

**THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS, INTO BATTLEFIELD HERONGATE:
REFLECTING ON A SITE IN CRISIS AS AN OUTSIDER**

By

Astha Saxena

A Major Research Paper Submitted to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology

University of Ottawa

In Partial Fulfilment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

August 2021

Supervisor: Dr. Scott Simon

Committee Member: Dr. Vincent Mirza

Acknowledgements

I appreciate and wish to thank the individuals, both in Canada and in India, who have been there to support me these last two years. My time at the University of Ottawa was a remarkable learning opportunity, and it could never have happened without the guidance, dedication, support, and expertise of my supervisor helping me through this project Dr. Scott Simon. I appreciate his patience and enthusiasm throughout the duration of this paper. I also want to thank Dr. Katherine Vantune and Dr. Vincent Mirza for helping me conceive this project; this project would not have been realized without their insightful comments.

I also want to thank Dr. David Jaclin for his encouragement to pursue anthropology at the University of Ottawa. He helped me value my subjectivity and introduced me to a world of possibilities. I want to thank my senior, Christine Beaudoin, who welcomed me to a new country and a new discipline as a friend. I also want to thank my methods course professor Dr. Deborah Sick, who helped me learn the absolute basics of ethnography. I am indebted to the residents at Herongate, who are kind and warm to all those who come to them to hear their stories. These experiences have given me the love, support and encouragement to feel at home in Canada.

I want to thank my family, to have supported my dream of pursuing anthropology, those who remain and those who have since departed, continue to be my strongest motivator. I especially thank my mother and brother for proofreading several versions of my paper.

I also want to thank my close personal friends in India, Aakanksha Mahajan, Nikita Choudhry and Dhruv Mohan, who allow me to rely on their emotional support to be able to explore my vulnerability for this project after the passing away of my grandparents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dedication

This paper is lovingly dedicated to the memory of my grandfather Mr. H. P. Saxena and my grandmother Mrs. Sudarshan Saxena, both of whom instilled fondness for stories of human lives. Their presence continues in my life through my work; what I continue to learn and everything I believe in is built on their wisdom, which is their parting gift to me.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Dedication	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Abstract	v
Preface	1
Introduction:	2
Who are Herongate?	5
Research question	9
Methods and conceptual tools	10
Heterotopias	11
Perspectives, prisms and points of view	14
Problem space at Herongate: Sites of crisis	17
Anthropology of gentrification	18
Pursuit of Anti-poor Utopias: as studied by geography scholars	20
Stigmatization and containment	21
Discriminatory remnants in the North American society	22
Experiences in India	24
Students in the slums of Delhi	25
The rehabilitated people of social housing in India	28
The Public discussion at the Herongate	34
Nemesis of Herongate: The local newspapers	36
The city newspaper: The Ottawa Citizen	37
Media silence, Stigma, and lack of agency	39
Proceedings of the meeting: What do we want to share?	39
Help me, grandmother!	43
Newcomers in Ottawa	48
We are Herongate	51
Conclusion	55
References	60

Abstract

This paper looks into the story of Herongate, a site to be gentrified in Ottawa, Canada, to understand what home means for the people experiencing displacement due to Gentrification. Herongate is a stigmatized and racialized neighbourhood in Ottawa. Herongate is comprised primarily of the economically weaker section of society. The people have battled for tenant rights and against forced displacement since 2016. Several factors have been involved in how this battle has played out. Foucault's concepts of heterotopias explain that the "untamed urban spaces" are tools to contain spaces of crisis and uphold the illusions of urban utopia. The urban discourses are often selective in what they acknowledge about urban lives. The strengths of poorer neighbourhoods often go unacknowledged. People who peek into these heterotopias of urban poverty are limited by their prisms that are shaped by these urban illusions. The paper employs self-reflection as the method to understand how outsiders understand housing injustice and how labels of immigrant visible minorities affect such spaces. Since the author is an international student from India, the paper compares the urban poor in Ottawa and cities across India, discovering the limitations of the author's prisms as an outsider. Herongate's newsletter, Herongate's public meetings and the scholarly works about Herongate weave a complicated but inspiring story about what has happened at Herongate and how the tenants battled evictions. The paper traverses the narratives built different mediums, trying to understand the limits of an outsider's perspective.

Preface

“There is one question that, perhaps more than any other, motivates anthropological inquiry. Take people from different backgrounds and place them in the same situation; they are likely to differ in what they make of it.” (Ingold, 2000, p. 157)

Every experience we go through gets impacted by us and impacts who we are. The impact varies with the intensity of what we experience. Intensity varies with our vulnerability in every experience. Anthropologists indulge in a mutual experience of a flux of ever-changing human perspectives like any other human. But they also indulge in a reflective exercise to understand what it means to be a human. Every time I visit my experiences in Herongate I would use different words to express and experience those memories. I learnt that in anthropology, any stories of destitution are shared through the experiences and the opinions of the people. I imagine every ethnographer dives into the lives of other people with their perspectives and at some point, they understand how they want to introduce their perspective alongside the stories of other people. I realize it allows the readers to make up their own minds about the situations traversed by the author. The project made me reflect on my perspectives and how I bring the context of my life to view other people's lives. Therefore, I do not write this paper as a scholarly assessment of the beautiful people at Herongate. I write this as an assessment of their impact on the people who come from the outside looking into their lives. It is a self-reflective ethnographic essay.

Introduction:

On the morning of April 27th, 2019 I stepped out to my balcony before I was supposed to leave for my first Herongate visit. It had been months since I had enjoyed the view from my high-rise apartment while I had my breakfast, the weather was getting warmer. I felt nostalgic about my journey. My undergrad Prof. David Jaclin from my department at the University of Ottawa had welcomed me to the discipline of anthropology from my architecture background. He advised me to journal every day so that I can revisit important memories. This morning I had revisited a few. One of them was my very first Google search about Herongate, which had promptly led me to a human rights article featured on the Al Jazeera Website, originally posted on August 21st, 2018:

Binto Mohamed hasn't had a good night's sleep since May. That's when she received a letter telling her that her family of ten people had until September 30 to find a new home. "There's a piece of me missing, because of the stress," she says, standing in the middle of her dimly-lit kitchen, the air thick and sticky in the overpowering August heat. Mohamed, a mother of eight, knows her house is far from perfect. The kitchen sink is about half full of dirty, brownish water; the drain hasn't worked for the past year, and despite putting in a request to have it repaired five months ago, it's still blocked. Without a working sink, dirty pots and pans sit unwashed on the stovetop, which itself is covered in a crusted splatter of sauces. The bathroom light fixture has been broken for months, while the outer glass of a double-paned window is missing off the first-floor room Mohamed's disabled 18-year-old daughter sleeps in, in a hospital bed. In the winter, cold air seeps in, making the teenager ill. But this home is all Mohamed has ever known since she moved to Canada with her family from their native Somalia in 2014. (Kestler-D'Amours, 2018)

To paraphrase the data of Google maps, I had been 11,332 km away from my family in the national capital region of India, New Delhi. I was trying to develop my research topic in the federal capital of Canada, Ottawa. "Home" would always seem to pull my thoughts, with my mind finding it easiest to fish for questions pertaining to the experience of one's home; I would assume that it would be the easiest to understand if the stories I pursued involved people's homes. I had fatefully discovered the Herongate story when I took a geography seminar course, in the winter of 2019, on 'the order and disorder in a city' at

Carleton University. The Al Jazeera article is one of the numerous media articles that would show up on the internet. Either these articles shared similar heart-breaking stories of destitution at Herongate or were reporting the reasons creating the destitution. Most depicted images of people protesting with banners that read “We Are Herongate”.

I flipped through my journal to find something more upbeat; I read the latest entry that I had written last night. Coming to Canada meant learning to live in a better-organized urban system. Canada had lived up to its expectation of a kinder place; growing up I heard from numerous people how their relatives in Canada had a better quality of life. I seemed to have stepped into one of the American kid’s television shows I grew up watching; where people with different skins, ethnicities, hair colours were all friends. I barely had any experience of an urban space where everyone around seemed friendly and happy. The only comparable experience I had was of a small town called Satna in the Central state of Madhya Pradesh in India. There, I was told that Delhi was a rude city and one doesn’t know until they leave it. I had only stayed there for four days and had wished to find the same friendly environment again someday.

I have reminisced a lot about my home back in Delhi. My own home in Ottawa was not too different than the one I had left in Delhi. My journals were full of comparisons. My apartment in Ottawa would sometimes feel magical. From my balcony, I could see Parliament Hill, the Gatineau Hills, rainbows, and sometimes hot air balloons on the horizon. My home back in Delhi was an apartment on the sixth floor with a wide-open view of the skyline of apartment buildings across a road and beyond a huge park. I would often sit in the balcony to watch the sunset while I worked or studied. The apartment in Ottawa felt like an upgrade of the same experience. Both buildings could see sunsets, a lot of trees and a metro train line. Only this apartment was ten stories higher, the unpolluted sky here was so much bluer, and there was no constant honking of vehicles. I couldn’t see the enormous crowd that

was everywhere in Delhi. The buildings didn't have black and brown deposits of dust. Only newly constructed buildings in Delhi had clean walls. Ottawa's lack of dust made it look like a newly constructed city. Dust makes everything look a shade duller. But I thought it rains so often in Ottawa, the rains keep the dust settled on the ground. Ottawa went through brilliant hues of greens, reds, and whites with the changing seasons of Canada. Some vehicles came at 3 am to clear the snow and even in the worst of winters my neighbourhood was cleaner than other parts of Ottawa. The heaps of snow these vehicles left were white in my neighbourhood but the heaps of snow had dirt in the other parts of the city, I didn't know why.

When I read my thoughts about the differences between the two cities, I realized that this was a day when the two were the most comparable. April in Canada was like Delhi winters, only without the smog. The pedestrian crowd outside my Delhi home was made mostly of the economically weaker class, or as we called it the labour class. These people came to my residential neighbourhood to work. My home was in a sub-city in West Delhi called Dwarka; this was one of what we called an upper-middle-class neighbourhood. We were used to the crowds around and would usually ignore it, it was like white noise. The residents of my neighbour were lesser in number than the workers. The streets also had beggars but we were habitual of looking past them. We were taught not to encourage them to beg by giving them any money. If they were persistent usually someone would scold them away. I didn't see such class divides in Ottawa that were as obvious as I had known back home, or maybe I couldn't tell. I enjoyed how Ottawa was visually comparable to home but also an upgrade from what I had known before I came to Canada.

The comparisons between my two lives weren't going to end with my homes. As got up to leave, I was gearing up for my first experience of the urban poor in Ottawa. In India, I had countless times talked to the urban poor experiencing destitution; they were either in

slums or rehabilitated from slums. Herongate was going to be my first experience with the poor in Canada.

For the course work of this geography seminar, I had researched the media coverage of their lives. I chose the assignment because I thought it could serve as the perfect overlap of the two disciplines of geography and anthropology. I was going to present to the residents what I had found. Herongate had the potential to inspire several points of inquiry. Carleton's Geography department was already heavily involved with the efforts at Herongate. Some of the students in the geography department were residents. I was not only introduced to the struggles at Herongate story through first-hand experiences of my cohort but was also introduced to the profound fondness for Herongate.

With the topic of home seeming intimate to me, Herongate inspired my first point of interest in Herongate, "how do the people of Herongate carry the idea of a 'home sweet home' with such fondness when they are experiencing the looming threat to the security of having a home?"

Who are Herongate?

Herongate is one of the neighbourhoods in the southern region of the regional municipality or ward 18 called Alta Vista in the mid-sized city of Ottawa, the federal capital of Canada. The neighbourhood is a rental residential property owned by a company called Timbercreek.

The local newspapers report that in May 2018, over 500 people or 100 families living in a few of these towers received eviction notices (Laucius, 2018) from the Timbercreek and by November 2017, 105 residents had lost their houses (Van der Zwan & Willing, 2018) and hundreds of families were evicted from a total of 230 units by the end of 2018 (Crosby, 2020). The Geography students and professors of the University of Ottawa, the Carleton

University and several other Canadian Universities have since been engaged with the residents to research the causes and manifestations of housing discrimination in Canada, revealing a lot of disturbing systemic issues. Ted Rutland, a Professor at Concordia, wrote in his book that these residences are built and controlled by developers and often witness the benefit of these developers being prioritized over the residents (Rutland, 2018). The residents of Herongate now believe that Herongate was always intended for gentrification, the plan being to allow them to decay, force out “legacy tenants” through wholesale demolitions” (which means demolition and eviction), “and maximize profits by increasing the density of units on each parcel” (Hawley, 2018). The Herongate Tenants’ Coalition website (HTC) explains this battle in better words than I could find.

