DISSERTATION

BUILDING A MILE HIGH CITY:

THEORIZING RHETORICAL INFRASTRUCTURES IN DENVER'S DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation utilizes multi-methodological practices to showcase rhetoric's role in directing, arranging, and negotiating urban development projects to sculpt a particular, and particularly power-laden urban identity. To this end, I theorize rhetoric as an influential urban infrastructure that guides how people construct and enact the built environment, everyday embodied practices, and community identity. Defined as the symbolic and material claims in and to urban spaces, rhetorical infrastructures, I contend, direct, arrange, and negotiate space's multiple trajectories into a practiced, everyday urban identity. Specifically, I theorize memory, imagination, and vernacular as rhetorical infrastructures through three different case studies across Denver's development. My first case study examines memory as a rhetorical infrastructure in Denver's first historic district, Larimer Square. Through spatial stories of frontier grit and exploration, I argue that Larimer Square directs Denver's trajectories toward white exceptionalism and unfettered expansion. My second case study analyzes the process of development through the rhetorical infrastructure of imagination in North Denver's ongoing project to redevelop the National Western Center and the surrounding neighborhoods of Globeville, Elyria-Swansea. Through mental mapping interviews, archival research, and spatial criticism, I analyze when and how varying spatial imaginaries collide to arrange the space's openness to multiple histories into place-making strategies that usher Denver into a global, yet homogenized, future. In the final case study, I pivot to vernacular infrastructures in a section 8

housing district in Denver, Sun Valley. Using photovoice methodology, this chapter showcases care, play, and growth as bottom-up, repair-oriented practices that (re)build community networks and relationalities during Denver's COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. Examining Denver's development across space and time, I argue that, through the rhetorical infrastructures of memory, imagination, and vernacular, Denverites and city officials sculpt an urban identity of white exceptionalism and unfettered expansion. As open and multiplicitous, however, these spaces come to be negotiated through everyday practices that, if only momentarily, reroute infrastructures towards roots and community care.

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In 1966, Denver's councilmen met to vote on the Skyline Renewal project, a $46 million development project designated to revamp 37 blocks of Denver's lower downtown. While the vote was nearly unanimous, Councilmen Houston "Hoot" Gibson rejected the project citing that it was unconstitutional for the government to acquire land only to re-sell it back to private corporations. He then delayed the vote three times for varying reasons including calls to check the bill's legality, proposals to change the mapped area for renewal, and a vacation.[1] Eventually, Gibson gained some traction to put the Skyline proposal up for a general vote in the November election. He argued that the Denver voters demonstrated their resistance to downtown renewal projects when they rejected a tax increase that would fund an $8 million renewal project.[2] After losing 5-4 in the Council he started a petition to get the issue on the ballot. Eventually gaining nearly 9,000 signatures for his petition, Denver residents went to vote on the Skyline Urban Renewal project on May 16th, 1967.

The nearly year-long debate demonstrated that "the Skyline issue [was] one of the most critical of modern times for Denver."[3] One unplanned debate between Councilmen Gibson and Bruce Rockwell, a member of the Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA), reveals the issue at stake. In opposition to the renewal project, Gibson stated: "'I say that Skyline is completely immoral, unconstitutional and antisocial.'"[4] He goes on to explain that urban renewal is immoral because renewal uproots families and neighborhoods, unconstitutional because it deprives a person of the right to own property, and antisocial because it moves families to high-rise apartments, which is not conducive for many of the 1,600 displaced residents. Taking aim at

architects, real estate dealers, bankers, and insurance companies, he ends his critique of urban renewal by calling the process a profit-grabbing endeavor serving selfish interests rather than the community.

In rebuttal, Rockwell calls the Skyline Renewal project the "'salvation of Skid Row.'"[5] Pointing out the Supreme Court's decision to uphold urban renewal and 40 different state cases that agree, Rockwell dismissed Gibson's constitutionality argument. In response to Gibson's claim about morality, Rockwell acknowledged that "'there have been some gross injustices committed throughout the country in the name of urban renewal."[6] However, he expressed pride in DURA's relocation programs. The real crux of his argument, though, was that "'the right to own property doesn't include the right to abuse property. [He] has no sympathy for the slum landlord."[7] Since, to him, the slum is not going to clear up on its own, urban renewal projects have to take the lead to rejuvenate, rebuild, and renew these blighted areas. He ends by imagining Denver's future possibilities, where, through the Skyline project, they "can make Denver the shining city of the West if not of all America."[8] These similar points were oft-repeated throughout the Mayorial debates in 1967 resulting in a heated division amongst opponents and proponents of urban renewal.

While the run-up to the vote was contentious, the results were a landslide. With 73,908 votes, 71.2 percent of voters approved the Skyline Renewal Project.[9] Getting the voters' green light, DURA began its project and decimated 27 blocks of Downtown Denver's 'skid row.'[10] DURA destroyed dilapidated buildings alongside historic sites like the Daniel's and Fisher complex, Cooper Building, and Teatro Row.[11] To do so, they had to relocate an estimated 700 businesses, 95 families, and 1,600 people who were primarily lower-class, disabled, elderly, and socially disadvantaged residents.[12] Without adequate funding from private developers, the

Skyline project initially created large swaths of parking lots that were not filled until a decade later. Eventually, however, the developers began building skyscrapers and the 16th Street Mall, which transformed the Lower Downtown area into a commercial and business district. Now referred to as a part of LoDo, the area is one of the most popular areas in Denver and is among the top 10 richest neighborhoods in Denver.[13] The voters who took to the ballot box in 1967 decided to approve one of "the biggest single project[s] any Denver agency has taken."[14] The legacy of that decision and its implementation lives on as both a success of renewal and an example of renewal's detrimental impact on historically marginalized people in the name of progress.

Over the next fifty years, Denver would experience a rollercoaster of boom-bust growth ultimately leading to the transition from a reputation as the barren Cow Town of the 60s through 80s into the still-growing sunbelt boom town. Throughout these boom-bust cycles, Denver planners continue to turn to development as a tool to elevate the Mile High City out of its gloomy periods and into a potential global city. In a 2018 panel on Denver's future, entitled "The Growth & Transformation of Denver's Business, Political, and Geographic Landscape," multiple city officials, investors, and developers emphasized how the last ten years of development have made Denver one of the most vibrant cities in the US.[15] When asked how Denver reached such peak levels of growth, one panelist succinctly answered: "Great cities don't appear — they are built. We had our plan and you can see the results of that plan."[16] If great cities are built, then we must critically question the ultimate goals of these plans as well as the routes developers take and resources they use to build such great cities. In particular, we should ask: who is able to live, survive, and thrive as a result of those plans?

The development projects that have built Denver over the last fifty years have lingering impacts on what resources Denver planners have utilized throughout the process of urban development to create and change the city's future trajectories. Among these resources are the common narratives, practices, and arguments—the topoi—that constitute the built environment's development and eventual everyday enactments.[17] Utilizing "already available categories and lines of rhetorical action," urban planners, developers, and everyday urban users draw on previous and ongoing development projects to produce particular versions of urban life.[18] Which resources are consistently imbedded into urban development and the city's built environment hold deep consequences for who, what, and how the city fits together. Examining the rhetorical resources that are reiterated into Denver's development projects across different times and spaces is my goal throughout this dissertation. In doing so, I seek to answer two research questions:

1) How does rhetoric function as a channel that directs and arranges space's openness and multiplicity into a dominant urban identity?

2) In what ways do communities, people, and practices (re)negotiate the sculpted urban identity throughout processes of urban development?

I proffer the heuristic of rhetorical infrastructure as a critical lens to begin to answer these questions in the context of urban development. I define rhetorical infrastructures as material-symbolic claims in and to urban spaces, which direct and arrange the possibilities/trajectories of urban identity into urged lived enactments.[19] Through the construction of shared and negotiated topoi, rhetorical infrastructures inhere into and guide the development of the material and symbolic landscape.

In this dissertation, I argue that notions of progress and the frontier West guide Denver's development through the rhetorical infrastructures of memory and imagination and sculpts an

urban identity of white exceptionalism and unfettered expansion. As open and multiplicitous, however, these spaces come to be negotiated through everyday practices that, if only momentarily, reroute infrastructures towards roots and community care. To introduce these concepts, I first trace major developments and transitions within urban development practices across the United States. Next, I outline Denver's development history from the Skyline Urban Renewal project into the contemporary moment. Finally, I preview the rest of the dissertation chapters.

U.S. Urban Development

U.S. urban development is complicated, contradictory, and unstable. Since World War II, cities have drastically transformed to meet demographics and forms of urban life. While each city transformed in different ways, to understand the changes in Denver from the 1970s on I want to trace three major urban development patterns in the US starting around the time of WWII. Across the United States, development projects shifted from practices of urban renewal to preservation, and onto commercialism. These practices, while embracing different themes of advancing urban life, still bring forward patterns where development became a tool to continue to segregate, separate, and displace marginalized communities in the city.

Urban Renewal throughout Cities

After the end of World War II many people in the United States, particularly upper and middle-class white families left the city to move into the burgeoning suburbs.[20] As suburbanites began spending more time developing consumer centers in their immediate areas, city planners realized it would be difficult to stop or even slow down the dispersion of upper, middle-class white families leaving the urban centers.[21] They outlined multiple tactics to attempt to lure back

many of the higher-income families who left including increasing accessibility to central

business districts via highways, redeveloping the city centers to become attractive once again to

those who left, and breathing economic life into the city through central commercial areas.[22]

They observed that a major roadblock to these desired transformations was that "in the mid

1940s, conditions in the central city were pretty bad… Home to the poor (and transient), these

neighborhoods were unsafe and unhealthy, lacking open spaces, fresh air, and the other features

most Americans looked for in a good community."[23] The best solution for business interests and

city officials was simple. Blighted areas, slums, and tenants had to be eliminated, razed, or

relocated and replaced by safe, attractive, and healthy upper and middle-class neighborhoods or

commercial centers.[24]

The federal government passed the Housing Act of 1937, which gave planners both the

legal precedent as well as financial support to begin to raze and redevelop areas designated as

blighted or slums.[25] Initially, the Housing Act was passed with the goal to reduce unemployment

and provide long-term housing programs for people who lived in harsh conditions and needed

affordable housing.[26] Throughout the early 1940s, the policy was to clear slums and immediately

build low-income housing for working-class families, "not for the unemployed or the poorest of

the poor."[27] While the housing structures improved and rent remained lower than that of the

suburbs, it was still often too high for the tenants who had previously lived in the cleared areas.

Providing some better housing for some tenants, however, did not help the quandary of getting

higher-class folks back into the city. The Housing Act of 1937 eventually paved the way for the

Housing Act of 1949.[28]

Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 focused more on eliminating blight and pursuing urban

renewal instead of assisting with low-income housing.[29] With no stipulation requiring developers

to build low-cost housing in the razed sites, little enforcement for local developers to relocate displaced families, and no federal oversight over how or which areas came to be designated as blighted or slums, the Housing Act of 1949 set the stage for the perils of urban renewal.[30] Subsidizing redevelopment, this legislation granted local governments the ability to acquire private property, decimated large swaths of land, and re-sold it (often at a cheaper price) to private developers who were seen as saviors of the deteriorating downtowns.[31] Lobbyists and advocates of urban redevelopment framed the clearance of blight as a political, social, and ethical response to the chaos and depravity of the city. Urban historian, Samuel Zipp coined these appeals an "an ethic of city rebuilding" where proponents of urban redevelopment

> envisioned a complete break with the past, wanting to remake everyday city life by uprooting and carrying away the nineteenth-century cityscape. They looked to restore urban order through a fundamental reconstruction of the social and built form of vast realms of human endeavor: housing, work, consumption, entertainment, and commerce.[32]

Of course, many of those displaced at the hands of this ethic of city rebuilding were predominantly poor people and people of color.[33]

Exacerbated by the Federal Housing Authority's racists zoning practices in the 1930s, a disproportionate amount of neighborhoods of color were set to be razed under the moniker of urban renewal. As George Lipsitz highlights:

> During the 1950s and 1960s, federally assisted urban renewal projects destroyed 20 percent of the central city housing units occupied by blacks, as opposed to only 10 percent of those inhabited by whites. Even after most major urban renewal programs had been completed in the 1970s, black central city residents continued to lose housing units

at a rate equal to 80 percent of what had been lost in the 1960s. Yet white displacement declined back to the relatively low levels of the 1950s.[34]

After losing their housing and their community, those who were displaced as a result of urban renewal were unlikely to be replaced or relocated afterward. Instead, eighty percent of the cleared land became commercial, industrial, or municipal buildings leaving only twenty percent of land for replacement housing.[35] In razing this land, cities across the United States further destabilized and disconnected communities of color while setting up downtown districts designed to appeal to white suburbanites.

With white families living in the suburbs rather than in the cities, the United States also diagnosed transportation as an ill to solve for the health of the city.[36] The lack of connecting roads between sprawling suburbs and the city would make even the best-built downtown district unattractive for white suburbanites. Passing the Federal Highway Act in 1956, Eisenhower signed into law a measure that would eventually create a 42,800 mile highway network.[37] City officials embraced highways into and through their cities because of their envisioned potential to create jobs, clear slums, and provide connections with the suburbs.[38] At the same time, their "construction exacted the ruthless destruction of the urban fabric, uprooting hundreds of thousands."[39] Throughout the ten years of passing the Federal Highway Act, highway construction demolished around 37,000 housing units per year and displaced hundreds of thousands of residents.[40] With the federal government offering to cover ninety percent of highway construction costs, many city officials viewed highways as a two-fold possibility to both increase the cities connectivity and destroy their designated slums and blighted areas.[41] As a result, low-income and communities of color were disproportionately impacted and decimated by

these stretches of highway construction. Those who remained in the areas still faced the harsh environmental and health impacts produced by highway commuters.

Reacting to Renewal Practices

As urban renewal cleared out urban spaces and urban communities, two prevalent reactions to urban renewal grew: preservation efforts and commercialism. Beginning in New York, preservationist efforts launched a "street-level defense of urban authenticity to confront the arrogance of both modernization and state power, which threatened to sweep away people as well as buildings."[42] Sharon Zukin divides this movement into three different groups. First, historic preservationists lamented the destruction of old and architecturally significant buildings that embodied urban memory. Second, community preservationists resisted the displacement of poor communities and communities of color at the hands of new construction. Third, gentrifiers sought to keep parts of the authentic cityscape to maintain the symbolic value of the urban lifestyle.[43] While each group held very different reasonings and routes, their ultimate end goal was to halt the decimation of the memory, everyday experience, and authenticity of city life. From these groups' efforts, New York stamped a path for cities across the nation to begin passing local historic preservation laws to maintain urban landscapes' rich history and to nourish Jane Jacob's vision of the city's complex, dynamic, and diverse everyday life.[44]

One of the most sweeping and comprehensive laws to take the mantle of preservation was the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA). The act set to preserve the "historical and cultural foundations of the Nation…as a living part of [the] community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people"[45] States across the country were tasked with identifying and nominating historic sites based on the National Park Services' criteria and historic preservation became a concern for federal, state, and local agencies within

future development projects. In 1976 the government passed a Tax Reform act that incentivized adaptive use for these sites, which caught the attention of private industries and business owners. In cities, businesses looked to historic preservation as a means to compete with the post-war shopping mall that, in part, drove suburban flight. Renovating markets, downtown squares, historic districts, and main streets into commercial centers became a popular practice in the 1980s.[46]

Through changing urban planning paradigms, neighborhood activism, and useful federal regulations, the 1960s and 1970s saw a moment where historic preservation became a tool to shape and reframe the urban centers. Bolstered by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Tax Reform Act of 1976, urban historic preservation was increasingly used for tourism, private development, and commercial areas. These laws preserve Jacob's calls for the interactive urban social life of the sidewalk ballet through the built environment. However, city planners and preservation laws also "encourage mixed uses, but not mixed population. They never speak of maintaining low rents on commercial properties, so they cannot combat the most common means of uprooting the small shop owners who inspired Jacobs' ideas about social order and the vitality of the street."[47] Instead, historic preservation became another site where economic progress far outweighed maintaining the actual origins and roots of the place.

This discrepancy becomes especially visible when considering the NHPA's neglect of Native Nations and Native Lands. From 1966 until 1992 indigenous history and roots were absent as essential links to the heritage of the land. Given cultural, historical, and religious connections to the land, this absence not only allowed a clear path to continue to remove indigenous historical sites, but also further placed indigenous tribes' survival at risk. As Marcia Pablo, member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe, writes: "Our history is written

within our unique and specific cultural landscapes. These places hold the memories of our ancestors, speak to us in the present, and are crucial to our survival, as Indian people, into the future."[48] In 1992, the federal government added an amendment to cover Native cultural and historic sites. Yet, the 1992 amendment and the NHPA still does not adequately protect Indigenous sites or provide tribes enough agency over which sites become protected.[49] Especially in urban centers, where much of the land and its cultural heritage was stolen, resettled by white colonizers, and paved over, the NHPA primarily serves business interests rather than historical origins.

While historic preservation solidified itself as a mechanism to create more consumer-based spaces, urban development across the United States still needed to solidify its urban identity. No longer tied to the mass industrialization prominent in World War II, the 1960s highlighted an urban crisis, which urban officials began to believe was an image crisis.[50] Without the demand for factories, urban spaces needed to rejuvenate their economic and social infrastructure to fit shifting consumer demands. For some cities like Detroit, deindustrialization marked economic ruin, high unemployment, urban deterioration, and continued instability. Other cities turned further toward commercialization through the retail and service industry. In the next section, I discuss Denver's urban development history to contextualize how Denver began to secure its urban identity, in large part, through rhetoric.

Denver Development

These patterns of urban renewal, preservation, deindustrialization, and commercialism persisted throughout Denver's history holding great influence in the city's development practices and urban identity. Like many cities, after the Housing Act of 1949, Denver began to set up their own local renewal agency to begin redeveloping the city. In 1958, a Denver City resolution

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instituted the Denver Urban Renewal Agency (DURA), whose overarching goal was to clear blight, reclaim broken areas, and transform Denver into "a historic yet vibrant landmark of the West."[51] DURA began with housing areas like Avondale, Blake Street, and Whittier, which displaced relatively few families and predominantly white residents.[52] Their influence, however, solidified through their larger projects in the late 1960s. These projects included the Skyline Renewal project in Lower Downtown and the University of Colorado's Auraria campus in Auraria.

The 1960s also marked the beginning of highway construction in North Denver. I-25, then known as Valley highway, opened in Denver in 1958 and I-70's 2.6 mile Denver stretch opened in 1964.[53] Both highways run through the Globeville and Elyria-Swansea neighborhoods. Hit hardest at this time was Globeville which sat in the middle of where I-25 and I-70 intersect, or, as many people call it, "the mousetrap." Globeville, which had a rooted history of Eastern-European immigrant residents began to see a rise in Mexican (27 percent) and Black residents (10 percent) during the height of highway construction.[54] In spite of mounting dissent and lawsuits against the plans to construct the highways along 46th and 48th avenue, the highway department held the groundbreaking ceremony in 1961. Completed in 1964, I-25's and I-70's highway stretches effectively cut through Globeville and Elyria-Swansea. By the late 1960s, these urban renewal efforts displaced an estimated 639 families, of which twenty-two percent were families of color.[55]

While New York was the initial site of these preservation efforts and Eastern cities like Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago kept momentum surging, Judy Mattivi Morley argues that cities like Denver "exemplified changing patterns in twentieth-century urban planning, western urban growth and development, and the importance of tourism as a western industry."[56] Utilizing

the National Historic Preservation Act, Denver registered its first historic district, Larimer Square, in 1971. Unlike previous preservation movements founded by historic associations or government programs, Larimer Square began as a coalition of private businesses explicitly aiming to draw from history to increase profit. Through the Tax Reform Act, the Larimer Square Association transformed the nearly destroyed block into a commercial center and tourist district.[57] Expanding its reach from there, preservationists turned their sights on districts and neighborhoods across Denver, including previously dilapidated areas like Lower Downtown District, Five Points Historic Cultural District, and Ballpark Neighborhood.[58] Following Larimer Square, these areas are currently or are becoming more geared toward commercial centers, high-end stores, and tourism.

Still balancing preservation with new construction, the 1970s were a time of burgeoning growth for Denver's development projects and overall economic wealth. 1970-1983 represented the height of DURA's development. Throughout this period DURA developed some of Denver's top tourist attractions,[59] created the city's Central Bus Station,[60] and constructed over "1,700 residential units, 6.3 million square feet of new or rehabilitated office space, 840,000 square feet of retail or commercial space, and 800 new hotel rooms."[61]Spurred by the oil industry, Denver planned massive development projects resulting in fifty new office buildings and a $200 million investment in skyscraper development within the Central Business District. Denver had the second largest growth between 1970-1978 behind Houston.[62] With such a large sector of office buildings, however, Denver was primarily a 9-5 business district with relatively little retail.

While Denver grew primarily from its oil-based economy, the falling oil prices in the early 1980s halted Denver's growth. In 1984, Denver had the highest rate of office vacancy in the nation (28 percent) and reported a loss of 29,000 jobs.[63] As a result, Denver's buildings once

again faced abandonment and Denver underwent a largescale process of disinvestment. By the 1990s, Denver was no longer an oil center and city officials faced the imperative to economically and physically regenerate Denver's urban identity.[64]

To address these issues, officials began implementing their Downtown Plan of 1989 to "re-inject retail, residential and entertainment facilities back into downtown."[65] Under this process, developers transformed vacant office buildings into apartment complexes and parking structures into shopping venues. Technology companies, lured in by Denver's cheap office retail prices, also eventually began to fill the rest of the vacant office, which helped diversify Denver's economy and brought nearly 48,000 jobs to the area between 1993-1998.[66] No longer connected to oil and shale, Denver's "economic base has shifted to creative business ventures, linked especially to information and communications technology along with financial services and retailing."[67] From this transformation, Denver once again became a burgeoning city.

Among Denver's different facets of growth was an increasingly diverse population. While still overwhelmingly white, in the early 2000s the percentage of white people across the total population fell six percent.[68] At the same time, the number of Black residents increased from 96,592 to 118,858 persons, the Asian population doubled, and the Latinidad population more than doubled over between 1999-2000.[69] Given the history of displacement and destruction of communities of color in Denver's history, the combination of a rising racially diverse population and a resurgence of developmental growth made the 2000s an important juncture for city officials to invest in equity and inclusion. Noting the changing demographics, Michael Murray recommended: "that the Denver Comprehensive Plan 2000 should devote an entire chapter to neighbourhoods many of which are equally vulnerable to the economics of the

property market."[70] Indeed, the Comprehensive Plan of 2000 added equity as a Guiding Principle

to begin to address issues of gentrification, displacement, and affordable housing.[71]

In stark contrast to urban renewal's initial focus on getting white upper-class families to

return to the city, the inclusion of equity hints at Denver's growing concern to make the city an

inclusive place to live for all of its people. And yet, as of 2020, Denver was the second most

gentrified city in the United States, behind San Francisco. Denver gentrified 27.5 percent of the

88 eligible development tracts between 2013 and 2017.[72] As renewal efforts prompt new

investments and raise property values, current residents begin to leave or get forced out by the

shifting economic and socio-cultural environment produced by white middle to upper-class

gentrifiers.[73] According to a National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) report on US

city development, Denver, Colorado also gentrified 15 percent of eligible tracts between 2000

and 2013.[74] Within these moments of gentrification, 18 percent of Black residents were displaced

and 33 percent of Hispanic residents were displaced (second in the nation behind Austin in

2013).[75] In spite of Denver development's deleterious effects on historically marginalized

communities, "the development boom in and around Downtown keeps on trekking with no

slowdown in sight."[76]

Much like other cities across the United States, Denver followed the same general

patterns that have shaped urban life in the US. After World War II, Denver turned to urban

renewal as a mechanism to rejuvenate a deteriorating urban center. Through large renewal

projects, the city officials and planners initially approached renewal through acts of destruction.

With little plans in place to rebuild from this demolition, Denver was left with a wound in the

heart of the city. By pursuing commercial preservation efforts and diversifying economic

possibilities in the city, Denver eventually built up from the rubble. Now, it is a fast-growing city

with increasing challenges over lack of housing space and rising cost of living. Of course, Denver's early destruction did not only occur by way of wrecking ball. Even in moments of construction, Denver development projects often displaced residents and disconnected communities. Even as Denver continues to flourish and grow, the devastation that development projects have had on low-income communities and communities of color, continues to leave these communities precarious to the rising issues of affordable housing and gentrification. It is within this tension that I bring forward an analysis of rhetorical infrastructures as undergirding values and logics which direct, arrange, and constitute Denver's development toward specific urban identities that uphold logics of whiteness and white supremacy in spite of officials' discourses of equity.

Chapter Previews

To understand how rhetoric has shaped Denver's development into the present moment, this dissertation journeys through Denver's past, present, and potential futures. Spanning across four neighborhoods, I utilize the heuristic of rhetorical infrastructure to demonstrate how Denver's development has shaped an urban identity of whiteness that continues to gentrify and displace marginalized communities. At the same time, these communities remain resistant to these projects and resilient in maintaining their identity of roots and community. Over the next five chapters, I highlight rhetoric as an infrastructure for both of these realities.

In Chapter 2, I explain rhetorical infrastructures' three major functions in spaces of urban development. Rhetorical infrastructures 1) direct which ongoing trajectories gain intensity and become reiterated across development projects, 2) arrange potential urban relationalities as a process of smoothing out heterogeneity, and 3) negotiate everyday, embodied spatial practices as co-constitutive performances of urban identity. As I will show in this chapter, the concept of

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rhetorical infrastructures enables and requires multiple methodologies. Therefore, I will also briefly discuss my methodological approaches and outline how methods connect with and inform the analysis of rhetorical infrastructures. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 draw on three oft-discussed meaning-making apparatuses within rhetoric of space/place, urban communication, and critical rhetoric—memory, imagination, and vernacular—to demonstrate how rhetorical infrastructures shape and emplace enacted urban identities into the development of a city like Denver.

Chapter 3 focuses primarily on memory as a rhetorical infrastructure that directs ongoing stories-so-far into a particular dominant narrative, which surfaces through everyday urban practices and urban development. I turn to Larimer Square, Denver's first historic district, to examine how the symbolic, material, and affective dimensions of space invite urban users to embody memories through different intensities. By underscoring the multiplicitous pasts that continue to linger in the space, I analyze the ways in which memory guides how, what, and who people remember as a part of the place's identity. Tracing memory's role as a rhetorical infrastructure, I connect Larimer Square's influence on guiding development across space and time within River North's (RiNo's) more recent development practices. Throughout this chapter, I argue that the rhetorical infrastructure of memory within Larimer Square sculpts an urban identity rooted in frontier expansion and white exceptionalism, which lingers into contemporary development projects.

A few miles from RiNo sits North Denver, which chapter 4 turns to as an ongoing development project. North Denver's development is an assortment of six different large-scale projects known as the North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative. In this chapter, I focus on the relationship between two plans—the billion-dollar National Western Center project and the three surrounding neighborhoods, Globeville and Elyria-Swansea. Focusing on imagination as a

rhetorical infrastructure, I trace how development processes arrange spatial relationalities through the collisions between lived enactments, conceived plans, and perceived routines. Utilizing mental mapping as a method, this chapter highlights tensions and negotiations between urban planners and residents to underscore development as a rhetorical process between heterogenous imaginations of what urban identities come to be emplaced in spaces. Still maintaining the lingering connections between the frontier West, Denver's rhetorical infrastructure of imagination risks smoothing out the heterogenous community roots and further exacerbating practices of white exceptionalism.

While the first two chapters focus on development projects and processes, my last analysis chapter—Chapter 4—narrows into the lived and everyday practices within communities whose already emplaced urban infrastructures failed. As COVID-19 struck the globe, the infrastructural disparities always present within historically marginalized communities became more visible and more impactful. During the stay-at-home order, I joined a research group to pursue a photovoice project documenting the experiences of residents in a section 8 housing sector, Sun Valley. Utilizing these photos and interviews, I proffer vernacular infrastructures as everyday, emplaced practices that open existing urban infrastructures' purpose, function, or mode to reimagine social patterns through a framework of community. By analyzing these vernacular infrastructures, this chapter takes bottom-up, everyday practices as significant infrastructures that build into community identity. In Sun Valley, the stay-at-home COVID period became the context for residents to sculpt vernacular infrastructures centered around care, play, and growth, which links community as a foundational and adaptive component of residents' sense of place.

Finally, my last chapter reviews and reflects on how the concept of rhetorical infrastructures helps critics further understand and analyze the openness of space and spatial politics. In this chapter, I demonstrate how the dissertation highlights rhetoric as a productive agent in the construction of the urban landscape and urges critics to take on an imaginative role in thinking about space differently. Underscoring methodological and political considerations, this chapter identifies the possibilities for rhetoricians to understand urban development as a site of spatial politics and breathe life into alternative ways of being. To begin this journey, the next chapter will define and outline the concept of rhetorical infrastructures.

Endnotes

1. For a more in-depth telling of these series of events see: John Morehead, "Skyline Project Bill Advances Over Objections," *Denver Post*, February 15, 1966, NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current.

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Building Theory: Rhetorical Infrastructures as Critical Heuristic for Rhetoric of Urban Development

> What is needed, I think, is to uproot 'space' from that constellation of concepts in which it has so unquestioningly so often been embedded (stasis; closure; representation) and to settle it among another set of ideas (heterogeneity; relationality; coevalness…liveliness indeed) where it releases a more challenging political landscape.[1]

> Space, as relational and as the sphere of multiplicity, is both an essential part of the character of, and perpetually reconfigured through, political engagement. And the way in which that spatiality is imagined by participants is also crucial. The closure of identity in a territorialized space of bounded places provides little in the way of avenues for developing radical politics.[2]

Feminist geographer, Doreen Massey, begins her influential book, *For Space,* calling on scholars to reconceptualize space. By reconceptualizing space as produced through interrelations, infused with coeval multiplicities, and always under construction, she reimagines space as political and social.[3] Rather than a flat surface upon which we interact, space is dynamic, alive, and filled with multiple ongoing stories and relationalities. The political and social thrust of this conceptualization is that space becomes an active agent in our being and being together in the world. As Massey describes in an interview, space "presents us with the question of the social. And it presents us with the most fundamental of political of questions which is how are we going to live together."[4] We live together through our relationality and connections with others. While still simultaneous and coeval, these relations are also filled with power.

In what Massey calls the "power-geometry" of space-time, highly complex social differentiations create varying degrees of movement and communication in space as well as control and initiation of space.[5] As such, there is an uneven access to and agency over space for different social groups and individuals. The history of contemporary urban development in the

United States, for example, highlights how private developers held more power over different neighborhoods than the residents themselves. While residents still construct space through their ongoing stories, the uneven power emboldened developers' stories while displacing residents'. Containing space's open multiplicity is the crux of spatial politics, which "is concerned with how such chaos can be ordered, how juxtapositions may be regulated, how space might be coded, how the terms of connectivity might be negotiated."[6] When space is contained to enable the communication of specific politics, the relations made available or controlled close off space's radical politics and create a seemingly bounded place.

Massey offers a conceptual grounding to examine how city development corals simultaneous ongoing stories into urban identity and what radical politics continue to linger through the space's ever-present multiplicity. While there are plenty of forces that attribute some interests, people, or practices with more control and power than others, the rhetoric of space itself is a key factor. Space, after all, "functions as a technology—a means and medium—of power that is socially constituted through material relations that enable the communication of specific politics."[7] Rhetoric furnishes a critical vantage point that can help critics examine how discourses, events, objects, sites, embodiments, and affects urge people into particular ways of being and being with others.

Rhetoric of space, specifically, foregrounds how spaces co-constitute our social, political, and cultural values, beliefs, and interactions. If the material space of our interactions "not only provides the cultural resources for living in the everyday, it is the site of that living," then rhetoric allows scholars to identify how space makes claims on our subjectivities and urges the enactment of certain forms of living together.[8] In particular, rhetoricians have underscored a litany of ways that rhetoric and space are connected, including rhetorics about space, spaces

where rhetoric takes place, space's rhetoricity, and rhetoric's relationship between space and identity.[9] Studying urban environments alone has yielded a wealth of scholarship on the impact of rhetoric in constructing a particular urban identity.[10] Throughout this chapter and this dissertation, I utilize much of this scholarship to examine how urban development enacts a spatial politics which directs, arranges, and negotiates the open multiplicity of space into a particular power-geometry of whiteness. I do so through the heuristic of rhetorical infrastructure.

Rhetorical infrastructures, I contend, are the symbolic and material claims in and to urban spaces, which direct and arrange space's multiple trajectories into a dominant, practiced urban identity.[11] Even though rhetorical infrastructures exist as and build the material and symbolic landscape, they are open to negotiation and thus are also contested within everyday practices. In my analysis chapters, I specifically draw on three oft-discussed topoi within the rhetoric of space/place, urban communication, and critical rhetoric—memory, imagination, and vernacular—to demonstrate how rhetorical infrastructures shape and emplace these discourses into the development of a city like Denver. The heuristic of rhetorical infrastructures helps critics understand how the use of memory, imagination, and the vernacular drives or resists urban development processes to produce a city's built environment and its accompanying and contentious urban identities.

When discussing the rhetoric of infrastructure, even if they do not necessarily use that name, rhetoricians have followed early urban study's view of infrastructure to focus on how the physical lineaments and contents of urban infrastructure produce the city's political and social landscape.[12] Rhetoric critics have underscored the material, symbolic, and affective role that infrastructural materials and systems like roads, street grids, parking lots, steam, networking applications, and glass have in creating urban systems.[13] Examining glass's role in creating urban

systems, for example, Timothy Simpson demonstrates how the material and aesthetic turn towards glass influenced a new spatial formation of financialization.[14] He argues that glass technically produces and aesthetically instantiates the process of financialization as a form of developing the urban economy.[15] Additionally, rhetoricians point to how such infrastructures set, but do not determine, particular ways of being in the city. In this vein, Donovan Conley examines how gridding in the American West produces particular paths of mobility and constructs a "defacto grid of governance, a terrain of designed mobility."[16] Yet, as Conley illustrates, while these infrastructures guide and produce potential movements, there is always the possibility to inhabit the chance encounters of space through our lived practices.[17] Showcasing the negotiation of how we construct ourselves within and against the infrastructural threads of the urban fabric, rhetoric has deftly traversed and exposed routes of power and resistance within the sociotechnical geometries of power inhered in urban infrastructure.[18]

Instead of focusing on the rhetoric *of* infrastructure, however, I pivot my attention toward rhetoric *as* an infrastructural system in and of itself. To this end, I do not focus on the objects as systems that structure the urban environment and people's interaction within the urban landscape. Instead, I draw on ontological infrastructures, which allows one to grasp "*how* life is put together and re-constituted… [and] points to ways of imagining a renovated politics" of urban infrastructure.[19] Rhetorical infrastructures, I demonstrate, are one such ontology that undergirds the creation, ordering, and enactment of the everyday urban built environment. If we consider rhetoric's broad definition as an artifact that "by symbolic or material means—has the capacity to move someone," then this dissertation underscores rhetoric's capacity to move urban development and the production of urban landscapes and identities.[20] By analyzing how rhetoric functions as an infrastructure, I call attention to the common topoi that serve as underlying

resources for developers, planners, and urban users to draw on as they construct, arrange, and (re)develop both the built environment and its invited urban identity.

Throughout this chapter, I develop the heuristic of rhetorical infrastructure as a critical lens that focuses on how urban development processes utilize common topoi as rhetorical resources to direct, arrange, and negotiate urban identity. To do so, I first underscore infrastructure's conceptual promise for examining how, through rhetoric, spatial politics order space's open multiplicity into a dominant urban identity. Next, I outline how rhetoric functions as an infrastructure. Specifically, rhetorical infrastructures 1) direct ongoing trajectories into a dominant story, 2) arrange relationalities to produce a smoothed out urban identity, 3) negotiate alternative openings through everyday practices. Finally, I discuss the methodological considerations that are and should be present while analyzing rhetorical infrastructures.

Rhetoric and Infrastructure

Infrastructure, as it is theorized in urban studies, is a particularly helpful framework for rhetoric scholars to turn to in order to heed Massey's view of space's open multiplicity and spatial politics. In urban studies, early scholarship focused on how the material structures—rail lines, sewage systems, internet cables, roadways—function, converge, and bind cities into a machine or organism for urban daily practices.[21] Within the last twenty years, however, scholars have questioned this stance because it simplifies infrastructural networks as objects or systems that merely determine the shape and form of the urban landscape.[22] Instead, the infrastructural turn within urban studies considers infrastructure as a social and technical process that actively shapes the sociopolitical, economic, cultural, and spatial life of the city.[23] Through this turn, scholars pivoted their research toward understanding infrastructure's role in shaping urban life and also expanded notions of what is considered an infrastructure.[24] Both of these shifts, I

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contend, offer distinct openings for rhetoricians to begin examining how multiplicitous stories and identities are organized into a dominant and reiterated urban identity.

To reframe understandings of infrastructure as a significant factor in shaping urban life, Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin offered a foundational set of four critical connections that redefine infrastructure to account for contemporary urbanism. First, infrastructures are socio-technical processes, which speak to the interwoven relationship between the technical systems of a city's material infrastructure and their impact on creating social worlds.[25] As a constantly negotiated process, people create infrastructures that then direct how urban users move between their physical and social worlds.[26] Second, infrastructures are congealed social interests.[27] By arranging heterogeneous people, places, and other urban elements into dynamic relationships, infrastructures "dramatically, but highly unevenly, 'warp' and refashion the spaces and times of all aspects of interaction—social, economic, cultural, physical, ecological."[28] Third, since infrastructural networks make up large portions of the material, economic, political fabric of urban life, they are embedded geopolitics that "infuses the politics of metropolitan areas."[29] Finally, infrastructures are deeply involved in structuring and delineating urban culture and the desirable urban order.[30] Graham and Marvin point to how people invoke images of infrastructure or justify infrastructural changes to promote ideologies and normative aspirations of progress and "the good city."[31] In so doing, infrastructures are intricate processes in creating the idealized city and its subsequent practices, cultures, and ways of being.

While Graham and Marvin expand the scope of how infrastructure impacts urban life, their work still focuses on the objects and networks in the city. Yet, another influential prong of research that directed urban studies infrastructural turn is the understanding that infrastructure is "social in every respect."[32] This pivot helps reimagine urban settings' sociality and its

relationship to infrastructure. By bridging the technical with the social, studies examine how a city's infrastructure "determine[s] the character of urban wellbeing and sustainability" through complex socio-technic alignments and networks.[33] What makes up the infrastructure, however, stems beyond objects and instead expands into the symbolic, affective, aesthetic, and embodied interactions with and in the urban landscape. [34] Scholars, in this framework, extended notions of what counts as an infrastructure to think of people, care, social relationships, or the sensorium as influential systems in the city.[35] In so doing, "the new writing shows how infrastructures— visible and invisible, grand and prosaic—are implicated in the human experience of the city and in shaping social identities."[36] This pivot ultimately garnered a new set of scholarly questions highlighting how infrastructure—structured through social expectations, corporate interests, historical legacies, and urban planning discourses—differentially determines the character of urban wellbeing across communities.[37]

The infrastructural turn's emphasis on the social and the relational broadens the scope of research to provide productive analytical junctures to examine how spatial politics begin to take hold. Infrastructures are ordering mechanisms, inherently relational, unevenly distributed, and open to negotiation. They are resources that attempt to route urban trajectories into a functional and seemingly smooth social experience of the city. Utilizing the framework of how resources bring everyday operations together across a range of people and practices offers rhetoricians an opening to examine what rhetorical tools mold a particular urban identity into a differentially experienced urban life.

Urban identity is a slippery term that intricately links place with individual and social identities and points toward the identity of the place itself. Individually, space provides resources and prompts performances wherein people constitute parts of themselves.[38] The formulated

identity of the place, or place-based identity, also functions as a way for the community to know itself through connections between spaces and their practices, memories, and politics.[39] Space and its relationship to identity, of course, is not an inert backdrop nor a-political, "rather, these relations themselves must be seen as active components in the unequal and heterogenous production and distribution of identities, politics, and actions."[40] As an active agent in the production and distribution of identities, space's material, symbolic, and affective dimensions constitute individual identities and their relationship with and to larger social and political identity networks. As such, the space of urban landscapes guides particular individual and community identity performances through their power relationship.

A part of how space co-constitutes individual and social identities is through how people, objects, and relationalities also craft space's identity. It is "the interactions and relationships between discourse, social practices, and physical elements that, when linked in particular ways, constitute what a place *is*."[41] In terms of urban identity, examining how the landscape of a city, often defined through its chance encounters and chaos, comes to accrue a sense of place amongst the urban residents and visitors is an important endeavor.[42] Drawing from these conceptual possibilities, I identify how rhetoric, as an infrastructure, urges the character of urban identity across communities, spaces, and times. In the next section, I outline how rhetoric functions as an infrastructure.

