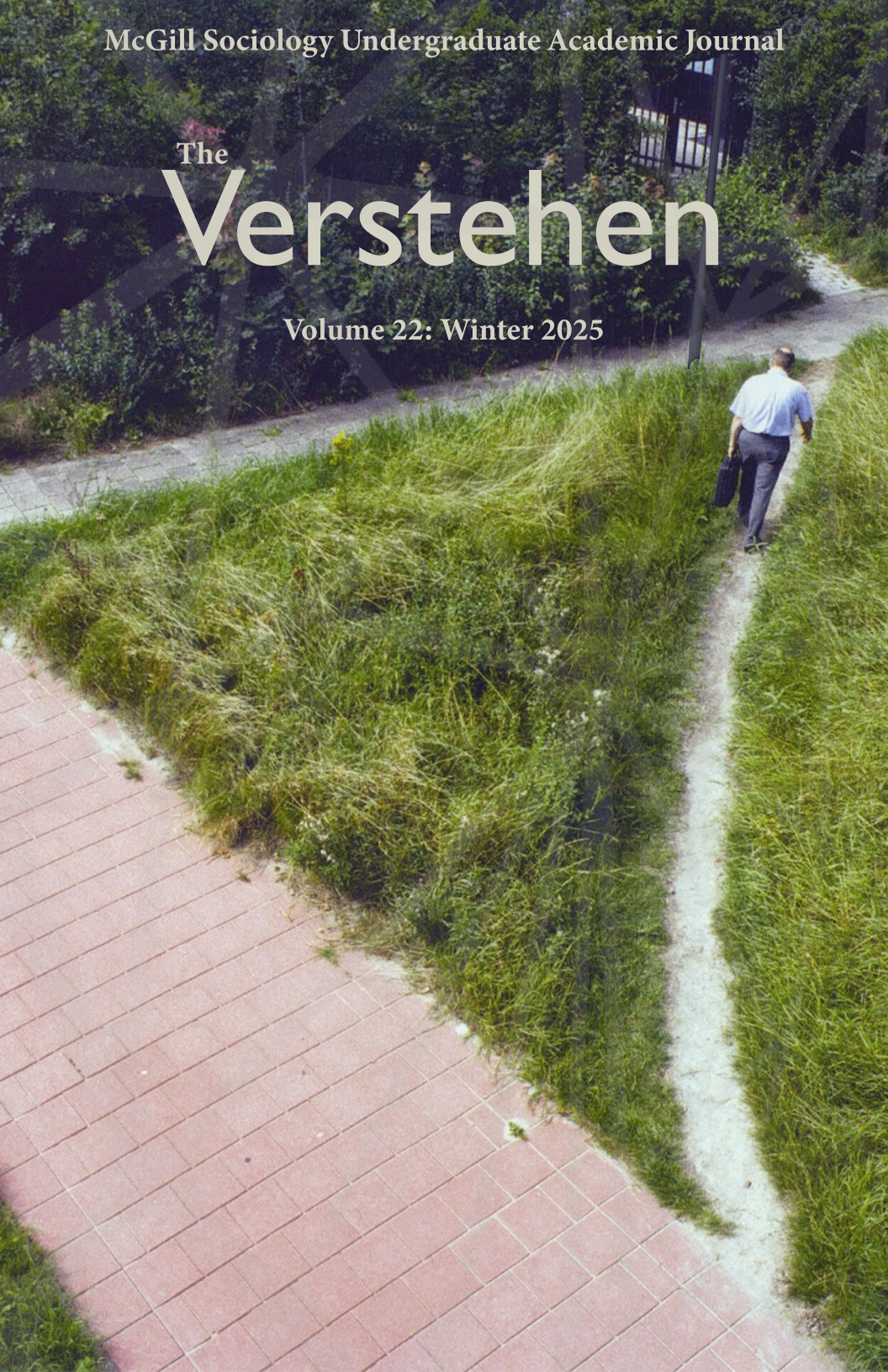


McGill Sociology Undergraduate Academic Journal

The Verstehen

Volume 22: Winter 2025



Sociology Students' Association presents

The Verstehen

Volume 22: Winter 2025

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Editor's Note

At the heart of sociology lies the idea of *Verstehen*—the notion that to truly understand individuals or groups, we must see the world through their eyes. Rooted in the German word for “understanding,” *Verstehen* challenges us to engage deeply with the people, structures, and histories that shape our social realities. The works featured in this issue of our journal, *The Verstehen* embody this commitment.

Lily Curtis’s paper “Green Gentrification in St. Henri: Effects on Housing and Income Inequality” explores the link between inequality and green gentrification—the process by which gentrification is justified through environmental concerns. In “The Image Isn’t Real, But the Consequences Are: Understanding the Rise of Deepfake Pornography and the Urgency for Policy Intervention”, Alix Faulkner examines the societal and psychological impacts of deepfake pornography and underscores the pressing need for policy reforms.

Joseph Liang's essay "Co-opting Agrarian Radicalism: Why Did Social Credit Win the 1935 Alberta Election?" argues that the responses of various political actors—including the federal government and left-wing parties—to the Great Depression reconstituted class interests, ultimately facilitating a shift from the UFA to Social Credit. Emma Qian's piece "A Poor Craftsman Blames His Tools: Progress Narratives as Wielded to Maintain Western Powers" critiques how Western states manipulate progress narratives and use pinkwashing processes to reinforce global hierarchies.

In "Does Increasing Access to Family Planning Decrease Fertility, or Is Development the 'Best Contraceptive'?" Jia Sun examines the interplay between family planning and education, arguing that education fosters a desire for smaller families and increases contraceptive uptake. Maya Wolff's paper "The Gay Village: The Inclusion and Protection of Montreal's LGBTQ+ Community Through Exclusion" explores the evolution of Montreal's Village and the broader tensions between economic progress and cultural preservation, raising important questions about the sustainability of LGBTQ+ urban spaces.

These works offer compelling insights into various aspects of our society, and each author has approached their topic with depth and rigor. The *Verstehen* exists to celebrate their scholarship and to provide a platform for critical inquiry. At its core, this journal is dedicated to fostering thoughtful discussion and engagement.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all contributors—our authors, the editorial team, the graphic designer, and the Sociology Students' Association Team. This issue would not have been possible without their dedication and trust.

With that, I invite you to enjoy the 2025 issue of *The Verstehen*!

Sainka Walia
Editor-in-Chief

Author Biographies

Lily Curtis

Lily Curtis is a fourth year undergraduate student, majoring in sociology and double minoring in religious studies and gender, sexuality, feminism and social justice studies. She plans to eventually go to grad school for social work or sociology. Originally from Vermont, she has lived in Montreal since 2021.

Alix Faulkner

Alix is a third-year Honours Sociology student at McGill University with a keen interest in criminology, specifically in the intersection of technology and crime. Her academic focus includes the role of emerging technologies, particularly AI, in shaping the dynamics of sex crime and surveillance in the digital age. Alix is an active member of the Sociology Students' Association and a content writer for Encode Canada, where she explores the evolving relationship between technology and society. When she is not reading for school, you can find her reading for fun, knitting, and scouring Facebook marketplace.

Joseph Liang

Joseph is a U2 student in Honours Sociology with minors in Indigenous Studies and Music. His interests include social movements and anti-oppressive, decolonial politics. He is also an avid enjoyer of falafel, the Korean hip-hop group Epik High, and the color purple.

Emma Qian

Emma is a U3 Honours sociology student with an anthropology minor. She is probably the SSA's number one fan and currently resides in its windowless office. She is also an embarrassingly late-in-life theatre kid, an anti-laundry-folder, and a starch oxford comma defender.

Jia Sun

Jia Sun is an undergraduate student in the Faculty of Arts, majoring in Sociology and minoring in Hispanic Studies. She began her studies at McGill University in engineering and shifted to the social sciences after realizing her passion for solving socially complex issues over technical ones. During an academic leave, Jia worked in Central America, solidifying her commitment to fighting socioeconomic inequality. Last summer, she worked with the Conseil Québécois de la Coopération et de la Mutualité, guiding young entrepreneurs to create a self-sustaining cooperative business. Looking forward, she plans to pursue graduate studies and a career in socioeconomic development. In her spare time, Jia can be found at live music events, zooming across the city on her bike, or sitting on lush patches of grass.

Maya Wolff

Maya Wolff is a double major student in political science and sociology in her last semester. She has moved around a lot in my life and has lived in Paris, Guadeloupe, and Vancouver before coming to McGill for university. She enjoys sociological theory and international relations. She hopes to get a job for the provincial government after graduating University.



Green Gentrification in St. Henri: Effects on Housing and Income Inequality

Lily Curtis

Abstract

The neighborhood of St Henri, located on the island of Montreal, was a historically working class, Francophone neighborhood. However, starting in the late 20th century St Henri began to transform from gentrification. Importantly, St Henri is largely affected by green gentrification—the process by which gentrification is justified through environmental concerns, coupled with strategic implementations of green spaces and clean-up efforts. The following paper will detail the process of green gentrification in St Henri, and its relationship with rising income and housing inequality. Using data from the 2017 and 2023 Canadian census, as well as reports from the Benedict Labre House (a local shelter) I argue that there is a correlation between inequality and green gentrification in St. Henri.

Introduction

The neighborhood of St. Henri, located along Montreal's La-chine canal, has undergone tremendous change within the last century. Once a large, industrial, working-class neighborhood, it has transformed into an area of visible inequality due to the effects of gentrification (García-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). The once bustling factories are now abandoned, or have been renovated into pricey new apartments and upscale restaurants, and pristine, well-maintained green spaces have also emerged across the neighborhood. While these changes may be viewed in a positive light, as an 'improvement' to the area, the ramifications on housing and income inequality in St. Henri delegitimize this positivist approach. Thus, the focus of this paper will be on the occurrence of green gentrification in St. Henri and the consequences it has on inequality, specifically in the realms of housing and income. Ultimately, I will argue, based on previous literature as well as census data, that both housing and income inequality have a correlation with green gentrification in St. Henri.

I will begin by defining terms imperative to the paper: gentrification, green gentrification, housing inequality, and income inequality. Next, there will be an introduction of the sources that will be used in the exploration of green gentrification in St. Henri, followed by a demographic and historical overview of the neighborhood. Then, I will outline the effects of green gentrification in St. Henri through both housing inequality and income inequality. In terms of housing inequality, factors such as homelessness and the ratio of renters to owners will be evaluated. Income inequality will be analyzed through poverty rates and unemployment rates. Lastly, I will conclude with a brief analysis of the motivation for gentrification, a summary of the main points, and the implications that this specific case study has on a broader level.

Defining the Terms

Gentrification is commonly understood to be the process by which urban, lower class neighborhoods are changed via an influx of wealthier people and their businesses displacing the established residents (Billingham 2015). Scholars are in disagreement over whether gentrification has a net positive or negative effect, and there has been much literature and theory developed in accordance with answering this question. However, this paper's focus will be on

the social inequalities that are produced by gentrification. A certain type of gentrification, known as green gentrification, uses the traditional understanding of gentrification and couples it with the phenomena of businesses and initiatives justifying their movement into low income areas using environmentally-friendly, or 'green,' terms (Dooling 2009). Additionally, strategic implementations of green spaces can be manifestations of green gentrification, as they tend to attract wealthier individuals and businesses at the expense of the locals. One way to measure gentrification is through a comparison of demographics before and after gentrification is said to have occurred.

Inequality, as will be explored in relation to green gentrification, will be understood in terms of housing and income. Housing inequality refers to the access to affordable, adequate, and quality housing within a given area (Owens 2015). Focused on St. Henri, housing inequality will be analyzed through homelessness and the rates of ownership and renting, as found within the Canadian census and reports from a local homeless shelter. As housing is intimately tied to income, it is imperative to also discuss income inequality when evaluating gentrification. Income inequality is typically represented through the Gini index, a statistical representation measured on a scale of 0-1. In this instance, 0 represents perfect equality; if there is \$100 and 100 people, every person has \$1. A score of 1, on the other hand, represents perfect inequality—in the former scenario, only 1 person would have \$100 (Measuring Inequality Lecture September 10). Thus, income inequality is a measure of the distribution of wealth throughout a population. Income inequality can be assessed in a variety of ways, including census data measuring income levels, poverty rates, and income distribution rates.

Previous Research

In exploration of the relationship between gentrification and inequality, I will largely draw upon research developed by Melissa Garcia-Lamarca and Aaron Vansintjan, Damaris Rose, Michael Mascarenhas, and Stephen Gaetz. Garcia-Lamarca and Vansintjan analyze the tensions in St. Henri which have erupted due to green gentrification, ultimately concluding that this phenomena has led to an erosion of community spaces and physical transformations alongside increased rent and physical displacement. While there may be improvements to the overall quality of the environment, these im-

provements have not met the long term needs of residents—a factor leading to resistance by both residents and activists (Garcia-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). Rose’s paper analyzes the relationship between gentrification and neo-liberal discourses, which impacts inequality as evidenced through demographic changes (Rose 2004). Mascarenhas will be used to better understand the issue of green gentrification as related to environmental inequalities and injustices (Mascarenhas 2008). Lastly, Gaetz’s work will be used to highlight the Canadian response to inequality, specifically in the form of addressing homelessness (Gaetz 2010). While other authors will be referenced, the previously discussed scholars will inform the majority of the paper.