Herongate is a predominantly racialized neighbourhood in Ottawa populated by low-income, working-class families. 89% of those facing displacement are people of colour, with 44 percent of them being first-generation Somali immigrants. (Mensah & Tucker-Simmons, 2021). “Many of the families affected are large, with an average of 5.4 people per house. Most have low incomes, yet they pay market rent – which is around \$1,400 or \$1,500 for a three or four-bedroom townhouse” (Hawley, 2018). The landlords of these rental buildings had already demolished 80 units in the first phase of demolition in 2015-16. To me, the most surprising aspect of this battle was the fact that the injustice through housing discrimination has no legal repercussions. Even though the law protects the tenants’ right to retain the original rent in case of a renovation, there is no such provision if the building is demolished (Crosby, 2020). Some of the evicted Herongate tenants, other tenants of Timbercreek and the tenants from nearby properties owned by other landlords together formed The Herongate Tenant Coalition (HTC) to challenge the evictions. They continue to resist the eviction, both through organizing efforts, “an unrelenting social media campaign that targets both Timbercreek and city officials to expose patterns of neglect, corruption, and intimidation”

(Crosby, 2020, p. 184), and through a legal application to Ontario Human Rights Tribunal.

The HTC website introduces this crisis as the “The battle for Herongate”:

The Battle for Herongate Begins

Herongate is, by far, Ottawa’s most diverse neighbourhood. It is a beautiful neighbourhood made up of people from a multitude of backgrounds. Children play in the streets and in the park while family members of all ages sit outside and share stories over tea. Some of us have built impressive front-yard and backyard gardens, while others have grown up and raised families here. Many of us have lived here for decades and this is where we call home. We are also one of Ottawa’s poorest neighbourhoods and we are now being told, for the second time in two years, that our community will be destroyed and we have no say in the matter. Timbercreek and the City of Ottawa want to “revitalize” Herongate and they want all the low-income people out.

Timbercreek and the city even tried to consult with us about the future of our neighbourhood when they knew they would be destroying our homes. They called this the “visioning process.” They are evicting us from own neighbourhood. What many people don’t know is that the entire neighbourhood of Herongate is essentially owned by Timbercreek. In fact, this is the largest group of residential rentals owned by one landlord in Canada. Over 4,000 people live in Timbercreek’s Herongate, the population of a small town (Herongate Tenants Coalition).

The geography scholars’ research reveals how the developer companies in Herongate trade low-income rental neighbourhoods that are ultimately intended for profitable gentrification (Crosby, 2020). Herongate’s previous owner Transglobe, a company accused of a similar business model, is referred to as the “infamous Canadian slumlord” (Crosby, 2018; Hawley, 2018; Mensah and Tucker-Simmons, 2021; Allukar, n.d.). Daniel Tucker-Simmons, the Herongate lawyer involved in this tribunal, and Joseph Mensah, a professor at York University, wrote in their paper that the residents of the Herongate neighbourhood are “an ethno-racial enclave, occupied mainly by visible minorities and Somalian Muslims” (Mensah & Tucker-Simmons, 2021, p. 2). They are experiencing “a pronounced social and economic toll that has compounded the racial discrimination” (Mensah & Tucker-Simmons, 2021, p. 1). They explain that the developers, in allowing the buildings to deteriorate allow rents to lower and become affordable to economically weaker sections of the society but only to strip them off it when the building has deteriorated enough. The legal application calls out

the developer's intention that Timbercreek's objective was to create a neighbourhood that would be "attractive to wealthier residents in Alta Vista and entice them to sell their homes and move southward to rent upscale housing in Heron Gate Village" (Human Rights Tribunal Application, 2018, pp. 4 - 5). Timbercreek's law firm sent a series of cease and desist notices threatening legal action and has engaged in other deleterious tactics to stifle dissent, including labelling Coalition members as "criminals" and "extremists." The mass eviction of hundreds of marginalized people and response to tenant mobilizations is a poignant example illustrating the tactics deployed by corporate entities to both accumulate profits and demobilize opposition (Crosby, 2020). Such research has then been shared with the public mostly through the HTC newsletter or the student newspaper "The Leveller":

The ownership of the property seems subject to endless obfuscation. Let's go back to the neighbourhood's beginning – but first, a note about how its name is spelled. Is it Heron Gate or Herongate? As somebody who grew up in the area, I can say that our neighbourhood identity has never fully taken shape, owing to our development as a series of "planned communities." This is evident even in the spelling of Herongate/Heron Gate. The massive monopolized rental community is known as "Heron Gate" (the spelling used by its corporate owners, creating the sense of a gated community), while the neighbourhood at large is Herongate (as reflected in use by residents, OC Transpo, and businesses) (Hawley, 2018).

The battle at Herongate has since only gained more attention for what it represents. It is a story more than simply about the lives of the people at Herongate; it is about social justice for the urban poor. The story of Herongate engages the discourses at play in the context of poor urban neighbourhoods of North America.

"Housing's no longer viewed as home, a place of security for a family, a place where memories are born and it shifts to housing as a place to park wealth and those to me are very different things." Leilani Farha, United Nations special rapporteur on adequate housing and a resident of Ottawa said. "The Heron Gate evictions are a sign of broader housing issues across Ottawa. When the Heron Gate tenants were told they were going to be evicted, their

biggest fear was that they would end up in homelessness because of the lack of affordable housing units in Ottawa” (Goodman, Cocullo, & Gergyek, 2018).

Impoverished communities are routinely subjected to displacement in efforts of beautification of the city, all around the world. The story of Herongate has hence become a part of a larger issue of the social harm caused by gentrification. Herongate is a site amidst a crisis that is surrounded by insiders and outsiders, everyone experiencing the site of crisis through their individual subjectivity. Those involved have explored this site with a varied number of aspects as their focus causing Herongate to vary in its identity of crisis such as the legal crisis, the social crisis, or a personal crisis (as is for the residents); all building a flux of perspectives at Herongate influenced by different fields of expertise and life experiences.

Furthermore, the residents felt it to be just as impertinent to rebuild the narrative about the Herongate as the legal battle to defend it. For this, they created their newsletter “We are Herongate” that is posted on their website. This reveals there is a need for the agency to be asserted. The existing narratives weaving their stories came from different points of view, all looking into a “poorer neighbourhood”. I realized the story of Herongate revolves around the perceptions/discourses and the narratives about precarious lives. This created another point of inquiry, “what does destitution mean? And how is it perceived in the case of Herongate?”

Research question

Through the story of Herongate, I try to understand, **What does home mean for the people experiencing displacement due to Gentrification?** A lot of the efforts of the residents were actively focused on telling the truth about what it's like to live at Herongate, through their newsletter “we are Herongate.” I assumed that they wanted to change an existing narrative. In this paper, I explore how Herongate has traditionally been captured in

the media. I will also try to see whether these discourses distort the lived realities, whether they are doing a disservice to the people at Herongate.

Experiencing the flux of perspectives at Herongate of people with different backgrounds, I realized that my own perspective on the subject is greatly influenced by my experiences in India. My first insight or the first acquaintance with the phenomenon (of displacement due to gentrification) has been through work in slum rehabilitation projects in India. Slum rehabilitation projects in India are criticized for displacing the homeless from the city centres to the outskirts of the city in a manner that completely disrupts their livelihoods. Having grown up in New Delhi, I have seen stark urban economic contrasts all my life. The slums would often sit adjacent to many wealthier residences. Furthermore, given a lot of Indians emigrate from India to North America; there are established notions about Canada that exist in Indian society. Additionally, growing up we consume American entertainment content and reports from news media that create a perception of life in North America.

Given the similar themes of my previous work, I use my personal experiences to understand the outside perspectives on urban poverty. I use my experiences of having seen poverty as the reality of the others in my home city. Growing up with the influence of North American culture, I also carried preconceived ideas about Canada that influenced my expectations about Canadian urban life. In this paper, I reflect on these influences on my ideas about urban life in Canada, and how it affects the way I understood Herongate as an outsider.

Methods and conceptual tools

In the discipline of geography and sociology, ‘discourse’ is understood as the “knowledge, subjects, behaviour, and events that are depicted and defined in statements, assumptions, concepts, themes, and shared ideas. The simplest way to think of the concept of

“discourse” is that it provides a framework, through which we see the world.” (Braham, 2013, p. 59) In this paper, I will employ this definition. Furthermore, I use these works to understand the discourses that the media coverage of Herongate has propagated. Herongate, being among the cheapest rental housings in Ottawa experiences the label of the “poor neighbourhood.”

I spent a day at Herongate where people discussed how Herongate can be helped. I try to understand how people can be oriented differently towards Herongate and what it means for the residents of Herongate¹.

For this paper, I employed the concepts used to talk about the sites of crisis, especially the works of Foucault (1986) (for the concept of Heterotopia), and Valentine et.al (for the concept of a prism), as conceptual tools to discuss the sites of crisis.

Heterotopias

Foucault’s work on spatial experiences has introduced a concept of “Heterotopias” as sites within a city with assigned meaning, such as graveyards or parks that are physically encased in a space with specific (tangible or intangible) functionalities (Foucault, 1986).

Foucault created this concept for a lecture meant for architects (Sudrajat, 2012) who explore these spaces objectively, concerned with the management of the functionalities of these spaces and what they represent. The purpose of this work was to present the cultural and social contexts of spaces to architects.

Foucault defines their system of “opening and closing” spaces that “both isolates them and makes them penetrable” (Foucault, *Of Other Spaces*, 1986, p. 26). He has defined

¹ This visit was done as a part of the Geography course and was meant to be published on the university website. People were supposed to present their personal experiences which would then be written about in the article. The research project had ethical clearance from Carleton University, which gave students permission to write about their observations in academic work.

Heterotopia to be specifically designed spaces with specific cultural significance, e.g., a movie theatre, cemetery, etc. These clearly defined spaces have one clear quality, “heterotopias are always places where incompatible or contradictory spaces converge” (Sudrajat, 2012, p. 30); “that we do not live in a homogeneous and empty space, but on the contrary in a space thoroughly imbued with quantities and perhaps thoroughly fantasmatic” (Foucault, 1986, p. 23).

Foucault defines the primary quality of these spaces as a contrast to the rest of the spaces around Heterotopias. Hence, these spaces can be heterotopia of crisis, deviation, etc. The heterotopic site of crisis is defined as “forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly, etc.” (Foucault, *Of Other Spaces*, 1986, p. 24). He explains that these spaces have changed to “heterotopias of deviation: those in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed. Cases of this are rest homes and psychiatric hospitals, and of course prisons, etc.” (Foucault, *Of Other Spaces*, 1986, p. 25).

Foucault's prime example of heterotopia is the sites of crisis because they are markedly different from the “norm.” The impoverished or more prone-to-crime neighbourhoods typically fall into such categories in modern times. These sites of crisis house more than the people and what they represent, they house the ideas of crisis. Since Herongate is a site experiencing a crisis, it is a Heterotopia viewed through different 'points of view creating a flux of perspectives.

Either their role [of heterotopia] is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory (perhaps that is the role that was played by those famous brothels of which we are now deprived). Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy,

ill-constructed, and jumbled. This latter type would be the heterotopia, not of illusion, but compensation (Foucault, 1986, p. 27).

As a former architecture student, I always saw creating new social norms being favoured over preserving the old norms. When I was taught such works at my architecture school, it was to understand how behaviour can be influenced favourably. The way spaces are designed, dictates how people will treat those spaces and people in those spaces. A classic example taught was that water dispensers in school are designed to be near the teachers' sitting rooms. Students tend to congregate near the water dispensers but being near teachers' rooms discourages that. Foucault's work is studied to understand the conflicting ideas associated with a space (Sudrajat, 2012). As an architecture student, these concepts were so hard to understand that in my first year almost all the students failed the course. However, it was a compulsory course because building new spaces creates conflict with the existing spaces. Sudrajat, an architect, has explained this in simpler language.

Heterotopias have a function about all spaces that remain outside them. This function unfolds between two extreme poles. The function of heterotopia of illusion is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, and the function of heterotopia of compensation is to create a real space – a space that is other. Thus, heterotopias enable us to both confront our illusions and create new illusions of the utopias we cannot have (Sudrajat, 2012, p. 30).

I believe that the practice sees buildings as art forms and architects as artists. We were trained to sell our proposal and preserve our creativity. I believe that it can create an inadvertent disregard for the experiences of the people in favour of personal ambitions. In my classroom, there was obliviousness towards the experiences of the other people, who may not inhabit the buildings we designed but would still be affected by it.

The sites of crisis as defined by Foucault don't explain whether it includes sites of destitution. However, the preservation of an illusion of utopia has a direct relation to these sites. The sites of crisis are designed to contain the "crisis" elements and keep them separate.

Utopian alternatives stand in contrast with these sites. By that standard, urban poverty serves this purpose more strongly than any other heterotopia

As an anthropologist, I get to acknowledge the lived spaces to be more than just functional units of inhabitation. For that, I believe it to be imperative to employ my empathy, vulnerability, and a personally engaged reflection to navigate the stories of people. Entering a space with an external perspective introduces these conflicting ideas into that space. Hence I find it important to include the ethnographer's prism.

