue and inconvenience (Nuttall 2011; Small 2011), opening opportunities for finance capitalists to make speculative profits at the expense of the petite-bourgeoisie ("Mayor's Inaugural Address to Council," 2011, 6). Wilson's book and interview, and the statements by other local political actors seem to validate one another regarding smart growth, but the ideology itself (i.e., that of sustainability and profit-oriented economic growth) may be inherently contradictory. The city of Port Moody, and presumably other Canadian municipalities, seek investment-capital and growth, but only in certain 'responsible' forms.

THE ACCUMULATION OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

The concerns of the Port Moody City Council to implement "arts and culture" objectives can also be traced to a profit-driven growth ideal, where cultural developments attract investment and human capital to the city on the basis of 'livability.' The City of Port Moody labels itself 'City of the Arts,' however, as two election candidates conveyed to me, there is little sense among citizens that the recent Councils have understood how to advertise cultural events, despite "our city's immense artistic talent" (Lisa Onduron, interview, November 15th; Dave Kaldor, interview, November 15th).[20] One possible reason for the city's attempt to brand itself in this way is to attract investment and expand local small business in its tourism industry. The increase of the city's cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) is seen as a way of increasing economic capital (profits and revenue), at least in the view of Zoe Royer, another Council candidate, who was elected (2011 campaign brochure, 3). According to the Port Moody City website, the City also seeks to pull in more human capital, i.e., highly skilled labour, through this strategy. The contribution of these forms of capital to the reproduction of capitalist class relations can be seen in Chapter Ten of the Official Community Plan (OCP), entitled "Arts and Culture," which states that strategies of cultural capital accumulation should "contribute to Port Moody's economic life" (58). Finally, in the context of a November 2nd committee meeting on Economic Development, citizen David Spence requested that the 2011 Annual Report of the committee should mention the economic benefits of the City of the Arts 'brand' in its contents. Tasked with increasing economic growth, Councillors appear to be upholding the "City of the Arts" brand-label to increase the flow of capital into the city and benefit small-business projects.

[19]Katie Kickbush interview:
http://www.bcdailybuzz.com/media/9064/Katie_Kickbush/

[20]At the very prolonged Arts and Culture committee meeting on November 7th, committee members in attendance debated how to get young citizens and parents of Port Moody involved in running the Youth Festival, in response to Manager of Cultural Services (Devin Jain's) concern that responsibility for the interdisciplinary theatre festival would be delegated to his administrative department. The uncertainty of volunteer support caused the committee to rescind its request for $5000 of funding from City Council which it had previously agreed on. By contrast, the Tri-Cities Homelessness Task Force meeting of October 7th brought twenty-two people together from non-profit organizations such as Purpose Society, Laurel Foundation, and St. Andrews United Church. Homelessness represented a serious demographic concern for candidates such as Tom Bell and re-elected Councillor Ben Eastwood. However, according to Teeple (2000, 112-4) and Sinha (2005, 163-9), this represents the increased reliance on private organizations to solve problems of social reproduction and reduce the demands of "social citizenship" in the context of the general decline of local government ability form substantive social policy under neoliberalism (2000, 107-8).

CONCLUSION

My research sought to address to fill in gaps in the social scientific understanding of neoliberalism, which has, in the words of Wendy Larner (2000), "not paid a great deal of attention to the politics surrounding specific programmes and policies" (14). By focusing on the discourse at Port Moody City Hall, and of those active at City Hall, I have been able to link the common threads and "messy actualities" of several contradictory neoliberal projects: relating to infrastructure development, redefinition of the role of citizens and state through the subjectivity of the tax-payer and homo economicus, as well as to the environmental problematic and the accumulation of cultural capital through municipal identity. Most of these, in fact, encountered little resistance, partly because potential criticisms had already been integrated into the very form of proposals, and because municipal political participation was very low – e.g., 15% in the 2008-11 elections. Yet, the scope of state intervention was still substantially intact, aside from its reliance on voluntarism and 'civil society organizations' in decision-making. At the local level, the articulation of a neoliberal agenda – literally, in municipal meeting agendas - is balanced by the particular class fractions whose property interests are served by decisions. In the case of Port Moody, this did not lead to unrestrained capital accumulation or 'programmatic policy consensus,' but it did show strong evidence of neoliberal mentalities, concepts, rationalities and practices structuring notions of 'good governance' and political agency. At a personal level, factoring in my life course position, I can attest to a certain dissonance with these institutional channels and discursive contours to political activity left in me, and to questioning how autonomous local politics can really be in resisting the macro dynamics of neoliberal capital accumulation, if at all. Scaling capitalism down to the more 'homely' and 'small-town' level of the petite-bourgeoisie is not in itself a less intense form of abstract capital accumulation and reinvestment, since it is precisely the construct of the individual 'rational-actor' – as efficiency-maximizer in all areas of social life – which is most clearly embodied in this form of political-economic life.

WORKS CITED

Ayers, Alison J., and Alfredo Saad-Filho. 2008. "Production, Class, and Power in the Neoliberal Transition: A Critique of Coxian Eclecticism." In Gramsci, Political Economy, and International Relations Theory: Modern Princes and Naked Emperors, edited by Alison J. Ayers, 109-32. New York: Palgrave Macmillon.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. "The Forms of Capital." In Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education, edited by John G. Richardson, 241-258. New York, Greenwood.

City of Port Moody 2009 Strategic Plan. http://www.portmoody.ca/modules/showdocument. aspx?documentid=133

City of Port Moody Official Community Plan, Bylaw No. 2849. 2011. http://www.portmoody.ca/modules/ showdocument.aspx?documentid=249

Clay, Mike. 2011. "Inaugural Address to Council." Talk presented at Inaugural Port Moody Council Meeting for newly elected City Council, Port Moody, British Columbia, December 6. Retrieved from: http://www. portmoody.ca/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=1267

Cohen, Ira. 2006. "Third Way Politics." Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology, edited by Bryan S. Turner, 627-8. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from: http://www.credoreference.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/ entry/cupsoc/third_way_politics.

Giddens, Anthony. 1998. The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Foucault, Michel. 2008. The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France, 1978-1979. Translated by Graham Burchell. Edited by Michael Senellert, Francois Ewald, and Alessandro Fontana. London: Picador Books.

Hackword, Jason, and Abigail Moriah. 2006. "Neoliberalism, Contingency, and Urban Policy: The Case of Social Housing in Ontario." International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 30 (3): 510-27.

Harvey, David. 2005. A Brief History of Neoliberalism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Keil, Roger. 2002. "Common-Sense Neoliberalism: Progressive Conservative Urbanism in Toronto, Canada." Antipode 34 (3): 578-601.

Larner, Wendy. 2000. "Neoliberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality." Studies in Political Economy 63: 5-25. Mau, Bruce. 2003. Massive Change. London: Phaidon Press.

McBride, Steven, and Kathleen McNutt. 2007. "Devolution and Neoliberalism in the Canadian Welfare State: Ideology, National and International Conditioning Frameworks, and Policy Change in British Columbia." Global Social Policy 7 (2): 177-201.

Munck, Ronaldo. 2005. "Neoliberalism and Politics, and the Politics of Neoliberalism." In Alfredo Saad-Filho, and Deborah Johnston, 60-9. Neoliberalism: A Critical Introduction. London: Pluto Press.

Saad-Filho, Alfredo. 2005. "From Washington to Post-Washington Consensus: Neoliberal Agendas for Economic Development." In Alfredo Saad-Filho, and Deborah Johnston, 113-9. Neoliberalism: A Critical Introduction. London: Pluto Press.

Sinha, Subir. 2005. "Neoliberalism and Civil Society: Project and Possibilities." In Alfredo Saad-Filho, and Deborah Johnston, 163-9. Neoliberalism: A Critical Introduction. London: Pluto Press.

Slater, Tom. 2004. Municipally Managed Gentrification in South Parkdale, Ontario. Canadian Geographer 48 (3): 303-25.

Strandberg, Diane. 2011a. "PoMo balks at corridor costs." Tri-City News, October 14. http://www.bclocalnews.com/news/131819633.html?c=y&curSection=/fraser_valley/ahobserver&curTitle=BC+News&bc09=true.

Strandberg, Diane. 2011b. "Trasolini is going provincial." Tri-City News, November 25. http://issuu.com/tricitynews/docs/tricitynews_111125.

Teeple, Gary. 2000. Globalization and the Decline of Social Reform: Into the 21st Century. Toronto: Broadview Press.

Trasolini, Giuseppe. 2008. "Inaugural Council Address." Talk presented at Inaugural Port Moody Council Meeting for newly elected City Council, Port Moody, British Columbia, December 2. Retrieved from: http://www.portmoody.ca/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=715

Trasolini, Giuseppe. 2011."Annual Address to Council." Talk presented at Port Moody Council Meeting, Port Moody, British Columbia, January 11. Retrieved from: http://www.portmoody.ca/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=928.

Wall Street, directed by Oliver Stone (1987; Los Angeles, CA: 2000), DVD.

Wright, Erik Olin. 1978. Class, Crisis, and the State. London: New Left Books.

Street Vendors in the Global City:
Exploring Genoa's Informal Economy

Joseph S. DeLuca

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, joseph.deluca@jjay.cuny.edu

ABSTRACT

On any given nice afternoon or early evening, it is not an uncommon site to see some Senegalese, Moroccan, or other North African street vendors on Via XX Settembre, in Piazza De Ferrari, or by the Principe train station on Via Pré or Via Del Campo in Genoa, Italy. Lined up along the sidewalk or roaming tightly confined market areas, and always on the lookout for police presence, they represent recurring actors on the complex stage of globalization in the global city. These niches in the informal economy represent a growing trend in the modern city. Who exactly are these people? How has the global city enhanced said roles? Why have these roles come about? And how do these people deal with the inevitable challenges they face? Looking at Genoa via the idiosyncratic framework of New York City's established informal market, this study of a growing, culturally infused city in the 21st century hopes—through the use of historical context, naturalistic observations, and interviews—to humanize these individuals' experiences and give a look into their complex lives.

Keywords: globalization, street vendors, global city, urban life, immigration

choice to leave one's home country is often well thought out and a result of a lot of stressful decisions. It is a complicated process, fraught with uncertainties and anxieties. Will I make it? Where will I live? Will I be deported? Will I ever be able to return home again?

INTRODUCTION

The influx of a large amount of immigrants anywhere poses many problems for the host country, but also for the immigrants themselves. In significant parts of Africa, political corruption, war, and lack of opportunity, combined with threats of poverty, force many people to immigrate into Europe. The goal in the end is the same for most immigrants: earn as much money as possible and send a portion to family back home. Many find it difficult at first to survive, however, and a lot resort to work in the informal economy. For most, though, these occupations tend to work out well for them financially.

Many African nations have indeed felt the aftershocks of post-industrialization. In a continent primarily reliant on agriculture and contingent weather patterns, globalization has provided temporary opportunities for work, but long-term implications for African economies. It is currently estimated that about sixty-five percent of Africans rely on agriculture for a living (International Food Policy Institute 2009). Over the last several decades, however, Morocco has emerged as a leader in the offshoring sector. Partly due to its geographical closeness to Europe and relatively stable climate, it has become a hub for cheap labor (Belhaj 2009). Senegal has concurrently seen an influx of multinational corporations and foreign investments, leading to a reduction—and in some cases, a complete exclusion—of smallholder suppliers within the horticulture industry (Colen et al. 2009). This introduction of vertical integration has further perpetuated the existence of unskilled labor and immigration.

