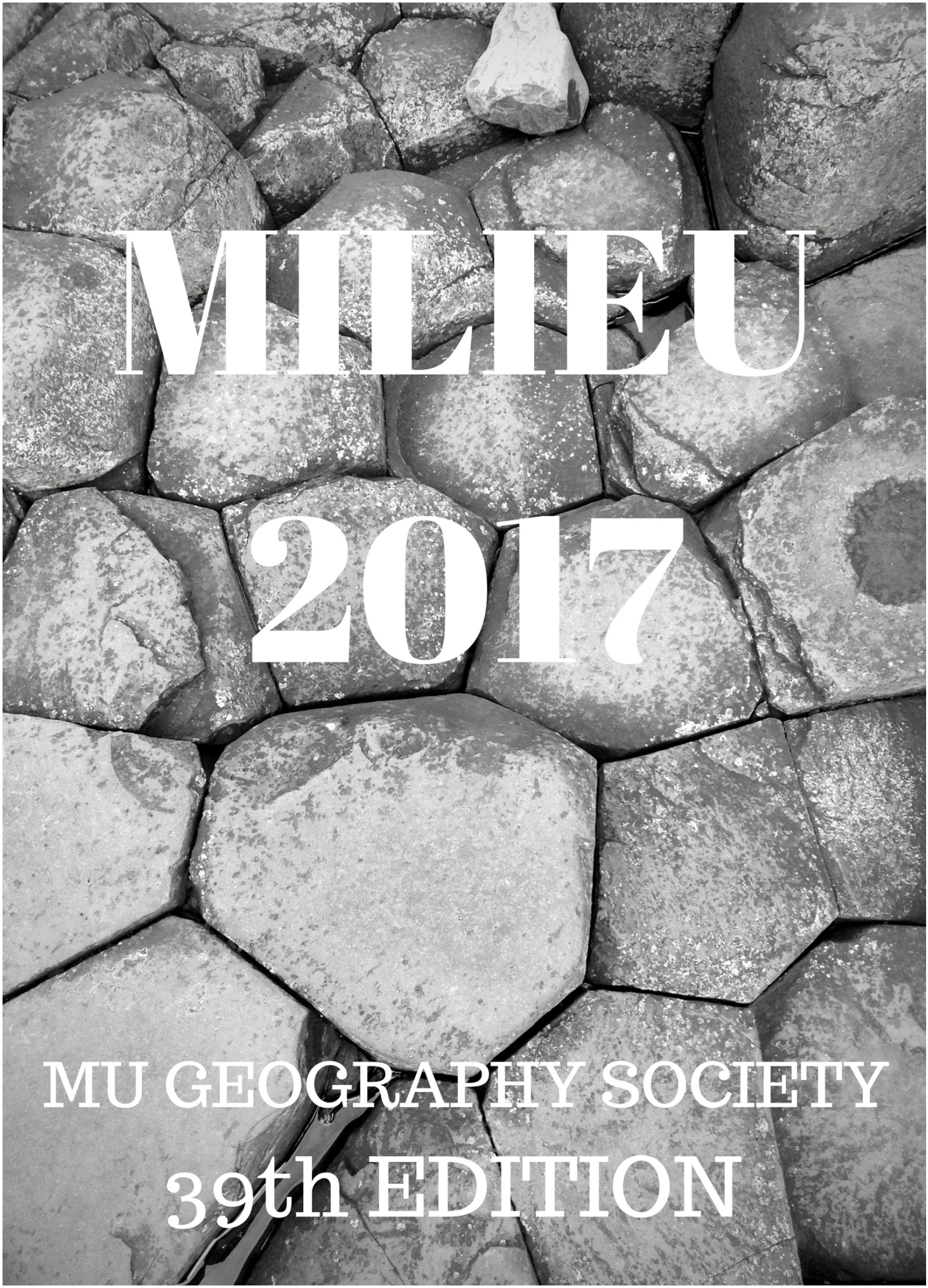

MILIEU

2017

MU GEOGRAPHY SOCIETY

39th EDITION

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Foreword

Welcome to *Milieu*, the magazine of the staff and students of Maynooth's Geography Department. I want first to commend the hard work of the authors and the imaginative design, editing and production that the *Milieu* team has achieved. Take a bow. There is something very special about having our own magazine. The ambition of sharing our work with each other is understandable since as Maynooth geographers we take pride both in the relevance and in the accessibility of our geographical writing. This edition of *Milieu* is ringing testimony to the intellectual rigour and societal salience of our studies.

There is very little academic work on the contribution of such Department journals to geographical education and research. In an article on Glasgow University's *Drumlin* journal, Chris Philo (1998) read the magazine as offering a window on student views of academic geography. He also saw the health of the magazine as an indicator of the vibrant intellectual culture at Glasgow. Philo had praise for *Chimera*, the geography journal of the Cork Department of Geography that had been produced annually since the mid 1980s. He did not seem to have been aware of the older journal, *Milieu*, produced at Maynooth since the mid 1970s.

As you read this issue of *Milieu* you might ask yourself: what does it say about the intellectual vitality of this department? You might enjoy reading about what the Geographical Society has done for our community, or about the practice of geographical education in 2017. You might note the impressive spread of interests: from epidemiology to cultural geography, from biogeography to political geography, from dance to swimming, from historical climatology to reproductive rights, from immigration to film, from blood to environmentalism. You might, as I do, look down the list of authors and wonder how many of these students will soon also be publishing work in professional academic journals, and how many of them will look back on *Milieu* as the glorious start of their career in academic writing. You might make a firm resolution that next year the list of contents will include your own contribution. For myself, I reflect on the 40 years of publication and I think of a departmental tradition that each cohort has in its turn cherished and sustained. I look at this magazine and I think we can all be proud to be part of a department in which students are producing work of this quality: relevant, careful and imaginative. We will all claim our share of the credit and it is great to see work from undergraduates, from students on our Masters courses, and from doctoral students.

I know that all our current students and staff will enjoy this magazine. I hope too that as we all contemplate joining the community of Maynooth Geography alumni, we might think of *Milieu* as a way of staying in touch, of regarding with awe or amusement the preoccupations of current staff and students. Perhaps some student will one day take up the challenge of Chris Philo's article and write for us all 'Reading *Milieu*: Academic geography and a student geographical magazine,' and in that way will also let the wider world of academic geography know about the vibrancy of the Maynooth tradition. For now, just enjoy the magazine and be sure to use it to promote far and wide the value of a geographical imagination, and the special place that is Geography at Maynooth.

Professor Gerry Kearns
Head of Department

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Editorial Note

Welcome to Milieu 2017! We are very excited to bring you an array of wonderful articles, reports and photo stories that showcase the work and interests of students and staff across our department. This year, we had a phenomenally successful call for submissions (receiving over 35 across all years) - so many, in fact, that we wish we could have produced a second volume!

Here, we bring you a wide range from the submissions we received that cover an impressively diverse range of topics. We welcome you to read of the work that geographers are doing at Maynooth on themes including health geographies, immigration, climatology, geographic theory, and art and film studies. We also include pieces on the activities of the Geography Society and the newly formed Supporting Women in Geography (SWIG).

We as the editorial team would like to thank each author who submitted such interesting and engaging articles, and the Geography Society and Department of Geography for their assistance in bringing the publication to life this year.

Thank you for reading, and we hope you enjoy discovering the work of your peers!

Aoife, Louise, Michael and Sasha
Milieu 2017 Editorial Team

Geography Society Year in Review

The Maynooth Geography Society is a student led society. We aim to be inclusive and diverse. We hold talks from leaders in the field, host social events for our society members and field trips for students, and keep students informed about what is going on in the world of geography. With over 100 active members this year, the society has held numerous events, with great support from students and staff. Our events have ranged from the fun and creative to the more serious and critical engagement with issues of the day. One of our first events was a documentary screening of 'The Hunting Ground' to highlight on-campus sexual assault, with a representative from the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and support from the Geography Department.

The society has also been involved in activism: holding an event in solidarity with the Dakota Access Pipeline protestors, in which we made posters and a video to show our support for what they are standing for. We have also shown solidarity with Ibrahim Halawa, an Irish student being held in an Egyptian prison for the simple act of peaceful protest; we collaborated with Amnesty International, held a moments silence, wrote postcards of support, and spread awareness of his situation.

In November, we held a bake sale in aid of St. Raphael's Special School, Celbridge, to help towards the expense for sensory equipment, with over €100 raised. We have also held three 'Ear to Peer' events, where we gathered together to give our geography students as much information about the semesters ahead of them and what they can do to keep on top of their work. We do our best to keep stress levels to a minimum because, as students, we are aware of the challenges faced by students.

We have also collaborated with many other societies on campus, most recently having a 'Nature is Nurture' walk on Maynooth's campus with the Maynooth Mental Health Society as a way of finding places that are calm and beneficial to a student's hectic life. We were accompanied by biologists and were taken through several of the species that find life on Maynooth's campus.

The Geography Department is a keen and trusted asset to the society, providing support and encouragement with all our events. The Department of Geography organised two 'Postgraduate Roadshows' to inform students of their options after they graduate, with assistance from the society.

Most recently, we organised an order of Geography Society Hoodies for members. Keep an eye out for them in the coming weeks on lucky members who ordered them. Finishing off the year this edition of Milieu will be launched in April, we'll be attending the annual Clubs and Societies awards night and running more 'ear to peer' events before the semester is finished.

Exploring Place through Musical Composition

Aoife Kavanagh, PhD Candidate

Artistic and creative geographic methods have been developing in recent times (Madge 2014; Dwyer and Davies 2010; Cresswell 2014), and this development continues apace with developments in media and technology. Such methods include a vast array of approaches such as artistic and creative mappings, drawing and visual art work, photography and video capture, and poetry and other forms of creative writing. These have been used not only to depict research, but as means of conducting the research itself. For example, Harriet Hawkins' work emphasises drawing and the creation of visual art work; she discusses how the researcher can learn anew how to see and look at the things they are learning about (Hawkins 2015). For her, this process was enhanced by learning how to draw, not so much in terms of the quality of the drawn pieces, but rather through the ways in which she learned to look at and observe differently what it was that she drew. Here, I will describe my experiences of exploring an unfamiliar place-based artistic research method, 'deep mapping', and a new musical role, composing, and what I learned through the journey of juxtaposing my aspiring-geographer and musician selves to try new possibilities in both realms.

In August 2016, I undertook my first original composition project with my friend and colleague, Ollie Hennessy. This piece, which we titled 'Harbour Reflections', was composed in response to artist Dr Silvia Loeffler's 2014-16 community-based project, *Glas Journal*, which included a closing visual arts exhibition that took place in Dún Laoghaire the following month at the Maritime Museum. During this time, Dr Loeffler was based at Maynooth University working with Professor Karen Till as an IRC postdoctoral fellow. Using *Glas Journal* project as an idea and place to explore in our composition came about after her kind invitation to perform at the project's exhibition launch. She was delighted that we felt inspired to create our own artwork as a contribution to her visual and archival deep mapping of Dún Laoghaire with local residents.

We performed the piece live for the first time at the exhibition, and subsequently in October at the international symposium, 'Mapping Spectral Traces: The Place of the Wound' (organised by Professor Till), where we also discussed the composition of the work (https://theplaceofthewound.wordpress.com/).

I first encountered the *Glas Journal* project when I took the MA in Geography course at Maynooth University. This deep mapping (Biggs 2010) examined place attachments and how they develop and change over time, as well as how Dún Laoghaire as a place has changed over time. Over the two years of her research, Silvia produced several art books, including a number with various Dún Laoghaire based groups and residents charting their explorations. At the time, I was in the middle of conducting a similar mapping project examining place- and music-making in Carlow, where I am based as a musician. Silvia's project not only resonated with me but indeed proved an inspiration, both in terms of my MA and the subsequent development of my PhD project.

Silvia's project continued through the following year, and I began my PhD studies. My interest in using artistic and creative research methods continued to grow, and I began to focus on the work of Hawkins (2013) on 'Creative Geography'. This approach centres not only the study of art and art works and what we may learn from them, but also the use of artistic methods for researching and learning about the world around us. Working with artists is emphasised, so that the knowledges and skill-sets of both artists and geographers can come together. This results in an approach whereby the scholar and artist become, as Hawkins puts it, 'artist-geographers'.

As I have described, my interest in creative community mappings began with my postgraduate studies. At the same time, I began examining musical performances and compositions through the conducting of 'musical ethnographies'. However, in 2016, I explored the possibilities of creating musical art with a composer as a creative geographic approach to understanding place-making and place attachments. To my knowledge, this sort of approach is limited within Geography. While field recordings and the study of soundscapes of places are frequent (e.g. Saldahna 2009), and pieces of sound art centring on place have been created, I have not encountered instances of the composition of original musical art works in the literature. Thus, I felt that this was a novel, interesting and important avenue to explore, and a means of building on the creative geographic approach which has underpinned the development of my project.

Both Ollie and I were, of course, familiar with Dún Laoghaire as a place, and I had visited in the context of the project itself. We had both also heard Silvia speak about the project at conferences, and read her article on the work (Loeffler 2015). She kindly sent us many photographs of the project in progress as well as the finished art books. Ollie and I went through all of this material, collated the themes and ideas we felt were most important and prominent in the project, and set out to compose.

A range of emotions and responses to place and changes in place, light and dark, were at the centre of the project and composition – it was the sort of discovery of and journey through these responses that we wished to capture. To give a brief overview, we chose instrumentation in line with that which was available to us, ultimately deciding on a viola instrumental with keyboard accompaniment. The latter provides a rich, almost orchestral, string sound, colouring the sound with chordal harmony which adds depth to the story the viola tells, while the viola has a very deep and emotive sound. We structured the piece in two parts. The theme of the first section introduces a motif which, we felt, captured our idea of Dún Laoghaire as a place. The second section describes the journey Silvia's project participants had taken in exploring place, place attachments and changes in place over time through their engagement with her project. The first section then returns, coloured and changed slightly by these same experiences, such that, while Dún Laoghaire remains, the participants' understanding of and attachments to it have been changed through their own reflections and explorations. The piece has the feel of an Irish traditional slow air, which is in keeping, we felt, with the ideas and feel of the project.

This experience demonstrated to me the potential of pursuing co-composition as a means of exploring place. I feel that it was particularly effective because it allowed Ollie (the composer) to use and communicate in a medium with which he has such a natural affinity, removing the need to put into words what, for him, could potentially be more easily, effectively and naturally conveyed through music. We were also able to discuss, in the context of musical devices such as harmony, motives and rhythm, the ideas of the project. For listeners, I would venture, it could provide a new way of experiencing and reflecting on the project, complementing the beautiful art books created by Silvia and the residents of the harbour.

For me, the co-composition was no easy task. I had never composed music which has been heard by anyone but me, nor had I ever composed music with anyone else. I improvise all the time when performing, recording and teaching, but this is not necessarily the same thing as composing, which I think of as the creation of new, original music material. There's much more security and room to hide when playing with and varying someone else's musical works and ideas, as became very clear when I set out on this project. I felt extremely nervous during the composition process itself, and Ollie, though aware of this, was adamant that I would challenge myself and move beyond those personal limits I had set on myself as a creative musician, or even, dare I say it, as a musical artist.

Looking back, though, I am glad that the experience was so challenging and engaging for me, because I feel that I returned to the stance of learner and sort of artistic "apprentice" which Hawkins (2015) discusses. When confronted with the need to think and use music in ways other than those with which I am so familiar, and indeed have come to build an entire set of professional practices on, I began to think about music, and my ideas of and approaches to music, and geography, in new ways. Indeed, in that different working context, my geographic interests were to the front of my mind in ways that would not ordinarily be when working with music. The communication between myself and Ollie was also changed, and we discussed chords, harmonies, tempo and melody with a different sort of set of intentions than we perhaps ever had before in a working context. What was important was that every musical choice made sense to us in terms of the story we were trying to tell. We discovered new things about how we think about and use the very musical devices we had come almost to take for granted.

Overall, I learned to see, feel, hear and understand music in new ways, enriching and developing not only my aspiring-geographer approach to my research, but also my own practice as a musician. I look forward to developing the approach further during my PhD studies.

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21 Hours, A Concept for Modern Living

Rhonda McGovern, 3rd Year

The New Economics Foundation (NEF) is the UK's "leading think tank promoting social, economic and environmental justice. Their aim is to transform the economy so that it works for people and the planet", with a mission to "kick start the move to a new economy through big ideas and fresh thinking" (NEF, 2015a). '21 hours' is a concept put forward by the NEF, who suggest that cutting our current working week from 35-40 hours down to 21 will bring about benefits for society and is essential in achieving a decarbonised economy not dependent on infinite growth, that promotes social justice and well-being for all, and a sustainable environment. They have listed a reduced carbon footprint, stronger economy, more productive employees, lower unemployment, improved well-being, more time for family, friends and community, and a stronger democracy as some of the benefits to moving to a working week of 21-hours. This article will discuss two specific aspects of the 21-hours concept: the social impact on humans and the natural environment.