Perspectives, prisms and points of view

I have taken inspiration from Ruth Behar's (Behar, 1996) and Tim Ingold's (Ingold, 2000) works to dive into the question of how my prisms influence how I comprehend the sites of crisis. Behar insisted that "What happens within the observer must be made known if the nature of what has been observed is to be understood. The subjectivity of the observer influences the course of the observed event radically." Tim Ingold emphasizes that a landscape and especially "dwelling" should be seen for how it is meaningful:

A place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there to the sights, sounds and indeed smells that constitute its specific ambience. And these, in turn, depend on the kinds of activities in which its inhabitants engage. It is from this relational context of people's engagement with the world, in the business of dwelling, that each place draws its unique significance. Thus whereas with space, meanings are attached to the world, with the landscape they are gathered from it. (Ingold, 2000, p. 192)

When people's perspectives are taken into consideration, academics employ the tool of "prism." Valentine's (2003) anthropological inquiry into gender identity discusses society's tendency to view everything from our personal point of view, shaped by the beliefs we inherit from society. In the case of gender, the "prism of gender in North American culture derives from the fact that it is characterized by a marked contradiction between people's beliefs about gender and real behaviour. Our real behaviour is far more flexible,

adaptable, and malleable than what our beliefs would have.” (Valentine, Spade, & Trautner, 2003, p. 1) In sociology, the term “prism” or “social prism” is used interchangeably with the term “social lens” to talk about the discourse that a person’s subjectivity employs. For example, O’Brien uses the conceptual tool of social prism to discuss how the belief systems of people can be paradoxical (O’Brien, 1999). In this paper, I use the term for both the individual subjectivity and the sociological prism that employs discourses.

The term “prism” got introduced into gender studies across varied disciplines. In anthropology, the term “prism” is used most commonly to signify the context of the discussion. E.g., “through the prism of gender that this study aims to understand the complexity of a transiting Indonesia greatly affected by processes of Islamization and democratization” (Van Wichelen, 2007, p. 3), or *Prisms of Belonging and Alternative Modernities* an emerging anthropological particularity through an ordinary urban place rather than assume its particularity before the ethnographic engagement. It proposes an anthropological theory that questions what is ordinary and explores the relation between the ordinary and the exotic.” (Napolitano, V, 2002, p.1)

This usage is not usually representing individual perspectives but a discipline, a topic or any social factors relevant. However, in gender discussions, the term is used for individual points of view. This is because individual perspectives are developed because of the way these prisms intersected in the individual’s life. Everyone has a gender identity and hence a perspective on it. “These patterns of gender are experienced and expressed in different ways depending on the other social prisms that shape our identities and life chances” (Valentine, Spade, & Trautner, 2003, p. xiv). Hence, their life experiences create their individual prisms on gender. Depending on how favourable the gender discourses are to a person’s experiences, their prisms on the norms can vary. Gender identities are intrinsic and yet also shaped by these norms.

In this paper, I use this term throughout the essay because destitution is also a fundamental human experience. Experience of destitution can vary and one may have a false sense of relatability and comparability. Privilege is defined when compared to the absence of privilege; a person who has comfortable life knows of destitution even if they don't know the experience of it. People in power usually have a very strong influence on the management of these heterotopias of crisis. Their prisms are based on their individual experiences. Herongate has a strong influx of prisms that prioritize economic value over the preferences of the residents. These individual prisms are opinions that can also be flawed.

My history of growing up and living in India forms the prisms I carried. Working on this project, I unveiled some of my misconceptions about poverty through the discussions about this project with my family, particularly my grandmother. I quote the conversations to reflect on those lessons. In this paper, I dive into the memories of experiences that had not seemed significant at the time; but during the course of this research, I discovered the realities of the urban poor. These realities existed all around me but I had never understood them. I felt it is imperative to keep that in mind when I experience Herongate; that my introduction to Herongate may teach me a lot more in the future than what I understood so far.

Every statement I quote about the lives at Herongate is publicly printed in the news media. The stories of the people at Herongate are shared extensively in the news media; my own presentation at the panel was on news media narratives. Many academicians have engaged the people for research works about the structural violence and experiences of marginalized communities. The people, however, exercise their agency through their Herongate Tenants' Coalition website (HTC) in their own words, and I wanted to preserve that by decidedly sticking to the words of the residents unadulterated by my prying questions.

Problem space at Herongate: Sites of crisis

Urban anthropology studies interactions and the experiences of the people in the context of relationships between the urban-scape and institutions. Such inquiries result in an analysis of economic forces, resource management, power relationships, and demographics in the urbanscape. Such inquiries, when focusing on the marginalized populations study the experience of structural violence or social disorganization caused by such power dynamics, study the social dynamics that influence, sustain and create these power relations.

In her 1964 book, Ruth Glass coined the term gentrification. She described it to be the process where, “the social status of many residential areas is being ‘uplifted’ as the middle class—or the ‘gentry’—moved into working-class space, taking up residence, opening businesses, and lobbying for infrastructure improvements” (Glass & University College, 1964, p. 1). Since then numerous academic works were done on displacement, caused by the gentrification, that build critiques of insensitivity stemming from the financialization of the housing market and the neoliberal economy, and the oppression produced through various other urban mechanisms such as institutional and corporate power dynamics or racism through urban policies (Miller and Stalcup, 2016) Urban anthropology sees gentrification to be both a result and a perpetrator of urban changes (Reick, 2018). Urban changes are complex and layered processes but more importantly constantly occurring:

There is no natural or authentic way to live in the urban spaces of the modern world. The material, social, economic, and political activities of creating spaces and occupying them are experimental processes, processes of repeated invention. Urban residents must continuously learn to live an urban existence. In an enigmatic essay that has become a touchstone for architects and architectural theorists, as well as for philosophers and anthropologists of the built environment, Martin Heidegger wrote that “mortals . . . must ever learn to dwell” (1993: 363). Contemporary urban spaces demand constant evolution, a process that is messy and unpredictable. It is also a task at which a city’s inhabitants do not always succeed. (Hoffman, 2017, xxi)

These urban changes, however, are problematic for several reasons that have become the subjects of scholarly pursuits over the recent years. These works have an overlap with other disciplines that work with statistical analysis such as economics, geography, sociology etc.

Anthropology of gentrification

Anthropology extensively studies gentrification for its social exclusion. Ethnographers visit the “Untamed urban spaces” (Hubbard, P., & Brooks, 2021) and learn how people are frustrated with the system’s disservice towards the displaced community. While other disciplines study the urban forces that influence changes in an urban space, anthropological inquiries document the experiences of these forces.

Several of these ethnographies actively advocate for the disregard for the originality of these sites. Gentrification is extensively explored in the context of anti-black racism and its evidence in systemic racism. However, the advocacy is not limited to that in support of the ethnic minorities in Western countries. These conversations are not limited to advocacy against gentrification.

Several discourses support gentrification; even an intent to preserve historic heritage is used as justification for gentrification (Herzfeld, 2010). Gentrified spaces are sometimes focused on redeveloping the areas around the spaces of Heritage to create a renewed space of heritage and cultural pride. Herzfeld (2010) brings attention to the manipulation of discourses that validates gentrification. “This commoditization of history expands into the urban design as a classification that serves the goals of neoliberal modernity. Here, the dominant interpretations of history spatially reinforce the current ideologies” (Herzfeld, 2010, p. 1). Arkaraprasertkul (2018) argues that gentrification does not always create social exclusion in

residential spaces. Taking the example of Shanghai in China, Arkaraprasertkul presents another example of historic importance being used as the reason to upgrade and uphold a higher status. Furthermore, people reinvented the narrative in Shanghai to create a neighbourhood with a higher class status that retained its heritage and historical roots.

In Indian anthropology, similar views are debated through different case studies. The primary focus of social sciences in India is on explaining the layers of social structures. The social divides are based on classes, castes, genders, religions, regional cultural differences and many more (Channa, 2018). Indian anthropology would find it hard to escape the prism of these complexities even though the counter-arguments exist. The counter perspective is similar to the works of Arkaraprasertkul and Herzfeld. Looking at India through the prism of it being a developing country, and through the prism of post-industrial spatial restructuring and urban transformation, the narrative advocates for gentrification (Chatterji & Roy, 2020). “A leading port and prime industrial cluster of Asia between the 1850s and 1950s, Calcutta’s economy declined sharply between the 1960s and 1990s and then started to recover partially through the development of trading and knowledge-oriented services.” (Chatterji & Roy, 2020, p. 1) Gentrification was important for the survival of the urban economy. These case studies where gentrification was welcomed; the people didn’t see the changes to be in conflict with the culture. It was rather seen as an enhancement.

These stories discuss the most influential discourses at play and explore how those are manipulated to justify gentrification. The context does not usually deviate from the idea of creating a more “elite” space. In most studies the change is unwelcome. This gives “gentrification” a negative connotation.

The negative connotations of gentrification are explained by the influence of new buildings on the perceptions of the onlookers. “Gentrification reshapes people’s

understanding of the urban experience”, and the mind itself becomes gentrified (Sorainen, 2014). It is these discourses that can either be favourable to a section of society or unfavourable; in most cases, it is a combination of both.

Pursuit of Anti-poor Utopias: as studied by geography scholars

Ted Rutland, a professor of urban geography at Concordia University, was an expert witness in the Herongate case. He explored how gentrification failed the poor in Canada, through the planning policies and the rationale behind it. It was found that the planning intentions began with the objective to improve the conditions of the low-income neighbourhoods to make them comparable to the high-income areas. These objectives stemmed from the need to rid the urban spaces from overpopulated, unmaintained, ungroomed neighbourhoods that also seemed to have a high concentration of criminal activities. The gentrification that followed was aimed at decentralizing these “problematic” spaces by widespread slum clearance followed by construction of public housing interspersed among the wealthier neighbourhoods. One of the major problems recognized by Rutland was the absence of the intention to cater to the needs of the poor (such as better opportunities, better access to social facilities, job opportunities, etc.) and more to suppress the after-effects of the absence of those needs. “Colonial policies like the centralization plan, in controlling the location of Indigenous inhabitation, ensured that very few Indigenous people lived in urban areas like Halifax in this period” (Rutland, 2018, p. 136). The critique of gentrification to “restore utopia” is in its blatant failure to achieve the aspired goal of uplifting the weaker sections. These ideas that standardized the wealthier sections of the society as the ideal way of life focused solely on the majority of the community’s needs, essentially marginalizing the already underprivileged. Since a majority of the poor were blacks such planning models amount to systemic racism.

Stigmatization and containment

Martine August, another Canadian geography scholar, provided expert evidence for the Human rights complainant (Vincent, 2020). Her study on gentrification in Toronto explains gentrification is a result of some form of discourse that aims for the “betterment” of the urban space and considers urban poverty as problematic spaces that are undesirable (August, 2014) (August and Walks, 2018). However, gentrification is not an effort to remedy these issues. Instead, these discourses result in efforts to contain these spaces to minimize their effect on the urban space or the market. This creates stigma towards such spaces and economically weaker sections of society. Furthermore, the containment and displacement thus created deprive the neighbourhood of their sense of ownership, familiarity, acceptance, attachment, security (both in terms of safety and identity), continuity, and even freedom (Shabazz, 2015). In an interview, August said, “To argue that we should have this system because (city) planning allows them to redevelop those homes — planning allows them to not replace the units for the same people at the same (rent), doesn’t mean that it’s right from the perspective of social justice and morality” (Vincent, 2020).

Foucault’s (1986) conceptualization of heterotopias explicitly marked sites of crisis as a thing of the past, even though the definition stays relevant for the modern urban poor. Geographical research skips the inclusion of lived experiences to explore what they mean and focus on cause and effect. Such works help in changing the discourse from a heterotopia of poor social health to a heterotopia of systemic discrimination that aids the legal pursuit for restoring human rights at sites like Herongate. The site, however, remains a heterotopia of crisis, a site that exists outside the norm (Foucault, *Of Other Spaces*, 1986).

Ted Rutland, through his work on the history of Halifax, explains that these colonial policies were once intentional in their discrimination towards visible minorities but since

many practices haven't found alternatives they continue to be the norm (Rutland, 2018). Like Foucault (1986), Rutland roots such as a norm of the past; in a television interview he says:

What's happening in Herongate is consistent with a pattern of displacement that's been repeated since the rise of urban planning in the late 19th century: Low-income and racialized people settle in a neighbourhood. As the land around it is developed, people begin to view the neighbourhood as comparatively undervalued and want to see it cleaned up — and those in a position to profit from such transformation see an opportunity. Although neighbourhoods such as Herongate are often by-products of class-segregationist city-planning policies and societal inequality, they become something that's worth more than the sum of their parts. Once people end up in those places, they build their own forms of community and mutual aid that make it possible to maintain traditions, figure out how to engage with the broader city and society — basically, make low-income life that much more viable. (Delamont, 2019)

Discriminatory remnants in the North American society

Given the history of racial displacement caused by gentrification, many anthropological works explore how the post-colonial remnants of systemic racism continue to evolve to preserve their existence in some form. These works build arguments against the neoliberal policies and the limitations of the racialized discourse around gentrification that the system doesn't create real useful opportunities for the marginalized.

Cunningham's 2018 work in Vancouver reveals the aftermath of such displacements when done repeatedly. He argues that while the neoliberal policies create economic growth they can often come at the cost of social growth. His paper reveals that an increasing demographic of the homeless are formed battling addiction and extreme neglect, which is left at the management by the city at supportive housing and other institutions that include government care homes, psychiatric wards, juvenile detention, drug treatment centres, and prisons. Being moved between these institutions, the constant dislocation leaves them traumatized and marginalized. Leaving them trapped between these institutions often leading to death through drug addictions and other health problems.