The motivation for green gentrification is well documented by Mascarenhas, who highlights the concerns of environmental degradation (Mascarenhas 2008). As seen in the early history of St. Henri, pollution and environmental harms are often disproportionately experienced by low-income individuals (Garcia-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). The push towards environmentally friendly policies has been adopted, possibly in name only, by businesses and government initiatives which are greening St. Henri. Unfortunately, this increased attention on the physical environment has not come with protections for the long-term residents of St. Henri (Garcia-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). Instead, it has driven up housing prices and made the neighborhood unaffordable for many.

History and Demography of St. Henri

This section will discuss a brief historical overview of St. Henri, as well as its demographics in the past century. Historically, St. Henri was a working-class industrial neighborhood benefiting from its location along the Lachine Canal (García-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). Characterized by poor, overcrowded conditions, it was the place of settlement for many industrial workers. However, the closure of the Lachine Canal in 1960 and the simultaneous construction of the Turcot interchange through the neighborhood economically, socially, and physically devastated the area (García-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). The Lachine Canal developed into a cesspool of bacteria, housing deteriorated, jobs vanished, and out-migration of the economically fortunate ensued. It is important to note that while the conditions of St. Henri were particularly unfavorable in the early 1900s, these conditions were somewhat equally distribut-

ed among the residents, a majority being white, Francophone, working class, and male (García-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). Starting in the late 20th century, efforts were made to clean up St. Henri via green initiatives and developments—leading to green gentrification.

With an understanding of the historical context, it is possible to move onto an overview of some of the demographics of St. Henri. The 2021 Canadian census provides recent insights into the population currently living in St. Henri. In 2021, there were 17 301 people living in St. Henri, with 13 285 of them between the ages of 15-64 (Statistics Canada 2023). There were a total of 9490 occupied dwellings, with the majority—7290—being apartment units in a building with less than five stories. On the other end of the spectrum, there were only 35 occupied single-detached houses, 30 occupied semi-detached houses, and 345 occupied row houses. There are 2700 private households which are owned, and roughly three times that amount are rented. 950 private dwellings are in need of major repairs. Regarding income, the median total income in 2020 was \$40 400, with 14 580 people receiving some type of income. Notably, there were 425 people above the age of 15 without any total income. Using the low income measure after tax, 3335 people fall into the ‘low income’ category, with the majority age group being 18-64 years, followed distantly by those above 65. Lastly, the unemployment rate in St. Henri is 10.5%, compared with 10.3% in the entirety of Montreal (Statistics Canada 2023). While the census provides an extremely detailed overview of the demographics of St. Henri, for the purpose of the paper I will focus primarily on data related to housing and income.

Effects of Green Gentrification

The previously discussed demographics and the historical overview provide a background for analyzing green gentrification in the neighborhood of St. Henri. In looking at the effects of green gentrification, the occurrence of homelessness can provide insights. In a report released by Benedict Labre House, a homeless shelter in St. Henri, they noted 43 000 visits to the shelter from 2023-2024, an increase of 8000 from the previous year (Benedict Labre House 2024). From 2020-2021, they reported 23 000 visits, nearly half of the amount seen three years later (Benedict Labre House 2021). It is important to note that the number of visits does not equate to the

number of homeless people, as individuals may visit multiple times, and the services provided are not exclusive to homelessness. However, the majority of the people that do visit the shelter are homeless in some capacity, or at imminent risk of becoming so (Benedict Labre House 2024). As new, high-end real estate developments—justified by ‘green’ concerns—continue to be built, more and more individuals find themselves homeless, or increasingly at risk of homelessness (Garcia-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). Green infrastructure, which has revitalized the existing environment and created new parks and green spaces, has served to increase property taxes and rent costs, leading to a lack of affordable, adequate housing (Garcia-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). In correlation with this, homeless shelters in the area have reported a huge increase in the usage of their services.

Gaetz, in his analysis of Canadian homelessness, notes how government policy and practice has failed to address the structural issues impacting the increase in homelessness across the country. While not specific to St. Henri, the concerns he highlights are prevalent for this case study. Previous to the 21st century, there was generally an adequate supply of affordable housing (Gaetz 2010). However, this supply has decreased with the lack of government funding and the neoliberal policies which encouraged privatization of real estate (Gaetz 2010). Instead of repairing existing housing and keeping it affordable, new housing is being built with a much higher price point (Garcia-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). In St. Henri, 950 private dwellings of the 9485 total are in need of major repairs (Statistics Canada 2023). Dwellings in need of major repairs are precarious and are occupied by those at a higher risk of becoming homeless, or experiencing invisible homelessness (Owens 2015). In 2016, there were 855 dwellings in need of repairs, with nearly the same number of units (Statistics Canada 2017). Hence, there has been an increase in the amount of unsuitable dwellings, a measure of housing inequality related to homelessness.

In addition to homelessness, the ratio of renting to owning can be used to understand the correlation between housing inequality and green gentrification occurring in St. Henri. In 2021, there were 2700 private households which were owned, and 6780 which were rented. With an inadequate supply of social and affordable housing, an erosion of tenant rights, and new luxury green developments, renters are being

priced out (Garcia-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). The destruction of historically affordable housing, instead of renovations, has affected the ability to rent. Wealthy individuals, who are attracted by the greening effects, are able to buy outright—driving up real estate pricing (Garcia-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). Thus, the trend of increased ownership and decreased renting is correlated with the rise in green gentrification.

Housing inequality cannot be discussed without also paying attention to income inequality. In 2021, 3335 people in St. Henri, or 19.8% of the population, were considered “low income” (Statistics Canada 2023). The unemployment rate was 10.5%. In 2016, 25.6% of the population was considered “low income,” and the unemployment rate was 7.6% (Statistics Canada 2017). The decrease in low income individuals from 2016 to 2021 is not necessarily due to people becoming more financially secure, but rather leaving the neighborhood altogether (Garcia-Lamarca and Vansintjan 2021). The increase in unemployment rate demonstrates the rising inequality; less and less people that live in St. Henri are able to maintain stable employment. As related to green gentrification, the influx of wealthy individuals because of greening—decreasing the affordability of living in the area—could explain the decrease in low income individuals living in the neighborhood. At the same time, those that stay are having more difficulty finding suitable employment.

As the phenomenon of green gentrification has been documented, as well as the related inequalities it produces, it is important to look at why this correlation may exist. According to Rose, the relationship between gentrification and inequality is driven by neoliberalism. A decrease in the amount of funding towards social and affordable housing, as well as fewer barriers for businesses and corporations to construct new, high-income housing, is caused by neoliberal policies adopted in Canada (Rose 2004). The extent of gentrification in St. Henri could not have occurred without a neoliberal environment. Importantly, greening developments do not have to result in green gentrification. Instead, the combination of greening with the neoliberal climate and its policies has allowed for, and has encouraged, the existence of green gentrification in St. Henri.

Conclusion

Census data and the research literature provides evidence to the correlation between green gentrification and inequality. Specifically, the case of green gentrification in St. Henri manifests in terms of housing inequality through an increase in homelessness and the changing amount of renters and owners. Additionally, income inequality was analyzed through a rise in unemployment rates, and fluctuations in the amount of low income individuals. Gaetz provides the larger Canadian context of homelessness, showing how St. Henri fits the broad trend of decreased affordable housing. Rose posits that this is related to the neoliberal climate in Canada, which prioritizes financial austerity and privatization. Mascarenhas notes the complexity of green gentrification: environmental improvements to an area are necessary for environmental justice, but too often create injustice by providing the conditions for which green gentrification occurs. The impacts of this green gentrification are explored in depth by Garcia-Lamarca and Vansintjan, who focus on physical displacement and long-term needs. Moving forward, it is imperative that efforts for cleaning up the environment are coupled with increased housing protections for long-term residents to avoid the encouragement of gentrification.

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Appendix I

2021 Canadian Census extracted data

Characteristic	Montréal, Ville (V) ⓘ Quebec [Census subdivision] ✖ Remove	H4C ⓘ Quebec [Forward sortation area ⓘ] ✖ Remove
	Counts	Counts
	Total	Total
Population and dwellings		
Population, 2021 1	1,762,949	17,301
Population, 2016 1	1,704,694	AAA
Population percentage change, 2016 to 2021	3.4	AAA
Total private dwellings 2	878,542	10,371
Age characteristics		
Total - Age groups of the population - 100% data	1,762,950	17,300
0 to 14 years	270,430	1,870
0 to 4 years	88,670	695
5 to 9 years	93,325	595
10 to 14 years	88,435	575
15 to 64 years	1,197,045	13,285
15 to 19 years	82,475	560
20 to 24 years	125,235	1,195
25 to 29 years	153,995	2,640
30 to 34 years	146,855	2,620
35 to 39 years	135,880	1,735
40 to 44 years	127,165	1,290
45 to 49 years	110,130	875
50 to 54 years	105,545	815
55 to 59 years	108,040	785
60 to 64 years	101,725	770
65 years and over	295,475	2,150
65 to 69 years	85,025	660
70 to 74 years	72,300	485
75 to 79 years	52,720	290
80 to 84 years	39,395	225
85 years and over	46,035	495
85 to 89 years	27,835	235
90 to 94 years	14,360	230
95 to 99 years	3,375	20
100 years and over	465	0

Household and dwelling characteristics		
Total - Occupied private dwellings by structural type of dwelling - 100% data	816,340	9,490
Single-detached house	58,065	35
Semi-detached house	25,740	30
Row house	26,175	345
Apartment or flat in a duplex	107,565	215
Apartment in a building that has fewer than five storeys	464,420	7,290
Apartment in a building that has five or more storeys	130,615	1,535
Other single-attached house	3,350	50
Movable dwelling 4	415	0
Household characteristics		
Total - Private households by tenure - 25% sample data 50	816,355	9,485
Owner	297,340	2,700
Renter	519,020	6,780
Dwelling provided by the local government, First Nation or Indian band	0	0
Total - Occupied private dwellings by condominium status - 25% sample data 51	816,355	9,485
Condominium	178,700	3,140
Not condominium	637,660	6,345
Total - Occupied private dwellings by dwelling condition - 25% sample data 58	816,355	9,485
Only regular maintenance and minor repairs needed	746,280	8,535
Major repairs needed	70,075	950
Income of individuals in 2020		
Total - Income statistics in 2020 for the population aged 15 years and over in private households - 100% data 10	1,453,280	15,000
Number of total income recipients aged 15 years and over in private households in 2020 - 100% data	1,396,100	14,580
Median total income in 2020 among recipients (\$)	36,800	40,400
Number of after-tax income recipients aged 15 years and over in private households in 2020 - 100% data	1,396,475	14,585
Median after-tax income in 2020 among recipients (\$)	33,200	36,000
Total - Total income groups in 2020 for the population aged 15 years and over in private households - 100% data 21	1,453,280	15,000
Without total income	57,180	425
With total income	1,396,100	14,580
Low income and income inequality in 2020		
Total - LIM low-income status in 2020 for the population in private households - 100% data 32	1,723,215	16,855
0 to 17 years	316,605	2,155
0 to 5 years	107,500	815
18 to 64 years	1,140,405	12,890
65 years and over	266,200	1,810

In low income based on the Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT)	299,080	3,335
0 to 17 years	49,430	510
0 to 5 years	17,500	150
18 to 64 years	184,970	2,175
65 years and over	64,675	655
Prevalence of low income based on the Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT) (%)	17.4	19.8
0 to 17 years (%)	15.6	23.8
0 to 5 years (%)	16.3	18.4
18 to 64 years (%)	16.2	16.9
65 years and over (%)	24.3	36.0
Labour force status		
Total - Population aged 15 years and over by labour force status - 25% sample data ¹⁸⁴	1,453,295	15,080
In the labour force	959,135	11,020
Employed	859,920	9,860
Unemployed	99,210	1,160
Not in the labour force	494,165	4,055
Participation rate	66.0	73.1
Employment rate	59.2	65.4
Unemployment rate	10.3	10.5