Rhetoric as Infrastructure

Scholars have drawn out how systems of infrastructure like highways, smart city technology, parks, crosswalks, and transit lines reproduce racist, sexist, anti-queer, and ableist urban spaces.[43] While these studies demonstrate the impact that imposed infrastructural systems have on the community, there is more to be done to trace how values, beliefs, and logics inhere

into the built environment and urban experience. To do so, we must consider additional infrastructures beyond a city's technical objects and systems. I propose rhetoric as one such addition. In this section, I outline how rhetoric serves as an infrastructure whose symbolic and material claims in and to space sculpt a dominant, yet contested, urban identity into the everyday built environment across multiple spaces and times. Specifically, rhetorical infrastructures 1) direct the multiple ongoing trajectories of space into dominant performances of place, 2) arrange heterogenous relationalities into a smoothed out urban identity, and 3) negotiate urban identity through everyday practices of the openness of space.

Directing Trajectories

Following Doreen Massey, rhetoric's suasory function can be seen as an ordering mechanism that creates a "clash of trajectories where the dominance of one of them reverberates the whole" of the city.[44] Massey utilizes the term trajectory to nod to the process of change in a phenomenon.[45] Trajectories are the multiple practices, histories, ongoing stories, identities, or politics across various times and places that continue to forge new relationalities within space. If cities are "peculiarly large, intense, heterogeneous constellations of trajectories, demanding a complex of negotiation," then how trajectories emerge or fade within the intricate negotiation bears heavily on our practice of place.[46] In the clash of trajectories, there is an event of place where spatial narratives meet up to form new political and social configurations.[47] In this section, I demonstrate that the concept of rhetorical infrastructure reveals how rhetoric serves as a resource that directs trajectories into a dominant narrative, habituates performances into everyday life, and guides future development in line with these established ways of being.

While Massey asks us to bear witness to the simultaneous stories across time as coeval, the power-geometry of space indicates that certain trajectories hold greater weight in the clash of

trajectories.[48] Examining which trajectories gain their force in the new configuration is a question of how certain trajectories emerge as persuasive stories to follow en route to place-making while others are untold. It is a question well-answered through rhetoric. Rhetoric, after all, "takes discourses, events, objects, and practices to be activities of a partisan character, embracing some notions and despising others, willfully or not."[49] The stories that come forward to be acknowledged or practiced into place are partial. Those that are made more present become active agents in directing our ways of being in the world together. As such, rhetoric serves as an infrastructure that directs which stories gain greater intensity and guides how we utilize these stories to build our everyday urban identities.

Often discussed in relation to public memory places, there is a wealth of scholarship on how a place's symbolic, material, and visual components urge people to acknowledge and enact portions of space's multiplicity.[50] The rhetoric of place does so by inviting us to attend to, embody, and navigate stories in particular ways. Constructing spaces of attention, as Kenneth Zagacki and Victoria Gallagher argue, the material and symbolic dimensions of place advocate a particular argument that imbues into the spatial experience. Attending to and embodying the spaces of attention, "visitors experience a value orientation and new ways of seeing."[51] Through the material and symbolic engagement with space, rhetoric mediates how we come to understand and practice particular stories.[52] Something as seemingly simple as having to walk around a monument, as Carole Blair and Neil Michel point out, draws pedestrians' attention toward a Civil Rights Memorial forcing them to engage with Civil Right's history or go out of their way not to.[53] These spaces of attention or performative rhetorics are each trajectories among others in the multiplicity of space. The trajectories which embed into the material, symbolic, and visual place, however, "function rhetorically to invoke a collective sense of civic and cultural

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understanding."[54] How we come to enact certain stories into the event of place attaches partial pasts into and as the present.

At the same time, a place can facilitate visitors to reinterpret or forget trajectories as the rhetoric of place invites people to take on alternative narratives. Kristen Poirot and Shevaun Watson offer a compelling example of how rhetoric directs pasts into particular frameworks in their analysis of Charleston, South Carolina.[55] As a historic tourist district, Charleston's rhetoric seeks to remember and enact its antebellum history. While still recognizing the place's history of slavery, the tour practices, marketing material, and aesthetics animated visitors' understanding of slavery through narratives of white resilience and freedom.[56] Throughout their analysis, they point to the shifting presence and absence of discussions on race and demonstrate how the memory practices in the historic district retain white supremacist logics in an effort to maintain its identity of heritage.[57] Memory sites, especially within urban contexts, are "rhetorical formations [that] exceed meaning-making in that they provide the resources and rationales for public judgments about the present that are grounded in strategic animations of the past."[58] The concept of rhetorical infrastructure pays credence to the resources and rationales that animate people's understandings of and experience with space's multiple stories-so-far.

We experience that which is given greater presence through our everyday performances. These day-to-day enactments also stitch us into the social fabric where we most materialize our ways of being together.[59] Everyday performances within space, then, build out and enact trajectories of their own. In this entanglement of space, scholars point to the ways that rhetorics of memory, mobility, citizenship, borders, and others serve "as a grammar or set of resources and structures with which, through rhetorical turns, individuals invent rhetorical performances of themselves."[60] The repeatability or potential habit-making which comes to fruition within the

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seemingly mundane actions of grabbing drinks at a bar or wandering an art district continue to press those trajectories as the well-traveled routes for being and being together in a city. Rhetorical infrastructures, as a concept, traces the everyday resources available as spatial practices for people to perform themselves as a part of the urban place's identity.

Of course, spatial performances are not distributed equally across different embodied positionalities in the space. Space is not a backdrop where identity struggles happen to occur, "rather, these relations themselves must be seen as active components in the unequal and heterogenous production and distribution of identities, politics, and actions."[61] The spatial practices made available or disciplined within place function to set the bounds of what is and is not acceptable, expected, or normal within the set spatial politics.[62] Tracing how places differentially "impress on the body" to create practices of dominance, marginalization, as well as potential agency, is an imperative that has been set by many scholars in the field.[63] Raka Shome asks us to consider how material practices of containment and control produce the "immigrant" identity.[64] Lisa Flores details how the rhetorics of mobility and stoppage "activate race through im/mobility."[65] In the city, Jolanta Drziewiecka and Thomas Nakayama aptly point out that "in the United States—a persistently racialized society—white skin offers much more mobility than other arbitrarily and powerfully constructed skin colors."[66] As the multiplicity of space is ordered through spatial politics, the available and disciplined embodied performances confine individual and social identities within power relations. How identities form through these practices or in contestation with them marks the space's future trajectories.[67]

Considering rhetoric as an infrastructure focuses on how the spatial politics and everyday performances that continue to reiterate certain stories in places across contexts. Building from Celeste Condit's notion that "life is the movement of coded material that differentially favors the

reproduction of its own code: life is the reproduction of identity," a part of rhetorical infrastructure's directionality is the mapping of how urban development works to reproduce its own code.[68] If rhetoric functions as a means to evoke greater intensities for some stories over others and our embodiments of these stories solidify them into everyday practice, then it is unsurprising that similar forms of development accrue across a city's spatial story. Able to draw on and reenact similar discourses, practices, and spaces, rhetorical infrastructures cultivate a set of stories and their trajectories create a well-worn path for how we come to enact, understand, and build the social world.[69] Rhetorical infrastructures look to how urban development practices sculpts this social world through the built environment.

Arranging Relationality

Rhetoric scholars have increasingly called upon the field to consider a more relational approach toward the rhetoric of space and place, which is at the same time a call to "critique the discursive constitution of 'empirical' processes and practices in and through places" and "expand the scope and scale of inquiry into place-making."[70] Taking these calls into consideration with urban development inherently questions how development processes attempt to arrange what Massey calls place's "throwntogetherness" into an ordered landscape. Throwntogetherness refers to the openness and chance of space where multiple trajectories come to converge. In moments of throwntogetherness, the collision between different stories, politics, and identities demands some dynamic of negotiation as to what new configurations form amongst the converging stories-so-far.[71] How these negotiations occur and what configurations develop represent "decisions that temporarily and contingently organize place out of space's resources [which] are at once a rhetorical effort and have rhetorical consequences."[72] Underscoring urban development as a process that arranges moments of throwntogetherness, the concept of rhetorical

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infrastructures calls on scholars to analyze how rhetoric functions to bring forward and negotiate relationalities into new configurations. Specifically, I view rhetorical infrastructures as textured structures of contact that arrange throwntogether relationalities into new configurations for future possibilities.

Dictated by the spatial and temporal configuration of a multitude of moments, rhetoric helps route the ongoing trajectories into a "here" of throwntogetherness. Each dimension is in constant motion and therefore calls forward different rhetorical consequences. To address the openness of space, Greg Dickinson asks us "to think texturally about space," which brings context forward as a way "to think about how any particular locale is always made up of its here and now and also always of elsewheres and elsewhens."[73] If we think of rhetorical infrastructure as converging moments of multiplicity, we can begin to account for the textures and relationalities of space that arrange how stories come to be negotiated in moments of throwntogetherness.

The concept of infrastructures from Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift will prove useful in thinking through this arrangement. They liken a city's infrastructure to "the urban equivalent of the machinery of breathing."[74] For them, infrastructure

> does not refer simply to actual physical lineaments. It is also, on one level, caught up with the moments of standardization, technical compatibility, professional rivalry, bureaucratic imperatives, regulatory competences, and general dispositions which allow things, quite literally, to fit together, and, on another level, with the different practices of maintenance and repair which allow infrastructure to continue working in at least some form, which continue to guarantee presence… In other words, infrastructure is a structure

of contact that also defines what shows up as real at any juncture. It is the gross material

of materiality.[75]

Understanding the city as connected and relational, their approach to infrastructure examines

how urban landscapes allow material things (human and nonhuman) to fit together through

structures of contact. Rhetorical infrastructures, in this vein, bring focus to the structures of

contact as textures that arrange how and what ongoing stories, times, and spaces collide.

Additionally, examining urban development through the concept of rhetorical infrastructures

asks critics to analyze what new configurations, through these moments of contact, then show up

as real.

To highlight the textures of contact among the multiple relations ongoing in space, we

must turn to the social mechanisms involved in the production of space. Henri Lefebvre argues

"(social) space is a (social) product."[76] Every society, according to Lefebvre, produces its own

spaces that contain and designate appropriate place for different forms of social relations.[77]

Importantly, how society produces space also becomes a question of how space produces

society. Space arranges how relations are coded as appropriate in place, how forms of thought,

action, or control are given presence, and how particular forms of being are repeated and

repeatable in the space. As a social product rather than an empty container, then, analysis of

space must "shift from *things in space* to the actual *production of space.*"[78] It is in the production

of space that common topoi are used as a mechanism for societies to produce social spaces that

are materially instantiated into the physical built environment of our everyday lives.

To analyze the social production of space, Lefebvre offers the spatial triad. The triad, to

Lefebvre, is made up of representations of space (conceived), representational space (lived), and

spatial practice (perceived).[79] Representations of space denote the conceptualization of spaces or

how planners or officials map out, plan, and envision space.[80] Representational spaces accounts

for how a space is lived through its images and symbolism—"It overlays physical space, making

symbolic use of its objects."[81] Finally, spatial practices refer to how, through everyday activities,

habits, routines, people perceive the space as a part of their daily reality.[82] This triad pushes

scholars to analyze artifacts like city plans, daily practices, and symbolic representations as

coeval and connected to each other in the social production of space.

These three moments of space each represent different structures of contact. The values,

beliefs, and invitations they bring with them in moments of contact direct how space comes to

prompt particular forms of relationality. Viewing space through the lens of social production

hones in on how a city planner's vision, a resident's work routine, and symbolic interpretations

of the "good city" come to fit together or collide. In tandem with throwntogetherness,

underscoring lived, perceived, and conceived spaces as colliding relationalities points critics to

ways of imagining how spatial politics arrange new configurations in everyday material places.

Rhetorical infrastructures provides a lens to trace these structures of contact and analyze how

common topoi and reiterated values arranged them to meet. These moments of collision alters

what configurations are made in the throwntogetherness of space as well as whose stories can

flourish within that event of place. And yet, space and its production can never fully be

completed.

Negotiate the Openness of Space

One of Massey's foundational concepts of space is that it is open and always becoming.[83]

It is in this liveliness that new configurations, alternative ways of being, and more democratic

politics can emerge. While she is clear that openness does not inherently mean resistance nor

does closure inherently mean power, everyday negotiations can re-open space to alternative

infrastructural possibilities.[84] Within urban infrastructures, the possibility of openness thrives when we consider people as infrastructure. Examining people as infrastructures focuses on moments of "collaboration among residents seemingly marginalized from and immiserated by urban life."[85] Re-working instilled or failed infrastructure, people's collaborative and everyday practices open the systems and processes of space to lively infrastructures and urban becoming.[86] Rhetorical infrastructures draw scholarly attention to the everyday forms of negotiations— resistance and building—that creates alternative routes and openings within a seemingly closed-off spatial politics.

While everyday life in some ways represents the mundane and taken-for-granted habits, routines, and repeated performances that make up our daily reality, in its constant performance there are possibilities for fissures and alternative possibilities.[87] Indeed, everyday practices or, as Michel De Certeau names them, "ways of operating," "constitute the innumerable practices by means of which users reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production."[88] Through the concept of "ways of operating" and "tactics," De Certeau points toward the momentary maneuvers that play with the imposed terrain sculpted through power relations (strategies).[89] Rhetoric critics have turned to De Certeau's concepts of tactics as ways to consider the rhetoricity of everyday practices like walking or to excavate forms of resistance in everyday spaces like the bathroom.[90] As a process of analyzing the relationship between strategies and tactics, De Certeau provides fodder for finding the fissures and manipulations within the repeated and mundane practices of space.

De Certeau limits these tactics as a temporal practice that restricts the potential resistance to opportunities and moments of trickery. For him, resistance is fleeting and "what it wins it cannot keep."[91] Examining only these moments, however, focuses analysis on flashes of the

everyday and limits engagement with how sustained practices and habits are also resources for creating alternative places and worlds. If we look to Rita Felski's concept of everyday life—"as a way of experiencing the world rather than as a circumscribed set of activities within the world"—then habits, repetition, and home are essential trajectories to analyze as a tool for creating communities' experiencing of the world.[92] Everyday life, in this way, has been taken up by feminist scholars like bell hooks who points to the home and habits of home as a site of resistance and community for Black women.[93] Similarly, Lisa Flores offers creating a home as a process of crafting a rhetoric of difference for Chicana feminists.[94] By building out different temporal and spatial routines and practices, Jack Halberstam also points out the possibilities for "the queer 'way of life.'"[95] Through daily practices, spaces, and habits marginalized communities have rejected dominant discourses and affirmed their own community identities as a form of everyday building.

As urban development comes to bear upon predominantly marginalized communities, the risk of displacement can quickly become a question of community and survival. The closing off of the community's relationship to the space, the potential discontinuation of their embodied practices, and the reinforcement of dominant stories within the space that follow the forces of gentrification spark a necessary negotiation for residents. Rendered out of place in the newly arranged spatial politics, as Karma Chávez demonstrates, there is still the possibility for agency.[96] She argues, "when a norm subjects a person, the very act of subjection indicates that other possibilities exist, because if no other possibility existed, there would be no need to impose a norm."[97] In the constantly shifting relationalities, which differentially press upon identities and bodies, each event of place holds the possibility for people and communities to reconfigure new possibilities. As is the case with urban development, the very instability imposed by

development opens grounds to rebuild differently. Rhetorical infrastructures points critics toward everyday resistance as well as everyday building as performances within urban development that negotiate spatial politics and retain space's openness to multiple routes and stories.

Methodology

Throughout this dissertation, I pursue multi-methodological approaches to examine rhetorical infrastructures across different times and spaces in Denver's development. The methodological choices I made were designed as a means to gather a more robust accounting of the space's multiple, ongoing, relational components. If rhetorical infrastructures is, as I contend, a heuristic that offers scholars conceptual tools to begin to build understandings of Massey's politics of space, then it is important to be mindful of how we begin to analyze the unruliness of space. To examine space through one vector of analysis, be it archives, interviews, or being there, risks siphoning the complexity of space into a static and discrete cross-section of space. Of course, the complexity of space ensures that "we cannot get our hands around this space-time. We cannot see it fully, experience it completely. And when we translate the richness of the embodied experiences into critical discourse much more is lost than is captured."[98] The ability to study and translate the full thrust of space is not my intention here. A multimethodological approach, however, opens the critic to the unruliness of space. Garnering multiple perspectives, opening the doors to different experiential moments, and expanding the temporal trajectories through which we understand the here and now demands that the critic employ various ways of seeing and being with space. Each interview, archival document, walk-through, conversation overheard becomes a part of the critic's spatial experience and the critic brings these accrued stories with them as they continue to examine the politics of space.

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To showcase the critical insights that a multimethodological approach can nourish let me provide a brief narrative of the process behind chapter 4's analysis of the Globeville, Elyria-Swansea neighborhoods. For this chapter, I utilized archival research, interviews, and my own embodied experience in the space. First, it is important to note my relationality with the Elyria-Swansea. The neighborhood is a relatively small, historically immigrant community, and predominantly Latinx. The majority of residents speak Spanish primarily, with 60 percent speaking only Spanish. The community has faced decades of hardships including environmental racism, disinvestment, unemployment, and constant construction and displacement.

I am a white woman from a suburb of Denver, Westminster, with a lower to middle-class upbringing. My first language is English, I've never worried about citizenship rights, and environmental toxins in my city park's soil have never been a concern for me. While I moved a lot as a kid, I never had to move because of development projects, nor was I ever at risk of losing my community support system as a result of moving or development projects. I came to the project with little knowledge of the space. My cousins were baptized in one of the churches and my grandparents spoke often of friends who had lived in the area for decades. Mostly, though, I came to the project through Colorado State University's partnership with the ongoing development project, the National Western Center. I was teaching a class on urban identities and we utilized this partnership to think through and examine the rural-urban divide. As someone who is not a part of the community and as someone who holds positions of privilege and power within the space, I decided to pursue qualitative interviews, archival research, and my own forms of being there. Individually, each method has value, but together they presented a more complex tapestry of the neighborhood.

For me to only turn to the archives would erase the ongoing development projects occurring in the area. Relying solely on my own embodiment of the space would erase more complex understandings of the community, and the residents' resilience and marginalization. Turning only to resident interviews risked erasing the contextual, governmental, and historical frameworks that have impinged on the space's possibilities and thus residents' experiences. In each of these methods, there is a rich assortment of stories-so-far, but they remain loose threads. The relationality that interweaves these stories together comes forward as the critic explores multimethodological approaches. I'll pause on a particular moment where the various ways of being with and in space come to be available through multimethodological projects converging during my research.

For my interviews, I went to Elyria Park and sat on a bench with different residents. During one day of interviews, as I spoke with residents, children played on the playground behind me, community volunteers from the Growhaus put together school supplies for the elementary school, and women walked around the park area. As the Zumba class finished, I saw the first resident walk toward me to begin her interview. Among other topics, we discussed, in admittedly broken Spanish, the highway construction near the school as well as how much she enjoyed being at the park and partaking in their available activities. From the archives, I knew the neighborhood's history of school closures, the battles against I-70s initial construction, and the ongoing history of factories contaminating the neighborhood's soil, resulting in a settlement that helped revamp one of the neighborhood parks.

In one single moment, I experienced and sat with multiple ongoing stories-so-far. As the community built boxes of school supplies, I experienced the resident's stories regarding her own love for the community, specifically the proud Hispanic community that she built through the

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Swansea Elementary school. As she expressed her fear that the I-70 construction was going to destroy the Elementary school, the archives showcased this very possibility given developers' history of closing Elyria Elementary School. My own body sat with these stories as children played in the park behind me. I heard their joyful screams and felt wooshes of air as they chased each other. In this moment, I sat with multiple ongoing stories-so-far. Did this moment bring forward all of space's complexity? Of course not. But that moment brought forward much of my analysis of the mural at Swansea Elementary School.

As a concept, rhetorical infrastructures is rooted in acknowledging the open multiplicity of space while examining how common topoi direct, arrange, and negotiate this openness to create a particular urban identity. To grasp rhetoric's influence in crafting a certain spatial politics rhetoric critics must utilize methods that grasp notions of the past and ongoing experiences of the present in the pursuit of imagining potential futures. Spatial rhetorical criticism, archival research, and qualitative interviews are useful methodologies to pursue as the critic examines rhetorical infrastructures. Although each chapter has multiple methodological facets, I utilize different combinations of these three methods for each chapter.

<center>Spatial Rhetorical Criticism</center>

As a part of the early scholarship on studying space/place, Carole Blair provided six parables for critics to consider as they moved from the purely symbolic and textual to the material, symbolic, and embodied artifacts of space. Of these, "being there" became an influential prong for future scholars to begin theorizing as a method for analyzing space and place.[99] In these theorizations, critics point to the importance of immersing oneself in the experience of and with space.[100] Rather than look to texts about space or only pursue a symbolic reading of space, critics point to the embodied and material experiences of space as a significant

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dimension of spatial rhetorics.[101] As scholars continue to take their body as critics and space's

embodiment seriously, critics have also expanded what encompasses the experience of space to

draw scholarly attention to other facets of the spatial experience like movement, rhythms,

materials, materiality, senses, sounds, and affect.[102] Attuned to how these dimensions of space

impact people's ways of being and being with others, the critic's body is well-suited to register

and analyze space's rhetorical workings.

Of course, to experience space as embodied is to also experience space as embodied with

others. Contextualized within even larger sets of discourses and relations, the individual body

cannot be the only site through which we understand space. As such, a critic's embodied

experience must undergo "movement from attending to [their] embodied experience of the places

out to discursive, cultural, and material formations; movement from the present of the spaces into

traces of its past."[103] Experiencing space with others is also grounded in the power relations

within our embodied experiences. Throughout this dissertation, I utilize my own embodied

experiences in each of the spaces I examine as a grounding methodological approach. To secure

such a movement out into the multiplicities of the space, I also utilize archival research and

qualitative approaches.

<div align="center">Archival Research</div>

Since my dissertation covers Denver's development over the last 70 years, a large portion

of my research consists of archival research, which helps collect artifacts and details of the past

to (re)construct a lineage of urban development. In archival studies, scholars have criticized the

idea that the archives are the arbiter of the truth of the past and container of history, which has

produced different methodological concerns and questions within archival research.[104] In the last

twenty years, rhetoric scholars, specifically, have made a (re)turn to the archives that asks

scholars to critically navigate and analyze how archives serve to activate or erase particular pasts.[105] Stemming out of Charles Morris' assertion that "the archive significantly influences what we are able to study, to say, and to teach about rhetorical history, and what we do, as rhetors, with its holdings in our scholarship, in our classrooms, and in the streets," archival methods have come to the fore as a critical site of investigation.[106]

In this proclaimed (re)turn, scholars attended to the archives as a space of invention, preferred memory, terministic screens, and, above all, a site of power.[107] Understanding the archives as a rhetorical site in and of itself centers archival research within a critical lens that constantly questions how, why, and to what consequence are there presences and absences in the constructed historical record. By beginning with this critical stance, scholars are also asked to consider the process of production, read between the lines in the historical account, and search for traces of marginalized identities and voices.[108] Rather than attempt to reconstruct a history of Denver through archival information, I take these critical stances to read into and against the grain of the archival collections that produce Denver.[109] These collections represent ongoing stories-so-far and inject trajectories into spaces. My job as the critic is to read these trajectories into the space as a way to examine how and if urban users attend to the multiple pasts of a space. My final approach brings personal experience into the fold to more fully understand the relationship between space and its past, present, and future. To do so, I turn to two different qualitative approaches—mental mapping and photovoice.

Qualitative Methods

Within rhetoric of space and place, there has been an increased effort to bridge rhetorical criticism with qualitative methods as a part of analyzing *in situ* practices and performances.[110] As a part of analyzing lived rhetorics, more and more rhetoricians are turning to interviews,

ethnography, and performance to analyze and participate in different *in situ* rhetorics.[111] The turn

to live rhetorics opened rhetorical criticism to "cultural processes and meaning systems,

dynamics of space/place, body knowledge, embodiment, and the rhetorics of marginalized and

excluded groups [which] are often difficult to access through texts."[112] Given that one of my

research questions revolves around the relationship between community practices and urban

identity, it is important to understand the residents' experiences, opinions, and sense of their

neighborhood from their own point of view. Utilizing interviews, which asks participants "to

speak of and for themselves," helps provide insight into how communities and residents

negotiate the everyday manifestations of Denver's rhetorical infrastructures.[113] While I explain

the methodological approaches I take more fully in the analysis chapters, I utilize two different

qualitative interview methodologies throughout this chapter: mental mapping and photovoice.

Mental Mapping

Mental Mapping is a visually oriented qualitative method that helps examine the

relationship that people have with physical spaces like the city.[114] Since its initial introduction

within urban studies, mental mapping has become a methodology that centralizes the

participant's ability to construct their own image and understanding of their physical spaces.[115]

As a bottom-up approach, mental maps ask those experiencing the process of change to become

the mapper of their place which provides participants agency to imagine, construct, and frame

their personal experiences as an essential part in the production of the neighborhood map.[116]

Additionally, the knowledge and experiences of the residents offer the possibility to "uncover

new dimensions of meanings and to highlight previously unseen impacts of the changes

occurring in a place."[117] As a methodology, mental mapping brings visual and kinesthetic

options into the interview to allow residents an opportunity to draw and discuss the emotional,

social, cultural, and physical dimensions of the neighborhood that may be lost to a purely oral form of interviews.[118] In so doing, the residents' mental maps create multiple, layered visualizations of residents' sense of place for urban developers and public audiences.[119] In chapter 4, I utilize this method to create a visual understanding of how residents imagine their neighborhood in comparison to maps created by urban planners.

Photovoice

Photovoice as a methodology is a participatory action-oriented research method typically used within marginalized communities.[120] Photovoice asks participants to take photographs of their everyday life across a period of time. After they take the photographs, the participants discuss the photographs with the researcher to share stories, experiences, and reasonings behind each photo. Through these photos and interviews, this methodology seeks to enable people to document and discuss their everyday community experiences.[121] Throughout the photovoice project, researchers encourage participants to utilize the photographs as a means to reflect on and communicate their community and culture while exposing social problems.[122] As an embodied performance, taking photographs engages the participants as observers of their own space and foregrounds their everyday life as a significant artifact of knowledge. Grounding the interviews through the participants' images then gives agency to the participants as their photos become devices to frame and visualize their experiences as the foundational perspective on their community spaces. I turn to photovoice in my final analysis chapter to understand how residents built bottom-up infrastructures through their negotiations of everyday life.

To demonstrate how rhetorical infrastructures make symbolic and material claims in and to space, I utilize these various methodologies throughout the next three chapters. While I use different combinations of methods throughout the next three chapters, the grounding concept

guiding my analysis is rhetorical infrastructures. As I defined in this chapter, rhetorical infrastructures, as a concept, calls on scholars to analyze how urban developers and users draw on common topoi to pursue a spatial politics. These spatial politics order the open, heterogenous, and interrelational ongoing stories-so-far that make up space into particular versions of urban identity. By directing the multiplicitous trajectories of space into a spatial story; arranging relationalities to form new configurations of place; and negotiating the politics of place to offer alternative routes, rhetorical infrastructures invite a dominate, yet contested urban identity. Built into the material and symbolic landscape and enacted through everyday performances, memory, imagination, and vernacular are specific rhetorical performances that urge us to see, act, and be differently as we sculpt our urban way of life. I begin the analysis with memory as a guiding force in developing Denver's spatial story and geography of action.

Endnotes

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Frontier Grit and Western Expansion: Analyzing Memory as a Rhetorical Infrastructure

In the mid-1960s, the Skyline Urban Renewal plan was set to raze nearly thirty blocks of Downtown Denver "all in the name of progress."[1] The plan's goal was to "give Denver the modern city, the skyline that [Denver planners] wanted to have as a regional and emerging national city."[2] Destroying Denver's old skid row sector to make room for the modern city was the driving force for city planners and Denver voters who approved the plan. By the mid-1970s, this promise for the modern future was paved over as sprawling parking lots.[3] Over fifty years later, this project is still criticized for gutting the city's soul and displacing large portions of people.[4] With preservationists' efforts to push against the mass removal of Denver's historical buildings, there were a select few buildings and areas that remained intact despite popular desires to erase the downtown area's past. In this battle over memory, it is unsurprising that Denver marked out its first historic district, Larimer Square. Sitting within the parameters of the Skyline project, Larimer Square came to represent the past that was very nearly destroyed.

Settled in 1858 by William Larimer, Larimer Square is a nestled block of cafes, restaurants, and boutiques in central Downtown Denver with over 150 years of financial, social, and cultural fluctuations embedded into its contours.[5] As the initial town center, Larimer Street began as an integral space for the development of Denver. Since its founding, however, the street transitioned from Denver's thriving city center, through prohibition-era bar scene, to skid row scourge. After facing destruction as a part of the Skyline Urban Renewal project, Dana Crawford, an urban preservationist, launched a campaign to save and rejuvenate one block of Larimer Street into Larimer Square.[6] After Larimer Square, Crawford utilized the momentum of the Square's success to expand her scope of preservation into surrounding areas like Union

Station and Lower Downtown Denver (LODO).[7] Now, Larimer Square and these neighboring areas are among the top tourist attractions within Denver, and Larimer Street reclaimed its status as an integral civic center for Denver.[8] From this controversial moment in Denver's history, developers expanded their sights beyond creating Denver's bright new future and began looking back towards memory as a philosophy for development.

In urban landscapes, memory evokes a sense of the city's identity and urges people to interact with and through public memory.[9] As a "performative rhetoric,"[10] engagement with these sites can range from different audience interpretations, embodied participation with the site, or an active performance of and with the site.[11] While these sites can offer resistive potentialities to (re)make the past and cultivate polysemous readings and multiplicitous experiences of the city, there are plenty of cases where memory elides particular histories to uphold performances of dominant narratives.[12] Analyzing specific areas within the urban landscape, critics have unearthed important rhetorical devices used to highlight these dominant narratives into the sites' public memory. Discourses of nostalgia, selective amnesia, authenticity, and tourism fashion a singular spatial history of a place, which often forgets or contains the multiple experiences that did and do inhabit the city.[13] While this scholarship untangles memory's rhetoricity within a specific area, memory's productive influence reaches beyond the neighborhood or tourist district. Instead, the "manufactured version of the city that emerges from fragments of promotional materials, place narratives, and built environments" cuts a path for the city's future trajectory.[14] This chapter focuses on how rhetoric manufactures an urban identity around particular narratives and spatial stories to cultivate a future repertoire for urban development. In short, I examine memory as a rhetorical infrastructure.

As a rhetorical infrastructure, how the past is maintained and/or tamed through memory directs "an intricate play between the infrastructural aesthetic, social praxis, and collective organization shaping the culture of the commons."[15] Throughout this chapter, I trace how urban development practices utilize rhetoric to emphasize certain memories of a space's accrued past as the overarching sense of place in everyday sites like Larimer Square. Guiding how or if people exist with the multiple pasts layered into the space, memory's rhetorical instantiations craft the city's spatial story and subsequent geographies of action into an infrastructure from which urban identity builds upon and supports as the taken-for-granted urban landscape. Specifically, I argue that, as a rhetorical infrastructure, memory in Larimer Square guides Denver's spatial story and urban identity toward a geography of frontier expansion and white exceptionalism.

To do so, this chapter proceeds in three sections. First, I outline how memory, as a rhetorical infrastructure, makes legible certain pasts as a part of the place, directs urban practices toward ways of being with these pasts, constructs a spatial story for future geographies of action, and builds a repertoire for future development. Second, I analyze the discourse of frontier grit as a rhetorical device that directs Larimer Square's preservation and restoration in the early and ongoing production of Denver's urban identity. Third, I underscore what political possibilities can emerge when places acknowledge, account for, and give credence to the multiplicitous pasts that reside within space.

Memory as Rhetorical Infrastructure

Memory, within rhetoric, is often understood as a contested construction of a particular history that is activated by present anxieties, shared among senses of communal belonging, and animated/materialized by affective and material/symbolic supports.[16] As a partisan and partial

practice, the rhetoric of memory serves as an agent "*to stabilize the meaning of particular envelopes of space-time.*"[17] By constructing the space's past within a particular set of truths, values, and actions, memory highlights specific past trajectories to develop a singular grammar. Through this grammar, people carve out performances of themselves in the present and imagine future possibilities.[18] Throughout this section, I demonstrate how rhetoric, through memory, serves as an infrastructure that functions in four ways to direct paths for developing and maintaining a particular urban identity into everyday practices and ongoing development projects. First, sculpted through rhetoric, memory serves as a mechanism to pause space into place by funneling multiple pasts into a legible set of material and symbolic performances. Second, through this legibility, memory as a rhetorical infrastructure directs how we come to affectively embody and exist with the still present, albeit potentially shrouded, pasts that remain a part of the city's identity. Third, by making legible certain pasts while directing people's existence with other pasts, memory develops a spatial story for the urban landscape that guides city-goers' present and future geographies of action. Fourth, as these spatial stories continue to get reiterated through everyday practices they begin to build a repertoire for future development planners to utilize.

First, through symbolic and material appeals to memory, rhetoric pauses space's heterogenous ongoing stories-so-far to amplify particular trajectories as an identity of place. Those paused trajectories only offer a partial understanding and enactment of the space's possibility. Spaces like Larimer Square are constructed through a temporal movement of ongoing trajectories rather than a cross-section of static histories.[19] These ongoing experiences are layered into space, but through a clash of trajectories we give presence to some of the multiplicities over others shifting space to place. As Yi-Fu Tuan explicates, "if we think of space as that which

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allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place."[20] In these pauses, politics can catch space's moving trajectories giving weight to some pasts, relations, and stories over others.[21] Through appeals to memory, rhetoric has the potential to call forth particular memories layered within space, compose them to be legible in the spatial story, and fasten certain memories as the path for future spatial trajectories.[22]

These appeals to pause space into place occur in and through memory's symbolic and material instantiations within a place. Symbols and material work together to promote certain forms of remembering the past that forefront some events and values while eliding others.[23] Mediated representations like novels, movies, images, or news articles create imagined expectations that we inflect into spatial practice.[24] Additionally, symbols within the space as well as the built environment as a symbol itself signify its function to people and influence their behavior.[25] These functions become more engrained into the place's materiality as memory builds upon or into a spatial genre like that of a historic district's generic style for urban areas. The material layers highlighted within a paused place offer spaces of attention for people to embody and navigate the place's symbolically presented and materially instantiated memory.

While the materiality of the place—the stone, brick, paint, and so on—itself not only invites us to attend to the funneled pasts within the place, the materials themselves remember the still ongoing pasts within the space's contours. John Dorst argues, "this view of materiality 'activates' objects as potentially full participants in the production of culture, not merely products or reflections of it."[26] In a space with a long and heterogeneous history, the objects that remain recollect the past as a continued presence within the space. Especially within historic districts, where the buildings, architecture, and materials are vehicles for authenticity, materiality

serves as a vessel of the accrued pasts within the space. By understanding matter as a remembering agent, scholars can examine how the materiality of space and our material enactments of the space participate in the production of its memory.

Through materiality, the rhetoric of space can also highlight only portions of the past as the materials offer layered representations of the many pasts in a space through memory. Practices of restoration, for example, recasts the already present spatial material to create a façade that functions as a textual and material palimpsest.[27] These palimpsests, as Joan Faber McAllister argues, differentially present the influences and lineages of different cultures, politics, and histories.[28] The layered cultural encounters remembered into or made visible within the place present "directional logics that continue to govern narratives of place and of identity."[29] While still present, the accrued pasts of space are painted over, restored into singular narratives, or refigured into a legible public memory. Primed by the symbolically and materially instantiated memories, particular pasts are made legible as a part of the place and inflect a particular narrative of the past into a recognizable shared social memory.[30] Bringing forward and urging enactments of a version of public memory, the symbolic and material rhetoric of the place guides people to experience the ongoing past trajectories through different intensities.

Second, by presenting space's multiple pasts through varying intensities, memory urges people to relate with and within the paused place through embodied and affective enactments. From constructing the body into the performance of the place's memory, inviting ways of looking, prompting enactments, and structuring embodied rhythms, the material dimensions of a place of public memory initiates the body into and compels movements of remembering.[31] Guiding our bodies within and through the potential pasts, these memory places create performances of attention where patron's awareness and enactment of certain narratives pause

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the past's multiplicitous trajectories into memory and space into place.[32] Public memory serves

to channel the past as a "historical interpretation for the purposes of making public argument."[33]

As a rhetorical infrastructure, memory presents which pasts are easily available for public

engagement and guides people's interpretations through embodied enactments. Especially within

everyday places like the city street or main square, the ways in which memory pulls our

embodied performances into a particular interpretation of the past occurs, in large part, through

affect.

      Considering that "cities may be seen as roiling maelstroms of affect," it is important to

consider how memory produces different affective intensities that guide how everyday city-goers

encounter and embody the presented pasts.[34] Affect is defined as an unqualified embodied

reaction. Upon qualification, affect turns into emotion.[35] Within spaces, affect informs our

embodied and sensorial navigation of the flurry of different intensities to establish a "sense of

place" and "a shared ground from which subjective states and their attendant feelings and

emotions emerge."[36] Further, affect can be designed into spaces creating "complex affective

states of becoming, 'regimes of feeling'" that inform and persuade our interactions within the

space.[37] In memory sites, how the past is collected and exhibited exerts influence on the affective

intensity and embodied reactions within people's urban experiences.[38]

      Within the maelstrom of affects, the urban landscape hosts an array of potential responses

to the heterogenous ongoing stories-so-far. As the multiple pasts continue to haunt the space,

how people exist with the "gaps, seething absences, and muted presences" creates the "political

and affective modalities by which we gain access to the facticity of constructed power."[39] By

inviting affective attachments to and embodiments of particular public memories, rhetoric

produces what Ash Amin calls an infra-being or a sense of place, which guides "the residents'

experience of living in the settlement, their feelings and obligations towards each other, their attachment and responsibility towards shared public spaces, their expectations from the commons."[40] Public memory, through its material and symbolic instantiations, directs which stories gain resonance and steers, through embodied and affective attachments, how people differently engage with memories that sculpt the site's spatial story.

Third, showcasing only a portion of the multiplicitous past amplifies an overarching spatial story and geography of action. These spatial stories serve greater purposes than providing a narrative of the space's past. Rather, as Michel De Certeau contends, "they traverse and organize places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. They are spatial trajectories."[41] Connected to the concept of *metaphorai,* or transportation, De Certeau argues that spatial stories, or our everyday "*narrative actions*," organize where and how we participate in space.[42] These geographies of action accrue across stories to then create commonplaces of order, or expectations of traversing our everyday places. As spaces accrue layers of enactments and expectations, the spatial story highlights particular fragments as geographies of action.[43] Think, for example, about asking where the bathroom is in a restaurant. When someone gives directions, they are presenting a narrative of action ("go to the door at the end of the hallway" suggests that we have to walk down a hallway). As we get directions more often, we can begin to expect that restaurant bathrooms tend to be down hallways and away from the dining area. A narrative about locating a bathroom may seem merely descriptive, but each story "'is a culturally creative act' [that]… has distributive power and performative force."[44] The spatial story amplifies different fragments of the past as geographies of action for how we come to understand, enact, and build places.

Fourth, these spatial stories carry forward as repertoires for future development. In urban development, the city grounds its projects in spatial narratives that tell the story of the city's identity and how sites progress across time. Through a bricolage of fragments, spatial stories link together past uses, inhabitants, and performances to mark out the boundaries of place and its future potential. As urban development projects turn to infrastructure to meld the city's varied history and memory into its everydayness, the visible spatial story suffuses into a taken-for-granted genre for building the urban landscape.[45] Rhetorical appeals and performances of memory serves an inventive function in the present and future development of the city. For example, Mary Triece demonstrates the function of a neoliberalized memory that focuses on individual heroes who helped city growth, a nostalgia for the good-ole-(white)-days, and selective forgetting of the city's racial history. She argues that Detroit silences communities of color while targeting their neighborhoods as "ripe for renewal."[46] This case study demonstrates how the process of memory and forgetting produces justifications for future processes of urban development. Built into the environment, the partial memories and spatial story becomes an infrastructure that makes certain ways of being and sense of place visible as a repertoire for future development projects.

While urged by rhetorical invocations of symbolic and material memory that give resonance to certain memories over others, ultimately space is made up of multiple stories-so-far. This is to say that Larimer Square is made up and infused with various, still influential, pasts and experiences that layer into the symbolic, material, embodied, and affective dimensions of the space. Through our daily enactments of these stories, we re-tread and entrench certain memories while gliding past or eliding others. As a rhetorical infrastructure, these practices pause the openness of space into a spatial story. The geography of action presented through these worn and

entrenched narratives develops as an urban identity and guides people's ways of inhabiting the space. Which stories, practices, and pasts become a part of urban identity is deeply political. The process of forgetting or unwillingness to acknowledge the oppressive contours imbedded in the space's trajectories hinders the ability to reckon with these pasts and productively build anew.