Most of these immigrants come with the idea to stay for a few years and then return to their country, but this frequently turns out to be harder than previously thought. Whether it is to North

America or to Europe, the route immigrants must take to and from Africa is often a perilous journey. Traversing the ocean, watercrafts carrying immigrants are often loaded well beyond capacity, unequipped with lifesaving equipment, and manned by inexperienced sailors. In Italy alone, over 13,000 bodies have been recovered in the last decade in the Mediterranean, due to shipwrecks (Voice of America 2009).

The choice to leave one's home country is often well thought out and a result of a lot of stressful decisions. It is a complicated process, fraught with uncertainties and anxieties. Will I make it? Where will I live? Will I be deported? Will I ever be able to return home again? In the end—to these men, women, and children—a chance of earning more money, and subsequently a better life for them and their family is well worth the danger of trying. For many of these immigrants, there is nothing left to lose. As one desperate Libyan refugee put it (after his ship sank and he swam to shore), "If they send me back, they send me back…I don't care. I've already lost everything" (Abrahamson 2004, 52).

Most have a conditioned fear of strangers when they do finally make it. Among my observations and interviews, I could always see the fear in the eyes of the vendor, his eyes darting left and right for police presence, his timidity and short responses, and his reserved nature. Although vendors conveyed to me that deportations among them are rare, the criminalization and discrimination of these individuals, as well as the pressure they put upon themselves to be successful, culminates into a day-to-day anxiety, and general distrust of others. A rare incident, but shocking nonetheless, in December 2011 validated these fears: An Italian citizen went on a shooting spree in a crowded market area, killing two Senegalese street vendors, and wounding three others, before killing himself (Kington 2011). One hopes this will be an isolated incident, but with rising tensions in Italy (and around the world) surrounding unemployment and other social, economic, and political woes, will the immigrant street vendor become the inevitable scapegoat?

In the marketplace, these men (and a few women) predominantly sell counterfeit goods at a cheap price. Although almost every city requires one to have a license to sell on the streets, these immigrants often do not due to their illegality. Compound this with the countless trademark and copyright infringements committed by these sellers, and it is easy to see how these men and women accumulate enemies.

The life of an immigrant street vendor is a complex one. Albeit, it is a relatable one for most: The need to support your family, even if that means traveling to another country to live

and work, resonates deeply on a human level. Unfortunately, the uncertainties that follow these immigrants are ubiquitous. With said uncertainties come a developed characteristic of hyper-vigilance, but at the same time, a remarkable level of resilience and hope. The globalized nature of the 21st century has transcended the idea of this nomadic wanderer. These vendors setup intricate networks among their peers, maintain connections back home, and make a living in the informal economy. The subculture created in the informal economy becomes a culture in and of itself. These people know what they are doing, and they often do it quite well. In a growing global city such as Genoa, these informal roles and communities are slowly emerging.

RESEARCH METHOD AND SETTING

Geographically speaking, it is not surprising that many North African immigrants end up in Genoa. For North Africans coming to Europe the first stop has been the bottom of the boot most recently, via Lampedusa, in the region of Sicily. During the summer of 2010 alone, nearly six thousand immigrants migrated here—more than the local population of Lampedusa itself (Pisa 2011). Immigrants coming to Europe then make their way up the peninsula. In addition, with Genoa being a port city, it provides easy access via the coast, and short train rides to several other global cities. Many immigrants to Italy, for example, find homes in places like Florence and Rome.

This research was conducted during June 2011, in Genoa, Italy. Notepad in hand, I conducted many daily observations throughout the city. My main areas of focus included the busy city center near Piazza De Ferrari and the historical section; my concentration shifted further east during weekend market days. Understandably perturbed by a foreigner with a notepad, detailed interviews were hard to come by on my own. However, I was able to make small talk regarding their home country and family, how long they've been in Genoa, and where their products were from, as well observe the actions of many vendors. On nice days, late morning to afternoon seemed the most opportune times to see these vendors in action. Police presence occasionally disrupted the flow of the informal economy in this crowded area, but they always assumed their positions again. These vendors, being in a vulnerable position due to their illegality, were always told beforehand of the study's purpose, as well as the ethical procedures. The confidentiality of their personal information was ensured, and pseudonyms were used when asked.

As the month progressed, and with the help of an expert on the topic (and friend of many of the vendors)—Professor of

Anthropology at the University of Genoa, Dr. Roberto Alzetta—I was able to delve into more personal details with these vendors. Topics regarding feelings about their undocumented status, racism, sales and remittances sent back home, family, living conditions, and culture and religion were explored. So as not to impede on the potential sales of these individuals, I conducted three such "full" interviews, ranging from 15-20 minutes, usually over a cup of coffee or Coke at a nearby café.

Throughout these interviews and observations, I learned of the many ways of how to obtain products. In Genoa, there are two major sources for purchasing your products: Many of the Senegalese and other African vendors who sell items such as handbags and sunglasses, for example, get these items from Asians. Moroccans, however, primarily buy their goods from other Moroccans in Genoa. Since Moroccans immigrated to Italy about twenty years before Senegalese and other African street vendors, many have been able to setup shops and small businesses in Genoa (Paolocci 2009). This in turn allows Moroccans to buy from "their own people" or their own kin network; people whom they feel they can trust, and people whom they feel will not steer them wrong. Social networks and trust are an important feature of the informal economy—an economy not regulated, and one where law does not generally apply (Stoller 2002, 15-16).

In Genoa, street vendors—at least the ones I spoke with—live in relatively comfortable conditions. For Moroccans, many housing units in the historical center by Principe train station are filled with street vendors. Among the massive amounts of immigrants, however, there are also some vendors who inhabit the poor neighborhoods, like the Begato projects (Magatti and Martinelli 2011).

The immigrants that were studied are all of African descent (and the majority are illegal). In addition, Genoa is still a growing global city, in terms of commerce and population. With that said, it may be hard to generalize this data; however, my hope is that it will unmask some of the similarities shared by the vendors, give a look into their lives, and show how growing global cities can have effects on the vendors, all while providing a framework for future studies and giving more insight into the Genovese street trade.

CONCEPTS AND LITERATURE OVERVIEW

The main concepts used in this ethnography are *globalization, post-industrialization, cultural production, multiple identities* and *rootlessness*, and the "*global city*" in relation to the vendors. By a global city, I mean one in which there is a large population, along with a globalized hub of culture and commerce, and in the case of vendors, access to improvised opportunities. Using the sociological lens of Paul Stoller's *Money Has No Smell*, as well as Mark Abrahamson's *Global Cites*, I will try to examine the immigrant street vendor more thoroughly in Genoa. Additionally, what can a contrast to such an eminent global city as NYC show us about Genoa?

GLOBALIZATION, POST-INDUSTRIALIZATION, AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

The street vendor presents an intriguing character in the vast network of globalization. Making the transfer of goods, services, and ideas more possible than ever before, globalization offers unique opportunities to the individual. Post-industrialization, or more precisely—global restructuring—has led to the erosion of the middle-class, and has further polarized the gap between rich and poor (Stoller 2002, 17). The emphasis on knowledge and a concurrent decline in the importance of blue-collar and manual labor creates this faction for would-be vendors. This has thus led to more activity in the unregulated informal economy. With that said, and as Professor Alzetta points out, what once used to be a rather lucrative opportunity has been marginalized somewhat by the increase of immigrants into Europe. He additionally notes a unique kind of hierarchy that exists within this black-market. Would-be vendors, without any start-up capital, may start out as beggars, save up enough to buy small items to sell (i.e. tissues, lighters, bracelets, socks), then eventually work their way up to selling more expensive items, like handbags and sunglasses.

In global cities in general, there is certainly a distinct division of labor. The need in such cities for such highly trained professionals like lawyers, doctors, and bankers in turn leads to the need for positions below these individuals. These increasingly specialized positions may include clerical workers, and other jobs the urban elites demand, generally filled by women. They usually provide only temporary employment, low-wages, and few health benefits. This so-called rise in the "disenfranchised"

working class, as Stoller (2002) calls it, has led to the rise of jobs outside the formal workplace, and into the informal one (91). A growing number of unauthorized cab drivers, and especially street vendors, attest to this trend.

The global city offers a means to this kind of informal economy. It supplies vendors with a populated city, a heterogeneous population, and a money economy. As Stoller (2002) documents in his research on African vendors in New York City, globalization allows, for example, the funneling of goods, like hats and bags mass-produced in Korea, to be sent to Los Angeles, then shipped throughout the United States, eventually to a broker on Canal Street, who in turn sells them to a street vendor. The massive network that is globalization thus allows for unique opportunities in the global city.

ROOTLESSNESS AND MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

Another change that experts argue is occurring in the global city is the identity to which one attaches. Some theorists argue that a sense of rootlessness is happening in the globalized world (Abrahamson 2004, 125). These analysts argue that, due to cities becoming so global, people are losing their hometown identities, and instead identifying more as a "citizen of the world." Based on this theory, a street vendor may be seen as rootless to some because he or she is so detached from their homeland the majority of the time. In Stoller's *Money Has No Smell*, many vendors talk about how much they miss home, how they care for their family, and how they feel no real attachment to the place they are in, further giving evidence to the multiple identities theory (2002, 4). The fact that many African vendors intend on returning home, try to respect traditions and their religion, and continue to try to speak their native language waters-down the rootlessness argument.

Looking at the bigger picture, it seems more likely that people may be developing multiple identities, including their "roots"— rather than multiple identities, whilst forgetting their "roots." Building on a different interpretation of Georg Simmel's idea of the "global supermarket," perhaps it is just that the global city "enhances people's ability to shift among multiple identities" (Abrahamson 2004, 127). In other words, this shift allows the immigrant street vendor to pick and choose identities, depending on the role needed or situation at hand.

In *Money Has No Smell*, for example, Stoller talks to an older man who claims to be a devout Muslim, and who criticizes the "immorality of Americans," their use of foul language, and lack of respect for elders. This man speaks of his faithfulness to his wife (who he has not seen for four years), his pious nature in giving to the poor when he can, and his dedication to religion. When Paul Stoller points out the ironic hat he is selling that says "Fuck Off" on it, and explains its meaning, the vendor—"seeing no dissonance between his views on Islamic morality and his business practices"—switches to his "street vendor identity," and claims that, "We are here in America, trying to make a living… Money has no smell." (2002, XI). The discord among all of these identities is added evidence of several identities—the virtuous Muslim when not at work, and the Americanized, globalized salesman when vending.

Another example would be of the vendor, Issifi, who has a wife back home in Nigeria, but a girlfriend in New York. Psychologically, this other identity may serve a purpose, because it is as if this dissociation lets him reaffirm to himself that what he is doing is acceptable (and to an extent, his cultural background also allows it—Issifi does note that men have more freedom in Africa, in terms of marriage) (Stoller 2002, 3). With such little overlap of networks and connections between the identities, Issifi—and street vendors in general—may confidently switch among identities, without threatening any other personas too much.

NEW YORK CITY: AN "ESTABLISHED" GLOBAL CITY

When speaking of the structures of a trade market within a global city, it can be safely said that New York City has an "established" one. By established, I mean an informal economy in a global city that has been in practice for well over a decade, has created meaningful connections in the community, has a recognized and strong informal sector, and a vast network among its vendors. A city's urban population also plays a large role in the realm of vending, and as of the 2010 Census, New York's was well over eighteen million. In addition to this, New York City has quite a large immigration population. In fact, it is nearly 36% (Massey 2010). This, however, does not include the *illegal* immigrants, which certainly would raise this percentage anyway.