Humanity's relationship with the environment has changed dramatically over time. In pre-history, man's relationship with nature was pivotal to survival. The hunter-gathers in Scotland 10,000 years ago, created a calendar to synchronise seasonal activities (Sci-News.com, 2013), the sundial kerbstone in Knowth, Co. Meath acted as an intricately designed calendar (Murphy, 2002). Humanity's calendar and time management was directly linked to the environment, in contrast with contemporary society where time management is constructed to operate and serve capitalism under economic cycles of one year and political cycles of up to 4 to 5 years. This restricts adequate consideration of the environment and the mitigation of the large scale damage we have caused to it. Bicchieri comments that "the environment created for man by the industrial age, lasting a mere three hundred years or so, is so recent that we do not know whether man will even survive it, much less adapt to it" (1988: iii). Evidence shows that levels of CO_2 in the atmosphere have risen substantially since the Industrial Era and this is linked with temperature rises on the surface of the earth. Some attempts are being made to combat the human impact and 2015 witnessed a new climate deal agreed at COP21, later ratified by 116 countries. However, American environmentalist Bill McKibbin argues that this is not sufficient. "This didn't save the planet, but it might have saved the chance of saving the planet". McKibbins' colleague May Boeve says: "while the text recognizes the importance of keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees C, the current commitments from countries still add up to well over 3 degrees of warming" (350.org, 2015). British writer George Monbiot also argues that not enough has been committed to: "what I see is an agreement with no timetables, no targets, with vague, wild aspirations" (Goodman, 2015). Dramatic change is required to mitigate change. Adjusting our working week can enable change to benefit humans socially and the world we inhabit physically.

During the 1990s in Sweden, many companies trialled six-hour working days for a full wage. One such company was Toyota in Gothenburg. It was operating with a stressed workforce who regularly made mistakes, and an unhappy customer base who had to be put on a waiting list to have their cars worked on. When the change came, the company put on two shifts a day of six-hour lengths, starting at 6am and 12pm. Following the change, the company reported the following improvements: staff felt better, there was lower staff turnover, it was easier to recruit new people, staff had a shorter travel time to work, there was more efficient use of the machines and lower capital costs as two shifts of people use one set of machinery, profits rose by 25%, employment increased, workers were in better health and they enjoyed better working conditions (Crouch, 2015). The structure of the shorter working day was of major benefit to the staff and remained profitable for the company. Changing to 21 hours allows society to continue operating under capitalism yet brings a heightened emphasis on human health and human well-being.

In a study examining the impact of nature on human health Hansen-Ketchum *et al* (2010: 103) concluded that "engaging with nature has the potential to foster

recovery from stress, improve cognitive attention, influence health and wellbeing and shape pro-environmental behaviour". 21 hours as a concept allows 14 to 19 hours extra social time per week to any person currently working full time, enabling more frequent engagement with nature, both directly and indirectly, and ultimately improving overall human health. This in turn offers opportunity to influence our motivation for protection of the environment and mitigation against climate change: "pro-environmental behaviours such as recycling were more likely among those who valued the restorative qualities of nature […] statistically significant correlations were found between fascination with restorative places and pro-environmental behaviours" (Hansen-Ketchum *et al*, 2010: 102).

In his foreword for Downs' *Still Stuck in Traffic,* Bruce Katz states that worsening traffic is a result of the way in which we organise ourselves, placing scrutiny on the concept that employees will interact more efficiently if they are all at work during the same hours (2004: viii). Congestion and pollution caused by excess traffic at certain times of the day can only be challenged through a radical reorganisation of the entire economy (Downs 2004: 6). Moving to 21 hours allows people to travel to work at staggered times decreasing the volume of vehicles on the road at any one time, reducing the overall amount of pollutants entering the atmosphere. Prior to the Industrial Era in 1750, the concentration of atmospheric CO_2 fluctuated roughly between 180-290ppm for at least 2.1 million years before present (IPCC, 2013: 486). The IPCC reported that CO_2 increased by 11.7ppm to 390.5ppm in 2011 (2013: 167), and is regularly above 400ppm today**.**

Using Sweden as an example we can see the positive impacts a reduced working week has on employees while increasing profits for companies. However, political will is required to make this type of change. With such short political time scales, it is difficult to imagine a government willing to turn things around completely to allow such a fundamental transformation to our economic structures. Plus, with short cycles governments are open to lobbying from powerful companies to sway policy in their favour. In Sweden when power passed ideologically from the left to the right in 2005, the reform was reversed and staff went back to eight hour days. It is possible that we are in a period where we must face up to reality and take on the environmental challenges facing us without appropriate leadership. Our future is with our environment from which we are currently disengaged. The hunter-gatherers in Scotland required a calendar to organise seasonal activities, while the sundial-calendar stone in Knowth shows our concept of time had evolved significantly. Both are evidence that, as people, we are highly intelligent and were linked in with nature. We possess the ability to tap into its inner secrets and the generative power of nature, yet our focus is centred on economic growth and annual time structures. Time management is no longer dependent on environmental factors which takes away any emphasis on preservation and results in unsustainability. We need to move away from building economies and look towards building resilience. The complex way in which we interact with the environment has major impacts on resources available to us for the future. We need to transform how we as a people organise ourselves and 21 hours is a concept that facilitates this change. Our current system of capitalism is operating to the detriment of nature and our precious resources.

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An Unconventional Interpretation of Geography as an Academic Discipline: Her Past and Uncertain Future

Aindriú Ó Maoilriada, 3rd Year

Cast Members:

Regional Geographer (Roger)

Spatial Scientist (Seán)

Radical Marxist Geographer (Mark)

Host (Terry Klinger)

Geography, the Polygamist

Opening scene. The Regional Geographer and the Spatial Scientist sit on the stage in front of a live audience. Both looking cross and uncomfortable and clearly detest being in one another's presence. The host Terry Klinger enters and the cameras follow him as the audience cheer. He positions himself off to one side of the stage. The audience fall silent in order to allow him to introduce the show.

Terry Klinger: Hello and welcome to another episode of the Terry Klinger show! (Cheering is audible in the studio). Tonight we have a special episode for you; with us we have Roger the Regional Geographer and Seán the Spatial Scientist. They have just found out that they have been seeing the same woman, each one unaware of the other. As you can understand, they are not happy having their time wasted and their emotions toyed with by a woman they've been dedicated too, so tonight they are here to confront her and find out why. Come on out Geography.

Geography enters from stage right. Audience boos at her. She takes her seat in the middle of the two men who shift uncomfortably as she approaches.

Terry Klinger: So Geography, we've two very unhappy men with us here today, who feel like you've been wasting their time. You've been seeing them in secret behind each other's back. How long has this been going on for?

Geography: Well, I met Roger for the first time in the 1930's and found myself immediately attracted to him. You see I had been seeing a man named Evan who was big into Environmental Determinism up until that point, however he seemed rather uneducated and small minded. So when Roger came along I was dumbfounded by just how intelligent he was. He looked at the world in a completely new way which was beautiful.

Terry Klinger: Excuse me!? Did you say the 1930s?! How old are you all?!

Geography: I'm not quite sure but I suppose my official birth year would be 1874 thanks to my two fathers, Carl Sauer and Alexander von Humboldt.

Terry Klinger: Jesus H. Christ this just got interesting… So tell me what happened next, what was it about Roger that appealed to you?

Geography: You see he is a regional geographer. This means he studied all different places in detail and that he believed everywhere and every place had its own uniqueness. It's really quite a beautiful outlook on the world. He'd look at places and document everything about them in words similar to what an artist would do with paints. Everything from the quality of the land to the wonderful little creatures in it all documented and read to me. It was very roman…

Seán cuts across her.

Seán: What a load of artistic nonsense … How many times can you describe the same place? Just because it has one tiny difference you waste your time documenting it as you believe it completely rewrites the whole scenario.

Terry Klinger: Seán, how are you? It's good to have you on the show. What is your take on this predicament you're in? And what is your opinion of Roger?

Seán: Well Terry, thanks for having me, big fan. Personally I think this airy fairy BS needs to stop. This regional Geography ideology is just a way of wasting time, focusing on place and believing everywhere is completely unique to everywhere else which is just untrue.

Roger butts in.

Roger: Oh and you think you're the perfect example of a geographer aye? Since when is maths relevant in landscapes? Geography means writing about the world not doing math… Get off your high horse with your theory of space. All you do is input numbers in order to make up fancy laws and paradigms that won't even hold true in a few years.

Terry Klinger: Back to you Geography. So explain to me how you met Seán here and why you fell for him.

Geography: Well Terry, we met in the 1950s. After I met him I was hypnotised by him. He seemed so ordered and unimpeded by things. He was very logical and had a great dress sense too. He had an impressive ability to sum up the world and divide it into understandable lumps allowing you to see huge parts of the world at the same time which was fascinating.

Roger: What is fascinating about numbers? I really don't get it at all. Seems like a desperate attempt to try add a more 'scientific' basis to geography so more departments don't end up like the Harvard one. But since when is math the foundation of science? I believe observation alongside critical and detailed analysis of those observations is the key to understanding our world, not throwing it into piles and hoping the general idea will hold over them.

Terry Klinger: Gentlemen, what if I told you that you weren't the only two who thought you were seeing Geography. Backstage we have Mark. Come on out Mark!

Seán: Aw no not… not this nut job…

Mark appears on stage and confronts Seán

Mark: Who are you calling a nut job!?

Terry Klinger: Easy now gentlemen! Now Geography, would you like to explain this to the others?

Geography: Well Terry, I met Mark through Seán. See they were friends long ago, both had an interest in statistical analysis and wanted to answer the large questions in the world. Mark and I had chatted on many occasions. He was such a pleasant man with these radical new ideas. He was interested in how capitalism has moulded our modern world and how economic factors as a result of colonialism and its offspring capitalism were still affecting our world today. It was because of this that he and Seán fell out. Seán saw him as a silly hippy who was stealing tools and ideologies from spatial science to try to fuel these unimportant conspiracy theories of his.

Seán: That's because it's true! It's not really an important topic. It's just another sub branch of spatial science, not this new paradigm in any sense of the word! He looks at space and devises laws to answer the questions exactly as spatial scientists do. However they label Marxist on themselves and study economics and capitalism which is something we also do from time to time. If you ask me it was a cheap way to open up a new field to make it easier for newer unintelligent geographers to reach the ranking of professor.

Roger: I agree! It is silly overall and not geography that is essentially history and economics under a new banner! Not related to my discipline at all!

Mark: You're missing the point all together. The capitalist system is like a machine processing our landscapes and forming them anew as it sees fit. It most definitely is as important as any of your fields of study! Rather than detailing our human landscapes why not look at the factors and processes that make them? You see…

Seán: What a load of bul…

Roger: That's not even related t…

They continue to cut across one another ignoring each other's arguments until Geography snaps and drowns them out.

Geography: Oh my God, just shut up already. This is why I don't want to be with any of you anymore! We're done!

Terry Klinger looks into the camera with a sassy look on his face while the others sit dumbfounded

Geography: You spend too much time bickering about who has the right method and who is wrong, when all of you have your flaws and upsides. For example, you Roger, you have an incredible eye for detail! You can look at an area and take it all in and you see everywhere as unique or individual. However there are overlaps and with the urbanization of the world this is truer than ever. Seán, you have an amazing ability to condense and analyse immense amounts of data and present them simply and accurately. However you ignore the beauty and individuality of places, not to mention that all the maths can be very boring! And you Mark, you're so focused on one aspect that you refuse the input of others!

All of you are incredible. However, you are all so focused on proving who is right that you lose track of your goals. You all work in the same discipline in an attempt to answer questions about the world. Rather than dividing your work from one another you would be better off to share your different mind-sets and incorporate them into one another's work to achieve the fullest outlook possible on the processes of the world.

But since you can't do that I feel that I'm better off not being tied down!

Terry Klinger: You tell them girl!

Geography: Yes Terry! I'm going to stay single for now and date new geographers and see all the different outlooks and theories they have to offer! And from there it'll be obvious with so many options. Either I'll find the one that is best suited to me or maybe no one person or approach will ever suffice. Perhaps I'm too open and need an array of ideas to quell the questions in my mind. Only time will tell!

Terry Klinger: Thank you Geography! And thank you all for coming tonight but sadly we are out of time! We shall see you all next week on the Terry Klinger show!

Black Criminality: The Mystification of the American Justice System

Amy Prior, 3rd year

In her book *Documentary Film: A Short Introduction*, Patricia Aufderheide (2007) believes that 'a documentary is a film genre in which a pledge is made to the viewer that we will see and hear something real and true' (p. 56). Ava DuVernay's 2016 documentary *13th* can be seen as what Aufderheide calls an 'committed' documentary (p. 58) as it provides an explicit in-depth look at the criminal justice and prison system in the United States, revealing the nation's history of racial inequality unfolded through the story of how mass incarceration today is the deadliest burden on black lives since slavery was abolished more than 150 years ago. The current state of America and the mythology of black criminality is eloquently contextualised through DuVernay's intellectual rigour. She depicts the significance of the role of the media in criminalising black men, from D.W. Griffith's film *Birth of a Nation* (1915), to *War on Drugs* (2007); while effectively highlighting the economic structures of racial oppression. This piece introduces *13th*, and its exploration of the history of racism and oppression resulting in criminalising black lives. It will then examine the role of media in shaping our perspectives of black men and analysis how the role of each president and indeed, American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), has shaped American legislation.

As its name suggests, *13th* refers to the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution, ratified in 1865 which states: 'Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, nor any place subject to their jurisdiction". In the film and book *The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander argues that throughout American history, African-Americans have been subjected by "different systems of racial and social control that appear to die, but are reborn in new forms tailored to the needs and constraints of the time" (21), noting the direct progression from slavery and Jim Crow Laws to the 'War on Drugs' in the 1970s and today's increasing levels of incarceration for African-Americans. In their lifetime, one in seventeen white males will go to prison, whereas the odds for black males are one in three. DuVernay affirmed in an interview conducted by Amy Goodman (2016) on Democracy Now, how she wanted she wanted to remind Americans how they are part of a rich, yet violent, legacy. As the US Presidential elections were taking place DuVernay hoped that people would interrogate both presidential candidates more deeply and insist on non-cosmetic answers about the brutal reality black Americans face in their everyday life.

As many people heavily rely on media for information, this *Netflix* documentary can be seen as a powerful weapon for quickly changing perspectives. In the aftermath of the Civil War, blockbusters like *Birth of a Nation* had a significant impact of the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and arguably a new wave of terrorism. DuVernay uses footage from *Birth of a Nation* to establish how discriminatory attitudes were shaped after the end of slavery, followed by interview techniques throughout the film, to offer expert opinion. DuVernay elicits an emotional response from the audience as she juxtapositions the fast paced shot of black people eating in an 'animalistic' demeanour (5:50) and the KKK galloping in a 'heroic' manner (6:24) conveying a significant amount of information about the messages of *Birth of a Nation*. The viewer is encouraged to relate such images to the evocative language used by the government. Kevin Gannon, Professor of History, for example, described *Birth* as "a profoundly important

cultural event" (quoted in DuVernay, 2016, 5 min), and Jelani Cobb, Professor of History and Director of the Africana Studies Institute, describes the origins of the KKK's burning of the cross as 'life imitating art' (quoted in DuVernay, 2016, 7 min). Through means of ideational montage that link actions with words and complimentary foreboding classical music, Cobb reveals the KKK never had the ritual of the burning of the cross; rather, it was a creation of D.W Griffith's who thought it was a great cinematic image (quoted in DuVernay, 2016, 7 min).

The flashing images depicted in Figure 1, frequently appears throughout the film, reinforcing Alexander's belief that "so many aspects of the old Jim Crow are suddenly legal again once you've been branded a felon. And so it seems that in America we haven't so much ended racial caste, but simply redesigned it" (Canadian Dimension 2016). This is a simple yet effective device as when anyone says the word 'criminal' the screen fills with Figure 1. This effectively emphasises how often and casual criminality when linked with black men in public discourse.

Figure 1: Ava DuVernay – 13th (2016)
Source: Netflix (2016)

Educator and writer, Michelle Alexander, tells how 'Regan turned Nixon's rhetorical war on drugs into a literal war on drugs' (quoted in DuVernay, 2016, 19 min). Kilgore believes that Nixon's use of the word 'crime' was a 'code word for referring to black people and the people of the anti-war movement' (*ibid*, 2016, 20 min). His words are accompanied with clips from historical footage of protestors and black athletes; this ultimately results in the viewer making a subliminal connection to the innocent people that the government is targeting. Angela Davis, American Political Advocate, believes that the election of Regan was 'transformative in a negative sense' (*ibid*, 2016, 19min). DuVernay uses a clip from a 1980s anti-drug commercial to emphasise how the media assisted Regan on turning the rhetorical war on drugs into a literal one.

Crack cocaine was criminalised in a way that powder cocaine was not. This contributed to the hyper segregation and further incarceration of black people as, when it came to prison sentencing, one ounce of crack was equal to a hundred ounces of powder (Sensagent, 2017). Douglas and Massey (1998:1) write that "no group but the blacks have experienced such segregation". This statement was further reinforced when one of Richard Nixon's top advisers John Ehrlichman, was caught on tape saying "we knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black. But by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin and then criminalising both heavily, we could disrupt their communities. Did we know we were lying? Of course we did" (quoted in DuVernay, 2016, 26min). This ultimately led to what Alexander believes what it means to be black today as she writes "today's mass incarceration defines the meaning of blackness in America: black people, especially black men, are criminals. That is what it means to be black" (56). Douglas also notes "the black ghettos are social, political, and educational and above all economic colonies" and the "inhabitants are victims of greed, cruelty and insensitivity" (3). This highlights the problem of spatial segregation in America as in *13th*, Cory Greene, Former Incarcerated Activist, affirms that black people weren't "immigrants looking for new economic opportunities' and 'didn't just land in places like Compton and Harlem," they flocked there as refugees from terror (quoted in DuVernay, 2016, 28min).