Larimer Square is a space with over 150 years of ongoing stories and many of these trajectories shape a landscape of whiteness and white supremacy. Yet, the material and symbolic textures that construct the identity of place smooth out these pasts to present the frontier grit of the American West. Specifically, I argue that through memories of frontier grit, Larimer Square constructs an infrastructure of Denver's spatial story that guides everyday practices and development toward a geography of frontier expansion and white exceptionalism. Before analyzing how memory serves to instantiate the rhetorical infrastructures of expansion and whiteness it is important to briefly underscore Larimer Square's oft-recited historical narrative. While this narrative serves as my grounding framework of the place's public memory, throughout my analysis I read the less resonant and papered over pasts into the space's material and symbolic contours to demonstrate how memory serves to guide and direct spatial experiences towards a particular narrative of urban identity.

The Story of Larimer Square

As a space designated as historical and formed through its history, there are markers of its past that have particular intensities in the design and production of Larimer Square. While these do not inform all of our interactions in the space, they serve as a loose floorplan for tracing the memories seated in the rhetorical infrastructures of Larimer Square's spatial story and urban identity. In 1858, William F. Larimer founded Denver City, and named the main thoroughfare after himself, Larimer Street.[47] Within the wave of the gold rush, Larimer joined the process of

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further westward expansion, where people laid claim to land in Colorado to build the territory's infrastructure. Near the Platte River, Denver City, and Larimer Street specifically, was a prime place to begin establishing Denver as the main hub for gold miners.[48] Beginning under the practice of expansion, Larimer Street attracted business owners looking to explore the merits of the newly thriving west. Consequently, majority of the commercial shops and resting areas culminated on the main intersections of Larimer Street and 15th street and during the 1860s and 70s important businesses and civic institutions lined the street, further engraining Larimer Street into Denver's political, cultural, and economic landscape.[49]

After the silver crash and economic panic of 1893, however, majority of the businesses on Larimer Street either shut down or moved to the more prosperous 16th street area in Denver. By the early 1900s, Larimer Street became a destitute region where bars, liquor stores, and cheap hotels replaced the once flourishing up-scale businesses, marking the street as a skid row.[50] It wasn't until the 1920s with the passage of prohibition that Larimer Square began to have a renewed stream of commerce. This commerce, however, continued to reflect its place as skid row, as its bars were closed only to re-open as speakeasies. Fixing itself as a space of outlaws, the new flux in capital did not re-establish Larimer Square to its original status as an urban center. Instead, at the end of prohibition, the speakeasies turned into flophouses and local hangouts for derelicts and drug addicts.[51]

As a result, the Denver Skyline Renewal Project in the 1960s trained its sights on demolishing Larimer Square to rebuild.[52] Yet, Dana Crawford's efforts to preserve Larimer Square succeeded. Unlike previous preservation movements founded by historic associations or government programs, Larimer Square began as a coalition of private businesses explicitly aiming to draw from history to increase profit.[53] Under this guise, Larimer Square began to

transform its identity as skid row into a commercial and tourist center. Instituting strict codes and regulations for businesses, Larimer Square began with big box stores and then moved into smaller high-end retail stores seen today.[54] As businesses move in and out of the space, the version of commercial district shifts, but Larimer Square has secured its status as a space of consumption and top tourist site in Denver. While this is a truncated and streamlined historical retelling of Larimer Square's past, it is the oft-recounted narrative across a multitude of news articles, tourist pamphlets, and historical reference materials discussing the Square.[55] In the next section, I analyze how this story also creates a well-worn everyday experience within the Square itself while also reading less recited, but still influential past narratives that make up the space.

Larimer Square's Memory as Rhetorical Infrastructure

Larimer Square, and its enduring presence in the face of urban renewal's wrecking ball, marked the historic district as a key exception within the Skyline Urban Renewal Project. Indeed, the mayor at the time of the Skyline Urban Renewal project, Mayor Tom Currigan, "hailed the development and called for an extension of the restoration approach to the entire lower downtown area."[56] This call has since been answered with the restoration of Lower Downtown into the contemporary LoDo neighborhood replete with the preserved 16th street mall and Union Station. This section asks, which pasts, stories, and layers prevail in Larimer Square's lingering influence as an exceptional site through which Denver based its future expansion? The discourse of frontier origins and grit is a key vehicle for symbolic, material, and embodied stories and repertoires of exceptional expansion that continue to flourish within Denver's ongoing development. Throughout this section, I analyze Larimer Square, its development processes, and the memories which have become attached to these processes as a central character in Denver's spatial story. Specifically, I argue that Larimer Square draws on memories seated within

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developmental memories of founding, restoration, and growth to create a spatial story where rhetoric of frontier grit pauses the Square into an identity of pioneering exploration, guides people's ways of being within the multiple pasts through white exceptionalism, and develops a repertoire of unfettered frontier expansion as a geography of action.

Throughout this analysis, I focus on the material and value-oriented frameworks of grit, which, through its spatial manifestations, propels and directs particular memories as a rhetorical infrastructure for Denver development. In its material form, grit relates in function and form to dirt, which has deep-cultural ties to mechanisms of order and disorder. The anthropologist, Mary Douglas, describes the function of dirt "as essentially disorder. There is no such thing as absolute dirt: it exists in the eye of the beholder… Dirt offends against order. Illuminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organise the environment."[57] The relationship between what memories of dirt or grit remains materially emboldened in a space and what is cleaned away showcases how rhetoric of grit organizes the environment around particular memories of order and disorder. As a form, grit is also the particulates that shed from a larger rock. The particulates, while separated are still matter that once made up the rock, but the ways in which it transforms creates an entirely different structure, size, and presence in the world. As a rhetoric, the material form of grit serves as a metaphor for the separated trajectories that make up space. The forms and presence that stories take remakes themselves into place. Materially, grit is also a unit to analyze as a part of spaces' rhetoric. The stray particulates in an alley or on a building produce different intensities and affects for patrons that inform their experiences of place.

Manifesting as values, grit refers to the capacity for perseverance to achieve difficult, long-term goals.[58] Given the frontier's lineage of wilderness, taming the land, and daring spirit,

grit's link to perseverance and tenacity has been taken up as a common trope of the frontier West mythology and media representation.[59] Through Denver's development, the use of grit speaks to the materials that make up these spaces, the types of values embedded into the spatial story, as well as the erosion of unpleasant memories that diverge from or endanger whiteness in the city.

<div align="center">Founding Gritty Origins as Pioneering the Frontier</div>

Larimer Square as a site of memory was designated a historic district because it demonstrated an aesthetic of Denver's culture, specifically a frontier aesthetic. In fact, one of the most persuasive tactics that preservationists like Dana Crawford used to compel Denver officials to preserve rather than destroy the Square was to link the site to Denver's frontier heritage.[60] Drawing upon fears that Denver would lose its individual identity, Crawford commonly characterized Larimer Square as "the most famous street in the West" and painted the space as a symbol of Denver's frontier past.[61] Larimer Square's beginnings as a historic district rested on its connection to the frontier West as a defining and unique characteristic for Denver. To become a historic district, the Larimer Square Business Associates drew on the space's first recorded history as the birth site of Denver.[62] Turning to the memory of white settler's founding, Larimer Square highlights the grit of the pioneering spirit while de-materializing and re-envisioning indigenous roots through moments of preserving peace.

Larimer Square "began with the jumped claim established in the spring of 1858 by General William E. Larimer, Jr. who founded 'Denver City' with four cabins, one on each corner at the intersection of Larimer and Fifteenth Streets."[63] The jumped claim refers to William Larimer beating the St. Charles company who initially claimed the land, but returned to Leavenworth during the Winter to purchase and sign for the land. Larimer's determination to own this land and make it a frontier hub surfaced in the rapid construction of buildings in the

area to secure their claim for Denver's settlement. Within a year of Larimer's claim, settlers built the first log cabin, post office, grocery store, and city hall.[64] William Larimer's founding grounds the Square's spatial story within a narrative of gritty determination to secure Denver's claims and subsequent success by whatever means possible.

Materially, Larimer Square guides tourists through this series of events in the first stop of the walking tour in front of the Granite Building, "the birthplace of Denver."[65] Located at the site of Larimer's first log cabin, it is no surprise that the tour begins in front of a plaque with an etching of the Larimer's log cabin entitled "Denver's first log cabin."[66] Placed next to the door entrance, the plaque rests in a potential performance of attention where patrons are primed by the historical significance of the location before entering the Granite building. During the summer months, walking tours that stop here first prompt non-tour patrons to acknowledge a public and publicized portion of the Square's history as large groups converge on the corner to hear about the first log cabin. In the tour, guides first describe the two earlier settler camps, the Russell and St. Charles camp, but swiftly move past this moment to discuss what materialized in the space as a result of this jumped claim—the later creation of Denver city.

Able to connect the dots between the first log cabin and what is now Tom's Urban, patrons are able to construct themselves into a particular spatial narrative of the area's development. In comparison to the tallest building ever built within Larimer Square, the tour's stop in front of a log cabin plaque allows patrons to visually connect a narrative of progress into the place's material development. As one stands in front of the marked location of the log cabin, they merely have to look up to see the four story Granite building. That movement upward links Larimer's claim to the land as a starting point for Denver's expansion up and out. There are material cues like plaques or tours throughout the Square that offer glimpses into the area's past.

As visitors engage with these cues, they bring those pasts into their understanding and performance of the area's contemporary moment. William Larimer's settlement is visually, materially, and symbolically told as a story of grit and progress. As patron's enter Tom's Cabin to get a drink or see a Comedy Works performance in the Granite Building, they are able to experience the entertaining results of the jumped claim that founded Denver.

The Larimer Square website also tells the story of the jumped claim as the start of their historical timeline.[67] Of course, the deeper jumped claim in Larimer Square comes from taking land from the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes.[68] The site briefly acknowledges the indigenous origins, but disconnects and expels these roots from the land and Larimer Square's material place. To showcase the indigenous pasts in Larimer Square, their official website posted an artistic rendering from the archives of an Arapaho settlement with this caption: "As the photo above shows, southern Arapahoe initially shared the site of Denver with pale-faced newcomers."[69] The photograph sits next to a description of the year 1861, when "Denver, then known as Denver City, is officially chartered and Larimer Street becomes the city's main street."[70]

Another key event of 1861 was the Treaty of Fort Wise, which forced both the Arapaho and Cheyenne tribes to relinquish their land—including the land where Denver was settled—and re-settle outside of a "reservation on the Arkansas River west of Fort Wise (later Fort Lyon)."[71] Linking Colorado's territorialization to a photo of indigenous people settled on their land reframes the narrative as a peaceful transfer of land between white settlers and the Arapaho and Cheyenne tribes. The photograph's inclusion demonstrates the Square's acknowledgment of a colonial past in the space, yet it is detached and decontextualized from the material space. As people are invited to pause at the plaques and displays commemorating white settlement as a

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founding history, the place presents the possibility to materially interact and add these moments into their spatial story. With the de-materialized indigenous origins, the memory of founding dislocates indigenous roots from the spatial experience creating a geography of erasure into the place's everyday practice.

While the Square does not offer a material practice to engage with indigenous origins in the space, Larimer Square does present a portion of this history that aligns indigenous pasts with the perseverance and grit to maintain peace. The Square does so through its visual representation of the place's frontier past in a mural painted above one of the most eye-drawing areas in Larimer Square—the Kettle Arcade Building (figure 1). The mural displays four scenes of Larimer Square's origin history atop sporadically spaced clouds: Arapahoe Chief Hosa (Little Raven), Annie Oakley, William Larimer, and the first mayor of Denver sitting with the notorious con-man Soapy Smith.[72] Replete with symbols of the visions of the frontier West—indigenous people, horses, a Yankee uniform, mountains, and tents—the mural builds a representative amalgamation of figures who showcase multiple stories of grit. Annie Oakley, for example, was a popular markswoman and sharpshooter in the Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. As a woman, she had to carve out a space in the men-dominated sphere of hunting a rifle-shooting and is known as an advocate for women's rights.[73] Through her perseverance and talent she became a leading act in the Wild West Show and gained national popularity. Since she is not associated with Denver's history, her placement is especially interesting as a testament to the Square's values towards grit.[74] She is then joined by more institutional actors like William Larimer and the first mayor of Denver, Robert Speer, who are represented as influential land-tamers in creating Denver. The mural forefronts mastery of the West and denotes success through a blend

of institutional development with individual moxy. In short, the mural overarchingly garners

sentiments and values of the frontier West as mastering the Wild West.

Figure 1: Mural at the Kettle Arcade. The figures in order from front to back are: Arapahoe Chief Hosa, Annie Oakley, William Larimer, and Notorious conman, Soapy Smith sitting with Denver Mayor Robert Speer. Photograph taken by Jordin Clark.

The mural begins with Arapaho Chief Hosa. As each of these figures denotes a stage

within the frontier history of the West generally and Larimer Square specifically, placing Chief

Hosa as the first figure develops an accurate timeline of the space's indigenous beginnings. The

inclusion of Chief Hosa is somewhat unsurprising since his life retains the spirit of perseverance

in the face of challenges. Hosa was known for his desire to make peace with the white settlers

even hosting a council with the local settlers in Denver and Auraria to find a way to coexist.[75] It

is his legacy of peace that symbolically connects with the mural. As the walking tour describes

his presence on the mural, he "was a chief of the Native American Arapahoe tribe who learned to communicate with the white man to promote peace."[76] Portraying Chief Hosa through his legacy of peace attaches his role in the frontier grit that founded Larimer Square through his dedication to preserving harmony within the white settlement.

Of course, peace amongst the settlers took form in taking land from the two tribes, continued deceit, and eventually massacring 150 Arapahoe and Cheyenne people in the Sand Creek Massacre.[77] The historic district registration form links itself to this massacre through their insertion of John M. Chivington, "a military fanatic who acted as the hero in the... Sand Creek Massacre," as an influential historic figure for the site.[78] The acknowledgment of Larimer Square's connection to the Sand Creek Massacre exists within the archives, but never fully emerges in the symbolic representation of Chief Hosa. Instead, the Square materially paints into the place a memory of the amicable Chief Hosa, whose arms are open to welcome the visitors entering the space. The placement of the Chief alongside the other figures who mastered the Wild West presents a smooth timeline wherein Chief Hosa, with open arms, sits amongst those who displaced and massacred his people. Acknowledging Hosa as a part of the Square's historical past opens the possibility to engage with and bear witness to the atrocities committed within these spaces, but patrons are only given a brief glimpse of this indigenous past as they continue their walk through the Kettle Arcade in the midst of some of the frontier pioneers.

Primed by the symbolic story of white settlement, patrons' embodied traversal through the Kettle Arcade materializes the values of pioneering as the place offers an act of discovery. Originally a butcher shop, the first floor of the Kettle Building was gutted in 1990 to build a pathway to a courtyard.[79] Now a red steeled archway with a gold-plated sign reading "Kettle Arcade," the renovated building calls patrons' attention to an arched crossing leading into an

unknown space. Not visible from the sidewalk, the courtyard on the other side of the crossing becomes a space to discover. The crossing, within which we must navigate to uncover the unknown, bears little resemblance to the natural aesthetic outside its borders and instead evokes styles representative of the Italian Renaissance. The sidewalk smooths out in a tiled diagonal pattern, the light fixtures shift from lampposts to open gauntlets exuding flame-like light, and the ceiling displays the prominent mural calling forth aesthetics similar to the Sistine Chapel. Unbeknownst to the patrons, these stylistic shifts serve to frame their entrance into an Italian-themed courtyard. The corridor, and its seemingly discordant aesthetic, provides an initial conceptual framework for how to explore the courtyard, a framework beset with Western expansionism. Taking on these invitations patrons can embody the frontier pioneering ways as they traverse the Kettle Arcade, discovering a courtyard not visible from the street. The entryway gate and the frontier mural direct the Square's spatial story toward frontier exploration and expansion. As patrons explore the Kettle Arcade on their way to dinner they are urged to perform and embody these stories into their own exploration of the Square.

Larimer Square roots its origins in the grit of William Larimer to develop Denver's first log cabin that became a thriving town center. If grit is the capacity for perseverance to achieve difficult, long-term goals, then Larimer Square—after facing floods, fires, economic downturn, and near demolition—is a testament to the space's long-term perseverance to transition from a log cabin to a top touristic district.[80] Written and materialized into the place are moments of perseverance attached to pioneering, expansion, and frontier grit, which builds a rhetorical infrastructure of frontier expansion as enduring long-term goals for Denver's urban identity. One narrative of grit that is papered over or re-envisioned in this story is the required tenacity and perseverance for the Arapahoe and Cheyenne tribes.[81] Chief Hosa's life is a tribute to the grit of

his perseverance toward peace in the face of white settler's continuous violence and oppression. Framing William Larimer's grit as the place's spatial story with little concern for the Arapaho and Cheyenne tribes' necessary and continued fortitude to survive presents visitors with a whitewashed memory of the Square's founding. Embodying this history through the exploration of Larimer Square's enclaves re-entrenches expansionist practices into people's present everyday encounters.

<center>"Keep it Gritty": Restoring Urban Whiteness</center>

After the white settlement of the space, Larimer Square faced an economic downturn that transformed the area's civic center identity into a long-standing reputation as Denver's skid row. Rather than dismiss this reputation, Dana Crawford wanted to "keep it gritty" as the restoration turned toward parts of the skid row day as an essential factor that "keeps the right mix of people coming in."[82] In order to become a historic district, the overall structure, character, and materiality of the buildings had to be preserved. Throughout the restoration process, however, developers tussled with the tensions between retaining the space's gritty skid row days and creating a high-end commercial and tourist district.[83]

To keep it gritty, Larimer Square aesthetically mimics imaginations of urban grit and brings skid row characters that invoke a sense of progress and tenacity into the spatial story. In so doing, the place brings together layers of comfort and risk into the spatial experience while eliding history of race and racialized violence to secure an experience of urban whiteness. Specifically, to restore whiteness into the urban environment, Larimer Square presents aesthetics and narratives of the gritty past wherein visitors are confronted with ghosts and memories of the skid row days of drunken debauchery, prostitution, and government corruption. By foregrounding these gritty moments, visitors affectively engage with these sometimes

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challenging and violent pasts but can evade engagement with trajectories of white supremacy and racialized violence. Through these performances, white exceptionalism becomes an embodied and affective guide to exist with the space's sordid "skid row" pasts.

One method of keeping Larimer Square's gritty character was to retain aesthetic and material spaces of grit. At one point, Larimer Street housed "46 bars, 57 flophouses, 17 pawn shops and 22 secondhand stores."[84] The gritty nature of these places included drunken debauchery, gambling, fighting, and prostitution.[85] Storefronts that are designated as popular speakeasies or saloon hangouts highlight these narratives through the material grit of the building façade. In contrast to their Starbucks counterparts, the seedy places of the past showcase painted walls chipping away to reveal weathered dirt-crusted bricks. For example, the entrance into the Green Russell, once a popular speakeasy, increasingly moves away from the natural look of the manicured sandstone as people walk down the steps (figure 2). At the bottom of the stairs, the space showcases a windowless white painted brick wall. The paint is chipping away to reveal sporadic splotches of red brick, which looks more like dirt rather than frontier mountains. As people walk across the matted down, hardened, dark green carpet the place confronts patrons with a small dingy and baren area with a fading red arrow pointing to another room. Drawing people into the place through the seemingly dirty entrance affectively orders the space around a spatial experience of what a speakeasy, saloon, or flophouse entrance may have looked and felt like while Larimer Square served the scourge of Denver. Given that people descend down the stairs to eat food or have a drink, the patrons entering this space are invited not only to experience the local gritty haunt, but to find comfort in its grunge as they attend to an everyday activity of dining out.

Figure 2: (Left) Entry stairs down into the Green Russel an old brothel turned into a bar/restaurant. (Right) The wall of the entry hallway into the Green Russel area. Photographs were taken by Jordin Clark

This moment of inhabitation and invitation to live with the grit is fleeting as the space quickly dissipates the potential discomfort and dirtiness that may come from the stark contrast between the high-end retail stores on the upper level and the skid row basement. After passing through the entrance (figure 3), the patrons round the corner to be re-placed into an upscale restaurant. Still retaining nods to its basement dinge, the place shows exposed pipes and its windowless setting darkens the ambience to affectively pull people into a performance of seedy darkness (figure 3). Yet, with its pristine wooden tables, mahogany leather-covered chairs, and expensive food and drink menu, the Green Russel has clearly surpassed the space's previous saloon and speakeasy days. Providing a spatial narrative of progress where the place moves from grit to gourmet, the Green Russel offers patrons a fleeting experience with the skid row haunt, but ultimately emplaces them and their everyday dining experience within a rehabilitated upscale

place. The oscillations between these two contrasting affective experiences attach the Square's

gritty past to embodiments of filth and dirt. The skid row days of the Green Russell manifest as

unkempt places and dingy basements, an experience that patrons quickly pass through on their

way to upper-class dining.
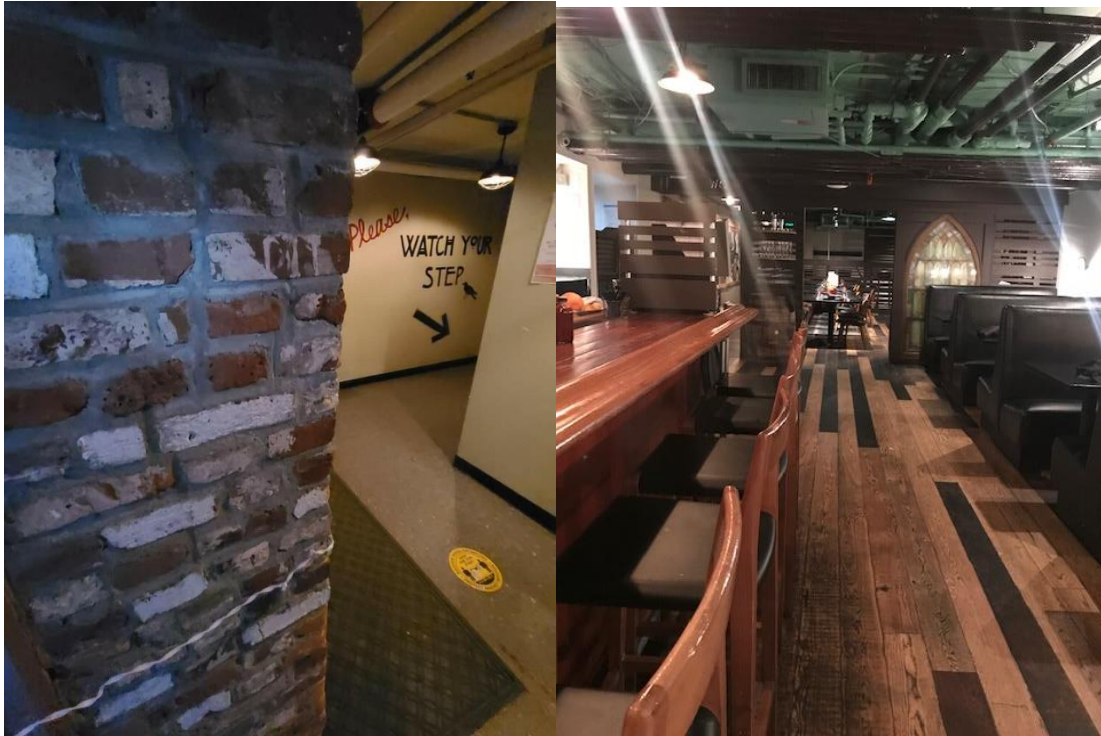
Figure 3: (Left) After the entry hall in figure 2, this small room guides visitors into a 60s style diner to be sat in the restaurant. (Right) The entryway into the restaurant portion of the Green Russell. There is also a mainly speakeasy-style bar in another portion of the establishment. Photographs were taken by Jordin Clark.

At these restored speakeasies and saloons, however, there was much more at stake than

dirt and grime. Indeed, Green Russel has etched into its material space a past of racism,

misogyny, and violence against women and prostitutes at the time. As one bartender informed

me, in the Green Russel's kitchen there is a closet named "D.H." for Dead Hookers (figure 4).

While there is no substantiated proof that the D.H. does indeed stand for dead hookers, its spatial

story exists across the workers in the space even if it's away from patrons. The patrons, then, are

invited to only momentarily step into the picturesque environment of the speakeasy or saloon.

Rather than hold the knowledge of the death and violence women incurred at this time, the gritty experience within the brothels, speakeasies, and saloons are produced through aesthetic passageways in a place. Performing these memories as fleeting experiences on the way to upper class taste offers patrons comfortable passage into a place that was so dangerous and exploitative for others.
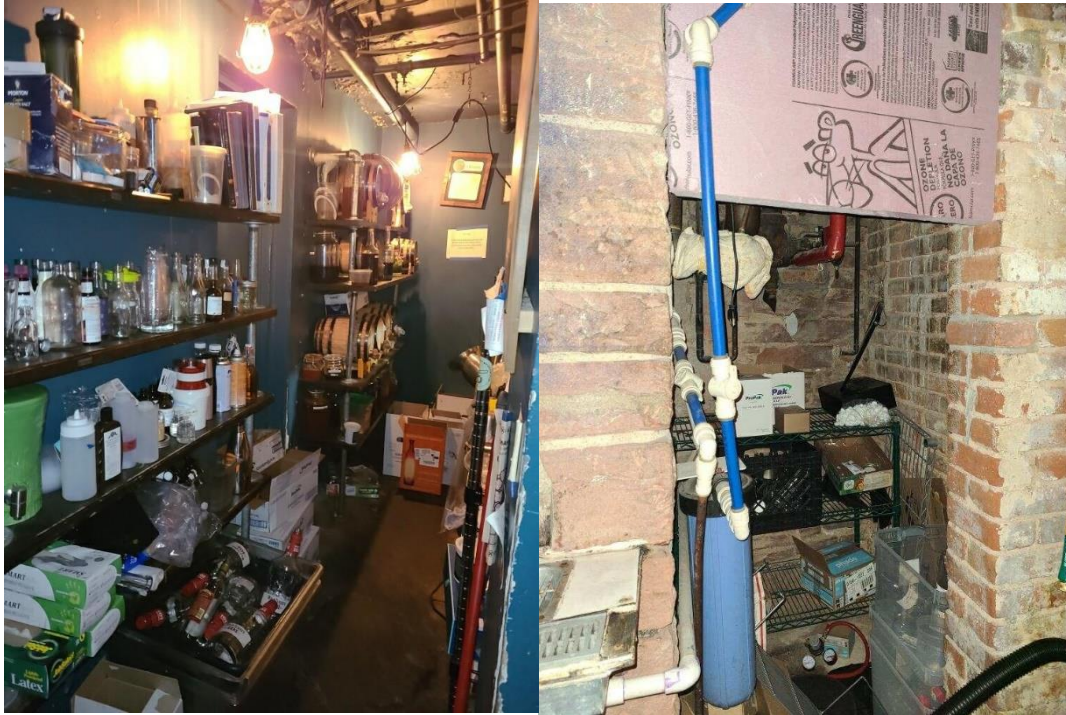
Figure 4: (Left) The storage area that bartenders call D.H. for Dead Hooker. (Right) Now a cleaning supply closet, this area is rumored to have been where multiple dead bodies, presumed prostitutes, were found. Photographs were taken by Jordin Clark

The historical tales of these times also build a particularly comfortable narrative of the Square's skid row past. The tourist memory at restaurants like Euclid Hall draw on the men's narratives to promote their place. The Hall's "History" page notes that the place is "rumored to have once been the very fancy headquarters of a brothel catering to government officials, law enforcement and members of the media."[86] The experience of the saloon from the men's perspective is particularly resonant in places like Ted's Montana Grill, which emplaces patrons into the frontier cowboy experience as it covers the tables with topographical maps of mountains,

has buffalo heads mounted throughout the place, and materially embraces the red sandstone exterior walls. Seeking out the brothels and speakeasies as a performance of the place's grit enlivens the drunkenness, gambling, and debauchery of the frontier men. Less apparent in Larimer Square's spatial story are the women who served as prostitutes and showgirls in these same spaces.

Given that women were limited to the domestic sphere or prostitution, they lacked financial agency and were beholden to the power, desire, and force of men. While some women made their livelihood and garnered power in the community through prostitution, acts of domestic violence, murder, and suicide "was shockingly commonplace in Red Light districts throughout Colorado."[87] One block over on Market Street, a string of murders garnered the street's nickname as "Strangler's Row."[88] Particularly precarious were Chinese immigrants who, "in the Euro-American mind… became especially identified with licentious sex."[89] As William Wei explains, Chinese prostitutes, while fewer in numbers, were condemned as a peril for the purity of white America and blamed for the degradation of white manhood.[90] At the same time, the Asian exotic stereotype led Chinese women to be treated particularly terribly by white men who "took advantage of Chinese prostitutes' powerlessness to fulfill their sexual fantasies, forcing them to perform deviant sexual acts in pursuit of unconventional erotic gratification."[91] While these histories are elided from the Square's gritty aesthetic, the place's rhetorically sculpted memory symbolically retains a lingering ghost of violence that women faced through the perspective of a showgirl, Amelia, who is said to haunt the Frontenac Building.

Amelia was a showgirl who fell in love, married, and had a child with the owner of the speakeasy, Papa. Their daughter, Ginger, fell in love with a mafia boss, which enraged Papa so much that he hired a hitman to kill Ginger's suitor. The hitman not only killed the mafia boss,

but also accidentally killed Ginger. Amelia heard the news in this building and "it is said that her presence is felt and seen today in both buildings."[92] This story highlights the ghost of a grieving mother who climbed out of prostitution, married up, and began a family. Amelia was an ethnically white women showgirl who hoped to "make money fast, marry well, and become socially acceptable," a future not available to women of color at this time.[93] As the mourning mother, the ghost of Amelia showcases her sense of tenacity to get out of the world of sex work and determination to suture herself into the valued norms of motherhood and domesticity. The story develops a sense of possibility and progress wherein showgirls are able to raise themselves out of their dangerous conditions and into domestic life. Confronted with a murderous past, Amelia offers patrons a moment to live with the deaths and violence that enveloped the skid row days of the space. The story, however, links the Square's history of violence as an eccentric miscommunication between families and a tale of foible within the Square's history rather than a pattern of violence against women.

Presenting Amelia's story through multiple walking tours as an indicator of the gritty brothel days of Larimer Square pauses that history into a whitened narrative where the gritty pasts of violence, misogyny, and racism comes to be restored as accidents within domestic life. By pausing on these trajectories, Larimer Square forgets histories of violence against prostitutes who had less protection and agency than showgirls. Moreover presenting the white women's narrative evinces racialized violence against Chinese immigrants like the 1880 race riot four blocks away.[94] The riot destroyed what was then racistly referred to by white people as Hop Alley, but was in actuality an ethnic enclave known as Chinatown.[95] The characters allowed within Larimer Square's skid row era disconnect the space from the tunnels that Chinese women would use to come into Larimer Square's brothels or the closets within Green Russel's kitchen.[96]

Amelia's haunting does not capture the violence, hardship, and xenophobia rampant within the ghosts of prostitution that shaped Larimer Street's skid row era. Rather, by securing people's responses to the violent skid row days through Amelia's story, Larimer Square leaves out and distorts the misogyny and racism against women throughout this gritty period of the space's past.

Within the Square's public memory, these headquarters and brothels instead gain more resonance as a part of the gritty account of government corruption within Denver's first City Hall. Across the street from Ted's Montana Grill and Euclid Hall sits a bell to mark the site of Denver's first City Hall. While the plaque simply states, "This Bell is the only existing relic of Denver's old city hall built on the site in 1883 and razed in 1936," the stories behind the City Hall have entered Larimer Square's gritty spatial story. In particular, the Square highlights the story of the City Hall War of 1894. After Governor Davis H. Waite attempted to remove both Denver's Police and Fire Commissioners for their corruption, the commissioners barricaded themselves in City Hall. Outside, thousands of townsfolk gathered, many of which flocked to protect the commissioners from Governor Waite.[97] The Governor called for a militia, which was met by several townsfolk, led by Soapy Smith, who defended the hall with bombs and grenades. Eventually, the tense situation diffused after the leaders convinced the Governor to take the case to the Colorado Supreme Court. After reviewing the case, they decided that the Governor had the right to fire the commissioners, but did not have the right to use the Colorado Infantry.[98]

As a monument to where this event occurred, the bell is easy to miss as it is small in stature and submerged into the back edge of a corner sitting across the street from Ted's Montana Grill. To see this glimpse of the city's first City Hall one must explore beyond the central hub of Larimer Square. Given its small stature and inconspicuous location in the Square, the bell becomes a secondary marker of government corruption. More often, this event is

commemorated through the legacy of Soapy Smith, Denver's infamous con man, whose presence rests in the Kettle Arcade mural, tour stops, and even on bar menus like Euclid Hall's. The tour and menu describe the finale of this event similarly, stating: "The governor stood down, took his case to court and lost, thus the underworld prevailed and skid row remained."[99] Framed as an act of bravado and gumption, this event highlights a trajectory to maintain white privileges embedded in the frontier cowboy ways at all costs. Inscribed into the Square's activities, the place symbolically utilizes Soapy Smith's character to showcase a memory of the height of Larimer Square's skid row days where corruption, gambling, drinking, and brothels were a part of the daily lives of nearly all those visiting Larimer Square, including top officials. The frontier cowboy character, however, escapes the law and becomes a beacon of checking government power to allow the lawless ways of the frontier West to prevail.

Highlighting this moment as a turning point for the underworld grit of Larimer Square's spatial story forgets the remaining years of government activity at the City Hall, which, as the plaque indicates, wasn't razed until 1937. In particular, pausing the space into this story forgets the continued lineages of white privilege and white supremacy within the rise of the Klu Klux Klan in the 1920s. As the KKK infiltrated and spread through government agencies, the organization's supremacist presence, ideologies, and practices found their way into City Hall. Epitomized by the Klu Klux Klan's march through Larimer Street, white supremacy continued to define Denver and Larimer Square's heritage.[100] While the exploratory patron who leaves the Square's main hub to view the bell can look East down Larimer street's main corridor where the KKK once marched, there is no symbolic or material attachment within the space to draw that affective response.

Instead, the place offers patron's Soapy Smith as the historical lens through which they contend with government violence and corruption. The bell, which represents the institution of City Hall whose corruption far extended beyond the City Hall War of 1894, sits just outside of the Square easy to miss and to forget. Presenting government corruption through a version of frontier grit, where the restless conmen and delinquents of the space sought justice from the governor's corrupt use of militia forces opens potential links with current tensions of racist policing and an over-militarized police force. Yet, protection of white supremacy leaves the cultivated place prone to papering over and affectively detaching the racist pasts that continue to linger into our contemporary moment.

> Layla Saad and Robin DiAngelo define white exceptionalism as:
>
> a double- sided weapon that on one side shields people with white privilege from having to do antiracism work under the belief that "I'm not a racist; I'm one of the good ones" and on the other side shoots out arrows at BIPOC by expecting them to carry the burden of dismantling white supremacy under the belief that racism is something that is a Black or Brown problem but not a white problem.[101]

Casting the past narratives through white experiences disconnects the racial history that is absolutely an ongoing story within Denver. Instead, Larimer Square's rhetorically sculpted memory allows patrons to embody and embrace stories that represent temporary moments in the linear progress that Larimer Square has made since its skid row days. Exempt from these narratives are the pasts that continue to haunt the space. As activists' protests throughout Denver—including Black Lives Matter protests, the Women's March, and Asian-American rallies—demonstrate, these oppressive trajectories are still alive and deeply entrenched in Denver's urban identity. Larimer Square is not exempt from retaining white privilege and white

supremacy into its spatial story and public memory. The material, symbolic, and aesthetic process of restoration in these areas demonstrate how the materiality of grit directs affective resonance toward practices of white exceptionalism. As this geography of action is taken up by future development projects we can understand how the frontier and grit produce a repertoire where whiteness is shielded from contending with race and racism in its developmental practices.

Growing Western Expansion as a Geography of Action

Making particular gritty spaces, characters, and memories visible within the spatial story forefronts and makes grit that elicits investments in progress and revitalization comfortable. By erasing or papering over other memories, specifically memories of racial injustice, this spatial story jettisons our responsibility to mourn, learn from, and live with the grit that white settlers and white supremacy created in the space's past. While papered over by stories of comfortable grit, these multiplicities still exist within the space and they linger as important trajectories of Denver's ongoing stories-so-far. Yet, as a rhetorical infrastructure, it is the paused trajectories of memory that guide development processes. Building out of the geographies of expansion and white exceptionalism, Larimer Square's development established a repertoire of gentrifying and/or displacing historically marginalized communities. In this section, I highlight this repertoire in Larimer Square's development process and then trace it forward to infrastructure built within the more recent development of the River North Art District.

Larimer Square, while inspired by San Francisco's Ghiradelli Square and St. Louis' Gaslight Square, was controlled by a for-profit corporation.[102] At the time, this change flew in the face of many development practices at the time, thus providing a foundational infrastructure for future development projects. However, the spatial story focused more on restoring the history of the buildings and their gritty past than the stories of those who were in the space. During the

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1960s, Denver city planners were attempting to transition the city from its deteriorated status as a cow town and skid row into a thriving urban center.[103] Developers planned to create this transition by demolishing 30 blocks worth of buildings in Denver. Before the Square's revitalization began, the city commissioned the University of Boulder to study the effects of urban renewal on Larimer Street. In the report, the researchers underscored the tumultuous nature of Larimer Street highlighting issues with pension disbursement, veteran payment, and diminishing opportunities for manual labor as reasons for the climbing homeless population. They recommended that the city cease any urban renewal efforts arguing that demolition would displace too many people without any possible replacement for the already ingrained networks of shelter, food, and employment opportunities. The researchers lined each subsequent recommendation with the base notion that urban renewal was detrimental not only to the underprivileged populations inhabiting the space, but also the surrounding areas that would be affected by the displacement.[104] Pursuing few of the researchers' recommendations, Denver continued its plans for the Skyline Urban Renewal Project. One important exception to these plans was Larimer Square.

Larimer Square's 1400 block endured in the face of the wrecking ball, thus offering a potential site to maintain the necessary networks for at-risk and underprivileged populations. However, the frontier grit and expansionist practices highlighted within Larimer Square's origin memories directed the space's development path towards continued expulsion and erasure. To stave off potential destruction from the urban renewal project, the Larimer Square Business Association had to revitalize 14th and Larimer and paint it as a potentially profitable space for Denver. Dana Crawford demonstrated hers and the Associations position within this form of

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urban redevelopment when Crawford spoke of the Association's motivation for preserving the square:

> Founders of Larimer Square are motivated to do something for the people of Denver to help them retain some of the frontier city's heritage. We want to recall the lively early days at Larimer St—it is still a very lively area—and we will assure that it will always be so when we build on a foundation of the past.[105]

In their reflection on preserving the Square, the Larimer Square Business Association remarked that "the whole idea in Larimer Square is that it's not changed—it's Colorado-based businesses and restaurants."[106] Drawing upon the small business owner of the goldsmith, cobbler, or saloon keeper of the space's frontier hub days, the Square highlighted economic progress as a memory of Denver's urban West. Using these memories to revitalize the area erased the concerns and presence of those people and networks that were displaced across the space's history. Instead, Larimer Square's status as the exception to the destruction of Denver's downtown district became a roadmap for future development projects. From this project, the memory of the frontier and grit served as a repertoire for cultivating Denver's urban identity.[107]

These repertoires are easily visible in development projects that are even thirty years removed from Larimer Square's initial preservation and redevelopment. Indeed, the spatial story invoked in places like Larimer Square presents residues of the past that help guide the character of renewed places like River North (RiNo). In particular, the rhetorics of the frontier and grit guide RiNo's development practices whose geographies of frontier expansion encroached and resettled historic communities of color and affectively detach marginalized communities pasts within the restoration of industrial grit.

Before it was an art district, the River North area was a primarily industrial area surrounded by the South Platte River, railroad hubs, and manufacturing centers.[108] Largely cut off from the downtown area, River North evolved "as its own community with a mixture of uses including a significant residential community, industrial uses that provided jobs to the residents, stores and services that provided for the needs of the residents, and other uses."[109] While the area had a considerable amount of vacant land, by the end of the 1930s industrial factories and the Denargo Market were thriving sites for employment and community resources.[110] New routes between central Downtown and River North developed as companies like Pepsi Cola built their factories in the industrial area in the 1950s.[111] Yet, even with more connections between these spaces, River North remained a primarily industrial area until a site analysis identified potential to develop increased mixed-use spaces in the area. In conjunction with creating over 1,000 new housing options, the River North redevelopment offered Denver the possibility to utilize frontier grit as a repertoire to begin development and, in turn, gentrification.[112]

City plans and newspapers framed the River North area as a nearly fully abandoned and dilapidated industrial area that was in dire need of redevelopment.[113] Indeed, many developers explained their interest in River North because it represents "the last frontier" in Denver development.[114] In its renaming and rebranding, RiNo's development pursued expansionist practices that encroached upon communities of color. This encroachment not only unsettles the already existing communities of color, but also signals possible gentrification. In fact, in 2014, Ink! Coffee Shop gave voice to the communities' fear in a sign placed in their window reading: "Happily Gentrifying the Neighborhood Since 2014."[115] It is no surprise that the RiNo development would raise the risks and realities of gentrification as the decision to redevelop

River North into RiNo draws cues from Larimer Square's spatial story and white settlers'

narratives of founding the frontier.