Appendix 2

2016 Canadian Census extracted data

Characteristic	H4C			Canada		
	[Forward sortation area [□]]			[Country]		
	Data quality	Map		Data quality	Map	
	Change geography			Change geography		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Counts (unless otherwise specified)						
Total - Occupied private dwellings by dwelling condition - 25% sample data 138	9,320	xxx	xxx	14,072,080	xxx	xxx
Only regular maintenance or minor repairs needed	8,465	xxx	xxx	13,151,600	xxx	xxx
Major repairs needed	855	xxx	xxx	920,480	xxx	xxx
In low income based on the Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT)	4,295	2,065	2,230	4,809,940	2,243,200	2,566,740
0 to 17 years	785	395	390	1,163,830	597,570	566,255
0 to 5 years	255	130	120	396,095	203,055	193,030
18 to 64 years	2,925	1,455	1,470	2,855,290	1,341,590	1,513,700
65 years and over	580	215	365	790,825	304,040	486,780
Prevalence of low income based on the Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT) (%)	25.6	24.6	26.6	14.2	13.4	14.9
0 to 17 years (%)	34.5	32.9	36.3	17.0	17.1	17.0
0 to 5 years (%)	26.4	25.0	27.0	17.8	17.8	17.8
18 to 64 years (%)	22.7	22.4	23.0	13.2	12.5	13.8
65 years and over (%)	36.1	30.7	40.6	14.5	12.0	16.7
Labour force status						
Total - Population aged 15 years and over by Labour force status - 25% sample data 163	14,890	7,370	7,515	28,643,020	13,990,430	14,652,585
In the labour force	10,890	5,675	5,220	18,672,475	9,731,830	8,940,645
Employed	10,065	5,205	4,855	17,230,040	8,923,540	8,306,490
Unemployed	830	470	360	1,442,435	808,285	634,150
Not in the labour force	3,990	1,695	2,295	9,970,545	4,258,605	5,711,945
Participation rate	73.1	77.0	69.5	65.2	69.6	61.0
Employment rate	67.6	70.6	64.6	60.2	63.8	56.7
Unemployment rate	7.6	8.3	6.9	7.7	8.3	7.1



The Image Isn't Real, But the Consequences Are: Understanding the Rise of Deepfake Pornography and the Urgency for Policy Intervention

Alix Faulkner

Abstract

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has enabled the creation of deepfake pornography, a form of image-based sexual abuse (IBSA) that poses significant threats to privacy, consent, and victimization. This paper examines the rise of deepfake pornography, its societal and psychological consequences, and the urgent need for policy interventions. Through an analysis of technological developments and victim demographics this research highlights the disproportionate targeting of women and marginalized groups and explores the profound psychological and social ramifications experienced by victims. Additionally, the paper applies Routine (Online) Activity Theory and Neutralization Theory to understand the dynamics of deepfake pornography as a modern crime. By addressing gaps in legislation and proposing actionable policy measures, this study underscores the critical need for legal, social, and technological responses to combat this emerging form of digital harm.

Introduction

One morning, you wake up to find your phone flooded with notifications from news websites, texts between group chats, and “X” (formerly known as Twitter) sending you updates every 20 seconds. Your favourite female celebrity has been a victim of a horrendous crime: the creation and distribution of deepfake pornography. That night, while you slept, someone uploaded an Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated pornographic image, where AI was used to make a nude image resembling them. This image, despite its lack of authenticity, caused immediate outrage, shock, and questions about the character of this person. But thankfully, as time goes on, the news turns positive as they fight for justice, filing lawsuits and setting up campaigns. Everything is finally back to normal, until one morning when you wake up to find your phone flooded with notifications. Instead of new articles and Tweets, they are messages from family, friends, colleagues, acquaintances, and strangers questioning and berating you about the explicit photo you posted to social media last night –but you have never taken an explicit photo. You check and it is not your body, but rather a realistic AI-generated image that looks seamless and realistic. You don’t know who posted or created the image, but it is there for all to see. You contact the social media platforms to take down the damaging image, you set the record straight with your friends and family– you do everything you can to prove that this is not your photograph, but the Internet is forever, and the picture looms. You turn to the justice system, but there are few modern laws and legislations regarding this specific crime, especially because you do not know who created or shared the photo. So, you continue your life, but it is not the same because the social and psychological consequences of that picture may affect the rest of your life. The rise of AI technology as a publically-available resource has complicated crime, justice, and punishment online – especially concerning photo and video doctoring. In the uncertain realm that is the Internet, the creation and distribution of deepfake porn has evolved into a growing problem, yet remains an understudied topic. This practice poses significant threats to privacy, consent, and victimization, necessitating urgent policy interventions.

What is Deepfake Porn?

Deepfake porn falls under the broader scale of Image Based Sexual Abuse (IBSA), which encompasses a range of non consensual

sharing and distribution of intimate images or videos. IBSA can occur in a range of contexts, including for revenge (often referred to as revenge porn), sextortion, and domestic violence (Flynn et al. 2022). The use of AI technology as a form of IBSA has emerged more recently, around 2017, and involves the creation of hyperrealistic pornographic content, commonly known as deepfake pornography (Mania 2024). This process uses AI algorithms to manipulate and superimpose an image of an individual's face onto explicit sexual content (Westerlund 2019). Through the use of multiple AI models, one which alters the images and one which detects the use of AI in video and image altering, perpetrators of the crime are able to create believable and realistic pornographic content (Karasavva and Boorbhai 2021:203). The advancement of AI technology, the Internet, and accessibility to social media platforms and online forums has led to the increasing sophistication of deepfake technology. However, more applications and software have been developed to easily create deepfake content without previous experience or expertise in video editing, media manipulation, or coding, making it more accessible to the public (Toparlak 2023). To create realistic doctored images and videos, deepfake technology utilizes facial recognition algorithms, machine learning, and neural networks to map an individual's facial features onto another piece of media (Westerlund 2019). This process often requires between 500 and 40,000 images of the target's face to generate a convincing deepfake video (Toparlak 2023). However, researchers have also identified techniques for the creation of realistic doctored images using merely one "selfie" or clear image of a subject's face (Westerlund 2019:41). Technology-savvy individuals may use software like "Instagram Scraper" or "Down Album" which are open-source tools that allow for large-scale sweeps of social media platforms to gather a wide range of images. Additionally, face-swapping source codes are freely available on platforms such as "GitHub" – a platform which allows for open-source software development. For those less technologically inclined, there are various user-friendly applications and websites, including "FakeApp" and "Duplicat", which allow for the creation of deepfake media with little to no skill or experience (Karasavva and Boorbhai 2021:205). The use of deepfake technology can have many "positive uses in many industries, including movies, educational media and digital communications, games and entertainment, social media and healthcare, material science, and various business fields,

such as fashion and e-commerce” (Westerlund 2019:41). Deepfakes are also commonly used on social media platforms to make satirical content, jokes, and comedic memes for personal and public enjoyment (Westerlund 2019). Despite this reality, 96% of deepfake content on the Internet is pornographic, the vast majority of which was created and distributed non-consensually (Toparlak 2023).

Targeted Victimization and Demographics

The reality of deepfake porn as a growing issue was brought to public attention in 2017, when Reddit users began to upload AI-manipulated images that transposed the faces of female celebrities on pornographic media (Paris and Donovan 2019). Many identify the first major distribution of this media as portraying actress Gal Gadot’s face on the body of a famous pornographic actor; however, other celebrities have also been victimized, including Emma Watson, Scarlett Johansson, and Taylor Swift (Mania 2024; Toparlak 2023). Female celebrities are one of the most victimized groups by the creation and distribution of deepfake porn for numerous reasons, most prominently the amount of media portraying them. The sheer number of videos and images of these public figures freely available online makes training AI systems and models to make realistic content incredibly easy (Westerlund 2019). Additionally, researchers have identified that women are the most targeted demographic of deepfake pornography, making up 92% to 99% of victims (Mania 2024:118; Toparlak 2023:6). The acute targeting of women is exemplified by the platforms themselves used to create deepfakes, for example, the website “DeepNude” fails to compute when presented with explicit images of males and “pastes a vulva over the male genitalia” (Gieseke 2020:1482). While men may experience victimization from the creation and distribution of deepfake content, it is more likely that they would be victimized by misinformation and cyberbullying, as opposed to pornographic material (Mania 2024:118). In addition to women, gender and sexually diverse individuals, people with disabilities, and racial minorities are more likely to be targeted for IBSA and deepfake porn (Flynn et al. 2022:1342).

Psychological and Social Consequences

Victims of deepfake porn creation and distribution are reported to experience high rates of psychological trauma and distress, often resulting in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety,

depression, and suicidality (Flynn et al. 2022; Karasavva and Boorbhai 2021; Toparlak 2023). Additional emotional consequences include “humiliation, fear, embarrassment, and shame” (Flynn et al. 2022:1343). The nature of these crimes, being equated to “digital rape”, cause severe psychological effects as a result of a victim’s privacy being desecrated, the loss of agency over one’s identity, and being personally targeted (Gieseke 2020:1484). Those who have been victimized follow patterns of censored Internet use after the event, including isolation, hypervigilance, and withdrawal from online life, often to avoid retraumatization (Flynn et al. 2022:1343; Toparlak 2023:5). On top of emotional consequences, victims experience social ramifications that can affect the rest of their lives. Researchers have found those who have experienced targeting through deepfake porn are more likely to be targeted by online and offline harassment, stalking, assault, and victim blaming (Flynn et al. 2022; Toparlak 2023). The nature of the Internet, which functions in such a manner that allows for uploaded content to be uploaded and reuploaded, shared and re-shared hundreds of times on numerous websites in very little time, makes the distribution of deepfake porn especially consequential. This reality, in addition to the little regulation of deepfake pornography on the Internet, makes fully removing compromising content extremely difficult (Karasavva and Boorbhai 2021:204). Prospective employers, love interests, friends, and others may have access to explicit content linked to a victim’s name and image, possibly depriving them from opportunities for the rest of their life (Gieseke 2020:1484).

Theoretical Perspectives: Routine Activity Theory and Neutralization Theory

The complexity and novelty of deepfake pornography as a pervasive issue requires theoretical analysis to fully understand and treat the issue. In 1979, Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felton introduced Routine Activity Theory, which posits that for a crime to occur, three main elements must be present: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. In 2010, Travis Pratt, Kristy Holtfreter, and Michael Reisig expanded on this theory with their Routine Online Activity Theory, which states that crime occurring via the Internet, especially fraud, can also be analyzed using the concepts of Routine Activity Theory. In the context of deepfake pornography, the motivated offender would be the individual or group

responsible for creating and disseminating the content non-consensually. As mentioned, the increasing popularity and accessibility of AI technology has made it easier for individuals to create deepfakes, thereby increasing the number of motivated offenders. Additionally, a driving force behind the creation of deepfakes are the communities that consume, create, and share instructions and tips on the creation of deepfake content (Karasavva and Boorbhai 2021). These communities encourage individuals to practice deepfake creation, thus creating more potential offenders. The suitable target refers to individuals who are vulnerable to victimization, such as female celebrities, who are often targeted due to their high public visibility and popularity (Toparlak 2023). However, with the growing popularity of social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, where regular individuals post personal photos and videos, the pool of potential targets for deepfake pornography expands beyond just celebrities (Toparlak 2023). Finally, the absence of a capable guardian is related to the larger issues of crime and punishment on the Internet. The lack of effective regulation and enforcement mechanisms on online platforms, as well as the lack of consistent protocols across platforms for reporting and removing deepfake content, creates an environment where offenders can operate easily and with relative impunity (Mania 2024).

Another theory that can offer insights into the issue of deepfake pornography is Neutralization Theory, introduced by Gresham Sykes and David Matza in 1957. Neutralization Theory suggests that individuals use justifications and rationalizations to suspend moral constraints and negate culpability while engaging in deviant or criminal acts (Sykes and Matza 1957). Perpetrators of criminal or deviant acts use various tactics to justify their actions, including denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of victims, condemnation of the condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties (Sykes and Matza 1957:667-669). In the context of deepfake porn, Neutralization Theory can help to explain the mindset and justifications employed by individuals who create and distribute such content. Firstly, individuals who create and distribute deepfake porn may justify their crimes by defining it as merely creative expression and technological experimentation. Though these justifications are loose and unconvincing, anonymity plays a crucial role in emboldening individuals to engage in such behaviours without fear of repercussions. Multiple scholars

note the use of IP address changing technology and “sock puppet” accounts, making tracking and tracing the origins of deepfake content difficult, thus adding to the perceived sense of impunity (Karasavva and Boorbhai 2021:205; Toparlak 2023:11). Secondly, perpetrators may employ the denial of injury as justification, arguing that since the deepfake pornography is digitally created and thus does not contain genuine content of real individuals, no harm is being done. This justification is especially present online, where individuals may feel detached from the real life consequences of their actions and are not present to witness the negative psychological and social impact on their victims. Thirdly, perpetrators may deny victimhood, claiming that individuals depicted in deepfake pornography are not real people and are merely fictional characters made from an amalgamation of human parts. Furthermore, perpetrators may dehumanize their victims, especially if they are public figures, like female celebrities who have a large public presence. The last two tactics mentioned by Sykes and Matza, condemnation of the condemners and appeal to higher loyalties, are less applicable to the general topic of deepfake pornography creation and distribution; however, specific cases may be more applicable for analysis. Due to the lack of research and literature about deepfake pornography, there is little knowledge regarding the mindset or justifications of perpetrators. Nevertheless, Neutralization Theory offers valuable space for conjecture and inference on the topic.