The ethnographies that were done in Chicago in poor black and Latino neighbourhoods reveal that combating the racist discourses around gentrification has led to obscuring systemic discrimination instead of fixing it (Mumm, 2008). For blacks, it has led to African Heritage tourism as the way to enable gentrification of poor black neighbourhoods (Boyd, 2005). In such projects, the new residents are the black middle class who gentrify poor black neighbourhoods to create a heritage site as a means to preserve their culture. Such efforts created an illusion of racial upliftment when in reality, the black low-income class residents are still being displaced by the middle class. Boyd explained that such projects successfully fix the symptoms of systemic discrimination like the stigma associated while preserving the development model; It effectively serves in further suppressing the voice of the destitute. A Latino resident explains, “The bulk of the Latino population is obviously not in that world. So what happens is you create an illusion where, especially among this generation of young urban professionals, that you’ve overcome the problems of racism” (Mumm, 2008).

Experiences in India

In the Summer of 2020, I had a seminar on Modern slavery at the university. I attended this online from New Delhi during the pandemic; the curriculum coincidentally included the plight of the Indian manual labour force hit hard because of COVID-19. It shocked me how little I knew about their struggles, how little the media covered and how my Canadian professor was far more aware than me about India. The reality of the poor in my neighbourhood in India has never properly reached me. Since my work at Herongate, I discovered many parallels in India and started experiencing disillusionments of similar nature for the first time in my life.

Reflecting on this colonial prism, Basso (1988) explains that anthropologists used to document their own experience when they study cultures significantly different from their own such as indigenous communities. He says that these documented other community' practices but couldn't be used as reliable guides to the experience of the indigenous people (Basso, 1988). Additionally, since these outsiders came from a society intending to create dominance over the other communities, a discriminatory discourse is created using these experiences. I imagine this would be true for any study about an underprivileged community when done by a privileged outsider's frame of reference.

For example, Appadurai (1988) unveils the lack of depth the anthropologists have had in their understanding of Indian society. He says that the older anthropologists attributed the social structure to be rooted in the caste system while overlooking a lot of other social forces that shape the society. It showcases the confines of the anthropologists' cultural prisms that cause the failure to comprehend the layered socio-cultural factors shaping that society. The caste system in India is a division of the Hindu community into different sects that are essentially hierarchal structures of the society which often includes an occupation, ritual

status and customary social interaction and exclusion. For example, the lower caste community would clean toilets and are considered untouchables while the higher caste would engage in conducting religious ceremonies. In India, the pre-existing discriminatory hierarchical structure was only aggravated by the colonial presence. Sanskritization is the structural parallel of racial assimilation in North America as explained by Mumm (2008) and Boyd (2005). It is a part of an Indian social process described as the norm where the lower castes seem to seek upward social mobility by emulating the practices of the upper or dominant classes (Shah, 2020). This is an almost subconscious cultural trait present in all of India where the lower caste communities favour the behaviour of the upper class. These works came from Indian anthropologists that found better ways to explain the hierarchies in Indian society and how they interacted with each other.

However, since I have not experienced discrimination, I do not realize the history of these favoured experiences, or how they continue to exist. My family and my peers in India have to actively educate ourselves about how discrimination continues in India.

Students in the slums of Delhi

As architecture students, we are taught to employ the prism of objective management of spaces to study rehabilitation projects; spaces and people in slums are assets to be managed. For this, studying the sites to be redeveloped was important, as well as the people who would be rehabilitated. Many projects in India have failed as they did not take into account how people felt about their shanty homes (Restrepo, 2010). Not many in my class understood this nor were we taught enough about it. However, I have always wanted to see spaces to be of value as the meaning assigned to them; my design concepts always focused more on how one interacts with spaces through memories and aspirations. This was not popular for design concepts. My classmates valued my absurd perspective. For group

assignments, I would usually team up with those who were happy to do more of the regular tasks and would leave the non-architectural tasks, like planning the case studies, to me.

In the summer of 2014, I and another from my class stood at the periphery of the slum cluster near a central Delhi mall, with an area of 100 square meters; this was a small slum. The shanty homes were built on top of heaps of dirt, with heaps of sand and other construction materials surrounding the space. These were bricks, corrugated steel sheets, the plastic rags that cement is packaged in, etc. They were all of the different brands, shapes and quality; as though collected over time from different construction sites. We assumed that the people were employed as construction labour. The homes seemed to be constructed from discarded construction materials, they looked as if they would fall apart at any moment. Some resembled the indoor forts I made with my brother as kids, only these were made of polycarbonate sheets. Another team member was supposed to show up but she couldn't get permission from her parents to visit a slum. The teammate who came with me, got permission because we agreed to be accompanied by a male family friend of hers. He refused to step near the dirt and the "dirty space", even though despite the heaps of dirt, the area was tidy. It felt a little rebellious that two girls would independently talk to the residents. We felt especially adventurous and wanted to peek into their homes if we could. We stood in awe of how creative some of those shanty constructions were.

Talking to the residents in poorer urban neighbourhoods in India would always create a bit of a spectacle. People would immediately notice us and gather around, eager to talk. I loved talking to old people, in such dwellings. There was a shared fondness to understand about each other's lives and maybe old people just liked to talk, although every single resident worked to earn their living. Old people knew what students do when they visit, we just talk, we cannot help. The labour-class poor people would struggle to understand why any student would talk to them; their demeanour is subservient, and they would allow strangers

easily inside their homes to show their lives. They look up to the surveyors, interviewers and ethnographers in hopes that our visit was for their welfare, it is hard to explain that this is not true. The old people usually knew better so they will not get disappointed.

The slum seemed chaotic and unorganized because of its construction but it was a community. The site had a history that the people shared with us. The site had seen many people come and go into these homes. Some people in these neighbourhoods educated themselves about the urban systems they live in; they found out what identification documents are, why are they needed, what benefits a basic education can give, etc. Some people had managed to gain access to a better quality of life. If they could afford they simply moved to better places to live in and would leave these areas. Other people would then migrate from rural areas into these neighbourhoods. This is why even if people progressed in their lives, the slum did not. However, despite the changing members of this community, the space retained its strong sense of belonging.

We had to take notes of what they required from their new homes. It was a hard assignment since their shanty sheds were tiny and only intended for sleeping. They did their cooking, bathing, studying and playing in the open; they had no use for indoors when they were used to wide-open spaces. The sturdiest-looking sheds had pitched roofs and were so low in height that one could only crouch and crawl into them. I peeked into a few smaller ones and they had a distinct odour of unwashed bed sheets. They did not seem to have any electrical appliances. I enjoyed how proudly everyone showed their lives to us. Their deep fondness made me think that they are content with what they had and enjoy that they can make so much from the little that they had. They relied on each other's support to build a living; since many were uneducated; a few educated ones were tasked with managing the official documents of these people.

The only properly constructed structure was the temple; the people were proudest of this structure. A place of religious importance doesn't get approval for demolition very easily. After thirty minutes at the site, I was taking deep comfort in knowing that our rehabilitation project was only a 3rd-year design assignment for college, that this area would not be demolished. It took only thirty minutes of knowing them to want to preserve their way of life.

The rehabilitated people of social housing in India

In the summer of 2017, I was on a return trip from the state of Madhya Pradesh on a train. This was my last case study for the research project and I was already feeling nostalgic about every field work I had ever had. Field work for architecture research was usually given to the lowest designated executive in the team. I loved getting these tasks. It had been three years since I first interacted with the people in slums. It took minimal exposure to the lives in slums for me to want to leave the practice of architecture; I could not find any job satisfaction in destroying it.

People not wanting to be rehabilitated was an established fact in the practice, however, not every project was a failure. I was now working at a policy research facility on a project on construction materials that could be affordable for slum rehabilitation projects. I had to coalesce the data collected from the previous sites, which were all wildly different. My notes were descriptive about the look, feel and experience spaces. These notes were not the least bit useful to our project. All I had to do was to find sites for interviews. I had met many people who enjoyed a better life when they were rehabilitated; I felt a deep satisfaction in knowing not every project destroyed lives. I took comfort in knowing that I would visit again for the interviews of the residents.

Cities in the South Indian states were harder to work in. Some sites were well outside the bigger cities and almost no one spoke my language (Hindi), I would often need a local person to translate the local language to Hindi. However, the people were a lot more accommodating than other states. The social housing I visited in Bangalore was one of the few success stories. Even though it is a well-developed metropolitan city, where people migrated from all states, the local language (Kannada) was still widely in usage. The people of the community had a laundry service within the complex that had employed the entire neighbourhood. A government employee from the development authority had offered to accompany me to the site, he had supervised the rehabilitation of the site. I had not experienced such hospitality in the northern states, especially in Delhi. The buildings at the site in heart of Bangalore were grey and had almost no dust or dirt on the exterior walls, always a sign of a newly constructed building. The residents had been informed that someone from Delhi was visiting their site and they were waiting for me with photo albums of the construction. The residents welcomed me and the official with garlands and sweets, it overwhelmed me because I was no one special. I had practiced accepting any generous offerings to respect their warm welcome. Some residents had volunteered to show their homes; the ones with finished interiors. These people had plastered walls with bright colours painted on them, a different colour on each wall. The small spaces were judiciously used for storage. I found that to be the theme of every home I visited in that neighbourhood. However, the most interesting part was that the government employee was as proud of it as the residents. The residents' stories were more about the awareness they gained about maintenance, responsibilities and rights as an Indian citizen and everything else they needed to learn to adapt to living indoors. The residents also thought of the employee to be a brother looking after them. The employee had to go well out of his way to help these people adapt; he

helped them build a community so they could support each other. After the tour, the residents bid goodbye to us with more garlands.

This stood in the strongest contrast with a site in Jaipur, Rajasthan. This was a north-western state. The exterior walls of the buildings were pink in colour but despite being new it had dirt all over the walls. The site was so outside the city, with only barren land around, that it seemed to be in the middle of nowhere. The wind blew so much dirt from the barren land onto the buildings that it betrayed the age of construction. Most homes seemed uninhabited and it was hard to find any resident to talk to. The government officials who supervised the project refused to talk; they did not have time for anyone. Fortunately, the residents spoke my language, only in a different dialect, but it was understandable. The isolation of their sites meant very few work opportunities and had led many people to leave these homes and move back to inner-city slums. I talked to a young mother who was kind enough to share the story of the neighbourhood. Her home had one bedroom, a hall and a kitchen but there were barely any possessions. Being a new mother, only her husband worked and she stayed home with the baby. This meant lesser earnings than what they had before the baby but more expenses. Her clothes were crumpled and dirty, and the edge of her sari had loose threads. She explained that no one ever told them how much earnings go into the maintenance of the home, the plumbing of the building was not working properly, the work opportunities were too far away and there were no schools nearby for the kids. Her hair had turned brown from being too long in the sun; she was a young mother but looked older with skin aged from the sun. I could see her tan lines almost creating a halo at the edge of her sari. Her skin was the originally same colour as mine but working outdoors had tanned the uncovered parts remarkably darker. I realized the skin and the hair gave away the lifestyles of people. I remembered when I was thirteen I had a vacation at the beach without sunblock and it had left me so tanned that it took three years for it to properly go away. My presence had

not created any spectacle in this neighbourhood. Two women were quarrelling so loud that the residents didn't even notice me. The young mother explained that no one gets along there.

I asked her to share what she knew about the neighbourhood. She didn't have much to share except that they felt betrayed. Their migration to the city slum (from rural areas) wasn't objected to when they originally came. Their transgressions of building unauthorized dwellings would go long ignored for years often until an economic opportunity arrived for the land. They began their lives in unauthorized dwellings and no one had ever educated them about the consequences. The forced displacements came at the cost of the settled lives built at these locations. In the slums, they had several job opportunities and easy access to basic amenities all around them. The displacement meant that the younger generations would end up having to rebuild their lives all over again.

In the central state of Madhya Pradesh, I had the easiest field work experience. The local dialect was comparable to the way my grandmother spoke. I found it easiest to emulate the local dialect in Madhya Pradesh. The people were the happiest people I had ever met, maybe it was just the specific town of "Satna". The taxi driver for that trip (who drove me to the interview sites in Satna) told me that it is a "khushhal" (a joyful) town. He had every chance to go to bigger cities but he simply didn't want to. He was thoroughly amused how the visitor from Delhi found joy to be surprising and he expected no less from an outsider. The surroundings were clean but also dusty. There was no pollution, but the car blew the dirt from the dirt road. Despite that, I forced my eyes open to gawk at all the people our car passed. Every single face was happy. He talked about the sense of community. I told him my grandmother's mother was from Madhya Pradesh because I wanted to be able to join into the sense of community like him. He understood the experience I was having. The baseline experience in the city is stressful and Satna was exceptionally peaceful. He told me that Delhites are unaware that Delhi is a rude city. My pleasant cultural shock didn't surprise him.