River North used to represent a geographic landscape along the North edge of the South

Platte River in Denver. By 2006, developers "cobbled together the districts uneven shape" to

create a new thriving area for artists and burgeoning neighborhood known as River North Art

District (RiNo).[116] In fact, two of the founders of RiNo joked that they "'wanted it to be shaped

like a rhino, but it wouldn't quite work out.'"[117] Instead of taking the rhino shape, the founders

met for one meeting where they "'named it, looked at a map drew a circle. [They] called it RiNo

and sent out a press release.'"[118] In an admittedly quick and arguably unconsidered method, the

Art District's borders were drawn to represent a "safari adventure" where people are invited to

explore the place's boundaries, find it's hidden gems, and discover it's unique character.[119]

Within the frontier settlement of the West, cartography was an important tool that ascribed

spatial and moral boundaries of the unknown promised land of the Western frontier.[120] Framing

the boundaries and place through nods to a safari adventure recalls the exploratory spirit of the

frontier settlers who tamed the Wild West. Through the use of mapping to cobble together a new

territory in Denver, the RiNo district continues the settler practices of the frontier as RiNo

expanded into and took over spaces in five different historical, and historically marginalized,

neighborhoods: Globeville, Elyria, Swansea, Five Points, and Cole.

Around since the 1880s, these neighborhoods were initially immigrant neighborhoods

where people came to work for the surrounding smelters or railroads. While originally home to

European immigrants, these neighborhoods have become important historical and cultural spaces

for Black and Latinx communities. Five Points, for example, has a long history as the heart of

Denver's Black community and is often referred to as the "Harlem of the West" because of its

draw for Black musicians and artists across the US.[121] The RiNo website acknowledges that RiNo is a part of these five neighborhoods and presents their history as a part of their spatial story.[122] Yet, the neighborhoods' histories are obscured by RiNo's material markers indicating the district's boundaries.

Orange metal rhino figures are strewn about throughout the landscape to demarcate the edges of the cobbled-together space. Rhino placards are painted on or posted near the District's businesses. Benches and electrical boxes have rhinos painted on them with the invitation to "Roam Wild." From these material markers, visitors are encouraged to roam wild within Denver's last frontier as they traverse across multiple historically marginalized neighborhoods. However, by only marking the place with Rhino's, the art district erases the neighborhoods' unique identities and interpolates their existence and history into RiNo's mapped space. Like William Larimer's first log cabin, RiNo's material markers rooted the art district into it a mapped place as artists, businesses, and developers settled on the edges of five different historic and historically marginalized neighborhoods. Further, the lauded reputation of the constantly transforming streetscape invites material practices for visitors to repeatedly explore each nook, cranny, and alley of the place to fully embrace its creative grit. As they do this, the patrons encroach on the already rooted community spaces within the five other neighborhoods. They do so as voyeurs trying to accumulate all of the RiNo experiences of the place. As geographies of expansion take precedent in the developmental repertoire, RiNo further instantiates the frontier values of manifest destiny.

The places that sit within RiNo's map are already existing settings and spaces. Interpolating already present practices and spaces into a newly mapped RiNo aligns with Larimer Square's frontier founding that thrives in the practice of claiming land to build a

prosperous city center. Of course, taking over the edges of these neighborhoods raised little

controversy from city officials, planners, or developers since the space was relatively vacant and

had very few existing residential spaces.[123] Developing this industrial area would increase

residential housing from only 70 to 5,000 residential sites. In a time where housing is

increasingly difficult to find, this expansion proves to be a necessary part of Denver's growth.

Indeed, some of these housing developments are designated as affordable housing units in

partnership with Colorado's Coalition for the Homeless.[124] A vast majority of the residential

spaces, nonetheless, are far from affordable. One of the first developed mixed-use spaces

heralded their focus on offering opportunities for young families to return to the city with rents in

the $1,200 to $2,400 per month for one and two-bedroom spaces.[125] In comparison to the

surrounding neighborhoods, whose average income was around $56,000 a year, the additional

residential spaces were designed and advertised to expand urban appeal to young (white)

suburban families.[126] As the RiNo art district expanded into the surrounding neighborhoods,

development practices highlighted the industrial feel while restoring an urban identity of white

exceptionalism.

Careful not to repeat their mistakes within the Skyline Urban Renewal plan, there was

less discussion of completely razing the area to build anew. Instead, developers like Mickey

Zeppelin and Tracy Weil saw potential in the industrial buildings. Taking the industrial areas as

the modern frontier, RiNo developers viewed the industrial buildings as a blank canvas for the

future creative arts district. Unlike Larimer Square, however, the RiNo development did not

stake their development in the long-standing history of sites like Denargo Market, which dated

back to the 1880s. RiNo's development, in comparison, turned to the more general infrastructure

of frontier origins as justification to expand private development and create another art district in

Denver. As a result, RiNo's developments maintained the symbolically appealing forms of grit while detaching past community roots. This maneuver of displacing roots as a process of expanding white settlement is especially apparent in the restoration of the Denargo Market.

Opened in 1939, the Denargo Market was built after farmers demanded that the city move the market to the industrial area rather than in the downtown district.[127] They argued that the site needs to be accessible for farmers in order to create a grocer-owned market that serves the surrounding communities.[128] Developed under the guise of accessibility, the Denargo Market became an important source for industrial workers and farmers to sell and buy their produce. Given that this area was isolated from Denver's downtown area, the Market was a significant site for the community to be able to develop and thrive in the face of dislocation. While the Market was destroyed in a fire in 1971, the name remains in the renovated apartment complex AMLI Denargo Market.[129] Marketed as a high-end lifestyle center, the apartment complex retains the market feel through its mixed-use style where residents and visitors get to still embrace a community-driven experience. Surrounded by working-class neighborhoods that exist within a food desert, however, the lifestyle center does little to restore Denargo Market's function, even if the general form remains.

Following Larimer Square's desire to "keep it gritty," influential developers like Mickey Zeppelin saw maintaining the space's industrial grit as one of the most important dimensions of RiNo's successful development. The industrial feel remains through restoration practices that thrive on what Susan Wick, an artist within the collective, describes her process of restoring a former sheet-metal factory. The restoration occurs, for her, by allowing the building to "have its own say in some things."[130] For her, keeping unpatched ceilings and old brick peels provides "insight into the building's construction and evidence of its age."[131] Retaining the aesthetic grit

cultivates a visible façade for the industrial past. Yet, the spatial practices and characters are forgotten within this restoration process.

In her restoration efforts, Susan Wick also discusses preserving a sign within the factory that read "board and room, home-cooked meals, 35 cents."[132] Restored as a single-family home for her and her husband Mickey Zeppelin, the area's community-driven identity and memories are recast into the façade of grit. In so doing, the restoration draws spaces of attention towards memories that highlight the space's recent history as a nearly abandoned industrial area. Making the deterioration visible in the buildings' restoration while stripping the interiors to produce upper-scale housing and dining offers residents and patrons the opportunity to experience the working-class industrial grit without the communities and people who once worked in the same spaces.

Conclusion

By making particular layers of memory visible while papering over others, spaces like Larimer Square direct development values and guide people's urban experience. In this chapter, I traced how the material, symbolic, affective, and embodied invocations of memories pause the multiplicitious ongoing stories-so-far of space into a dominant narrative of place. The paused place provides an infrastructure that directs both the everyday experiences of urban users and a repertoire for future development projects. Throughout this chapter, I identify memory's four functions as a rhetorical infrastructure. They are that, through rhetoric, memory: 1) makes legible certain pasts as a part of the place, 2) directs urban practices toward ways of being with these pasts, 3) constructs a spatial story for future geographies of action, and 4) builds a repertoire for future development. Through emplacing frontier expansion and white exceptionalism as Larimer Square's spatial story, the place's memory crafts a rhetorical infrastructure that guides Denver's

urban identity and developmental repertoire toward practices of gentrification and displacement. Given this infrastructure, it should come as no surprise that Denver has become the second most gentrified city in the United States, second only to San Francisco.[133]

And yet, the concept of space thrives in the knowledge that multiplicitous pasts, stories, and possibilities remain available to build into alternative places. While Larimer Square and RiNo may have paused the space into a place of frontier expansion and white exceptionalism, examining these memories as rhetorically emplaced infrastructures gives credence to the political implications of which memories people and developers are invited to exist with and build from. Given rhetoric's turn towards archival research and a renewed vigor towards giving presence to that which has been erased or forgotten, rhetoric scholars are particularly well-suited to analyze the pauses that cement into a spatial story.[134] As rhetorical critics, excavating the multiple stories, relationalities, and simultaneous pasts, reopens place into a space of "connections yet to be made, juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction (or not, for not all potential connections have to be established), relations which may or may not be accomplished."[135] Current debates about Larimer Square and RiNo's future are perfect examples of how to open space to build a new rhetorical infrastructure for the urban landscape.

In 2019, Jeff Hermanson proposed a renovation plan for Larimer Square, which landed the historic district on the nation's top endangered places list! Hermanson proposed that Larimer Square could add two high-rise buildings behind the Kettle Arcade building and the Walkway alley on the East and West sides of the block. One of these buildings would be designated for affordable housing while the other could be used as a hotel. Atop the buildings, Hermanson advocated for urban gardens that would provide the produce for the Square's restaurants. The influx of revenue from these two development structures would help balance the costs to

continue restoring the deteriorating historic buildings along the square. Amongst a swell of controversy, opponents argued that this plan would destroy the Square's historical integrity and architectural identity because it does not fit the form nor function of the Square's past.[136] The plan has since been revoked as the Larimer Square Associates try to find an alternative route for the place's future. If Larimer Square considered the Women's Mission that existed in the same space where Soapy Smith began his con games then preservationists may be able to create connections to the affordable housing proposal that lies beyond the gritty narratives instantiated into the space.[137] Within this spatial story, Hermanson's proposal would have produced a different—not necessarily better or worse—course of action.

At the same time, RiNo is negotiating criticism saying that RiNo has gentrified the surrounding neighborhoods including a growing petition to "re-normalize the Art District's name back to Five Points."[138] Some companies like Odell Brewing are beginning to pay credence to Five Points' historical and continued trajectory in the space by re-pausing their brewery through Five Points' ongoing story. This materialized in the renaming of their brewery to "Odell Brewing Five Points Brewhouse" because they "realized that by not using the Five Points name [they] were participating in the diminishment of the Five Points Neighborhood."[139] While a relatively small step in the face of the rapid rate of gentrification within the area, it still marks how places can transform to reincorporate different pasts into its enacted and acknowledged memory.[140] To further embrace these still present pasts, RiNo developers could recall the roots of the Denargo Market to reconsider how RiNo can best serve the surrounding communities or underscore the working-class lives within the industrial grit as they consider mixed-income housing. While the rhetorical infrastructures of frontier expansion and white exceptionalism run deep within

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Denver's urban development, there are simultaneous trajectories that places like RiNo and Larimer Square can catch in order to create a more just politics of place.

As developers consider how they want to guide future development projects, it behooves us to consider the process of imagination as another rhetorical infrastructure. In the next chapter, I move down the road from RiNo to analyze a current and ongoing development project whose goal is to usher in a "new West" on a global scale while also focusing on local goals to "reconnect Globeville, Elyria, and Swansea and bring life back into these communities."[141] Retaining memory as an influential rhetorical infrastructure, I demonstrate how the imaginary, during an ongoing development project, represents a moment where the openness of space is inherently alive. Examining the different trajectories that enliven the space, I demonstrate how the imagination as a rhetorical infrastructure sculpts a path for urban development that is up for contestation and reimagination.

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61. Morley, *Historic Preservation and the Imagined West*, 54.

62. "Larimer Square National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form," National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form (Denver, May 7, 1973), https://npgallery.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Text/73000468.

63. "Larimer Square National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form," 6.

64. Smiley, Jerome C. *History of Denver, with Outlines of the Earlier History of the Rocky Mountain Country*. (Denver, CO: Denver Times, 1901), p. 212-213. https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p15330coll2/id/1471/rec/16.

65. "Larimer Square Historic Walking Tour."

66. Whether or not this was actually the first log cabin built in Denver is up for debate. One writer who documented the history of Denver during this time period, Jerome Smiley, indicates that one of the settlers from the Lawrence camp built the base of a log cabin and was about to finish it when Larimer showed up to move into the log cabin. There are other claims that the Russel camp had built other housing structures to mark their territory as well. See: Smiley, *History of Denver*.

67. "Welcome to Larimer Square, Denver's Most Historic Block," Larimer Square, accessed October 22, 2018, https://www.larimersquare.com/.

68. According to a detailed history of Denver's controversial settlement, Smiley, *History of Denver*, Native Americans held the title to the land, which was "not subject to occupation by white men under the public land laws of the United States" (199). Yet, the St. Charles company

who held the first claim for Denver maneuvered around this title by employing John Smith and William McGaa, traders who were connected with the Arapaho tribe through trade and marriage. Records show that the St. Charles company "induced Smith and McGaa to join them in organizing the proposed town company, provided the two traders would make the enterprise satisfactory to the Indians; all of which they agreed to." (199) Through trade the Indigenous tribes lost their title to the land, which eventually became Denver City.

69. "History," The Larimer Experience, accessed October 15, 2020, https://www.larimersquare.com/50/history.html#three.

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73. Glenda Riley and Richard W. Etulain, "Annie Oakley: The Peerless Lady Wing-Shot," in *By Grit & Grace: Eleven Women Who Shaped the American West* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997), 93–114, http://archive.org/details/bygritgraceeleve00rich.

74. "Historic Denver Growing Walking Tours for 2017," *The Denver Post* (blog), May 26, 2017, https://www.denverpost.com/2017/05/26/walking-tours-historic-denver/.

75. Fowler, "Arapaho and Cheyenne Perspectives," 373.

76. "Larimer Square Historic Walking Tour."

77. Fowler, "Arapaho and Cheyenne Perspectives," 380–84.

78. "Larimer Square National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form."

79. Thomas J. Noel and Nicholas J. Wharton, *Denver Landmarks and Historic Districts*, 2nd ed. (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2016), 39.

80. Morton and Paul, "Grit."

81. As Lorretta Fowler "Arapaho and Cheyenne Perspectives" argues, "the Cheyenne and Arapaho camp at Sand Creek was a product of a thirteen- year strategy of taking responsibility for maintaining peace with Americans, regardless of the great sacrifice, in order to remain in their homeland and subsist by a mixed economy of hunting, working for hire, and ranching" (384). The grit to pursue peace in spite of the continued theft, deceit, and violence at the hands of white settlers was a tactic of survival.

82. Campbell, "Q&A."

83. Ibid.

84. "Welcome to Larimer Square, Denver's Most Historic Block."

85. Jan MacKell, *Brothels, Bordellos, & Bad Girls: Prostitution in Colorado, 1860-1930* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004).

86. "A Little Bit of History," Euclid Hall, 2017, http://www.euclidhall.com/history.html.

87. MacKell, *Brothels, Bordellos, & Bad Girls*, 36, 197.

88. Ibid., 66.

89. William Wei, "Representations of Nineteenth-Century Chines Prostitutes and Chinese Sexuality in the American West," in *Enduring Legacies: Ethnic Histories and Cultures of Colorado*, ed. Arturo Aldama (Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2011), 70.

90. William Wei, *Asians in Colorado: A History of Persecution and Perseverance in the Centennial State* (University of Washington Press, 2016), 106.

91. Ibid., 106.

92. "Larimer Square Historic Walking Tour."

93. MacKell, *Brothels, Bordellos, & Bad Girls*, 6.

94. Newspaper clipping, "Colorado, the anti-Chinese riot in Denver on October 31st," by Wilkins, N.B. 1880-1890, Denver Public Library Special Collections, (Denver, CO: Denver Public Library), https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p15330coll22/id/89632/rec/5.

95. Roy T Wortman, "Denver's Anti-Chinese Riot, 1880," *The Colorado Magazine* XLII, no. 4 (1965): 280; Wei, *Asians in Colorado*, 64. Now, the only remnant of Colorado's first race riot is a plaque on 20th and Wazee, which has been criticized for presenting a whitened history of the event. Song, Jingyi. *Denver's Chinatown 1875-1900: Gone But Not Forgotten*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2019), 1. While Chinatown was not in the actual material space of Larimer Square, since the Square was the first preserved site that embraced the past of Denver's Skid Row era it takes on the role of representing this history even if it sits outside of the 1400 block.

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97. Photograph of City Hall War of 1894, "Militia en route to City Hall" by H. F. Peirson & Co, March 15, 1894, Denver Public Library Special Collections, (Denver, CO: Denver Public Library), https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p15330coll22/id/26189/rec/9

98. Stephen Grace, *It Happened in Denver*, 1st edition (Guilford, CT: TwoDot, 2007), 52.

99. "Euclid Hall | A Little Bit of History," accessed October 24, 2020, http://www.euclidhall.com/history.html; "Larimer Square Historic Walking Tour."

100. Photograph of KKK on Larimer Street, "Parade in Denver preceding a convention of Klansmen" May 31, 1926, Denver Public Library Special Collections, (Denver, CO: Denver Public Library), https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p15330coll22/id/21857/rec/1.

101. Layla F. Saad and Robin J DiAngelo, *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor* (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2020), 68, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/csu/detail.action?docID=5979726.

102. Morley, *Historic Preservation and the Imagined West*, 50.

103. James Brooke, "Goodbye, Cowtown; Denver Enters the World Arena," *New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y.*, July 20, 1999, sec. A.

104. Edward Rose et al., "The Unattached Society: An Account of the Life on Larimer Street among Homeless Men" (Boulder, CO: Bureau of Sociological Research, University of Colorado, September 1965), 42–43.

105. Johnston, "City Officials Hail $1 Million Larimer Square."

106. "Celebrate 50 Years of Preservation In Denver's Larimer Square | National Trust for Historic Preservation."

107. The developers who influenced Larimer Square's preservation expanded their reach into the Lower Downtown area of Denver. In particular, the preservation of the 16th street mall and Union Station bears remarkable resemblance to Larimer Square's own process. Indeed, the preservation and renovation of these two spaces were put into connection with Larimer Square in order to maintain cohesion in Lower Downtown as a major attraction within Downtown Denver. While Larimer Square's influence on Downtown Denver points to urban development's ongoing transformation towards a unified urban aesthetic and identity, this dissertation is more concerned with the undergirding logics that slip into and impact development across space and time. For

much of Denver's later development, Larimer Square became a beacon of the past that was nearly lost. The frontier heritage that came to define Denver was nearly destroyed through a vision of invention, a mistake that Denver would try not to make again. To move away from the decimation of land, Denver pursued more architectural work in the realm of urban memory. Meaning, there were more efforts to preserve buildings in Denver, more development projects guided through frontier roots and more plans to link urban change to a collective memory.

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109. Ibid., 22.

110. Ibid., 22.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid., 3.

113. Ibid.

114. "RiNo newcomers adding to food, drink options in hip neighborhood." *Denver Post*: Blogs (CO), March 2, 2012. *NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current*. https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/13D45D405C6A4AC0.; Mike McPhee. "A green home to call their own." *Denver Post,* (CO), April 8, 2009: B-01. *NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current*. https://infowebnewsbankcom.ezproxy2.library.colostate.edu/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/12774291D7C0A870.; Christian Toto. "Look on the Brighton side: Developers set their sites on River North's rundown boulevard, home to city's latest renewal project." *Denver Post* (CO), September 7, 2008: K-03. *NewsBank: Access World*

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view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/12316DF0342EDB30.

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Lovers," *Denver Post*, April 2, 2010, *NewsBank: Access World News- Historical and Current*.

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119. Ibid.

120. DeRogatis, *Moral Geography*, 17.

121. Laura M. Mauck, *Five Points Neighborhood of Denver* (Arcadia Publishing, 2001),

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122. "Our History | RiNo Art District," RiNo Art District, accessed October 25, 2020,

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123. Webb, Moulton, and LeClair, "River North Plan," 22.

124. McPhee, "A green home to call their own."

125. Raabe, Steve, "Developers step up for young families," *Denver Post*, August 21,

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133. "Gentrification and Disinvestment 2020 » NCRC."

134. Charles E. Morris, "The Archival Turn in Rhetorical Studies; Or, the Archive's

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135. Massey, *For Space*, 2005, 11.

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137. "Euclid Hall | A Little Bit of History."

138. Tori Mason, "Petition Calls To Revert RiNo Back To Original Name Of Five Points," July 7, 2020, https://denver.cbslocal.com/2020/07/07/petition-denver-rino-five-points/.

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Resident Roots and Pioneering Progress: Analyzing Colliding Imaginations as Rhetorical Infrastructure in North Denver's Development

After over 100 years hosting the National Western Stock Show, Denver city officials began to contend with two increasingly apparent issues. First, many of the longstanding buildings were in need of massive repair and restoration to continue holding the growing number of visitors. Second, Denver's recent population and commercial growth made the Stock Show land valuable to potentially help meet the needs of the fast-growing city. In the same vein, the growth of Denver began to limit the Stock Show's possibility to expand as the ultimate venue for the "Super Bowl of livestock events."[1] In 2011, because of these constraints, rumblings that the Stock Show may move to a different location began to emerge.[2] After much debate and negotiations about whether the Stock Show should move elsewhere, Denver voters passed measure 2C in 2015, "a measure to increase city debt and extend a tourism tax in order to fund tourism-related projects… specifically focused on the National Western Center and the Colorado Convention Center."[3]

The aim of the National Western Center (NWC) is to develop a unique campus primed to become a global leader in food production, water, energy, and agriculture.[4] To do so, the NWC concentrates on developing educational programs, technological advances, and collaborative research to develop long-ranging solutions in food, water, energy, and agriculture.[5] The center also revels in the opportunity to lead the way as "a global example of how this thoughtful design and programming can bring together families and hipsters, cowboys and computer programmers, CEO's and kayakers."[6] With the collaboration of a litany of partners, investors, and funders, not only will the National Western Stock Show transform into the National Western Center, but the

billion-dollar project is also set to "serve as a catalyst for the new west and a new way of thinking."[7]

A part of this new way of thinking is that the NWC is but one of six spokes within a larger, collaborative project called the North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative (NDCC). This program is designed to align the planning and implementation of six ongoing development projects that will usher in North Denver's next forty years. Primed as the "Corridor of Opportunity," the interconnected development plans bring together six major projects to build "one bold vision."[8] Covering 3,000 acres, the project is seen as "one of the largest urban redevelopment efforts in the nation."[9] The six major projects include three transit-based reconstructions and three placemaking projects. The transit plans are designed to provide substantial connectors throughout the city—Interstate 70, Brighton Boulevard, and the addition of three transit lines and four stations that spans the city. The NDCC's placemaking projects focus on addressing the National Western Center, Globeville and Elyria-Swansea (GES), and River North/South Platte. Whether it is envisioning how to produce a space fit for the global future or how to fit all the different Denver spaces together, a large-scale development project like North Denver's and its planning represents a moment where Denver is (re)imagining its spaces, relationalities, and potential identity.[10]

Given the NDCC's size, collaboration across multiple stakeholders, and long-range goals, the project represents a poignant case study to understand the social practices and negotiations that come to arrange potential future urban landscapes. Within the process of urban (re)development, sociologist Michael Borer argues that scholars should make a conceptual shift towards understanding the collective imagination. He states, "by studying a place that does not exist yet, it is necessary to make a conceptual shift away from collective memory toward

collective imagination."[11] While my last chapter demonstrates that we can never fully shift away from memory since it is an infrastructure that directs potential trajectories for future spaces, his call to focus on imagination within redevelopment is a useful pivot.

Redevelopment projects, like the NDCC, utilize the imagination to craft Denver's urban image for the next twenty years. While city plans are influential artifacts in designating what, how, and why spaces change in the urban landscape, it is but one component in the urban imaginary. Throughout this chapter, I turn toward Henri Lefebvre's understanding of the social production of space to account for the multiple moments that converge within the spatial imaginary. His theorizing of the triadic relationship between three moments of space "ascribes considerable significance to the spatial imaginary."[12] The triad, to Lefebvre, is made up of representations of space (conceived), representational space (lived), and spatial practice (perceived).[13] Representations of space belongs within the realm of urban planners who imagine how a space can come to produce and construct a symbolic vision of the city.[14] Representational spaces revolves around the lived experience and imagination of inhabitants and users who seek "to change and appropriate" spaces.[15] Finally, spatial practices represent the dialectic between people's daily habitual reality and how a society produces, masters, and appropriates space to form a cohesive ideological structure.[16] The modes through which lived, conceived, and perceived practices come to shape space and the social consequences of these spaces has, over the last 40 years, become a critical site of study for rhetoric scholars.[17]

I join these conversations surrounding Lefebvre's work with particular attention to moments where the lived, conceived, and perceived spaces converge in the process of redevelopment. When city planners and urban users contend with a space's potential development there is a momentary negotiation between the imaginations of space that, if taken

seriously, can inform the city's future values, lived possibilities, and ideological structures. The moments of overlap between Lefebvre's three moments of space induce a negotiation within development projects that bridge and/or disconnect how we can imagine the spaces of our lives. I contend that imagination as a rhetorical infrastructure forms out of these collisions.

This chapter uses these colliding imaginaries as a grounding source to extrapolate how development processes arrange spatial trajectories—replete with multiplicities of people, places, things, and values—to fit together and form into a seemingly solidified place. As a rhetorical infrastructure, the imagination arranges potential relationalities amongst the users and planners of the space in order to smooth out the textures of the built environment into a desired urban image. Taking these arrangements and collisions seriously highlights the potential paths that redevelopment processes can take as they (re)produce the social space. The ongoing development process in North Denver is a poignant example to examine how imaginations (re)produce social space and for whom.

In this chapter, I turn to the imagination as a rhetorical infrastructure that arranges space's multiple trajectories and potential relationalities into place-making strategies and practices. The contested moments between the NWC and the surrounding Globeville, Elyria-Swansea (GES) area highlight tensions between the urban users, planners, and their vision of the future place. In particular, the imagined infrastructure for these projects arrange place-making practices around connectivity, community orientations, and stability/change. While the community seeks to retain space's openness to multiple histories, city planners pursue steps toward progressing Denver into its global future. Specifically, I argue that the contested imaginations develop a rhetorical infrastructure that emphasizes Denver's frontier identity of Western expansion as an active process of progress while envisioning community roots as a

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closed and static object within the place. In so doing, the imagined place risks smoothing out and fixing the heterogenous community identity as artifacts of the place while arranging ongoing future relationalities toward white exceptionalism and gentrification.

To this end, this chapter proceeds in four sections: First, using Lefebvre's spatial triad, I outline three major components of the imagination as a rhetorical infrastructure. Second, I underscore my multi-methodological pursuits within this chapter, which offered insight into some of the triadic spatial practices and collision within this ongoing development project. Third, I present a brief history of development efforts in Globeville and Elyria-Swansea with particular attention to previous contentious and marginalizing development projects to hone in on and contextualize the imaginative infrastructures I turn to in my analysis. Finally, I examine the current iteration of these past developments to analyze moments of collision within the National Western Center and Globeville, Elyria-Swansea development projects. Throughout the analysis, I demonstrate how the imagination functions to build a place-making strategy that expands Denver's urban image as a place of progress over roots.

Imagination as Rhetorical Infrastructure

In urban studies, scholars are acknowledging the role that imagination plays in shaping the city's potential future, with specific attention to how the imagination coordinates the city's field of experience.[18] The turn towards the imagination prompts questions about how and why the city is arranged into a taken-for-granted seemingly singular place.[19] These questions of imagination within urban studies are, at its core, a communicative and rhetorical question. Indeed, examining imagination as a process of urban environments is "a rather classic approach to urban communication scholarship, insofar as it combines questions regarding the role that major ideologies found in planning, policymaking and the media have in constituting cities as

both imagined and concrete places with a rhetorical or 'semiotic landscapes' perspective."[20] Communication scholars demonstrate how urban development pulls together, whether intentionally or not, the imagined, concrete, and embodied possibilities available in space to constitute place.[21] In this section, I utilize both of these strands of research to outline the imagination as a rhetorical infrastructure that 1) emerges in the communicatively instantiated moments of lived, perceived, and conceived space, 2) is contested or contestable in moments where imaginings converge or collide, and 3) arranges potential relationalities into place-making strategies, which develops the landscapes urban image.

First, how perceived, lived, and conceived moments of space are materialized into the built environment communicates what is imagined as possible in the production of the space.[22] In his influential book, *The Production of Space,* Lefebvre takes aim at theorists' understanding of space as an objective background or purely mental space.[23] Instead, he insists on a unitary theory that considers space as a combination of physical, mental, and social worlds.[24] By uniting these fields, "we are concerned with," he argues "the logico-epistemological space, the space of social practice, the space occupied by sensory phenomena, including products of the imagination such as project and projections, symbols and utopias"[25] To unite these fields, he suggests the triadic relationship between three moments of space—representations of space (conceived), representational space (lived), and spatial practice (perceived). While Lefebvre concentrates on how these three dimensions produce social space, rhetoric scholars have given greater attention to how they each come to bear in the built environment and its consequence in producing the social world.[26] It is in these instantiations, that the infrastructure of imagination emerges. Throughout this section, I outline how these triadic moments are communicatively instantiated into and as place.

Representations of space exist within the realm of conceived space and most closely aligns with what people think of within urban development. The maps, city plans, diagrams, and designs that planners develop create a symbolic layout for the production of space. These forms of representations of spaces denote a symbolic representation of how planners, scientists, and architects imagine a city and direct spatial practices. The symbolically planned and imagined space does more than map the streets in a city or plan a housing development. Within these maps and semiotic representations, "city plans craft an ideal image, a vision, and a more concrete blueprint for developers and city leaders seeking to transform an urban environment."[27] In this ideal image, urban plans instantiate power by symbolically organizing social relations around a proper urban user and directing cultural values toward dominant discourses and beliefs.[28] Communication scholars base their analysis in the notion that spatial maps, plans, and business interests are "constitutive forces of those spaces, and not even the most objective-seeming maps could escape questions about their ideological placement in a discourse of power and politics."[29] Constituting the space within these visions, the imagined city becomes a site wherein planners progress a vision of the city that often reflects and maintains historical trajectories of inclusion/exclusion as well as power/privilege.[30]

Representational spaces are the lived moments within a space that transform and appropriate conceived and perceived spaces.[31] Lived space exemplifies the relationship between material spaces, experience, and imaginative texts. Within this moment of space, "material space is available for the production of imaginary texts even as imaginary texts are resources through which we experience space itself."[32] For my purposes, it is best to focus on how images and the imagination co-constitute lived spaces in urban development. If we think of urban development as a process of planning places that do not exist or at least do not exist within the desired form,

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then it is important to underscore what images frame place-making strategies and its impact on how the place then comes to be and be performed.

Analyzing the image or imaginative texts as a productive source of the built environment acknowledges that "cities are framed by our mediated experiences."[33] The image of a city builds a set of expectations and co-constitutes the experiential urban landscape.[34] Possible sources for these images are abundant. A photograph or artistic rendering of a place, a mental picture we may develop from memories, and popular culture texts that depict a place are but some of the artifacts that alter our sensory and embodied perception of the environment. Constantly seeing rodeos or Western movies, for example, will alter the lived, sensory experience and expectations someone would have in the redeveloped National Western Center. Representational space represents the movement between visual texts like television, photographs, or films; past experiences influenced by personal and collective histories; and the actual built material place.[35]

While conceived and lived space may attempt to set the stage for users' potential practices in the space, the production of space also contends with people's material, habitual, and everyday practices. Spatial practices or perceived space engages these everyday material practices. To Lefebvre, "the spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it."[36] Embodied and performed in the daily reality of users and inhabitants, spatial practice encompasses how our everyday spatial enactments actualize or renegotiate the imagined spaces of planners and imaginative texts. For example, the conceived space of an intersection puts into place a crosswalk. Signs, laws, or even movies depicting people crossing the street at said crosswalk help people understand the concept of crosswalks. Each of these provide resources to perceive how to use the intersection and the white painted blocks in

the middle of street. Beyond just the lived and conceived spaces, our perception of how to enact

this space engages the societal rhythms and connections between pedestrian and car, values of

time, and even ideologies of capitalism.[37] In these spatial practices, as Michel de Certeau argues,

we have the ability and agency to shift and actualize the space differently through something like

the act of jaywalking.[38] Doing so speaks to people's agency as an "operator" of space.[39]

Inhabitants' movement and rituals perceive the order and rules designated by the conceived and

lived moments of space. The embodied practice of this order has the potential to maintain,

negotiate, and/or resist the production of urban space.

Even though these moments are theoretically distinguishable, Lefebvre warns that the

distinction between the spatial triad "must, however, be handled with considerable caution. For

one thing, there is a danger of its introducing divisions and so defeating the object of the

exercise, which is to rediscover the unity of the productive process."[40] Finding instances where

the three moments of space collide is one attempt to rediscover the triad's productive process

that builds into or contests social spaces. Specifically, I attend to how each of these moments are

instantiated into space and communicatively direct towards particular ways of being.

Lefebvre undergoes a similar analysis as he unearths these processes and their ideological

attachments through a special attention to the history of space. In this analysis, he argues that

different eras produce spaces through a particular spatial code—a means of interpreting, living,

understanding, and producing space.[41] This chapter looks less historically and more towards

ongoing urban development processes. Examining the development process concentrates

attention on the productive potential of imagining a "fresh space… which is planned and

organized subsequently."[42] Positioning this process under the framework of the imagination or

imaginary intentionally connects the production of space with the construction of communities. This leads to the second dimension of the imagination as a rhetorical infrastructure.

Second, the imagination forms a rhetorically contested imagined community through the moments of collision between Lefebvre's triadic production of space. Viewing the imaginary through a rhetorical perspective gives credence to how discourses, public processes, legislation, and activism constitute the formation of a collective imaginary.[43] The imaginary is an active participant in constructing our shared world.[44] As Robert Asen argues, the imaginary participates in this construction in two ways. One, as a taken-for-granted background, the imaginary, shapes shared assumptions, values, and perceptions.[45] The imaginary, as Robert DeChaine discusses, symbolically crafts a vision, or terrain, upon which enactments of citizenship, global communities, and civic culture must traverse.[46] Two, the imaginary is a resource for rethinking relationality amongst people and places.[47] Resources like our public vocabulary or different ideographs constitute the imaginary and "equips publics with the discursive and rhetorical resources for stranger relationality."[48] Thinking of the imaginary spatially, both of these processes arrange spatial expectations and guide which performances and relationalities should or should not be present in space. Together, the imaginary forms as a productive agent that "now mediates all forms of experience"—including practices of everyday life, agency, and collective and individual action.[49]

While the imaginary shapes the performances of and identities within the sculpted shared world, the imaginary in and of itself is also a rhetorical space. The discourses that converge to cultivate a civic or social imaginary creates a rhetorical space "both real and imagined, performative and affective… where culture and politics converge, identity is shaped, and power is wielded."[50] While scholars have done important work unmasking how different metaphors and

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ideographs shape the imaginary, the imaginary can become a contested rhetorical space through embodiment, protest, and visuals.[51] Josue David Cisneros' analysis of La Gran Marcha's (re)bordering of the civic imaginary demonstrates "how migrants, who embody a 'troublesome' ambivalence and ambiguity as transnational subjects, resist and rewrite dominant representations of the ideal US citizen."[52] Written to supplement DeChaine's work on how the metaphor of alienization borders the civic imaginary, this article powerfully calls forth the imaginary as a contested rhetorical space. The space of the imaginary is unstable, requiring constant reification into the shared social world.

These contestations exist across forms of visual, embodied, and symbolic forms, which rhetoric critics have attended to as acts of reimagination. For example, Elinor Light looks to graffiti as a practice that emplaces narratives, images, and experiences into space "to produce a particular aesthetic, a way of doing, making, and moving throughout our built environments."[53] Scott Mitchell analyzes mural projects as an act of emergent memory that rhetorically transforms spaces as vessels to reimagine Black spatial memories.[54] Alyssa Samek traces the embodied performance of running as a rhetorical protest act that temporarily transforms women's place and mobility in the city.[55] What these and other works illustrate is that, even if the city is developed as an imagined space, the space and its rhetorically constructed community is open for reimaginations.[56] As multiple practices, plans, and imaginations take hold within the urban environment, place-making strategies surface to arrange the heterogeneity of space into place.

Third, as a rhetorical infrastructure, the imagination is a resource that arranges relationalities and trajectories to make a future place. Drawing on the imagination as a form of infrastructure presents interesting challenges and questions in thinking of urban development. Even with a collaborative and robust planning process, "the urban environment is increasingly

one where it is difficult to ascertain just what social practices, alliances, and knowledge can be mobilized sufficiently enough to produce probable outcomes conceived in advance."[57] Given these uncertainties, imagination as an infrastructure focuses on relationality, or "the ways in which relationships themselves constitute an infrastructure for inhabitation."[58] If, as Vyjayanthi Rao contends, infrastructure is a medium of social relations that consists of the structural couplings of people and urban material, then the points of contact between people, plans, and urban material proffer a guide for the space's potential becoming.[59] Within the moments of (de)coupling, how do communicative practices influence which relationships can come into contact? How do these arrangements move urban development toward particular future trajectories? As a rhetorical infrastructure, these (de)couplings represent negotiations between various forms of imagined spaces. How and which spatial relations come to be (re)arrange through these imaginations is a rhetorical process of place-making.

Place-making strategies render place as meaningful. Through a variety of material and symbolic practices, the practice of place-making is a persuasive strategy that gives meaning to place. Of course, another way of thinking about the term meaningful is to view place as full of meaning. Aligning with notions of space as a constellation of heterogenous phenomena, then place-making also "refers to processes, sometimes directed by organizations, through which a collection of human and nonhuman entities become arranged into a dynamic configuration."[60] How the different relationalities and ongoing stories-so-far come to be throwntogether into an event of place imbues meaning into the place and provides resources through which people can make place meaningful.[61] As urban development projects seek to change the symbolic, semiotic, and visual-material performances of the area, the meaning of the place is in flux.

How planners and urban users reinstill meaning into the space requires place-making strategies, including cultivating an urban image. The "identity of every city can be considered to embody itself in its urban image which consists of different elements such as streets, communication networks, texture, cityscape, turning points, form and shape of buildings."[62] Considering that the developers' reimagined urban image alters how the city is legible for its urban inhabitants, imagination as a rhetorical infrastructure offers a resource to recreate how urban inhabitants make the city legible in their own mental maps.[63] The city's ability to become legible again is, in large part, guided through place-making strategies that involve "processes of land-marking, place-naming, soundscaping and imagining [so] a sense of place can be restored when 'emptied' of place attachment…."[64] Given the potential for urban development to empty out cultural, historical, and residential place attachments, the place-making strategies instilled into the imagined future place provide direction and resources for urban users to recreate their own mental maps. The different sets of images, practices, and relationalities available to the urban users cultivate what meaning the place takes on and for whom. Therefore, a development project's adaption of the urban image (re)arranges and guides how people, things, and experiences fit together within the future place.

If infrastructure represents how things come together, then the rhetorical infrastructure of imagination entails the connections amongst myriad texts that coalesce into potential arrangements of the space's past, present, and future. Further, the connection between how artifacts like city plans or maps imagine the urban landscape is up for negotiation with how people inhabit the imaginative infrastructures. Put differently, the imagination, as an infrastructure, arranges the interactions and relations between the triadic relationship of the production of space. The moments where these trajectories come into contact open the

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possibilities of space to performative and embodied (re)imaginations. Through the lens of rhetorical infrastructure, my analysis focuses on the (dis)connections and instances where the perceived, conceived, and lived production of space crash to consolidate an alternative urban terrain. In the next section, I discuss mental mapping as a methodological procedure. When put together with textual and embodied rhetorical criticism, mental mapping helps highlight the collisions and arrangement of relationalities that coalesce to form a particular urban image and imagined community.

Imagining Multi-Methodologies

As should have become apparent in the previous section, the imagination is composed of multiple forms, voices, and artifacts. To begin to understand this multiplicity, scholars must approach the space from various angles and should be informed by several perspectives. To do so, I enlist multiple methodologies throughout the chapter that help determine moments of collision within the rhetorical infrastructure of imagination. I utilize artifacts like city plans, reports, my own spatial experience, and mental mapping interviews. Analyzing city plans, reports, and the critic's embodied experience have a methodological lineage in rhetoric, which I overview in the introduction.[65] Therefore, this section mainly focuses on my use of mental mapping as an additional approach to underscore community experiences as an informative imagination of space.

Mental Mapping is a visually oriented qualitative method that helps examine the relationship that people have with physical spaces like the city.[66] Since its initial introduction within urban studies, mental mapping has become a methodology that centralizes the participant's ability to construct their own image and understanding of their physical spaces.[67] These maps also create multiple and layered visualizations of residents' sense of place for urban

developers and public audiences.[68] I turn to this method, here, to create a visual understanding of how residents imagine their neighborhood in comparison to maps created by urban planners. These maps are intended to bring visual and kinesthetic options into the interview. Bringing more sensory dynamics to the interview allows residents an opportunity to draw and discuss the emotional, social, cultural, and physical dimensions of the neighborhood that may be lost to a purely oral form of interviews.[69] For this chapter, I utilized the mental mapping process to understand residents' daily activities in the neighborhood, what spaces are important for them, how they would like their neighborhood to change in the future, and how they believe the ongoing developments will change their neighborhood. Asking them to draw and discuss these experiences in their neighborhood, the mental mapping method offers a spatial, visual, and oral creation of how inhabitants of a space perceive their own neighborhood and what daily activities may come into contact with city plans.