With a large immigrant population comes a more established global city, due to the amount of diversity and networks formed. And with a more established global city comes a more established informal economy. Because of this, the amount of ethnic enclaves increases, and thus allows would-be immigrants and vendors the opportunity to choose where they would like to go.

What each global city has to offer—demographic-wise and resource-wise—generally affects the items that are sold. New York City street vendors in Harlem, for example, traditionally sell to an African-American population, and their goods are a direct reflection of this (their customers, for example, are generally looking for a way to reconnect to their culture). Items in the Harlem trade section may consist of African "wood" (masks, statues, artwork) and "authentic" kente cloth from Ghana—items that allow the would-be purchaser to connect to their roots.

It can further be argued that New York City is quite an advanced global city, providing numerous neighborhoods of homogeneity (Little Italy, Little Germany, Koreatown, Chinatown, and Harlem among others), intertwined into broad areas of heterogeneity (i.e. tourist hotspots), and consequently more diversity in terms of clientele for the vendors. Vendors in New York City, for example in the Times Square area, may be geared towards a more tourist type of clientele, selling items such as hats and t-shirts with "I Love New York" on them. The freedom for a vendor in NYC to sell in different areas and to different clientele is a testament to the city's top-tier status on the global city continuum.

Establishment also positively correlates to security in some ways. Vendors in Harlem, for example, may setup a market, and all sell on tables, side by side. With this tactic, it is relatively difficult for law enforcement to do anything individually—only to disperse them.

Another prime example of this establishment comes from Stoller's work in New York City. When tough times hit and Issifi was not paid for a shipment of goods, an informal association of street vendors put money together and loaned him what he needed to get started again (2002, 23). This vast web of connections and camaraderie among vendors is a result of the vast immigrant presence in NYC. The development of such a safety net, as in Issifi's case, is demonstrative of the informal economy's firm ground here

GENOA DATA: ESTABLISHING A MARKET

As of 2006, only about 4% of Genoa's legal population was made up of immigrants. Home to some 600,000 people, Genoa is still a developing global city (Italian National Institute of Statistics 2006). Genovese street vendors, for example, sell to a more diverse local population, and to a number of tourists. Immigrants do not represent a large number of the local population, and therefore the informal economy is rather weak.

In Genoa, there is really only one "type" of street vendor—the tourist/local population seller (from my month of observation, at least). In certain areas of the historical center, however, it must be noted that some vendors sell traditional Moroccan shoes—*babouches*— as well as traditional Moroccan garb, but it is generally sold to the local Moroccan population. Additional cultural production is nonexistent.

The number one reason for involvement in the informal economy, regardless of culture, is money. As one street vendor, Abdzurahim Eaoussi, says, "I use this money to support my family; that's why I came here. There are few opportunities to find work in Morocco." Another street vendor I met, under the pseudonym "Mohamed," said, "The money I am able to make here selling is greater than what I would make at a salary job back home." He sends back about one hundred Euros every month in remittances.

Furthermore, in Genoa, not many vendors feel safe selling. When I asked "Mohamed" why he never stays in one place to sell, he said it is because he fears the police. Because there are so few vendors in Genoa, they can easily become outnumbered by police and apprehended. Senegalese and Moroccans in Genoa generally sell alone, or in small groups. In my observations, I have never seen more than five or six Senegalese vendors in close proximity. Moroccans are even more elusive when it comes to groups; I almost always saw them on their own. This shows that Genoa is still a fledgling global city, not quite established just yet. Moreover, in a place like Italy with a long history of nationalism and intolerance, as well as a small amount of immigrants by global city standards, the informal economy is rather weak still.

Likewise, xenophobic laws and policies present another obstacle for the immigrant street vendor. Immigrant dissent in Italy is far from clandestine. The country's current laws make no mistake of their suspicion towards foreigners and their goal of "othering"—that is, dehumanizing and negatively defining the

immigrant, out-group population. For example, in order to gain citizenship, an immigrant must live in the country for ten years, as well as show proof of a legal occupation for the majority of that time, which is sometimes near impossible, due to discrimination and refusal to hire an undocumented immigrant. In addition to this, the immigrant's children—even if born in Italy—are not guaranteed citizenship, even when they turn eighteen (Campani 2007). This thus deters some would-be immigrants, or at least lessens the impact of a flourishing informal economy through fear.

Due to the aforementioned early arrival of Morrocans into Italy, many of the goods that they sell are indeed reflective of this fact. Items sold in Genoa traditionally include "Ray Bans," counterfeit handbags, tissues, umbrellas, and small mementos; such as mass-produced wooden turtles, and bracelets. A very small amount of Moroccans sell counterfeit bags and sunglasses. The majority sells tissues, socks, umbrellas, and small key chains—all things normally sold in a small store. Many also sell flowers; I actually met a Moroccan immigrant who owned a flower shop on one my observations in the historical center. He was shopping with his wife and kids and when we spoke, he was noticeably proud of his business (one which was started by his father). The Senegalese, on the other hand, really have not established themselves in Genoa yet. Immigrating relatively recently into Italy (not until about 1985), there are few Senegalese shops and shop owners, so their only option, other than Moroccan goods, is to buy from Asians (Hamburg Institute of International Economics 2007).

Throughout my time hanging around vendors in Genoa, I learned that many of them (particularly Moroccan) come and go from Genoa quite often—sometimes even two to three times a year. Partly due to the convenience of travel by bus to Morocco, and partly due to missing family and for religious purposes, there are times when many immigrant street vendors are not present, especially during the Ramadan period. The fact that many immigrant street vendors can be absent at any point in the global city adds to the "establishment" theory. As Genoa grows as a global city in the future, and most likely an important hub for immigration, drastic changes may be seen within the informal realm. Relatively speaking right now, however, the state of the informal economy is not very stable.

GENOA'S GLOBALIZATION

As many cities have seen over the past century, globalization has allowed the transfer of people, goods, symbols, and ideas all over the world. If any further evidence is needed for the effects of globalization and the global city on the individual, one only needs to go to Via XX Settembre one afternoon to observe the poster boy of these processes: the African immigrant street vendor, in his Italian clothes, carrying his counterfeit sunglasses—most likely from an Asian or Moroccan wholesaler—and eating an inexpensive meal for lunch at the largest fast-food American conglomerate, McDonald's, while ordering in Italian or English. Throughout my observations, I have noticed this type of globalized individual on two occasions. The vendor would come in quickly, put his goods on the floor by the door, take his food in a bag to go, and quickly get back to work. The affordability and quick-style efficiency of McDonald's food aids the vendor in his pursuit of maximum profit on the market.

CULTURE'S ROLE

There is an old Moroccan saying that goes something along the lines of this: It is better to earn one dirham by commerce than ten dirhams through a salary job. The Moroccan cultural obsession with commerce does not stop there. Additional (roughly quoted) sayings include: "All bad for a woman who roams about, but good for a man who does" and "You can live for one hundred years, but if you do not travel, it might as well be cut in half." All of these phrases support the Moroccan mentality to trade and travel abroad, while emphasizing independence. The people of Morocco often see an individual who travels and supports his family with respect. This, however, consequently puts even more pressure on those not to be deported.

Throughout my investigations, I have also come across an interesting trend in Genoa: Moroccans, in particular, often return home as a sort of retirement. After completing a number of years trading, younger siblings, children, or other family may take over, allowing the elder vendor to return home. When talking with Eaoussi, he made no mistake about wanting to return, saying, "I am taking it easy right now… I plan to return to Morocco in one or two years and let my younger brother take over my position, now that he has his papers.

This concept of filial piety, or as Professor Alzetta cheekily likes to call it, "filial welfare," is part of the immigrant street

vendor way of life. As Eaoussi notes, he plans on retiring very soon from the street trade. Having done it for fifteen (legal) years, he says he is ready to go back to Morocco shortly. Right now, his younger brothers are getting integrated into the vending market, and they will support him in the future, as he has supported them and his parents. This is seen over and over in the informal economy. With few chances in their home country, these vendors try to make enough money to support their wife and kids, as well as their parents and other family members.

In Genovese-Senegalese trade, as many vendors point out, it is not so much that traveling abroad is encouraged in the society, but rather a "commitment to community," and a need to support one's kin group. The street vendor thus happens to fulfill the criteria of supporting the community and family. In a country where hospitality—known as teranga—and family life and community are highly valued, a position as a street vendor seems like a good fit (Discover Senegal 2008). Being a position in which one must constantly interact with others, create networks, and survive tough times, the Senegalese's cultural background helps them, and their commitment to supporting their family stays the main drive.

In relation to this, Senegalese culture encourages a deep tie to family. In turn, many Senegalese vendors in Genoa often feel homesick and want to return to see their family as well. One vendor, Professor Alzetta noted at the time of these observations, actually just left Genoa to go witness the birth of his first son.

PSYCHE OF THE GENOVESE STREET VENDOR

Several street vendors that I have spoken to in Genoa stress the fact that they do not strive to become an Italian citizen since it is nearly impossible for the undocumented immigrant anyhow, and that they do not see themselves in anyway as "Italian." This may be more due to the fact that some of these immigrants experience discrimination and racism in Italy, but it can also relate to their strong ties back home, showing how they are still connected to their roots in some way.

To the immigrant street vendor, the use of multiple identities can be quite beneficial. They may be a father, a devout Muslim, and a street vendor, but all of these may consist of very different networks, with very little overlap. To enhance profit, the vendor may assume the role of "street vendor" in Genoa, use aggressive and sometimes dishonest selling techniques, and

temporarily put "devout Muslim" and "father" on the backburner until he returns to his native country.

Moreover in Genoa, street vendors have no problem acting aggressively and trying to make a sale. It is not uncommon for a vendor, for example, to put a bracelet on your un-wanting hand, and then expect payment in return. It is a direct opposite to the other side of these vendors; the side often seen in Mosques in the historical center, in which these vendors respectfully pray and obey the norms.

There was one Moroccan vendor in particular by Piazza De Ferrari who made use of such multiple identities. I noticed him my first day in Genoa, and continued to watch him throughout my stay. He would make his rounds around the fountain, flirting with the women, and putting bracelets on people's hands, usually without asking. I would watch him some afternoons in his relentless pursuit of money, methodically picking out his clients. Sometimes he would just ask for tips. When stores started to close up and the sun began to set, these same vendors would often congregate with each other, presumably talk in their native language—laughing, telling jokes, smoking—switching into a more comfortable and natural identity. Moroccans, most of whom are Islamic, would normally not condone such assertive selling techniques, especially within a religion that has a deep respect for women. For the immigrant street vendor, though, sales correlate to a living and food on the table for their family. That doesn't mean that a vendor loses this other identity, or becomes any less of a Muslim: It is rather put on hold, paused. In fact, there are often overlaps between the street vendor identity and religious identity. A vendor may occasionally leave his goods with a friend during the day so that he can pray, or visit the Mosque in the historical center, just a short walk from the bustling city. This ability to shift back and forth between roles protects the psyche from any conflict that may arise.

The use of multiple identities in the global city thus provides another example of how these places offer unique opportunities for the individual to exploit to their benefit. As seen in Genoa, global cities provide a source of income and a living, rather than a culturally enriching experience that threatens their other identities, or their roots for that matter.