I enjoyed the rhythmic noise of the train serving me as white noise. On the train, I sat next to the view of field crops passing by. All the states I visited had different languages and cultures; every city looked vastly different. But they all were connected by railways passing through crop fields, all looking the same. Every trip had started the same but ended with vastly different interactions. I had no idea Indian diversity was before these visits; it always felt like waking from a deep slumber of ignorance. Madhya Pradesh had given me the fondest memory, all though very little came from the trip for my project. I only visited a small manufacturer of fly ash bricks. He had invited me to his home from the factory for tea; he wanted to know what a research project was, what I did and how it would affect people's lives. He did not understand the purpose of the interviews where one has to ask these residents about the functional experience of the construction materials. To him, nothing could be sillier than to be interested in displaced peoples' experience of construction materials. To him, the real value was in their life experiences and what displacement meant to them. It struck me that I was in complete agreement. I had stepped through the looking glass a long time back.

Urban utopias are an illusion upheld by restricting the spaces of urban crisis to unacknowledged heterotopias of crisis. That manufacturer made me realize that I had only ever enjoyed any work because of the stories of the people. I enjoyed it because every time I talked to someone from a different class, I would be confronted by the realities of these illusions. Over time I had understood the value of their stories, and the limitations of the discourses I had grown up with. Most urban systems, that I was surrounded by, upheld these illusions. For instance, the project that brought me to Satna had focused on creating sustainable development through environment-friendly construction. When in fact a building can be very well made but still be a failure if people are not comfortable. Abandoned buildings of any material are wasteful. Social upward mobility further ensures the

preservation of these illusions. The people progress economically and move to better neighbourhoods as opposed to upgrading the ones they lived in, making these heterotopias of crisis the consistent tools of confining the untamed parts of the society.

My mind was occupied by the fields passing by as I looked out of my train window; it felt representative of the heterogeneity of the injustice. People had families in rural places like these lands; they worked hard to grow crops and feed everyone else. When their children moved to urban places to find an upgrade in their quality of life, society did them a disservice. The people who lived in these places had very little access to the agency in how their future was decided. But I couldn't imagine how one could even begin to influence change. I needed to find a profession genuinely interested in studying the meaning of people's lives.

The Public discussion at the Herongate

Our professor had given us a ride to Herongate. I always found any car trips distracting, Ottawa was beautiful, lush green and clear skies were always distinct bright blue. I was so used to Delhi's grey sky that I never knew what bright blue was. I told this story often since the Canadians always found it amusing. I realized all the places I had travelled outside of Delhi, I never looked up. Either the sun was always in my eyes or the dust.

The meeting at Herongate Community Centre was one of the many it had seen, but it was going to be the first one for me. The residents had organized a panel discussion of academicians to disseminate information about the plight of Herongate people and to share its proceedings on the University website. This discussion was specifically about the finer points of by-laws exploiting the disadvantaged urban poor and not enough research can be done to establish how unfair the urban structure webbed around Herongate is.

The Herongate buildings had exposed brick buildings that looked similar to other apartment buildings I had seen in Ottawa. It took a closer look to observe the neglect the buildings bore, in the windows and the balconies. The neighbourhood had almost no residents outside the buildings. When we approached the Community Centre, the entrance was a tricky walk; the snow was piled in heaps that were melting and turned the lawn into the mud. It was an entire skill set to walk on snow. Another group of students, also from the geography department of Carleton, were waiting in the hallway of the community centre. The hallway was a dull grey colour but as clean as any other building in Ottawa. It had a newspaper rack next to a bulletin board. It was full of event posters and activities the Herongate people engaged in. It was bright and vibrant as though it was the corridor of my school. I had heard my classmates fondly talk about this supportive welcoming community that had created a real

sense of belonging for so many people. My apartment building in Ottawa never had any event posters.

The Carleton cohort and our professors intended to present the findings of our research; each of us had individual assignments. As opposed to feeling more informed about their stories, the research had instead left me feeling self-conscious about my involvement; the people were far more informed about their experiences than I was.

The meeting that followed that day had vividly displayed the interaction of the residents of Herongate with the strong and honed academic perspectives of the panel members to brainstorm solutions. I observed how the community reacted to the panel, to the media stories, to the statements of their oppressors (the landlords), and to me. The solution-oriented approach of the scholars contrasted with the personal accounts of the residents. It was apparent that acknowledging the narratives of the residents was as important as defending Herongate. The moment I step into Herongate, I am confronted by the agency and the authority of the residents over the Herongate situation. After the meeting, I had found myself caught in the strong emotional effects of the personal stories of these residents as they stood up one by one to share insecurities with which they have been saddled. My presentation about the media coverage of Herongate was perhaps the most personal of all the presentations; the loss of home and identity of the neighbourhood was the reality of the Herongate community. In trying to learn the appropriate way to orient myself to deal with sensitive subjects, I was confronted with the struggle to coalesce several perspectives that came from these varying fine-tuned prisms; I struggled to find where my prism fits.

Nemesis of Herongate: The local newspapers

For the assignment, I had chosen to see the History of the representation of Herongate in local newspapers². I studied the print media of Ottawa, essentially the city newspapers as well as the community newspapers, to see how the news about the neighbourhood was covered.³ The content of the community newspapers and reporting style is vastly different from the city newspapers. While the city newspapers compile reports about the city developments, crime, governance, institutions, etc. as a statement of fact, the community newspapers compile community events, individual stories, representing the richness in the locality. Since I already knew the Herongate felt the need to have a separate newsletter, I expected the community newspapers to fail to talk about Herongate.

“Vistas” and the “OSCAR” the two printed papers circulated in the ward, reported regularly about the activities at Alta Vista and did not have a single community story from Herongate, remaining completely silent on the eviction story⁴. The city newspapers did cover Herongate, however, I discovered that Herongate’s visibility was impacted by the wealthier neighbourhood adjacent to it. Herongate lies in the ward (or regional municipality) of Alta Vista. Within this ward, there is a neighbourhood called Alta Vista that is across the Heron road, to the north of Herongate. The coverage of the two neighbourhoods should ideally be

²The Herongate battle had ignited a lot of media coverage online. Searching Herongate online yields several reports covering the personal accounts of the residents after the the battle had begun. However, these reports were not a part of the geography course assignment because my intention was to understand the history of representation in the local newspapers before the Herongate crisis happened.

³ To study the data of the news media coverage, print media was used to find the association of news articles of the two neighborhoods with the type of news covered by tracking the number of mentions and the combinations of various keywords (such as “Herongate”, “Heron gate”, “crime”, “police”, “Alta Vista”, “ward” and “neighbourhood”). *The Ottawa Citizen* articles were searched through the ProQuest database of Canadian Major Dailies.

⁴ Much like the mention of “Alta Vista” in the city newspaper, the Vistas articles leave ambiguity in the usage of the name. As per the website, it can be assumed that the Vistas would be the local newspaper of the entire ward; one of the main objectives is to discuss the planning and development issues of the ward. The articles in these issues are stories about Alta Vista residents which could mean about the entire ward. Yet, Vistas has remained silent on the backlash to the eviction. In OSCAR since 1980s, Herongate is mentioned in a total of 15 issues all being related to activities in the mall.

comparable but that was not the case. My research reflected that the neighbourhood Alta Vista and the ward Alta Vista were used interchangeably.

The city newspaper: The Ottawa Citizen

The neighbourhood of Herongate does not get a lot of mention in the *Ottawa Citizen* newspaper. A cursory reading of the articles mentioning Herongate seems to talk about the area only when there is a crime. A total of 402 articles show up that have been published about Herongate or “Heron gate” in the *Ottawa Citizen* since 1986 till April 7th, 2019. Of these 402 articles, about 234 articles are news items about Herongate Mall. since 1986, a total of 168 articles talk about the rest of the neighbourhood and of these 74 articles (44%) mention “police” or “crime.”

Such level of coverage in the city newspaper stands as a stark contrast with the number of articles that mention Alta Vista which is 5,154. Of these, only 960 of them talk about “crime” or “police” (19%). The fact that the number is higher is not surprising given it includes articles about the Alta Vista ward as well as Alta Vista the neighbourhood that seems to use it interchangeably. Since Herongate does not get mentioned with the neighbourhood suffixed to it, the ambiguity doesn’t necessarily get clearly resolved even by the context of the articles, given that they can talk about an Alta Vista house or residents, without any specificity, one might assume it is the neighbourhood.⁵

On comparing, the difference between the two neighbourhoods, regarding their association with crimes, is apparent. 30.8% of the articles about Herongate report criminal activities while the number is only 18.6% for Alta Vista. The difference in the association

⁵ About 81 of the mentions are about the Alta Vista Public school and 1439 of the total mentions are of the Alta Vista Drive (or Alta Vista Drive) that includes news items about the Ottawa general hospital, the Ottawa Public library or other buildings located in the area. This means that 2835 articles would be about residents that have no mention of the “ward” and are not about the non-residential buildings. Of these 2835 articles, 403 articles are associated with “crime” or “police.”

can also be credited to the fact that when the news reports explicitly talk about the neighbourhood with crimes, they tend to leave out the name of the ward while other reports about various centres in Herongate (Heron Road Community Centre or Heron Emergency Food Centre) don't mention Herongate as the locality and may still mention Alta Vista.

A news report about crimes that includes both the neighbourhoods from September 10th, 2014 titled "City's 30th shooting in Alta Vista backyard" talks about police's efforts to "curb the violence" in the neighbourhood after too many shooting incidents in Alta Vista. The article is talking about dealing with gang suppression in the area while adding that "Herongate has seen more than their fair share of the city's 30 shootings" (Yogaretnam, 2014).

Such tonality for Herongate neatly establishes the association of the neighbourhood with crimes. Since 2018, the news reports gained the addition of the eviction case as a theme adding 20 articles about the neighbourhood. After comparing the articles with the *Leveller* the injustice, exploitation and the lies (Crosby, 2018) that led to evictions and reflect neglect (Rockwell, Patterns of Neglect: Heron Gate residents suffer from a legacy of poor maintenance, 2018) were absent from the articles in *The Ottawa Citizen* that report only the actions the residents of the area take and the claims they made. For example, the August 18th, 2018, article titled, "Heron gate landlord no villain" states that "the eviction of 105 families from Ottawa's Herongate development is a simple tale of a greedy corporate landlord victimizing low-income tenants, most of whom are visible minorities" if "listened to some people" stating it's not factual (Ottawa Citizen Editorial Board, 2018)⁶. After that sentence,

⁶ On August 18th, 2018, The Ottawa Citizen article, titled "Heron gate landlord no villain" built a case for the landlords stating, "We should cheer the renewal of Heron Gate. It is easy to criticize landlords for wanting to make a profit, but if they didn't, there would be much less rental housing, including affordable units"

the article discusses how “the facts tell a rather different story” in a little over 500 words that rationalizes the necessary evictions. The article doesn’t get into the arguments that residents use to fight the legal battle.

Media silence, Stigma, and lack of agency

After going through media coverage about the Herongate, it is seen that of the little mentions that Herongate gets, a large amount is about the Herongate Mall and the rest is related to crime. It is clear that not only has the media taken agency away from the Herongate residents but also aided in stigmatizing the neighbourhood by the way it has been held in association with criminal activities. Additionally, the silence of the media on the effects of eviction on the people of Herongate helped in building the rationale for the evictions for the readers. In such conditions the lack of agency itself can contribute to the stigma given the plight of the residents was never heard so the evictions remained justified.

The articles in the HTC newsletters not only discuss the types of news items covered in the *Vistas* but also how people cope with the evictions. These actions reflect the need to fill the coverage gap which is important to fight the stigma (Erfani-Ghettani , 2018). It is worth noting that the *Leveller* and the online HTC newsletter have a limited reach compared to *The Ottawa Citizen* and *We are Herongate* is only available online.

Proceedings of the meeting: What do we want to share?

In May of 2019, the proceedings of the meeting at Herongate had been posted on the website. I Google the meeting and found the first post about it. The first post about Herongate on the Carleton website was the public event poster that read “Evicted from Home? The (White) Right to the City and the Struggle for Herongate.” This event serves as an opportunity to learn about the latest research on the Herongate situation and participate in a discussion about mass evictions in Ottawa. The event is being held in partnership with the

“Herongate Tenant Coalition.” I could remember feeling eager to attend it, looking forward to the meeting. This excitement heavily contrasted with the overwhelming sense that the meeting had imparted at the end of the day. I had since been looking forward to the published proceedings from the day; however, the summary disappointed me. The proceedings of the event, now posted on the Carleton University website, omitted the parts that had impacted me the most.

The summary recalls how Professor Kennelly begins at the meeting, describing how their involvement began at the Herongate and precisely what their agenda has been:

I live in Alta Vista, across the road from Herongate. When I found out what was happening, I got in touch with the Herongate Tenant Coalition. We began to talk about what Carleton could do to support their advocacy work and shed light on the issues that led to this abuse of human rights, practically in the backyard of Canada’s seat of government.

She then asked the residents to share their accounts. Many of the residents had taken their turns to talk about their struggles at Herongate before the panel had begun. The summary online-only shared a few, online one of which was Tammy Mast who wasn’t an immigrant but felt at home at Herongate:

I have been a resident of Herongate for five years, and it is a beautiful place to live. In 2002, I moved to Ottawa from Alberta. I lived in a number of neighbourhoods around Ottawa, but it wasn't until I moved to Herongate in 2014 that Ottawa really began to feel like home. This is despite the fact that I am demographically and culturally very different from most of my neighbours here in Herongate - a true demonstration that Herongate is a vibrant and welcoming community. For a lot of terrible reasons like systemic racism and corporate efforts to dictate a narrative that serves their own interests, there existed an outsider stigma about this place, but that is a sham.