In *In Place/Out of Place*, (1996:5) Geographer, Tim Cresswell discusses how a "small group of powerful people can impose an ideology". DuVernay shows how this ideology can translate into real life as she describes the impact of ALEC through archival footage of news clips of civil rights advocates protesting against what they describe as "a political lobbying group who write laws and give them to Republicans" (quoted in DuVernay, 2016, 53min). Following the emotional portrayal of 17 year old Trayvon Martin, who was shot dead by George Zimmerman under Florida's 2005's 'Stand Your Ground Law', DuVernay reveals that this law was in fact written by ALEC. Visual evidence including footage of State Representative Joe Atkins questioning State Representative Steve Gottwalt on if his proposed bill had any relationship with ALEC. Here, DuVernay shows how select politicians and corporations control fundamental decisions on law making that undoubtedly segregate black people. The suspense of the music accompanied by the voiceover at 56:12 allows the character to speak directly to the viewer, offering

information, explanations and opinions on the black and white logos of the companies involved in ALEC.

One of the most striking parts of *13th* features clips from America's now President Donald Trump, who at the time was speaking at election rallies. In the clip, there is powerful footage of his supporters inciting violence against others, spliced with scenes from the Civil Rights era. DuVernay stated: "I think it's vital to have him in there, because he's taken this country to a place that is going to be studied and considered for a long time. It's going to have repercussions past the moment" (Calvario, 2016)

While the election is now over, *13th* can be seen as an educational tool built on the hope that more increased awareness around segregation and mass incarceration of black people, will lead to positive social change. Trump is now America's 45th President and under his administration, will the American justice system continue to mythologise African American men who have become segregated from society through mass incarceration? Only time will tell, but through the dedicated hard work of the 'Black Lives Matter' who 'are committed to embodying and practicing justice, liberation and peace' (Black Lives Matter 2016), there appears to be a glimmer of hope for equality in the future.

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Blood, Disease and The Political Economies of Blood Donor Policy

Gisele. Eugenia Connell, M.Litt Candidate

Donating blood is a selfless act of goodwill, so we are told. Apart from the odd bag of Tayto crisps, we are inclined to get little in return for blood donation, other than the feeling that we have significantly benefited another in need. The seemingly innocuous concept of altruism has its roots in the writings of Richard Titmuss who, at the height of a 1970s blood product boom and its accompanying hepatitis transfusion- transmission scare argued in short that people who conceived blood as a 'gift' (evoking the classical anthropological notion of social contract as exemplified in the work of Marcel Mauss) and not a commodity, would be less likely to infect the blood supply as they were giving altruistically, and not because they wanted money for drugs or alcohol. In the absence of hepatitis screening, Titmuss advocated for a *pre-emptive* blood strategy, one that would locate risks not so much within the blood, but within donors themselves, all of whom by this logic are presumed guilty until proven innocent. Better quality donors it was felt would yield better quality blood, (Glied, 2010). Differences in the access, utilisation, and technology needed to fractionate blood in the global South however, mean that anonymous voluntary donation is simply not always feasible, and it is here that kinship 'replacement' donors must transfuse blood 'vein- to-vein' as an alternative means for meeting the state's requirements (Mumtaz *et al*, 2012; Street *et al* 2009; Erwin *et al*, 2009).

Michel Foucault (1977) claimed that we could see references of 'governmentality' (or, essentially the preoccupation of postmodern states with altering and directing human behaviour) in the preventative management of smallpox containment which, he argued, could be more easily managed with mass vaccinations and national health campaigns that were targeted at the

population and which securitise bodies *before* the outbreak of disease. Blood now represents one of the greatest bio political anathemas of modern medicine; not only does it affirm life through use in transfusion therapies, but along with sex, has become symptomatic of the perils of disease, danger and death. The HIV/AIDS crisis positioned this "haemato-global-assemblage" (Simpson, 2009) at the centre of a globalising potential of bio political norms. The World Health Assembly has passed over thirty resolutions on blood safety, availability and security all of which attribute safe blood to voluntary, self-sufficient donation with careful donor selection procedures to help militate against disease. The WHO's (2010) glossy production: 'Towards 100% Voluntary Donation' has been foremost in enticing policy-makers of the Global South to adopt a system of safer blood supply, but in reality, is nothing more than an Orientalist minefield that pedals gendered and eroticised imagery used to qualify tropes of an idealised donor. The US President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief - PEPFAR similarly exudes a medicalised military model which taps into a centuries old tradition of civilising narratives. Housed in the Department of State, and launched in the aftermath of 9/11 by then Republican President George Bush, PEPFAR has become a strategic arm of US foreign policy that not only provides the greatest source of aid for a single disease, but in doing so, legitimates US interventionism in affected oil and mining countries (Altman, 2004; O'Manique 2005; Ingram, 2011). Since 2004, PEPFAR has provided approximately $437 million in bilateral aid to transfusion services in fourteen countries identified in sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean as having high HIV prevalence rates, (CDC, 2016). In 2002, the WHO estimated that 5 to 10% of HIV infections were being transmitted through "unsafe blood donation" practices in these countries, even *prior* to the implementation of PEPFAR's blood programme. And yet, as can be seen from PEPFAR's (2006) progress report, an average of only 3.19% of donors were HIV positive in Africa, and that in fact the prevalence of HIV among screened donors was as low as 0.09% in South Africa, 1.60% in Uganda and 4% in Botswana, indicating that the so-called threat posed by marginalised groups to blood infection was overstated at best.

The WHO (2016) reminds us that transfusing whole blood is no longer an "economically efficient way" to make use of someone's 'gift.' A "modern system" it chides, is premised on the fractionation of blood and source plasma into constituent parts making it possible to receive smaller quantities of precisely what is needed and thereby increasing the overall "efficiency" of a unit of blood by about 600%. Douglas Starr (1999: xii) draws striking parallels between blood and oil, observing that at the time of writing, a barrel of crude oil...sells for $12 while the same quantity of whole blood in its comparable 'crude' [or fractionated] state, would sell for more than $20,000 . It would thus appear that the ideal "gift economy" that Titmuss imagined is becoming more difficult to sustain given the ever-growing capital value of "biological fragment[s]" in contemporary society (Waldby 2002:309). Under the existing system, blood banks can even charge hospitals a handsome fee for blood, and in Ireland, the 'biovalue' which this can yield is typically €130 euro, while screening for blood infections on the other hand, costs only about €30. The blood import/export enterprise can even profit from the outbreak of disease as was evinced in a recent article in The Guardian (2015) which lamented the privatisation of an 80% share in the government owned plasma company to Bain Capital, a US Venture fund that could make sizeable profits on Britain's 90% blood imports needs since the outbreak of vCJD or 'mad cow' disease. Public interest cases filed against Ahmedabad Gurajat in India, too, have revealed that legal blood banks have even been contributing to the spread of disease despite having collected blood voluntarily, as many of them were less concerned with stringent screening while profiting up to 1.9 million in the sale of blood components (Anand, 2015). Yet, continuing to legally conceive blood as a 'gift' reserved for the epochs of medicine, rather than a commodity for the market, insulates pharma companies and commercial transfusion services not only from trade law, but from costly cases of public litigation (Havighurst, 2009). This proved to be significantly the case when haemophiliacs affected by the 1980s AIDS crisis in North America struggled to prove in their legal battles against US blood banks that medical 'negligence' had occurred over implied warranty (Bayer and Feldman, 1999).

(Re)Drawing the Boundaries of Citizenship

As a liberal political economy, governmentality also utilised as its coercive dispositif, a range of rational circulations and calculations domestically (Foucault; Ingram (2010; 2011; Walters, 2012). The European Union has rendered unambiguous that; "blood and blood components coming from third [world] countries [should ensure that] there is a quality system in place in the stages preceding importation equivalent to the quality system provided under this Directive." and further stipulates that; "blood supply for transfusion is very safe as the risks from blood-borne pathogens including HIV are minimal because of exclusion guidelines and

extensive blood testing" (Directive 2002/98/EC). Herein lies the admission of one critically dis-analogous point. If we are to take Titmuss's 'Gift Relationship' at face value, then we might accede that blood is a relational fluid that unites us all, and which is everyone's right to give away. Prinker's (2010) point is more pertinent here who claims that altruism is not only made possible when the needs of a society are met through collectivist values that prevail socially, but that the actual type of altruism that prevails in society is a *conditional* one. The anonymity principle between donor and recipient he argues, prevents the "unfettered altruism" of every able-bodied person willing (or wishing) to donate. Lengthy donor questionnaires forensically examine donors' place of birth, travel history, recent sexual activity and a litany of other practices that invite one to do an archaeological dig of all elements of their past behaviour. What results from this 'space of confession' is excessive and discriminatory donor exclusions based on race and sexual orientation, some of which are only currently being challenged, and not least here in Ireland (Strong 2010; Connell, 2017).

Blood Services on the other hand will typically paint a monochromatic picture of power by claiming that their selection criteria is standardised, fair, and in the interests of "safeguarding" a national blood supply. Indeed the blood they claim to be interested in is secular, clinical and devoid of cultural context (Simpson, 2009). But "foreign blood" has always been viewed as suspect. Not only were Haitians (regardless of US citizenship) publicly banned from donating blood on US soil at the height of the AIDS crisis, but in the early 1990s, the Israeli state routinely collected voluntary donations from Ethiopians while secretly discarding them under a ban unpublicised until late 1996, (O'Neill. 2003; Nelkin 1999; Farmer; 2006; Fouron, 2011). What these policies amount to for certain groups is a naturalised link between race, blood and risk that is acutely felt through exclusions that are cast as an accepted or inevitable part of the blood donation practice. Ultimately for Titmuss, the Gift Relationship was about redrawing the boundaries of citizenship in order to establish blood as a no longer universally donatable substance. At the heart of his policy was not the kind of philanthropic or ethical altruism in blood donation that one might expect, but a rational political economy of power designed to sort the circulation of blood and bodies, and nullify their potential harms to the system.

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Factors Influencing Earth's Mean Annual Temperature at varied locations

Nathan Kane, 2nd year

The Earth's mean annual surface temperatures vary greatly from one point on the globe to another. There are several outlying factors that adversely affect annual global surface temperatures, namely, latitude, geographical position, time of year and altitude.

The latitude of a region plays an important role in the control of surface temperatures of an area and in turn the annual mean temperature. As stated by Tarbuck (2014) the latitude of a region is responsible for the amount of insolation received by the surface. This is due to variations in the Sun's angle at different latitudes which gives rise to variations in daylight hours and the intensity the surface is receiving solar radiation and thus, for how long and how intensely the surface is being heated. During daylight hours, Insolation dominates the heating of the Earth's surface. This is due to the surfaces much higher exposure to the sun's radiation. Countries at latitudes close to the equator experience many more annual daylight hours and much greater heating of the surface as the sun's rays intensely radiate vertically towards the ground than those at higher latitudes. Thus, surfaces at higher latitudes experience less intense heating as the Sun's rays are angled and dispersed over a much greater area and the surface is subjected to much less annual daylight hours. (Tarbuck, 2014). Therefore, countries located at higher latitudes experience lower annual surface temperatures. Take Ireland for example; mean surface temperatures are recorded to be 10 degrees Celsius and annual daylight to be 1200 hours (Met Eireann, 2016). Compare this to a country like Ecuador which has a mean annual temperature of approximately 25 degrees Celsius and is subjected to 2058 daylight hours (Climatemps,2016), and the noticeable differences in mean temperatures between the regions is understandable. However, the difference in latitude is not the only factor controlling annual mean surface temperatures.

If one is to take the cities of Eureka, California, and New York city as an example, it is evident that there is more than just latitude at play when understanding difference in variations in annual mean surface temperatures (Charlton,2015). Both cities are coastally positioned and are located at the similar latitude. However, the annual temperature range for Eureka is much smaller than that of New York. Yet, the mean annual surface temperature for New York city is 19 degrees celsius greater than that of Eureka. There is clearly another influence on the region's surface temperatures. A factor said to be largely responsible for differences of mean surface temperatures at regions of similar geographical positions or latitudes, is the influence of prevailing winds. At coastal regions like New York city and Eureka, prevailing winds blow either from the ocean towards the land (windward coasts) or from the land towards the ocean (leeward coasts). According to Lutgens (2014) this gives rise to variations in temperature as follows; water has a much higher specific heat capacity than the land. This results in the ocean taking much longer to both heat up and cool down. While on the other hand the land's surface heats and cools more rapidly than water. This leads to prevailing winds having a vastly different temperature range depending from where they blow. Therefore, windward coasts like Eureka experience cool summers and mild winters as prevailing winds maintain relatively stable temperatures year round. While, on the other hand leeward coasts such as New York are subjected to more extreme temperature changes as the winds rapidly heat up over the land surface during the summer and rapidly cool down during the winter. Resulting in regions of similar latitude experiencing very different temperature ranges.

Furthermore, the continentality of a region is an important control in the mean surface temperatures (Wilby, 2005). As mentioned previously the land on the earth's surface heats and cools more rapidly than the

Earth's oceans. This leads to landlocked regions such as Moscow or locations that are far from coastlines displaying an increased range of temperatures as compared to temperature ranges recorded in areas of maritime influence.

This is because the heating and cooling of the land's surface occurs in a relatively thin layer on soil at the surface. This prohibits heating from the sun's rays as soils generally are poor conductors of heat. This means that surface temperatures vary greatly throughout the year and lead to annual temperatures greater than those of regions near the ocean (Sweeney, 2005).

On a broader scale, variations in solar radiation reaching the surface throughout the year, produce differences in the earth's surface energy budget and consequently lead to changes in mean surface temperatures on a seasonal basis. Throughout the year variations in the distance between the Earth and the Sun give rise to the Seasons we experience on the Earth's surface (Lyle, 1980). Steady changes in daylight hours' account for variations in temperatures between the seasons, notably Summer and Winter. According to Tarbuck (2005) during winter in the Northern hemisphere, the earth is angled away from the sun and so is subjected to less insolation than it is during the summer as day length is significantly reduced. Thus, leading to a decrease in mean surface temperatures during the winter. Whereas, during the same period, the Earth's southern hemisphere experiences Summer as the Earth is angled towards the sun and so is in receipt of greater amounts of insolation as the day lengths are longer and so mean surface temperatures are higher, and vice verse.

During the annual solstices which occur twice yearly, the earth's axis is tilted almost directly at or away from the sun. On July 22nd the earth is positioned so that the northern hemisphere is angled 23.5 degrees toward the Sun. During this time the Sun's rays radiate vertically at the Tropic of Cancer this time in the known as the summer solstice for those in the Northern hemisphere. Whereas, on December 21st the Sun's rays radiate vertically at 23.5 degrees south of the equator in the Tropic of Capricorn. This is known as the Winter solstice to those in the North but as the Summer solstice to those in the South. This explains why mid latitudinal regions tend to be warmest in summer, and display quite high annual mean temperatures (Tarbuck, 2014).

The altitude of a region is also important factor in the control of surface temperatures. According to O' Hare (2005) two cities which demonstrate the influence of altitude on mean surface temperatures are Guayaquil and Quito, both situated in Ecuador. Both cities are located in close proximity and near the equator, however, each have very different mean annual temperature ranges. Quito as an annual mean temperature of 13 degrees, whereas Guayaquil displays an annual mean surface temperature of 25 degrees. According to Lutgens (2014) the relatively large difference in mean temperatures is due to the cities respective elevations. Guayaquil is positioned only 12 meters above sea level, whereas, Quito on the other hand is positioned 2,800 meters above sea level. Areas of high altitude such as Quito, are subjected to the principle that is the normal lapse rate. This means that surface temperatures drop by 6.5 degrees Celsius for every 1 kilometre ascended through the troposphere, and thus explains the difference between mean annual surface temperatures of the two cities (Sweeney, 2014).

The reasons for the variations in mean annual temperatures across the globe can be understood and described by the mentioned factors above. However, one must note that there is a multitude of other factors that could be considered when understanding these variations in temperature.

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Can living near water improve our health?

Julie O'Driscoll, 3rd year

As Abraham *et al*. state in rather simplistic terms, "An appealing landscape contributes to people's health" (Abraham *et al*, 2009:59). Can living near "blue space", or water, improve our health in terms of our physical, mental and social well-being? And if so, how and to what extent? This article will offer definitions, analysis and discussion based on research relevant to this subject.

The term 'blue space' can be defined as "all visible surface waters in space" e.g. lakes, rivers, fountains, the ocean etc. (Volker and Kistemann, 2011:449). It is analogical to green space, i.e. natural areas such as parks and forests. The World Health Organisation describes health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (1948, cited in Volker and Kistemann, 2011:114), in other words it is salutogenetic. Given this particular definition, which acknowledges that health goes beyond the absence of disease, blue space can have an impact on human health by improving our psychological wellbeing, physical fitness, social fulfilment and happiness in general.