CONCLUSION

All in all, global cities provide fertile ground for inimitable social phenomena: It is a place where culture collides and reproduces. Genoa, a growing global city, is establishing itself in Italy as a host for informal economy. As it moves forward on the global city continuum, it will continue to globalize and grow.

Global cities as a whole offer more opportunities around the world to succeed, and thus consequently, more chance to fail. The informal economy is full of a host of risks, and only the wittiest and most street-smart come out on top. The street vendors I met were making more than they would at a salary job back home, however, at the expense of living as an illegal alien and being away from their family. The positive outlooks and spirits of these individuals were incredible, though. Year after year, they work in a foreign country, return home for a couple of months if they're lucky, and then go back to work. The informal economy became their way of life, and in some cases, a "job" passed down to family.

In the beginning, my goal was to uncover some of the universal plights that plague the individuals who inhabit these cities. The topic of street vending and more broadly, informal economies, is one of a vast amount of information and research, and focusing on Genoa, Italy alone presented a wealth of information. To that extent, though, I think I succeeded in my purpose.

As the gap in this world between the wealthy and poor increases at an alarming rate, and as big companies continue the "race to the bottom" in terms of cheap labor, global cities will play host to an increasing number of individuals—people like street vendors in Genoa—looking for success any way they can. With more low-skilled labor and movement in the informal economy to surely come, it will be interesting to see how the networks and connections among these groups develop and form, and the new challenges that these people will face. The global city isn't going anywhere, and will continue to play host to these people.

Among all of this pandemonium, though, it is important to regard these street vendors as human beings and individuals—individuals with values, with family, with culture. Whether their lifestyles are ethically or morally right or wrong is debatable, but at the end of the day, they do this to support their family, and the lure of the postindustrial global city is a hard one to resist.

WORKS CITED

Abrahamson, Mark. 2004. Global Cities. New York: Oxford University Press.

Alzetta, Roberto. Interview by author. Personal interview. Genoa, Italy, June 2011.

Belhaj, Imane. 2009. "Morocco among the top ten countries in offshoring sector." Accessed February 12. http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2009/01/07/feature-03

Campani, Giovanna. 2007. "Migration and Integration in Italy: A Complex and Moving Landscape." Accessed June 23. http://www.migrationeducation.org/38.1.html?&rid=81&cHash=e5c8e1d629b6234d84577d1805d9a67b

Colen, Liesbeth, Maertens, Miet, and Swinnen, Johan F.M. 2009. "Globalization and Poverty in Senegal: A Worst Case Scenario?" Paper prepared for presentation at the International Association of Agricultural Economists Conference, Beijing, China, August 16-22.

Discover Senegal. 2008. "Memories of 'Teranga.'" Accessed June 20. http://www.discoversenegal.com/Memories_Teranga.html

Eaoussi, Abdzurahim. Interview by author. Personal interview. Genoa, Italy, June 27, 2011.

Hamburg Institute of International Economics. 2007. "Focus Migration: Senegal." Accessed June 22. http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/Senegal.2636.0.html?&L=1

International Food Policy Institute. 2009. "Agriculture's Critical Role in Africa's Development." Accessed February 12. http://www.ifpri.org/publication/agriculture-s-critical-role-africa-s-development

Italian National Institute of Statistics (Istat). 2006. "Italy in Figures." Accessed June 20. http://www3.istat.it/dati/catalogo/20070517_00/Italy2007Ing.pdf

Kington, Tom. 2011. "Florence gunman shoots Senegalese street vendors dead." Accessed December 17. http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/dec/13/florence-gunman-shoots-street-vendors.

Magatti, Mauro, and Martinelli, Monica. 2011. "The new urban issue: A journey into the Italian city and its sensitive areas." Accessed January 2. http://www.academicjournals.org/ijsa/fulltext/2011/March/Magatti%20and%20Martinelli.htm.

Massey, Daniel. 2010. "Immigrants playing a larger role in city's economy." Accessed June 22. http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20100113/FREE/100119938#.TgcSwWW_It0.

Mohamed (pseudonym). Interview by author. Personal interview. Genoa, Italy, June 27, 2011.

Paolocci, Fulvio. 2009. "The Moroccans of San Nicola Varco." Accessed June 20. http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/italy/091015/moroccan-immigrants

Pisa, Nick. 2011. "2,500 illegal immigrants a week from North Africa flooding into Europe through Italy." Accessed June 20. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2003537/2-500-illegal-immigrants-week-North-Africa-flooding-Europe-Italy.html.

Stoller, Paul. 2002. Money Has No Smell: The Africanization of New York City. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

US Census Bureau. 2010. "2010 Census Data - 2010 Census." Accessed June 22. http://2010.census.gov/2010census/data

Voice of America (VOA). 2009. "Italy Pushes For Steps to End Illegal Immigration Problem." Accessed June 22. http://www.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-03-31-voa47-68824532.html

Exchanging Culture?: Opportunities for Intercultural Interaction at the Halifax International Market

Alison Froese-Stoddard
Dalhousie University, afs@dal.ca

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I explore the 'International Market', a unique initiative designed by the management of the Halifax Seaport Farmers Market, and Immigrant Settlement and Integration Services in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The public space of the market provides the opportunity to study the interactions between cosmopolitan consumers and immigrant vendors, while examining the larger question of immigrant integration into the community of a mid-sized Canadian city as well. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the market management, the business development team at ISIS, and with vendors and consumers participating in the International Market to ascertain the social and/or economic benefits to each participant. The research reveals the opportunities for, and limits to intercultural exchange between newcomers and long-term citizens in a public market space.

Keywords: immigrant integration, farmers market, public space, cosmopolitan, community

**The official opening of the Halifax Seaport International Market was Friday, November 19, from 12:00 – 2:00 pm. Vendors sold authentic foods, fair trade products and crafts from around the world. The official opening was marked by a visit from Minister of Immigration Ramona Jennex, who spoke about the importance of immigrant business to the future of Halifax, and sampled some of the international cuisine.
Be sure to check it out, as every Friday is International Market day! Admission is free and everyone is welcome.**

- Taken from ISIS (Immigration Settlement and Integration Services) website

The opening of the International market was co-announced by the Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market and ISIS (Immigration Settlement and Immigration Services) in the fall of 2010. The International market, held at the Seaport Market building on Fridays, marks the confluence of several social trends in both the local city space of Halifax, and the larger Canadian context. ISIS's involvement with the development of the market suggests that there is a substantial benefit to new immigrants through selling the traditional food and crafts of their homelands. Cosmopolitan consumers also presumably benefit from the variety of food and goods up for sale. In this article, I want to ask the question: Who is the International Market for? Obviously the market could have value for both parties, but do these values intersect?

SETTING THE SCENE: HALIFAX AND CANADIAN MULTICULTURALISM

Halifax is a regional hub city for the Atlantic provinces of Canada. It is a small city, famous for its friendliness towards tourists and folksy traditions while maintaining a measure of urban cosmopolitanism, due to in large part to its five universities, which attract students and professors from elsewhere. The Halifax Farmers Market is a much loved Haligonian institution and is the oldest continuously running Farmers Market in North America, established a year after the founding of the city of Halifax in 1750. Throughout the years, the location of the market has changed several times, and since the early 1980s had been run as a weekly market by a co-operative of vendors in a charming, but very cramped historic brewery building in the center of the downtown district. A revived interest in local food in the last few years encouraged the market's board of directors to expand to a new building of their own in 2010 on the seaport waterfront, close to downtown and

next to the busy cruise ship terminal. The new Seaport Market building boasts an innovative environmentally-friendly design and has ambitions to open every day of the week. A small group of vendors have been maintaining the older Brewery market on Saturdays, and is holding its own for the time being.

Halifax is not particularly known for its cultural diversity, but its small immigrant population is growing; the number of immigrants coming to Halifax rose by about 1.52 times (from 1700 to 2,585) between 2001 and 2006 (Citizenship and Immigration 2006). Immigrants have also raised the percentage of visible minorities in Halifax from 7% of the population in 2001 to 7.5% in 2006 (Statistics Canada 2008). In the last decade, a great deal of attention has been paid by all levels of government to developing programs in Halifax that facilitate the integration of these newcomers into Canadian society to ensure that they find a lasting home here. Most newcomers to Canada choose to settle in the nation's three largest cities, Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal, where there are already large and well-established ethno-cultural groups. Attracting and retaining immigrants to Atlantic Canada demands innovative strategies that will require the active participation of the established citizenry to create welcoming spaces. Like most Canadians, Haligonians are quite positive toward immigration and are supportive of federal multicultural policies. According to a series of "Focus Canada" polls conducted by Environics, 85% of Canadians agreed that multiculturalism was important to the Canadian identity in 2003. (Kymlicka 2010, 7).

PRACTICES OF COSMOPOLITANISM AND THE SOCIAL SPACE OF MARKETS

In principle, the International Market serves as a kind of meeting place for different experiences, values and motivations: the experience of the city consumer who is attracted to the international aspect of the market, the experience of the immigrant vendor building a business selling her own homeland food in a public space, and the experience of all actors in the market as a uniquely public retail space. In this section, I examine some of the key concepts in the scholarly literature that help problematize these themes. Since few articles speak to all three dimensions, I deal with scholarship on cosmopolitan patterns of consumption, social geography of markets, and the urban food economy in turn.

Much of the recent scholarly work on ethnocultural food focuses on colonial patterns of consumption by a dominant group in an effort to build a 'cosmopolitan' identity. David Bell describes what he sees as the modern city consumer's 'cultural omnivorousness': the compulsion to eat everything, to be open to everything, to chow down on it all, in the hope that the 'best bits' can then be assembled into a new you – or, rather, *a better, more accurate reflection of the real you.* (2004, 47). In Bell's view, the cosmopolitan consumer is insatiable and self-obsessed, and has no real connection to the producers of the food he or she consumes. Lisa Heldke (2009) also explores the ideas of cultural food colonialism, but is careful to analyze and deconstruct her own history of food imperialism. She recognizes that her standards for authenticity in ethnocultural foods are based on what is most foreign to her own palate, and therefore mastery of recognizing, eating and cooking these foods signifies that she has transcended her own ordinariness. To overcome culinary colonialism is to engage with cooks and eaters from cultures other than our own 'not as resources but as conversation partners' (Heldke 2001, 191).

Ghassan Hage explores the barriers against these conversations in the very influential essay, "At Home in the Entrails of the West: Multiculturalism, Ethnic Food and Migrant Home-building" (1997). Hage accepts that while positive interaction initiated by food sharing is possible, there are often issues of power and subtle racism underlying these casual interactions. He also notices that in the fashionable ethnic restaurants of Sydney's inner city suburbs, there is a greater trend toward 'multiculturalism without migrants' and to describe this trend coins the term 'cosmo-multiculturalism', which depends on consuming the very differences of food to attain value, similar to Bell's vision of cultural omnivorousness. Hage's essay lays out two simultaneous visions of multiculturalism in the same city and acknowledges that a variety of experiences are possible and that geographic location is central to the outcome of interaction. Jean Duruz has also written extensively about intercultural interactions in public and private spaces, and believes that meanings attached to particular foods and practices are complex and shifting (2000, 297). Moreover, in a multicultural country, there isn't always a clearly dominant ethnicity; new immigrants and established citizens both participate in 'identity grazing' through food consumption and preparation, which negates the presumed power relations of culinary imperialism (2000, 299).