The visual differences between classes in India are pronounced, but the people at the Herongate did not look any different from any other people in Canada, yet they were marginalized, discriminated against and experiencing destitution. After a few more residents, a very pretty white woman (whom I will call Callie) got up at the end. She shared a long and heart-breaking story of falling through the cracks in the system over and over for years. After

struggling to find a home she had come to Herongate where many people came from struggled lives. Her home was meaningful to her because she could belong there now. Her story was not just about the Herongate but also about being a poor woman in a Canadian urban area. The neglect she battled made her sob through the retelling of her stories. Among all the stories that day, Callie's reflected the most how deeply the forced displacement is hurting people at Herongate who are already struggling; yet her story went untold.

Perhaps the academic prisms present at the event failed to use her accounts in the summary because it digressed heavily from their focus. The geography and planning scholars' prism walks the line at the intersection of creating by-laws and social reforms. They acknowledge the need for agency and involve themselves with the management of how the system interacts with it. It was hurtful for me to see the brave woman be vulnerable, but not get printed in the summary. Herongate had separated the two mediums of resisting the evictions. The stories went on their website while the academia focused on the systemic agents of oppression.

The lived reality of the Herongate was obvious; the Herongate had a bad reputation. Everyone around me talked about it. As a geography student, I had to present not what we already knew about the negative narrative but how I can show it. After every other student had presented their research, I presented the number of mentions of Alta Vista and how that compared to Herongate. I talked about the context of these mentions and concluded the presentation. In my words:

Based on these findings of my analysis, my conclusion is that the Herongate neighbourhood doesn't exist unless there is a crime. Herongate has not been covered in the newspapers for its vibrant life. Media coverage about Herongate residential is significantly lower than Alta Vista and far more about criminal activities. Even though there are more crime reports in Alta Vista, the tonality of news coverage suggests that the crime hub is in the "backyard" of Alta Vista that is creating a serious situation for Alta Vista (with no regard to the residents of Herongate). This could have contributed to the stigma around the place. By comparison, Herongate,

evidently, doesn't get agency for its neighbourhood. The city newspapers cover articles that reflect concerns about the well-being of the Alta Vista neighbourhood but ignore Herongate.

At the end of the meeting, many came to me to tell me they liked listening to my emotionally charged presentation. It was Callie's story before the start of presentations that had created my emotional affect. I felt angry and it resonated with the people of Herongate.

When Callie stood up I was momentarily distracted by her face that reminded me of another girl I knew in my high school. Like my old classmate, Callie had a soft demeanour, was pretty, and spoke honestly from a vulnerable space. I thought that had she been in my school she would have found herself in a popular clique, always easily favoured, almost oblivious that people would always be a little nicer to a pretty person. As I had watched her, her account of neglect and discrimination conflicted with that vain shallow worldview I had learnt in my life, it was jarring. In India, you can make quite accurate guesses about what kind of privileges a person enjoys by the way they look, their clothes, the way they talk and their skin. You get a reliably decent idea about the privilege that someone is raised in. It follows them no matter where they go because they sound and behave a certain way. I have never experienced discrimination no matter where I went, I garnered favours easily and people listen when I talk. Callie would have done better than me. I could see possibilities of a favoured life when I saw her and yet the reality was the absence of it. My prism was shallow and I needed to look deeper to comprehend why this was jarring. It was the first time I had realized that had grown up knowing "Sanskritization" to be a part of my experience in the society, that these favoured experiences that one enjoys simply because of how they talk or dress, I had taken for granted but had never thought about it. So many of the people at Herongate seemed educated, with experience of healthy normal lives, they had access to information and resources had decent jobs it could have been any other neighbourhood for all I knew. And yet they were struggling to gain control over their lives.

Nima Hussein, a student studying International Development and Globalization at the University of Ottawa had been a resident of Herongate since her childhood and is an organizer with the Herongate Tenant Coalition. In the fourth issue of the HTC newsletter, she wrote in her article:

If this were anywhere else, maybe this wouldn't have been such a grave injustice. A huge slap in the face, for sure. But here's the thing: Herongate is a primarily low-income and racialized community. The people living here are mainly Somali and Arab immigrants, with at least 4 kids per household. So when Timbercreek leaves these marginalized groups of people to face the cold brutality of homelessness, let's finally call it what it really is gentrification. The truth is, we're the type of people Timbercreek doesn't want in their neighbourhoods. We're the type that doesn't deserve adequate housing, the type that can't even be afforded a basic, damn human right. It has been proven time and time again that people are unlikely to rent or sell to Black folks, people with disabilities, Jews, South Asian peoples, etc. This is not new. Many Herongate evictees have reported facing rejections from other landlords, largely due to the stigma of an area infamous for its 'diversity and preceding reputation, as well as the surreptitious, pervasive racial profiling that oft accompanies being Black and Muslim in a white colonialist state (Hussein, 2018)

I had sat in the room listening to heart-breaking stories that I imagined would get printed online, recorded, and properly acknowledged, but the one that impacted me the most was omitted. I knew less than anyone else in the room, I was perhaps the one getting educated the most, and yet I had authority on the matter and agency because I had done a comprehensive study of all the articles in local newspapers about Herongate. The data speaks for itself is something Ted Rutland talks about a lot in his book (Rutland, 2018), the value of undeniable data; but to understand the experience of it felt equally important to me. I felt eager to go home and find comfort in a discussion with my grandmother; despite the positive reception, I couldn't shake the experience of something like imposter syndrome.

Help me, grandmother!

“Do you understand that there is nothing more personal than a person's home?” my grandmother warned me when I shared my experience at Herongate with her. “Those people are vulnerable and are sharing their personal stories to you, whatever your work is; respecting

them has to be primary.” I couldn’t agree more, as this much was clear from the media research, however, I wasn’t sure why she thought I could be disrespectful as well. “They want their stories to be heard and written about, they appreciated me talking about their lives,” I replied to her as I shared my experiences with my grandmother. There was no denying it overwhelmed me to see the vulnerability at Herongate, it was uncomfortable. I would often wake my grandparents back in India at odd hours to reflect, it helped me decompress and process what I absorbed while I studied in Canada; I also relied on the wisdom of their life experiences.

In India, a family usually has paternal grandparents, parents and kids all living in the same house. With working parents, my grandparents spent more time teaching me about their lives than my parents did. Because my grandparents grew up watching their parents participate in India’s freedom struggle against the “westerners,” they knew what seizing agency for one’s own story, taking authority over one’s own life in a colonial situation feels like. They both had single parents who participated in civil disobedience movements, peaceful protest and boycott of foreign goods. Their upbringing was compromised; my grandpa grew up in the relatives' homes and grandmother had to wait until she got married to get an education. The encouragement to stand for and to serve such causes had also informed my reason to step into anthropology. The stories of my grandparents’ childhood, which I inherited as the family heirlooms are the only memories of a struggled life that I carry. I had never until now consciously understood what having these memories as my roots meant.

Faced with involvement with suffering for the first time, I learnt that carrying roots of identity through history is a different thing from the identity that came through experience. My experience at Herongate had thoroughly challenged several of my perceptions; History is not only filtered but also softened into simple lessons for children. Observing lived realities came as a rude shock to the several notions not only the ones built for children but also the

rest of the world. For me, the notion of a developed country being a Utopia was the first perception to go, Canada being the poster child for Human rights was the second. Even without my grandmother's stern retort, it would invariably overwhelm me when I find myself representing someone else; but she seemed to want to hint at something more than that. "It doesn't matter what kind of western expert you become, if you have lived a comfortable life you can never fully understand what it feels like to be in their position," she continued.

I now realize that it is a blissful ignorance someone, who has seen an uncomfortable life, recognized in me. She disapproved of having any opinion on the lives of those in destitution because to her it seemed that having lived my life in security and privilege, I would not even realize how little I understand about what struggle is. While reflecting on my day at Herongate, it was comforting to know that my grandmother anticipated the limitations of my prism. I found it remarkable how the need for sensitivity taught by professors at my university was uncannily similar to what my grandparents seemed to have gathered from their own experiences. I did not know what to do when I felt my heart-breaking from their stories. The discussions with the professors tell me that fishing for comfort defeats the purpose because these stories need to be left at that, without a catharsis. The discussions with grandmother told me why.

"The British never respected the Indian mind. Understandably, they were progressive but the Indians had their strengths. Indians' identity got compromised when they believe someone else knows what was best for us." Grandmother repeated something she was fond of talking about, as she continued to build on her stance against the "western approach" 'to uplift. She was quick to recognize a space where there is a tendency of looking down into marginalized lives with pity, a sentiment I saw resonating with the residents of Herongate. Having digressed to colonial rule India, grandmother commented on the British's 'civilizing' influence on Indians. "How can you help something you don't understand? You are an

outsider and you worked as an outsider. You can't truly benefit anyone if you can't give up your privilege or worse, fail to understand it." The colonizers carried the intention to create a hierarchal difference, who intentionally turned a blind eye towards the destitution. Those of us that benefit from such structures continue to uphold the hierarchical differences by failing to acknowledge their existence. Growing up, I thought I am a part of the oppressed people, but this wasn't true; those were just my grandparents' stories and not mine.

For me, being at Herongate served as a lived contradiction. I found experiences of Herongate residents relatable through the stories of my grandparents' childhoods; yet, the disservice towards the poor may have supported my privilege. It is a dichotomy of identity, I imagine, a great deal of first or second-generation immigrants in North America must be traversing. My family has crossed the privileged barrier, my grandmother may have stood on the cusp and I cannot claim ownership to her stories. They may be my roots but not quite my identity and certainly not my lived reality.

Being an international student from India, who had also never lived outside of suburban New Delhi before coming to Ottawa, I cannot stress enough how disoriented I felt when I studied the perspectives of the vulnerable in Canada. I could see my prism and subjectivity were failing me to be able to properly understand the experiences of Herongate. I could relate to several elements of perspectives involved at Herongate; I was a foreigner, a student, experienced in fieldwork with displaced individuals, experiencing loss of home, and a resident of rental housing in Ottawa. And yet, my prism served better to unveil how ignorance is perpetuated among the privileged. Since I am a part of the privileged visible minority, who have been fortunate to only be around those who celebrate diversity, I am one of the first ones to benefit from the compensations offered to visible minorities and usually the last to feel the impact of the discrimination that continues in the society. When I heard their stories, I realized how I compared to the people at Herongate; I could access job

opportunities far more easily but the refugees at Herongate had struggled. I grew up watching American kid's television shows where people with different skins, ethnicities, hair colours were all friends and believed it to be true. In essence, this ignorance was propagated through the luxury of not having to face systemic discrimination. The existing social evils were never really taught in school textbooks either. If I immigrate to Canada as a student, it is wildly different to do that as a refugee.

Since I initially failed to understand that, I not only undermined Herongate's plight but also the ethnic diversity of visible minorities. Through a reflection with my grandmother, I understood the limitations of any external (and privileged) prism and the ignorance about it propagated in the media with a lack of representation. At this point I realized, I knew nothing, that my own impressions of North American urban life were unreliable, it was just the American dream sold to the rest of the world. Furthermore, I may have underestimated the ethnic discrimination in India too. The divide to me only ever seemed economic and I had never thought to ask about the casteism or racism that the urban poor may have faced.

In the summer of 2021, I stood on my balcony in Dwarka. This time I noticed the pedestrians in front of my balcony, who they were and how I had usually experienced them in the past. The COVID had made me complete half of my education from India online. It meant I could be with my family while I studied at a Canadian university. My perception began changing when I had come across Herongate. I could see my privileges. Writing about Herongate made me think about everything that had any impact on me. I realized that I had always wanted to learn about the marginalized sections of society; my obliviousness had bothered me. But I had never equated it with my own privileges. I learnt that sometimes we can be blindsided because of our privileges because we are not always aware of them. This can result in undermining the plights of those who don't have those privileges.

Newcomers in Ottawa

The group of students that had assembled at the HTC meeting had discussed their progress in their respective researches during the event. They had shared these with the residents. I had witnessed such discussions regularly at the university. The students did not introduce themselves as if they were introducing themselves for the first time. I had realized that they got together for ideation with the residents even when there weren't any HTC events planned. Herongate was a supportive community; the residents had supported the education of the students who understood the battle at Herongate. Several of these students were already involved in ethnographic fieldwork.

I was almost envious of my cohort to be able to not get overwhelmed. During all of those discussions, I would think back to the only academic ethnography I had done; it was for my research methods class. I had interviewed several international students to explain what home meant to them. I had focused a lot of my research work on the Indians in Ottawa. I was very uncomfortable during some of those assignments and these sites were not even emotionally heavy the way Herongate's were. One of the oddest experiences was during the welcome party for graduate students from the University of Ottawa and Carleton University⁷.