Sociological and criminological theories are essential in shaping public policy that establish concrete differences in the world, especially regarding modern crime prevention. While theories such as Rational Choice Theory and Pattern Theory have aided in establishing crime reduction measures, such as CCTV cameras and burglar alarms (Michalopoulos 2024), theories like Routine Online Activity Theory and Neutralization Theory can offer valuable frameworks for understanding policy recommendations that may aid regulating crime online and involving AI. Both theories demonstrate the necessity for digital literacy and education as a proactive strategy to prevent and regulate deepfake pornography distribution and creation. This practice would aim to disrupt the practice of justification and blame deflection from perpetrators, as they would be educated on the real-world consequences of creating such media. In addition, it can play a crucial role in empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills needed

to identify and respond to deepfake content online, thus resulting in quicker and more concrete action to ensure the least harm for victims. However, this strategy is not perfect as it puts much of the responsibility on victims, which is already an omnipresent reality for individuals navigating victimization (Karasavva and Boorbhai 2021:207). Additionally, these theories may promote the implementation of regulatory frameworks on platforms to ensure content moderation and algorithms equipped to detect and remove deepfake pornography. This would help in reducing the availability and accessibility of such content, thereby acting as a capable guardian against the spread of deepfakes. Regulatory algorithms and mediators would also work to reduce the spread of information that may contribute to the assembly of more communities, thus decreasing the pool of potential offenders. Scholars note that these kinds of regulatory frameworks, both within individual countries' legal systems and on online platforms, are the first step in addressing deepfake porn distribution and circulation (Mania 2024:124).

Legal and Technical Perspectives

While these theories offer valuable policy suggestions, researchers and scholars discuss a wide range of policy approaches to mediate the problem of deepfake porn creation and distribution. Many of these suggestions are aimed at the current major problems regarding policing deepfake porn, including the lack of a single definition, the tendency for reactionary policies as opposed to precautionary, and a lack of deterrence (Mania 2024). Current policy recommendations fall into two main categories: legal and technological. Legal suggestions tend to focus on the rules, regulations, and laws established by specific government or authoritative bodies to address the issue of deepfake pornography. This perspective would suggest expanding on existing regulatory frameworks to encompass deepfake pornography. For example, Vasileia Karasavva and Aalia Boorbhai (2021) suggest adding specifications about deepfake pornography to Canadian criminal law surrounding child pornography. This would involve regulating deepfake pornography of minors under the criminal act of child exploitation and pornography, which already has strict laws and regulations in place. The legal perspective would also propose the introduction of new legal frameworks that specifically address deepfake pornography, such as laws that criminalize the creation, distribution, and possession of non-consensual deepfake pornographic content. This approach would

allow specific tailoring of laws to the complex and multifaceted nature of deepfake pornography. However, a clear definition of the crime would be required to ensure effective implementation, which is an ongoing problem of current policy creation and reform (Mania 2024). On the other hand, technological policy suggestions focus on strategies, guidelines, and initiatives to regulate, detect, and mitigate the creation and dissemination of deepfake pornography. These suggestions may involve content regulation by host websites and educational legislation, as discussed above concerning Routine Online Activity Theory and Neutralization Theory, or the development and implementation of advanced deepfake detection technologies. Platforms, including Facebook and Instagram, have begun to invest in AI and misinformation-detecting technologies that give viewers a warning before viewing potential deepfake content (Mania 2024:124). Additionally, the US has recently amended the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), now allowing victims of deepfake porn to maneuver the current legal framework and remove such content from online platforms without a lawyer of copyright registration (Karasavva and Boorbhai 2021:207). These technologies and online practices can work together to minimize the spread and impact of deepfake pornography by giving more responsibility to individual platforms and giving some agency back to victims. While both paradigms for policy recommendations have their merits, it is clear that technological and legal remedies must work together to effectively address the threat of deepfake pornography.

Conclusion

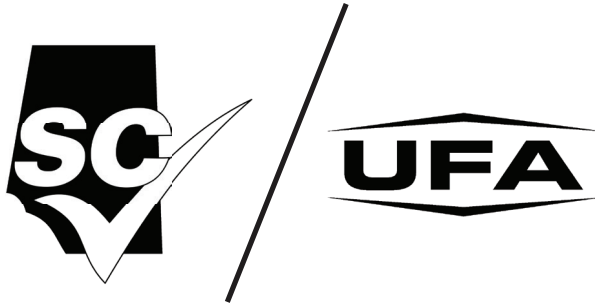
The recent rise in AI-related cybercrimes in the form of deepfake pornography creation and distribution has left a gap in the justice system that requires urgent intervention and policy development. With the popularization of social media and the Internet, as well as the sophistication of AI technology, the creation and dissemination of deepfake pornography has become easier and more widespread. Those who are victimized, particularly women, disabled individuals, racial minorities, and sexually diverse people, face significant psychological and social harms that can affect their personal and professional lives. Routine Activity Theory and Routine Online Activity Theory aid in understanding how individuals become perpetrators and victims of deepfake pornography, especially on the Internet, which is currently lacking sufficient guardianship. Neutralization Theory aids in under-

standing the motivation and justifications that perpetrators may use to engage in these harmful activities. Through these theories, policymakers can gain a deeper insight into the complexities of deepfake pornography creation and distribution. The impact of deepfake pornography has ignited a need for policy creation and reform, falling into legal and technological recommendations to mitigate the consequential harm. The complex nature of deepfake pornography creation and distribution, as well as the gap in existing literature, have revealed the need for a rapid, comprehensive, and holistic approach to addressing the issue.

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Co-opting Agrarian Radicalism: Why Did Social Credit Win the 1935 Alberta Election?

Joseph Liang

Abstract

The 1935 Alberta election marked a dramatic political shift, where the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA), an agrarian radical movement that had been in power since 1921, was completely wiped off the electoral map by Social Credit, a fairly conservative party of mostly urban professionals. The electoral victory of Social Credit challenges theories of late-19th and early-20th century agrarian radicalism that explain leftist farmers' movements as a natural result of the economic conditions and class interests of farmers. Instead, drawing on the work of Eidlin (2016) and his modified articulation model of political parties, I argue that the responses of various political actors (including the federal government and various left-wing political parties) to the Great Depression reconstituted and crystallized class interests in a way that allowed for a turn away from the UFA and towards Social Credit. By explaining why Albertan agrarians rejected a farmers' movement in favor of Social Credit, I hope to clarify the conditions that led to agrarian radicalism more generally, situating Alberta within broader debates about the relationship between class and political party.

Introduction

The 1935 provincial election in Alberta marked a dramatic political shift, as Social Credit, a political party founded only three years prior, won a landslide victory in the midst of the Great Depression, capturing 56 of 63 seats and eliminating the incumbent United Farmers of Alberta (UFA), which had been in power since 1921 (Elections Alberta, n.d.; MacPherson 1962).

This shift represents not only a momentous political change, but presents a challenge to the existing theory around late 19th- and early 20th-century agrarian radicalism. Much of the literature suggests that agrarian radicalism was a natural response to the unique economic grievances and class position of farmers as independent commodity producers. Ostensibly, a combination of fluctuating farm prices, a reliance on credit, exploitation by railroads, banks, and marketers, and an atomized and independent structure of production pushed farmers into politics, especially when those conditions intensified during economic crises (Sanders 1999). This model of agrarian radicalism views it as a natural outgrowth of class structure and interests, similar to the reflection model of political parties that Barry Eidlin (2016) describes in relation to labor. According to this perspective, the Great Depression would have pushed farmers closer to the UFA—an agrarian populist movement that sought to replace the existing party system, which was seen as dominated by the East, with a system of “group government” representing farmers’ interests against corporate monopolies and the ‘plutocratic classes’ (MacPherson 1962). Instead, in response to economic crisis, what emerged was not a farmer’s movement advocating for state regulation of monopolistic capitalism, but a party led mostly by urban professionals, advocating for monetary reform in the form of a dividend paid to all citizens, intended to maximize individual economic freedom (Finkel 1989; MacPherson 1962). Why did Social Credit win the 1935 provincial election?

I argue, drawing on Eidlin (2016)’s modified articulation model of political parties, that rather than seeing agrarian politics as a result of fixed class interests, the responses of political actors (namely, the federal government, and various leftist political parties) to the Great Depression reconstituted and crystallized class interests in a way that mobilized a turn away from the UFA and towards Social Credit.

Specifically, Social Credit's rise to power was a result of 1) a demobilization of agrarian radicalism and alienation of the rank and file by a conservative incumbent UFA in the 1920s, 2) the re-mobilization of farmers and workers in the 1930s by sympathetic rhetoric from political elites and a rise in leftist organizing (in the form of the CCF and Communist Party), and 3) the co-opting of outwardly radical structures and rhetoric by Social Credit to absorb the newly mobilized masses.

By explaining why Albertan agrarians rejected a farmers' movement in favor of Social Credit, I hope to clarify the conditions that led to agrarian radicalism more generally, situating Alberta within broader debates about the relationship between class and political party. This question is also important because after 1935 until 2015, right-wing parties dominated Alberta's provincial government (Elections Alberta, n.d.). The 1935 election marks a turning point in Alberta's political history away from left-wing politics that could provide insight into the dominance of conservative liberalism in the province today.

Existing Explanations

Drawing on Eidlin (2016), I suggest that explanations for Social Credit's rise to power can be categorized by their hypothesized relationship between class and political party – namely, into reflection, articulation, and modified articulation models of political parties.

The reflection model argues that Social Credit came to power as a natural outgrowth of Alberta's underlying petit-bourgeois class structure. C. B. MacPherson (1962) characterizes early 20th-century Alberta as a society of "independent commodity producers" in a subordinate position to eastern capital, who translated their economic grievances into political demands for a government to protect their class interests. He argues that the UFA was the first experiment in a government built to express the petit-bourgeois interests of farmers. However, according to MacPherson, it was precisely the petit-bourgeois nature of the farmer class that prevented a true class consciousness – the UFA was thus built on a false illusion of the farmer's economic independence, which prevented any meaningful challenge to capitalist property relations. He suggests that with the onset of the Depression, this "baked-in" weakness of the UFA became its downfall – the UFA cabinet resisted calls from the rank and file such as a mora-

torium on farmer debt, failing to accomplish its own goal of representing farmer interests. MacPherson suggests that Social Credit inherited power from the disgraced UFA as an inevitable evolution of equally petit-bourgeois democracy, promising to better represent the “general will” against the “business interests,” just through monetary reform. Robert Brym (1978) concurs with MacPherson that Western Canada was an “internal colony” exploited by the eastern capital. This economic subordination, combined with a moderately “proletarianized” farmer class with some mortgage debt (and thus reliance on capital to make a living), created a predisposition for agrarian populism to protect farmer interests. However, Brym observes that compared to Saskatchewan, Alberta was more petit-bourgeois, with a greater proportion of ranchers, who occupied a stabler economic position. He concludes that populism thus took a petit-bourgeois form in Social Credit. In this view, both the UFA and Social Credit were manifestations of farmers’ discontent with their subordinate position to eastern capital, and the failure of the UFA and the rise of Social Credit was an inevitability baked into the petit-bourgeois class structure of Alberta itself. However, the reflection model neglects that a very real ideological shift occurred with the election of Social Credit. As Edward Bell (1993) observes, Social Credit was not a petit-bourgeois farmer’s party. It originated in the city and drew its support from a broad “underclass” of workers, farmers, and the urban middle class struck by sudden poverty. Moreover, farmers and workers were themselves often internally divided in support of Social Credit, which challenges the reflectionist idea of Social Credit being an inevitable expression of fixed class interests. Bell (1993), who I suggest represents an articulation model, argues instead that Social Credit came to power because its organizational savvy allowed it to assemble a diverse base of voters for which it became the most rational choice. He argues that a number of necessary conditions were met for the growth of Social Credit as a social movement: sufficient economic grievances; a simple, mysterious, but widely acceptable ideology; movement resources like a wide media reach and charismatic leadership; a robust organizational structure; and weak competition from other parties. These social movement conditions allowed Social Credit to assert itself above the other electoral choices for the broad “underclass” of Albertan voters thrown into poverty by the Great Depression: an incumbent and unpopular UFA with a poor track record in response to the Depression, and a Liberal and Con-

servative party that offered lukewarm reform proposals at best. Like Eidlin (2016) identifies, however, the articulation model threatens to overestimate the ability of political parties to construct collective identities from nothing. Bell threatens to abandon class constraints entirely by framing Social Credit's success in the language of rational choice.

Alvin Finkel (1989) presents an explanation that I suggest aligns with Eidlin (2016)'s modified articulation model. Finkel argues that Social Credit came to power because it co-opted an existing tradition of agrarian and worker radicalism, constructing new political coalitions from preexisting class constraints. Unlike Bell, he concedes that Alberta was a province dominated by an agrarian, petit-bourgeois economy, with farmers and workers who had defined class interests that found their expression in various protest movements such as the UFA and Labour Party. However, he argues that these movements' conservative responses to the Great Depression alienated their rank and file. Social Credit replicated some of the radical rhetoric and reforms of the previous movements, allowing them to absorb the already mobilized masses.