So what does the research say when this interaction happens in a farmers' market instead of a restaurant? The social geography of markets, particularly farmer's markets, has been studied especially as they pertain to city life. A study of British markets by Sophie Watson and David Studdert suggest

that the ambiguous public/private space of the market can offer possibilities 'for people to mingle with each other and become accustomed to each others' differences in a public space' (2006, 3). Kristin Lowitt has written specifically about Nova Scotia markets, including the Halifax Farmers' Market, and concluded that a sense of community was central to the market experience for both producers and consumers (2009). In a larger Canadian context, Bochra Manai considers the functions of public spaces and places in the integration of immigrants and in building welcoming communities, and has written that markets are public spaces that can 'lead to meetings, furtive or superficial as they may be, that allow for interactions to take place' and that the concept of gastronomy 'brings about opportunities for sociality in intercultural and interethnic relations' (2009, 2). These scholars suggest that there are unique intercultural possibilities for both settled Canadians and newer immigrants within a traditional market environment, but they still leave us with the question of how the exclusive sale of 'international' goods by immigrants in the retail geography of the Halifax International Market influences the consumer/vendor relationship.

At first glance, the addition of an International market day to a farmers' market where the wares for sale are primarily 'local' is an odd pairing. But recent research on alternative food systems helps account for it. Most Canadian Farmers' Markets have moved to heavily favoring 'local' food, with some defining this as food produced within a 100-mile radius of the market (Potter 2011, 63). The Halifax Seaport Farmers' Market vendor handbook loosens the normal requirements that the majority of vendors must be primary producers on International Market day, and stresses that day vendors can play an important economic, social and business role in the market. However it does state 'that primary producers should and must control the HFM as a prerequisite for maintaining it as a farmers' market oriented to the needs of farmers' (Halifax Farmers Market 2010, 5). Given that the trend in farmers markets seems to be moving toward gastronomic isolationism, is the inclusion of a market day dedicated to 'internationality' counterintuitive?

Betsy Donald suggests that the consumer's perception of 'quality' is the common denominator for an array of ethnic, organic, fair-trade and artisanal products available in the city today. Quality may mean different things to different people, but Donald argues that 'the common thread among these consumers is that they are looking for something different from what is available from more mainstream producers or retailers' (2006, 1904). Lowitt noticed a similar trend towards

quality in her study of Nova Scotia farmers' markets and that the '(re)emergence of farmers' markets can be seen as part of a wider 'quality turn,' that is, a shift among a growing number of consumers away from industrial food to what they perceive to be higher quality food (2009). As a part of the alternative food network, the Halifax Seaport Market might want to be seen as a destination for quality products, and consider the measured inclusion of non-farmers as natural to this goal.

The three issues of colonialist/cosmopolitan patterns of consumption, markets as sites of sociability and local/ethnic pairings of 'quality' food raise the question of whether food can actually prompt intercultural interaction. Many of the scholars mentioned above are curious about the possibilities for, and the limitations of food-based encounters as providers of intercultural interaction. Heldke, Hage and Duruz describe different methods of appropriate interaction which can aid a cosmopolitan's anti-colonial eating. Manai, Donald and Watson argue that the sociality of the market space can facilitate intercultural interaction and even integration. The next section describes how I set out to investigate these themes in Halifax.

RESEARCH METHODS: CONTACTING PLAYERS AND PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET SPACE

The aims of this research, conducted in the time-limited context of an undergraduate seminar in Canadian Studies, were to explore whether the Halifax International Market, as a retail space and a manufactured public space, creates an environment for community relations that can sidestep colonialist patterns and offer opportunity for interaction and integration within its city, province, and country. It also examined the range of market experiences that are possible from the point of view of both consumers and immigrant vendors. Neither group is homogenous, and each individual brings his or her own culture and background and experiences to the interactions in which they engage. Does each party get something valuable from the social space of the International Market?

My main research method was semi-structured interviews, supplemented by observations of the market. I spoke with three kinds of participants in the creation and performance of the market: (1) selected representatives from both the Halifax Farmers' Market management and ISIS in order to understand the story of the development of the market, and (2) vendors and (3) consumers taking part in the market to see what kinds of interactions take place and what they mean to interviewees.[1]

I contacted ISIS and the Halifax Farmers' Market Cooperative via e-mail with an overview of my project and a request for an interview. At ISIS, I reached a business development trainer who had helped another staff member who had worked for several years on the project with training clients in preparation for selling at the market since August 2010. I spoke with the trainer in the ISIS offices on February 24, 2011. I conducted an interview with the market manager for the International Market by telephone on March 3, 2011. Each of these semi-structured interviews, designed to explore their motivations for developing the market and their sense of its progress, lasted about 45 minutes and was recorded as digital audio files.

All of the interviews with vendors and consumers took place on a cold and rainy day, February 25, 2011 at the International Market. After I approached possible participants, I identified myself as a Dalhousie student, gave them a brief overview of my topic, and requested a short interview that they could halt or terminate at any time. If we managed to find a spot to sit down for the interview, I asked permission to record the interview; for the others, I took notes where we stood. These interviews lasted about 45 minutes. No personally identifying information was sought from consumers and I noted the names of the vendors' businesses in my notes only. In this paper, specific vendors will be referred to as V1, V2, V3, etc. and consumers will be referred to as C1, C2, C3, etc.

I conducted interviews with eight food vendors. I focused my attention on temporary vendors in the central table area, rather than established vendors who lease storefront space. There were only two table-area food vendors selling on that particular day that I did not get a chance to speak with. The interview questions attempted to discover origin of vendors' business plans with ethnic food, attitudes toward Canadian multiculturalism, and their feelings about the market. I also conducted six interviews with consumer groups of two or three for a total of 13 people. Due to the miserable weather, traffic at the market was very light and it is quite possible that my consumer base might have been very different on a more pleasant day. My interviews with the consumers attempted to discern attitudes toward international food and a sense of their retail motivations.

RESEARCH FINDINGS
THE GENESIS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET

A coherent story of the genesis of the International Market emerged from the interviews conducted on February 24 and March 3, 2011 and all information in this subsection comes from information gathered in these interviews. The management of the Halifax Farmers' Market started thinking about the possibilities for community interactions within the market early in the planning stages for the new Seaport Market building several years ago.[2] The 'Community Connector' program was created by the Market in 2009 with funding from Service Canada (a federal government agency dealing with work and employment, among other things) to develop liaisons between the market and various agencies and groups. The program focused on four areas: food and health, the market as an arts centre, sustainability and the environment, and culture and immigration. My respondent at the market was hired as the connector for the Cultural component with an initial emphasis on investigating opportunities for farmers and other producers to cater to ethnic communities within Halifax. He explains:

> We had a person go out and meet with different immigrant groups to identify what are the food products the immigrant groups are looking for that aren't being produced in Nova Scotia and could that enhance agriculture production. And while we were doing that, many of the immigrants were interested in selling at the market themselves. So we kept that in mind. And then as we were designing this last spring, the market manager said, could we look at creating an international market where it would be different from the traditional market, because the traditional market says the products have to be from Nova Scotia and produced here and all that stuff. So what we did was, I set it all up for them by saying, ok, you can import a product, or you can make a product here, but it has to be authentic to your country. All right? So that was the way to do it. 2001)

He approached ISIS in addition to other community groups like the YMCA (which also runs immigrant integration programs) in early 2010 to see if they would be interested in developing a market day with their clients. ISIS currently puts on a huge range of workshops and classes each day for their clients that aim to strengthen specific abilities that will aid integration into Canadian society, such as English lessons, computer skills, and Canadian business etiquette (see www.isisns.ca/). Their clients had long been requesting a class on market-based food business development, even though few had any prior experience in the food industry. The ISIS business development department had been working towards securing a venue for businesses selling newcomers' foods for several years, but costs for renting facilities like the Halifax Forum were prohibitive and the existing Brewery Market was small and only open one day a week. By the time the Market management contacted ISIS in 2010, much of the foundation work for the International Market had already been laid by ISIS, and a group of newcomer clients interested in the project had already been identified.

In order to get their clients ready to sell at the market, ISIS staff provided initial business development training, including advice on what to sell, how much variety to sell, and how to price products to ensure they would pay themselves fairly. A business trainer from ISIS described the training process:

> ..so we had 6 information sessions for the clients, telling the clients what the market was all about, what they were going to need, what the market was going to provide them with in terms of materials and infrastructure type things and then we had the food handlers course – we had all our clients take the food handlers course.

The Farmers Market 'Community Connector' conducted market-specific training in the ISIS classrooms, including providing connections to government inspected kitchens in the community where food preparations must happen to comply with official safety regulations.

The International Market finally opened on the first Friday of November with around 30 food and craft vendors. All parties involved mentioned that there were logistical things to iron out at the beginning, such as access to water and refrigeration but generally the market was on a good footing by the time of the official opening on November 19. The ISIS business trainer admitted that although there was a lot of initial interest by their clients for the market, the many 'rules and regulations weeded out who was just kicking the can, and who really wanted to sell at the market'. She mentioned that 'we had a lot of issues with the Department of Health turning up – they were at the market, like, continuously…'. At the time of the interviews, there were only fourteen food and craft vendors currently selling at the market, half of whom had originally taken the information sessions through ISIS. The market management stated that many of the craft vendors intend to come back when the weather is nicer and the traffic picks up.

> The basic problem, traditional of all markets that in January, everything drops. January, February, March. And so, we had it going pretty good right up to Christmas, and then I knew after Christmas it was going to be a real problem. That's the way it is. So hopefully when April rolls around, we'll get more people coming back.

My respondent from the Farmers' Market is full of ideas to increase business and traffic at the market including themed days like International Kitchen Parties where different groups will sing and dance and play over the supper hour.³ He is also committed to the idea of the market as a learning centre for the community, and he is planning theme days that put a spotlight on a specific part of the world that could include lectures by university professors or representatives from NGOs, travel information from travel agents, and fair trade information in addition to the popular food and dance aspects of the cultures.

In many ways the International Market is not so different from the regular market, where vendors who sell ready-to-eat food are classified as secondary producers. The International Market vendors are therefore able to compete for the spaces on the more lucrative Saturday selling day (Halifax Farmers'Market 2010, 1). The difference is that the International Market dedicates space to international vendors and is the only market day that also allows completely non-local and non-food items to be sold in the market building. It is a new departure for this particular market, which has always been focused on locally grown produce, and Nova Scotia artisan made crafts. Betsy Donald's view of the urban creative-food economy where 'quality 'may be defined as the ability to find an 'authentic' product from their homeland that cannot be purchased at a mainstream food retailer. For another consumer it may be about consumer products grown locally; for another it may be about buying products free from pesticides or herbicides, regardless of the source. However, once could argue that the common thread among these consumers is that they are looking for something different from what is available from more mainstream producers or retailers.' (Donald and Blay-Palmer 2006, 1904).

VENDORS' EXPERIENCES OF THE MARKET SPACE

As mentioned earlier, February 25, was a cold and rainy day in Halifax, and the weather probably had an impact on the quantity and length of interviews at the market. However, certain patterns still emerged in the vendor and consumer interviews. I begin with the vendors' points of view. To my surprise, given the apparent extent of the ISIS training, only two of the vendors I interviewed had been involved with ISIS. The business facilitator from ISIS had suggested that at least seven of their original clients were still selling at the market, so it is possible that the few vendors I didn't get to interview did go through the ISIS information sessions. It is also possible that some vendors decided to forgo selling at the market on that particular day, due to the poor weather. Other vendors came to the market by different means: one had some contact with YMCA programs and had a prior food franchise business but was now looking to downsize her business commitment, three individuals had also sold at the Brewery or Seaport market before, and the other two vendors were starting new businesses and had applied to the Seaport Farmers' Market directly. Half of these vendors are Canadian citizens, and half hold permanent resident status.