To recruit participants, I utilized connections through Colorado State University's extension outreach program. After sending my recruitment material to community partners, I began working with promotoras at the Growhaus.[70] The Growhaus is a non-profit indoor farm that is committed to "ensuring healthy food access in Globeville and Elyria-Swansea," which is currently a food desert.[71] The promotoras offered their small group collectives the opportunity to participate in the interviews for a $25 visa gift card garnering six participants. Including my interviews with two promotoras, I interviewed eight Elyria-Swansea residents, all of which identified as Hispanic women and all of which spoke Spanish as their first language. As a white woman who only speaks simple conversational Spanish, I arranged for a translator to allow for a more fluid and participant-oriented interview. For three interviews, there was a professional translator, two interviewees opted for one of them to serve as the translator. Due to a

miscommunication, I conducted three interviews using my own Spanish skills. The multiple

translation experiences present a constraint for fully understanding resident experiences in the

interviews. Additionally, I conducted the interviews at Swansea park during promotora meetings

or events to ensure accessibility and comfort among participants.

The interviews themselves took a semi-structured and structured format and the mental

mapping exercise occurred in two phases. The first phase began with semi-structured questions

designed to have participants discuss how they view and imagine their neighborhood. I loosely

structured this portion of interviews around Lefebvre's triadic production of space focusing on a

description of the neighborhood (conceived), their uses of the space (perceived), and their sense

of place (perceived).[72] The next portion of the interview centered around the mental mapping

exercises.

For the mental mapping exercises, I gave residents a basic street map of their

neighborhood to draw on. To offer some orientation to the neighborhood, I utilized Google maps

whose algorithm marks the most popularly searched places. Admittedly, this choice was in error

for it seemed to direct participants' responses. For example, dispensaries are overrepresented on

the Google map and this became a common discussion across the participants. It is unclear

whether or not this conversation represents the residents' common experience and perspective on

the space or whether it was directed by the google map. In each interview, I provided residents

with a set of color pencils and asked them to draw or mark different places depending on my

interview prompts. As they drew on the map, I asked residents to verbalize their thought process

and asked them probing questions to get more information about why they chose particular

places and how they enacted these spaces. There were two different stages of this mental

mapping exercise.

In the first mental mapping exercise I directed the participants to 1) draw what their usual daily routine in the space is, 2) mark and draw places that are important to them and that they think is important to the community, and 3) ask them to draw what changes, if any, they would like to see in their neighborhood. During the second mapping exercise, I asked them to draw how they think the city will change their neighborhood in the future and specifically asked them about the National Western Center plans. These responses and maps serve as a point of data to address the developed, ongoing, and at-risk, spatial practices present in the area. As residents discussed their daily habits, community spaces, and community identity, they also traced their current and imagined lived and perceived moments of space.

It is through these interviews, the city plans, and my own movements throughout the space that compose my analysis of the triadic production of space. Examining the development across these artifacts, I examined the points of contact that emerged in each artifact. Points of contact included dimensions of the space like different material places, shared practices, contested values, or negotiated visions for the future. Analyzing these collisions represent moments that arrange the possibilities of space into a distinctively meaningful place. As each artifact looks forward to secure meaning into the future place, they develop a particular imagination, a rhetorical infrastructure that guides the development process. Before I analyze the space, however, it is important to contextualize the points of contact that emerged from these artifacts. In the next section, I briefly summarize Globeville, Elyria-Swansea's historical lineage of development which persists in the current project.

Urban Development in Globeville, Elyria-Swansea

The imagination is rooted and guided from the past to help us understand our present and imagine the future. If this is the case, then something as large as the North Denver Cornerstone

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Collaborative surely must be drawing on North Denver's past to build upon its future. The neighborhoods that sit within this development area have a particularly long history to build from. Surrounding the NWC and NDCC development plans are three of the oldest neighborhoods in Denver—Globeville, Elyria, and Swansea. Settled in between 1889-1891 and incorporated into Denver in 1902, these neighborhoods have, throughout their history, been made up of predominantly immigrant populations.[73] Beginning as sites for immigrants from Poland, Slovakia, and Czechoslovakia the area's immigrant demographics have shifted towards a more latinx and largely immigrant population for the last 30-40 years.[74] Over the last sixty years, development projects in the area have implanted deep-rooted inequities and struggles within the communities.[75] In fact, from the 1960s-2000s the types of development projects that created these inequities hold some eerie similarities with current development projects. In particular, highways, the National Western Stock Show, and housing have been continuously redeveloped or altered over the last sixty years. In this section, I point out lineages of previous development projects to offer a grounded past from which the imagination builds.

Between the 1960s to the 1990s, Globeville, Elyria and Swansea were popular spaces for transit construction, industrial plants, and the National Western Stock Show. As a part of Dwight D. Eisenhower's *Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956* Denver began construction on Interstate-70 and expansion of Interstate-25.[76] Opened in 1962, I-70 and I-25 crossed right through Globeville, Elyria-Swansea.[77] From this moment onward, the community became divided as many residents were forced to leave their homes and living conditions were marked by the environmental hazards, constant sounds, and highway refuse.[78] Additionally, between 1962 and 1979 multiple new industrial plants moved into the stockyards that bordered and encroached on the resident's homes,[79] the National Western Stock Show began to reconstruct and expand,[80] small businesses

and grocery chains left,[81] Elyria's elementary school was set to close,[82] and the Denver Urban Renewal Agency made moves to refurbish homes and build more single occupancy dwellings to increase home values.[83]

Throughout this period, the residents won battles for increased police patrol,[84] new construction on community centers,[85] sidewalk and drainage repair,[86] increased environmental regulations,[87] and funding for multiple art and memory projects to commemorate the community.[88] Even with these important community victories, the prominence of city and industry-led projects influenced the GES' decreasing property values,[89] increased crime,[90] and renewed expansion efforts for I-70 and the National Western Stock Show.[91] Still an economically depressed area, the GES continues to fight ongoing battles between the city, the National Western Stock Show, and the surrounding factories. With the announcement of the new National Western Center development in 2013, community partners and resident coalitions highlight how the project leaves residents "vulnerable to the rapidly increasing threat of involuntary displacement from [their] homes" and a loss of their community.[92]

And yet, plans to redevelop the area continue. The city does so, though, with a multilayered collaboration process that was certainly not a part of the previous development processes. As the plan indicates, this "inclusive and collaborative process was established to ensure that all perspectives were considered, and that this Plan sets forth a vision desired by the community."[93] Of course, residents are skeptical of how much the city will actually consider their perspectives as the development takes full force. At the same time, the residents I interviewed flashed some hints of optimism bubbling beneath these concerns at the prospect of having infrastructural support in their long-running efforts to clean up, repair, and uplift the strong and resilient community.

There is no clear way to know how this development will impact the residents or GES' future. However, by examining the relational arrangements that are beginning to take form in these moments, I offer a glimpse into what type of place and imagined community begins to emerge as an infrastructure that arranges the NWC's and GES' envisioned future. Keying into moments where the vision(s) of place come into contact with the openness of space and vice versa is the goal of the next section.[94] To this end, I attend to three major points of contact surrounding the space's connectivity, orientation, and stability/change. These collisions occur in the I-70 highway construction, the NWC's new West orientation, and housing's stability/change. Showcasing the negotiations between perceived spaces of origins, conceived spaces of progress, and lived spaces of contested imaginings of the West, these points of contact cultivate a potential infrastructure of imagination rooted in Western development and progress. Specifically, I argue that, from these negotiations, the NWC and GES create a contested imagination wherein community roots are conceived as static objects within the active process of frontier progress thus creating place-making strategies that smooth out heterogeneity into a homogenous place of and for Western expansion.

Imagining North Denver's Infrastructure

Development projects are inherently designed and implemented to change aspects of a specific location. While development necessitates change, one of Denver's visions for their future development is to "preserve the authenticity of Denver's neighborhoods and celebrate our history, architecture, and culture."[95] This goal is especially important within the North Denver development projects as Globeville and Elyria-Swansea are some of the oldest neighborhoods with strong and heterogenous roots. While preserving these origins is a valiant goal for Denver planners, the term authenticity "has taken on a different meaning that has little to do with origins

and a lot to do with style. The concept has migrated from a quality of people to a quality of

things, and most recently to a quality of experiences... a city is authentic if it can create the

experience of origins"[96] The battle over residential roots and origins and the experience of

authenticity is a crucial crux for how imaginations collide within the North Denver development.

While the National Western Center and Globeville, Elyria-Swansea plans intentionally

marked the residential roots in the space as an important and valued dimension of the

development project, how this imagination comes into contact with the enacted development

plans demonstrate that there is a disconnect between the residents and the city plans. Utilizing

practices, maps, images, tours, and art, the residents showcase an imagination based in the active

and ongoing practice of the area's sprawling, dynamic roots whereas the city plans conjure an

imagined future that presses these roots into concrete and static objects in the place. This

contestation traverses across three themes—connectivity, orientation, and stability/change—and

surfaces within sites of collision throughout the GES' contemporary history.

<center>Connecting Multiple Places, Disconnecting Multiplicity</center>

In the North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative, connection across transportation links is

a prominent goal for Denver's future. Additionally, developing further connections between

residents, communities, and places like the National Western Center is a key concern for

residents, city planners, and community partners in the area. How this comes to be enacted in the

production of space offers a telling glimpse into the imagined networks of connection across

time and space. From the plans and practices, the main imagined networks stems out of

expanding and re-routing I-70, which indicates that connectivity, in this development project, is

arranged towards material, bounded places for automobility rather than residential experiences

and community practices.[97] To enhance material connections between and within Denver, city

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plans imagine further entrenching and expanding already existing and marginalizing networks of connection while community practices utilized the construction material to visually reimagine community connections across time and space into the development infrastructure.

The decision alone to redevelop and expand I-70 entrenches the highways historic roots of marginalizing the GES community. With an amassing commuter network that utilizes this highway, the NDCC aims to expand the six-lane highway to eight and make a portion of the highway move below grade.[98] It is worth noting that citizen and public comments gathered for the project's environmental impact study are overwhelmingly opposed to the plan citing the environmental impact, continued destruction of the GES community, and racist lineage of the highway's early construction.[99] Given that the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) already acquired 56 residential properties and 17 businesses, these concerns demonstrate worries that city plans are re-rooting the inequities of previous I-70 constructions to further entrench past displacement and marginalization.[100] The Torres family materially exemplifies these lineages as CDOT acquired two of their properties in the 90s and submitted notice of the family's third acquisition request in 2014.[101] CDOT's insistence to continue the project, despite citizen feedback, reinstills the roots of disempowerment, displacement, and disconnection that fell on the GES community in the 60s and 90s.

In response to these plans, Denver residents offer alternative imaginations about the spatial practices within these future connections in Denver. Public comments nod to how the increase in public transit could make I-70 expansion unwarranted as people would use transit systems more than the highway. They also offered a solution for potentially re-routing the highway in connection to I-76 and 270 as a way to mitigate daily disruptions to the GES community.[102] Framing their imaginations through the daily uses of the highway and residential

transit patterns, the citizen forum showcases a disconnect between conceived and perceived connection. As city planners conceptualize the expansion as necessary for future growth, Denver residents bring forward their routines and everyday practices as an alternative vantage point to imagine the highway. Even with these criticisms and alternatives the highway project continues as planned.

One imagined revision within highway development projects' lineage of disconnecting communities is Denver's plans to build a stretch of highway underground. Along the 10 mile stretch of redevelopment, the city committed to routing about a mile of the highway underground. This decision offers the potential to reconnect the currently separated Elyria-Swansea area. Building a 4-acre public park atop a part of the underground highway marks a potential overlap between material and community connections. The junction wherein this overlap takes place is at the edge of the Swansea Elementary school.

As city construction and community spaces collide, Swansea Elementary is a site where community, city, and daily practices converge to (re)imagine the efficacy of I-70 and its 4-acre park. Marked as an important space for every single resident's mental map, the school represents both a space for the future generations and a community space. It is unsurprising, then, that residents were concerned as I-70 plans showing potential interference with the school became public. As one resident recalled, "cuando empezó la construcción, pensaron que iban a tumbar la escuela… entonces hablamos con el director y todo y dijimos, 'No queremos que quiten la escuela, no queremos.' Si ellos quieren hacer construcción que vean la manera, que no la muevan y no la movieron."[103] In their discussion with city planners, residents challenged the city to rearrange their construction plans to ensure that the school did not move, thus retaining some community stability. After winning this battle, the city also needed to institute measures to test

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air and soil quality and create structures to ensure students' safety during the construction process. The structure they built was a long white wooden construction wall between the school and the construction site (Figure 5). This wall and air/soil testing, of course, still does not protect residents from the toll that the constant construction has on their housing infrastructure, ability to move about in the neighborhood, and the noise as well as air pollution.[104]

What the wall did provide, though, was an opportunity for residents to reimagine Swansea Elementary's deep roots within the neighborhood's spatial practice of education, community, and connection into the construction site. Initially, the imposing white wall and its emptiness induced fear among the students who worried that the wall was a barrier and the school was "algo que les iban a quitar a ellos."[105] In reaction, the GES community began to reimagine the wall as a blank canvas to re-root themselves into the increasingly disconnected space. In collaboration with the school, local artists gathered to paint over the white walls and symbolically alter the space. Along the different wooden panels, the aesthetics ranged from playful images promoting student's imaginations and sense of childhood innocence and biting critiques of the environmental damage and gentrification taking hold in the area (Figure 5). The vibrant colors and array of activities represented in the art provides students and community members a space to re-envision their neighborhood as creative, beautiful, and open to their childhood imaginations.
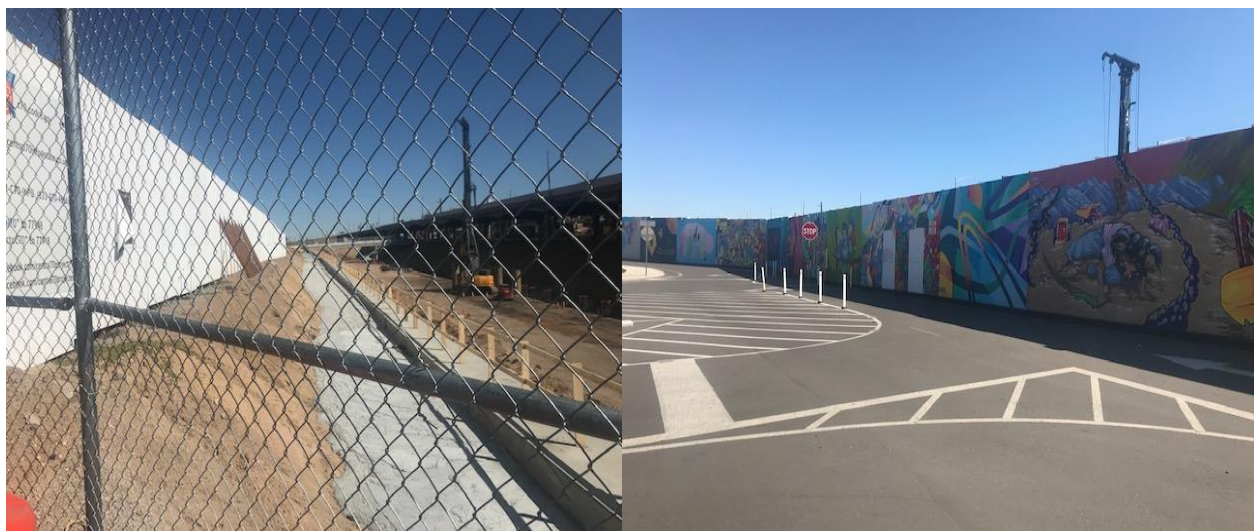
Figure 5: (Right) Blank white construction wall on other side of Swansea Elementary School, (Left) Community created mural painted on the construction wall facing Swansea Elementary School. Photographs taken by Jordin Clark

Created from local artists, the artistic styling and bilingual panels tap into the cultural value of Swansea Elementary school. As Azúl explained, "Esta escuela es importante para mí. Yo, en lo personal, me ha gustado mucho porque es una escuela, enseñan bilingüe, dos lenguajes."[106] Similarly, Florencia stated that the school was important "porque mis hijos estuvieron ahí y yo siento esa escuela como que me transporta a mi país… Es como 90% hispano en esa escuela."[107] The mural presents a "cultural landscape" that visually and symbolically incorporates this bilingualism while "heighten[ing] cultural identity and reinforc[ing] an ethnic solidarity of place."[108] Retaining this cultural significance into a landscape that marks the space as a construction zone symbolically communicates the residents' resilience and power within the space and as a community. This message imbeds further into the community through the residents' spatial practices.

As people drive across these panels to drop off students or as students play at the playground nearby, the mural draws on the space's material characteristics to represent an alternative world. Next to a school garden, there is an image of a sunflower growing in outer

space as a child looks at a pollinating bee through a telescope. Another panel marks the construction through the eyes of a child as they watch an animal dig up poison with an eye towards profits (Figure 6). These referential nods to the material places and activities in the area open the mural up as a mental map for residents to re-draw the I-70 construction in their own symbolic form. Rather than enact the space through the cities conceived space, the representational space of the mural offers play, community, and critical thought as an alternative perception for the space's future. Indeed, the wall itself existed because of this critical thought and community resilience.

Figure 6: (Left) Painting showcasing a child looking at a pollinating bee through a telescope with the caption, "Play is a world of learning, El juego es un mundo para aprender," (Right) Painting of a construction site where a child on an excavator tractor watches an animal dig up the ground with toxins. Photographs taken by Jordin Clark

Stemming out of the continued advocacy and resistance among the residents, CDOT funded the art project. Spokesperson Rebecca White discussed CDOT's reasoning for their cooperation saying:

I love that we've found a place for art in such an unlikely location. The school had asked for this wall, it's just sort of an extra layer of protection for the students, so why not make

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it a place as well? It's going to be up for quite a few years and to have something

beautiful for the kids to look upon for the next few years is a neat way to provide this.[109]

Indeed, the mural is a work of beauty for kids to look upon, but it has the possibility to do more

as it merges with students' daily habit of attending school and looking upon this mural. The

representations and invitations presented across the mural weaves into the mundane practices of

their daily lives. Further, its very existence as a canvas for local artists marks the mural with the

voice of the community. It becomes a clear representation of the import that educational spaces

have in the community as well as the possibility of advocacy within the community.

On the other side, the wall returns to its white baren wood as it stands above dirt mounds

and different construction vehicles (Figure 5). Here, I-70's impact is visibly and materially

exposed. Lest we forget, the wall shrunk the drop off and parking lot area and became a constant

imposing presence for the Swansea students and community. As the Swansea Elementary school

represents a community space for many of the families in the area, the I-70 construction right

next to the area mimicked previous experiences wherein highway construction dismantled

community spaces and residential homes. Burying these memories and experiences under the

ground has merely engrained the continued marginalization into the land, while papering over its

history with a four-acre park. The other side of the wall currently reveals the process of

marginalization. In this large ditch there are massive dirt mounds, construction vehicles, constant

noise, the ground shakes, and the air and soil measures represent a constant check on CDOT.

With these extant elements, residents' concerns about their crumbling housing infrastructure,

asthma, mental fatigue from noise, and concern for their children's health is easily linked to I-

70.[110] The roots of marginalization come into view throughout the construction process. The wall

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draws attention predominantly to the community voices while providing a barrier for I-70s long-standing and continued impact on the neighborhoods.

Yet, as Rebecca White reminds us, this wall is only temporary. The dirt mound will become a below-grade highway stretch capped with a ground-level park and the wall—with its art and all—will come down. While the park is exciting for many residents, this collision between conceived, perceived, and lived spaces are not built to last. Indeed, this collision showcases the ways in which community roots are emplaced as static, fixed, and closed objects while progress is made into an active on-going process. Making the wall into a place, the development project captured the community's voice and potential mental maps into an object that will be torn down. The community's advocacy to build the wall as well as the art depicting future generations discovering, playing, and critiquing can easily become a forgotten trajectory in the future development of the space. Instead, the wall will be replaced with a picturesque park that materially covers the highway even as the highway continues to cause harm for those in the GES.

Designating a temporary material construction wall as the site for residents and artists to insert their imaginations arranges community roots as a fixed, easily displaceable object. The highway, however, is an ever present and active site that symbolizes Denver's progress. Built in the 60s and expanded in the 90s, each re-construction speaks to Denver's continued growth and development. Even though residents' own place-making strategies via the construction wall will fall to create the park, the ongoing devastation of the highway will remain in the cracked housing structures, environmental issues, and continued legacy of the highway's symbol of progress. As I discuss in the next section, the routes for progress are arranged by what ideas and values the development plans orient the space's imagined future towards. In the case of the GES and NWC,

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development is oriented towards ideas of the "new West," which highlights the American

frontier heritage as it dislodges the community's experiences of multiplicitous Wests.

Orienting the New (Multiple) West

Arranging what relationalities remain present or absent, open or closed, active or static

depends, in part, on how we align the space toward particular vantage points, bodies, and ways

of being. To use Sara Ahmed's work, arranging future paths depends on how the imagination

configures our orientation to the potential space and its development.[111] Orientation, according to

Ahmed, "involves aligning body and space: we only know which way to turn *once we know*

which way we are facing."[112] Knowing which way to turn comes out of the different objects near

us, the lines available to follow, and the repeated directions to steer toward those particular

objects and lines. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, memories of Western expansion and

frontier grit have paved a well-trotted path for Denver to turn toward in their development

process. The National Western Center faces these lines and orients their conceptualization of the

future space through and around the new West. Indeed, this development project is imagined as

"a catalyst for the new West."[113] In this orientation, the conceived imagination arranges the

proper places of Western heritage as the anchor for envisioning place-making in its architecture

and aesthetics.[114] The perceived and lived spaces of the GES collides with this vision to

potentially negotiate economic, cultural, and regional understandings of the West and bring into

reach heterogenous versions of multiple wests.

Grounded in the American West, the city plans turn toward the new West through its

architecture. The NWC describes this vision as such:

the site and architecture should have an overall character that supports the pioneering

vision; one that celebrates the past, but clearly points to the future. The character of both

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buildings and open space should reflect the American West by considering the landscape, the river, the prairie and the agricultural heritage while inspiring new design ideas for the future.[115]

The new West does not seek to "reestablish older west or industrial buildings, but to design buildings that reflect the general character of the past."[116] Bringing a modern aesthetic to these "longstanding landmarks," the city reorients new visions of the West as the continuation of general Western practices of agriculture and industry.[117] The renewed "new West architecture" forefronts functionality with little ornament and simple forms.[118] No longer tied to the older west, the general character is open, simple, and detached from cultural ties of the space and its economic history. By orienting the new West architecture towards functional agricultural and industrial practices, the plan's reimagined West "begins to position Denver as a global player in 21st century agriculture issues."[119] In this rearrangement, the specific identities connected to the GES' spatial practices, representational spaces, and economic attachments are stripped away and reoriented toward an operational and frontier expansionist processes.

While these new relationalities can potentially advance deeper and more prosperous connections to the community than the neighborhoods' sordid history with the industrial sector, the general character also decouples the area's important contribution to the economic and cultural history in Denver. Indeed, one desired change in the Elyria-Swansea plans is to further connect the community and their industrial history to Denver's economy: "Elyria and Swansea are largely known for their industrial uses and major transportation corridors, yet the community is seldom referred to as a significant contributor to Denver's economy."[120] Without these connections to the community, the new West untethers the economic and cultural practices of the longstanding neighborhoods and rearranges the site as a source for new relationalities with the

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American West. Especially since there is also an engrained history of immigration imbued and actively present in the GES, the American West presents a very limited and limiting path for place-making.

In attempts to expand this vision, city planners and residents produced alternative representational spaces and spatial practices to re-orient the American West towards multiple Wests. Specifically, within a community guided tour, oral history project, and input on economic infrastructure the GES community rearranged future objects, lines, and arrangements towards a multiplicitous west. To understand the GES residents' daily spatial practices within the area, the NWC planners asked a group of residents to design and direct a neighborhood tour of the area (Figure 7). "This was," according to the NWC master plan, "a foundational event that opened lines of creative communication, camaraderie, and empathy among the members of the NWCAC and the NWC Partners."[121] While I was not on this tour, the map serves to showcase how residents perceive the significant routes and places in the area. Following its path highlights community-imagined anchors and edges. Analyzing these places, then, offers moments of contrast between the planners' conceived and community's daily lived understanding of the new West. In particular, the tour confronts the NWC's design by juxtaposing architecture that forefronts functionality and little ornament with culturally expressive infrastructures already instilled in the space.
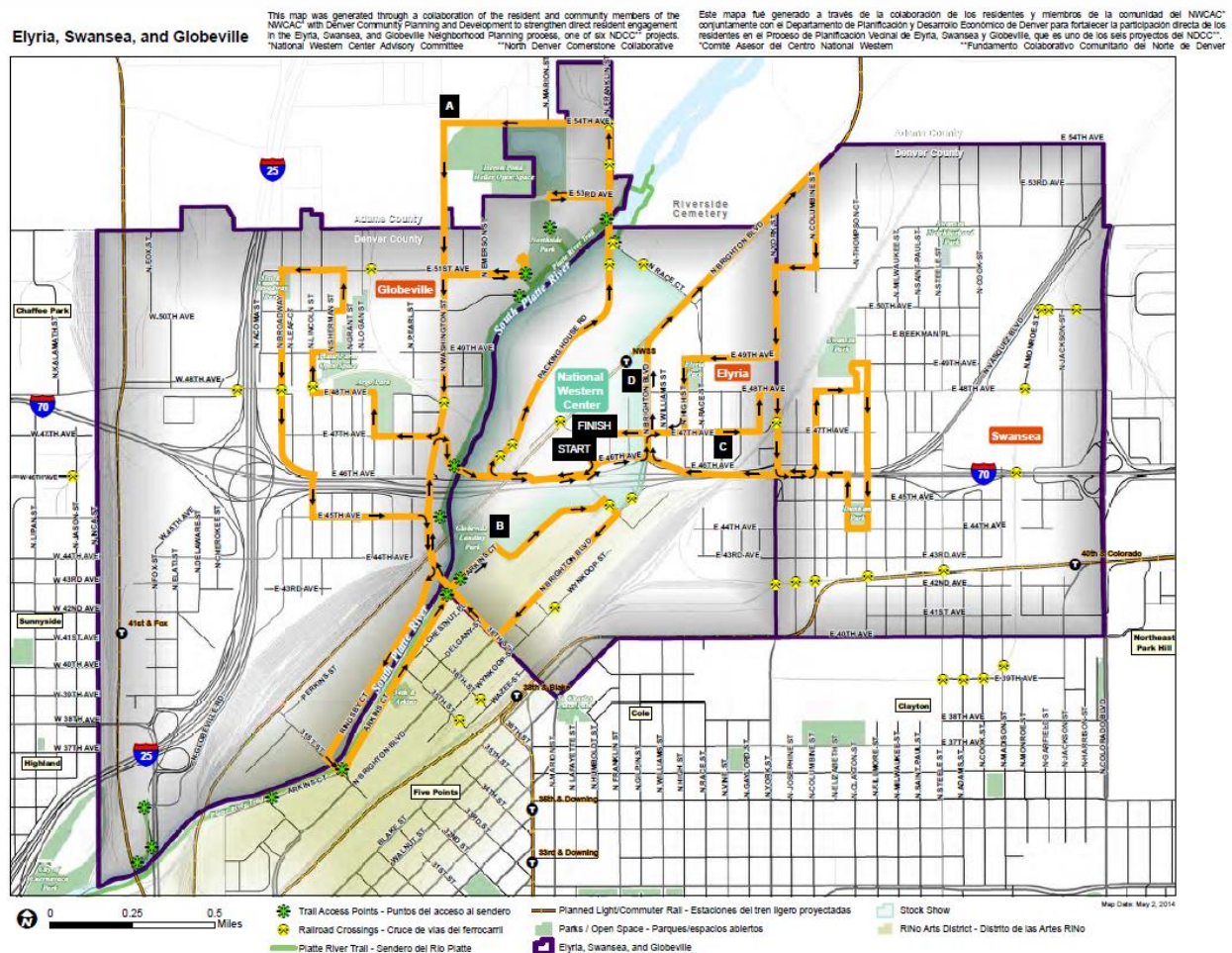
Figure 7: Map of Community-Guided Tour, "Master Plan Appendices." National Western Center Master Plan. Denver, CO: City of Denver, March 9, 2015. https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/NDCC/documents/NWC/Big%20Picture%20Docs/NWC_MP_Appendices_FINAL.pdf. P. 51.

Starting and finishing at the National Western Stock Show arena, the tour moves toward Globeville's edges where there is a mix of industrial companies and parks. Along the East edge of Globeville, the tour travels in and out of the park area at two different entry points while traversing past industrial sites. Oscillating between industry and public parks, the East edge of the tour connects resident histories with industrial areas and parks as a part of their everyday life. Indeed, the industrial history of the space has played a direct role in the creation, destruction, and renewal of some of the key neighborhood parks. Argo park in Globeville, for example, was

created by the Boston and Colorado smelter company for the residents who worked at the Argo smelter.[122] In the 1940s, the park was expanded and improved, but this work was for naught as the city found hazardous contaminants in the soil from the nearby Asarco, metal processing plant.[123] After the community won a $28 million settlement against the plant, Asarco was also tasked with cleaning up the neighborhood, including re-soiling and improving the park.[124] With the tour's movement between the area's industrial edges and anchored community parks, the residents connect these trajectories together.

Parks, in these neighborhoods, are significant spaces for gathering and activities, which becomes more apparent as the tour travels through three different parks in the center of the community. In contrast to these community areas, there is a deep distaste for industrial factories in the area because "Esta comunidad se ve afectada por la fábrica, las industrias, todo eso… También se ve afectada por el suelo también… Además la psicosis por lo de las fábricas."[125] Beginning the tour through the neighborhood with a site of juxtaposition between parks and factories presents an aesthetic divergence between community spaces and the NWC's proposal. Whereas the factory aesthetic matches the new West orientation, the community parks are marked through a vibrant aesthetic that nods to rich cultural history and residential roots in the area.

In 2008, the city funded a local artist to paint a mural entitled "The New Worlds of Globeville Pool," where the exterior walls depict "a stone wall with Aztec sculptures and motifs wrapping around the building."[126] Drawing on Aztec traditions, the mural nods to the place of the indigenous West and Aztlán as reference point to reorient the NWC's connection to their industrial and agricultural vision. Especially with Argo park's connection to the space's industrial roots, layering Aztec traditions into the space opens different points of contact for what

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traditions, cultures, and heritages can lie within the new West beyond the American West. Securing the community center to the parks showcases how the community reimagined the parks symbolic and material landscape and offers an alternative aesthetic and cultural attachments to the functional new West.

Right after the tour passes through this imagination, the residents bring the group to the Northeast neighborhood edge. Here, there are individualized stylings of the residential homes on one side of the street and on the other side rests a commercial-apartment complex crafted through a modern industrial aesthetic with clean lines and a metal exterior. The city plans ask for "light industrial mixed use infill development to serve as a buffer or transition between existing residential areas and heavier industrial uses."[127] The industrial designs could be an example of said buffers. Yet, the aesthetic experience at this point in the tour showcases a jarring vacillation between industrial and residential roots. As a result, the residents' tour highlights the divergent styles and cultural relations between the community and the NWC's imagination of a new industrial and agricultural West.

Along the West edge of Globeville, the tour passes along an I-70 exit ramp with two murals, one that depicts a Mexican farming family with both the USA and Mexico flag waving behind them and the other with a wooden chest "intended to capture the vibrant and diverse group of people and interests that can be found in the neighborhood."[128] As the tour rounds out this edge there are two churches rooted in the neighborhood's diverse heritages— St. Joseph Polish (Parafia Św Józefa) and Holy Rosary Catholic Church (La Iglesia Catolica del Santo Rosario). As the three edges within Globeville's tour demonstrates, the Western heritage within the historically and continued immigrant neighborhoods has very different attachments. The European West of the Polish and Slavic immigrant who were prominent in Globeville's early

history is very different from the Aztec indigenous West represented in Argo park, and both divert from the American frontier West guiding the NWC's architectural design. These histories, nevertheless, come into contact in the development area. If development orients their vision towards the edges and centers that residents present in this tour, then the function of the new West architecture surely would not strip the area's cultural history to its general character. Rather it could embrace the wealth and specificity of the longstanding heritages imbued in the space's history.

Another orienting mechanism available outside of the functional new West, is the community's oral histories. In collaboration with the Denver Public Library and History Colorado, the GES oral history project represented one of the most concerted efforts to document a relatively meager archive of the area's past. Using oral history as a method of constructing the neighborhoods past produces a more varied set of historical records that has more potential to capture marginalized voices and experiences.[129] In the GES oral history project, resident stories provide a fuller understanding of the neighborhood and its relationship with the National Western Stock Show. Integrating this and other stories like this into the NWC's architecture is one of the primary goals of the Elyria-Swansea neighborhood plan. In fact, the plan instructs the NWC to use multiple historical interpretations from residents who have lived in the neighborhood anywhere between two to forty years as a guide for material markers, wayfinding signs, and architectural design choices.[130] Additionally, they request that the oral history becomes a permanent fixture in public facilities across the NWC so that people can bear witness to the stories that helped inform visions of the new West. Emplacing specific, but multiple, resident narratives into the sites architectural structure emphasizes stories as a symbolic rendering of the imagined character of the space. A far cry from the functionalist pursuit within

the new West architecture, emphasizing residents' roots within the area's cultural and economic history can offer an expanded sense of the potential new West beyond its agricultural and industrial relationalities.

For example, if the new West were to incorporate Boogie Mondragon's story, then resident's connections to community-created economic care would be within reach. Mondragon shares his memories of the stockyards and Denargo Market:

> We'd play at the stockyard and we'd ride the pigs. And the pigs only came in one time a year. We'd put boards on the side of our legs and we'd ride. As soon as we we're done we'd go to the river. We'd clean off, lay out, dry, put our clothes on and go back home. I laugh at this, but when I was little all my brothers and everybody I knew used to walk through the Denargo markets and we'd go and steal some of the fruit and go downtown. And we'd done that many years. As I got older, I had to deal with those people at the markets over there. They were laughing, they said 'you were never stealing from us. We used to put that out there for you's.'[131]

As I demonstrated in my last chapter, the Denargo markets, as a community site, is a forgotten trajectory within the RiNo's memory infrastructure. And yet, this story brings forward that trajectory and arranges it in relation to the community's spatial practices with the National Western Stockyards.

Orienting the Nation Western Stockyards and Denargo market toward community-oriented economic approach, the story imagines alternative economic forms available to spaces like public markets and less formal economies. These economic forms "encourage social gathering by providing spaces for swap meets, flea markets, and open-air public markets as a community and economic development model for low-income and under-served

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neighborhoods"[132] Instead of growing through private-public partnerships, which the NWC draws heavily upon, as the only economic orientations for the future space, this story and other oral histories would place informal and pop-up economies within reach.

Of course, it would be inaccurate to say that the NWC has not oriented their development towards advancing the economic connections with the community. One measure that the NWC proposed to ensure economic connections with the community is through a hiring program for residents. The jobs program offers residents with renewed economic connections to the construction of the site. However, as one resident pointed out, "lo malo es que van a ofrecer trabajo para toda la gente, pero nosotros como inmigrantes no podemos aplicar a esos trabajos."[133] This barrier may have been one of the reasons that the Elyria-Swansea plan requested

> Adaptable community spaces [that] can provide for social meeting and economic exchange where, for example, vendors could sell culturally-relevant items such as food, handcrafts, gifts and business services. This type of informal engagement could provide affordable items that make shopping accessible for people across income levels, and could create a market exchange that gives opportunity to both the buyer and seller.[134]

There are public spaces that the NWC has allotted to community gatherings and potential farmers markets, but none are associated with the campus that directly advocates for their vision of the new West. Imagining economic exchange through a (semi) informal trade of goods and services opens economic connections to more people, products, and services that represent a multicultural and inclusive global relationality.

If the NWC wants to reorient their campus towards a vision of the new West as an exemplar of a global future, then attaching its imagined design and architecture to multiplicity

rather than functionality could further a more inclusive global future. Paying mind to the stark contrast between the industrial edges and community anchors; giving credence to the residents' experiential history in the area; and opening economic possibilities to these anchors and experiences sets the stage for reimagining a new West that is less directed towards the white, colonial West of Larimer Square. Instead, the new West can embody tenets of openness and multiplicity. The NWC plans have taken measures to re-imagine the area through open and public spaces for communities to host cultural gatherings and economic ventures. These openings can allow residents to insert their lived and perceived versions of the West into the space. However, the specific spatial attachments of the new West offered in the NWC's conceived space limits what cultural, historical, and economic lines the future place can follow. Viewing the imagined global relationalities through functionality, industry, and agriculture places the American West within reach while detaching the space's potential future from the rich and multiple lineages already imbued in the space. Building the NWC through this general character of the American West reroutes the residential lineages away from the site. In so doing, the rhetorical infrastructures entrench an imagination that will likely uproot residents' connections to the space. In the next section, I analyze which roots are at risk of displacement within the differently imagined spaces of stability and change.

Rearranging Stability through Change

There is a longstanding and tenuous relationship within urban development between residents' desire for improved infrastructure and their fear of displacement and instability.[135] In the GES, this negotiation is alive between residents and city planners. One collision point that highlights this negotiation is the imagined vision of stability and change. In particular, there is contestation between which spaces should be arranged as or around stability and change. In

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previous city plans, "Areas of Stability" marked spaces where little change was necessary to maintain the location's character.[136] "Areas of Change," on the other hand, identify regions where more robust development should occur for growth.[137] City neighborhood maps highlight majority of the GES as areas of change, but identify residential areas as spaces of stability.[138] Through this distinction, the city plans imagine the home as private and detached from conceived space. In contrast, residents' imaginations arrange change/stability around home and homemaking's material (perceived) and discursive (lived) practices. In this section, I first demonstrate how city plans reroute community spaces as private and separate from development practices. Then, I highlight residents' imagined infrastructures of home that build upon already rooted community networks for stability and change.

By mapping the neighborhoods' predominantly public spaces as areas of change and privates spaces as areas of stability, the city delineates development efforts through a public/private divide. Private spaces or residential areas tend to be imagined as areas of stability to mitigate housing changes and potential displacement. Public spaces like parks, commercial districts, or vacant lots are then slotted as areas of change and, therefore, "of concern to everyone."[139] Each of the public spaces identified for change opens up the space's future to a wide breadth of public forums and decisions on what changes to make. In this public/change and private/stability divide, the city inserts ambiguity "between what objectively affects or has an impact on everyone, as seen from an outsider's perspective, on the one hand, and what is recognized as a matter of common concern by participants, on the other hand."[140] The stark boundary in what spaces are up for development and the ambiguity over whose experience is of concern absolves the city of responsibility for residents' home lives and community development and allows a wider public to decide upon neighborhood changes. [141]

In contestation with this boundary, the Elyria-Swansea neighborhood plan recommends that residential areas "be considered reinvestment areas where the character is desirable to maintain, but would benefit from reinvestment through modest infill."[142] Starting from residential areas out, the plan argues, would enhance "the quality of life in the Traditional Residential Areas… while promoting a re-imagination of the Areas of Change within Elyria and Swansea."[143] Reconfiguring the maintenance of the home as a starting point to reimagine areas of change relocates resident and community relationality as the development project's main concern in the imagined space.

Newer development plans like Blueprint Denver—Denver's comprehensive plan for the next twenty years—seems to take up these reimaginings by reconceptualizing neighborhoods outside of the dichotomy of stability and change. The new approach attempts to reimagine development through a more flexible approach towards "mak[ing] a neighborhood complete."[144] The plan defines the completeness of neighborhoods "by its distinct and authentic history, culture and character, as well as its access to a variety of housing types, services, green spaces and employment opportunities."[145] Given the historical inequities tied to the GES' lack of access to daily infrastructural networks like housing and employment, GES is slotted to undergo substantial changes to become "complete."[146] In this metric, the term "complete" suggests a more holistic approach from developers, but there is still a divide between community roots and material spaces in the area.

At stake in this reimagination is the definition of a complete neighborhood as well as whose definition. Especially as a historically marginalized community, the GES is shrouded by the definitions that the National Western Stock Show, Denver government, factory industries have imposed on them. A city plan attempting to complete the neighborhood continues to place

the GES at the mercy of "stereotyped perceptions and… dominant culture."[147] Clara, a community promotora, speaks of such a situation. In describing city developers, she states: "Sometimes they think like, 'Oh, GES is very poor,' and no, it's not that poor. The thing with these communities, most of the community are immigrants and they don't get benefits; one, because they don't qualify for them or they do, but they don't know or they are afraid to ask."[148] This stereotype, then, materializes "in help [that] is not based on the community needs," but "if all these organizations that are focusing into, 'Oh, let's help,' they would focus on what the community really needs, they would grow a lot."[149] Distributing change and stability through a city definition of complete, runs the risk of perpetuating these dominant stereotypical definitions of GES and instilling infrastructures detached from community needs.