The party took place at Lago restaurant on Dow's Lake Ottawa on 5th October 2018. Up until 9:30 PM, people were still arriving at the venue. At the beginning of the party, the lights were bright and there was no music. All one could see were chairs and tables all around for people to sit and dine together at, with a bar on the side. This was experienced as a dull environment by the Indian group. It seemed to be a sit-down event as opposed to a dance party. The locals were lining up in a long queue for food. The international students were visibly agitated by the lack of liveliness and enthusiasm. A few of the locals came to sit down

⁷ These assignments had ethics approval from the University of Ottawa for the Research Methods coursework.

and share a table with these students. They struck up conversations with them which just fizzled out quickly. International students did not seem to want to interact or talk with other groups of people for long. Multiple groups of international students were coming in. They greeted and talked with other students for a few minutes but would then disperse back into their own groups. This lasted up until 10:30 PM after which the dance music and the photo booth to pose with props had started, and the ambience changed completely.

Once the music started most of the Indian students seemed eager to dance but they were hesitant to initiate. They waited till the locals had begun dancing and a small crowd had gathered at the centre of the restaurant. Once about half of the students were gathered at the dance floor the lights were dimmed and the music grew too loud to allow people to continue to talk or at least to let them indulge in deep discussions. Around 11:00 PM the crowd was equally divided, with some at the bar ordering drinks, some standing and eating around the dance floor, some at the photo booth and rest on the dance floor. This lasted for another 30 minutes by which time the food had finished and then almost all of the students were dancing.

The Indian students, who had been looking forward the most to dancing, gradually seemed to have hogged the dance floor. They were the loudest, dancing vigorously, synchronized and shouting a continuous rhythmic “hey” with the beat of songs. They had some specific Indian dance moves and a distinct tempo which made them stand out among the rest of the crowd. The other groups took note of it and attempted to join in. After some time some Canadian students were also dancing like the Indian students. The Indian students would immediately get organized for synchronous dance the moment an Indian song would play. The Mexican group found this to be immensely fascinating. They had one Indian in their group and they were speaking to him about how the energy would only compare at a Mexican party if the people were very drunk. They also explicitly said how it would be

inappropriate for two men to dance together with each other in Mexico. This would be seen as a homosexual advance but Indians danced mostly in same-sex groups. The individuals occasionally stepped away from their own group to try to teach (or impose) their moves to the other groups. The people on the receiving end of the sudden intrusion to be amused by it; they attempted to follow.

This event helped me observe how new students, especially the ones coming from different countries navigate social familiarity in their new environment. It was the last welcome event organized for new students. Six weeks had already passed since the start of the semester. It did not actively direct the students to have a cultural exchange or “make new friends”. The international students were still unaccustomed to foreign cultures but at the same time were not overly self-conscious. Two types of international students were successfully identified, the Indians and the Mexicans. It was evident through their conversations and body language that they were in a new unfamiliar situation. They were focused on comparing their experience at the party with the expectations of the crowd’s behaviour that they came in with. The Indian groups seemed to be most eager to find a place of social familiarity. They were reserved while entering the premises and waited for the others but were not reserved once they had got the opportunity to indulge in the activities they were familiar with. The fact that there were a lot of people from the same culture seemed to have played a role in helping them feel comfortable to behave the way they would have presumably done in their home country. This comfort then extended to the point where some of them actively tried to influence the crowd. There seemed to be a sense of pride in being able to party in their distinct cultural way. This can be seen as a preference in the way they wanted to be presented in front of others and be accepted for it. I had expected that the international students would be more focused on trying to adapt to the local culture and I was proven thoroughly wrong.

Students had found freedom, independence and opportunities in Canada. I could see the same feeling of “an upgrade in life” feeling that I had often felt. But I related better to the Mexican groups. Mexican group was more inclined to observe and learn. I was very uncomfortable seeing people of my country not being as warm as Canadians had been with us; I disapproved of what they did. Some of the Canadian and Mexican students could tell how I felt. They told me that I am trying to take accountability for other people’s actions but I don’t need to; that I should let the Canadians can decide whether they want to join the Indian groups. I was still uncomfortable but I felt at ease with the new friends I was making. Looking back at the event, I realize that I was wrong about what I understood. The Indian students were trying to engage Canadians and many Canadians enjoyed that. I realized that I was uncomfortable because I did not want Indians to be perceived as unwilling to learn about other cultures. But this was because it could also affect how people saw me. As an outsider, I was apprehensive of how I was being perceived and it affected how strongly I reacted to other international students. An Indian friend told me that I was overly cautious and the caution needs to be thrown out of the window at a party. The party was not the part that was enjoyable for me at this event. The only thing I enjoyed was the fact that it was my first participant observation assignment. All these assignments were difficult because they made me ask what it means to be an outsider.

We are Herongate

My perception of foreigners in Ottawa was coloured by what I knew about international students; all were free, lively and hopeful. My geography class was showing me the limits of my perceptions. A lot of the discussions about Herongate had two types of focuses: one was the types of research papers that built pieces of evidence of active violations of tenants’ rights; the other was the researches that aided the voices of HTC. An example of an initiative that supported the voice of Herongate was by an artist called Neal Rockwell. He

was featured in the first issue of their newsletter on the HTC website. When I was discussing the possibilities of my assignments with my cohort, this work was suggested to me for inspiration.

Sometime after the meeting, I decided to look up Neal's part in the HTC newsletter issue. Rockwell had been creating a multimedia portfolio on Herongate. The notes he made from his visit were posted in the issue. His notes showed a Herongate that was worse than what I had seen so far. While reading them I could imagine what it would be like to be shown around by the Herongate residents. Neal had written:

Even our cursory walk around the property showed buildings to be in a state of bad disrepair. The first image that struck me was the dumpsters. There are a huge number of them, and they seem to have been placed somewhat haphazardly throughout the complex. Many of the homes are empty, waiting to be demolished. Of the still-occupied buildings, there are significant signs of neglect: crumbling front steps, missing siding or shingles, broken windows, addresses written on with magic marker. In one situation, shingles were held in place with clothes pegs. The parking garages are only half-lit. We walked through a corridor in one of the low-rise apartment buildings. It was blasting hot and airless. The baseboards were falling away in one place revealing what appeared to be mold. In one place water damaged drywall was falling in from the ceiling, very brown; clearly, it had been like that for quite some time. At the center of the complex, there is a pool, chained closed for years, half-filled with brackish water, populated by ducks and floating garbage.

We met Shauna Pilon, who was watching over her daughter Jasmine and her friend Vanessa while they played at the playground in the modest park beside Herongate. They live in one of the tower buildings. She painted a picture of slow, sub-standard maintenance and insalubrious conditions. "There's mad roaches everywhere, when you turn on the lights they go everywhere. Jasmine screams." The pool, she said, hasn't worked for five years. When she asked, the company said it was too much money. She also said that when she moved in, electricity and utilities were included in the rent, but now the company was trying to make the tenants pay.

As we crossed the street we were approached by a young man named Ibrahim Elmi. Attracted by the camera he asked, "Hey, what are you guys selling?" We explained the project. It turned out he lived in Herongate and had recently received an eviction notice. He agreed to do a short video interview. Elmi, 33, once again mentioned the slowness and inadequacy of maintenance, as well as the seemingly omnipresent cockroaches. He noted that the relationship with the landlords felt predatory: they

gave the least they could and took the most possible. (Rockwell, Issue 1 - Notebook, n.d.)

I went through several stories mentioned in the newsletter again. I had wondered about wanting to write about Herongate's experience of suppressed agency. I could see a lot of possibilities for the paper. I realized that the neighbourhood was truly open to outsiders, knowing well that they would be actively challenging prejudiced notions others carried. But I also realized I won't be the first anthropologist to write about Herongate. A resident of Herongate who also had a degree in Anthropology also had her experiences written in the first issue of the newsletter. It reads:

Mavis Finnamore, Chair of the South Ottawa ACORN Chapter until 2016, was a long-term resident (over 25 years) of Herongate in Ottawa. Married, with a degree in Anthropology, she has two children. Her interest in people almost led her to a career in social work, but she didn't think she could handle some of the heartbreaking cases of abuse, so she quit. Her interest in people and social causes didn't stop, however; it just grew in different ways.

My two children were born [at Herongate], and my mother came to live with us in the early 90s. It was a comfortable middle-class development, and we had no complaints with the maintenance or the management. Things started to change when we became aware Minto was selling various parts of Herongate starting in 2009-2010. Our section was the last to be bought, and immediately it was apparent the new owner, TransGlobe was nothing like Minto in terms of maintenance and professional staff. General cleanliness, lawn and shrub maintenance, and garbage pick up, became haphazard and infrequent. Repairs took ages to get done, and only if you bugged them. Sometimes grass would be a foot tall before it was cut. People began moving in who didn't seem to care about others, throwing garbage outside, and having loud parties that kept many of us awake past midnight. One elderly neighbour of mine was threatened by a newcomer, so she moved out. Others started doing the same. I stayed with my family mostly because I liked my home and we couldn't afford to move at this time. (Finnemore, Issue 1 - Notebook, n.d.)

Mavis had presented her perspective not as an anthropologist but as a resident. I have wondered whether that was a preference. There were a few more visits our class had made to the Herongate. Students often discussed ethnographic opportunities with the residents. But I decided that I would not interview them for my paper. The voices of Herongate in the

newsletter came unfiltered; there were no external prisms presenting opinions on their lives. What Herongate means as a home to the residents is evident in their newsletter. I decided I would instead write about the marginalizing discourses I was confronted with; how they were understood by the outsiders. I decided to try to understand the prisms of the privileged that surround spaces like Herongate.

Conclusion

As of July 2021, it is unclear how Timbercreek intends to proceed with gentrification in the future. The last post about it on the HTC website reads:

There hasn't been much movement on the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTTO) case between dozens of demovicted tenants and the City of Ottawa and Timbercreek since the application was first filed in early April 2019 (the last family left the parcel of 150 townhouses in early October 2018, and all the houses were bulldozed in Jan/Feb 2019). Since the HRTTO application was filed, Timbercreek has changed its operating name to Hazelview. This is an indication that the executives in charge want to distance themselves from the crisis of their own making.

On an encouraging note, this case is likely the largest housing rights case in the country's history and it came together entirely through independent organizing by neighbourhood tenants who took bold and decisive action against both a \$10-billion corporation and Ottawa's heavy-duty "old guard" landlord-developer-political class. We want to thank all of the excellent work of the legal team, consisting of lawyers Daniel Tucker-Simmons, Yavar Hameed and Nicholas Valela, with support from Professor David Wiseman's University of Ottawa Access to Justice Program.

Throughout the research (both primary and secondary), when I tried to process my experiences, I couldn't help but find myself asking the basic questions I imagine every ethnographer asks themselves when they are starting out: "Coming to Canada as an outsider, where do I begin to form my perspective? How do I separate what I experience about Herongate when it is always a part of the larger experience of a new country? How do I make sure that I do not accidentally treat a sensitive issue disrespectfully? Most importantly, how do I ensure that I don't lose the authenticity of my perspective in trying to keep my narrative 'appropriately respectful'?"

To understand Herongate, I had to understand that there are lived experiences in the world I can seemingly be very familiar with, as a known part of urban lives, but it does not mean I know what it is like to live them. Discovering the subtlety of ignorance of the privileged lives in me meant rethinking the most fundamental aspects of my identity. Through this research, I found myself humbled and scrambling to rebuild my perspective on

sites of crisis. I realized that the lived realities at Herongate paralleled those in India. I recognize the often-patronizing nature of external prisms. These prisms can cause more harm than help. I had also made the naïve mistake to think my undergraduate education in architecture would make a project involving gentrification an easier subject; that the familiarity with planning and rehabilitation would serve me. Instead, the project was an education about respecting human lives for their agency and about the shocking reality that it has almost always been stripped away for people in destitution.

Learning about the issues creating problems like the kind the Herongate people face means learning about how thick the walls of ignorance can be; how discriminatory social divisions can sustain through obscurity and ignorance.

The relative experience of deprivation doesn't touch a student as easily as it would for a person who came to Canada as a refugee, but it is not always easy to see that. These differences matter when we talk about discrimination towards visible minorities. Furthermore, my community was the people at the universities in Ottawa, people who can afford higher education, who would network within privileged spheres and extend access to those spheres to me.

We are limited by our prisms. I found that in order to understand the experiences at the heart of sites of crisis like Herongate we should try to engage emotionally. In thinking about loss and the struggle, I discovered my hesitation to engage deeply. I discovered my lack of experience to know how to acknowledge their battle respectfully. This led me to discover the ignorance that privileged people carry. I realized that the resilience of Herongate goes unnoticed every day because we think visible minorities are homogeneous. This misconception serves in obscuring the continued existence of systemic discrimination of the

marginalized. Visual minorities can also be a part of the privileged that are not affected by systemic discrimination as strongly.

The Herongate story is reminiscent of stereotypical anti-black segregation through gentrification, which has been prevalent in the better part of the last century; although I find those easier stories to grapple with. The segregation during civil rights movements in the sixties or the casteism before the independence of India was obvious; how their lives are compromised and culture disrespected is also easier to see. The modern publications on these topics lay stress on the incomplete job of undoing systemic discrimination.

Growing up in Delhi, any kind of racism in Canada was usually been unheard of for me. Perhaps because of the sheer volume of Indian immigrants, the lived experiences always seemed like an upgrade from the alternative in India. This notion was thoroughly being challenged at Herongate. Discriminatory gentrification, on the other hand, has been a fact of life for me, given I had field experience in Indian slums. The gaps in the knowledge are made even more complex in the modern day with inefficient unbalanced efforts to combat the almost (but not quite) obsolete colonial practices of taming the wild urban spaces.