There have been a number of studies carried out on the benefits of blue space on human health and wellbeing. One such study, carried out in England by Wheeler *et al*. (2012), found that people that lived closer to the coast reported better health. This may be due to the increased level of physical activity and mental stimulation experienced by people that live in such areas. It is also possible that the people living closest to the coast are simply wealthier and therefore can afford better health care. However the study found that the health benefits of ocean proximity were greatest for socioeconomically deprived communities (Lewis, 2013), which shows that ocean proximity is beneficial to human health regardless of income level. Suval (2014) offers a more scientific explanation for some of the health benefits of living near the coast. Minerals and negatively charged ions in the sea air reduce stress and improve concentration, salt in the water preserves tryptamine, serotonin and melatonin levels in the brain, which assist in decreasing depression, and research has demonstrated that the sounds of waves alter the brain's wave patterns, producing a state of relaxation. Another study involving floatation tanks found that immersion in water can lead to significant reductions in physical and mental stress levels. "The potential to bathe and swim in water allows a very different interaction with the natural environment than can be achieved on land" (Rew, 2008 cited in White *et al*., 2010:491). Physically immersing one's self in water may cause positive mental stimulation.

The importance of fresh water for our physiological health is obvious; we cannot survive without it. However, it has more health benefits than simply keeping us alive. For example, it provides nutrient-rich seafood, unusual pharmaceuticals, and ecosystem services that allow for leisure activities (Wheeler *et al*., 2012). There is a connection between the coast and increased opportunities for physical activity. Swimming, jogging, volleyball, surfing and other forms of exercise associated with beaches and the ocean can generate positive mood states, reducing stress and improving physiological functioning (Thompson Coon *et al*., 2011 and Hartig *et al*., 2003 cited in Wheeler *et al*., 2012). People living near the coast, or any form of blue space, may be more inclined to exercise on a regular basis, which directly benefits their physical health, and indirectly benefits their mental health.

White *et al*. (2013:102) suggests that the benefits of living near the coast are "more strongly associated with reductions in negative outcomes (i.e. mental distress) than increases in positive ones (i.e. feelings of well-being)". With regard to stress reduction; people living near the sea are more inclined to visit it, which is important because time spent by the sea is associated with particularly strong feelings of rejuvenation and stress relief. This may be due to the relaxing visual and sound properties associated with water (White *et al*., 2010). According to Ulrich *et al*. (1991 cited in Abraham, *et al*., 2009) looking at a landscape that is perceived as pleasant, such as a beach, reduces the negative feelings and thoughts induced by stress exposure, and replaces them with positive feelings and thoughts such as interest, cheerfulness and calmness. Blue space can therefore be considered a form of therapy and an effective aid in stress reduction. Abraham, *et al*., (2009) states that numerous studies have found that people prefer natural landscapes such as beaches, waters, forests etc., as a setting for recovery from mental fatigue due to their high restorative potential. An example of one such study is by Berto, (2005) cited in Abraham, *et al*., 2009), who used visual confrontation with pictures of natural landscapes to examine their restorative effect on mental fatigue in students. The results of these studies

support the theory that blue space decreases mental distress.

"Our innate relationship with water goes far deeper than economics, food or proximity" (Nichols, 2014:10). Humans have an emotional connection to blue space. We are inspired, thrilled and soothed by it. As humans, we seem to know instinctively that it makes us healthier and happier, reduces our stress levels and brings us peace (Nichols, 2014). To quote the famous poet W.H. Auden (1956 cited in Nichols, 2014:8) "Thousands have lived without love, not one without water". Throughout history our emotional connection with water has been referred to in many pieces of art and poetry. Another layer to the emotional benefit of blue space is its interpretation as a sacred substance for some spiritual/religious groups. Water is used in important rituals involving birth, marriage and death. It is also used as a symbol for healing, particularly in Christianity. Foley (2011 cited in Volker and Kistemann, 2011) mentions that there is an emotional need for places of healing connected with water, such as holy wells. As humans, blue space offers us emotional support through our own positive associations with it.

In addition to the physical and psychological benefits, blue space can enhance social integration by facilitating social contact, collective work, community building, social networks and mutual trust (Abraham, Sommerhalder and Abel, 2009). By collectively experiencing nature in the form of waterscapes, a type of bonding occurs that brings people together. Studies on the health-promoting impacts of community gardening, or green space, found that it fostered development of community networks, social support and motivated people to engage in their community (Abraham *et al*., 2009). Blue space benefits social wellbeing by promoting these positive social interactions.

In this industrialised age, most of the world's population live in cities (Rees and Wackernagel, 1996 cited in Volker and Kistemann, 2011). The potential of blue space in built up areas, or urban blue, regarding restorative health has been underestimated in the past. However, White *et al*.'s (2010 cited in Augustin, 2010) study based on how much people were willing to pay for a hypothetical hotel room with a particular view (of green, blue, or urban spaces) discovered that both green and urban spaces with water were preferred to similar spaces without water. In the past, emphasis has been placed on the importance of green space in urban areas, however new perspectives have shown that healthy urban spaces can take the form of green, or blue space. In a study carried out in Germany (Volker and Kistemann, 2013), the benefits of urban green and urban blue were found to have many similarities, however some health-enhancing effects turned out to be more prominent for urban blue, including enhanced contemplation, emotional bonding, participation, and physical activity. The resulting positive health impacts mean that urban blue can be considered a therapeutic landscape, in the same way urban green can.

So, to answer the question, of whether living near water can improve our health, the research presented in this article proves that it can. It promotes mental health through attention restoration, stress reduction and by evoking positive emotions; physical health by encouraging physical activity, in both urban and coastal areas; and social wellbeing through positive social interaction.

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Critical Review of 'New spaces of inpatient care for people with mental illness: A complex 'rebirth' of the clinic?'(Curtis *et al*., 2009).

Neil Marshall, MA Geography

This paper seeks to review and critique a case study analysis undertaken by Curtis *et al*. (2009). This examination will identify the setting and subject matter of the Curtis *et al*. paper along with analysing the methodology used for the case study. Furthermore, the key findings from the study will be determined and analysed and any omissions or bias which may have occurred will be critiqued. The aforementioned study was compiled in the setting of a newly built psychiatric care unit in a deprived area of inner London. The focus of the study was to analyse three closely interrelated themes in relation to the facility. The themes addressed were: the tensions that exist between the concept of care in the community and the reality of the transition of patients returning to the community when they are ready; how staff and patients try to instil a managed permeability in order to manage the connections between the facility and the 'outside' community; and thirdly, the unit as a stable feature and new space of refuge in an otherwise unstable and unpredictable geographical experience for those diagnosed with mental illness (*ibid.*). Consequently, these factors combine to address the subject matter of the benefits and downfalls of locating a new space of inpatient care for mental illness both geographically and philosophically closer to the local community.

The methodology used in the research was to undertake unstructured interviews with the users, staff, management and consultant psychiatrists of the new London facility, with the users being recruited via a local voluntary organisation for psychiatric service users who had experience of using the new facility (*ibid.*). There were only two specific questions in the interviews as the interviewees were asked what particular features of the hospital they felt were good for the well-being of users and staff, and what features they felt were not so good (*ibid.*). This methodology shows a clear qualitative approach to the research and although a lack of prepared questions is evident, the unstructured discussions provide a potential avenue for unscheduled follow-up questions to be asked which could contribute additional data to the study.

The first theme addressed by the interview results was that of the transition of patients from the facility back to the local community. The findings show this to be a largely negative response from the perspectives of the patients and staff. Patients stated that they felt like they were 'dropped like a wet rag' when discharged and that there was no offer of a social worker along with a complete lack of any aftercare support (*ibid.*). This shows that there is a geographical disconnect between the facility as a place and the wider space of the community into which the patients are discharged. However, the consultants did admit that the transition from place to space was a balancing act between keeping patients too long and exposing them to the outside world too soon, and claim that there are efforts to bring the two elements together as occupational therapy is offered to users such as trips to the gym or local shopping street (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, this is merely preparation for living in the outside space and not an attempt to interlink the facility, a place with support for patients, and the community, which has little to no support. Therefore, such facilities need to be viewed as unbounded nodes within networks in society which cannot have geographical limits (Cummins *et al*., 2007). This would allow mental health care facilities such as this to truly connect to their local community surroundings in order to create a fluid sense of place and ultimately reduce the anxiety that users experience when making this transition.

The second theme identified by the research was how the facility has been designed to facilitate managed permeability. Although a lack of geographical connections through services such as aftercare when the patients were released was perceived, whilst the users were in the facility there was shown to be an active permeability to the unit, giving the patients more freedom to exit the place of the facility and enter the spatial territory of the community at will. However, Curtis *et al*. identify that this process seems to be a one-way street as although unlocked wards allow patients to leave freely so that they 'don't feel locked up', there are restrictions on who can come in from the 'outside' as visitors are strictly monitored and have to report to reception in order to gain access to the facility (Curtis *et al*., 2009). This is due to the ease at which drugs and dealers can access these facilities (Quirk *et al*., 2006). Consequently, the design of this new facility and processes of surveillance which focuses less on the 'insiders' or patients and more on 'outsiders' indicates that this place is far removed from the prison-style asylums of the 18th and 19th centuries. These institutions

were spaces of power in institutional settings in which 'inmates' were vigilantly monitored and controlled, some in a Panopticon-style design likened to a maximum security prison where all 'inmates' could be scrutinized from a central surveillance point (Curtis, 2010). However, this new one-way permeability design of unlocked wards and reduced monitoring of users allows the facility to work as a reverse of the institutions of the past and act as a safety net for patients who may feel that the system allows them freedom and mobility but also sanctuary from the outside local community if it becomes too daunting, making this new facility truly is a place of refuge. This in turn allows users to test their own geographical boundaries by allowing them to attempt to turn the local community into a place that they can frequent rather than a space in which they are just abandoned.

The final theme analysed within the research was how the facility operated as a stable feature in the lives of its users. The interview findings derived that patients formed a close bond with the new hospital building due to being given their own bed area which was their own responsibility to maintain and keep tidy (Curtis *et al*., 2009). Although this attachment was positive, a consultant stated that it can be detrimental when users come to leave as they then experience anxiety of detachment from the facility (*ibid.*). Therefore, the study uncovers both the positive and negative aspects of the facility serving as a stable presence in users' lives. Although they see it as a homely and therapeutic communal geographic place, there is a jolt of reality felt when the transition is made from that safe environment into the less stable outside world. This is where increased permeability, community links and support are needed in order to pave the way for a smooth transition for users.

The study communicated the key themes and related findings with reasonable balance although more data could have been sought from the users as to how they viewed the facility as a place or space. Overall this lack of user opinion caused a slight imbalance towards more staff and consultant viewpoints being utilized for the study. In turn, this portrayed a slight bias in favour of the staff and management, in particular their views on the running of the facility. Furthermore, as the discussions were unstructured, there could have been more questions directed at the staff and managers as to how the hospital could improve the patients' transition into the community in order to reduce anxiety. The study could have probed more into asking how the transition could be improved in order to increase the fluidity of sense of place and identity between the facility and local community. In addition, a main theme focussed on how permeability was managed and controlled, but no data was gained in relation to how permeability could be safely increased or encouraged within the facility. Apart from the information about unlocked wards there was little data gathered in the form of ideas from staff and management about how patients could further connect with the wider geographic spaces, places and identities of the local community. Consequently, the three themes of transition, permeability and the facility as a stable presence were all addressed. However, the study could have developed more questions in the methodology phase which would have driven a deeper analysis of any potential new solutions for the facility in relation to how patient transition could be better facilitated and how increased permeability of the facility could be implemented.

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Supporting Women in Geography, Ireland

Members of SWIG Ireland and Dr. Rezvan Moghaddam at a recent seminar 'Women's Movement in Iran' which took place in February at Maynooth University. SWIG Ireland established in May 2016, is part of a network of similar organisations across the globe for the purpose of creating a supporting network for academics. The purpose of SWIG is to empower and support women within the discipline of Geography through representation, support, career development, training, and other resources. SWIG creates a space for women and supporters of women in geography to come together for intellectual, professional, and personal support. Its goal is not only to underline and tackle inequalities that many women continue to face in academia, but to celebrate the work of women within the discipline. SWIG aims to do this through promoting the discipline of geography to other women within, and outside of the University, and by representing women within the discipline of geography. This is done by providing information to members, sponsoring female geographers as speakers and/or guests of the University, and sharing their research, experience and achievements.

SWIG Ireland will host a 'Welcome and Networking Event' on Wednesday 3 May the evening before the opening of the Conference of Irish Geographers. During the CIG, which runs from 4 – 6 May, SWIG Ireland are organising a themed session on Women in Geography. Additionally, the group's first AGM will be held in Cork during the Conference. If you would like any additional information about SWIG please contact swig.ireland@gmail.com or follow them on twitter @SWIGIreland

A Selection of Pictures from Irish Fieldtrips in 2016


km An Láithreach
20 LARAGH
R756
Cillín Chaoimhín km
HOLLYWOOD 7
R756 N81
Gleann Dá Loch
GLENDALOUGH
Baile Coimín km
BLESSINGTON 17

Glacial Geomorphology Fieldtrip March 2017

Lanzarote January 2017

Second Year Fieldtrip March 2017
Kilkenny; Waterford; Cork; and Limerick

Milieu

Reflections on Lanzarote: A field trip for second year geography.

James R Floyd Jnr., 3rd year

The following is an excerpt from the journal I kept during the course of the Lanzarote module field trip for second year Geography students. While a great deal of data and information was extracted from field notes taken during visits to local sites and buildings and transposed into the original reflections journal, much of what will be written here is a revised edition to make this a more readable piece.

First impression of Lanzarote as one steps off the plane is that of a very touristy location. Much of the industry and available space in any populated area is dedicated to feeding, housing, transporting and entertaining the foreign visitor. There are more busses, taxis, and rental fleet vehicles than privately owned vehicles on the road. Every language imaginable floats through the air as we step out into the afternoon sun with our bags. There is a very alkaline taste to the air much like baby powder. Once the bus deposited us at the apartments (Costa Teguise Nazaret) we made introductions and received our marching orders for the morning. Once all were settled and rooms were assigned, I decided to go for a little wander through the immediate area. The 'Spar' which was located just outside the entrance to the apartments was familiar. There were products from all over the world and for far lower prices than someone coming from the United States. Drink, tobacco, products of luxury and vice were all much cheaper than one would expect. Twelve euros a litre for rum made me take a step back and laugh a bit at staying completely sober for the entire trip.

After an early night and an early rise, I was able to snap a few photos of the sunrise over the ocean which was quite beautiful in contrast to the volcanic landscape surrounding me. After breakfast the group met up to start the journey.

The first stop was De Castillo de Santa Barbara, a 16th century outpost built on the rim of an older volcano. Here, my group was assigned to look at adaptations the local flora has made to deal with the arid conditions of the island. We found several peculiar looking plants including one specimen of Ficoide Ice plant.

(Ficoide ice plant)

The plant itself stores water as droplets on the exterior of the leaves. Second stop for the day was the cactus gardens. Far beyond the gardens themselves was a good example of a lava tube; a geomorphological feature which was formed during the 1730-1736 period of volcanism which is responsible for much of the shape of the island today. A lava tube is formed when the outer crust of a lava stream cools at a faster rate than its centre. Gas builds up behind the liquid lava and blows it out, leaving large tubes and caves.

The cactus garden itself is an homage to the agricultural history of the island as it is planted with large numbers of prickly pear cactus. The cactus itself and its fruit is not the focus of all the effort however, rather the infestation of the cochineal insect which feeds upon it. The insect is a small beetle which has an interesting defense mechanism; it produces a deep red coloured chemical which is responsible for the red clothing dye, carmine. The colour itself is rather important to the Catholic Church as it is the colour of the robes of a cardinal. While there we were informed of the reason the agricultural sector use deep layers of black volcanic pebbles to cover areas of plantation. The stones protect the soil from convection drying by the wind as well as catching and condensing water from the air. Soil temperature and humidity data we collected showed this as fact.

(group member posing for photos outside lava tube)

After lunch in Orzola, we visited a Malpaise, or 'bad land', which butted up against a beach of sand where we were to look at the growth of lichens as well as the difference in plants growing among the stones versus plants growing in the salty Saharan Sand which had blown in to form the beach. The lichen were plentiful and showed a surprising degree of variability. The plants in the stony area were all rather soft while still displaying signs of being attuned to the arid environment with its small leaves and woody stems. The beach however showed thicker walls of the leaves, meant to keep the salt spray of the ocean from sucking out water through osmosis.

(Beachside MalPaise)

The last stop for the day was at the agricultural museum, a personal favourite as I come from an agricultural community and always enjoy seeing how different cultures met challenges posed by their respective lands. From baggy clothes meant to deal with the back-breaking heat of the day to camels and goats, each item on display was a testament to the tenacity of the human race in its desperate mission to make a life for itself on whatever patch of land it lands on. There were fields of the stony pebbles arranged with the ubiquitous soccos, or low, circular stone walls designed to catch and condense water from the air and percolate it down into the vines of the Lanzarote wine trade. Inside the main house one could see evidence of recycled wood from ships used to build the house. There were pottery items made from local clays as well as grinding cracking devices which have been used since the beginning of human ingenuity to crack and grind grains, these particular specimens made from local basalts. Inside the winery, one could smell the musty reek of grape and yeasts working to produce a particularly fine white wine which we were treated to at the end of the tour. The most memorable moment of this stop was when one of our group admitted, excitedly, to never having seen a live chicken, at which point he proceeded to spend most of the time at the agricultural museum trying to catch and pet a chicken. It was infectious, seeing a twenty-year-old man act like a four year old in perfectly innocent glee.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the three lecturers John Coll, Martina Roche, and Bettina Steffanini for the well guided and highly educational trip out to the Canary Islands. I would also like to thank the other students for helping make the trip so entertaining. We spent four more days in as many places, seeing the sights, learning of the history of both the culture and landscape of Lanzarote, it was enough to renew my interest in geography as an art as well as a science. It is a fond recollection I have of the Manrique foundation, Porta del Carmen, Mount Timanfaya and other places in and around the island and I encourage all students to take time to go and learn about the islands themselves.