Instead, by examining the residential imagination, rooted in and through the home, place-making strategies can become rooted in already existing community-created spaces and definitions. Majority of residents in the GES have lived in their homes on average of 7-10 years and "have called GES home for multiple generations and decades, with strong relationships between neighbors and original landlords and tenants."[150] Having stable roots within their houses, which pass down from generation to generation, has allowed residents to find deep connections to their community and create their own definitions outside of dominant perceptions. Rather than see GES as poor, residents that I interviewed described the community as strong, resilient, welcoming, and home. Of course, residents want to see more access to food, better streets without the constant construction, and less odor and toxins from the surrounding factories. Those are infrastructural failures that residents have had to deal with because of oppressive and inequitable development practices. One resident answered a question she assumed I would have after she told me about all of the infrastructural needs in the community. In anticipation, she said:

"Tal vez ella se estará preguntando por qué no te mueves a otro lugar, pero la respuesta es

porque nos sentimos como cómodos aquí en la comunidad porque hay mucha gente que es de

nuestra misma raza, y los niños van a la escuela por habla hispana. Nos sentimos como más

seguros, en confianza."[151] Reimagining completeness in the neighborhood through places that

residents establish for themselves foregrounds place-making strategies where the space

"ultimately [becomes] their own homeland, and thus their own identity."[152] Therefore, by

arranging the imagination around relationalities of the home reimaginations can move

community areas of stability and change "away from being objects and become subjects who can

then begin to establish their own home."[153]

In the GES, residents speak of the home that the community has established emphasizing

the community ties, networks, and practices entrenched within the home. In describing the

community, Clara demonstrates this link as she explained that the GES is a "a very united

community and they receive the people from the outside, it's always very well received, like

family."[154] Just as the home can provide space for family growth, in the GES, homes also serve

as spaces for material practices in community growth. For example, as a food desert, the GES

neighborhoods have created multiple community gardens for residents to have fresh and

accessible produce. Through these gardening practices, the line between community and home

merge as residents let people in the community to "use their backyards or open spaces… and

then the ladies from the community, they planted and they go and they clean."[155] Creating

everyday sustainability through the home demonstrates the potential for residents' spatial

practices to maintain their rooted networks. In maintaining these networks, the home also serves

as an area of change for the everyday lives and practices of people in the community. Allowing

the residential home to extend beyond the private sphere or area of stability offers alternative

imaginations of what transformations can be made throughout the city's designated areas of change.

Extending practices of the home into practices of change also opens development to processes of homemaking. Celeste, a resident who is proudly engaged in acts of change serves as a great example of this potential conceptual pivot. She described her motivation for pursuing programs of change when she said: "A veces, como madres, no sé-- Yo soy mexicana, y no sé la cultura de cada país, pero nosotros nos enfocamos mucho en la casa, amas de casa… Nos gusta participar… Nos gusta dar nuestra opinión… Igual nos gusta agradecer… Cada detalle que tienen hacia uno."[156] Given that framework, it is no surprise that Celeste and a group of thirty other mothers met every Monday at 9:00 am to investigate community needs and their potential solutions. From these meetings, the group made significant, albeit seemingly mundane, positive changes in the area. Among these changes were getting benches placed at the bus stops, obstructing additional marijuana dispensaries from coming into the area, beginning conversations to build a pedestrian bridge across the rail lines at a major thoroughfare in the neighborhood, starting a mobile preschool project during COVID to ensure children were still receiving an education.[157] These are but a few of the accomplishments that Celeste mentioned in the interview. For her, in the GES, "la gente, la que no trabaja, es ama de casa."[158] Through homemaking in the community, residents are fighting to ensure stability for the already existing residents. Establishing home through their own definitions, opening their homes to the community, and using their attachment to home as an expansion of the community, the residents reimagine the discursive and material space of the neighborhood to bridge residential roots as sources of stability and change.

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Given the option, eighty percent of residents want to stay in the GES, but "projects like the I-70 expansion, National Western Center, and RTD's A Line, are having a substantial impact on the market, as is private speculative real estate transactions."[159] To the GES community, one of the more unstable conditions is the precarity of their homes. The changes occurring around the area make the homelife ripe to also change because "si sube la renta, mucha gente, mucha comunidad se va a ir a otros lados y va a quedar pura gente rica aquí."[160] Mitigating housing displacement is a prominent focus for Denver's twenty year plan and an immediate concern for residents in the GES. Indeed, the city designating residential spaces as areas of stability attempts to stave off direct displacement in the form of evictions or dispossession.[161] In a similar vein, the GES Coalition for residents is combatting displacement, albeit through a more on the ground platform, through potential solutions like the creation of a Community Land Trust, affordable housing bonds, new hiring and apprentice initiatives, or cooperative lending and banking options.[162] In this important work, there is still another force, I argue, at play—the disparate imaginations in the development. Grounding development in imaginations of a dichotomous understanding of stability and change dislocates the home as a fixture of and bridge between stability and change. Without the home as a foundational infrastructure to imagine neighborhood growth, the city leaves residential spatial practices as private while public changes attempt to instill an alternative and potentially harmful vision.

Imagining a Renewed Urban Life

The National Western Center and the Globeville, Elyria-Swansea development projects are not slated for completion until 2024, which is a seemingly generous prediction. Since the city published their plans for the area in 2015, the space has already changed significantly with even more transformations on the horizon. In the confines of this dissertation, I will not be able to see

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how or even if the collisions I highlight come to impact the space. Yet, if we take a pause on the possibilities of imagination as a rhetorical infrastructure, then, analyzing the potentialities that begin to emerge in a development space can become a useful practice. Utilizing Lefebvre's spatial triad, I identify the imagination through instances where the conceived, perceived, and lived moments of space collide within the social production of space. As an infrastructure, these collisions or points of contact arrange the heterogenous trajectories into particular place-making strategies, which arrange how future expectations, embodiments, and communities form. Throughout this chapter, I have turned to the imaginative infrastructures within the North Denver development projects with particular attention to the Globeville and Elyria-Swansea area. In particular, I argue that the imagined infrastructure for these projects begins to instill place-making practices that emphasize Western expansion as an active process of progress and smooths out community roots as a closed and static object within the place.

Yi Fu Tuan demonstrate that the ideas of space and place require each other to define either: "from the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa."[163] He goes further to define the relationship between the two to say, "if space is movement than place is pause."[164] Analyzing imagination as an infrastructure asks scholars to identify points of contact, contestation, and collision that occur within the process of pausing. While rhetoricians have turned to the imagination as a mode that guides people's expectations, senses, and embodiments as they interact with the paused places, this chapter focuses on the process of making place. Viewing the imagination as an infrastructure helps identify points of contact, contestation, and collision that occur within the process wherein space comes to be imbued with power, values, and practices as it develops into place. Focusing on the process rather than the product shifts the scholarly perspective in three productive ways.

First, keying into moments where the vision(s) of place come into contact with the openness of space and vice versa is a useful practice for understanding how space and its multiplicitious, ongoing relationalities come to be arranged into a singular power-laden place. Second, as this chapter demonstrates, there are a litany of voices, identities, practices, relationships, and spaces that exist within the negotiation for how spaces develop into place. History shows that urban development, in creating new places, often displaces the stories, voices, and practices that make up historically marginalized communities in that space. To focus on the process of development, then, is an opportunity and commitment to also make those communities visible. Third, since the imagination, as I define it, actively engages lived and perceived moments of space, this concept calls on rhetoricians to invest in everyday community experiences as an active agent in urban development.

Since much of this chapter is utilizing to Henri Lefebvre's work, it seems fitting to conclude through his concept of the "right to the city," which is at its core a "right to urban life."[165] Everyday users and inhabitants of the city have a right to not only occupy the everyday space of the city, but also to manage and create its urban life. In doing so, urban life can be built out of use value, places of encounter, play, and imagination rather than continue development through a focus on the economic exchange value of the city as object.[166] This chapter highlights the multiple on-going battles between developers' imaginations of the city as object and residents asserting their right to the city and urban life. To Lefebvre, it is through the latter where a renewed city can become the *oeuvre*.[167] As this chapter demonstrates, urban development processes, even with more attention on equity and community, still reduces and impinges upon residents' right to the city. Yet, the residents are still fighting for their right to their homes, their schools, and their everyday urban life. If urban development functions to arrange trajectories and

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relationalities into a singular place, then this chapter showcases the alternative imaginings of what that place can be and who it can be for. Allowing residents the right to the city is an available trajectory to build into place and imagine a renewed Denver urban life.

In the next chapter, I hone in on how people and their everyday practices negotiate rhetorical infrastructures to build alternative trajectories into the openness of space. In particular, I focus on how vernacular infrastructures negotiate already emplaced and inequitable infrastructures. Turning to the stay-at-home period during COVID, I analyze Sun Valley, a public housing sector in Denver, to examine how communities build bottom-up infrastructures as place-making strategies. As the GES teaches us, rhetorical infrastructures are open to contestation. My analysis of Sun Valley takes this lesson forward to consider how, in these negotiations, new routes form within space to enact and form place differently.

Endnotes

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2. "History Of The Site," National Western Center, accessed February 15, 2021, https://nationalwesterncenter.com/about/what-is-the-nwc/history-about-the-site/.

3. "Denver, Colorado Municipal Elections, 2015," Ballotpedia, accessed February 15, 2021, https://ballotpedia.org/Denver,_Colorado_municipal_elections,_2015.

4. "National Western Center Master Plan" (Denver, CO: City and County of Denver, March 9, 2015), vii.

5. Ibid., 8.

6. Ibid., 3.

7. Ibid., vii.

8. City of Denver, "North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative: Six Projects- One Vision" (Denver, CO), 3, accessed April 20, 2021, https://denverleadership.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Leid-Kelly.pdf.

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10. Triece, *Urban Renewal and Resistance*, 20.

11. Michael Ian Borer, "From Collective Memory to Collective Imagination: Time, Place, and Urban Redevelopment," *Symbolic Interaction* 33, no. 1 (2010): 98, https://doi.org/10.1525/si.2010.33.1.96.

12. Christoph Lindner and Miriam Meissner, "Introduction: Urban Imaginaries in Theory and Practice," in *The Routledge Companion to Urban Imaginaries*, ed. Cristoph Lindner and Miriam Meissner (New York: Routledge, 2018), 6.

13. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 33, 40.

14. Ibid., 39.

15. Ibid., 39.

16. Ibid., 38.

17. The history and different trajectories of the rhetoric of space/place has been outlined in multiple review essays. See for example: Joan Faber McAllister, "Space in Rhetorical Theory," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication* (Oxford University Press, 2019). https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.123; Joshua Ewalt "Mapping and Spatial Studies." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication* (Oxford University Press, 2017). https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.651; Greg Dickinson, "Space, Place, and the Textures of Rhetorical Criticism," *Western Journal of Communication* 84, no. 3 (2020), 297–313. https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2019.1672886.

18. Lindner and Meissner, "Introduction" in Lindner and Meissner.

19. Stephen Graham and Colin McFarlane, "Introduction," in *Infrastructural Lives: Urban Infrastructure in Context*, ed. Stephen Graham and Colin McFarlane (Routledge, 2014), 1–2.

20. Giorgia Aiello, Matteo Tarantino, and Kate Oakley, eds., *Communicating the City: Meanings, Practices, Interactions*, New edition edition (New York: Peter Lang Inc., International Academic Publishers, 2017), xviii.

21. Aiello, Tarantino, and Oakley, *Communicating the City*.

22. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 41.

23. Ibid., 1–12.

24. Ibid., 11.

25. Ibid., 11–12.

26. For example, Greg Dickinson, *Suburban Dreams: Imagining and Building the Good Life* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2015) utilizes representational space to understand how popular culture texts influence our imaginations of suburban life. Robert Topinka, "Resisting the Fixity of Suburban Space: The Walker as Rhetorician," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (2012): 65–84, https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2011.622342 analyzes walking as a resistance to abstract space, which bear remarkable similarity to walking as a spatial practice and site of resistance within Iowa Street. Mary E. Triece, "Constructing the Antiracial City: City Planning and Antiracialism in the 21st Century," *Western Journal of Communication* 82, no. 5 (2018): 613–30, https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2017.1390148 turns to city plans, or representations of space, to identify how racialized logics come to be imbedded in the very development of spaces.

27. Triece, "Constructing the Antiracial City," 615.

28. Ibid., 616.

29. Timothy Barney, "Power Lines: The Rhetoric of Maps as Social Change in the Post–Cold War Landscape," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95, no. 4 (2009): 413, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630903296176. Richard G. Jones and Christina R. Foust "Staging and Enforcing Consumerism in the City: The Performance of Othering on the 16th Street Mall," *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* 4, no. 1 (2008) add business interests as a dimension of representations of space in their analysis of how 16th Street mall performs

structural othering. They argue: "Business interests also fall into this category as they inscribe upon the materiality of space their own desires for generating revenue through redevelopment." (10).

30. For example, Mary Triece's "Constructing the Antiracial City," traces how contemporary racialized urban politics discursively advanced antiracialism as a cultural value and prompted urban planners' rhetoric "to promote American cities as postrace, as spaces where race and the closely tied concept of diversity may be celebrated without the encumbrance of racism" (616). Yet, these plans paralleled neoliberal discourses and created a postrace city "landscape fitting for market growth and tempered by the universalized ideals of liberal democracy" (617). As the spatio-temporal context shifts so too does the imagined possibilities of the city. Within a rhetorical analysis, underscoring urban space as imagined allows scholars to examine the ideological tenets and power-tinged manifestations that create dimensions of inclusion/exclusion and constitute a vision of the urban user.

31. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 39.

32. Dickinson, *Suburban Dreams*, 41.

33. Dickinson and Ott, "Spatial Materialities: Coproducing Imaged/Inhabited Spaces," 31.

34. Ibid.; Yi-Fu Tuan, "Images and Mental Maps," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 65, no. 2 (1975): 205, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1975.tb01031.x.

35. Dickinson, *Suburban Dreams*, 40–45.

36. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38.

37. Topinka, "Resisting the Fixity of Suburban Space."

38. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 1984, 96.

39. Ibid.

40. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 42.

41. Ibid., 47–48.

42. Ibid., 47.

43. Robert Asen, "Imagining in the Public Sphere," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 35, no. 4 (2002): 345–67, https://doi.org/10.1353/par.2003.0006; D. Robert Dechaine, "Bordering the Civic Imaginary: Alienization, Fence Logic, and the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95, no. 1 (2009): 43–65, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630802621078; D. Robert DeChaine, "Humanitarian Space and the Social Imaginary: Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders and the Rhetoric of Global Community," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 26, no. 4 (2002): 354, https://doi.org/10.1177/019685902236896; Darrel Enck-Wanzer, "Decolonizing Imaginaries: Rethinking 'the People' in the Young Lords' Church Offensive," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 98, no. 1 (2012): 1–23; Josue David Cisneros, "(Re)Bordering the Civic Imaginary: Rhetoric, Hybridity, and Citizenship in La Gran Marcha," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 1 (2011): 26–49, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2010.536564.

44. Asen, "Imagining in the Public Sphere," 350.

45. Ibid., 351

46. Dechaine, "Bordering the Civic Imaginary," 59; DeChaine, "Humanitarian Space and the Social Imaginary," 365.

47. Asen, "Imagining in the Public Sphere," 351.

48. Enck- Wanzer, "Decolonizing Imaginaries," 4.

49. DeChaine, "Humanitarian Space and the Social Imaginary," 365.

50. Dechaine, "Bordering the Civic Imaginary," 60.

51. DeChaine, "Humanitarian Space and the Social Imaginary"; Dechaine, "Bordering the Civic Imaginary"; Enck- Wanzer, "Decolonizing Imaginaries."

52. Cisneros, "(Re)Bordering the Civic Imaginary," 27.

53. Elinor Light, "Aesthetic Ruptures: Viewing Graffiti as the Emplaced Vernacular," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 15, no. 2 (2018): 182, https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2018.1454970.

54. Scott A. Mitchell, "Spaces of Emergent Memory: Detroit's 8 Mile Wall and Public Memories of Civil Rights Injustice," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 15, no. 3 (2018): 197–212, https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2018.1500699.

55. Alyssa A. Samek, "Mobility, Citizenship, and 'American Women on the Move' in the 1977 International Women's Year Torch Relay," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 103, no. 3 (2017): 208, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335630.2017.1321134.

56. Light, "Aesthetic Ruptures"; Joan Faber McAlister, "Vedic Victorians on American Gothic's Landscape: Relocating 'Foreign' Architecture and Restoring the Spatial Figure of Juxtaposition," in *Communicating the City: Meanings, Practices, Interactions*, ed. Giorgia Aiello, Matteo Tarantino, and Kate Oakley (New York: Peter Lang, 2017), 47–61; Samek, "Mobility, Citizenship, and 'American Women on the Move'."

57. Simone, *For the City Yet to Come*, 3.

58. AbdouMaliq Simone, "Relational Infrastructures in Postcolonial Urban Worlds," in *Infrastructural Lives: Urban Infrastructure in Context*, ed. Stephen Graham and Colin McFarlane (New York: Routledge, 2014), 18.

59. Vyjayanthi Rao, "Infra-City: Speculations on Flux an History in Infrastrucure-Making," in *Infrastructural Lives: Urban Infrastructure in Context*, ed. Stephen Graham and Colin McFarlane (London: Routledge, 2014), 40.

60. Joshua P. Ewalt, "Cultivating Consubstantiality with the Land Institute: Organizational Rhetoric and the Role of Place-Making in Generating Organizational Identification," *Communication Monographs* 85, no. 3 (2018): 383, https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2018.1427880.

61. Massey, *For Space*, 2005, 138–43.

62. Amin Maghsudi et al., "Urban Image as a Reflection of Urban Identity: A Study of the Link between the Concepts of Urban Image and Urban Identity in the Historical Texture of Gorgan," *Journal of Art & Civilization of the Orient* 8, no. 27 (2020): 78.

63. Meant as somewhat of a guide for urban planners, Lynch's work pressed planners to consider urban development as a process to increase city's potential legibility and sensuous enjoyment for urban inhabitants. Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960), 2.

64. Setha Low, *Spatializing Culture: The Ethnography of Space and Place* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 73. Low discusses these place-making strategies within the context of violence, fear, and terror. The passage underscores some of the contexts wherein people's attachment to place is detached like in instances of violence, fear, or terror. I would include urban development as another instance where pace attachment is vulnerable to change or dislocation. In these moments, similar tactics of place-making strategies are used to reattach place's meaning to certain inhabitants. Who those attachments are geared to is the question of this chapter.

65. Triece, *Urban Renewal and Resistance*; Dickinson and Aiello, "Being Through There Matters: Materiality, Bodies, and Movement in Urban Communication Research."

66. Jack Jen Gieseking, "Where We Go From Here: The Mental Sketch Mapping Method and Its Analytic Components," *Qualitative Inquiry* 19, no. 9 (2013): 712–24, https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800413500926.

67. Lynch, *The Image of the City*; Robert E Gutsche, "News Place-Making: Applying 'Mental Mapping' to Explore the Journalistic Interpretive Community," *Visual Communication* 13, no. 4 (2014): 487–510, https://doi.org/10.1177/1470357214541754; Hyunjoo Jung, "Let Their Voices Be Seen: Exploring Mental Mapping as a Feminist Visual Methodology for the Study of Migrant Women," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38, no. 3 (2014): 985–1002, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2427.12004; Jennifer L. Lapum et al., "Pictorial Narrative Mapping as a Qualitative Analytic Technique," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, (2015), https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406915621408.

68. Kimberly Powell, "Making Sense of Place: Mapping as a Multisensory Research Method," *Qualitative Inquiry* 16, no. 7 (2010): 539–55, https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410372600; Chris Brennan-Horley, "Mental Mapping the 'Creative City,'" *Journal of Maps* 6, no. 1 (2010): 250–59, https://doi.org/10.4113/jom.2010.1082.

69. Jung, "Let Their Voices Be Seen"; Powell, "Making Sense of Place."

70. Promotoras are women who are commonly considered to be predominantly health workers in Hispanic and Latinx communities. To read more about the productive relationship between promotoras and academic research See: Cassandra M. Johnson et. al., "Promotoras as Research Partners to Engage Health Disparity Communities," *Journal of the Academy of*

Nutrition and Dietetics 113, no. 5 (May 1, 2013): 638–42.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2012.11.014. In the Growhaus, the promotoras provide support, programing, and organization to advance the social, cultural, and physical health of the community.

71. "The GrowHaus," The GrowHaus, accessed March 27, 2021, https://www.thegrowhaus.org.

72. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 35.

73. "Globeville Neighborhood History," Denver Public Library History, August 27, 2020, https://history.denverlibrary.org/neighborhood-history-guide/globeville-neighborhood-history; Elizabeth L. Macmillan, *Elyria: Denver's Forgotten Suburb 1881-1941*, (2004).

74. "Globeville | Community Facts," Shift Research Lab, 2017, https://denvermetrodata.org/neighborhood/globeville; "Elyria Swansea | Community Facts" Shift Research Lab, 2017, https://denvermetrodata.org/neighborhood/elyria-swansea.

75. Cheyenne DeCristopher, "Globeville, Elyria and Swansea: Communities of Color with Generations of Injustice," *Sierra Club Colorado* (blog), January 25, 2018, https://www.sierraclub.org/colorado/blog/2018/01/globeville-elyria-and-swansea-communities-color-generations-violence.

76. "Historic Timeline," Colorado Department of Transportation, accessed February 26, 2020, https://www.codot.gov/about/CDOTHistory/centennial/timeline.

77. Eric Twitty, "Historic Context: Interstate-70 Mountain Corridor" (Denver, CO: Mountian States Historical, June 2014), 244–46, https://www.codot.gov/projects/contextsensitivesolutions/docs/pdfs/combined-historic-context-report.pdf.

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80. Memorandum from Annie Ray to Bob O'Donnell, "National Western Stock Show," January 19, 1979, box 30, folder 14, Harman, O'Donnell and Henninger Associates, INC. (HOH) Architectural Records, Denver Public Library

81. "12 Ask Court to Stop New Rendering Plant."

82. Art Branscombe, "Board Hears Ideas for Surplus Schools," *The Denver Post*, October 14, 1979; Art Branscombe, "School Board Votes to Ask for Bids on Four Buildings," *Denver Post*, November 16, 1979.

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92. GES Coalition, "Globeville Elyria-Swansea: The People's Survey A Story of Displacement" (Denver: FRESC, 2017), 2, https://www.gescoalition.com/the-ges-peoples-survey-2017.

93. "Elyria & Swansea Neighborhoods Plan" (Denver, CO: City and County of Denver, March 23, 2015), 2.

94. Yi Fu Tuan demonstrate that the ideas of space and place require each other to define either: "from the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa." Tuan, *Space and Place*, 6.

95. DenverCPD, *Comprehensive Plan 2040*, 2019, 00:18, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KtzBTbzDOk&t=40s.

96. Zukin, *Naked City: The Birth and Life of Authentic Urban Places*, 2–3.

97. While I am focusing on I-70 as the main site of connectivity, the National Western Center retains the theme of bounded, static place of connection in their own plans. Even though the NWC and outreach programs are working hard to find and cultivate connections with the community, the spaces in which connection can occur are still confined and delineated to open plazas or building floors. Designating certain areas in the center where community residents can play, meet, and gather still sets parameters on what, when, and where connections can occur. In contrast, residents' discussion of community is far more fluid and built through mobile relationships, be it activities, going to multiple places throughout the community, or just moving across the space. Nancy depicts this well in her recollection of first coming to the neighborhood:

"Yo llegué, ya ahí me tocó llegar a mi casa. Yo decía, '¿Por qué me tocó este barrio? ¿Por qué todo?', pero ya donde empecé a conocer aquí todo esto, hasta caminando yo me venía a las partes, porque no manejaba. Poco a poco me fue gustando el ambiente de las personas.Ya te digo, con mis hijos, mi esposo, puro llevar y traer de las escuelas y también participar en sus escuelas, en apoyarlos, en ir a las juntas o en actividades; en todas sus cosas. De hecho, mi hija iba a una escuela muy lejos y siempre yo tenía que ir a acompañarla en los juegos en los que estaba. Estuvo en fútbol, estuvo en un grupo de baile.

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Translation: "I arrived, and that's when I got to my house. I would say, 'Why did I come to this neighborhood? Why did I come here?' But when I started to get to know all of this here, I would even go walking around, because I didn't drive. Little by little I started to like the environment, the people. I'm telling you, with my children, my husband, just taking them to and from school and also participating in their schools, in supporting them, in going to meetings or activities; in everything, they were doing. In fact, my daughter went to a school far away and I always had to go with her to her games. She played soccer; she was in a dance group."

Nancy (Resident of Elyria-Swansea, interviewed by Jordin Clark. September 29,2020.

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100. Tayler Shaw et al., "Denver's Central 70 Project: Digging in Troubled Ground," Colorado Springs Gazette, accessed April 3, 2021, https://gazette.com/news/local/denvers-central-70-project-digging-in-troubled-ground/article_ed4fe09c-4eb9-11eb-806d-6fad58e688fd.html.

101. Gabe Fine, "Big Projects Are Home Wreckers for Longtime Residents of North Denver," Westword, August 15, 2017, https://www.westword.com/news/national-western-center-i-70-projects-are-homewreckers-for-north-denver-residents-9369550.

102. Some exemplary comments with these re-imaginations include Styles Adamson "Widening I-70 is not the best alternative! I76- 270 should be reconsidered. When light rail is fully implemented substantial pressure will be taken off and there is no reason that the thru traffic on i70 should go right through town. Sufficient consideration has not been given to the source of the traffic." (10); Lisa Adducci "I am passionately against the expansion of I-70. I think it was a mistake to divide the neighborhoods in the first place. Doubling down on that mistake is a travesty. Plus, times have changed. More people want to live in the city to be near work. More people work from home, cutting down the need for big highways."(11); Unnamed:

> As a life-long resident of Denver, I'm concerned about the scope of the proposed project. It is so enormous and so detrimental to the kind of a fabric of the city. It is about moving people through the city as if it was a sewer line. And I believe it isn't right for the community. It is not a contemporary solution. It is a 1970's solution of build a big road. I don't believe that CDOT has looked at real alternatives to disburse traffic, of making improvements to 270 and 76, where they have the ability to go along Sand Creek and go along, I think, it's Clear Creek and improve those corridors and not have to double the size of the I-70 right-of-way. (18)

"Citizen and Public Comments."

103. Florencia (Resident of Elyria-Swansea), interviewed by Jordin Clark. September 29, 2020. Translation: When they started the construction, we thought that they were planning to take away the school… So we talked to the director and everything and said, 'We don't want the school taken away, we don't want." If they want to do construction in the way they are seeing it, they do not move the school and they did not move it.

104. Shaw et al., "Denver's Central 70 Project."

105. Florencia (Resident of Elyria-Swansea). Translation: "something that they were going to take away from them"

106. Azul (Resident of Elyria-Swansea) interviewed by Jordin Clark. September 29, 2020. Translation: "This school is important to me. Personally, I've liked it a lot because it's a bilingual school, they teach in two languages. I feel satisfied because the teachers always help us when we have an issue with the kids. They are good teachers, and they provide good learning for the kids."

107. Florencia (resident of Elyria-Swansea). Translation: Because my kids went here and I feel like this school transports me to my country. It's like 90% Hispanic in that school.

108. Daniel D. Arreola, "Placemaking and Latino Urbanism in a Phoenix Mexican Immigrant Community," *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 5, no. 2–3 (2012): 159, https://doi.org/10.1080/17549175.2012.693749.

109. "Painted Mural Wall Separates Central 70 Project From School," August 27, 2018, https://denver.cbslocal.com/2018/08/27/mural-wall-central-70-project-swansea/.

110. "Painted Mural Wall Separates Central 70 Project From School," 70.

111. Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, and Others*.

112. Ibid., 7.

113. "National Western Center Master Plan," vii.

114. Ibid., 49.

115. Ibid., 71.

116. Ibid., 71.

117. Ibid., 40.

118. Ibid., 71.

119. Ibid., 4.

120. "Elyria & Swansea Neighborhoods Plan," 16.

121. "National Western Center Master Plan," 59.

122. Mary Lou Egan, "Globeville Story: Argo Park," *Globeville Story* (blog), November 13, 2010, http://globevillestory.blogspot.com/2010/11/argo-park.html.

123. Ibid.

124. Natasha Gardner, "Welcome to Globeville," *5280*, November 2014, https://www.5280.com/globeville/.

125. Lupita (promotora for Elyria-Swansea), interviewed by Jordin Clark. September 21, 2020. Translation: This community is affected by the factory, the industries, all of that… It's also affected by the soil… Also the psychosis about the factories."

126. Larry Borowsky, "Good Neighbor Agreements," *Judy Montero- News from Denver Council District 9* (blog), March 20, 2008, https://lboros.wordpress.com/2008/03/.

127. "Elyria & Swansea Neighborhoods Plan," 94.

128. "Globeville Mural 2014 Update!," PlatteForum, *ArtLab Blog* (blog), August 3, 2014, https://platteforum.org/blog/2014/08/04/globeville-mural-2014-update.

129. Danielle Endres, "Environmental Oral History," *Environmental Communication* 5, no. 4 (2011): 485–98, https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2011.610810; Mary Ann Villarreal, "Finding Our Place: Reconstructing Community through Oral History," *The Oral History Review* 33, no. 2 (2006): 45–64; Ellen Swain, "Oral History in the Archives: Its Documentary Role in the Twenty-First Century," *The American Archivist* 66, no. 1 (January 1, 2003): 139–58, https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.66.1.9284q6r604858h40.

130. "Elyria & Swansea Neighborhoods Plan," 17.

131. History Colorado, *Mario, Boogie, Phylis, and Cleo - Globeville-Elyria-Swansea Neighborhood Memory Project*, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rE7C75av9U&list=PLl68fplNJM8Cjy9Jw7qsLcZU8W_6f nmEH&index=2.

132. "Elyria & Swansea Neighborhoods Plan," 20.

133. Florencia (resident of Elyria-Swansea). Translation: "But the bad thing is that even though they're going to be offering jobs for people, we as immigrants can't apply for those jobs"

134. "Elyria & Swansea Neighborhoods Plan," 16.

135. Jiří Pánek, Michael R. Glass, and Lukáš Marek, "Evaluating a Gentrifying Neighborhood's Changing Sense of Place Using Participatory Mapping," *Cities* 102 (2020): 102723, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102723.

136. Andrew Kenney, "Forget 'Areas of Stability.' Denver Is Changing How It Talks about Growth.," *Denverite* (blog), February 20, 2018, https://denverite.com/2018/02/20/denver-tries-reset-city-planning-conversation-new-blueprint/.

137. Ibid.

138. "Elyria & Swansea Neighborhoods Plan," 25; "Globeville Neighborhood Plan" (Denver, CO: City of Denver, 2016), 33.

139. Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990): 71, https://doi.org/10.2307/466240.

140. Ibid., 71.

141. This contrived distinction becomes especially fraught with the history of displacement and eminent domain in the area. Indeed, the public/private divide was much less

stark when the city acquired 56 homes and 17 businesses to construct the public highway; Shaw et al., "Denver's Central 70 Project," 70.

142. "Elyria & Swansea Neighborhoods Plan," 26.

143. Ibid., 26.

144. "Blueprint Denver: A Blueprint for an Inclusive City" (Denver: City and County of Denver, 2019), 130.

145. Ibid., 130.

146. "Elyria & Swansea Neighborhoods Plan," 25; "Globeville Neighborhood Plan," 33.

147. Lisa A. Flores, "Creating Discursive Space through a Rhetoric of Difference: Chicana Feminists Craft a Homeland," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 82, no. 2 (1996): 145, https://doi.org/10.1080/00335639609384147.

148. Clara (promotora for Elyria-Swansea), interviewed by Jordin Clark. September 21, 2020.

149. Ibid.

150. GES Coalition, "Globeville Elyria-Swansea: The People's Survey A Story of Displacement," 4.

151. Florencia (Resident of Elyria-Swansea), Translation: "Maybe you're wondering why you don't move out of here, but the reason that I don't move is because I feel very comfortable. There are a lot of people of my own race, and you have the school that is a Spanish school, so we feel comfortable."

152. Flores, "Creating Discursive Space through a Rhetoric of Difference," May 1, 1996, 146.

153. Ibid., 146.

154. Clara (promotora for Elyria-Swansea).

155. Ibid.

156. Celeste (resident of Elyria-Swansea). Interviewed by Jordin Clark, September 29, 2020. Translation: Sometimes, as mothers, I don't know—I am Mexican, and I don't know about the culture of every country, but we focus a lot in the home… We like to participate… We like to give our opinion… They are grateful too… of every detail they have toward us."

157. Ibid.

158. Ibid.. Translation: "the people, who do not work, are homemakers."

159. GES Coalition, "Globeville Elyria-Swansea: The People's Survey A Story of Displacement," 4.

160. Lupita (promotora in Elyria-Swansea). Translation: "if the rent goes up, a lot of people, a lot of the community is going to move away and it's going to be just rich people here."

161. Amy Twigge-Molecey, "Exploring Resident Experiences of Indirect Displacement in a Neighbourhood Undergoing Gentrification: The Case of Saint-Henri in Montréal," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 23, no. 1 (2014): 2.

162. GES Coalition, "Globeville Elyria-Swansea," 18.

163. Tuan, *Space and Place*, 6.

164. Ibid.

165. Henri Lefebvre, "The Right to the City," in *Writings on Cities: Henri Lefebvre*, ed. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 158.

166. Ibid., 148.

167. Ibid., 156.

Negotiating Failed Infrastructures: Vernacular Infrastructures in the Time of COVID-19

While the first identified COVID case occurred in Wuhan, China in December 2019, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11th.[1] In Colorado, Governor Jared Polis confirmed the state's first case of COVID-19 on March 5th and the first COVID fatality on March 13th.[2] By March 26th, the United States surpassed China's infection rates becoming the epicenter of the virus.[3] To mitigate the growing case numbers and death toll that was surging in the United States, Governor Polis, along with nearly every state in the US, instituted a statewide stay-at-home order. Requiring residents to avoid unnecessary activities outside of their homes except for critical activities, the order began on March 25th.[4] Even though Polis ended the statewide order on April 27th, multiple counties across Colorado maintained their local stay-at-home orders until May 8th, including Denver county.[5]

Within Denver, the urban experience created distinct and specific struggles during the stay-at-home period of the pandemic. As a highly infectious airborne virus, cities' high population density, public transportation, multi-unit housing structures, and an abundance of interconnected networks presented obstacles to containing the spread of COVID.[6] In large part because of factors linked to population density, Ivan J. Ramirez and Jieun Lee found that between March and April, 2020 Colorado's "urban settings, relative to rural settings were at greater risk for COVID-19 incidence."[7] Not only was the risk of infection greater, but the stay-at-home orders disrupted daily life and further exacerbated already existing urban inequalities.

In particular, historically marginalized communities throughout Denver were disproportionately affected by the pandemic and its cascading effects on daily life. Latinx, Black, and Indigenous communities faced higher rates of COVID infections, hospitalizations, and

fatalities than white residents.[8] Social determinants like access to food, housing, healthcare, clean air, and water help explain COVID's differential impact on communities of color and low-income areas.[9] Therefore, the decades of racist segregation and disenfranchisement within urban planning and policy left historically marginalized communities particularly vulnerable to the virus. Additionally, without equitable public infrastructures already in place, Denver's stay-at-home period also saw an unprecedented rise in unemployment, food insecurity, and eviction, each of which predominately impacted non-white, lower-class residents.[10] Even though the pandemic represents a deeply challenging time for communities around the globe, its overarching impact on marginalized communities highlighted and intensified ongoing infrastructural failures within the urban landscape.

In this chapter, I focus on one neighborhood's experience during these stay-at-home orders, Sun Valley. Sun Valley is a Section 8 housing district that is in the process of development to become a new eco-district in Denver. The residents of Sun Valley form an economically impoverished, yet diverse community that includes refugees, immigrants, Black, and Latinx families, single-parent households, and individuals who suffer from chronic health conditions or who are permanently disabled. Although the residents of Sun Valley live in downtown Denver, they are geographically isolated and contained by a highway, industrial sites, and the vast parking lots for a national football stadium. This isolation restricts residents' right to the city, curbs access to opportunities in Denver, and limits the potential for economic growth within the community. Sun Valley is the city's poorest neighborhood with 83% percent of Sun Valley households living below the poverty line.[11] And yet, as a public housing sector undergoing a massive redevelopment, Sun Valley residents experienced unique tensions during this same period. Residents' stable housing access was mixed with uncertainty over their place in

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the redevelopment. Increased support from development organizations alleviated some of the initial COVID-driven precarity, but the new mixed-income building sites left some feeling vulnerable to a future loss of community.

Throughout this chapter, I focus less on the development process in Sun Valley. Instead, I emphasize the relationship between infrastructural support available because of the development and the residents' everyday coping mechanisms during COVID-19. I analyze this scenario as an emergent moment in which the community, through its repair-oriented response to COVID's stay-at-home period, refurbishes failed infrastructures into vernacular rhetorical infrastructures. Specifically, I argue that Sun Valley residents sculpted vernacular infrastructures centered around care, play, and growth to link community as a foundational and adaptive component of residents' sense of place. To do so, the chapter proceeds as follows. First, I identify how COVID-19 serves as an example of infrastructural failure. Second, I outline vernacular infrastructures as bottom-up, repair-oriented practices, which emerge during moments of precarity to (re)build community networks and relationalities. Third, I detail my methodological approach—photovoice—and highlight how it functions within the critical participatory trends in rhetoric. Finally, I analyze Sun Valley residents' emergent vernacular infrastructures during Denver's initial stay-at-home orders.

COVID-19 and Infrastructural Failure

COVID-19, as a global pandemic, represents a moment of what Stephen Graham calls infrastructural failure.[12] I focus primarily on the stay-at-home period to discuss the two forms of infrastructural failure that Graham identifies: 1) an event of infrastructural failure associated with apocalyptic fears and 2) ongoing infrastructural disruptions linked to cultural repair. The first form speaks to how events rupture urban infrastructure's taken-for-granted state as the "normal,

societal background," and "deem[s] to threaten the 'normal' worlds of transnational capitalism."[13] Four processes often connect to events of infrastructural failure. First, infrastructures that are often made to be invisible become exposed as the disruption moves infrastructures from the backstage of daily life and into the spotlight for critical examination and scrutiny.[14] Second, since infrastructures are tightly woven assemblages, events of infrastructural failure produce cascading effects that move through and disrupt the whole system.[15] Third, public discourses reframe the event as a technical malfunction, act of nature, and an unavoidable tragedy or disaster.[16] Finally, the reactions in the aftermath of such events prompt increased measures or fail-safes within infrastructure to ensure less risk in the future.[17] COVID has left many people, communities, nations in a deeply precarious state making it an event of infrastructural failure.

From previous events of infrastructural failure like the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, urban planners and government agencies developed a definition of "critical infrastructures" as a metric to measure vital infrastructures whose failure "might cause a large loss of life or adversely affect the nation's morale."[18] Across federal, state, local governments and different private and public sectors, agencies have identified, reinforced, and prioritized the security and quick recovery of sites deemed as critical infrastructures.[19] In practice, they do so unevenly and with little regard for the "mundane protection of human life."[20] Rather, as Michael Dillon and Julian Reid argue, critical infrastructures have served as "a more profound defense of the combined physical and technological infrastructures on which global liberal regimes have come to depend for their sustenance and development in recent years."[21] As a result, in events of crisis and infrastructural failure, marginalized communities continue to take the brunt of destruction, disruption, and death.

The COVID-19 pandemic maintains this pattern as communities of color, lower-class, and immigrant populations are disproportionately impacted by the virus and its cascading effects.[22] On top of the infrastructural failures, the national, state, and local government responses, which could have lessened the effects of COVID, were often unevenly enforced, economically driven, and provided under-resourced or no networks of support for impacted communities.[23] Of course, marginalized communities are no strangers to failure on the federal, state, local, and infrastructural levels. COVID did not create these inequities but further aggravated the already disrupted and insufficient infrastructures within marginalized communities.