Reflecting on those memories with my grandmother now, I can see that I saw the idea of loss out of curiosity and as an education in human lives. It was abstract and unlived. In her eyes, choosing to write about something I do not personally understand seemed disrespectful; to her ignorance is not an acceptable excuse. To live through loss or a real looming possibility of it came the following year for me. The COVID-19 touched everybody's life around me and showed loss and destitution unlike any I ever knew. I do not know a single person who didn't lose someone dear to them. Reflecting on Herongate during COVID, I can see I had relied on my grandparent's experiences because 'loss' was abstract. It made me self-conscious at Herongate; I had some vague awareness about it. Furthermore, I now realize

that in not discussing anything with the residents, I avoided the possibility of being accidentally disrespectful; asking grandmother instead was a safer way to address such a topic. I had unknowingly distanced myself from a deeper engagement. It makes me wonder that perhaps the people of Ottawa who don't live at Herongate are also hesitant in similar ways. Perhaps this contributes to the lack of adequate or appropriate mention of Herongate in the newspapers.

I realized my grandmother alluded to the fact that my point of view is closer to colonizers than the residents; it is external, privileged, and comes with a personal agenda which was my research project. Furthermore, I view the Herongate struggle through my frame of reference, which was my Indian heritage especially pertaining to my family's discriminatory experiences. Basso (1988) explains that this inevitably results in lapses in understanding. Ingold (2000) lays stress on phenomenology as a tool to allow readers to get past these filters of the authors' prisms. A reader might be able to recognize the limitations of my prisms better than I could realize, making it important to share.

These lapses would hence be much larger when the intent to understand the lives of a community is completely absent. For Herongate, "What can be done about this situation?" seems to be the intent of the developers. The notion that they need to be helped out of this neighbourhood undermines their autonomy as individuals or a community; it effectively dismisses any reason to preserve their way of life. An important parallel I noticed between the urban poor of India and Canada was the importance the residents laid on community support. The experiences in India showed how necessary this support can be. The absence of the intent to respect the residents' lives is the central theme of the stances against gentrification. Furthermore, displacement takes the sense of belonging away from people; even though during the worst of their hardships the sense of belonging is all that they have. In my Indian field visits, the people were rehabilitated but often the welfare of the people is

completely ignored. It is important to note that Herongate tenants were not fighting a lack of consideration, they fought for tenant rights.

The impact of Herongate brought my attention to the agency of tenants, the discourses involved and how truth can be obscured. Since I employed self-reflection as my method for this study, my perceptions were challenged. I showed how successful Heterotopias of crisis are in upholding illusions. However, it took me several years and many additional experiences to fully process and acknowledge my experiences in India. There were so many things I wanted to know more but I had hesitated to ask. There are things I realized later that I wish had crossed my mind back when I had met the urban poor in India. Therefore, perhaps, in future, I would realize how much more I can learn from Herongate, or that understanding these spaces that are unfamiliar to the ethnographer, is a never-ending task.

The Herongate tenant's coalition (HTC) created their own website that reveals their side of the story. It has resulted in giving voice to the people with the cultural background being the "other". Just like Appadurai (1988) did for Indians, the Herongate community can set the record straight.

References

- Allukar, M. (n.d.). *Easy Targets: Mass evictions are human rights violations say, tenants*. Retrieved from Canadians for a Modern Industrial Strategy (CMIS): <https://industrialstrategy.ca/content/easy-targets>, last accessed August 4, 2021.
- Appadurai. (1988). Putting Hierarchy in Its Place. *Cultural Anthropology*, 3(1), 36-47.
- August, M. (2014). Challenging the rhetoric of stigmatization: the benefits of concentrated poverty in Toronto's regent park. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space.*, 46(6), 1317-1333. doi:10.1068/a45635
- August, M., & Walks, A. (2018). Gentrification, suburban decline, and the financialization of multi-family rental housing: The case of Toronto. *Geoforum*, 89, 124-136.
- Basso, K. (1988). Speaking with Names: Language Among the Western Apache. *Cultural Anthropology*, 3(2), 99-130.
- Behar, R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston: Beacon Press. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/txu.059173004486248>, last accessed August 4, 2021.
- Boyd, M. (2005). The Downside of Racial Uplift: the meaning of gentrification in an African American neighborhood. *City & Society*, 17, 265-288.
- Braham, P. (2013). Discourse. In P. Braham, *In Key concepts in sociology* (pp. 59-61). SAGE Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781473914704.n13
- Crosby, A. (2018, October 16). Mass Eviction in Herongate: Developer Threatens to SLAPP Tenant Coalition. *Leveller*.

- Crosby, A. (2020). Financialized gentrification, demoviction, and landlord tactics to demobilize tenant organizing, *108*, 184-193. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2019.09.011>
- Cunningham, D. (2018). "We Don't Belong There": New Geographies of Homelessness, Addiction, and Social Control in Vancouver's Inner City. *City, City & Society*, *30*(2), 237-262. doi:10.1111/ciso.12177
- Delamont, K. (2019, August 29). In just four years, a multibillion-dollar developer has demolished dozens of homes and evicted hundreds of residents in Ottawa's Herongate neighbourhood. Now, community members are trying to put the company — and gentrification itself — on trial. *TVO*.
- Erfani-Ghettani, R. (2018). Racism, the Press and Black Deaths in Police Custody in the United Kingdom. In M. Bhatia, W. Tufail, & S. Poynting, *Media, Crime and Racism* (pp. 255-275). London: Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71776-0_13
- Finnamore, M. (n.d.). *Issue 1 - Notebook*. Retrieved from herongatetenants.ca: <https://herongatetenants.ca/we-are-herongate-issue-1/notebook/>, last accessed August 4, 2021
- Foucault, M. (1970). *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human*. London: Tavistock.
- Foucault, M. (1986). Of Other Spaces. *Diacritics*, *16*(1), 22-27. doi:10.2307/464648
- Glass, R., & University College, L. (1964). *London: Aspects of change*. London, University College: MacGibbon & Kee.
- Goodman, S., Cocullo, J., & Gergyek, M. (2018). Heron Gate evictions point to the growing affordable housing crisis in Ottawa. *capital current*. Retrieved from <https://capitalcurrent.ca/heron-gate-evictions-point-to-growing-affordable-housing-crisis-in-ottawa/>, last accessed August 4, 2021.

Google Maps. (n.d.). Retrieved from

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/New+Delhi,+Delhi/Ottawa,+Ontario,+Canada/@2.2157466,-86.3028263,3z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m13!4m12!1m5!1m1!1s0x390cfd5b347eb62d:0x52c2b7494e204dce!2m2!1d77.2090212!2d28.6139391!1m5!1m1!1s0x4cce05b25f5113af:0x8a6a51e131dd15ed!2m2!1d>, last accessed August 4, 2021.

Hawley, J. (2018, September 21). The Money Behind the Heron Gate Evictions: How financialization is being used to force out an entire neighbourhood. *The Leveller*.

Herongate Tenants Coalition. (n.d.). *we are herongate issue 1*. Retrieved from herongatetenants:

<https://herongatetenants.ca/we-are-herongate-issue-1/>, last accessed August 4, 2021.

Hoffman, D. (2017). *Monrovia Modern: Urban Form and Political Imagination in Liberia*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Human Rights Tribunal Application. (2018, September). Retrieved 2021, from herongatetenants.ca:

https://herongatetenants.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/20190401-SCHEDULE-A-to-Form-1_Redacted.pdf, last accessed August 4, 2021.

Hussein, N. (2018, Aug). The Truth of the Matter. *we are herongate*.

Ingold, T. (2000). *The Perception of the environment*. London and New York: Routledge.

Kestler-D'Amours, J. (2018, August 18). Heron Gate mass eviction: 'We never expected this in

Canada. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved 2021, from Al Jazeera:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/8/21/heron-gate-mass-eviction-we-never-expected-this-in-canada>, last accessed August 4, 2021.

Laucius, J. (2018, September 27). For last residents, the countdown to moving deadline enters final days at Heron Gate; Most are gone, but some occupants can't find suitable housing nearby.

The Ottawa Citizen; Retrieved from

<https://www.pressreader.com/search?query=For%20last%20residents%2C%20countdown%20to%20moving%20deadline%20enters%20final%20days%20at%20Heron%20Gate>, last accessed August 4, 2021.

Lees, L., Elvin Wyly, & Tom Slater. (2007). *Gentrification*. New York and London: Routledge.

Mensah, j., & Tucker-Simmons, D. (2021). Social (In)justice and Rental Housing Discrimination in Urban Canada: The Case of Ethno-racial Minorities in the Herongate Community in Ottawa. *Studies in Social Justice*, 15(1), 81-101. doi:10.26522/ssj.v15i1.2239

Miller, S., & Stalcup, M. (2016). *Corruption, Community, and the Urban Project: An Anthropology of Gentrification in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn*. University of Ottawa: School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies.

Mumm, J. (2008). Report from the Field: Redoing Chicago: Gentrification, Race, and Intimate Segregation. *North American Dialogue*, 11, 16-19. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1556-4819.2008.00007.x>

O'Brien, j. (1999). In *Social prisms: Reflections on everyday myths and paradoxes*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi:10.4135/9781452234045.n1, last accessed August 4, 2021.

OSCAR. (n.d.). Retrieved April 2019, from <http://oldottawasouth.ca/archives>, last accessed August 4, 2021.

Ottawa Citizen Editorial Board. (2018, August 18). Heron Gate landlord no villain. *The Ottawa Citizen*. Retrieved from <https://www.pressreader.com/canada/ottawa-citizen/20180818/281668255820766>, last accessed August 4, 2021.

Poster, E. (n.d.). *Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences*. Retrieved from Carleton website: <https://carleton.ca/fass/event/evicted-from-home-the-white-right-to-the-city-and-the-struggle-for-herongate/>, last accessed August 4, 2021.

- Proceedings. (n.d.). *Faculty of Art and Social Sciences*. Retrieved from Carleton Website:
<https://carleton.ca/fass/story/carleton-profs-and-students-research-recent-herongate-evictions/>,
 last accessed August 4, 2021.
- Reick, P. (2018). Gentrification 1.0: Urban transformations in late-19th-century Berlin. *Urban Studies*, 55(11), 2542-2558.
- Restrepo, P. (2010). Moving in – Selling out: The outcomes of slum rehabilitation in Mumbai. *International Conference On Applied Economics – ICOAE 2010*, 641-648. Retrieved from
<http://www.shram.org/uploadFiles/20140507121915.pdf>
- Rockwell, N. (2018, November 15). Patterns of Neglect: Heron Gate residents suffer from a legacy of poor maintenance. *Leveller*.
- Rockwell, N. (n.d.). *Issue 1 - Notebook*. Retrieved from herongatetenants.ca:
<https://herongatetenants.ca/we-are-herongate-issue-1/notebook/>, last accessed August 4, 2021.
- Rutland, T. (2018). *Displacing Blackness: Planning, power and race in twentieth-century Halifax*. University of Toronto Press. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487518233>
- Schnurr, J. (2018, May 17). Herongate residents rally to save townhomes. CTV News Ottawa. Retrieved from <https://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/herongate-residents-rally-to-save-townhomes-1.3934585>, last accessed August 4, 2021.
- Shabazz, R. (2015). *Spatializing blackness: Architectures of confinement and black masculinity in Chicago*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- Shah, A. M. (2020). *The legacy of M. M. Srinivas: his contribution to sociology and social anthropology in India*. Routledge.
- Sudrajat, I. (2012). Foucault, the Other Spaces, and the Human Behaviour. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 36, 28-34. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.03.004

- Valentine, C., Spade, J., & Trautner, M. (2003). *The Kaleidoscope of Gender: Prisms, Patterns, and Possibilities*. Sage Publications.
- Napolitano, Valentina. (2002). Introduction: Prisms of Belonging and Alternative Modernities. 10.1525/california/9780520233188.003.0001.
- Van der Zwan, A., & Willing, J. (2018, May 8). Landlord demolishing more homes in Heron Gate, displacing 105 residents. *The Ottawa Citizen*. Retrieved from <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/landlord-demolishing-more-homes-in-heron-gate-displacing-105-residents>, last accessed August 4, 2021.
- Vincent, D. (2020, June 20). The tenants evicted from an Ottawa community say it's about replacing low-income residents of colour with affluent white renters. *Toronto Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2020/06/20/the-tenants-evicted-from-an-ottawa-community-say-its-about-replacing-low-income-residents-of-colour-with-affluent-white-renters.html>, last accessed August 4, 2021.
- Vistas News. (n.d.). *Vistas News*. Retrieved April 2019, from <https://vistas-news.ca/>
- We are Herongate. (n.d.). *Herongate Tenants Coalition official Website*. Retrieved from HTC Website: <https://herongatetenants.ca>, last accessed August 4, 2021.
- Yogaretnam, S. (2014, September 09). <https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/police-investigating-citys-30th-shooting-of-the-year>. *Ottawa Citizen*, last accessed August 4, 2021.