All of the vendors were quite positive about the social aspect of the market and several mentioned that it was the best part about working there. One of the vendors that had been referred by ISIS said this about the social aspect of the market:

Well, that's the best thing for us. Strictly, we're not pushed for money, but we're pushed for social interaction. And this market is a welcome change, really. It's very good. You interact with people, especially Canadian people to buy – at the same time, other people working here, all these vendors. We just feel it's great. (interview,V1).

Another vendor saw the social aspect as a good selling point to the market and remarked, 'People like to come away from their computer, and interact with people like me. We have regular customers that come and talk.' (V2). All vendors expressed that they had gotten to know other vendors and some also exchange food.

The priority of producing 'homeland food' was less important to newcomer vendors than I had expected, given the planned theme and regulation of the International Market. All of the vendors were proud to talk about the uniqueness of their foods, and some shared cooking tips, but several vendors reminded me of the requirement on International day to sell food from their country of origin and mentioned they like eating a wider variety of foods at home (V1, V2, V4). None of the vendors had any problems finding authentic ingredients in Halifax and stated whatever they couldn't find at Costco or Atlantic Superstore could be supplied at the local ethnic shops. Only two vendors stressed the importance of using locally sourced ingredients, including the only vendor born in Nova Scotia. (V7, V2).

There were varied opinions about the success of Canadian multiculturalism and the feeling of welcome from Canadians. All but one participant thought that multiculturalism was a positive aspect of Canada and that Canadians were (mostly) welcoming to people of different backgrounds. Newcomers tended to elaborate more about the positive experience they had had with Canadians than immigrants who had been here for some time. One newcomer vendor was already contributing to the community by volunteering at ISIS as a coordinator for diversity workshops and was enthusiastic about sharing knowledge of his home country - during his interview, he showed me a map of his country to explain a bit of its geography as it related to different kinds of foods (V1). The only negative response to my questions about the welcome given by Canadians was from the African Nova-Scotian[4] vendor who said that there was only token acceptance by Canadians toward people of different backgrounds and that Halifax was not changing in its views toward minorities (V7).

All of the vendors were somewhat disappointed with the level of business at the International Market and some mentioned that they were just breaking even (V1). They were generally positive that business would pick up once the weather was better. One vendor had extensive ideas about what was needed at the market:

> That's what I found, they (consumers) want to have their food and they want to spend some time here. So we're visualizing that we want to work on that, how they can spend more time here, either for the children, or there can be some cultural program, some buskers program…The second thing, we were talking among ourselves, another thing is, let this market become more friendly, more hospitable? Otherwise people buying certain things, they would prefer to go to a mall, instead of coming here. So we have to create something different, something special (V3). .

This vendor was also careful to stress that in summer, he didn't want to cater to cruise ship customers (who arrive on ships at the Seaport) at the expense of his regular customers. He doubted that the food vendors would benefit too much from this type of tourist anyway, since they can't take food back with them on the boat, where all the food they want is included in their cruise anyway. I found it noteworthy that this vendor had been in Canada the least amount of time compared to the other vendors, but was the most excited about welcoming 'regular Canadians' to *his* market.

CONSUMERS' EXPERIENCES OF THE MARKET

All of the 13 consumers interviewed were Canadian citizens and six described their ethnicity as Canadian as well (several further identified as Quebecois or Newfoundlander). Nine consumers mentioned that they had originally lived in another Canadian province and two consumers were tourists from another Canadian province. By my observation, ten of the consumers were in the 18-35 age range and three were over 50. Three consumers had at least one parent who had not been born in Canada. All of the consumers I spoke with were white, and appeared middle class, although no specific questions were asked about income. I tried not to disrupt anybody's lunch, and approached small groups of people as they were on their way into the market, or who had just finished eating.

Most consumers I interviewed at the International market were generally interested in culture and were somewhat regular visitors to the regular Farmers' Market on Saturday. Only two groups of consumers included people who had been to the International market before this particular day. All of the consumers expressed concern for quality and were generally convinced of the inherent high quality of local food; six consumers made a regular effort to buy organic produce. Only the tourists, who were visiting Halifax for the Canada Winter Games, were generally uninterested in organic and ethnic food, although they did say that they enjoyed going to the Mennonite markets in Kitchener once or twice a summer for the fresh, high quality food (C8 and C9). All consumers appreciated the direct contact with the food producer and saw it as an important aspect of their desire to purchase food at the market. Several customers were aware of Fair-Trade food and tried to support it, if not actively seek it out (C6, C7, C11, C12, C13). One consumer who was an International Development student at Dalhousie University said that purchasing local and fair-trade food was emphasized so often at school that she sometimes bought it out of guilt (C13).

Most of the consumers I spoke with were quite positive about the availability of ethnic food in Halifax but some individuals wanted to see even more choice. One consumer who had grown up in Ottawa said, 'Coming here – I don't think it was such a shock but when you talk about - Let's get take out Indian… Well, IS there take-out Indian in Halifax?' His partner, who was originally from a small town in Northern Manitoba countered, 'It's different for me, where I come from

it's the opposite. Here there's so much food to try!' (C1 and C2). Almost all of the consumers were very satisfied by the level of authenticity of ethnic food at the market.

Interestingly, several consumers had a very savvy reaction to the word authentic; one had done a lot of cooking while travelling in different parts of the world and mentioned that authenticity can change according to where you are (C6), and another used air quotes when saying he had no idea what 'authentic' meant and declined to act as an authority for something he didn't know much about (C2). Only one consumer, a self-declared food snob, had low opinions of the authenticity of the food at the market and suggested that some of the food the vendors were selling had come from a frozen box. He also described Halifax as a 'backwater shit-hole' when it came to finding ingredients for his Mexican, Indian, and Thai recipes (C10). This consumer was the only individual I encountered during this project that reflected the type of voracious food colonialism described by Bell (2004) and Heldke (2003); the majority of consumers seemed to have less preconceived notions of what authenticity entailed.

DISCUSSION: TRANSCENDING COSMO-MULTICULTURALISM?

It is clear that the Halifax Seaport Market Management is attempting to create a space that will be important to the community as a place to gather together to learn about each other and the environment we all share through the further development of the International Market. Their plans for putting on educational programming relating to different parts of the world might push the market's interpersonal scope further than the 'saris, samosas and steel bands' popularization of multiculturalism, which is often the most immediately accessible way of introducing new cultures to what is perceived as a homogenous mainstream public. It is also clear that the international vendors themselves are very invested (financially and socially) in the market and it appears that there is some collaboration with management to see how their input could help the economic success of the market. Peter Li has written that 'integration is about incorporating newcomers into a democratic process of participation and negotiation that shapes the future' (2003, 330), and it appears that the International market does provide some opportunities to do just that.

The market also benefits from the International Market by simply introducing new customers to their retail space. By

offering a combination of local, fair trade, and international goods at the market, and looking to widen the scope of the International market by adding free entertainment and value-added lectures, the International market also achieves three out of the four attributes necessary for a vibrant public market space as described by Watson and Studdert (2006,viii): features to attract visitors to the site, opportunities to linger, and an active and engaged community of traders. (The fourth attribute for success is having good transit service to the market, which could be researched further for its impact on inclusion opportunities.) The market management admitted that the new market building provided an immense amount of space to house new vendors and that they needed to find new producers to fill up the market on a daily basis. The question of how to get new customers and new producers was a main factor in the creation of the Community Connectors program in the first place when planning the new market space. The market's management stated that focussing on community and inclusion just makes good business sense.

The consumers at the International Market on February 25, 2011 appeared at first to be a homogenous, white, middle class group, but upon closer inspection were perceived to encompass a range of income levels, cultural backgrounds, and attitudes toward international food. I got a sense from all of the consumers that they were very careful where they decided to spend their money and that for some, the higher costs for organic, local or fair-trade foods were justified by a personal set of ethics and a desire for quality that went hand in hand, and didn't necessarily mark them as the urban elite. This echoes Betsy Donald's vision of the urban creative food economy, even though the International Market is a tiny microcosm of the food systems in large cities like Toronto.

The attitudes of the consumers started to diverge when talking about ethnocultural foods. Most of the consumers I interviewed were originally from other provinces in Canada and many had travelled extensively. In some cases, the International market provided the cosmopolitan range of foods they were accustomed to at home (C2, C10, C11). Some consumers considered themselves foodies and clearly enjoyed the variety of foods laid out for consumption (C3, C6, C11, C12). One of the consumers described her love of ethnocultural foods; 'We kind of move around the world, don't we?' (C3). Hage might consider these attitudes cosmo-multiculturalism (especially the self proclaimed 'food snob' consumer), but most of these consumers spoke in a tone of respect and friendly admiration. Some of these same consumers were extremely self-reflexive in the way that they talked about food (C2, C6, C11) and appeared to have negotiated for themselves very anti-colonialist ways of perceiving food in the way they refused to act as authorities about the ethnocultural food they sought out and enjoyed. Ian Cook suggests that in a multicultural country,

> There is no automatic, powerful, taken-for-granted, Other-eating white personality that needs to be dismantled and reconstructed. It's already fragile and bitty because people's heterogeneous biographies and everyday lives are often both food colonialist and anti-colonialist…. Few mainstreamers have, for instance, lived in the same place their whole lives. They've crossed culinary cultural borders in their life histories. (Cook 2008:828)

As one of the vendors mentioned to me after I shared that my father had been a refugee to Canada, 'Well, everybody's dad was a refugee to Canada. (Laughs) Except for the First Nations!' (V1). This recognition of his own status as essentially the same as long-term Canadians may give us a model of interaction where we can begin to consider ourselves as 'Others' within a multicultural framework in order to meet others on an equal footing

CONCLUSION: THE VALUE OF WELCOMING SPACES

To answer my original research question, Who is the International Market for?, the International Market appears to have value particularly for newcomer business owners who sell at the market, educated urban consumers, and the Market management itself. It was difficult to gauge the amount of intercultural interaction actually occurring between vendors and consumers at the market from my limited interviews. Certainly, there was a lot of respect on the behalf of consumers toward the vendors and vendors said that most Canadians were very interested, accepting, welcoming and fair (V1,V2,V3,V6). In light of research describing restaurant consumption of ethnocultural food (Hage 1997; Bell 2004; Heldke 2001), it seems that this respect is more difficult to foster outside of this market environment, where there is at least a certain level of

direct interaction with the producers of food. The social retail space of the International market appears to attract consumers who are already willing to move beyond the self-obsessed and insatiable cosmopolitan consumerism described by Bell (2004) to an awareness of the people and cultures producing the food.

On a larger scale, the entrepreneurship programs provided by ISIS are very powerful integrative tools that empower newcomers to quickly become invested in the community. Selling at the International market is both a low-risk business and also a community integration strategy that, as Peter Li (2003) suggests, allows newcomers to participate in a very social aspect of Canadian life in Halifax. The market is, of course, just one very small aspect of the larger issue of integration and social inclusion. According to Statistics Canada, the Atlantic region is one of the most ethnically homogenous places in Canada, with a lower rate of visible minorities than other regions (Statistics Canada 2008). Immigration is vital to grow or even maintain the population base in Halifax and Nova Scotia and successful integration of new immigrants is vital to help them stay here. Halifax has a lot at stake in the creation of welcoming spaces, and it appears as though the community is making an effort at making this happen.