Given this reality, marginalized communities are, unfortunately, well-practiced in the second form of Graham's concept of infrastructural failure: cultural repair. For him, cultural repair focuses on "the improvised coping strategies of users and providers in dealing with day-to-day infrastructure disruptions."[24] In this form of infrastructural failure, seemingly engrained community foundations are consistently disrupted and opened to a necessary liveliness of bottom-up infrastructural improvisation.[25] When spaces are alive to the social dynamism of their users, infrastructure enters into a process of urban becoming. In this becoming, communities have the potential to set "in motion a specific way of seeing, of envisioning the environment that will inform how people, things, places, and infrastructure will be used."[26] These emergences are indicators of the co-constitutive relationship between the social, material, and infrastructural dimensions throughout urban life.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the urban technological processes that make up urban infrastructure collapsed, thus creating an assemblage of failure that has left a devastating gap between larger infrastructural technologies and people's livelihoods and social

community. Yet, through failure, urban centers enter into a process of urban becoming, which opens engrained socio-technic systems to bottom-up infrastructural improvisation.[27] COVID exposed and created gaps within larger systems and urban life. The everyday community practices that emerged out of these gaps showcase routes of renewed stability through which one can reimagine urban life in a pandemic era. In the next section, I examine these individual and community practices as a form of what I call vernacular infrastructures.

Vernacular Infrastructures

Calling on critical rhetoric scholars to expand criticism beyond primarily analyzing rhetorics of domination, Kent Ono and John Sloop brought forth a critical heuristic to examine vernacular discourses in their article "The Critique of Vernacular Discourse."[28] They define vernacular discourse as speeches and cultural practices that resonate with and are specific to historically oppressed communities.[29] Providing vernacular discourse as a critical heuristic, Ono and Sloop call on scholars to think through how historically marginalized communities survive and remain resilient by crafting a discourse that rejects dominant frameworks and affirms community-crafted identities and practices.[30] In this chapter, I examine these community practices during the COVID-19 pandemic to analyze what I call vernacular infrastructures for the Sun Valley community.

I define vernacular infrastructure as everyday, emplaced practices that open existing urban infrastructure's purpose, function, or mode to reimagine social patterns through a framework of community. There are four specific components to vernacular infrastructures that I will discuss throughout this section. They 1) are produced through everyday and 2) emplaced practices that 3) open engrained infrastructures to a process of urban becoming, and 4) create alternative infrastructures wherein community subjects, practices, or spaces can emerge.

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First, vernacular infrastructures are produced and shaped through everyday practices. At the outset of work on vernacular discourse, scholars shifted their attention to the everyday as a vernacular performance of the public as well as a mode of rhetorical invention for marginalized local communities.[31] Within public sphere theory and publics, Gerard Hauser wields the concept of vernacular rhetoric as a tool to shift rhetoricians' focus from speeches and formal discourses to "everyday exchanges of the street."[32] Emphasizing quotidian negotiations amongst plural experiences, vernacular serves as a discursive arena in which strangers and communities express to each other "who [they] are, what [they] need and hope for, what [they] are willing to accept, and [their] commitment to reciprocity."[33] The everydayness of these experiences points to how the vernacular consistently attunes our attitudes toward particular organizations and enactments within community life. Within the cityscape, neighborhoods are "intensely vernacular enclaves" where residents accrue and sculpt local gestures into a sense of this community life and communal identity.[34] Hauser's conception of vernacular rhetoric highlights the impact of micro, everyday practices in creating a public that runs up against larger-scale politics and political decisions.

Ono and Sloops' attention to the actual everyday embodied performances and bodies themselves underscores vernacular as a mode of rhetorical invention through the individual and social body. In this view, the vernacular springs from the everyday lived experiences of marginalization.[35] Grounding vernacular discourse within identity and historically marginalized communities, scholars like Bernadette Calafell and Dawn Marie McIntosh argue that "the bodies of people of color are always and already 'counter' to dominant ideologies that govern the public sphere."[36] The embodied performances of survival and resistance, then, serve as an inventive base for community building and counterpublics.[37] Therefore, the body, specifically the

Other(ed) body, and its everyday performances are indispensably linked to vernacular discourse and the counterpublics formed therein. Everyday performances of those with Other(ed) bodies are always already produced as a potential vernacular rhetoric whose very presence disrupts the public and whose very survival affirms their own livelihood and identity. While seemingly individual, these embodied performances provide possible bridges to continue to enact a shared, invented meaning of community in spite of ideologies that "locate them as counter to normative publics."[38]

In terms of urban planning, historically marginalized communities not only sit outside of the public ideologically, but also spatially. Infrastructure serves as a vehicle for ideologies and power to press into and produce places that segregate, disconnect, and marginalize communities. Redlining continued de jure segregation practices that isolated and disenfranchised communities of color.[39] Highway construction has historically cut through and disconnected marginalized communities.[40] Sanitation processes, food deserts, and industrial development forge deep health disparities throughout these communities.[41] Urban development practices increase rent gaps and property taxes creating issues of gentrification and displacement for those living in these communities.[42] In each of these cases, the developed infrastructures constitute the stage through which the bodies and lives of those deemed as a part of the (counter) public perform their everyday life.[43] And yet, "people figure themselves out through figuring arrangements of materials, of designing what is available to them in formats and positions that enable them particular vantage points and ways of doing things."[44] How people figure themselves out are the tactics of everyday life in that they "can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces" and the infrastructures that produce them.[45] As tactics, the everyday practices that constitute vernacular infrastructures exist in relation to dominant strategies, or the proper place.[46] Rather than

construct new proper places for the community, people "make do" using practices, processes, and systems to survive and thrive.[47]

Second, vernacular infrastructures are emplaced because everyday performances draw on, disrupt, and/or alter the visual-material-symbolic components of the place's already existing infrastructures. Elinor Light links place to vernacular discourse through her concept of emplaced vernacular, "a complex vernacular articulation that takes seriously the political power of aesthetics and the particularities of place."[48] Linking place and vernacular pivots analysis towards the visual, material, and embodied elements of space as potential sites to articulate identity and community. Given that vernacular infrastructures are tactics of everyday life, the sites of these routes exist in the emplaced vernacular rather than embedded infrastructures like roads, sewage, or electricity. Within places, vernacular expressions articulate themselves through the symbolic, aesthetic, material, and embodied performances with and in the space. Here, something like graffiti ruptures spatial ideologies and gives voice to vernacular subjects.[49] Drawing on these characteristics as well as the concept of emplaced vernacular, vernacular infrastructures form out of practices that borrow from existing dimensions of place and their spatial inequities to manufacture alternative routes for community practices.[50] Emplaced practices represent the modes by which vernacular infrastructures come to be within a community. The consequences of how vernacular infrastructures rupture and renegotiate the lived experiences within urban infrastructures lead to the last two components.

Third, vernacular infrastructures open engrained infrastructures to a process of urban becoming, a process that releases established socio-technic systems to a necessary liveliness of bottom-up infrastructural improvisation.[51] Infrastructures are designed to codify, designate, and order the heterogeneous and unregulated possibilities into a functional model of urban life. In so

doing, they pin down the openness of space and create built environments where "the differentiated elements of society are to assume their own places and trajectories and become the vectors through which social power is enunciated."[52] Particular places and practices are connected to different identities and ways of being and become legible through the infrastructural properties imbued in the space.[53] And yet, these places are still imbued with multiplicity where "the outcomes of collaborative work in the city can be open ended, unpredictable, and made singular."[54] This is especially true in spaces where infrastructures have not fully codified places and their practices.

Indeed, it is precisely because there are fewer stabilizing structures and insufficient resources to direct and support residents that people have more power to instill their own infrastructures. In moments where heterogeneous activities, modes of production, and institutional forms are made through open-ended improvisation, the people and their collaborative practices of "making do" serve as the guiding infrastructure.[55] This reliance on people and their interconnectivity generates the process of urban becoming. Vernacular infrastructure sits as a part of the process wherein people and the local community become main agents in developing open, flexible, and collaborative infrastructures of making do.

Fourth, the vernacular infrastructures created rupture many of the already existing, failed infrastructures to forge alternative paths wherein local subjects, practices, and spaces can emerge. As AbdouMaliq Simone argues, people, as an infrastructure, are essential architects that guide this process of urban becoming to create emergent possibilities for an alternative community infrastructure.[56] The collaborative practices developed by people in the community have the ability to forge radical openings for a sense of place that may be absent or reeling in a moment of emergency or infrastructural failure.[57] As a part of urban becoming, local people,

spaces, and performances constitute the alternative infrastructures to fill gaps left by infrastructural failure. In the next section, I speak to the methodological imperatives and possibilities for rhetorical critics to analyze these moments of urban becoming and vernacular infrastructures.

A Note on Method

Vernacular discourse "should have as its goal a critical framework that works to upend essentialisms, undermine stereotypes, and eliminate narrow representations of culture."[58] To do so, scholars must resist traditional (often developed by white men) conceptions of the unity or fragments of a text to be open to marginalized discourses that develop from an array of everyday sites.[59] Influential scholars on Latina/o Vernacular Discourses like Michelle Holling and Bernadette Calafell highlight three metatheoretical considerations for scholars to take as they pursue criticism of Latin@ specific vernacular discourses: tensions of identity, decolonial aims, the critic's role.[60] Through these considerations, Holling and Calafell guide criticism in three ways. First, they point to the tensions between recognizing intersectional differences within specific communities while maintaining the potentialities within collective identity.[61] Second, they direct scholarly attention toward decolonial rhetorics that include understudied realms of everyday performances, the body, and lived experience as sites of availing agency and liberation.[62] Finally, they reflect on how the critic's subjectivity and their political and cultural possibilities—as well as limitations—guide their rhetorical criticism.[63] In practice, these considerations have yielded a shift toward Cherrie Moraga's "theory in the flesh," which calls for theoretical production to come from embodied lived experiences.[64] Underscoring the utility of Moraga's "theory in the flesh," vernacular discourse as a critical framework relies on giving voice or performance to the experiences of survival, resistance, and empowerment that occur on

the everyday level.[65] As such, methods within vernacular criticism rely on the participant's and critic's embodied and self-reflexive experience within the specific community to develop alternative epistemologies.

Another methodological strand for vernacular criticism focuses on emplaced and participatory practices for the critic. In service of this, Aaron Hess constructed the method of "critical-rhetorical ethnography," or a locally situated and experiential approach to the vernacular discourses.[66] "As a rhetorical method," critical rhetorical ethnography "highlights elements of advocacy, identification, and persuasion, using theoretical concepts familiar to rhetoric. Simultaneously, as ethnography, it draws from a tradition of qualitative methods, including participant observation and interviewing, to assist in the research into vernacular advocacy."[67] This rhetorical field method presses the critic, as instrument, to participate in the community's process of invention and advocacy while the rhetoric is happening rather than after its occurrence. Between this method and the approach of theory in the flesh, it is clear that studying vernacular discourses foregrounds embodied knowledge production, critical self-reflexivity, and advocacy. Taking the participatory and experiential imperatives of both these methods, I turn to photovoice as a critical methodology that centers community experiences and voices, creates openings for community members to develop embodied knowledges, and pursues community advocacy.

Photovoice, as a methodology, is a participatory action-oriented research method typically used within marginalized communities. This methodology came out of public health studies in 1997 from Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Buris, but has garnered popularity across disciplines like disability studies, education, and geography.[68] Photovoice has three main goals: "(1) to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, (2) to

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promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and (3) to reach policymakers."[69] Using ethnographic techniques, photovoice combines photography, experiential knowledge, qualitative interviews, and critical dialogues to amplify community voices and experiences as a resource for policy changes. Throughout the photovoice project, "participants reflect on and communicate their community's concerns to represent their culture, to expose social problems, and to ignite social change."[70]

While each instantiation of a photovoice project is guided by community contexts and thus differs slightly, there are a few key processes that remain consistent. Community members are asked to document their lives through photographs to gather people's perspectives on their lived experiences. Then, participants are asked to create stories or explain the photographs to researchers as a way to instigate further self-reflection and to voice their own visual narratives. With its focus on images, the photovoice technique allows participants to frame and visualize their experiences and perspectives on their community spaces. Finally, a version of critical dialogue takes place either amongst the community or with policymakers to produce action from the participants' visual and verbal narratives.[71]

Within rhetoric and critiques of vernacular discourse, photovoice is a particularly useful methodology because it presents an opportunity for participants to co-construct a multiform vernacular discourse and foregrounds critical ethnography and advocacy. One of the central tenets of the photovoice methodology is "the co-evolution of research objectives, the co-production of knowledge, and capacity building of all those involved."[72] As a loosely structured methodology that privileges participant agency over the researchers, photovoice is designed to promote community-produced knowledge that is grounded in the communities' everyday life. With an array of different visuals and diverse narratives based in their community space, the

multiple artifact fragments converge together to create a local vernacular discourse. As a rhetorical artifact, the photovoice project encompasses what Darrel Wanzer-Serrano calls an intersectional rhetoric, an inventive visual-embodied-symbolic vernacular discourse that carves out a space of agency for the community.[73] Further, documenting the embodied experience through visual and verbal narratives to create knowledge laces multiple forms of "theory in the flesh" together into a community-driven understanding of the space.[74] Using this embodied knowledge, the goal of the photovoice project relies on reaching policymakers to prompt further community advocacy.

This chapter utilizes a photovoice approach to examine how city residents in a US public housing neighborhood, the Sun Valley housing project in Denver (CO), reimagined their urban life in the early stages of the pandemic. The photovoice project began with the goal of documenting the Sun Valley residents' stories for a popular press article. Two researchers, Jeremy Auerbach and Solange Muñoz, who were already researching the ongoing development project's environmental impact, proposed the popular press article idea to Denver Housing Authority's program coordinator in Sun Valley, Shania. They aimed to capture Sun Valley resident's experiences during Denver's first stay-at-home orders from March 25th-May 8th. To do so, Shania provided eighteen households with cameras to capture images of the pandemic's impact on their environment, their daily lives, and their community.

At the end of May, Jeremy Auerbach reached out to me as a part of my Colorado State University Extension Internship work to see if I would be interested in helping transcribe interviews. Solange Muñoz had completed five out of the thirteen final interviews by this time. Since these were meant to be for a popular press article, Muñoz predominantly asked the residents to explain the photos they took in an unstructured conversational format. While I

conducted two in-person interviews with the program coordinator and a resident without an internet connection, Muñoz conducted majority of the interviews because she had developed a rapport with the residents during the process. After transcribing and discussing the themes across these five interviews, we developed a set of loose interview questions to understand two overarching themes: 1) how did the stay-at-home experience alter residents' spatial routines, habits, and sense of place and 2) did their sense of community change as a result of these adaptations?

For the first overarching topic, we developed potential probing questions to ask as residents were discussing their photographs. For example, if residents mentioned going to different places or moving differently (i.e. taking alternative routes, going places at different times, not going to places that they usually would), Muñoz would refer to a list of potential probing questions asking residents to expand on how these changes affected them, their neighborhood, and how they feel about the neighborhood? To understand the resident's sense of community we added multiple questions after residents discussed their photos. For example, "if you had to describe what this summer has been like for you in general what are some of the main things you would talk about?" and "has COVID made you feel differently about your community? How? Why?" Linking infrastructure as an emergent and embodied practice that develops a sense of place, these sets of questions opened conversations about how residents' everyday practices had to shift during the stay-at-home order. They also explored how these practices reshaped their relationship to the neighborhood, community, and space.

Residents' photographs and narratives reveal the many ways the pandemic affected their lives and highlight how community support and resources were vital infrastructures for residents to survive and overcome COVID. Due to the limitations with social distancing and public

gatherings we were unable to engage with the community in person as we explored this research. Additionally, many of the residents are slotted to temporarily move into different neighborhoods as the development project continues to tear down the section 8 housing sites. Unable to fully engage in public advocacy, we still committed to sharing these photovoice projects as well as our collected data, coded themes, and final research projects with the Denver Housing Authority's program coordinator. From this research, she has mentioned how fortunate it was to be able to document this experience and shed light on practices of community resilience.

In the next section, I connect the photovoice materials with a spatial analysis to examine how Sun Valley residents' emplaced practices cultivated vernacular infrastructures during the COVID stay-at-home orders in March and April. I argue that Sun Valley residents fostered vernacular infrastructures that refurbished already failing dominant infrastructures with practices of community and individual care, play, and growth. In so doing, residents and organizers attached community as a foundational and adaptive component of residents' sense of place. In the next section, I analyze residents' experiences, photos, and the space of Sun Valley to demonstrate their cultivated practices of care, play, and growth.

Vernacular Infrastructures of Care, Play, and Growth

In 1943, Sun Valley became the location of one of Denver's first public housing dwellings, Las Casitas.[75] During the 1950s, however, I-25's construction demolished many of Las Casitas housing and the city constructed a new public housing project called Sun Valley Homes.[76] Sun Valley Homes is a 330-unit, barrack-style public housing complex that still houses many of Denver's poorest residents today. In fact, Sun Valley is the poorest neighborhood in Denver with residents earning a median income of $14,460.[77] For much of Sun Valley's history, the area has existed in the "shadow of Denver," isolated from downtown Denver as it sits walled

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in by the Denver Bronco's Stadium to the north, I-25 to the East and South, and the Platte River

to the Northeast (Figure 8).[78]
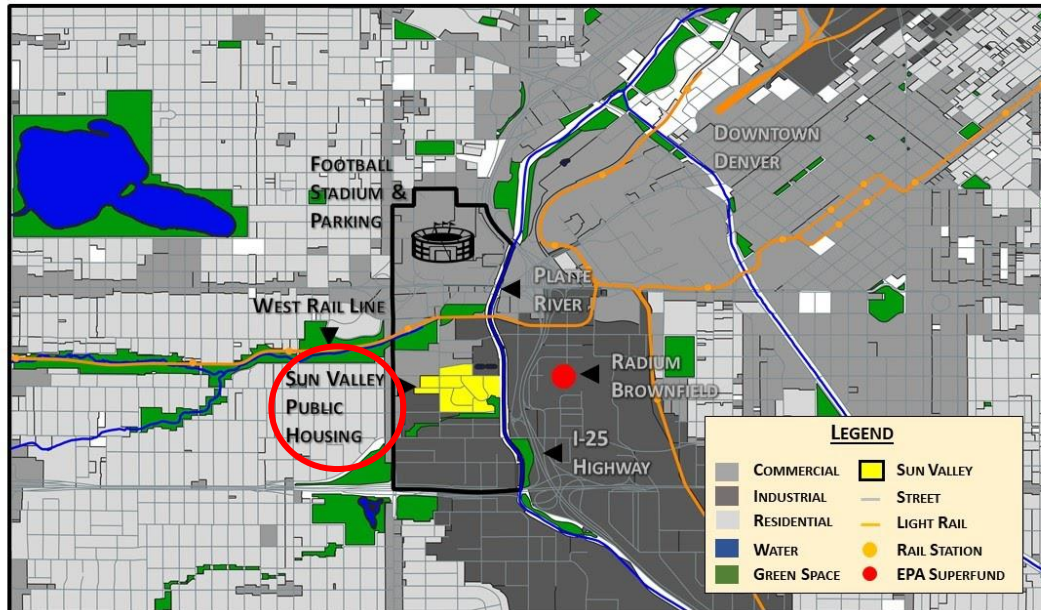
Figure 8: Map of Sun Valley in relation the Denver infrastructures created by Jeremy Auerbach

However, Sun Valley no longer remains in the shadows for Denver development plans.

Beginning around 2010, Sun Valley has received attention as a site ripe for renewal.[79] Six

different Denver city development plans and a number of large-scale renovations and

construction projects are set to usher in a new era for the Sun Valley community.[80] The

neighborhood is also a part of a series of target cities in the US named under the model of

EcoDistricts. As an EcoDistrict, Sun Valley's development is "poised to create a new model of

community transformation, with equity, environmental justice and public health as its driving

forces."[81] The EcoDistrict initiative partnered with the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) and the

Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) to emphasize outreach and inclusive development for Sun Valley residents facing phased relocation.

This partnership culminated to create "The People's Team," a group of non-profit project liaisons committed to community support and outreach. They began working in the neighborhood for at least five years before construction. After nearly ten years of planning and five years of on-the-ground outreach, the construction of multiple high-rises, mixed-income apartment buildings began at the edge of the Sun Valley Homes housing district in 2019. Shortly after, COVID-19 struck the community and momentarily shifted resident and community support organizations' attention away from the development project and toward daily survival.

As soon as Mayor Hancock announced the stay-at-home orders for Denver county, fear descended upon Sun Valley. The fear of the virus's transmission pushed individuals and families inside their homes and away from neighbors and the community. The local primary school locked its gates and yellow caution tape was pulled around the community playgrounds. For many families, this fear of the virus was connected to other feelings of uncertainty including anxiety over the loss of income, the stress of protecting their children, and the move to online schooling. As fear became a shared affect for people across the globe, the residents of Sun Valley captured how fear manifested as a continuously altered everyday life. In this uncertainty, residents were required to improvise connections between people, spaces, and activities. In many cases, the fluctuating needs and desires that came out of peoples' disrupted habits reemerged as potential sites for repair-oriented community practices.

Given the ongoing redevelopment project in the area, the Sun Valley community was also connected to the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) and the Choice Neighborhood Initiative (CNI) who were there to ensure a smooth and supportive transition into the new apartments.

However, for the non-profit and government organizations that coalesced to create "the People's Team," it became clear that the initial programs and support systems offered to the community were insufficient for a COVID context. Helping residents survive the COVID crisis proved to be an urgent necessity for the team and "there was no framework for any of it."[82] As lead program specialist, Shania recalls, "everyday we were in here on our whiteboard wondering what can we do, what do people need."[83] Therefore, the pandemic was a catalyst for investing in strategies and infrastructures that would address the individual and collective needs of the Sun Valley residents in novel ways.

It is within the negotiations between entrenched urban infrastructural failure, everyday resident practices, and community support structures that the Sun Valley neighborhood found openings to reimagine their community, everyday spaces, and future potentialities for both. Specifically, between the resident's everyday practices and the People's Team's support framework, the neighborhood became a site to produce lively vernacular infrastructures that adapted to the community's daily needs, concerns, and altered practices. In short, Sun Valley created vernacular infrastructures that, if only temporarily, revived failed infrastructures with community-based practices, sites, and relationalities that created more possibilities for residents to cultivate care, play, and growth.

Cultivating Care in the COVID Crisis

The COVID crisis has sharpened many people's critical view of the inadequacies and inequities of the whole arena of care in the United States. After all, "the Covid-19 crisis is becoming firmly established as above all a *crisis of care*."[84] One major source of this crisis of care sprang from the economic precarity brought on by COVID. Between March and April, the unemployment rate in Denver jumped from 5.2 percent to 12.3 percent. Throughout the rest of

the summer, the unemployment rate remained in the double digits, which were higher rates than Denver has experienced in the last ten years.[85] In Sun Valley, COVID piled onto and further exacerbated the neighborhood's already existing issues of unemployment and poverty.[86] Sun Valley residents combatted these inequities by adjusting economic and spatial infrastructures toward practices of "caring with."[87] Ashraful Alam and Donna Houston propose "caring with" as an alternate infrastructure that "recognises care as a dynamic relation where both care giver and receiver actively participate to achieve meaningful care."[88] Sun Valley produced these infrastructures of "caring with" through alternative practices that surrounding the distribution and creation of care packages.

In the face of an economic downturn, the People's Team increased their food distribution practices and reimagined economic support as a form of community connection. Multiple families that we interviewed had to restructure their practices and resources because members of their family were furloughed, fired, or had their hours cut. One woman had to alter her schooling to get a job as her mothers' hours decreased.[89] Since the parent's jobs were postponed, another family had to allocate meals among their twelve children leaving days where some of the children were unable to eat.[90] In reaction to some of these realities, Sun Valley community support systems initiated processes of care that delinked care from practices of exchange and reciprocity.

Before COVID, residents would attend events to accumulate points that they could use to buy some of their daily essential items.[91] This system of reciprocity where people exchange time for essential resources shifted as people could no longer attend events because of the stay-at-home order. Instead, the People's team supplied all residents with necessary resources including food and other essential cleaning products. As the People's team program coordinator, Shania,

explained, "Our first concern was that our families could stay in the house so they could have the things that they need. The food, cleaning products. Those kinds of things."[92] Expanding food distribution practices to include weekly food boxes as well as hygiene, cleaning, and school products allowed residents to alter their own practices and spending, thus taking "a lot of weight off [their] back."[93] Rather than link food and product distribution with processes of reciprocity, the further economic insecurity that came with COVID opened these processes of care to new attachments with the community.

The new system of economic support for all residents secured an alternative routine where the distribution practices offered moments for residents and the People's team to connect. Care packages were distributed to each resident's door by those who work for or volunteer at the People's Team. Utilizing a golf cart, the People's team traversed through the sidewalks and pod-styled yards of the Sun Valley Homes' structure to distribute the care boxes to residents. While done with all of the recommended precautions (masks, outdoors, and six feet of social distancing), these deliveries were, for some residents, the main interaction they had with anyone outside of their immediate household. In a time with limited ability to interact with people face-to-face, these weekly distribution practices constructed habits of support and connection within the community.

Given the routine and practices associated with these care packages, the golf cart became a symbol of the People's team (Figure 9). Its traversal across the neighborhood invited residents to pause their activities, come outside, and interact with the passengers. Each day, as Shania explains, they would utilize these interactions as a springboard to brainstorm ways to support residents during this trying time.[94] Navigating a pandemic where insufficient resources plagued many households, the People's team and their weekly practices became an alternative

infrastructure where economic support emerged as an opportunity to construct a positive

performance of relationality between organizations and residents.

Figure 9: The People's Team Golf Cart, photograph taken by participant

The creation of the care packages also provided opportunities for the residents to become

care givers within the community. As the COVID context began shifting and it became clear that

the stay-at-home orders were enduring, the residents turned toward community engagement to

cope with the amassed unstructured time. Contesting isolation from quarantining, some residents

adjusted to their free time by volunteering at the Sun Valley Youth Center or Grow Garden to

complete the care packages. For example, when masks became a required safety material in

Denver, the Sun Valley Youth Center called on the residents to help provide material and time to

make masks for the community.[95] Donating the materials and time to make the masks that were

distributed to the community offered families an activity to fill their time, learn different skills,

and deepen connections to community support systems like the Youth Center. The materials themselves even remained within the community where the cloth that one family donated to the Youth Center turned into a mask for another family in the area. Practices such as this created a feedback loop of caring with, wherein the outcomes of care, like masks, melded with processes of self, family, and community care.[96]

These practices of caring with also allayed some resident's fear produced by COVID. For many families, their fear of the virus was connected to other feelings of uncertainty: anxiety over the loss of income, the stress of protecting their children, and the move to online schooling. Lack of information about the virus initially created distrust, particularly among parents trying to keep their children away from others. Elena, a single mother who kept her child "locked in the house," explained that "[her daughter] doesn't understand that I'm just trying to…keep the distance from everybody so nobody in our family gets sick."[97] Fear and anxiety climaxed after the shooting and death of a resident which stemmed from an argument between families about social distancing. Many residents pointed to the shooting as an example of the feeling of danger in the area, which, according to Carla, "made the environment unsafe. Really unsafe for us and my family. And for me I was like this is not the first time or the second time that like a crime or scary something scary happening in the neighborhood like this… I've been in Sun Valley for almost 4 to 5 years now, and as the years go by it gets dangerous and unsafe."[98] The institutional failures inhered in the US COVID-19 response and public housing instilled a fear that initially dismantled Sun Valley resident's everyday life.

At the same time, through practices of caring with, residents and community connectors began co-constructing many of the activities and practices that residents documented throughout

the stay-at-home orders. Indeed, the community support systems developed during COVID anchored Jan's description of Sun Valley:

> I say we are Sun Valley strong because a lot of people took their time out to bring food to us. To make sure we were okay. If you didn't have a mask they were helping us out with masks. They were bringing dirt, bringing seeds flowers. What do you need? What are your needs? So we can give to you and that was the most awesome thing of bringing our community together.[99]

In cultivating these relationships, fears surrounding the neighborhood and community were restored into a sense of place rooted in community.[100] As participants in the process of care, this sense of place grew stronger. Mikaela, who did not want to leave her house because she thought Sun Valley was "ghetto ratchet," described how her relationships with her neighbors and the community changed after she delivered health and wellness kits to them. She explained, "[Before] I wouldn't even go outside, now I'm looking for residents to talk to and interact with, just to see how they are doing."[101] As a community connector, Mikaela identified the COVID-created practices as potential sites and moments to attach to the community outside of the initial stigmas she internalized upon moving into the space.

Without the sufficient infrastructures already in place, community connectors were starting from scratch to meet the needs of the moment. Shania describes the rebuilding process:

> It was literally straight into emergency mode. These families have to stay home and these are the most vulnerable families. And buses are shut down… These are the families that have to stay home. We can't have an outbreak in a complex like this. And these are the families where it's the hardest for them to stay home. So anything we can do to help them with that.[102]

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As a result, the local public housing authority played an important role in providing some support and direction to the many new practices and relationships that were being created during the pandemic. As the manager explained, "I think our role was to be that connection for people who didn't, at a time when we were told to not have any connections."[103] At the same time, she acknowledged, "I think I learned that there were a lot more connections than I knew. I don't know if they existed before [but] I've seen a lot more connections."[104] These novel connections are emergent points of possibility for residents' sense of place to grow through the invented infrastructures of caring with.

<div align="center">Play and Community Sense of Place</div>

Recently, scholars have noted the potentiality available in the performance of play to cultivate a context to radically imagine alternative futures. Amber Johnson frames this potentiality when they say, "creating space for people to radically imagine through play acts as a transformative act and liberates the mind from potential constraints while also building capacity around community change."[105] Given that people felt like they "were in captivity and stuck inside all the time" spaces of play outside the home became even more important as sites to activate connections, reimagine community, and generate joy.[106] During COVID, the material places that often serve as sites of play became limited because of the stay-at-home order. Yet, "all play moves and has its being within a playground marked off beforehand either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course."[107] The community developed a vernacular infrastructure of play that re-shaped Sun Valley's playground and marked off Sun Valley as a playground. In so doing, the community crafted a ruptured environment for residents to reimagine the community's internal and external spatial connections.

The stay-at-home orders initially produced a stark shift in the time residents spent outdoors playing in comparison to other summers. Indeed, multiple residents commented on how strange it felt for Sun Valley to be so empty.[108] But, with the shared yards between the different pods, residents were hesitant to leave their homes and go outside at all.[109] Therefore, COVID required people to find other places to leave the suffocating summer heat and isolating "captivity" of their homes. To do so, many residents turned to the very infrastructures that have historically isolated Sun Valley from Denver, Mile High Stadium (the Denver Bronco's football stadium), and the Platte River as sites of play.[110] Majority of the photovoice participants documented a similar experience where their family had to leave their home and go on an adventure at the river or stadium.

One interview, in particular, encapsulates how these adventures helped residents reimagined institutional infrastructures through play. To get out of the house, Jan and her son Leon decided to take the longest route for an already long walk to the nearest store—Family Dollar. As a part of this route, they went over by the Broncos stadium and took photos of "some of the things they have over there as you're walking around there."[111] In these photos, there are images of the mother and son rolling down a hill outside of the stadium, resting on a patch of grass, posing in front of different statues at the stadium, and crossing through the parking lot with their Family Dollar bag (Figure 10). As they set out to grab something from the store, the pair decided to utilize the time, effort, and space as a way to move around and explore.

Figure 10: (Left) Rolling down a Hill at the Broncos Stadium, (Right) Posing by a statue at the Broncos Stadium, photographs taken by participants

Using the stadium as a site of exploration, fun, and rest, Jan and Leon replaced their usual interactions with the site to improvise their own play. While they usually do not like having the stadium close by because of the noise and traffic during game days, in this instance they grounded themselves in activities not usually available to them. Being able to roll down a hill because it seemed fun, or just lay down after Leon "got pooped…and said that's it I'm done" challenges the usually packed and raucous purpose of the stadium parking lot and surrounding area.[112] In the face of fear and anxiety, Jan and Leon activate alternative usages available in the stadium and created their own playground through the very infrastructures that have isolated them from resources like a grocery store.[113]

The actual playgrounds in Sun Valley also provided a material place to reimagine community connections and safety. Within Sun Valley's pod structure residents have a shared outdoor space. Across some of the pods, there are smaller playgrounds open to the residents. As was the case in many places across Colorado, the Denver's stay-at-home orders included closure

of all "playgrounds, picnic areas, other similar areas conducive to public gathering, and attended areas"[114] With Sun Valley's high youth population, these playgrounds are important and oft-utilized infrastructures of play. For most families, their children not being able to go outside and play resulted in further anxiety, stress, and strain. Given the playgrounds' significance in the community, it was unsurprising that multiple residents captured photographs of caution tape and closure signs restricting their access to these places (Figure 11). Indeed, one resident described the moment that they saw the closure signs at the Denver Public School playgrounds as a "heartbreaking" sign that "this [the pandemic] is for real."[115] While the caution tape demonstrated the reality of the situation, residents rejected full out restriction in favor of participatory safety processes.

Figure 11: (Left) Close shot of caution tape closing off swing set, (Right) caution tape closing off area of playground, photographs taken by participant

Multiple times caution tape was torn down shortly after it was put up. In its place, residents set up an unofficial system where children played in their own pod playground while

families watched the children to make sure they were playing in a COVID safe manor.[116] Developing a system among the families, residents reactivated play into the space for the children and demonstrated the community's agency and interconnectedness. Of course, these actions went against public health regulations, but, through their own community processes of safety, residents reframed Sun Valley's spatial arrangements to re-install possibilities of play.

Residents' informal play infrastructure then urged and gave direction for the community support organizations to develop more formalized and regular processes of play in the area. For example, the People's team built upon the residents' use of the pod system for playgrounds and socially distanced interactions to develop play practices like the "mobile field day." For the mobile field day, the People's team brought different activities to each pod so the children could play together, even if socially distanced. While each pod had to remain within their own groups, the mobility of play connected these practices across the necessarily separated areas in the community. As COVID-19 forced Sun Valley residents to isolate themselves into their pod units, the residents saw the mobile field day tables and activities moving across the Sun Valley area. Since the shared yards have relatively unobstructed views of various pods, residents were able to watch others participate in the mobile field day activities throughout the neighborhood. Attaching play across spaces through mobility, the shared experiences of play—children making slime, playing water pong, arts and crafts tables, jenga—cultivated opportunities to stay connected, if not through interactions, then through common activities.

The activities themselves transformed the space of Sun Valley into a canvas for playful expression. After seeing more children out playing, the People's Team began to include chalk and other craft items within the care packages to promote artistic expression within the community. The sidewalks became perfect areas for people to begin writing signs of hope and

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guidance, or to create colorful landscapes across Sun Valley (figure 12). There were sidewalk

games, like hopscotch, strewn throughout the neighborhood which gave children the opportunity

to explore and safely play at the edges of different pods. At one point, the People's Team gave

households a time capsule worksheet and urged residents to use sidewalk art as the platform for

their answers. Given the outdoor element of these sidewalk drawings, the sidewalk never

permanently held a single drawing or expression, which allowed people to consistently

reimagine how they wanted the space to hold their experiences. By using the sidewalks as a site

of play, these artworks and games outlined different pods and opened the informal borders

between them as additional sites for residents to cultivate performances of safe play.

Figure 12: Chalk art on sidewalk in Sun Valley, photograph taken by participant

While the sidewalk art was still practiced within the pod structure, playful practices of art across the community converged in the Grow Garden, a community garden on the east edge of the neighborhood. Here different activities, organized by the People's Team, sutured the multiple lived experiences of residents into a single area. For example, there are a litany of tags made by residents that tied across a chain-link fence at the Grow Garden. This section, as Shania explains, is called:

> the garden of hope, which was the tags we passed out with markers so families could put whatever they wanted. Whatever they were thinking. If they wanted to put nice words or if they wanted to put angry words. There's a lot of emotions going on. And just tie those up around the garden so people. Again, to try and encourage people to use that garden space if they wanted. They could see those walking around the garden.[117]

Written in varied languages and styles, the tags symbolically showcased the vast array of how residents imagine themselves as connective links within the community during COVID. Further, the residents tied their tags to the linked fence in a space that many people came to when they decided to get out of the house. Able to walk through and read the different tags, the community's practices of care offered them an opportunity to meander through and connect with other residents' moments of imagination and play. Therefore, in the act of creating, exhibiting, and viewing, the tags opened the chance for residents to express themselves within the COVID moment, attach that imagination into a communal space, and physically observe their community's lived experiences.

Bridging these materials into other artistic expressions, volunteers with CNI and the People's Team spent much of the summer painting the wooden part of the fence and different benches with artwork that depicts Sun Valley's multicultural community. These artworks are

easily visible along the South Platte River trail where cyclists, joggers, and walkers pass by Sun Valley on their outings. While the tags remain on the inside edge of Sun Valley reflecting the local community experience, they, along with other community-specific activities, served as inspiration for public-facing expressions. Significantly, the artwork has become a beacon for non-residents to come to the Grow Garden's Friday Farmer's Market whose profits return to community outreach. Utilizing the community's expressions, the Grow Garden takes Sun Valley's vernacular infrastructures of play and showcases them as public-facing works to secure more visitors and profits for the Grow Garden. As residents participated in activities geared towards play, the material spaces in Sun Valley became a site to imagine, express, and bear witness to the community's COVID experiences.

When asked what they like about Sun Valley, many residents pointed to the small community where there was value in knowing people in the community as well as knowing "where [they] can go for support."[118] Yet, at the beginning of the stay-at-home orders, the lack of these outdoor interactions and community-driven support concerned the People's Team "because [they] weren't seeing them. They wouldn't answer the door."[119] As the stay-at-home order progressed, residents translated the benefits of the entangled community within the COVID context into practices that allowed them to "still [go] outside, social distance," and connect with people.[120] These routines, habits, and events inspired more formal support systems to install opportunities for residents to turn these playful actions into infrastructures of play.

Growing and Growth

To document the juxtaposition of the captive feeling during the stay-at-home orders and the playful possibilities outside their home, two residents took photos of the view outside of their screen door (Figure 13). One showed the nearby water plant and Broncos' stadium and the other

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focused on a crane and construction work on the apartment that their family was likely to move into. Taken from a COVID-struck vantage point, both photos captured the connected relationship between future changes and the present stay-at-home conditions. While experiencing a global pandemic, the community's practices were tinged with the anticipation of their future in the ongoing development projects. In this relationship, Sun Valley cultivated practices and spaces "that may help to prepare specific actors to reach and extend themselves across a larger world and enact these possibilities of urban becoming."[121] Put differently, the convergence of COVID and the development project framed the neighborhood's vernacular infrastructure around relationalities of growth and growing. In so doing, the community's vernacular infrastructure of growth during the stay-at-home period sowed ties with the land, expanded everyday practices

into community practices, and nurtured community connections as roots for continued placemaking in the area.

Figure 13: Looking out the Screen Door to see the construction of the participant's new apartment, photograph taken by a participant.

One material practice of growth that most photovoice participants documented was gardening and the community Grow Garden. Using seeds that the People's Team distributed in some of the care packages and seeds from the Grow Garden, many families began gardening for the first time during the stay-at-home period. To them, COVID presented "an opportunity to start" gardening to "just keep [their] minds off of things and just like have something else to worry about."[122] In their gardens, people planted food like chilis, radishes, rhubarb, and tomatoes, which became key ingredients for some of the food they would make at home. While several residents grew plants indoors, others worked with neighbors to make small gardens in their yards.

As the stay-at-home orders lifted, residents were still planting even more and expressed the joy they gained from the practice. On resident expressed: "it was exciting. Well it still is. To watch them grow."[123] Gardening, as a practice, focuses on connection to the land and offers people the opportunity to bring beauty and sustenance to the space.[124] The outcome of gardening not only provides residents with beautiful sunflowers to enjoy or chilis to make salsa, but also cultivates care into the land as the plants nourish and detoxify the soil (figure 14). Of course, these personal gardens are temporary given the impending construction and redevelopment in the area. Yet, the routine and joy cultivated from these practices of growth were not lost on residents as they discussed the future development project. Some who were initially excited to move to the new apartments began hesitating at the thought of not having a yard to play or plant in. In an act

of solace to get through COVID, personal gardening offered residents the ability to develop the land even while cranes and construction sat right in front of them.

Figure 14: Newly created garden in participants yard, photograph taken by participant

The year before the pandemic struck Colorado, the Denver Housing Authority, in partnership with Denver Botanical Gardens created a community garden called the Grow Garden. In its first year, they planted and harvested 5,000 pounds of produce, eighty percent of which went to Denver Housing Authority residents.[125] To fill the garden, the People's Team interviewed residents about what types of produce they use most often and would like to be available in the Grow Garden. Since the Sun Valley community is such a diverse population with residents coming from multiple geographic and cultural spaces, the interview yielded requests for produce across the world. In one planter box, there may be serrano peppers near hot Chinese five color peppers, for example. Rather than have to travel miles away to buy produce from international markets in Aurora, the Garden provided a space where different culturally significant products can flourish together.

Being able to find and use produce from their own neighborhood helped root the residents and their vibrant diversity into a heterogenous space. Describing the garden, Elena said:

> it's um right in the middle of the community and there's pretty positive little quotes that are around it as you walk through and you can read. So it's actually pretty nice and relaxing to go there as well. And you can see all the beautiful plants and all the vegetables and greens and all that that they're growing.[126]

Each plant growing into a variety of colors, shapes, sizes, and textures also created a visually abundant space for residents. With the help of the Botanical Gardens, Sun Valley's communal Grow Garden materialized the wealth of cultures, traditions, and food practices within the neighborhood.