Finkel provides a convincing account of Social Credit's 1935 success. What he fails to explain is the timing of Social Credit's emergence. John Conway (1978) observes that the UFA, almost immediately after coming to power in 1921, slashed government expenditures and largely ignored reform proposals from the rank and file in the midst of an agricultural depression. Moreover, he observes that in the early 1920s, federal Progressive Party MPs in Alberta, in addition to the UFA's own Convention and newspaper, were calling for the implementation of a social credit system, also to the UFA government's stubborn refusal. UFA membership declined precipitously from its 1921 peak of 37,000 to 15,000 by 1923-24. Thus, alienation from the UFA was already occurring in the early 1920s, all while social credit ideas were gaining traction – why did the Social Credit party only emerge 10 years later? Alberta thus provides a comparative case with itself – using Rebecca Emigh (1997)'s negative case methodology, I aim to explain Social Credit's success in the 30s by explaining the absence of a social credit party in the 1920s.

Articulation of Argument

I argue that the difference between the 1920s and 1930s was a

matter of farmers' political mobilization. Specifically, applying Frances Piven and Richard Cloward (1977)'s concept of transvaluation to explain social movement mobilization, I argue that Social Credit came to power only in the 1930s because the responses of the state and of various other political entities (such as the newly formed CCF and Communists) served to crystallize and rearticulate farmers' interests, where they realized that their situation was unjust and subject to change. The absence of a similar response to the recession of the early 1920s left farmers vulnerable to demobilizing UFA rhetoric of individual hard work and thrift to overcome the hardships of recession. This specifies Finkel's explanation by elaborating the mechanism by which farmers, alienated from the UFA, were mobilized to be co-opted by the ostensibly radical structures and rhetoric of Social Credit.

The 1920s left farmers demobilized as dominant parties failed to affirm the legitimacy of their attempts at protest and reform. Conway (1978) observes that the first half of the 1920s was an agricultural depression that led the rank-and-file of the UFA to demand government protections for farmers from falling farm prices, including a debt moratorium, an end to foreclosures, and better seed grain advances. The government refused, and instead slashed government services and spending, ending rather than expanding, for example, the seed grain advance program in 1923. Conway observes that this was justified by the government as not only necessary to balance a public debt which had ballooned under its Liberal predecessors, but also as the way to pull Alberta out of the recession. The messaging from the government was that farmers needed to pull themselves up by the bootstraps, rely less on government aid, and through minimal government intervention, the market would right itself. Conway observes that UFA rhetoric of thrift seemed to vindicate itself with the return of economic prosperity in 1925-26.

It appears that this messaging of individualism worked to demobilize farmers – Conway notes that membership in the UFA plummeted by 1923-24, and farmers increasingly turned to cooperative economic efforts to address their grievances, rather than political mobilizations within the UFA. Despite winning re-election in 1926, the overall popular vote decreased from 278,177 to 188,219 votes, which Conway argues marked the growing alienation of farmers

from the UFA. I suggest that it also marked a demobilization from politics on the whole. I suggest that this demobilization resulted from a combination of a likely sense of disappointment arising from the failure of independent political organizing to bring about the desired changes of the rank and file, and the rhetoric of the UFA for the farmer to turn to their own hard work and thrift to pull themselves out of economic hardship. In the language of Frances Piven and Richard Cloward's (1977) transvaluation, farmers' certainty that their situation was unjust (i.e. not a product of individual laziness) was shaken, and their belief that their subordinate position in the economy could be changed was dashed. The consequence of alienation from the UFA in the 20s was withdrawal from politics entirely, not reabsorption into an alternative populist movement like Social Credit.

The Great Depression, on the other hand, brought about a profoundly different response from the Canadian political elite. The UFA still responded to rank and file demands with a stubborn refusal to step into the economy, cutting services and raising taxes, while resisting calls for a debt moratorium and the extension of credit (Conway 1978). What made this different from the 1920s was a chorus of political voices that confirmed farmer grievances as unjust and encouraged them to see them as subject to change, crystallizing their demands. On one hand, Conway (1978) observes that various Royal Commissions of the federal government confirmed farmer grievances even if they suggested insufficient reforms to address them. The Royal Commission on Banking and Currency, for example, confirmed that agrarian credit was a major issue for the farmer and suggested the creation of a national bank and specific rural credit schemes. Another Royal Commission confirmed that the growth of corporate monopolies since the 1920s had resulted in untenable conditions for farmers. Conway suggests that these reports served to confirm farmers' economic grievances. Unlike the UFA's rhetoric of thrift in the 1920s, the political elite of the 1930s acknowledged farmer grievances as a product of unjust structural conditions, contributing to a transvaluation and re-mobilization of agrarian radicalism.

At the same time, leftist agrarian and worker radicalism was on the rise, which, as Finkel (1989) observes, mobilized farmers. The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) formed out of a group of Alberta Labour and UFA members in 1932 (Finkel 1989).

Finkel observes that the CCF drew on the more radical demands of the rank and file, including collective ownership of resources. The UFA affiliated with the CCF in 1933, and despite mixed support for the CCF as a result of its connection to a conservative UFA government, Finkel observes that the leftward shift of the UFA party convention (if not the government), still prompted excitement. Farmers came out en masse to CCF organizing meetings, UFA membership increased, and UFA-CCF candidates saw electoral success in by-elections (Finkel 1989). Thus, even without a material improvement in government policies and despite its ultimate unpopularity, the radical rhetoric of the CCF and its socialism remobilized farmers to enter politics, by the ideological articulation of an alternative to an unjust system of agrarian exploitation.

Finkel (1989) also points to the Communist Party as being a significant mobilizer. Despite having a consistently low membership and never mounting a significant electoral campaign, Communist Party organizers were involved in organizing mass protest mobilizations in response to the Great Depression. CP organizers led relief strikes of the unemployed, mine worker strikes, and mass rallies, mobilizing thousands of workers, the urban unemployed, and to a lesser extent, farmers. These mobilizations were often successful in demanding improvements in relief. Successful political action likely also contributed to the remobilization of farmers through the production of a sense of collective power and the possibility of change. Both the CCF and the Communist Party thus articulated and crystallized the class interests of farmers and workers, contributing to their sense of injustice at their situation, and producing a sense of empowerment through collective action. Consequently, unlike in the 1920s, farmers in the 1930s experienced a mobilizing transvaluation, where political elites and leftist political parties confirmed the injustice of their situation and built a sense of empowerment to effect change. In this context of farmer mobilization, Social Credit came to exist. Finkel (1989) argues that Social Credit co-opted structures and rhetoric of its agrarian/worker radical predecessors to absorb already mobilized farmers and workers. For example, despite being largely directed by Aberhart and the central office in Calgary, the party adopted an ostensibly democratic structure, with local “study groups” that sent representatives to zone assemblies, constituency conventions, divisional conventions, and ultimately, a provincial league convention (Finkel 1989).

Finkel also observes that the Social Credit ideology was itself vague and flexible enough to incorporate quasi-working-class rhetoric. Alberta Social Credit drew its economic theory from the work of C.H. Douglas, who saw capitalism as marked by a chronic surplus of goods, which he proposed would be solved by bolstering purchasing power, either through the provision of credit to businesses to reduce prices, or the provision of universal dividends to consumers (MacPherson 1962; Whalen 1952). Finkel observes, however, that Aberhart's rhetoric applying Douglasite social credit theory was much more flexible, often veering to the left. With a fuzzy understanding of the economic theory, Aberhart simply adapted the idea of a regular dividend, and combined it with the idea of a state-imposed price control that would include a redistributive tax to finance the dividends – something much more reformist than Douglas' theory built on individual purchasing power (Whalen 1952; Finkel 1989). Moreover, Aberhart drew on Douglas' insistence that administration be done by a technocracy of experts to mask the vagueness of social credit ideology, saying, "You don't have to know all about Social Credit before you vote for it...all you have to do about Social Credit is to cast your vote for it, and we will get experts to put the system in." (quoted in Macpherson 1962:151). Finkel (1989) observes that this amorphous political ideology allowed Alberta Social Credit to flexibly incorporate often contradictory quasi-working class politics – for example, the party newspaper often included anticapitalist rhetoric that attacked corporate employers, supported workers, and defended the unemployed. Finkel argues that from the perspective of the Albertan farmer or worker in 1935,

Social Credit would have appeared just like any previous radical movement, despite the absence of meaningful farmer/worker leadership. And unlike the CCF-affiliates (UFA and Labour, associated with the conservative incumbent government), and Communists, Social Credit was electorally viable (Finkel 1989). It was thus uniquely placed to ride the wave of mobilized agrarian and industrial politics into power in 1935.

Conclusion

The 1935 election thus saw a unique combination of 1) farmer alienation from a conservative UFA government that had distanced itself from its rank and file, 2) transvaluation and mobilization of

farmers and workers by sympathetic federal government pronouncements and the growth of radical political organizing, and 3) the emergence of an electorally viable party that co-opted the structures and rhetoric of agrarian radicalism. It is this unique combination of factors that allowed Social Credit to come to power in the 1935 election. Drawing on Eidlin's (2016) modified articulation model of political parties, this explanation complicates existing explanations of agrarian radicalism as a straightforward expression of farmer class interests, emphasizing instead how political parties rearticulate political identities within the constraints of pre-existing class interests of farmers and workers. Future research should investigate *why* the UFA so quickly abandoned the demands of the rank and file. How could an agrarian radical movement come to oppose so stubbornly the demands of its own farmers within a year of coming into office?

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A Poor Craftsman Blames His Tools: Progress Narratives as Wielded to Maintain Western Powers

Emma Qian

Abstract

Single-track definitions of progress are highly exploitable. To make this argument, I begin by establishing the way in which LGBTQ+ rights have become woven into narratives for progress. The treatment of queer individuals has become commonly used as a benchmark to gauge nations' civilization status or progressiveness, dividing peoples into those who are arbiters of morality, and those who must be policed or controlled. This paper criticizes Western states' misuse of these progress narratives to reinforce global hierarchies. Through homonationalist sentiment and pinkwashing tactics, global powers come to justify projects which maintain and further their dominance. Specifically, I draw on the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the current genocide in Palestine by Israeli forces, as examples of pinkwashing at work to justify Western imperialist efforts. I argue that the co-option of LGBTQ+ advocacy is one example of the ways in which those in power use the concept of progress to further their own agendas.

Introduction

In 2015, the ruling in favour of *Obergefell vs Hodges* marked the landmark legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States. On that day, a clear sense of progress and celebration permeated. Today, under hailing attacks on queer folks on every level, the path toward progress doesn't seem so certain. Today, the relationship between LGBTQ+ rights and progress has never been more complex. In this context, this paper seeks to interrogate hegemonic benchmarks for progress and denounces the Western powers' tendency to wield narratives of progress to maintain and further their own global dominance. Specifically, I will draw on the global push toward LGBTQ+ rights as a sign of progress to reflect on the underlying racialized inequalities that complicate that assertion. This analysis begins by tracing back our current understandings of progress and the role of LGBTQ+ advocacy in that vision of progress. Then, drawing on the cases of the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the ongoing Western-backed genocide in Palestine, moves to scrutinize the danger of blindly following single-track understanding of progress, and highlights the importance of nuance and a multiplicity of perspectives through an exploration of how the West misuses progress under the form of homonationalism and pinkwashing to its own benefit.

A Few Steps Forward...?

Progress was, and is, so often conceptualized as linear, successive, and moving from "primitive" to "civilized". Though this conceptualization is no longer one that is widely agreed upon amongst scholars today, it had an undeniably firm grasp on historical studies of progress and remains hotly grappled with today. Enlightenment thinkers, such as Anne Turgot (2011), embraced this understanding and undertook the mission to trace the history of the "advances of the human mind" backward, to demonstrate the clear progress, he claims, that has been made from the "barbarism" of early settlements to the later "civilized" greats of the West. In this view, not only has progress been seen as linear, it has long been understood to be heading toward very specific goals and drawing on very specific values. Turgot considered the Ancient Greeks to hold position as the epitome of human progress, chiefly because they revolutionized the standards of liberty, morality, and reason. These ideals have, over time and with the global power of these nations, become embedded in common understandings of progress as

a whole. Not only are these values valorized above all others, they become constructed as something that is uniquely Western, that remains inaccessible to the “less developed”, “primitive”, or “barbaric” nations, and whose global implementation requires Western intervention.

Indeed, even outside of scholarly debate, the deep enmeshment of liberal values with aspirational and normative understandings of modernity has become increasingly obvious in commonplace and political narratives of progress. Values such as equality, liberty, and human rights have become ubiquitous with ideals of progress, modernity, and civilization; those who adhere to these ideals are progressive, are modern, are civilized, while those who do not must then be convinced, intervened upon, or punished for not following the curve. In its mission to promote equality, liberty, and rights for all, the West has come to utilize “sexuality [as] a site of boundary drawing and is linked to the concept of civilization” (Ferguson 2022:711). Indeed, queer theorists have long pointed out and criticized this connection between gay rights and “civilizational status,” using gay rights as a way to determine and appoint the level of civility and modernity of a nation, and with such comes the moral and political consequences that accompany this distinction. To varying degrees, the West’s push for these normative values has shaped, or at least has attempted to shape, the attitudes of all nations and create a unified, teleological goal of universal gay rights. This effort operates alongside forces like cultural diffusion or Arland Thornton’s developmental idealism model, which posits that the “proper” developmental goals and methods have spread from their roots among the European elite to the rest of the world, and is a fundamental driver of social changes (Thornton, Dorius, and Swindle 2015). Basically, it stipulates that individuals and nations around the world have and will emulate European and Western institutions, values, and policies, including stances on LGBTQ+ concerns. Today, as those who aim to fall under Western definitions and values increasingly seek to adhere to these specific stances, the presence and degree of gay rights and equality basically serve as a “pink litmus test” to determine the degree of “progressiveness” a nation can claim (Rahman 2014). Indeed, as Weber writes, these narratives have served to “divide the world into ‘normal states’ and ‘pathological states’ depending on how well these states treat their homosexuals” (Cynthia Weber as cited in Ferguson 2022:711). Clearly, then, the West has con-

structed a narrative of progress centered around a linear path toward progress, pebbled by gains in gay rights, and where anyone deviating from the path will remain precluded from the ultimate destination.