(nightly discussions of the day's events)

My life in Lund - 7 months and counting

Caolan Leneghan, 3rd Year Erasmus Studies

It's been quite a journey since my Ryanair flight out of Dublin on a sunny August morning. Looking back now at a nervous and excited me I can laugh. Looking around the departure gate for a somewhat student-looking person that maybe, just maybe, is going to Lund also. Little did I know at the time, there were five of us on that flight doing exactly the same thing. The first months would be best depicted in a summer holiday brochure: sun, the beach and the idyllic student summer experience. Looking out my window now, this seems far removed from the current climate. It is cold, raining and very much like Ireland.

Studying at Lund University posed its challenges but overall I can say that I would most certainly come back if given the opportunity. The freedom in my schedule and class choices has given me a greater perspective on what I would like to do in the future, although I am by no means closer to finding my thesis title. These last seven months I have found new interests and built on previous ones. Studying alongside people of all nationalities has given my experience that true international touch. A small city by European standards of roughly 100,000 people, Lund is bursting in multi-culturalism and yet still holds a lot in its Swedish traditions. I don't know why they have a decomposing fish (Surströmming) as a meal and how it can come in different flavours. But I've tried them all. The university and student organisations cooperate to give an amazing immersion into Swedish life. A cup of coffee has become a ritual in the morning and eating caviar like it was Kerrygold is something I've grown used to.

Living as a student in Lund is about being part of more than an academic community, from the entire international network, right down to your Swedish neighbour. Lund for me is an ever-growing family. The ideology of togetherness and cooperation is very strong, maybe due to our limited supply of washing machines, which has brought together both ourselves and our clothing on more than one occasion. However, red t-shirts and purple socks have become a trend that will stick for the next several months at least.

So what is it like? Well to that question I have yet to find a good answer. I hope this short piece has done it some justice. However, the last seven months have given me a list of words to use when the question will arise and a catalogue of memories to choose from. Although I'm just over the halfway mark here in Lund I am far from halfway finished with Sweden and my Erasmus adventure. The best advice to anyone would be to go for it. Explore the country, engage with the people and enjoy every minute. I have learned to take the chances and the deals, a road trip to Hamburg or nine days in Lapland; you never know where you will be the following weekend. Cycling your bike to the beach or through the snow and occasionally pushing it. Life in Lund is as diverse as the people staying here. In a way this is what makes it a place worth being and for me worth living.

Exploring the Reasons Why Ebola Featured So Prominently in the News

Christopher Nand, 2nd year

Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), formally known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever (or EHF), is a rare viral disease most common to Central Africa, which currently has no cure or vaccine (WHO, 2016). According to the Mayo Clinic (2014), its effects can be devastating on the human body with symptoms including nausea and vomiting, diarrhoea, chest pain, stomach pain, bleeding (usually from the eyes), and internal bleeding. The survival rate for EVD can be extremely low with some documented cases having a fatality rate of up to 90% (Weyer *et al*, 2015). It is a zoonotic virus (primarily believed to be carried by fruit bats), which means that human infection is usually due to an outbreak. These outbreaks are usually caused by person-to-person transmission, which includes direct contact with the body, bodily fluids (such as blood, saliva, sweat, urine and semen) and even the contaminated clothing or items that have been in contact with infected people (Barron *et al*, cited in MacNeil and Rollin, 2012). EVD contraction is quite low, even in Central Africa where it is primarily located, especially compared to other neglected tropical diseases (NTD). It is important to note that poverty and rural locations are two characteristics commonly associated with outbreaks of EVD and, up until recently, it was almost unheard of to have a case of Ebola, never mind an outbreak in the Western world. Ebola stayed out of the news for many years but in 2014 there was a sudden increase in media

attention. Given these facts, the reasons Ebola became a media epidemic will be investigated.

Even though the risk of contraction was so low, why was there so much media coverage given to the disease? This is a particular interesting question, which involves looking more deeply into the causes of outbreaks. Ebola outbreaks are difficult to detect in the most affected of regions as these regions are so prone to more NTDs, some of which carry similar symptoms. This is due to their having the characteristics of being poverty stricken and far away from the nearest medical facility, i.e. being resource-limited (MacNeil and Rollin, 2012). Months can go by without authorities even knowing about cases, as these areas are so remote. This is a common trend found when studying EVD, and is a major contributory reason as to why large EVD outbreaks still occur in Central Africa. Control of outbreaks requires a certain level of medical coordination but more often than not this is almost nil in the immediate areas. However, despite this, the risk to 'Western' populations was, and still is, extremely low. Why is that the case? Simply, the chance of an infected person or people making it to the 'west' is slim. This is due to the fact, as previously mentioned, that the high risk areas are poor, remote, Central African regions, and transmission is via person-to-person contact. The first major news coverage began in 2014. News outlets all over the world were covering the 'Ebola story'. The question is why now? According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2015), the Ebola virus was first discovered in 1976 in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Thus, this was not the first sighting of EVD. One reason entered the public eye was due to the fact the outbreak in West Africa in late 2013 was the largest and most fatal Ebola outbreak in recorded history (WHO, cited in Weyer *et al*, 2015). It was so deadly that, by August 2014, the World Health Organisation (WHO) had declared the Ebola epidemic in West Africa a Public Health Emergency of International Concern or PHEIC (ECDC, 2016).

The media's influence on the public's perception of the risk involved only served to fuel the public fear and anxiety. The media loves diseases, and Ebola was just one of many diseases that caught the attention of the media at the time. Swine Flu was all across the news a few years previously, and then Ebola came into the spotlight, despite being in no way as widespread as the aforementioned disease. Up until only very recently the 'flash new disease' was the ZIKA virus, and there will almost definitely be a new one to take its place. Due to the horrific symptoms, such as internal and external haemorrhaging and very high mortality rate, Ebola made for 'excellent' headlines. A very concerning fact is that, while there are some treatments for EVD, there is no cure or vaccine. As discussed, EVD has been contained mostly to Western and Central Africa. Suddenly, a case of transmission appeared outside of Africa, in Spain. The first case of Ebola virus disease acquired outside Africa, according to Parra *et al* (2014), in a report written at the time of detection, through a patient whom, after being transported from Sierra Leone to Spain for treatment, died and transmitted EVD to a nurse (who had not been outside of Spain) who was preparing the body for burial. This is the first moment when alarm bells started to ring. Following this, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States all had patients testing positive for Ebola. All patients were later cleared of life threatening symptoms except for one death in the United States. This is truly a significant factor in the widespread acknowledgement of Ebola and the exponential increase in fear levels that cannot be overlooked. Even though almost all cases were contracted by individuals who were in Africa previously, and the spread of fatal Ebola did not take place on a global scale, the media had already driven fear into people. In 2014 for example, CNN labelled Ebola 'The ISIS of Biological Agents'. This kind of message is not forgotten easily by the viewer and is an example of how news outlets can do more harm than good.

What was the role of social media in amplifying the fear of Ebola? Social media nowadays has a significant role in every aspect of everyday life, the EVD 'crisis' is no different. Crisis is in quotes not because it was not a crisis - it absolutely was. It was considerably tragic for the people and countries involved in outbreaks of fatal EVD, it affected them in every aspect of life, be it health, economically, socially, etc. The matter of the fact is that it just was not a *real* crisis in the 'western' world, or majority of the world for that matter. There was not mass sickness and horrendous death at every corner. Fung *et al* (2014: 2207) highlight an important divide between the informed and uninformed, and rich and poor countries when they write that *"*twitter traffic shows an imbalance across the digital divide; there were more tweets about Ebola in the USA, where transmission was contained, than in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, where there was and remains a continuing epidemic*"*. A day after the first U.S case of EVD, Twitter posts about Ebola reached a peak of 1.5 million, 21 times as many as the day before the first U.S. case (Rodriguez-Morales, 2015). While social media can be a fantastic way of communicating with people all over the world, it also has downsides. Unlike most reputable news outlets, people on social media can feel less obligated to fact-check and

ensure that what they are saying is not false. One single tweet from a misinformed person can create a tidal wave of panic that reaches the entire world. On social media a person can make the news. It limits the relevant authorities in properly carrying out their jobs. People can be alienated and stigmatised for being in close proximity to an infected area or a suspected case. However, there are also major benefits. Important safety bulletins and education about EVD and other diseases could be delivered instantly to thousands if not millions. Social media certainly raised the attention paid to EVD worldwide. As timing is crucial when it comes to EVD, social media was a vital tool in identifying patients, isolating them, and making sure the public are aware of the precautions needed to be taken, and it even had a part to play in ending EVD in Nigeria (Markus, 2014).

In conclusion, there were many reasons why Ebola was so prominent in the media. Perhaps it had to do with the new cyber age we are in, where everyone who's anyone is connected to the internet or news outlets in some way shape or form. Or perhaps it was the sheer fear of such a horrendous death that shook people to the core. There may even be factors that have been left out or overlooked in this investigation. While Ebola is still not eradicated and continues to flourish in previously mentioned locations, as of 29 March 2016, the WHO announced that Ebola or EVD outbreak in West Africa was no longer a PHEIC.

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Gun safety in America - a social problem

Michelle Melia, 2nd year

Figure 1 Source: Moms Demand Action (2013)

Advertisement is a powerful medium to communicate with the public on a large scale. We live in an increasingly mediated world, where goods and services are targeted at us at every turn. Usually advertisements use extravagant language that draws us, the public, in, with words such as 'exclusivity' or 'luxury'. The advertisement shown in figure 1 is quite the opposite. It uses simple language and lets the image alone send a powerful message. This advertisement is not trying to sell a product, but rather an idea. What is being sold here is a social problem within the United States. Before fully grasping what the advertisement is about, the image of two children - one holding a book and another holding such a lethal weapon - yet with no expression on either of their faces, as if the two objects are similar, is quite alarming. There is no exact figure for the amount of guns in the US but there are thought to be about 300 million guns which are held by a staggering one third of the total population. That is almost enough guns for every person in the country, including children (BBC News, 2016). Guns are such a normal part of life for American citizens you can understand why the children in the picture seem so unaffected by the presence of the firearm.

These children are in what looks like a library, a safe place, but with guns present how safe can it be? The advertisement thus sends a powerful message to wider society, ranging from people with children to the government to change gun laws. The advertisement is run by a group of concerned mothers in the US entitled 'Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America'. When taken in combination, the image and the writing on the picture is so powerful that it should make anybody stand back and think. At first you would think that the gun would be banned to protect the children. However, this is not the case, and, due to picturing of a bottle of wine on its front cover, it is actually the Little Red Riding Hood book that is kept out of schools in the US.

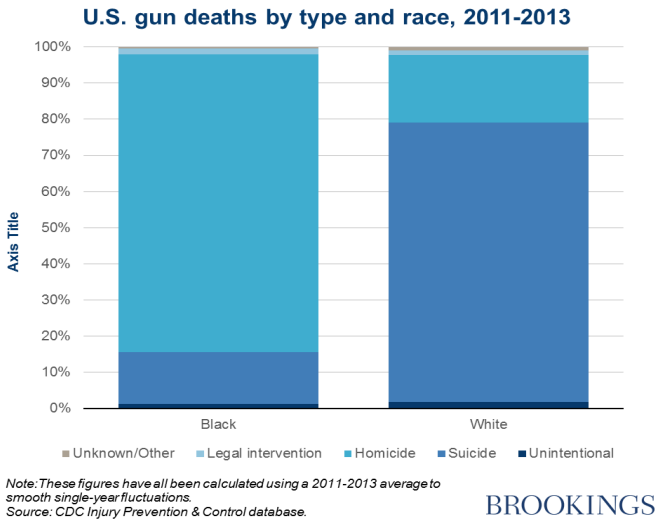

Figure 2 Source: Reeves and Holmes (2016)

The level of gun-violence in the US is striking. For example "guns were responsible for 33,599 deaths in 2014, of which 63%were suicides, 34% homicides, and 2% were unintentional shootings" (Winker, *et al*, 2016:578). Throughout my research I did not uncover any deaths caused by the book 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Moreover, the topic of gun use in the US is directly intertwined with, and directly implicated in, high levels of social segregation. Between 2011 and 2013, the largest group killed by gun violence were black men killed by homicide (about 82%). Meanwhile, white men who died due to gun violence during this period died by suicide (77% of all gun related deaths within white male population). The levels of racial inequality within society with regard to gun violence are striking. On top of this, the relationship between suicide and open gun policies is concerning as mental health issues become increasingly common.

The use of guns in America, and related levels of deaths, has caused a numbing effect on the public and this advertisement demonstrates that it is more serious than anyone cares to admit. The fact that children can get their hands on a firearm so easily is quite scary but the fact that they cannot get this fairytale book is even more concerning.

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The Hours (2003) - The city, gender and power

Emily Lawless, 3rd year

Power at a basic level is the "ability of one agent to affect the action or attitudes of another" (Gregory, 2009: 575). However, geographers disagree with this definition and many other definitions of power, as they do not include the complexities of time and space. Power intersects all areas of society and defines individual perceptions of belonging. Places can be perceived as 'natural', but even so, these areas are influenced and constructed through dominant ideas on land use, architecture and many other visible and invisible structures. These places are "often used to control people and things" (Cresswell, 1996: 163). Cities can be seen as places where power or normative structures are highlighted. This essay will focus on the influences of power on women and highlight their reactions to these imposed expectations such as motherhood and the limitations, for example, of confinement to private spheres. The film version of *The Hours* (2003) provides multiple examples of the power relations with women and cities. The 'management' of women is illustrated through two time periods; represented by Virgina Woolf in 1921 and Laura Brown in 1951. Each narrative provides insights into female life, one from the post-World War 1 era, and the other from post-World War 2 era. The historical context for each narrative emphasizes the individual character's struggle with the ideologies of everyday behaviour, systems of power-geometry, and transgressions.

Ideology defines individual "positions within a [the] wider structure [of society]" (Cresswell, 1996: 15). Through these structures, individuals can be classified as included, excluded, and limited within everyday life. These dominant powers create 'accepted' views on expected behaviour for different individuals in different times and spaces. These behavioural expectations are ideally depicted in *The Hours* (2003) character Laura Brown. Laura is a 1950s post WWII middle class suburban wife. This era of American culture was dominated by conservative social policy on "marriage, gender roles and family life" (Coontz, 1992: 22). Specific gender roles kept women subordinate in the home and men are dominant in the workforce. Government policies were completely directed at the resurrection of the nuclear family. Women were bombarded with images depicting family as "the most basic institution of society" (Coontz, 1992: 22). This 'naturalness' of female roles in the home, lead many women similar to Laura to feel trapped. The extent of her life role dissatisfaction becomes clearer as the film narrative progresses.

The beginning scenes, give an insight into these gendered roles of the Brown household. Laura's husband Dan is giving young Richard his breakfast, opening and closing multiple cupboards, creating noise within the quiet house (*The Hours*, 2003: 12mins). Dan is nearly ready to go to work when Laura appears in the kitchen. Dan is dressed in a white shirt, tie and trousers; young Richard is sitting at the table in his pyjamas; while Laura is just out of bed. She is wearing a blue flowery dress; her hair is un-styled, and she is not wearing makeup. The scene emphasises a difference between Laura and Dan. Dan stands in brighter areas of the kitchen, with the sunlight casting a glow on him. The audience sees him through the eyes of the young Richard and Laura, with the camera at a slight upward angle, identifying him as a beacon of the 1950s role of breadwinner. Laura is also viewed through young Richard's eyes, as well as being viewed from above, contrasting her gendered role with that of Dan. In addition, Laura keeps to the darker parts of the room, always viewed away from the light. This links with her performance for Dan. She does not want to expose herself to the light and let Dan see through her façade. Laura's mask falls when Dan exits, closing the car door and the window shows her face crumble and shift expressing her inner turmoil. The window reflects the outside world (the silhouettes of the trees) but also Laura's state of mind.

Power-geometry is the systematic inequality that positions different individuals and groups "within networks of flows and interactions" (Gregory, 2009). This geometry of control influences and dictates

segregation through differing spatial placement of classes, races and genders. This system can be seen to work in partnership with mobility. Mobility is the "movement and circulation of people, goods, and information" at different scales (Castee *et al*., 2013). These movements are dictated by dominant groups that constantly redefine and constrain certain individual developments. Individual actions can be constrained to limited local spaces, often with inadequate resources. These restrictions can be illustrated through access to resources of housing, employment and transport. Virginia Woolf in 1921 Richmond illustrates this restrictive system of power-geometry in *The Hours* (2003). In the film, Virginia Woolf has been given a doctor's prescription of suburban life for her 'anxiety and stress'. The city here is seen as a place of sensory overload. The 'weaker' mind can easily become confused and demoralised by the city's vast amount of stimulants (Park *et al*., 1967). It was common belief and a component of some modern medical diagnoses that those individuals with weaker minds needed time to 'heal' in the slower and quieter areas of the suburbs. These power-geometries dictated the physical movement of individuals with mental health issues, establishing the city as a place of exclusion. Individuals are restricted by the barriers of the suburbs in their "capacity to move widely across space" and into the city (Sibley, 2009: 86). Early on in the film, it becomes clear that Virginia Woolf's independence and freedom to move is heavily restricted.