WORKS CITED

Bell, David. 2004. 'Taste and Space: Eating out in the city today." In Culinary Taste: Consumer Behaviour in the International Restaurant Sector, edited by D. Sloan (Ed), 43-57. Oxford: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada. 2006. Socioeconomic Profiles of Immigrants in the Four Atlantic Provinces — Phase II: Focus on Vibrant Communities. Accessed January 22, 2012. http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/research/socioeconomic/section2.asp

Cook, Ian. 2008. "Geographies of Food: Mixing." Progress in Human Geography. 32 (6), 821-833.

Donald, Betsy., & Alison Blay-Palmer. 2006. "The Urban Creative-Food Economy: Producing Food for the Urban Elite or Social Inclusion Opportunity?" Environment and Planning A, 38(10), 1901-1920.

Duruz, Jean. 2000. "A Nice Baked Dinner...or Two Roast Ducks from Chinatown?: Identity grazing." Continuum 14.3:289.

Hage, Ghassan. 1997. "At Home in the Entrails of the West: Multiculturalism, Ethnic Food and Migrant Home-Building." In H. Grace, G. Hage, L. Johnson, J. Langsworth & M. Symonds (Eds.), Home/World: Space, Community and Marginality in Sydney's West, 99-153. Annandale, NSW: Pluto Press.

Heldke, Lisa. 2001. "Let's Cook Thai: Recipes for Colonialism." In S. Inness (Ed.) Pilaf, Pozole, and Pad Thai: American women and Ethnic Food. 175-198. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. 2003. Exotic Appetites. New York: Routledge

Immigration Settlement & Integration Services. 2010. Halifax Seaport International Market. Accessed January 23, 2011 at http://www.isisns.ca/news/halifax-seaport-international-market/.

Kymlicka, Will. 2010. The Current State of Multiculturalism in Canada and Research Themes on Canadian Multiculturalism,2008-2010. Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Accessed November 16, 2011 at http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/multi-state.pdf.

Li, Peter. 2003. "Deconstructing Canada's Discourse of Immigrant Integration." Journal of International Migration and Integration, 4 (3), 315-333.

Lowitt, Kristen. 2009. "Exploring Connections Between People, Places and Food in Three Nova Scotia Farmers' Markets." Cuizine, 2 (1). Accessed March 3, 2011. http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/039514arz

Manai, Bochra. 2009. Importance of Public Space in the Integration Process and in Building Welcoming Communities. Accessed January 23, 2011 at http://canada.metropolis.net/pdfs/manai_e.pdf.

Potter, Andrew. 2011. "Thinking Local, Acting Loco?" Maclean's Magazine. January 17. p.63-64.

Statistics Canada. 2008. Canada's Ethnocultural Mosaic, 2006 Census. Accessed March 22, 2011 at http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/ethnicorigin/pdf/97-562-XIE2006001.pdf.

Halifax Seaport Farmers Market. 2010. Vendor Handbook. Accessed February 25, 2011 at http://www.managemymarket.com/Uploads/OrgFiles/149/ Seaport%20 Vendor%20Handbook.pdf

Watson, Sophie and David Studdert. 2006. Markets as sites for Social Interaction: Spaces of Diversity. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Opening Doors and Sitting on Floors:
Public Events in Private Spaces: the (re)-appropriation of space through grassroots events in Halifax

Samantha Levy and Susannah Church
Dalhousie University, Halifax Nova Scotia Canada,
samantha.k.levy@gmail.com & susannah.church@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

As a group of university students, we came together to discuss social trends we had noticed around our respective neighbourhoods in Halifax. We set out to investigate public events in private spaces. We found that these private spaces included the backyards and living rooms of those hosting the events. We focused on four case studies, which included an open-mic show, an art show, a lecture series event and a story-telling session to gather our research. It appears that this trend represents a need for a greater sense of community within our city and an outlet to share creative projects and ideas. The concept of blurring the boundary between public and private spaces is indicative of greater social support within an urban community.

Keywords: community, urban, social, public

We behave differently in someone's living room or backyard than we would in a lecture hall or cafe, so a reading series run out of the home on Allan St. would have a very different 'feel' than one in a bookstore on Spring Garden Road, and a backyard lecture series would demand different social cues than one held at a university.

INTRODUCTION:

We have noticed a recent trend in the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia, of public events being held in traditionally private spaces, namely in peoples' homes. Does this phenomenon have something to do with the lack of public spaces available for these types of ventures, or is this development a sign of a wider cultural shift? Does it reflect a common desire for a greater sense of trust and community within the city, or could this be merely an aesthetic preference? Our project aims to explore these questions and to look broadly at the reasons why so many of these events were created, and what people's reaction has been to them. We are interested in whether or not these events create community where it is otherwise lacking or, conversely, if they are signals of a healthy, active community. Our research aims to find the motivations behind public events in private spaces, and to determine how these events reflect and satisfy the needs of an urban community. We will be exploring this question through four case studies: The Monday Night Agricola Street Open Mic is a weekly drop-in open-mic night held in a residential living room; The Allan Street Reading Series is a monthly salon that is open to the public with a curated selection of presenters hosted in a residential living room; The Fuller Terrace Lecture Series is a bi-weekly, theme-based lecture series that solicits lecturers through open-calls presented in a residential backyard/alleyway; Ben and Zoe's Art Gallery is a sporadic pop-up gallery hosted in a residential home, showcasing the art of their friends and peers but open to public perusal and purchase.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Since our research question is primarily concerned with examining the notion of community and the appropriation of public and private spaces, we will proceed to examine how these terms are defined and how the events that we've researched may challenge these definitions. It is difficult to reach a consensus about the meaning of community, because the term means different things to different people. Laura Pappano writes that it is easy to apply the notion of community "to a range of experiences... community [brings] different people together in common pursuit across lines of difference...we understand a need for each other, and – perhaps most critically – we know that our destinies are bound up with one another" (Pappano, 2001, 185). Wellman and Leighton describe community as a network of interpersonal ties that provide sociability to members of a common locality with shared sentiments and activities (Wellman, 1979, 365). They note that the inclusion of locality in this definition has caused some to conflate community and neighbourhood; for our research, it proved significant that these events were all located in Halifax's North End, a neighbourhood known for its social involvement. Pappano notes that while most people acknowledge the importance of community in fostering identity and creating connections, they are increasingly likely to retreat to the private realm; she writes "why open the door when it is challenging enough to manage our own lives?" (Pappano, 2001, 208). As we will show, the events we studied seem to defy this tendency by opening their doors to bring the public into private spaces.

In *Public and Private Spaces of the City,* Ali Madanipour describes the three types of places that exist within the city: intimate, interpersonal, and impersonal; the home would exemplify the intimate, the interpersonal space would include schools, workplaces, community centres, and so on., and city streets and places of public use would be categorized as impersonal (Madanipour, 2003, 1). According to Madanipour, "ever since the rise of the city...public- private distinction has been a key organizing principle, shaping physical space of cities and the social life of their citizens" (1). How one delineates the public and private realms is important because whether or not we view something as 'private' or 'public' influences our relation to the space, our relationships in the space, and importantly – our desire or ability to even use the space. We behave differently in someone's living room or backyard than we would in a lecture hall or cafe, so a reading series run out of the home on Allan St. would have a very different 'feel' than one in a bookstore on Spring Garden Road, and a backyard lecture series would demand different social cues than one held at a university.

For many Westerners, the home epitomizes the private sphere, yet this was not always the case; though we may currently consider the home to be the materialization of the private, in the Middle Ages "there were no boundaries between professional and private life. Working and living were combined in the typical bourgeois townhouse of the fourteenth century...life was, indeed, 'lived in public'...the notions of privacy, function and comfort as understood today did not exist" (Madanipour 2003, 68). However, starting in Victorian England and continuing into the modern era, "the public character of the house was lost and some of its functions were taken up by the club, the cafe [in France] and the public house [in Britain]" (72). The strict separation of public and private in social interactions of the time was reflected in the home, and integrated social bonds gave way to commodified social relations wherein private, domestic space needed to be differentiated from public, social space (75). So, the home became synonymous with the "intimate", and public spaces, such as the aforementioned bars and cafes, became places where people could engage in interpersonal relationships. It is important to note that the sociocentric modes of pre-Victorian interaction still prevail in many parts of the world, meaning that this obsession with privacy is more prevalent in Western society, while society-centric life is still the norm throughout many other cultures. In truth, this absolute demarcation or differentiation between private and public is really a product of modern, western societal values.

In contrast to the intimacy of private spaces, the public sphere is typically characterised by interpersonal and impersonal relations and interactions with others who impact your life but with whom you do not have an intimate relationship. Since the public sphere requires you to handle relationships that are both impersonal *and* interpersonal, the public is constructed and communicated through conduct and performance in a much more defined manner than is the private. In effect, public spaces are socially constructed through the "phenomenological and symbolic experience of space as mediated by social processes such as exchange, conflict, and control" (Low, 1996, 861); these processes are also encountered in the private sphere, however the dual levels in which they must be navigated--the impersonal, the interpersonal, and sometimes even the personal--in public makes them especially pertinent to its characterisation. Through social exchanges and use of space, a public space may be socially constructed in a venue that is typically private; symbolic meaning

of a space does not depend on physical characteristics, so while a bunch of couches and a TV may imply living room, the scenes and actions of an open-mic every Monday night suggests otherwise.

Above all, most definitions of public space emphasize "the necessity of access, which can include access to a place as well as to the activities within it" (Madanipour, 2003, 111). The idea of access is crucial, because it can help us explain how domestic spaces such as living rooms and backyards can be transformed into public spaces once open access is granted. According to Madanipour, "one way to confront the range of ambiguities and overlaps is to see that the definition of the 'public' may depend on its context and...it seems that depending on what we define as private sphere, the public sphere is defined in relation to it" (113). Put another way, when the private is personal, or intimate, then the public must satisfy the impersonal and interpersonal functions. However, when the private becomes an interpersonal space, as it does when events such as readings, lectures, musical performances, and art shows get brought into the home, the differences between them are notably blurred and, as a consequence, the city is in some small way transformed.

The shape of a city and of urban life are characterized by the way in which the public/private distinction is made; as Madanipour writes: "a central challenge in urbanism is to find a balance between the public and private realms" (241). The balance is seriously challenged by the emergence of open, seemingly public spaces in the traditionally private domain, and most of the time this ambiguity proves to be quite confusing, as an experiment in other cities seems to show. Alex and Sebastian Cowan ran an art and performance venue, Lab Synthèse, out of their loft apartment in Montreal, and though for them the space was an intimate one in which they opened their door for the occasional interpersonal interaction, attendees had a hard time differentiating between an open-private space and the traditional public space. Though the Cowans lived and worked at Lab Synthèse, to others it was just a party venue: "There's a certain degree of respect when you enter someone's home that you don't enact in a public space...the overlap between public and private made living at Lab feel a lot like work" (Coleman, 2010, 12-13). It was because their venue took on an increasingly "public" feel – with people showing up uninvited, people showing up who were outside their social circle, people not respecting their space – which they eventually shut the Lab down (13).