However, these narratives are not “natural,” and they certainly are not neutral. Instead, they have been created and reaffirmed through the concerted effort of global powers to assert their moral and political superiority, and erasing or condemning that of others. In fact, these kinds of frameworks were designed to, and actively do, contribute to feeding the global narrative “in a ‘homocolonialist’ fashion that renders resistant populations inferior in relation to superior Western values” (Rahman 2014:283). There is a clear distinction, and moral judgement, that is imparted between those who adhere to these values and norms, and those who do not. Specifically in the US context, I draw on Jasbir Puar’s (2007) pivotal work on homonationalism, which she defines as the way in which certain homosexual individuals (usually white, cis, and middle-class) are granted access and are considered part of wider nationalist sentiments, as a framework to conceptualize the way gay rights have been utilized and discussed in the global conversation by the US to serve its political needs. The “gay-rights-as-human-rights” discourses, which are steeped in Western, often neoliberal understandings, seek to make sweeping claims to define human rights and how they are upheld, while ignoring how these definitions conveniently highlight certain moral issues while eschewing others. Similarly, this hegemonic sexual epistemology serves to police and cherry-pick ways of being that lead to a “Westernization” of “LGBTQ identities and politics in non-Western contexts” (Kehl 2020:21). Indeed, “homonationalism can then be understood as a form of sexual exceptionalism [that] corresponds with [the] exceptionalism of American empire” (Puar 2007:2), where the value and import of international LGBTQ+ rights and the treatment of queer folk become politicized talking points and serve the imperial encroachment of American identity. As Puar writes, “there is a commitment to the global dominant ascendancy of whiteness that is implicated in the propagation of the United States as empire as well as the alliance between this propagation and this brand of homosexuality” (2007:2). To that end, as progressive views and values of LGBTQ+ advocacy are heralded as the way of the future and should be emulated by all, the Western powers, such as the US, who have a monopoly on these policies conveniently

gain the power to police and arbitrate the global scene of progress.

A Few Steps Back

The fight for equal rights for all and more inclusive global spaces is a worthwhile, important, and unfinished mission. This paper, and previous scholarship, do not seek to undermine or push against this goal, nor do they seek to defend oppressive and homophobic policies and attitudes, but rather aim to highlight the ways in which Western powers co-opt the mission of queer liberation to their own benefit, and to further reinforce racialized global inequalities. They challenge the way progress is wielded as a tool for what is ultimately the vested interests of global powers, while often failing to benefit those who are most marginalized. The following analysis will attempt to highlight some of the criticisms against homonationalist policies and their global consequences. For one, the imposition of Western values and policies feeds into imperialist and colonial projects, especially given the wider position and history of many Western powers in the geopolitical narrative. Many have criticized the American government for its “pinkwashing” initiatives, which utilize gay rights and queer liberation to justify political and military action, and for using these moral justice causes as a smokescreen to detract from their less-than-liberal policies in other sectors. The Western-centric basis and association to homonationalism of many LGBTQ+ advocacy endeavours might lead them to face considerable backlash and obstruct actual activist work.

To begin with the criticism of homonationalism as a continuation of colonial and imperialist legacies, we might harken back to the criticisms of classical thinkers of progress as brought up by Amy Allen (2017), who interrogates the overbearing Eurocentric and colonial nature of these conceptualizations of progress, and their blatantly self-congratulatory tendencies. As Allen writes, there is a particular concern amongst decolonial scholars that “the very idea of progress or of a developmental reading of history is grounded in a normative decisionism by means of which European Enlightenment theorists congratulated themselves on being more civilized, developed, and advanced than [other colonized subjects]” (Allen 2017:22). If the foundation of progress – rooted in principles of liberty and equality, which in turn drive the pursuit of LGBTQ+ rights – is based on the histories and values of European nations, how can we ensure that these prin-

ciples are the ‘proper’ measures of progress? Now, the point here is not to challenge the importance of equality nor the importance of LGBTQ+ advocacy, but rather to question how these specific benchmarks of progress are determined, and whose voices are highlighted.

A pragmatic theorist would also take issue with such a teleological vision of progress and warn against its dangers (Kitcher 2015). If, as the homonationalism perspective would propose, progress is measured solely on whether or not a nation champions gay rights, we become at risk of letting other forms of oppression and unintended consequences slip by in the name of progressive gay rights, and fall into colonial and racist directions. Instead, it would be less harmful to take on a pragmatic approach, which aims to continuously reassess the “problem” at hand and devise a solution to reach that goal, as proposed by Philip Kitcher. This way, nuance, adaptability, and agency can be emphasized, and the danger of the co-optation of a single-track goal can be minimized. Additionally, we’d do well to heed Kitcher’s call toward further democratizing the process by which we identify and target problems, by fostering an “informed discussion among representatives of all available perspectives” (Kitcher 2015:489). To include a diversity of perspectives in determining what the next goal in progress we’d like to make is a first step toward decolonization and reestablishing more equal power relations. Queer individuals from all backgrounds could then make their needs heard and champion for a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of progress in queer liberation that does not fall into racist pitfalls.

Gay rights and homonationalist concerns were used not only as a barometer of a nation’s “civilization status,” but also as a measure of a people’s “right and capacity for national sovereignty” (Puar 2013:336) – the latest iteration in a long line of tactic the West has utilized to prevent colonies and those in the global periphery from achieving and thriving under self-governance without the intervention of the white man (Gutierrez 2022). Drawing on Edward Said’s key work on Orientalism, the boundary between the “orderly” West and the “chaotic” and “barbaric” East had long been drawn and reinforced with the goal of the Western powers “dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said 2003:3). With these histories in mind, interventions by Western forces in the name of LGBTQ+

rights and progress take on a different tone, and reveal a clear and long standing pattern of paternalistic control and oppressive practices.

These forces not only serve to help Western powers maintain control of the narrative, but the crafted narrative of Western exceptionalism and the homonationalism mission are then used to justify and explain political and military action and uphold global hegemony. Notably, the US has long utilized its “liberal” and “progressive” stance on the promotion of LGBTQ+ rights to justify and explain their invasion and war contributions in the Middle East. Pinkwashing, which stands as a manifestation and practice of homonationalism, is a propaganda tactic Western powers often utilize to “wash” and conceal the narrative to their advantage. “Liberating queer individuals” and “fighting homophobia” have heavily contributed to the US’ reasoning for the “War on Terror,” and has bolstered the spread of Islamophobia. As Puar (2007) traces in her book, the pinkwashing of US military intervention in the Middle East is nothing new. She recounts the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan and the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and how feminist and queer Americans and internationals justified this military action by stressing the importance of “saving” oppressed women and queer individuals under the Taliban. Under the rise of American gender and sexuality exceptionalism, the nationalist mission grew in aplomb as the US gave itself the duty to uphold global democracy and human rights and intervene in that regard, as well as liberating all individuals trapped under such unjust conditions, declaring itself the global “arbiter of appropriate ethics, human rights, and democratic behaviour” (Puar 2007:8). In the background of growing Islamophobia in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, homonationalism particularly grew as a nation-wide sentiment under the joining of American identities and queer identities, having found a common adversary in the form of the Muslim identity, which they perceived as both anti-American and anti-gay (Gutierrez 2022). During this era, these distinctions were frequently called upon to justify the American narrative of bringing order and peace to an oppressed people in crisis. Military intervention, then, instead of being framed as violent, disruptive, and dangerous to local peoples, was legitimized as an act of bravery and righteousness, a sacrifice to fight the “barbarism” of the local powers in charge, all in the name of progress (Gutierrez 2022).

Most recently and saliently, pinkwashing has played a significant role in the US' justification of its alignment and complicity with Israeli forces in the ongoing genocide in Palestine. For the last few decades, throughout the escalating conflict in the Gaza Strip that today is widely recognized as an ongoing genocide against Palestinians (Amnesty International 2024), so-called Israel has utilized pinkwashing and pro-gay sentiment to brand itself as modern, progressive, and pro-human rights, acquiring the sympathy and support of many Western states and individuals, all the while demonizing Palestinians as "homophobic fanatics" (Schulman 2011:1). Plainly put, they utilize the same boundary work to "justify their occupation of Palestine through a juxtaposition of the alleged modernity/progressiveness of the Israelis, with the alleged, backward homophobia of the Palestinians" (Puar 2007:114). Sarah Schulman, notable queer scholar and activist, used the term for the first time in a 2011 New York Times article, describing "pinkwashing" as a "deliberate strategy to conceal the continuing violations of Palestinians' human rights behind an image of modernity signified by Israeli gay life" (2011:2). Over the last two decades, Israel has sunken time, resources, and money, into carefully crafting a pro-gay, progressive image to cover up its busy of Palestinian rights and seeking allies in white queer individuals, drawing on "the emotional legacy of homophobia" (Schulman 2012) to provoke outrage against the homophobic policies of Muslim Palestinians, co-opting both the queer liberation movement and the investments of queer individuals in these false missions. This image has been crafted and upheld through a concerted campaign of media and political image-making, the Brand Israel campaign. Its mission was clear: "to depict Israel as relevant and modern" to the world (Schulman 2011:2). Addressing the US congress in 2011, Israeli prime minister Netanyahu claimed: "In a region where women are stoned, gays are hanged, Christians are persecuted, Israel stands out. It is different." (Benjamin Netanyahu as cited in Hickey 2020). This campaign was pushed through various initiatives. The government funded massive tourism campaigns featuring young, same-sex couples to promote itself as a gay haven for international queer travellers by flaunting ad campaigns, rainbows plastered over so-called Tel-Aviv, and immense pride parades. It screened pro-Israeli films at international queer film festivals. It even utilized its appearance in the Eurovision Song Contest to promote a trans artist, Dana International, who won the contest in 2019 (Hickey

2020; Schulman 2011). The campaign particularly utilized and drew on the narrative of Israel standing as an isolated beacon and haven for LGBTQ+ rights in an otherwise homophobic Middle Eastern climate, highlighting the importance of its survival and propagation for queer individuals all over the area (Hickey 2020). Importantly, these campaigns have not only helped Israeli efforts gain individual support, they have provided large global powers like the United States the justification they needed to lend their support to the genocidal forces. In fact, the US and Israel have long been allies, and the US has continued to fund arms for the Israeli military despite the violation of Palestinian human rights (Waxman 2024), often drawing on homonationalist and pro-gay sentiment to justify that alignment. These harsh delineations between Israeli and Palestinian values are immensely inflated by these pinkwashing narratives. They draw on, and contribute to, racist and Islamophobic narratives that pick at homophobia within Muslim communities while ignoring the historical and contemporary harm Christian and Jewish powers also cause queer communities (Hickey 2020). These narratives also actively harm queer communities by erasing the experience and advocacy of queer Palestinians and Palestinian groups, who must fight for their rights and face oppression along intersectional facets of their identities (IGLYO 2023). I posit that the increasing link between pro-gay narratives and Israeli/Western forces might harm queer advocacy in Palestine and cause more draconian anti-queer policies. Jeffrey Alexander, in his 2019 work, proposed an alternative to the linear and iterative views of progress as previously outlined by advancing a pendulum understanding of progress, oscillating between frontlash (disruption to the status quo that challenge vested interests) and backlash (movements of undoing that aim to reestablish the status quo), and this sort of frontlash/backlash effect has been seen amongst contexts of LGBTQ+ advocacy. Indeed, as LGBTQ+ movements become increasingly linked to “international” and liberal narratives and methods, corresponding backlash has led to a weakening in the effectiveness of the movements and has led to increased anticipatory countermovements in surrounding contexts.

It is possible that similar backlash could face queer Palestinian folk in their fight for LGBTQ+ rights if the conflation between pro-gay advocacy and Western, liberal narratives continues. Local communities, perhaps seeing queer activists groups drawing

on narratives and policies that come from the West or bear resemblance to Israeli pinkwashing initiatives, might feel threatened and react more explosively, causing bigger backlash movements. As an alternative, relative success has been found when advocacy groups are able to draw on Indigenous methods and narratives to support and anchor their activism, and studies saw that having other “underdeveloped” countries lead the conversation and the movement faced less antagonism and were able to dampen the threat of cultural imperialism (Velasco 2023a; Velasco 2023b; Encarnación 2016).