There are many scenes were Virginia Woolf is portrayed as limited. Leonard, her husband, with the assistance of doctors' opinions, exerts power over Virginia's mobility. Virginia cannot leave the house without Leonard's consent. In one particular scene, Leonard is at the printing press with his assistant (*The Hours*, 2003: 29mins). The mise en scene, focusing mainly on figure behaviour in this shot highlights the tensions of Virginia's (im) mobility. She must ask Leonard's permission to go for a morning walk. She looks anxious and impatient waiting for his response. Leonard and his assistant react by looking at Virginia, as if they are analysing her thought process. Leonard monitors Virginia's state of mind by checking the weather, seeing she has a blue coat on, and emphasising the shortness of her walk. Leonard uses monitoring and exertions of power because he is presumably worried about Virginia's mental state.

Later on in the film, Virginia's sister, Vanessa visits Virginia (*The Hours*, 2003: 42mins). The scene shows them in contrast to each other. Vanessa wears a crisp white 'modern' dress, with her hair neatly plaited and pulled back. She has style and is full of excitement. She can be seen to represent London and its constant renewal. Virginia is wearing a drab, ill-fitting floral dress, and her hair is in a messy bun. This portrayal seems to represent Virginia's mind set and her restriction to the dull confinement of the suburbs. Vanessa is her link to the city. This link is why she becomes upset when Vanessa did not invite her to a party. Virginia feels trapped by the doctors and Leonard, as she has no 'excuse' to move beyond the suburbs and back to the city.

Transgression is the "act of crossing accepted limits" (Gregory, 2009: 770).Transgression can be seem to not only cross but also to highlight the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and social norms. This focus on boundaries can offer investigations into "previously considered 'natural', 'assumed' and 'taken for granted" elements of place (Cresswell, 1996: 26). Responses to transgressions can generate new forms of socially accepted norms. However, it can also create new classifications of exclusion. Dominant powers have the ability to define others and also to "make rules for others" (Cresswell, 1996: 25). Transgression seeks to briefly disorder their rules and emphasis the problems within power systems. Transgressive behaviour is illustrated throughout *The Hours* (2003) and highlights the power controls on genders.

Ideological transgressions appear in a scene between Laura and her friend Kitty (*The Hours*, 2003: 37mins). Kitty confides in Laura that she is having trouble conceiving and has to go to the hospital. In 1950s America difficulties in conceiving was perceived as "unnatural" (Coontz, 1992: 27). Women often defined themselves through family and home, and being unable to have a child was a serious disadvantage. In the film Kitty is a typical suburban wife, she is very glamorous, and wears a feminine dress and jewellery. She also has her hair styled and a full face of makeup. Laura is pale in comparison, both in her appearance and role as wife and carer. The camera shot shows a wider shot of Kitty, with the toaster, counter and cupboards in the background. Kitty paints herself into these surroundings, while Laura is shot close up, emphasising her disconnect with her domestic role. Kitty is upset, and Laura tries to console her; they share a kiss. This kiss is very out of place to its surroundings, in a 1950s kitchen. Their individual reactions to the kiss highlight the transgression. Kitty resumes her normal façade, back to the dutiful wife, while Laura's reaction emphasizes the

isolation and frustration of her role, especially when, later, she snaps at young Richard, when Kitty leaves.

In the film, Virginia creates a transgression of mobility rather than role, when she flees to the train station without Leonard's knowledge (*The Hours*, 2003: 85mins). In this scene, she is wearing a hat, coat, and gloves, intent on going to London. Here, the tensions of Virginia's freedom and mobility come to a head. The setting of the train station is empty, a centre for movement, highlighting the direction her health and relationship with Leonard must take. Virginia asserts herself as a person with power and independence. She is a woman of high social class and intellect; she feels there is no life if she can't choose how and where she lives it. Leonard reassess his decisions on love, fear and her needs. Together they both choose to live a life in the "violent jolt" of London (*The Hours*, 2003: 86mins).

The dominant powers can be seen to create rules and roles for others. In the past, women have had various forms of power exerted over them from Virginia Woolf's mental health and mobility constraints to Laura Brown's ideological gender role assignment. In the film, both women endured these restrictions and limitations, and Transgressions occurred as they could not stay in roles or places where they had no say in their lives. These transgressions provided Clarissa Vaughan in 2001 (*The Hours*, 2003) with her life. She can work, own property, have a child through artificial insemination and possesses influence over other people's lives (older Richard). The transgressions of previous generations of women contributed to "social and spatial transformation" (Gregory, 2009: 770). But even the modern day 'freedoms' that we possess need to be analysed to determine who is currently given ideological roles and who is excluded within society. In conclusion, it is only through constant transgression of gender roles, access to resources, mobility and places that women can be independent directors of their lives.

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The International Whaling Commission's policies should be extended to even the smallest cetaceans.

Charlotte Greene, 2nd year

The International Whaling Commission (IWC) should expand their conservation and protection schemes to even the smallest of cetaceans such as Dolphins. We can clearly see why the commission needs to re-evaluate their stance on the situation, primarily looking at the annual dolphin hunt that occurs in Japan. The IWC was established in 1946 with the purpose of providing 'proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry' (IWC, 2016). The Commission clearly states they were set up for the conservation of just twelve species of whale rather than all cetaceans. The most evident need for the IWC's re-evaluation of their policy is the annual dolphin hunt in the small coastal town of Taji, Japan where thousands of dolphins and small whales are mercilessly captured or slaughtered. The IWC's policy needs to be extended to all cetaceans that are now under threat.

By means of an introduction I will first discuss the function of the IWCs function. The Commission was set up under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling in 1946, with the sole objective of regulating whaling and conserving whale stocks. They set out a series of regulations including restrictions on hunting methods and creating whale sanctuaries in specific areas. The IWC also conducts a comprehensive research on cetacean populations, where all data is compiled within their Journal of Cetacean Research and Management. The IWC does not define what constitutes as a whale but rather oversees the conservation of 12 whale species that were considered endangered during the time of establishment. Eighty-eight governments are members of the IWC, Ireland joined in 1985, while Japan joined in 1951. Some government members agree with the current policy of regulating only 'great whales' while others believe even the smallest of cetaceans fall within the IWC's jurisdiction. 'The IWC facilitates and funds a large number of small cetacean conservation

programmes but it does not regulate hunting of small cetaceans.' (IWC, 2016). This policy needs to be re-evaluated, as many small cetaceans are now under threat, evident in annual dolphin hunts conducted in Taji.

Do dolphins constitute as a whale? Many people and biologists split dolphins, porpoises and whales into separate categories, though all these mammals identify as 'whales'. 'There are overall 80 species of whales living in our world', creating the classification known as Cetacea (About whales-Whaleman foundation, 2009). These species are divided into sub groups such as Mysticeti (non-toothed) and Odontoceti (toothed). Dolphins are air breathing, warm blooded mammals, they are very intelligent and live in 'complex social structures and are part of the family of toothed whales, which also includes killer whales and pilot whales' (Dolphin Drive Hunts, 2017). Being at the top of the food chain, dolphins are very much interconnected to both survival and health of marine ecosystems. These sentient creatures live in pods and use a system of echo location to navigate and hunt, this system requires high sensitivity to sound, some pods develop specific whistles for their family. These intelligent creatures are conscious breathers and choose how and when to breathe, when sleeping, only half of their brain shuts down to prevent drowning. These animals should be thought of as a learning opportunity rather than a profit making machine. The captivity of Dolphins is a growing phenomenon, predominantly in the unnatural confinement of glass tanks where they preform to be fed and stay alive. This then poses the question of, can one consider a life of captivity better than an inhumane slaughtering, a practice that is encouraged by the Japanese government to local fishermen in areas such as Taji?

Japan's whaling policy has been under much criticism, they were one of the first members of the IWC and given that they play a lead role in its bureau, one would assume they advocate and adhere to the policies of the commission, this is not the case. When questioned about their hunting they use the banal excuse of 'scientific research', yet no data has been accumulated from their findings. Many journalists have investigated why Japan is determined to continue their hunt of great whales and dolphins. Wingfield-Hayes article concludes that the practice of whaling is encouraged by 'a handful of MPs from whaling constituencies and a few hundred bureaucrats who don't want to see their budgets cut.' When Japanese officials are asked why they continue whaling, they state it's for cultural reasons. It is evident that whaling is a big part of Japanese culture, references to whales are seen in 'art, literature, folk and faith' (Japan and Sydney, 2012). Hunting whale was tradition, yet history dictates that large, trawling, deep sea ships are a new mechanism. Officials of the country advocate that eating whale is the norm, at one stage it was but not anymore. Whale meat contains high levels of mercury, many of the whale meat consumed by the Japanese is done without consciousness, as the meat is falsely packaged. The Cove, a documentary by Ric O'Barry highlights the danger of its consumption. Though the question still lies, if there are no health benefits from consuming whale meat and alternative materials exist that could be used instead of whale by-products, why does thousands of whales/porpoises/dolphins die? The Cove, gives a visual insight to the annual dolphin hunt of Taji. Fishermen go out to sea with nets and using long rods, bang them against the sea floor creating a distressing sound for dolphins, causing them to flee from the noise into the cove, a hidden body of water that is invisible from public view. From here the dolphins are kept captive until fishermen return to decide the weak from the strong. Those who manage to escape to open water, stay close by, refusing to leave their family. Dolphins form strong bonds with their pod, to watch their family suffer, die or be taken away from them is inhumane. This practice supports both the mental and physical torment of these intelligent creatures. For what cause? The captive dolphins are sold for a profit, to live in captivity. In many situations whaling has become a practice of greed rather than necessity for resources.

"A dolphin's smile is the greatest deception. It creates the illusion that they're always happy" (The Cove, 2009). What occurs in Taji is a worldwide phenomenon that needs to be stopped. We can no longer neglect the inhumane reality of this industry that is fuelled by greed. The IWC protects 'Great Whales', they need to extend their policies to even the smallest of cetaceans, or eventually there will be no more dolphins.

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Dreams in the Dark: Memories of St. Michael's Estate

Orla Curtin, 3rd year

Dreams in the Dark (2013), by Dublin-based Joe Lee, is a 22-minute long documentary focusing on the story of St Michael's Estate Inchicore, Dublin 8. The film takes a detailed look at the various stages of development and decline of the estate between the early 1970s through to the early 2000s. When St Michael's opened in 1970, there were positive expectations and a great atmosphere for the neighbourhood. Previously known as Keogh square, the new estate was designed using modernist architecture, and had 346 flats housing 1500 people in blocks that look somewhat similar to those built in Ballymun. In the 1970s these flats were extremely sought after as they offered free hot water and heating, and the location provided centrality. The complex was home to a many working class families. However, the strong sense of community could not stop the introduction of drugs to the area in the 1980s-90s, in particular heroin, which was related to the recession at the time. Ultimately, the flats were demolished, and many of its residents moved to places such as Clondalkin and Ballyfermot. In this essay, I explore how Lee depicts people's place-based identity, spatial segregation and related social problems, and residents' hopes for the future.

'Place is more than a spatial referent and a place can bring about a strong sense of identity and belonging as we belong to one place and not another' (Cresswell, 1996: 3). Residents of St Michaels Estate speak in the film fondly about both the material aspects of their home when it first opened, such as how they had 'all the comforts' (Lee, 2013, 2:43 min), and also of their sense of belonging, in mentioning that they didn't want to move from Inchicore as that is where they were 'born and reared' (*ibid*, 2:38). The happiness portrayed on the faces of the children in the film suggests they are happy in their own place, as this is where their friends or 'social space' (Cresswell, 1996: 3) is, and, more importantly, where their home is. The people talk so positively about their home and the other residents, that Lee's use of a flashing heart represents this connection to the estate (1:54 min). In an interview with a former resident I conducted in December 2016, I found that she felt that St Michael's Estate had a great sense of community, as everyone watched out for each other, and that she didn't want to move from the flats. She also mentioned that she was always committed to moving back to the new complex when it was built, as this was where she had identified as her home just like the residents communicated in the film (interview with author, 2016).

In addition to a strong sense of place and identity, Lee also depicts spatial segregation a phenomenon that divides people living in one place from people living in other places (van Eijk, 2010: 3). Many graffiti signs (Lee, 2013, 4:09 min) are visible throughout the film, representing the youthful residents of St Michael's Estate, but also showing who they are to insiders, while letting outsiders know their identity affiliations (Figure 1). Spatial segregation in urban areas throughout the world has resulted in differentiated and unstable residential conditions. There is a certain socio-economic identity that corresponds with social housing; those living in flats generally are of a lower-income status and we see in the film a resident spoke about how the bills were 'easier to manage' in a flat than in a house (Lee, 2013, 2:46 min).

Figure 1: Graffiti signs in Dreams and the Dark. (Lee, 2013)

Dublin Corporation housed unmarried mothers who had children out of wedlock in St Michael's Estate due to a lack of housing in the city centre. The poorest level of residences where offered to these women as their income status would generally be low, further marginalising both the women and the estate as a whole. The imbalances that came out of this led to social deprivation and stigmatisation. At 13:37 in the film we see the condition of housing start to deteriorate. 'Some residents were ashamed to live in St Michael's Estate when the conditions of housing deteriorated. As shown in the film some residents wouldn't give their address out in case they were stigmatized against' (CM, 2016, interview

with author). We see other signs of segregation throughout the film, especially regarding the regeneration project of St Michael's Estate. For example, in one of the scenes we can see a man breaking down the wall that surrounds the estate (Lee, 203, 5:47 min): this can be seen as a removal of the boundaries that have isolated the complex from the outside world, resulting in the alienation of local residents. 'When walls, borders and boundaries become completely sealed off, they cause hardened social "edges" to emerge, groups essentially split into two and different communities develop on either side' (E, 2012: 1).

In the early 1980s, social and living conditions in St Michael's Estate began to decline, and the tone of the film changes and the music and editing slows down to depict the emerging social problems. In the film the members of St Michael's Estate talk about how the estate completely changed when people started to move out (Lee, 2013, 13:33 min). With community members leaving and the heroin epidemic starting, drugs for some may have. "been perceived as an escape route from social deprivation" (Drug problems in Dublin, 2004). Whereas Lee used a beating heart at the start of the film to represent the residents love for their home, towards the end of the film the symbol changes to a ring of fire (14:13 min), an image that can be compared to the spiralling drug problem at the time. A former resident explained how drugs were a big part of the social problems of the flats, as well as other problems too, such anti-social behaviour, violence and intimidation (CM, 2016, interview with author). There are many images that show the seriousness of social problems in the film such as a young boy with a smoke in his mouth (11:07 min) and a car burnt out in the middle of the complex (13.48 min).

Figure 2: Residents of SME watching the memories of the flats projected onto one of the blocks. (0.23) (Lee, 2013)

We learn in the film that members got together to combat this growing drug issue with each block having residential push out (14:26 min). A scene depicts a residents' protest march taking place in the 1980s, and their attempt to remove a man who was taking drugs in the complex (14:59 min). They represent a small army walking together to try and combat the drug problem. At this time everyone was becoming aware of the impact of drugs not just in St Michael's Estate but a city as a while. Community members mention how they thought they had combatted the drug problem as they were strong in the protest actions, but in reality it had gone underground (15:13 min). We see these problems in the film as residents talk about how one member of the family would have to remain at home to protect their home from a burglary.

When social issues become a 'threat to values and interests dominant in society at a given time' that may 'lead to methods of intervention designed to control or solve the problem' (Jamrozik and Nocella, 1998: 11). Yet residents in the film said there was no help from the city authorities, or the will power to do anything about the flats and its growing problems. Former resident CM explained that by '1998 there was a survey sent around to all residents and the majority wanted the flats demolished' (2016, interview with author). The opening scenes of the film feature a clip of the film, with residents' recalling their memories of the flats, being projected onto one of the blocks (0.23 min; Figure 2). This art project occurred before the tower blocks were demolished. Former resident CM remembered how it was 'very sad to watch' and to know that the flats were going to be demolished (2016, interview with author). Another visual arts project created by Lee was a mural named 'The Laughing Wall' (2002), which featured pictures of the former residents smiling and happy. The mural was unveiled at a time when the area had a reputation for drugs and anti-social behaviour to show that, despite negative perceptions, the area still had community spirit (Kennedy, 2013).

Lee documents the transportation of material from the old complex to a newer complex and the film ends with the possibility of a better future for local people under the redevelopment and regeneration plan. The regeneration project of St Michael's Estate took sixteen years to complete however, former resident CM who lives there explains that the new complex doesn't have the same level of community spirit as the flats did (2016, interview with author). The end of the film shows a clip

of the flats being boarded up (21:50 min). However, this is not the end of the life of St Michael's estate.

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Jumping In: Geographies of Swimming

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All of us remember where we first learnt to swim. In my case, even though I had grown up near the River Nore and gone on holidays to Kilkee, it was in the Tinside Lido (Figure 1) in Plymouth. Later I swam badly across the bay in Kilkee as a teenager, but then largely abandoned swimming - unless in a warm climate - through much of my adult life. I did start surfing - equally badly - when I was 40 and that was despite a lingering fear (based on a traumatic childhood swimming incident in Courtown) of waves. Slowly since then, I have got back into the water and much of my current research interest centres on blue space and in particular, geographies of swimming (Foley, 2015 & 2017; Foley and Kistemann, 2015). As an established social practice in multiple settings and locations, I would like to suggest that swimming has the potential to be of interest to student geographers through a range of different routes.