It is clear from the literature that our four case studies represent a unique approach to the creation of urban community through the blurring of traditional public/private distinctions. Further discussions of these events in our research findings support this claim. These events contest 'the merciless separation of space' that Georg Simmel said to be a defining aspect of city-living (Coleman, 2010, 11) and they work to engage the community by radically redefining social barriers associated with space and place.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

To sum up so far, our research investigates why the creation of these "public events in private spaces" occurred in Halifax and how people's social relations are negotiated in these events. While most studies examine the privatization of public space in the negative sense of commoditisation, we will explore the ways in which the blurring of public and private has been employed in order to extend public usage and create more communal spaces. By looking at the social construction of their spaces, we look to see if these events were created out of a perceived need for more intimate relations in the city, in light of the levels of social isolation that people experience in their daily lives in Halifax. We expect to find that these events have arisen out of a need for intimate and private space, and that they arise in the city because of the impersonal, compartmentalized elements of society where there is a clear division between 'public' and 'private' life. We posit that these events successfully blur the lines between 'public' and 'private' and give participants a greater sense of community and connection in their lives.

To address our research question we primarily used the method of semi-structured interviews, both short 'vox pop' and longer interviews, to collect our data. We conducted eighteen 'vox pop' interviews with attendees of these events, and four longer interviews with hosts. The term 'vox pop' refers to the short, informal style of interview commonly used in news programs as a way of polling pedestrians. Interviewing was the most appropriate method because we were interested in the motivations, perspectives, and impressions that the attendees and hosts had in relation to these events. We asked such questions as: Why were these events needed? Did people feel isolated in their Halifax urban life? What was the atmosphere of these events and how did they differ from more conventional

spaces? Allowing participants to answer in their own words gave us, as researchers, the most lucid picture of their experiences.

We also searched for newspaper articles about the events in the local press. This allowed us to draw on the point of view of a person who was not attending the event because of perceived inaccessibility; it gave us access to perspectives of those who were not connected to the events, thus placing them in a larger social context.

We obtained our data by contacting hosts of the events through their publicity material and arranging interview times that worked for both parties. We interviewed five hosts for three of the events; we were unable to get an interview with the founder of the reading series because of scheduling conflicts. The interviews ranged in time from thirty minutes to two hours, the latter being the interviews with Ben Caplan and Julia Feltham, which were recorded on videotape for presentation purposes. In order to speak to attendees, we either attended the event or located them through contacts we had or who were recommended by the host. The only events that we were able to attend to collect research during the writing process were the Open Mic and the Reading Series; however, the other two events had also been attended by the authors prior to their beginning this research project. Most of the hosts and attendees were accessible and happy to talk openly and personally about these events, which may be a result of the intimate nature of these events. We then analysed the data by gathering our interview responses together, along with comments found in the newspaper, and compared and contrasted the findings. We looked for particular themes and insights that were relevant to our research question.

Our research ethics were grounded upon the informed consent of the individuals to be interviewed. We did not elicit information revealing private, or potentially divisive or controversial subjects that would cause ethical concern about the impact of our research. All attendees remained anonymous in our findings and all the hosts gave us consent to use their names and pictures.

FINDINGS

Artistic events such as the ones studied are meant to engage the community; bringing these events into the home reveals a further desire for intimacy and interaction within a sometimes hostile and anonymous urban setting. These events create a sense of urban community that Fran Tonkiss describes as "villages in the city, based on familiarity and shared cultural norms" (2005, 9). Tonkiss notes how rural incomers usually import these intimate forms of community, and indeed our event organizers all come from small cities or rural towns.

All five hosts that were interviewed had grown up in relatively small cities or towns (predominantly from the Atlantic provinces of Canada, namely, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland). Not one of the hosts was from a large city, or even a city the size of Halifax (population 373,000 in 2006), and our interviews confirmed that there was definitely a pattern of recreating the sense of community the hosts had felt growing up. Julia Feltham, co-host of the Open Mic, mentioned, "being raised by a pile of Newfoundlanders, I remember as a little kid going to little towns and you called everybody uncle and aunt and I literally thought I was related to the entire island. I have been raised to believe that everyone is my family." The 'family community' Julia was raised by has shaped the way she treats the audience at the Open Mic. Treating everyone like a brother or sister is not the norm in an urban environment, so public events in private spaces begin to dissolve our concept of the stranger. The desire for a connection and resistance to social isolation proved to be important motivators for our hosts in creating these events. While a sense of community is clearly a huge motivator, we must not ignore the significance of bringing this community into their homes. We asked Julia how public the event actually is, given that she seems to recognize most faces, to which she responded, "it is really public. Often people will think I know someone 'cause I hug them when they come in the door, but still - it doesn't mean that I know them." She strongly believes that "the fact that we have our doors open make us more safe."

Ella Tetrault, one of two hosts for the Fuller Terrace Lecture Series, told us that one of the main goals for her event "was to come to know their community differently and expand that community and their understanding with each other". This goal was also in conjunction with an interest in the activity of public speaking and shared knowledge. When asked if she found that having the event in her backyard deterred people from coming she responded that "having the event in our backyard may turn people off, but I do not believe a university lecture hall is

any more accessible. Every space can be intimidating, but the backyard has the potential to be unintimidating because it is so informal. Every space has its limitations."

The motivation behind creating events such as these definitely speaks to the issue of social isolation and urban alienation. Ben Caplan, the other Open Mic host explained:

"it is very easy to become isolated in modernity, you've got your job and you're a cog in the machine, you're supposed to rotate in a particular place, where do you go to meet people? What if you don't want to go to a bar and drink? What if you're not going to classes anymore? And your friends moved away. To be able to connect with people of a like mind and have those kinds of enriching relationships, a lot of people really cherish having access to this kind of stuff and to be part of a community."

Ella Tetrault agreed with this sentiment, explaining that the lecture series was an attempt to take the somewhat superficial interactions one would have at a party and translate them into more meaningful, shared experiences. Another trend among the hosts was that they were all recent graduates, in their mid to late 20's. We interpret a correlation between the loss of a school-based community and the creation of an interest-based support system. Specifically, the desire to connect through the exchange of ideas, stories, and mutual interests is very reminiscent of the university environments from which the hosts had recently graduated.

Based on our participant observation at the events, it was very clear that the audiences are predominantly students, or recent university graduates. This pattern demonstrates the possible exclusiveness of the events; although they claim to be public, it is important to understand who feels welcome and why. In an interview with Halifax News, North End resident Mark Butler expressed this same sentiment about the Fuller Terrace Lecture Series: "A lot of people seem to know each other here, but it would be really interesting too if you could bring together neighbours who don't usually talk and have different lives, ages and professions" (Burnet and Schurman, 2010). This apprehension about going to a public event in a private space was reiterated by one of the attendees at the Reading Series. Though she went on to read one of her works at the event, she was initially reluctant to attend, telling us that: "I'd heard of the reading series and been interested in attending but without

an expressed invitation or a friend-of-a-friend relationship, I wouldn't have been comfortable." After having participated as a first time reader she expressed gratitude "to have been able to start out at the reading series because the atmosphere was so friendly and open".

Most of the attendees interviewed for each event said that they knew someone related to the event, whether it is one of the hosts or someone participating in the event as an artist or performer. This is also an indicator of exclusivity – people are much more likely to attend if they feel welcome, whether or not they were invited. Many attendees seemed to have found out about the event through word of mouth. It seems that running into a friend on the street and being told about the event in passing is a common way to be invited. For example, one writer who presented at the reading series confessed that she was invited to read after a chance encounter with the host at a bar. Although each event has had other mediums of publicity, such as write-ups in local weekly newspaper *The Coast* and *The Dalhousie Gazette*, and even interviews on the local programs on CBC Radio, verbal invitation seems to be most effective in influencing attendance. This has been one of the reasons that growth outside of specific social circles has been slow, because without the time and resources that a bar or a bookstore would have for publicizing their events, most have had only limited success reaching audiences outside their social circles. However, this informal process is also an important part of the alternative culture of these events; during her interview with Ella Tetrault, one of the researchers was even invited to give a lecture next summer.

When asked if they enjoyed events in private spaces more than events in more conventional spaces, all attendees responded 'yes'. Attendees used words such as 'inviting', 'grassroots', 'intimate', 'magical', 'comfortable', 'feeling of home' to describe the atmosphere of the private space-based events. Most attendees recognized between 5 and 10 other people at the event, usually a couple of the people they knew before ever coming to the event and the others they either recognize from similar types of events or from just having seen them around Halifax.

There were definitely limitations that we experienced throughout this research process. Besides the obvious time limit (research was conducted for a one-term class), the main limitation was that it was difficult to obtain information about people who had heard of but chose not to attend the events we studied. It would have also been very interesting to compare our findings by speaking with people who organize or attend similar events in more conventional public spaces.

CONCLUSION

With regards to our research question, we successfully discovered the hosts' motivations for creating and maintaining their events. We have also concluded that the overall response from their audiences was positive and has encouraged them to keep the events public. We have learned that the events were created as a response to a strong sense of community, rather than a lack thereof, though it is important to note that these events do not cater exclusively to the issue of social isolation common within urban settings. Rather, the intention for bringing these public events into private spaces was to bring people together around a social need by providing artistic outlets. The desire for a connection and resistance to social isolation proved to be important motivators for our hosts in creating these events. While a sense of community is clearly a huge motivator, we must not ignore the significance of bringing this community into the private home. Events such as the ones studied are meant to engage the community bringing these events into the home reveals a further desire for intimacy and interaction within a sometimes hostile and anonymous urban setting. These events create a sense of urban community that Fran Tonkiss describes as "villages in the city, based on familiarity and shared cultural norms" (Tonkiss, 2005, 9). Tonkiss notes how rural incomers usually transport these intimate forms of community, and indeed our event organizers all come from small cities or rural towns.

Overall our methods of long and short interviews were suitable for obtaining the information, due to the limited sample size, the scope of our research was quite limited. Nevertheless, interviews were a suitable form of research in the sense that they required personal participation in events that were founded upon the principles of exchange and social interaction. Furthermore, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed hosts and

attendees to express themselves without being confined to predetermined survey answers. Based on our interviews and our literature review, we concluded that these events redefined and socially constructed the spaces in which they were held, blurring the participants' conceptions of public and private, and thus influencing their interactions with one another. Due to their unique settings and DIY-styled initiative, the hosts have effectively re-defined the public/private distinction, creating spaces capable of fostering a new type of community in the city.

WORKS CITED

Burnet, Mary & Schurman, Georgia (2010, August 15). Growing Backyard Lecture Series Provides Space for Showing and Telling. Halifax News

Coleman, Madeline. (2010). How to Run a DIY Party Space (without the cops shutting you down). Maisonneuve Magazine, 37

Low, Setha. (1996). Spatializing Culture: The social production and social construction of public space in Costa Rica. American Ethnologist, 23(4): 861-79

Madanipour, Ali. (2003). Public and Private Spaces of the City. New York: Routledge

Pappano, Laura. (2001). The Connection Gap: Why Americans feel so alone. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press

Tonkiss, Fran. (2005). Space, the City and Social Theory: Social relations and urban forms. Cambridge: Polity Press

Wellman, Barry, & Leighton, Barry. (1979). Networks, Neighborhoods, and Communities: Approaches to the Study of the Community Question. Urban Affairs Quarterly, 14 (3): 368-90