Conclusion

It is also important to recognize that many other narrative threads and discourses are happening concurrently, though they lie beyond the scope of study of this paper. The same analysis could be applied to the context of purplewashing and femonationalism, where feminist and women’s liberation movements and rhetorics have been, and are, co-opted to the same degree to support nationalist sentiments and draw boundaries between nations and peoples in terms of “progress.” The same can be said for greenwashing (climate activism) and redwashing (social justice activism) policies. These tactics, in the hands of the powerful, all ultimately serve to maintain and justify that power. Ultimately, this thread of analysis aims to prod at the apparent “progressive” narrative that global powers claim as exceptionally their own and demarcates them highly above the rest. It argues that these narratives do not often actually lead to progress, but rather utilize progress as an opportunity and moral leverage to further systems of subjugation and othering.

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Does Increasing Access to Family Planning Decrease Fertility or is Development the ‘Best Contraceptive’?

Jia Sun

Abstract

Global leaders in international development, such as the Gates Foundation, the UNFPA, and the Canadian government, are investing heavily in improving contraceptive access across the Global South, driven by the belief that fertility decline is a key driver of socioeconomic development. Therefore, it is paramount to examine the evidence-based merit of increasing contraceptive access as a driver of fertility decline. While family planning programs are often seen as a direct and immediate way to lower fertility, they are shown to be insufficient on their own. Instead, education plays a crucial role in reducing desired family size and increasing contraceptive uptake. I critique Bongaarts’ theory of proximate determinants, focusing solely on the “unmet need” measure for contraception, as overlooking the importance of socioeconomic and cultural factors in shaping fertility preferences. Notably, evidence from Sub-Saharan

Africa shows that attitudinal resistance to contraception, driven by factors like spousal opposition and religious beliefs, is a significant barrier. I show that education, particularly of women and children, emerges as a key driver of fertility decline by altering socioeconomic dynamics within families. Western ideals propagated through education further influence fertility preferences by promoting smaller family norms. I argue that family planning and education are interconnected, with education fostering the desire for smaller families and increasing contraceptive uptake. I conclude that policymakers should prioritize investments in education alongside family planning programs to achieve sustainable fertility decline and that this holistic approach also empowers women to make informed decisions, driving broader socioeconomic development.

Introduction

In this essay, I address the question of whether increasing access to family planning or development is the most effective method to reduce fertility. I argue that increasing access to family planning (used synonymously with the term contraception) alone is insufficient to lower fertility and that education (used as a proxy for development) is a better pathway, as it reduces desired family size and ultimately increases contraceptive use. First, I will begin by critiquing Bongaarts' theory of proximate determinants of fertility, showing that focusing solely on contraception through the concept of "unmet need" is a misleading and incomplete approach to lowering fertility. I show that it is the desire for smaller family sizes, rather than the mere prevalence of contraceptives, that drives fertility decline. Then, I will argue that increased education is a necessary concurrent way to inch toward fertility decline. I explore the three mechanisms through which education impacts desired family size. Namely, through the education of children, the education of women, and the spread of Western ideals encompassed by both children's and women's education. Lastly, I will argue that family planning and education are closely interconnected, with education motivating smaller family sizes and increasing contraceptive use. I will conclude by discussing how the relevance of fertility theories can vary when applied in practice.

To begin, I demonstrate that focusing exclusively on family planning to decrease fertility oversimplifies a complex issue shaped by larger socioeconomic and cultural factors. Notoriously, John Bongaarts (1983), arguing that socioeconomic explanations for fertility decline have been inconclusive, proposed his theory of proximate determinants, which emphasizes biological and behavioural factors directly influencing fertility; namely, contraceptive use. To support his theory quantitatively, Bongaarts uses the concept of "unmet need," a metric whereby sexually active women who report wanting to avoid pregnancy but are not using contraception are considered to have an "unmet need" for it (Bongaarts 2017). According to Bongaarts (2017), there is a great amount of "unmet need" in the "developing world". However, critics of the "unmet need" concept argue that it fails to explain contraception nonuse, leaving us uncertain whether the women qualified as having an "unmet need" would use contraceptives if they were available or would even have fewer children if they did (Kaiser

2011). To examine the causation behind women's contraceptive non-use, Leigh Senderowicz and Nicole Maloney (2022) disaggregated the "unmet need" metric into "demand-side unmet need," stemming from a lack of demand for contraception and "supply-side unmet need," stemming from a lack of access. In seven Sub-Saharan African countries, they found that "attitudinal resistance" was a far greater contributor to contraceptive nonuse than lack of access. Between 69% and 84% of total "unmet need" was found to be driven by a lack of demand. Among the reasons declared for this were opposition from husbands, fear of side effects, religious prohibitions, and fatalism (Senderowicz and Maloney 2022). Thus, merely increasing access to contraception for women in that significantly sized category would likely not reduce their fertility without accompanying social and cultural changes.

In parallel, Lant Pritchett argues that increased availability of family planning is ineffective without a prior desire to reduce family size (Kaiser 2011). The basis of his argument lies in data showing that in more than 50 "developing" countries, 90% of the correlation with actual fertility is explained by desired family size (Kaiser 2011). Studies indicate that a woman's desired family size is most strongly predicted by her income, education level, and her infant's survival chances (Kaiser 2011). This confirms Senderowicz and Maloney's (2022) findings that fertility rates are primarily shaped by more complex socioeconomic factors and not merely the availability of contraceptives. Furthermore, viewing family planning as a standalone driver of fertility decline is unrealistic; a single exception to the rule discredits this theory. While there are debates about whether family planning programs (FPPs) initiated or merely accelerated the decline, their role in many late 20th-century fertility transitions is widely acknowledged (Mason 1997). However, state-organized family planning was absent during the 19th and early 20th-century fertility transition in the West (Mason 1997). This suggests that factors beyond the availability of family planning have influenced fertility decline and likely facilitated contraceptive uptake when FPPs started becoming widespread.

Having established that factors beyond mere availability of contraceptives are necessary for fertility decline, I will now turn to evaluate the role of one such factor – education. The role of education on fertility rates has been studied in the literature in two key ways:

through the education of children and through the education of women. On one hand, the impact of children's education on desired family size is explained by John Caldwell's (1980) theory of wealth flows, which argues that the impact of education on children is through the economic restructuring of family relationships. In traditional societies, wealth flowed from children to parents, as children contributed labour to the family, making large family sizes beneficial to parents (Caldwell 1980). On the other hand, in modern societies, parents invest heavily in their children through the direct and indirect costs of their education.

This investment in children subsequently causes a cultural shift, whereby children are assigned a higher status due to their new educational attainment and are alienated from traditional home chores (Caldwell 1980). Thus, parents in modern societies are simultaneously investing more in their children and reaping less economic benefit from them, forcing a necessary drop in the parent-to-child ratio. On the other hand, Easterlin and Crimmins' demand theory explains the impact of women's education on desired family size. This theory suggests that women's education elevates their social status and access to employment and economic opportunities, which increases the opportunity cost of bearing and raising more children (Liu 2020). Consequently, this reduces their demand for children (Mason 1997). Julia Behrman (2015) tested this theory in practice in Malawi, Uganda, and Ethiopia, where Universal Primary Education was implemented in the mid-1990s. She studied women who had completed their schooling careers and had started bearing children and found that increased schooling did reduce women's desired family size across all three countries. (Behrman 2015). Moreover, women's education has been hypothesized to affect fertility rates indirectly by increasing knowledge of family planning and shifting attitudes towards its acceptability (Liu 2020). This indirect effect of education on fertility reduction was evidenced in Indonesia, where a large part of the decline in fertility in the 1980s was linked to increased contraceptive use among more educated women (Gertler and Molyneaux 1994, as cited in Liu 2020).

An overarching force in education as a driver of fertility decline is the diffusion of Western ideals. Caldwell (1980) argues that Western schooling speeds up cultural change partly because their agenda prioritizes the larger capitalist economy over family produc-

tion. Translated into the “developing” world, schooling propagates the values of the Western middle-class over those of the local middle-class, the latter whose values are painted as being archaic (Caldwell 1980). Arland Thornton’s (2001) concept of developmental idealism supports the influence of Western ideals, positing the idea that non-Western societies view the West as the ultimate model of developmental success. Because of this, he argues that non-Western societies try to emulate these values. Notably, he highlights the remarkable expansion of mass education in the diffusion of developmental idealism in the non-West. In the same vein, individualism and the image of Western family life (ie. smaller and more nuclear families) are conflated with socioeconomic development in many educational curricula in the non-West (Thornton 2001). Thornton (2001) concludes that developmental idealism may be one of the most essential explanations for various family changes, including shifts in fertility, both within and beyond northwest Europe over the past two centuries.

Weighing the arguments for family planning and education, I see them as two sides of the same coin. I believe that sustained education can indirectly address many of the reasons for contraceptive non-use belonging to the “demand-side unmet need,” such as opposition from husbands, fear of side effects, religious prohibitions, and fatalism. Therefore, I contend that access to family planning is most effective when implemented alongside broader socioeconomic improvements like education, which both motivates the desire for smaller family sizes and promotes family planning techniques. One case where this mechanism may have been at play is a study directly relating education to contraceptive use conducted by William Axinn and Jennifer Barber (2001) in Nepal. They found that a woman who sent one or more of her children to school, whose husband completed the ninth grade, and who lived near a school in childhood had more than double the yearly probability of permanently using contraceptives to limit their fertility than a woman without access to schools during childhood, whose husband has no formal schooling, and who has never sent any of her children to school (Axinn and Barber 2001). Likewise, I also believe that increased contraceptive use will lead to smaller family sizes, allowing more resources to be invested toward each child’s education. This creates a reinforcing cycle between family planning and education.

In parallel, I believe great consideration should be placed on each considered region's historical and geopolitical contexts, as they heavily affect the causal pathways through which family planning and education influence fertility rates. For example, the way family planning and education influence fertility in countries where mass education and fertility reduction are a recent development is likely to differ significantly from the pathways observed in places like contemporary China, or even in lower-income countries like Malawi, Uganda, and Ethiopia, where Universal Primary Education was implemented earlier on. Moreover, different regions' cultures and family structures should be taken into account before generalizing theories. For instance, although Caldwell's wealth flow theory is applicable in Sub-Saharan Africa, where elders are likely to benefit from high fertility in a lineage-based system, this theory is less applicable in many parts of East Asia, where fertility decline was not accompanied by changes in relationships with extended family (Mason 1997). I also want to note that one should not be fooled by how straightforward theories appear in principle. When translated into the real world, their application is often complicated by a multitude of often unpredictable factors that can significantly influence outcomes. For example, Monica Grant (2015) investigated whether a free primary education policy implemented in Malawi in 1994 and the subsequent secondary schooling of girls had impacted the age at which they had their first child. The results went against all theories on the topic: she discovered a strong negative correlation between educational attainment and the age at which women have their first child. This led to the hypothesis that school quality deterioration and the shift in the age at enrollment were hindering the causal pathways proposed by theories linking education and fertility (Grant 2015).

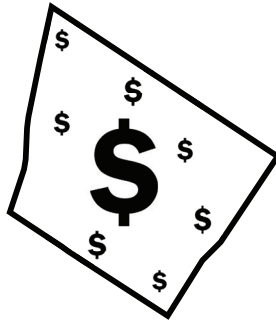
Conclusion

In conclusion, through this essay, I sought to answer the question of whether access to family planning or development is the most effective path to fertility decline. By weighing their competing roles in reducing fertility, I found that motivation, largely influenced by education, appears to be the prime mover in fertility reduction rather than access to family planning services alone. This understanding has significant implications for policy and resource allocation. It suggests that investments in education should be prioritized alongside expanding FPPs. Policymakers should consider integrating family planning edu-

cation into school curricula to improve the effectiveness of FPPs by cultivating social norms necessary for their use. This holistic approach of combining family planning with education would ensure a sustainable fertility decline, which can drive further socioeconomic development. With all things considered, I believe that both access to family planning and quality education are valuable goals in their own right – not merely as a means to achieve fertility decline, but as an end in themselves to empower citizens to make autonomous and educated decisions.

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The Gay Village: The Inclusion and Protection of Montreal's LGBTQ+ through Exclusion

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Abstract

This paper compellingly explores the intricate paradox of inclusion and exclusion within Montreal's Gay Village, shedding light on how gentrification has fundamentally altered its function as a vital safe-haven for LGBTQ+ individuals. This study illustrates the transformation of the Village from a refuge for marginalized queer communities into a space increasingly shaped by the interests of affluent residents and tourists. The phenomenon, referred to as "gaytrification," has significant implications: it erases intersectional queer identities, notably those of lesbians, trans individuals, and people of color, while contributing to the alarming trend of the Village's "de-gaying." The interaction of these concepts is visible when strolling through the Village allowing for empirical evidence to the claims. Ultimately, this paper argues that the ongoing evolution of the Village exemplifies broader tensions between economic progress and cultural preservation, raising crucial questions about the sustainability and future of LGBTQ+ urban spaces.