Figure 1. Tinside Lido, Plymouth

For *historic geographers*, the social and cultural histories of swimming have deep roots that reflect a range of social and cultural values, practices and performances. Anyone who lives in Dublin and has followed the coast southwards past Sandymount Strand and beyond will pass three famous outdoor baths, the Merrion, Blackrock and Dun Laoghaire Baths, all now closed. All three were tidal and all that is left of the first two are the old walls, though in its day the Merrion Baths had its own pier while the Blackrock Baths was the home base of some of Ireland's greatest divers (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Eddie Heron, Ireland's Greatest Diver, Blackrock Baths

The Dun Laoghaire Baths were only closed a few decades ago and while many still mourn their loss, plans are afoot to partially make the space re-swimmable. But there are a chain of historic seaside resorts around the coast, from Tramore to Kilkee to Enniscrone to Bangor that attest to centuries-old family summer holidays where the beach and the water was all one needed. The historic functions of baths and indeed beaches more broadly were steeped in Victorian values of cleanliness, modesty, healthiness and shared familial practice. Yet at the same time, they were profoundly liminal and often dubious spaces of an earthier seaside population, where

social and sexual mixing was an equally common practice.

For *social and cultural geographers*, the practice of swimming and the settings in which it takes place are grounded in cultural elements such as identity and place. Perhaps equally importantly, swimming is a physical act carried out by human bodies that in turn opens up space for discussion around embodiment. While historically swimming was an outdoor pursuit, the arrival of cheap travel and the experience of swimming in 'actual warm water', changed habits and on another level, pushed swimmers indoors. Currently, the bulk of swimmers use swimming pools and there is a whole geography around training, exercise and leisure geographies that can be written up about indoor spaces (Ward, 2017). Personally, I find both the spaces and practices of outdoor swimming to be more varied and interesting. Contemporary swimming spots, such as the 40 Foot in Sandymount or the Guillemene in Tramore (Figure 3), are what David Seamon calls 'third spaces'; sites of social exchange and practice in which a whole range of encounters, practices and identities are performed in open shared inter-generational space.

Figure 3. The Guillemene, Tramore

From an embodiment perspective, swimming bodies range from the 'perfect' 'beach body' to the 'very imperfect' bodies of people with disabilities. Yet ironically, beach bodies sometimes avoid the water, while the disabled land body can become a fully enabled sea body. I had the good fortune in 2014 to meet Martin Pollock, an Afghan Vet who had lost both legs and one arm in a landmine explosion (Figure 4). However, Martin regularly swims and surfs (https://vimeo.com/67493701) to prove the power of water in transformation and renewal in people's active lives, something that equally applies to older and otherwise unfit bodies.

Figure 4. Martin Pollock, Swimmer and Surfer

Based on my own specific subject interest, *medical/health geographies,* swimming acts as a really helpful introduction to a range of theoretical ideas (depth, flow, affect, performance) and applied aspects of physical and mental health and recovery. People who swim regularly actually experience specific physiological changes that enable them to stay longer in the water, while the layers of blubber that long-distance swimmers carry enable them to cover vast differences. In addition, the exercise of swimming improves fitness and aerobic capacity while in terms of illness recovery it works on everything from ligament injuries (exercising muscles without weight-bearing pressure) to breast cancer (referred by GPs for pectoral exercise and mental health). But in my work, interviewing swimmers using oral history methods, the power of swimming as a powerful force across their lives, connecting the past with the present, family with friends, place with practice, all attest to a deep form of therapeutic accretion, building up resilience, identity and very specific connections with swimming places and with the different people who drift in and out of those places.

These are just very short introductions to the range of potential geographic research themes associated with swimming. For everyone who does swim, there are many people who can't, won't or don't swim; uncovering the reasons why would be very interesting and would be likely to touch on aspects of risk, climate, phobias and life events. While we associate swimming with coasts, beaches and indoor pools, it also occurs in many different inland locations; lakes, rivers, reservoirs and springs. In addition, there are multiple private swimming places, the swimming pools obvious from the sky flying into any warm country. Such often exclusionary spaces have also been replicated in public as people have been separated by gender, ethnicity, race and class through the creation and maintenance of male-only, whites-only, rich-only beach and pool spaces in many countries (Wiltse, 2007). Yet I would argue that, for the most part, swimming spots and practices are by their nature

inclusionary, described by swimmers as a form of home, a community of shared passion but also as a space to be in touch with nature and with one's own body. Next time you're passing, jump in.

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Does Immigration Policy Need Reform, or Does Our Attitude to Immigration Need to Change?

Katie Phelan, 2nd year

Migration, defined as 'the residential relocation of an individual, family, or group from one place to another' (Gregory, Johnston, Pratt, Watts and Whatmore, 2009), shares a symbiotic relationship with the geography of place. The global dispersal of people, the political boundaries that exist between regions and the dispersal of development would not exist in the same way without migration. It is embedded in our history, with immigration particularly rooted in global society. Recently, issues of immigration were recently brought to the forefront of media attention and global discussion when US President Donald Trump implemented a ninety day 'Travel Ban', on the 27th of January, 2017. Trump signed an Executive Order that forbade the entry of travellers from seven Muslim-majority countries (Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen) into the United States of America for ninety days. This order also halted the admission of refugees into the US for 120 days from this same date, and suspended Syrian refugee admissions indefinitely. This order attracted widespread criticism for its racist and sectarian nature, and also raised the important issue of why there is a negative stigma attached to immigrants.

It is impossible to imagine what the earth would look like today without first recognising the influence immigrants have had on the global map. Would America be the leading global power? Would the global north exist without immigration? The main reason for the north-south divide is colonisation, one which has had an irreversible and reprehensible impact on indigenous cultures and people. European imperialists were often responsible for this exploitation of indigenous resources and people, particularly in their southern colonies. For North America and Australia, the immigration of those European imperialists can be seen in the resulting development of economic systems, trade agreements, and boundaries that exist today. We must, then, consider the history of immigration before condemning the people who are currently moving into our countries. For Ireland, in particular, perhaps the most competitive selling point that Ireland offers to multi-national corporations is that it has the only English-speaking workforce in the European Union. The use of English in Ireland is connected to English imperialists. And similarly, we can trace European imperialism in North America since the fifteenth century to the rise of President Trump in the US; Trump owes the white skin, which he and many of his supporters hold in such high regard, to immigrants from England, Spain, Italy and France who colonised North America and in so doing almost completely wiped out the Native Americans. While colonialism should be condemned, looking at the consequences of this immigration is important to gain an understanding of immigration today.

If we recognise how the product of past patterns of immigration has created affluence for many, why does such a negative stigma surround the ideas of immigration and the people who are trying to immigrate? On both a national and global scale, immigrants are often greeted with an attitude of disdain; people are often unwilling to share their country's wealth with others. We Irish are not immune to being pulled elsewhere by socio economic factors. During the Great Famine of the 1840s, Ireland experienced mass emigration as millions of Irish people emigrated to North America to avoid poverty, English oppression and unemployment. On their arrival, unskilled migrants gained employment while often meeting with a negative American reaction. Similarly, when recession struck our economy in both the 1980s and in 2008, many Irish nationals emigrated, moving to countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom in the hope of gaining employment and a higher standard of living. Despite our own history of migration, Irish people have not responded positively to those who have

immigrated to Ireland for similar reasons, such as those who came to Ireland following the economic boom experienced in Ireland during the early 2000s. There is a negative stigma surrounding such immigrants, who are often subject to racism (Cork News, 2011). It is often alleged that these immigrants are depriving Irish nationals of employment opportunities; in reality immigrants are often more willing to fill shortages in unskilled sectors.

The resettling of Syrian refugees has also been met with apprehension by host countries. As of February 2016 only around 259 of the 2,622 Syrian refugees that Ireland pledged to resettle had arrived in Ireland since 2015 (Irish Times, 2016). Ireland and Europe have been considerably less enthusiastic than America had been in housing Syrian refugees before President Trump was inaugurated (NBC News, 2016). It appears that the push factors that are driving immigrants to certain countries are not given enough consideration, and without this consideration, immigrants are seen negatively. We must not lose sight of how Irish people have not been immune to such push factors in the past, and we must be mindful of our history and the history of others when considering our attitude to immigration.

When an immigrant is celebrated, however, it is often only due to their financial success. This was made abundantly clear following the media outburst in the wake of Trump's 'Travel Ban'. As major news publications strived to share the experience of those displaced, their narrative was often limited to that of the immigrant America was proud to house because of their contribution to the nation's gross national product. CNN, The Washington Post and Bloomberg made us aware that multi-national corporations such as Apple, Google, eBay and Intel would not exist without immigration. While this aspect of immigration may be true, and these links between immigration and success in business may deserve to be celebrated, this restricted media coverage appears to oblige immigrants to be commodities in that they are significantly contributing to the country they relocate to. There is a need for the media and for us ourselves to stop viewing immigration in such a narrow manner. Immigrants are individuals, with unique qualities, experiences, and ambitions. Immigration is valid because immigrants are *human*– and their new neighbours and governments should not dehumanise immigrants in restricting them to validate themselves through economic prosperity.

Just last year, two successful and consequential political campaigns utilised a need for immigration reform to entice voters. These included President Trump's presidential campaign, and the push for a 'leave' vote in the Brexit referendum. However, we must consider whether immigration laws truly need amendment, or whether it is the negative stigma around immigration that is in urgent need of reform.

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The Area: Dancing Through the Docklands

Kevin Cleary, 3rd year

We dance for laughter,
We dance for tears,
We dance for madness,
We dance for fears,
We dance for hopes,
We dance for screams,
We are the dancers,
We create the dreams
-Albert Einstein

At first seeing *The Area* (2013), it was hard not to be reminded of Albert Einstein's poem about dance. This delightful film by Ríonach Ní Néill and Joe Lee is as much about friendship and laughter, dancers and dreams as it is about one's attachment to place and identity. It features a lively bunch of fun-loving over-50s from an inner-city dance club called Macushla. Through the voices and movement of these dancers, the viewer takes an emotional tour of the inner-city Docklands area of Dublin.

Film Still from *The Area* (Ní Néill and Lee, 2013, 21:04). Source: joelee.ie

In many ways, the film is a bittersweet trip down memory lane. The dancers dance from place to place recalling childhood memories and life growing up in what was once an area dominated by proud working class families, but is now dominated by massive steel and glass developments, like the IFSC development at Custom House Dock, where the majority of residents and office workers come from some other "place". Decline, decay and desolation are also part of this story as derelict sites act as windows to the city's industrial past, long gone, but fondly remembered in the stories and memories of this fun-loving bunch.

This essay argues that these inner-city communities are, in many ways, the heart and soul of the city. The larger than life characters with their own brand of humour and colloquialisms have a strong attachment to the inner-city, their "place" *that* gives the city its own unique personality. Some might say that there are many social problems within inner city neighbourhoods, such as drugs and crime. MacCarthaigh (2014) provides evidence of such social problems when he states that Pearse Street Garda Station in the heart of Dublin's south inner-city is the busiest Garda station in Ireland, with an all-time high of 10,650 crime offenses recorded in 2013. That being said, arts-documentary films such as *The Area* are a timely reminder that there is much to be proud of within these neighbourhoods. Sadly, however, many of these working-class communities may soon be consigned to the past as new developments and gentrification in the latest wave of 'economic recovery' are again escalating rental and home prices, pushing local residents further out of the city.

Docklands in Transition: The 1970s

Through dance, *The Area* reimagines what the north Docklands of Dublin used to look and feel like before things changed irreversibly from the 1970s onwards. With economic restructuring occurring during the 1970s in response to a capitalist crisis, with the 1973 oil crisis and a global recession, Western European and North American countries transitioned from industrial capitalism to post-industrial or advanced capitalism. The spatial layout of western cities, including Dublin, changed with deindustrialisation, resulting in the loss of manufacturing jobs due to the competitive advantages of relocating those jobs mainly in the global south (Short *et al*, 1993). Moore (2008: 55) states that labour de-casualization and job cuts resulting from increased containerisation and mechanisation at Dublin's Docklands resulted in a 96% jump in unemployment from 1981 to 1986. Significantly, Moore also points out that 52% of heads of households in Sheriff Street, considered to be the 'heart of the docklands' and where many of those featured in *The Area* came from, were on the unemployment register in 1981; this figure would jump to 70% unemployment by 1986. The overall result was poverty and dereliction. Moore (2008: 55) further argued that conditions "in some parts of the docklands only twenty-five years ago were more reminiscent of a third world city than the capital city of a European State".

During the height of the Celtic Tiger years, derelict sites from the phase of deindustrialisation were replaced by flagship building developments such as the aforementioned IFSC located in the Custom House Docks area. According to Daly (2015), the IFSC covers 15.8 hectares and accommodates over 184,000 sq m of office space, as well as two hotels, bars and restaurants, a large residential development, retail, a crèche and the National College of Ireland campus. Urban regeneration has transformed the Dublin Docklands into a modern urban space with many recognisable landmarks, such as the 3ARENA, Board Gais Energy Theatre and the Convention Centre, not to mention the waggishly named Silicon Docks otherwise known as Grand Canal Dock, home to tech giants such as Facebook, Google, LinkedIn and Twitter, But who benefitted from that 'boom phase' of urban development? Atkinson (2004) argues that as a result of gentrification, new infrastructure was serviced wealthy new residents. Hip gastro pubs replaced the old traditional pubs, delicatessens replaced the local grocers, as the cost of living and rents inevitably went up. The result was an alienation of local residents to their local landscapes and for many, displacement from the *place* where they grew up and have family ties going back generations *(ibid*). Many now live in places they really do not want to be.

Remembering Place: Alternative Stories of the Docklands

Tuan (1977: 6) notes that undifferentiated *space* becomes *place* as we get to know an area better, and affix it with value. According to Inglis (2001), a sense of place is still a strong marker of identity that is central to an individual's knowledge and understanding of him/herself and others. He also argues that, not only is identity with "place" where one is currently living very strong, but that one's sense of belonging also includes complex and enmeshed memories of the place where one grew up. This deep sense of place is very much a central theme in *The Area*, as the voice-overs attach memories and meaning to different locations that might seem as undifferentiated spaces -- parking lots, residential streets, tram stops -- but are places of attachment for these local residents.

Benson (2008: 4) argues that "There is a strong belief that attachment to place is a defining feature in the sustainability of both place and community". That is to say, if a large percentage of a population has no identity or attachment to a *place,* then that *place* becomes cold, impersonal and without a soul. The Macushla dance club members certainly do not lack soul and give a poignant insight into a community that has had its ups and down, but is still fiercely proud of their identity and show a deep understanding of their *place* and its history through their lived experiences and memories. As the dancers dance through the "area", an old memory or story is revealed by a voiceover from a local resident, such as: "I fell in love when I was twenty-three, that was the woman I married and the only one I was ever in love with*"*; or recollections of first kisses and dances with "Skinnier Fox*";* or of family gatherings and parties. Residents' voices give this otherwise cold post-industrial landscape a warm and intimate connection to a community. These juxtapositions in the film are perhaps a little quirky and definitely has a surreal feel to it as streetscapes, warehouses, and underground carpark are the scenes of some unusual events such as: the dance ball in the warehouse at the beginning of the film (Figure 2), the poker game at a kitchen table in the middle of an underground car park, a woman tap dancing at a site that was once a dance theatre, a piano being pushed down the middle of a street, or perhaps, the most surreal scene of all, the gentlemen dressed in tuxedos dancing and serenading old tailor's dummies in an abandoned site of the post-crash landscape of the Anglo Irish Bank (Figure 3). These clever scenarios allow audiences to reimagine events and scenes from the past that did or may have happened at most of these sites. In so doing, the directors and residents/dancers/actors contrast the past and present uses of the city in unexpected and often humorous ways.

Figure 2: Opening Scene
Film Still from *The Area* (Ní Néill and Lee 2013, 00:36) Source: joelee.ie

Celebrating Community:

Fittingly the film ends how it began, with people laughing and dancing and enjoying each other's company in a social gathering. The scene is shot in an

old former tenement house. What is particularly nice about the final scene of *The Area* is the nice blend of young and old, having a hearty sing along to the up-tempo old Louis Armstrong's number "When the Saints go marching in". There's tap dancing, clapping, jazzy trombone beats and that wonderful sense of fun that is a central theme that runs throughout the entirety of this movie. Perhaps Deputy OJ Flanagan (1982 cited in Moore, 2008: 88) said it best:

Fig 3: Dancing with Tailor's Dummy
Film Still from *The Area* (Ní Néill and Lee 2013, 10:31). Source joelee.ie

"Dublin people respect and love their city; build it up for them and make it a place where they can live with their flats, their homes, their schools and educational facilities and not have it as a huge block of aluminium and glass. Let there be children running around and life in the city and not have many parts of it used for only six or eight hours a day".

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The Geography of Women's Reproductive Rights in Ireland

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Discrimination based on gender is prohibited in Ireland (IHREC, 2016). However, many would argue that despite this legislative protection women are subjected to sexism and discrimination on a daily basis. Many feminist legal scholars contend that this is due in part to the treatment of women in Irish Law (Bacik, 2004; Fletcher, 2005). *Bunreacht na hÉireann* explicitly places women in the home (Article 41.2.1) a provision that over the years has underpinned Ireland's treatment of women. This paper aims to explore the spatio-legal aspects of laws in Ireland as they relate to women's reproductive rights. Law is pervasive, sculpting and moulding our understandings of the world. However, the law has often managed to do this while appearing neutral, objective and benign. It is of course none of these things but rather a series of complex interactions between society, economics, politics and spaces. In this paper, I sketch some of the practical consequences of these interactions for women in Ireland who find themselves faced with a crisis pregnancy.