This connection to the community's multiplicity became visible in the residents' kitchens as their COVID cooking practices became potential moments to expand into the community. With the restaurants and school closures, many residents were cooking more often than they had before. Many used the shift in routine to forge different connections to the local space. As Mikaela and her partner reached a point where they "were kind of tired of food," they began to experiment with new recipes from a local restaurant.[127] Remembering a chile relleno dish from a local haunt, Mikaela brought her community into the home to create a new experience for her and her family (figure 15).[128] While this act did not financially support the local restaurant, the experience established an attachment to local spaces within her mundane practices of cooking. Amelia, a stay-at-home mom whose husband was furloughed once the pandemic began, took photos of herself making crab legs. She explained that that particular evening she was participating in a challenge in one of her Facebook groups "to see whose crab legs came out the best-looking."[129] These acts of cooking allowed families to come together in their homes, but it

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also allowed them to activate connections with other people and places in their COVID-altered daily lives.

Other families used cooking to link their past home countries with Sun Valley. Several refugee families took photos of themselves preparing dishes from their home countries. Carla described in great detail a dinner she prepared (figure 15):

> This is my cultural food. Anytime when I'm stressed or anything [I cook]. And these couple of months have been very stressful, very boring, and very annoying…It is something called fufu with spinach and dried fish that I cook together… It's a main dish in my country and it takes time to make. I made it and thought it looked good, so I took a picture of it.[130]

Carla described her cooking as a connection to her home country, which she wanted to remain strong given how much she missed her home country. Using cooking as a connection to her home country, Carla's everyday practices also reach into the community through spaces like the Grow Garden as it plants different cultural food products.

Figure 15: (Left) Cooking Chile Relleno's, (Right) Finished plate of Resident's home dish Fufu, photographs taken by participants.

Growing connections throughout Sun Valley, one family also turned the fears and precarity of COVID as an opening to expand the community's roots into the built environment. Sasha's family who was "in the house for a long time… especially [because] their dad was very strict about it and not letting them go out" translated their strict stay-at-home period into time to build up their local store.[131] Moving into the store in January, their opening was delayed by COVID. When asked whether they were worried about not being able to open during COVID, Sasha's response demonstrates the ways in which community connection replaced forms of fear within residents. She responded:

> Not really because we were like thinking of the small safety. This is not something you can control. It happens to everybody so the first thing you are worried about is everybody safe. You know the reason we close the store. It's a small space. It's not like a big grocery store so just we want to be careful with everybody. Its hard to do the social distancing stuff. So we decided let us see. For us no matter what. If it is hard financially or whatever cuz we have to be careful. Safety for our family and other people is the key.[132]

Instead of opening the store, their stay-at-home practices documented the family working on "additional things" for the eventual opening. At the time of the interview, the store was open and Sasha admitted that "people come to visit the store but not really. People still, they don't want to go outside."[133] Yet, the store remains as a site of connection and growth for residents. Built out of a COVID moment, the store and its family modifications showcases the community rooted development of Sun Valley's sense of place.

Of course, the upcoming development project will upend some, if not all of these roots. Shania discussed the ways in which the new apartments tried to pre-emptively adapt to some of

the residents' concerns, which were further highlighted by COVID. Increasing privacy and space between units, allowing six-feet between market stands, and opening a smaller community space for each apartment building are some of these adaptations.[134] And yet, when asked about their plans after development finishes, many residents spoke of their hesitation to lose some of these vernacular infrastructures that they developed.

Some worried about how the move towards a mixed-income housing development would increase stigma around the current residents.[135] Many expressed concerns over the lack of a backyard after realizing the foundation it served to help residents play and plant.[136] Others feared the risks of losing the community support system that became so engrained during COVID.[137] In thinking about Sun Valley's growing connection to the land, local spaces, and the community, these fears are unsurprising. In the face of COVID and development, Sun Valley residents instantiated new practices, systems, and support as an important trajectory that makes up the space of Sun Valley. These vernacular infrastructures' longevity, however, is not guaranteed. Rather, they are open to loose ends, emergent possibilities, and improvisation. Whether that means these infrastructures return to routes of institutional top-down processes or remain rooted in the local community is to be determined.

Conclusion

In moments of urban becoming, places like Sun Valley are brought back into the movement of space, which is "always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed."[138] Intermingled within the "connections yet to be made, juxtaposition yet to flower into interaction," sits emergencies like the COVID pandemic.[139] How one survives and potentially thrives in a time when institutional infrastructures worsen inequities and precarity comes from emergent relationalities and practices. Moments of emergency, in particular, begs the "question

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of how urban residents can work and collaborate with each other—most particularly how connections are best forged and maintained; how visible and known these connections can and should be?"[140] Through residents' photographs documenting their daily life during Denver's initial stay-at-home orders, this chapter draws out some of these connections. Produced within and through the local community, the connections bridged Sun Valley infrastructures with community practices to produce their own vernacular infrastructures of care, play, and growth.

As urban infrastructures failed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the residents of Sun Valley turned inward to (re)build community infrastructures through care, play, and growth. The production of these lively infrastructures offers a moment for communities to produce a shared sense of place and cultural common space.[141] This chapter highlights how marginalized communities, who are so used to infrastructure failure, remain resilient as they forge vernacular infrastructures to address basic needs in times of insecurity. This insecurity is expected to increase in light of increased extreme climate events, pandemics, and failures in the political economy. Sun Valley's practices of resilience showcase what bottom-up vernacular infrastructures can emerge in urban spaces in moments of urgency. Through these vernacular infrastructures, marginalized communities are also able to construct their own sense of place and community practices.

This chapter draws attention to the diverse emotional, physical, and relational needs of a community, and suggests that everyday negotiations in space should be taken seriously as a prominent infrastructure for community survival and nourishment. Expanding this COVID-driven moment of emergency and emergence into rhetorical infrastructures underscores the influence of everyday practices in making the city. Sun Valley is only one example of the many communities around the globe facing similar infrastructural failure. But, these residents provide

lessons on how local practices re-route the symbolic and material dimensions of place to create alternative ways of being. Acknowledging and making visible vernacular infrastructures, showcases how everyday practices provide alternative and viable performances to construct a sense of place. Further, the vernacular as a rhetorical infrastructure points to how these performances negotiate already emplaced spatial identities into alternative, and potentially more livable, worlds.

Making the Sun Valley experience visible offers alternative trajectories for urban planners, scholars, and community organizations to draw upon as they navigate how to center people in the development of more just and community-based infrastructures during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, since vernacular infrastructures entail everyday practices, or tactics, the new relationalities, alternative performances, and emplaced identities are less secure than other infrastructures I have discussed throughout this dissertation. After all, De Certeau makes it clear that within the tactics of everyday life "what it wins it cannot keep."[142] Yet, if space is the multiplicity of stories-so-far, the traces of victory remain a part of the space. It is the job of the critic, the community organizer, developers, and residents to amplify these trajectories and build upon them as a part of the ordering mechanisms that create place. To examine and magnify everyday vernacular practices as rhetorical infrastructures is to attempt to stretch the fleeting moments of alternative worlds across time and space. For Sun Valley, tracing vernacular infrastructures becomes a political act that retains the experiences, stories, and different ways of being as resources for the ongoing development projects. As residents worry about their place in the new mixed-income community, the infrastructures of care, play, and growth can provide a guide for resecuring their community-cultivated sense of place.

Of course, the logics of frontier expansion and white exceptionalism remain pervasive in the development projects. As of this writing, it has been over a year since Mayor Hancock lifted the stay-at-home orders. With vaccination rates increasing and COVID cases decreasing, many places in Denver are going back to their pre-COVID routines—streets are regaining their hustle and bustle, people are commuting to their jobs, public transit is running more regularly, restaurants are busy once again. For Sun Valley, this return to normalcy means that the development project has continued in full force. As most of the residents who participated in the photovoice project have had to either temporarily or permanently move from their now destroyed homes, their emplaced community infrastructures are precarious.

Solange Muñoz recently spoke with Jan and Leon, who temporarily moved to another public housing sector as construction began on their old home. In their conversation Jan spoke of their brief return to their old Sun Valley home to pick up the sun flowers they grew throughout COVID. Unfortunately, they were already removed. They were devastated. Leon voiced his incredulity saying, "they couldn't even wait a few days for us to come back and get our stuff."[143] The sunflowers they spent all of COVID growing were ripped from the ground within days after their departure leaving no opportunity for them to revive the plants. As development clears a path for the new mixed-income apartments, analyzing vernacular infrastructures calls on scholars to excavate and advocate for the routes and practices that the local community etched into the space's ongoing stories-so-far.

Endnotes

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14. Ibid., 18.

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infrastructures after 9/11 see John D. Moteff, *Critical Infrastructures: Background, Policy, and

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"Critical Infrastructures: What Makes an Infrastructure Critical?" (Washington DC: Library Of

Congress, January 29, 2003), i, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA467306.pdf.

19. Moteff, *Critical Infrastructures*, 2.

20. Quotation from Graham, "When Infrastructures Fail," 15. Moteff, *Critical

Infrastructures* (28), outlines some of the controversies surrounding places who are seen as lower

risk receiving greater federal funds or resource allocation. As the early struggle to identify

critical infrastructures during COVID-19 demonstrate, the initial definitions of critical

infrastructures, which rely more on economic or military sectors of life was insufficient in terms

of focusing on the vulnerability of everyday activities, occupations, and ways of being. See, for

example, the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency's early report noting essential

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24. Graham, "When Infrastructures Fail," 19.

25. Amin, "Lively Infrastructure," 156–57.

26. Simone, *For the City Yet to Come*, 5.

27. Amin, "Lively Infrastructure," 156–57.

28. Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, "The Critique of Vernacular Discourse,"
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30. In the late 1990s, two strands of vernacular rhetoric developed. Kent Ono and John Sloop ("The Critique of Vernacular Discourse") presented their understanding of vernacular rhetoric. They focused on analyzing practices within marginalized communities' that rejected dominant stereotypes and discourses while cultivating discourses and practices that affirmed the community's self-definitions. Gerard Hauser's "Vernacular Dialogue and the Rhetoricality of Public Opinion." *Communication Monographs* 65, no. 2 (June 1, 1998): 83–107. https://doi.org/10.1080/03637759809376439 formulation on vernacular discourse centered on public sphere theory. In his theorization, vernacular rhetoric adjusted scholarly attention towards the quotidian and everyday local practices rather than dominant large-scale politics. There is substantial potential overlap between these two understanding of vernacular rhetoric. Specifically, the connections between local, community-driven rhetoric thrives within both frameworks as does the focus on quotidian practices as a site of political agency and change. These overlaps are important building blocks for vernacular infrastructure. Therefore, I draw from each framework to understand how vernaculars serve as an everyday practice to build community identity in spite of dominant marginalizing infrastructural failure. It is, however, important to note that scholars have also drawn out important differences between these frameworks as they ground their analysis in one of the two camps. One of the significant distinctions between Ono and Sloop and Hauser is how they ground their understandings. Ono and Sloop focus on identities and the body, with explicit attention to historically marginalized communities. Hauser utilizes vernacular rhetoric through the framework of public sphere theory and centers on create local ideas and community organizing. See: Bernadette Calafell and Dawn Marie McIntosh "Latina/o Vernacular Discourse: Theorizing Performative Dimensions of an

Other Counterpublic," in *What Democracy Looks like: The Rhetoric of Social Movements and Counterpublics*, ed. Christina R. Foust, Amy Pason, and Kate Zittlow Rogness (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2017), 201–21.

31. Gerard A. Hauser and Thomas W. Benson, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres* (Univ of South Carolina Press, 1999); Bernadette Marie Calafell and Dawn Marie D. McIntosh, "Latina/o Vernacular Discourse" in Foust, Pason, and Zittlow Rogness, 201–21.

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34 Hauser, "Attending the Vernacular: A Plea for an Ethnographical Rhetoric," in Senda-Cook et.al., 16.

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36. Calafell and McIntosh, "Latina/o Vernacular Discourse," 217.

37. Ibid., 203.

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covert understandings of race." George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place*, 6.

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practices that articulate these identities and community and can translate within emplaced

vernacular infrastructures: cultural syncretism and pastiche. Cultural syncretism refers to local

communities use of vernacular to both affirm their own cultural expressions while also protesting dominant cultural ideologies. Pastiche represents the processual and active practice of borrowing popular culture and using the scraps to constitute new effects and create new forms of expression, identification, and practices of and for the local community.

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52. Simone, "People as Infrastructure," 408.

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57. Ibid., 408.

58. Ono and Sloop, "The Critique of Vernacular Discourse," 25.

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90. Abdul (resident of Sun Valley), interviewed by Solange Muñoz, June 19, 2020.

91. John (resident of Sun Valley), interviewed by Solange Muñoz, August 13, 2020.

92. Shania (Human Services Program Specialist, Denver Housing Authority).

93. John (resident of Sun Valley).

94 Shania (Human Services Program Specialist, Denver Housing Authority).

95. Amy (resident of Sun Valley), interviewed by Solange Muñoz, June 18, 2020.

96. Shania (Human Services Program Specialist, Denver Housing Authority), Darya (resident of Sun Valley), interviewed by Solange Muñoz, July 29, 2020.

97. Elena (resident of Sun Valley), interviewed by Solange Muñoz, June 16, 2020.

98. Carla (resident of Sun Valley).

99. Jan (resident of Sun Valley), interviewed by Solange Muñoz, June 18, 2020.

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108 Darya (resident of Sun Valley); Shania (Human Services Program Specialist, Denver Housing Authority).

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116. Amy (resident of Sun Valley).

117. Shania (Human Services Program Specialist, Denver Housing Authority).

118. Darya (resident of Sun Valley).

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130. Carla (resident of Sun Valley).

131. Sasha, (Resident of Sun Valley), Interviewed by Solange Muñoz, July 27, 2020.

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134. Shania (Human Services Program Specialist, Denver Housing Authority).

135. Carla (resident of Sun Valley).

136. Jan (resident of Sun Valley).

136. Sasha (resident of Sun Valley).

137. John (resident of Sun Valley).

138. Massey, *For Space*, 2005, 9.

139. Massey, 11.

140. Simone, *For the City Yet to Come*, 9.

141. Amin, "Lively Infrastructure," 146, 148.

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Concluding the Mile High City

As I wrote this dissertation, I taught a course entitled "Communicating Urban Identities." It began as a part of an Undergraduate Research Academy whose aim was to provide student opportunities to pursue fieldwork on local issues. The issue at hand for the first semester was the development of the National Western Center. Students analyzed the rural-urban divide from different disciplinary perspectives. Economics students researched the National Western Center as a potential bridge between Denver and rural economies while communication studies students focused on how the National Western Center's development may shift Denver's urban landscape. As a part of the course's fieldwork component, we took two field trips to Denver. In these field trips we visited many of the places that make up the case studies of this dissertation. We went on a tour at Larimer Square, roamed about RiNo, perused the mural paintings at Swansea Elementary, and envisioned the future projects taking hold at the National Western Center.

During our trip through the Globeville, Elyria-Swansea neighborhoods a contentious debate emerged. As we explored the mural at Swansea Elementary a conversation about the NWC and I-70 development projects' efficacy began. Half of the students derided the NWC development because of the potential gentrification and displacement in the GES. The other half applauded the development's potential to improve and advance the area into another thriving destination for Denver. Conversations about I-70 took a similar tone. On the one hand, students argued that the highway disconnected the community and its expansion would only exacerbate that. On the other hand, students claimed that we need this highway for transportation and we need to expand them to account for Denver's growth. In discussions of displacement, pro-

development students discussed the availability of housing in rural areas in Colorado and the relocation assistance from the government as solutions to the issue of displacement. In rebuttal, the other students discussed the loss of community, roots, and way of life as too high of a price to pay for moving.

Over the course of the semester, we would go round and round with this debate. We constructed a shared vocabulary about the different terms that kept emerging in the conversation to see if we could find common ground. We explored the history of development in the area and its relationship to the future to trace some of the tensions between development and power. The division never faltered, and no one budged. The debate just continued because, for them, it was not a question of terms or history. Rather it was a question of how each student understood Denver's urban identity. For some, their notion of Denver's identity was engrained in conceptions of economic progress and expansion. For others, Denver is a city of roots and community. All of these identities and, of course, more persist in the space of Denver's stories-so-far.[1] Yet, the trajectories the students grasped became a line of argument—a topoi—that impacted how they roamed through RiNo or envisioned the NWC buildings. While these fifteen people who live fifty miles from Denver do not represent the full complexities of Denver's development, we can see how these debates correlate with Denver's past, present, and future development projects.

As I demonstrated in the introduction, urban development has often been lined with practices that align privatization, renewal, and consumerism with the idea of progress. Seeking to clear out slums, redevelop dilapidated areas, and rejuvenate urban growth, urban planners and city officials turned to development projects as a way to preserve an urban experience and sculpt a flourishing city center. Across the United States, these development projects produced a

repertoire of "upscale growth, based on both the economic power of capital and the state and the cultural power of the media and consumer tastes."[2] These notions of progress and expansion that half of my students clung to so readily draw on these histories to understand Denver's identity through its consumable destinations.

At stake here is the question of what urban experience(s) come to be preserved and for whom does the city flourish? This question raises others. Can or does urban identity guide urban development? In what ways does urban identity emerge in the process of development? How is identity developed across different spaces and times in a city's development? What kinds of performances are made available through developed or developing urban landscape? How does the built environment enhance or deny the performance of particular identities? Which identities and performances are deemed in or out of place within the city's developing landscape?

Rhetoric is at the heart of these questions leading to more: What is rhetoric's role in developing urban places? How does rhetoric serve as a resource to sculpt a city's urban identity? What is the relationship between rhetoric and spatial politics? How can critics account for the openness of space? In the proceeding pages I will draw out how this project offers answers and map out ways that future projects can address similar problems. Throughout this chapter, I will review the previous chapters offering glimpses into how this dissertation urges critics to think through rhetoric and space/place differently. After reviewing the chapters, I will expand on these insights and detail how this dissertation highlights the utility of thinking rhetoric as infrastructure, presents methodological considerations for analyzing space as mulitplicitous, and calls for alternative routes in urban development.

Chapter Reviews

Throughout this dissertation, I turn to rhetorical infrastructures as critical heuristic to analyze how Denver's development projects over the last sixty years have sculpted an urban identity of white exceptionalism and frontier expansionism. I argued that, through memory and imagination, Denver planners and urban users construct a dominant urban identity of frontier expansion and white exceptionalism as repertoires for urban development projects in the city. As open and multiplicitous, however, these spaces come to be negotiated through everyday practices that reroute infrastructures towards roots and community care. Chapter 1 contextualizes the process of urban development across the United States and Denver since the 1940s. In this chapter, I demonstrate patterns of urban development throughout the country, but my dissertation focuses solely on Denver, Colorado.

Denver exemplifies an interconnected and consequential city within the US that still clings to an individual identity of the West. As Denver continues to grow and transform, its development patterns can offer insight into contemporary considerations and forms of urban development in relation to other phases of urban change. Additionally, throughout Denver's development, preservation efforts like those in Larimer Square and event structures like the National Western Stock Show served as exemplars for the development of similar sites across the United States.[3] At the same time, multiple previous urban spaces influence Denver's planners and residents developmental plans, thus demonstrating the interconnected patterns, forms, and infrastructures within the United States.[4] These contexts are so similar and reproduced across the United States, I contend, because they are influenced by rhetorical infrastructures.

In chapter 2, I present rhetorical infrastructures as a framework to help critics begin to analyze how different values, beliefs, and traditions come to be built into and as the urban

landscape. I defined rhetorical infrastructures as the symbolic and material claims in and to urban

spaces, which direct and arrange space's multiple trajectories into a dominant, practiced urban

identity.[5] Through the use of common topoi like progress, expansion, authenticity, or roots,

rhetoric serves as a channel that guides urban development projects as well as urban users'

experiences within the built environment. Throughout this chapter, I outlined three functions of

rhetorical infrastructures.

First, the concept of rhetorical infrastructures points scholars to attend to how rhetoric

directs the ongoing and multiplicitous trajectories that make up the openness of space into an

event of place. By filtering out, giving presence to, and securing greater intensity of certain

stories over others, the symbolic, material, and embodied performances of space rhetorically

sculpts a spatial story that urban users and developers follow in their everyday life and future

projects. Second, rhetorical infrastructures attend to how the various relationalities that make up

space come into contact to arrange a smoothed out urban identity. Utilizing Henri Lefebvre's

spatial triad, I drew attention to the moments of collision between lived, perceived, and

conceived space as guiding tools for the production of space.[6] Rhetoric plays a role in arranging

how these different moments of space converge and, more importantly, how these collisions

communicate a smoothed out urban identity. Third, rhetorical infrastructures speak to how space

and urban identity is negotiated through everyday practices. From everyday acts of resistance to

moments where daily practices build up different ways of being, people's everyday

performances open space and present alternative trajectories as possible paths to change the

politics of place. These three functions of rhetoric occur as an infrastructure of urban

development. Using this conceptual framework, I analyzed memory, imagination, and vernacular

as rhetorical infrastructures that influenced Denver's development across four different times and spaces.

Analyzing Denver's first historic district, Larimer Square, chapter 3 demonstrates how memory, as a rhetorical infrastructure, guides everyday practices and urban development by sculpting an urban identity out of particular pasts. As was the case with many cities during the 60s and 70s, planners and residents tussled between preservation and renewal. Larimer Square sits in the middle of this battle and its success has, as I demonstrated, provided a roadmap for future development projects. In this chapter, I examine Larimer Square as a memory place and focus on what narratives, characters, and plots come to the fore within the Square's spatial story. I argued that the place evokes memories of frontier expansion and white exceptionalism while papering over possibilities to reckon with Denver's history of white supremacy, racialized violence, and colonialism. By developing Denver's early identity through the spatial story of frontier grit, Larimer Square provides a repertoire for future developers to draw upon in projects like the River North Art District (RiNo).

For this chapter, I turned to archival research and historical sources as a means to evaluate the ongoing pasts with the place's sculpted public memory. Evaluating memory as a rhetorical infrastructure requires critics to examine the dominant spatial story and its material and symbolic instantiations in the place. Further, by examining memory as a part of ordering space, critics should begin to critically examine what stories are given less intensity in the space. Within rhetoric's (re)turn to the archives, many scholars are critical of the archives as repositories of power.[7] The archives are a site where rhetoricians must critically examine whose stories are told and which stories are left out.[8] Just as rhetoricians have called for methodologies of critical imagination, gossiping, or archival invention in their critical examination of the

archives, I ask scholars to think of space as an additional site to read different experiences as a part of the past.[9] If we build our present and future from the past, then the pasts which are given presence to influence our day to day lives directly impacts our ways of being together now as well as in the yet-to-come. Therefore, re-attaching pasts, particularly those which have been moved to the margins, as a part of the place has the potential to transform its political possibilities.

Building from memory, urban development is also a process of imagining future places. In chapter 4, I consider the imagination as a rhetorical infrastructure that arranges potential relationalities to form an urban image that emboldens certain people, places, and things as a part of making place meaningful. I analyzed the imagination as a rhetorical infrastructure in the North Denver area, with specific focus on the National Western Center and Globeville, Elyria-Swansea. Through this analysis, I argued that surrounding the themes of connectivity, orientation, and stability/change, the North Denver development projects embeds notions of progress and expansion as active processes for Denver's spatial growth while designating community roots as static objects within the place. Leaving experiences of roots as closed trajectories in space increase the risk for residents to be displaced from the area's progression forward.

To analyze the communicative manifestations of Lefebvre's triad, I turned to city plans, resident interviews, and spatial criticism as artifacts that captured the planners' representations of space, residents' spatial practices, and both planner and residents performed or created representational spaces. From these multimethodological pursuits, I examined sites where all three moments of space converged and analyzed what values and performances emerged as potential place-making strategies. Throughout this chapter, I oscillate between which trajectories

are likely to direct the place-making process and which other trajectories could inform the future place. This alternation throughout my analysis speaks to how development processes close off and order the space into place. Analyzing spaces that are in process opens possibilities for critics to pursue feats of imagination themselves. As rhetorical criticism moves forward toward "doing the work of addressing the significance of our cultural environment, past and present, in an effort to (re)build, strategically, our just future," underscoring imagination as a rhetorical infrastructure presses critics to build imaginations of an alternative world into the possibility of space.[10]

While much of this dissertation examines the top-down ways that developers, planners, and urban users cultivate a particular and particularly power-laden urban identity, chapter 5 takes seriously that space is always in the process of becoming. In chapter 5, I focused on Sun Valley, a neighborhood who is a part of a new development project, during the context of Denver's COVID stay-at-home orders. I traced how these individual and community experiences began to sculpt a vernacular infrastructure to survive the infrastructural failures apparent within the stay-at-home period. Through their everyday practices and support systems, I argued the Sun Valley neighborhood re-placed economic support, community relationships, and social stigmas to build local infrastructures of care, play, and growth. Focusing on vernacular infrastructures highlights the ways in which marginalized communities re-route obstacles and infrastructural failures into resources to empower the possibility of different practices and new worlds.

Residents of Sun Valley captured their experience during Denver's COVID stay-at-home orders by taking photographs of their everyday experiences and discussing their documented experience in interviews. Embedding the research methods within a community's daily routines, habits, and places also provides residents an opportunity to engage with their own everyday life from a different perspective. By documenting the processes of our daily practices provides

people moments to pause, reflect, and learn from the daily practices that build into or disrupt a community space. Utilizing a method that captures this helps residents, researchers, and planners alike to bring these embodied knowledges into their future endeavors.

If rhetorical infrastructures, as I argued in chapter 2, negotiate alternative possibilities, then it is important to attend to the everyday individual and community practices that open space to the potentiality of a more livable place. How do communities constitute spaces where their ways of being and identity can survive and thrive? In what ways can the material and symbolic space offer alternative forms of community? The vernacular is one concept that helps us answer these questions as it focuses on how marginalized communities affirm their identity in order to survive and create alternative worlds.[11] Taking the vernacular seriously as a practice that re-routes the politics of place into an alternative opening allows scholars to take stock of less dominant and potentially resistive trajectories available in space.

These three analysis chapters examine different phases of urban development across multiple neighborhoods in Denver. In this journey throughout Denver's spatio-temporal development, rhetorical infrastructures became a connective tissue that brought together understandings of Denver's dominant, yet negotiated identity. In the next section, I outline how the concept of rhetorical infrastructures urges critics to examine rhetoric's productive and imaginative role in the construction of the urban landscape.

Rhetoric through Infrastructure

One important object of analysis for rhetoricians is metaphor. This makes sense seeing that "through the use of metaphor, reality is conceived in a particular way because of the linguistic vehicles employed in its construction, and this reality can change as we use different vehicles to structure that reality."[12] If metaphors direct our reality in our everyday life, then the

metaphors we use in our scholarship surely guides our analysis. Especially within spatial

criticism where we are using symbols to discuss the material, embodied, and affective world, the

terms we use to analyze and describe spaces matter.[13] As such, critics have offered different sets

of terms or metaphors to expand the fields scholarly insight like textures, ambience,

juxtaposition, mapping, or swerve, to name a few.[14] In this dissertation, I offer infrastructure as

another conceptual framework through which we can conceptualize the rhetoric of space.

Viewing space through the lens of infrastructure offers critics a set of tools to think about

rhetoric as a productive agent in the construction of place and urges critics to draw connections

between the construction of place and the possibility to imagine alternative worlds.

Infrastructures can be thought of as socio-technic building blocks that organize, facilitate,

and create possible practices within areas like the city.[15] As Lefebvre contends, every society

produces its own space and "any 'social existence' aspiring or claiming to be 'real', but failing to

produce its own space, would be a strange entity, a very peculiar kind of abstraction unable to

escape from the ideological or even the 'cultural' realm."[16] Infrastructures—from the building

material, through transit connections, to the flows of goods and resources—are systems and

processes that sculpt the urban backdrop and "make the modern city the machine that it is which

the foundation for society's space."[17] Within a more contemporary lens of infrastructure, it is

also important to understand that these foundations are always shifting and consistently

renavigated. Be it from processes like urban development where entirely new structures are built

or people's everyday interactions, urban infrastructures are social forms that imbed ideological

values into and as the material, symbolic, and aesthetic landscape. Co-constituted by the social

world, people, communities, and ways of being also (re)negotiate how infrastructures can or do

sculpt society's spaces. Given these co-constitutive processes, infrastructure provides a lens to think through how space and its impact on identity, sociality, and politics is produced.

Viewing rhetoric through this lens, foregrounds rhetoric as a part of the urban background that constructs and negotiates the production of society's space. As an infrastructure, rhetoric is the channel the directs, arranges, and negotiates the possibilities of space into what becomes everyday places like Larimer Square or the National Western Center. While rhetoricians' focus may be more centered on how these spaces urge audiences to see, move, or be differently in the world while in the space, the concept of infrastructure asks critics to place initial focus on the undergirding logics, values, and systems that come to be built into the material and symbolic space. Rhetorical infrastructures urge critics to consider the undergirding logics and common topoi as productive agents in creating the material, symbolic, and embodied components of everyday space. To do so critics examine how rhetoric, like infrastructure, facilitates and orders the landscape into particular ways of being and being with others.

Understanding rhetoric as a channel that organizes the openness of space into a certain form of urban identity also calls on critics to examine the possibilities of what a space could be. Through the influential work of Doreen Massey, analyzing space as multiplicitous, produced through interrelations, and always becoming opens us up to a new politics of space.[18] Rhetoricians utilize Massey to analyze processes of forgetting or absence in space.[19] This work focuses on Massey's event of place where, through a clash of trajectories, new configurations form. Those new configurations are imperative to study because they sculpt our ways of being together in particularly power-laden ways. There is more work to be done, though, to trace out and breathe life into those configurations whose muted presences continue to linger in the openness of space.

As Blair et al. contend, rhetoric is partisan in its very nature.[20] Examining spaces partiality, rhetoric is a critical lens to analyze how that which is said versus unsaid, present versus absence, remembered versus forgotten crafts certain political, cultural, and social worlds. By excavating the still lingering possibilities in space, this dissertation urges scholars to not only analyze how absence occurs, but to excavate these absences and radically imagine space through different past trajectories, imaginations, or vernacular practices. In recent scholarship, scholars like Amber Johnson urge critics to expand their work into the territory of imagining and rebuilding differently. They state: "As a plea for our future, continue critiquing systemically oppressive structures, but use your work to go far beyond the critique... Now it is time to start rebuilding new systems."[21] By taking Massey's contention of multiplicity and openness seriously, this dissertation attempts to instill the muted presence of ongoing stories-so-far as an imperative dimension in the rhetoric of space. From these heterogenous interrelations we can begin to imagine rebuilding anew. If rhetoric is an infrastructure, then giving presence to these possibilities of space offer critics, communities, and planners different foundations to continue building society's space.

Posing radical imagination as a part of rhetorical criticism's telos raises concerns over speculation and questions of how, methodologically, do rhetoricians begin to use their analysis as a means to imagine alternative worlds and rebuild new systems. Urban development, as a process is a useful context to think through radical imagination in the material spaces of our everyday lives. By the end of this conclusion, I will bring forth some lessons we can learn from Denver's urban development as a means to demonstrate ways to use rhetorical criticism as a foundation to rebuild rhetorical infrastructures toward a just world. Before that, however, this

dissertation poses some methodological considerations that helps critics attend to the heterogeneity of space while building imaginations for alternative futures.

Mapping Methodological Considerations

Throughout this dissertation, I utilized multiple methodologies and each chapter was distinct in my methodological choices and processes. To analyze Larimer Square and RiNo, I relied on archival research and my own embodied experiences of "being there" and "being through there."[22] In the imagination chapter, I turned to archives, mental mapping, textual criticism, and my own embodied experience. Then, to analyze the vernacular in Sun Valley I pursued photovoice interviews and spatial criticism as my methodological crux. My choice to use multi-methodological pursuits within each chapter and the array of methods across the dissertation raise three considerations about the possibilities of multimethodological work in spatial criticism: the possibilities to analyze multiplicity, the role of the critic's own embodiment in relation to these different methodological approaches, and the form of qualitative approaches critics choose to take.

To analyze rhetoric's role in ordering the openness of space, it is important to engage with the space through various perspectives. After all, if one is to argue about heterogeneity should they not also be informed through multiple methodologies. Therefore, I do not use just one artifact or one methodology to examine Denver. Instead, for each chapter I utilized multiple methods to understand the heterogeneous, interrelation, and open components of space. While the methodologies I used could have each, individually, offered rich data for analysis, together they helped untangle the complex tapestry of space. Therefore, I turned to different methods as practices to amplify space's various trajectories.

Even though the idea that artifacts and texts are fragmented is a rather uncontested concept for critics, there is still a dearth of scholarship that accounts for ways of examining the different fragments.[23] For texts, many scholars turn to different forms of textual analysis which is important and useful in thinking of the fragmented ways a text reaches audiences. Yet, as many scholars call for critics to consider different vocabularies and approaches to move rhetoric away from the purely symbolic world, there is more to be done in thinking about what approaches we take to understand the textures of space.[24] I propose the use of multimethodologies as a route to grasp onto the complex contours of how space is cultivated, experienced, and understood. Each method grants critics alternative insights and embodiments of the space. In analyzing the politics and possibilities of space's multiplicity, each method offers a renewed perspective to see, understand, and experience a different trajectory.

Opening rhetoric to the floodgates of methodology does put the field at some risk. Pursuing social scientific work under the moniker of rhetoric potentially passes over the critic, the experienced space, and the body. Indeed, interviews, archives, and symbolic readings can easily put the analytical weight behind other rhetorical artifacts detached from the actual space itself. Pursuing these methodological choices provide critics the opportunity to "flee from this embodied, intimate, and personal engagement of the critic's body with the space of analysis. Confronted by the confounding porosity and simultaneity of space, we almost immediately turn to non-embodied modes of analysis."[25] The body, then, must still be the key vehicle of analysis and it should be a guiding resource in choosing and crafting other methodological approaches.

In this dissertation, I have turned to my body as a tool to participate in and more fully understand the spaces of Denver. Grabbing a drink at the Green Russel or walking through the Grow Garden at Sun Valley became an important source of data for my analysis. This

embodiment, however, was only a part of my understanding and experience of space. Through these multimethodological approaches my embodiment in space was shaped by the archives and city plans and Sun Valley residents' photos and Elyria residents' mental maps. From information in the archives, I re-experienced those potential pasts as a guide to understand how they do or do not inflect into the present. Resident interviews became not just another source of data, but also an experience of being with others in space. By sitting at Elyria Park with residents we were embodying the space together and each of their mental maps came to reconfigure my own mental map of the space. Following the photographs residents took and the stories they shared, my body felt the playgrounds or the South Platte River differently. The body does not, nor should not become detached from our analysis from space. Rather, critics should turn to multimethodologies as a route to expand our experiences of space's diffuseness. Our bodies and shared social world should be influenced and impacted by our methodologies as we come to understand the openness of space. To ensure that we are not detaching our bodies, identities, and experiences from space, it is important to carefully choose methodologies that drive this connection.

Throughout this dissertation, I turned to different types of qualitative interviews as routes to understand people's everyday experiences, sites of community, visions of place, and practices of resilience. Initially, I decided to take these approaches, in large part, because I was analyzing marginalized communities. I was also analyzing residential neighborhoods that I have never lived in. As a person who holds many experiences and positions of privilege and as a person whose everyday life is not centered in these places, it was important for me to understand and amplify the voices of residents in the area. Taking account of these dimensions, I turned to more "formal modes of participant observation (including interviewing and other techniques for in situ analysis) [which] enables practitioners of rhetorical field methods to glean more nuanced data

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about the diverse identities and interpretations shaping 'live' rhetorics."[26] Indeed, from my

interviews, I gained important insight into the tensions between oppression and agency within

communities; I understood more about everyday struggles and dynamics within the community;

and I began to learn more about how the community defines and discusses the significant sites

and practices within the areas.

Using interviews and more formal qualitative methods to study live rhetorics does,

however, run the risk of detaching the experience from the lived rhetorics being analyzed.

Asking questions about experiences is one level removed from the actual experiences

themselves. To invigorate a more *in situ* experience, this dissertation showcases the expansive

qualitative approaches at hand for rhetoricians where the method itself invokes lived

performances. Using mental maps, for example, brings the participants body into the process of

discussing a space. Photovoice calls on participants to experience and capture everyday life. The

methodological choices we make as critics should go beyond collecting different data about an

artifact. Rather, the gathering of data itself is a part of the process of these lived rhetorics.

Therefore, choosing approaches that bring participants bodies, experiences, and spaces into the

process reattaches the more formal modes of participant observation to the lively,

improvisational, and embodied rhetorics that critics seek to analyze.

Methods like photovoice and mental mapping are helpful approaches for rhetoricians to

enlist in order to better bridge moments of live rhetorics and interpretations of these experiences.

Through different methodologies that implicate participants into an embodied or performative

experience, interviews can allow participants to enact and reflect on their own embodied

experiences in space. For example, the photovoice method asks residents to capture their *in situ*

rhetoric. These photographs encapsulate the mundane activities which form the overarching

individual and community experiences. Methodologies tied to daily life, like photovoice projects, give credence to the significance of the everyday and brings forward people's documented lived experiences as another rhetorical artifact to consider everyday life. They also bring participants into the process of attending to their own everyday. As residents took pictures of their everyday life they became, in some ways, rhetorical critics themselves. Taking stock of the often taken-for-granted moments and then analyzing them through embodied reflections later is an informal practice of criticism. While it is not the whole of rhetorical criticism, it provides a more lived perspective of these particular trajectories. The critics role then is to work with the community to bring these routes forwards as potential building blocks for redevelopment projects or community support systems. Fulfilling this role, in the next section I offer some thoughts on Denver's potential routes forward.

Developing Denver's Future

This dissertation takes Denver as its case study to outline and exemplify the critical heuristic of rhetorical infrastructures. As a burgeoning city within the United States that has experienced drastic growth over the last ten years, Denver is a valuable case study to examine. In fact, with an average population growth rate of 1.6% per year since 2010, Denver is the fifth fastest growing large city in the US in 2019.[27] With benefits like economic growth and increased employment opportunities also comes issues with traffic, overcrowding, rising cost of living, and housing shortages.[28] Those moving into Colorado are predominantly middle to upper middle-class, well-educated, white people, thus shifting the economic and racial composition of the city and its neighborhoods.[29] As the city continues to expand there has been a growing sense that Denver is "erasing and rebuilding a shinier, clogged version of itself."[30] In response to this growth, the City of Denver has issued multiple plans that indicate a desire to "look to the future

with the collective vision of the community guiding a set of ambitious goals, policies and more nuanced strategies to address these challenges."[31] Given the invigorated efforts to develop Denver, this moment is an opportunity for scholars to consider and compare the processual and political shifts in development from the 1950s to now.

Throughout this dissertation, I have traced Denver's past, present, and future development projects. These projects indicate a strong tension between the city official and developers' stated desire to create an equitable, affordable, and inclusive city and Denver's material spaces and embodied practices. At the heart of this tension, I contend, lies Denver's unsubstantial reckoning with its past and ongoing trajectories of oppression and resilience. As I have demonstrated throughout this dissertation, values of progress and expansion guide Denver's development. Imbedded in Denver's everyday spaces, these values secure performances linked with frontier grit and whiteness, which mitigates any urgency to reckon with the city's stories of injustice. Instead, Denver's urban development aims to induce comfort within white narratives while building up spaces for white expansion. At the expense of rooted communities, who are predominantly low-income communities of color, the undergirding logics of progress and expansion continue to displace, gentrify, and forget these roots.

And yet, there are plenty of examples where these communities' strength showcase what is possible when urban landscapes develop through different rhetorics. Vernacular rhetorics of care or spatial imaginaries of the home exist within spaces like Sun Valley and Globeville, Elyria-Swansea. Not only do they exist, but they are influential rhetorics that guide those neighborhood's ways of being. These trajectories have already built portions of these neighborhood spaces. In thinking about urban development, planners, developers, and urban users should consider these practices to "build rubrics for a just world. Build archetypes for

justice. Embody the practices of social justice so that we may live in social circles where our bodies are more than stereotypes; they are complex entities entrusted with uplifting communities."[32] Rather than espouse the values of diversity, inclusion, and equity within city plans, this dissertation highlight routes for urban planners and users alike to recognize, amplify, and bring these different stories forward as new possibilities for future development.

This is not to say that the vernacular rhetorics of Sun Valley should become the only vision of Denver's future spaces. That would not be in the spirit of the openness of space either. At the same time, this dissertation showcases how, over at least the last sixty years, Denver, among other cities in the United States, have razed, cleared out, and displaced these trajectories. In so doing, urban landscapes have been deeply segregated and oppressive for communities of color.[33] In thinking of how to move forward from this ongoing history, Massey poses the question: "If we take seriously the relational construction of identity (of ourselves, of the everyday, of places), then what is the potential geography of our politics toward those relations?"[34] By taking seriously community practices and roots as impactful relations in space we may just be able to reimagine a potentially new geography of our politics. We may begin to build from alternative infrastructures that construct a different urban landscape and invigorate a more just urban identity.

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