Introduction

Spaces and the individuals that populate them are in a constant state of co-construction. Through this process, spaces dedicated to inclusion are, at times, lost in a process known as gentrification. The gentrification of the Gay Village (hereafter referred to as the Village) showcases the pioneering work that gay populations often have on unpopular areas by “renovating” them. To discuss this concept at length and analyze this cycle of gentrification, we will be drawing heavily on Colin Giraud’s (2012) work “Gay populations as gentrifiers in Paris and Montreal,” Nathaniel Lewis’ (2019) article “Gay Geographies” and Petra Doan and Harrison Higgins’ (2011) work “The Demise of Queer Space? Resurgent Gentrification and the Assimilation of LGBT Neighborhoods”. By interrelating gentrification with the concepts of space and individuals, we can observe inclusion and exclusion in relation to the process of neighbourhood gentrification.

We will first define the terms of gentrification, segregation, and urban renewal, and discuss how these processes affect access to these spaces. To illustrate these concepts, we will use “Income Inequality and Income Segregation” by Sean Reardon and Kendra Bischoff (2011) and Robert Sampson’s (2018) work “Neighbourhood Effect and Beyond Effects and Beyond.” By engaging with accounts of individuals living in the Village through journal articles, it will be easy to expose the commodification of the Village and its reliance on tourism. We will also use Julie Podmore and Line Chamberland’s (2015) work “Entering the urban frame” to compare issues of stratification within the queer community, with lesbians experiencing intersectionality through their status as women as well as lesbians. Lastly, we will analyze the impacts of the gentrification process on social inequality in the Village, notably the further marginalization of those who cannot afford to live in the Village as well as the increased arrival of straight individuals, leading to the “de-gaying” of the space.

This topic is a meaningful one as gentrification threatens safe spaces that are meant to serve a population that already faces a heightened level of violence. Through my research, I also found that the move en-masse of queer individuals has been linked to a rise in rent. This proves interesting to me as during the walk, I recognized just how ironic the concept of an inclusive village is when it is plagued with homeless-

ness. During September, I walked around the Village to get a feel for the actual look and experience of the neighbourhood allowing first-hand observation about the homelessness situation and current gentrification process. This interest was furthered by the unique composition of the Gay Village of Montreal as a fusion of Francophone and Anglophone culture, representing Montreal culture as a whole. The role of lesbians and their chronic invisibility in society and history is additionally thought-provoking in relation to the concepts of inclusion and exclusion in the Village as during the walk, I encountered absolutely no spaces dedicated to lesbians, with almost all of them intended for gay men.

I will endeavour to look at how the inclusion of gay individuals in the Village ultimately leads to the marginalization of a particular population, usually of the working class, and how the neighbourhood, through constant evolution, is further gentrified by urban development, ultimately alienating the population it was meant to protect in the first place.

History of the Village

Montreal's Gay Village, now the largest in North America, has evolved significantly from its early days as a small cluster of LGBTQ+ spaces in downtown Montreal. Initially, the area between the streets of Stanley and Sainte-Catherine, stretching from Peel to Atwater, was the epicentre of Montreal's gay life, primarily through the late 1970s (Hinrichs 2012). A defining moment in this era was the 1977 police raid on Mystique and the subsequent one on Truxx, two popular bars at the centre of gay life in the old Village (Zanin 2008). The raids sparked protests, marking a turning point for LGBTQ+ visibility in Montreal. Shortly afterward, Quebec passed Bill 88, banning discrimination based on sexual orientation and laying the groundwork for a more cohesive and resilient community (Zanin 2008). Economic pressures in the early 1980s, including rising rents, led to a mass migration of LGBTQ+ bars and businesses eastward to the Centre-Sud neighbourhood around the Beaudry metro station. This move established the new Gay Village in one of Montreal's poorest working-class Francophone areas, transforming it into a vibrant cultural and nightlife hub (Zanin 2008; Valiante 2015). Despite setbacks, including police harassment and the impact of the AIDS epidemic, the Village grew stronger and became a focal point for LGBTQ+ life and activism (Hinrichs 2012).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Village solidified its identity as a safe space for LGBTQ+ individuals facing discrimination elsewhere in the city. As acceptance of LGBTQ+ people grew in Montreal, the Village became more diverse and inclusive (Hinrichs 2012). Even though the rise of digital dating platforms and broader social acceptance began to reduce the Village's role as the only meeting space for LGBTQ+ people, impacting the bar and nightclub scene that once defined the area (Valiante 2015), Montreal's Gay Village remains a vibrant district, though it caters increasingly to tourists and a more general audience. This evolution reflects changes in LGBTQ+ life, from a marginalized community seeking safe spaces to a more visible and integrated part of Montreal's urban fabric, even celebrated in yearly pride events. Nevertheless, the Village continues to symbolize a legacy of struggle, resilience, and cultural pride (Hinrichs 2012).

Defining the Terms

Gentrification transforms historically marginalized or working-class neighbourhoods through rising property values, the influx of wealthier residents, and urban redevelopment (Doan and Higgins 2011). In LGBTQ+ neighbourhoods, this process often leads to the displacement of less affluent community members and the loss of queer cultural identities, with benefits disproportionately favouring white, middle- and upper-class gay men while marginalizing people of colour, trans individuals, and working-class queers. The process of gentrification by the gay community has been coined "gaytrification" by Giraud (2012) and does not evade the pitfalls of traditional gentrification. It contributes to broader patterns of inequality, or the uneven distribution of resources, recognition, and access within these spaces, further privileging wealthier individuals at the expense of vulnerable groups. Displacement, also discussed by Doan and Higgins (2011), is a direct outcome of gentrification, as rising costs force working-class residents out of neighbourhoods they helped create, disrupting historical ties and weakening the community's diversity.

These processes erode collective efficacy, which Robert Sampson, Jeffrey Morenoff, and Thomas Gannon-Rowley (2002) define as a community's ability to achieve shared goals and maintain social cohesion through trust and cooperation. In LGBTQ+ neighbourhoods, collective efficacy fosters belonging and activism but

is diminished by gentrification and the commodification of queer spaces. Finally, income segregation exacerbates these dynamics by spatially separating households based on income levels (Reardon and Bischoff 2011). Rising income inequality intensifies this segregation, creating distinct affluent and impoverished areas, limiting access to resources such as quality housing and education, and reinforcing existing inequalities. These interconnected processes highlight how urban transformation reshapes LGBTQ+ neighbourhoods, amplifying tensions between inclusion and marginalization.

Inclusion and Exclusion

Gentrification in LGBTQ+ neighbourhoods often begins with the migration of relative affluence into historically working-class areas (Girard 2012). The new Village was established when rising rent pushed out the businesses from the old Village to the new one, which at the time was primarily populated by working-class Francophone individuals (Hinrichs 2012). Those who follow previously established businesses usually have more disposable income than straight young couples because of the lower rates of child-rearing; therefore, they can renovate and develop property, leading to a rise in property value and a shift in the local economy. This is supported by the socio-demographic census of the Gay Village in 2001, which showed that 76% of the population in the Village was an adult, as opposed to 63% for the whole city, showcasing a lower-than-normal rate of children (Ville de Montréal). The wealthy are able to segregate themselves into affluent areas, while lower-income people are constrained from moving to find more affordable housing (Reardon and Bischoff 2011). The more segregation happens, the more social and political polarization causes harm, since neighbourhoods play a crucial role in sustaining inequality (Sampson 2018). This process can transform the area into a more affluent space that caters primarily to middle- and upper-class consumers, leading to the exclusion of less affluent LGBTQ+ individuals who were the original inhabitants and pioneers of these neighbourhoods.

The rise in income inequality drives the segregation of LGBTQ+ neighbourhoods, ultimately pushing out less affluent residents. Montreal's urban zoning policies and economic strategies support gentrification and attract affluent residents. Just like the old Village being raised out due to urban renewal pressure, the current

Village is preyed on by developers and wealthier individuals (Hinrichs 2012). The origin of the Villages is mostly that of inclusion, with most Gay Villages around the world developing in lower income areas with higher crime rates that represented an opportunity for individuals to purchase property (Lewis 2019). The intersection of class and gender privilege is central to this economic advantage. Queer spaces are not static or inherently subversive but are continuously produced through social, political, and economic processes, and white middle-class gay men, being the only ones able to afford it, overpopulate the Village, effectively erasing people of colour, trans individuals, and working-class queer people (Oswin 2008). The mass movement of gay individuals into a specific area does offer the possibility to grant them some political power thanks to the structure of the Canadian government; they can create voting blocks, increasing their visibility and likelihood of protection (Lewis 2019). However, these forced displacements disrupt the established social networks and weaken the sense of solidarity central to their identity. This is not to say this solidarity is gone forever; during the walk, I witnessed the interaction of three individuals in front of the bathhouse who were clearly in the habit of doing favours for each other, such as picking up each others' mail. Nonetheless, this camaraderie has become rarer and harder to accomplish.

The erasure of lesbian politics and advocacy is closely connected to the history and transformation of queer urban spaces. These spaces, historically dominated by gay male culture, have often marginalized lesbian identities and activism. According to Natalie Oswin (2008), queer neighbourhoods are frequently portrayed through the lens of affluent white gay men, sidelining other groups like lesbians, people of colour, and working-class queer individuals. This focus is reinforced by gentrification, which raises living costs in queer neighbourhoods, pushing out those with less economic power, including lesbians (Oswin 2008; Giraud 2012). Lesbian advocacy in Montreal initially gained traction within feminist movements, with the creation of distinct bars and safe spaces separate from male-dominated venues. However, Podmore and Chamberlin (2015) describe how these women faced both homophobia and sexism, even in supposedly queer-friendly environments, where male ownership often restricted lesbian visibility. A pivotal moment is the raid on the club Madame Arthur, sometimes referred to as Montreal's "lesbian Stonewall," highlighting the struggles

for lesbian recognition amid a male-centric queer narrative (Podmore and Chamberland 2015). These events highlighted how the intersectionality of being a woman and a lesbian made one increasingly vulnerable to the male gaze through the objectification of women and lesbians (Podmore and Chamberland 2015). The 2001 census shows that despite Montreal as a whole being majority female (52% women), the Village has a majority of men (59%) (Ville de Montréal 2001).

The increasing orientation of the Village towards tourism and mainstream appeal has led to what some scholars term the “de-gaying” of the neighbourhood (Lewis 2019). As spaces once defined by their LGBTQ+ identity become attractive to a broader audience, they lose their distinctive cultural markers. There is a valid critique of the use of the term “gay village”, risking to essentialize these spaces as inherently exclusionary and liberatory (Oswin 2008). This is exemplified in the sheer non-existence of lesbian spaces in the Village to this day. The need to appeal to a broader audience combined with the broader acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals and the rise of mobile dating means the existence of these spaces does not rely on their queer characteristics (Valiante 2015). However, the businesses in the Village still need to survive, meaning that they rely increasingly on tourists, foregoing their uniqueness to pander to a more widespread, primarily straight clientele, as testified by a Villager bar owner to CBC (Kahn 2019). While tourists, especially gay tourists, are likely to visit, the increasing rents are introducing a new kind of non-queer population, inevitably lowering the level queer support, feeling of acceptance and community, and collective efficacy of the neighbourhood, ultimately driving out even those who could afford it (Doan and Higgins 2011). These spaces become increasingly depoliticized, effectively reinforcing heteronormativity and eliminating the aforementioned voting blocks. Organizations that support LGBTQ+ individuals in need have a more challenging time hitting their targets, and the cultural distinctiveness is forgotten.

Conclusion

The gentrification of the Gay Village in Montreal highlights the relations between space, identity, inclusion and exclusion in an urban environment. Due to their denomination as a queer safe haven for marginalized queer communities, these spaces were defined by their exclusionary nature. Over time, economic pressure and urban devel-

opment driven by these spaces' rising popularity shifted the Village's social dynamics. Wealthier residents, improvements in the buildings, and the creation of condos drove up property value, putting pressure on the original population of working-class Francophones, ultimately leading to their complete dispersion. Contemporary developments have shown that working-class queer individuals and queer people in general are now being driven out of the Village as younger queer people feel better supported outside of the Village and no longer rely on its community and social ties. The gentrification process highlights the tensions between economic growth and cultural preservation. Preserving the authentic feel of the Village proves increasingly complex as the rise in income and tourism introduces a "de-gaying" effect. As the area becomes more economically exclusive, the Village's role as a safe and inclusive place for diverse LGBTQ+ individuals is undermined, leading to a loss of the very qualities that made it unique. Simultaneously, relying on tourists is insufficient for small businesses struggling to make it through the winter. The struggle to stay visible, relevant to the queer community, and politically influential with rising economic pressure proves complicated for Montreal's Gay Village, as well as most LGBTQ+ oriented neighbourhoods around the globe. This transformation raises significant questions about the future of queer urban spaces, notably whether they can retain their cultural importance or if they will continue to be reshaped by the forces they once resisted. Overall, the cycle of inclusion and exclusion is showcased in the Village's relationship between gay men, lesbians, and the queer working-class, proving that the inclusion of one effectively marginalizes the other.

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