Before we continue, let us first unpack what is meant by 'the law'. Barkan (2011) suggests that one of the problems with 'the law' is the way in which it is used as a catch-all to refer to a myriad of processes, societal relations and power discourses. At any time the law can simultaneously refer to not only the actions of legislative bodies in the enactment of law, but also the way in which police, state agencies, and others, implement the law. The adjudication of law through courts and tribunals, and the process of litigation is another important aspect of the legal phenomenon. Threaded through these aspects of law are the ways in which individuals engage with, contest, internalise and reproduce legal concepts and norms. Hence, law in its

various guises serves as a means of governing, often invisibly, with the implicit consent of the governed.

In early work, Blomley (1994) proposed the idea that space is not a mere backdrop for the law but rather is constitutive of the law, with places being where law acquires meaning and saliency. This constitutivity is more than a mere influencing of space by law, and vice versa. The legal practices of naming, ordering, cataloguing and ruling are engaged in a dynamic process of constant production and reproduction. The law "brings into existence that which it utters" (Bourdieu, 1991: 42 cited in Blandy and Sibley, 2010:278). To ascribe legal signifiers to an act or an object situates it within networks of power; these positions further condition subsequent actions and reactions to these acts or objects, further reinforcing their position (Delaney, 2014). The 1861 Offences Against the Person Act provides the legal basis for the criminalisation of abortion in Ireland. Following independence, access to abortion and contraception continued to be restricted. Between them, the Censorship of Publications Act, 1929 and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1935 prohibited any publication advocating contraception, or abortion and prohibited the sale, offer, advertisement or importation of any contraceptive. It is important that both of these legislative acts are seen within the context of the State's positioning of women within the home. In the nation-building project, Irish women were conceptualised as key to the reproduction and propagation of the Irish nation. Their place was in the home, raising children (Fletcher, 2005). Not until the Health (Family Planning) Act, 1979, which legalised contraception were condoms made available and even then with limited access for solely married couples. Thus by signifying that condoms were for contraceptive use only, and for use by married couples only, the law precluded any notions of female sexuality, female enjoyment of sex or indeed same-sex sexual activity. This was further accepted as 'the norm' foreclosing the potential for spaces in which these activities could occur. Thus the place of women within the family home as laid out in the constitution was further bolstered by laws related to contraception and reproductive health.

In practical terms, our understandings of ourselves are rooted in part on the role of place and our position within it (Blomley, 1994: 220). Central to the creation of space and place is the demarcation of borders or boundaries. The law is used to create many different types of boundaries which delimit spaces of inclusion, exclusion and exceptionality. In the case of women's reproductive rights in Ireland, the creation and enforcement of borders at various times has created and foreclosed spaces for women, creating imagined spaces of difference. The women who took the 'contraception train' to Belfast in May 1971 (RTÉ, 1971) made visible the constructed nature of boundaries so often taken for granted.

It has been argued by Koskenniemi (2004) that law is best understood as a 'hegemonic technique' – a tool for use. In Ireland the law has been used by both the state and citizens to produce, reproduce, and destroy spaces of inclusion and exclusion for women. The state has sought to utilise the law to ensure women's reproductive role in society is reinforced but women have contested this identity through the process of litigation and direct action protest. The 'X Case' involved a minor, the victim of a rape whose parents sought to bring her to the UK for the purposes of procuring an abortion. The Attorney General however sought an injunction in the High Court preventing X from travelling. Costello J. granted the injunction finding that the Attorney General was correct to invoke the jurisdiction of the court in order to vindicate and defend the right to life of the unborn in the case. This decision was subsequently appealed to the Supreme Court who found in a majority decision that the right to travel was generally fundamental in nature and that a person could not be prevented from travelling to another jurisdiction to engage in activities unlawful in Ireland, regardless of their legality, or not, in the destination jurisdiction. The court further found that when there is a "real and substantial risk" to the life of the mother, then it may not be practicable to vindicate the right to life of the unborn. While one arm of the State in this case sought to use the law to curb the rights of the mother, another arm of the State were convinced by the discourse presented by the defendant's legal counsel that, given the circumstances, curtailment of travel by the State would in fact be unlawful, not the procurement of an abortion by X. Finlay C. J. further acknowledged that thousands of Irish women travel each year for the purpose of abortion, thereby highlighting the disconnect between the law as conceived and the lived experiences of women. In 2007, a young woman aged 17, known as Miss D who was in the care of the State wished to terminate her pregnancy. The Health Service Executive attempted to prevent Miss D from travelling. In the High Court challenge, McKechnie J. found in favour of Miss D accepting her counsel's argument that the case was about the right to travel and not abortion *per se*.

Irish women have also used legal techniques available to them in attempts to scale-jump within spaces of engagement. In the case of A, B and C for example the European Court of Human Rights found that Ireland's failure to implement the constitutional right to a lawful abortion when there is a risk to the life of the mother violated the Article 8 rights of Applicant C. While this was deemed a success for the applicant, with regard to lived experience, the European Court's decision simply increased the visibility of the lack of rights experienced by women, without any marked change in C's everyday experiences.

Unfortunately, the enforcement of these laws, has led to a self-censoring, or 'chilling' effect for medical professionals amongst others. Even in circumstances that meet the very limited parameters for lawful abortion, there have been cases of medical professionals being reluctant to perform or facilitate an abortion as evidenced by cases such as P.P v Attorney General or A, B and C v Ireland. Thus from the moment of conception, so long as she remains in Ireland a pregnant woman cedes part of her bodily autonomy to the State. The thirteenth amendment guarantees pregnant women have the right to travel during pregnancy for the purpose of procuring an abortion. It is estimated that approximately 4000 women do this each year (Pinto, 2015). The ability to engage in this spatial fix however is contingent on a woman's position. Aside from financial considerations, women in the asylum system, migrant women or girls in the care of the Irish state, may find themselves trapped within the shadow of Ireland's restrictive abortion laws.

This paper has sought to elucidate the co-constitutive nature of law and space and their subsequent role in gendered spaces in the context of women's reproductive rights in Ireland. Delaney (2015b) has suggested that legal geography is a useful instrument for making visible, previously invisible injustices by taking us "into the workshops where space, law and (in)justice are the means of the co-production of each other" (*ibid*:2). In Ireland, the rhetoric of reproductive rights at the international and constitutional level have not until recently been felt in the everyday spaces inhabited by women. For women unable to travel, the shadow of these rights continues to fall short of the spaces they occupy, thereby situating already marginalised women in precarious spaces.

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Why we shouldn't live in modern cities

Dawn Higgins, 3rd year

Human geography has been tracking the migration of people from rural to urban areas over the past 50 years, and it is now estimated that more than 50% of the world population lives in urban areas, a migration which appears to be purely socio-economic (Wu *et al*., 2016). The developing geographical discipline of environmental geography aims to study the ways in which human interactions with the environment have changed as a result of this increasing globalisation and migration of population. However, other fields are also interested in studying this phenomenon, and studies emerging from a growing psychological discipline known as environmental psychology suggest that this migration to urban based living is in fact having a large detrimental effect on humans in all areas of our lives, including our physical and mental health, and our social lives.

Modern life for many people revolves around working long hours and commuting large distances daily. This lifestyle has a demonstrable negative impact on both mental and physical health. Humans should not live clustered in cities (Ott, 2016) but instead should live in more rural settlements with access to social supports (Cobb, 1976), where individuals can have a more balanced way of life (Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2016), avoid rising crime rates (Weisburd and Telep, 2014), stress caused by noise (Basner *et al*., 2014), pollution (Babisch *et al*., 2014), overcrowding or living in confined spaces (Graham and Colin, 2015), and isolation (House, 2001), all of which have a negative impact on both overall health (Bambra, 2016) and perceived life satisfaction (Berry and Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2011). Living in suburbia also increases time spent commuting, which exacerbates these negative repercussions by increasing mental stress (Koslowsky *et al*, 2013). Further, an increase in time spent commuting predicted an increase in weight gain (Sugiyama *et al*, 2013), decreases in the amount of restful sleep individuals achieve (Bishop, 2015) and can lead to increases in physical health issues such as heart disease (Nyhan *et al*, 2014), and diabetes (Tsuji *et al*., 2015). Living in this manner also increases social isolation. Due to a phenomenon known as "social withdrawal" (Millgram, 1970) people who live in urban areas are so overloaded with unwanted social contact they do their best to avoid it where possible (e.g. through the use of headphones or being on their smartphones). This is particularly obvious in city dwellers that commute, as it is a common sight to see a train carriage full of people, none of whom are interacting with each other. This withdrawal can cause people to become socially isolated. Social isolation can lead to an overall reduction in levels of life satisfaction, which are higher when people have a close social support system (Chan and Lee, 2006). This support can come from either family (Horwitz *et al*, 1996) or friends (Brown *et al*, 2003). People living in rural areas with strong support systems also tend to live longer (Frey, 2011), are less susceptible to disease (Cohen, et. al, 2003), have lower levels of stress (Cacioppio *et al*, 2003) and lower levels of depression (Stutzer and Frey, 2006).

Therefore, as humans are readjusting to their environment by moving to urban areas, the environment of these areas also needs to be adjusted to adapt to the influx. In the past, developers have not put much thought into the interaction between humans and their living spaces, as the emphasis has always been on maximising profit. This needs to change and living areas in the future should be designed to afford humans the best living standard possible. On the lower end of the socio-economic scale, people live in smaller houses and apartments which are built in smaller scales to allow for more units to be built, but are designed so inhabitants do not meet each other to give the impression of privacy. This sounds like a benefit, but as humans are hardwired to seek close relationships with those people who live in close proximity to them (Festinger and Schacter, 1950), this illusion of privacy simply leads to social isolation.

However, many of the harmful ramifications of modern living can be offset by contact with nature. Providing useable green areas in urban housing estates can increase overall health in individuals in the area both physically (van den Berg *et al*., 2015), and mentally (Alcock, et. al, 2014). This occurs both by fostering a sense of community spirit (Germann-Chiari and Seeland, 2004) and by giving inhabitants access to nature (Tamosiunas *et al*., 2014). This increase in community spirit is particularly important, as it would establish the close support system which is usually lacking in urban areas, and thereby reduce social isolation (Ming, 2014). Time spent by adults in green areas has become popular in recent years as a panacea for curing the everyday stresses and strains that people are feeling. Studies have shown a correlation between time spent in nature and reduction in anxiety levels and depression (Ulrich *et al*., 1991). Physical health is also likely to be better in people who regularly engage with nature (Pretty *et al*., 2005).There

are also many benefits to children who have access to green areas. Children prefer to play in a green area (Fjørtoft and Sageie, 2000) showing that people's affinity with nature is an intrinsic characteristic which would be acted on if the opportunity were provided. Children with access to green areas have lower weight gain rates (Dadvand *et al*., 2014) and higher emotional resilience (Flouri *et al*, 2014). Further, just 30 minutes playing in such an area reduces ADD (Taylor *et al*, 2001) and other behavioural issues (Markevych *et al*., 2014) in children.

Therefore common community areas where residents are free to gather and socialise would be an ideal solution to many of the issues city dwellers are facing. These types of open plazas are common-place in many continental European countries such as Spain, where higher social contact within neighbourhoods can be seen, thereby reducing the community breakdowns occurring across urban areas of the UK and Ireland. Having these common areas open and in full view of all apartments also mitigates a lot of inner city problems, such as drug selling and crime, as areas being well frequented and visible leads to illicit activity happening less often (Kuo and Sullivan, 2001). If living spaces were designed with these considerations in mind, it could reduce the amount of anti-social issues seen in urban areas.

Since 2009 all new developments must have a green area in its design under Irish planning law. However, as there are no regulations in relation to how this space must be given by developers, the total green space required tends to be made up of many little areas on the outskirts of the developments. While this is within the letter of the law, it does not seem in keeping with the spirit, which was to allow the people living in the development to have a communal space. It may be that further regulations are required to ensure that developers include this need in their plans, to try to combat some of the health, social and mental issues that urban living is causing.

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The Importance of Historical Climatology

Drew Stewart, 3rd year

Historical climatology is defined as a field of study situated at the interface between climatology and (environmental) history, which deals primarily with documentary evidence employing the methodology of both climatology and history (Brázdil *et al*, 2005). It is characterized by three objectives - reconstructing patterns of weather and climate prior to the development of modern instruments, investigating the vulnerability of past societies and economies to climate extremes and natural disasters, and the exploration of past discourses and the social representation of climate (Brázdil *et al*, 2005). The contribution of historical climatology has been of critical importance to our understanding of climatic processes of the last millennium and to the interaction of humans with their environment.

Historical climatology has contributed significantly to our understanding of natural background climate variability. Climate reconstruction combines a variety of non-instrumental man-made sources such as weather diaries, annals, art and ship logs with natural proxy data which includes tree rings, pollen data, ice core proxies and oscillation of glaciers. The availability of such rich data sets has allowed for highly accurate climate reconstructions in the Atlantic-European region for the past several centuries (Brázdil *et al*, 2005). Le Roy Ladurie discovered how institutional accounts of the timing of grain and wine harvests were suitable proxies for assessing temperature (Pfister, 2010). Similarly, annual tree ring growth can help to assess yearly temperatures and the length of the growing season. Ship logs are another source of climatic conditions which have the potential to greatly expand our knowledge of ocean conditions. Having collected observations from logbooks in the Øresund area for the period 1675-1715, Frydendahl and Frich (1996) concluded that the frequencies of northerly wind directions were greater and the winds stronger than between 1951-80.

Climatic depictions in art also provide useful indications of past climates. Paintings such as *The Frozen Thames* (1677) and Pieter Bruegel's *Hunters in the Snow* (1565) offer artistic portrayals of the extent of winter conditions during the 'Little Ice Age'. While some of these paintings may be imaginary or exaggerated, historical evidence suggests that many undoubtedly represent objective reality at the time they were painted. Photographs showing the oscillation of glaciers also provide an understanding of glacier retreat in the modern warm period. Perhaps the most dramatic example is the comparison of the glacier d'Argentiere engraving of the 1850s to Le Roy Ladurie's photograph in 1983 (McCouat, 2015).

Atmospheric effects of volcanic eruptions also feature heavily in past art culture. The eruption of Krakatoa in 1883 provoked artistic representations of the lucid multi-coloured evening displays caused by the scattering of light by the atmospheric particles (McCouat, 2015). Newspaper reports expressed similar fascination at the

spectacle. Paintings of Venice during the 18th and 19th centuries have also provided historical climatologists with an indication of past water levels in the city which have been useful in comprehending sea level changes in modern history.

Historical climatology is also crucially important in the understanding of climate impacts on past civilizations. William Lauer (1981) has commented that 'climate shapes the theatre in which human existence – the history of the human race – takes place' (Brádzil *et al*., 2005). Therefore it may be argued that climate is as much cultural as it is scientific. The social and religious implications of climate variability such as the witch hunts in Europe during the Maunder Minimum convey how politics, corruption and spiritual beliefs traversed in the observation of and reaction to climate change. Therefore the cultural constructions of climate across diverse societies and eras demonstrates how principle climate ideas and narratives can impact policy discussion, social relations, economic plans and power dynamics (Carey *et al*., 2002).

The Inca Empire benefited from improved irrigation and greater crop yields during the late Medieval Warm Period and expanded settlements to higher elevations in the Andes (Carey *et al*., 2002). While beneficial climatic effects appear to enlarge the scope of human capabilities, climate shocks hinder it and often lead to emergency consequences (Pfister, 2001). While factoring in historical, environmental and social contexts, many historians have attributed climate changes as a powerful factor in the demesne and collapse of empires such as the Ottoman and Maya societies. Ogilvie *et al*. (2000) provides proxy data evidence from ice cores and marine sediments which show favourable conditions that enabled the Vikings to explore and settle Iceland and Greenland between 800-100 AD. However, historical reconstructions allude to considerable climate cooling 'The Little Ice Age' in Greenland following 1300 AD, may help to explain the disappearance of the Greenland Norse settlements in the 15th century.

A key strength in the body of literature concerning historical climatology is the way in which it highlights vulnerability. Marginalized populations often suffer more severely from climatic variability and weather hazards due to their limited socio-economic resources to protect themselves and are often unable to recover from distressing situations leading to increased power imbalances, social polarization and economic inequality (Carey *et al*., 2002). The emphasis on vulnerability holds a particular merit for understanding global warming today because it advocates how particular marginalized peoples or poorer countries will suffer more devastating consequences from global warming than the ruling classes or wealthier industrialised nations (Carey *et al*., 2002).

Historical climatology is crucially important in understanding past climate variability. The reconstruction of regional extreme climatic and weather phenomenon and the examination of the societal reactions to these events are vital to analyse how differing societies in varied situations may respond to, and be affected by future events, and to gain a greater knowledge of the type of events that may occur in the future. It is essential to draw from past experiences in our socio-environmental reactions to climatic change and its consequences in the modern day. The study of historical climatology is therefore of tremendous practical importance in the continuing challenges of human-induced climate change and how our modern civilizations will cope with the threat of global warming.

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