

NATURE, SOCIO-SPATIAL DIVISIONS AND CONNECTIONS: AN
EXAMINATION OF EL JARDÍN DE GUADALUPE

By

Elizabeth Moreno

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Committee Membership

Dr. Matt Derrick, Committee Chair

Dr. Sarah Ray, Committee Member

Dr. Erin Kelly, Committee Member

Dr. Yvonne Everett, Program Graduate Coordinator

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ABSTRACT

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Culture is often discussed in the content of social behavior but, how culture is spatially linked to landscapes is often overlooked. Points of social and cultural reproduction is not only tied to landscapes, but there are constantly challenged as new cultures are introduced into a space. Latino culture in the United States has, and continues to, reshape America's landscapes. For purpose of this thesis, the reshaping of landscapes will be observed in a community. This project examines the perception that Latinos avoid participation in a community garden. This perception is not entirely true, as there was one Latina participating. As I engaged with the community for over two years, I recruited an additional six Latino volunteers. The argument is, if we analyze spaces as separate from one another, the actual participation of the Latino community in the garden is overlooked and it overlooks how culture reshapes landscapes. In short, the community garden's existence is sustained by the activities and (Latinos) culture that occurs in other connected landscapes. Drawing on participant observation, participatory action research, surveys, and interviews, I analyze how intersecting axes of difference in culture influence participation in the garden and how culture shapes place making. To protect the

community, I have changed the names of places and of individuals and chose to use the word “Town” to refer to the community of study.

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I would like to thank my late grandmother, Eliza Chavez. Thank you for all your wisdom, love, and passing on your passion to my siblings and I. Thank you for teaching me faith, how to pray the rosary, to cross myself, and the story of Our Lady Our Guadalupe. I miss you every day. Thank you for inspiring me to consider the church as a possible thesis project.

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INTRODUCTION: IDENTIFYING CONNECTIONS AND DIVISIONS

The Garden

At the community garden, Bill, the director of the project gives me a tour of what his hard work and dedication have reaped, what his has sown this growing season. “This is our greenhouse,” he says, “where we keep and start our pony-packs and startups.” The packs are neatly aligned with tiny sprouts already beginning to poke through the soil. Outside the greenhouse, he goes on to show me more perfectly aligned rows of lettuce, kale, carrots, and cabbage. The director is an experienced gardener, as he can grow a large amount of food with only a few volunteers. In fact, he is also an educated botanist who teaches agriculture classes at the local community college. The community garden itself is a project funded through the collaboration of the local Catholic Church and another community service center.

Walking me through the garden, he explains that one-third of the garden’s produce are donated to the Parish Food Pantry. I notice perfectly parallel rows of kale and lettuce on the land. The geometry is striking. Three times a week, the Parish Food Pantry gives away fresh produce to low-income individuals and families — a crucial resource for the needy in this rural Northern California town. The community garden, gives the residents the opportunity to grow their own food while helping the broader community outside the church. “The garden is open to the community, but I haven’t had much volunteers or participation,” he explains. It’s been mostly me working out here. Gloria, a

Latina woman, is the only other person who has participated, but she has her plot over here.”

We arrive at a distinct plot of zucchinis and cucumbers. “Look at this plot here. It belongs to Gloria,” the director points out. “Look, it’s just all bundled and jumbled up. There is no structure, and she does not know how to use drip irrigation.” There is a tone of frustration in his voice. Gloria is a middle-aged, first generation Mexican-American woman and, like Bill, an active member of the local Catholic Parish St. Francis. “I would like for more participation from the Parish in this garden. Latinos too, but they always seem to separate and keep themselves to a corner.”

The frustration in garden ministry is that there is little to none participation from Latino community. These frustrations stem from different binaries of nature and anxieties, and reflect dominant American culture and narratives, and regarding Latinos in a white rural space. Dominant American environmental culture often critiques the lack of participation of ethnic minorities in green spaces and often research makes suggestions of how to encourage minorities to participate. However, the suggested method for minority inclusion overlooks spatial connections (Mitchell, 2008).

The garden is an idea of a production of nature, where links of nodes of reproduction are transparent. In this thesis, I argue that the dominant American culture and narratives of environmentalism ignore the connections of spaces and landscapes between nature, the Latino community, and how culture is changes landscapes. As a preview, I will walk my reader through some spaces in the following sections of this introduction chapter.

The Church

I stay in the back, watching Father Javier make people laugh with his jokes. “Juan, do you love your wife?” Father Javier asks. “Is she good to you? You better say yes... she is sitting next you.” Juan, along with the rest of the Latino congregation, laughs. As he wraps his arm around his wife Estella he nervously responds, “Yes, I do!”

It is a beautiful, sunny day in the Town and everyone is celebrating Mother’s Day, especially at St. Francis Parish. St. Francis is a small church with high antique ceilings and stained glass windows that narrate stories of Jesus and saints. Eager to hear to the word of God, people fill the benches and those who arrive late stand in the side aisles, and even pour out to the church’s door. He loves telling stories about his youth how he has persevered being away from home. Father Javier, asks the mariachi to play patriotic Mexican songs for the congregation. One of the popular songs the band plays is “Mexico Lindo Y Querido.” It is an immigrant love song that goes something like this:

“I sing to your volcanos, to your meadows and flowers, love of my loves... beautiful and beloved Mexico, if I die far from you, say I am asleep and bring me here, bury me in the foot of the mountains, covered under your fertile soil where it cradles sane men.”

This song, and many others alike, play out from home and car stereos of many Latino households in the community. In the church, they also sing songs to celebrate the women. Mother’s Day in a Catholic Latino household is also a celebration of the Mother of the Americas, Our Lady of Guadalupe (Rebecca, 2009).

“Our Lady of Guadalupe is our greatest mother and today we celebrate her, as well as the mother of Mexico, the queen of the Americas,” Father Javier claims. He requests a song called “La Guadalupana,” which tells a story about a man, nature, and faith. The story centers on Juan Diego, a Mexican Indian who, during a harsh winter, experienced a spiritual encounter. During one of his daily walks, on a hill called Tepeyac, Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to him, speaking in his native language, for a special request. The image, and the way in which that Our Lady of Guadalupe presented herself, is important because she did not represent a European image of Mary. She was one of Juan Diego’s own people. Her skin was olive and an aura of golden rays surrounded her body. Our Lady of Guadalupe requested that a temple be built on the top of the hill of Tepeyac and Juan Diego’s job was to convince the local bishop.

As told further in the song, Our Lady of Guadalupe instructed Juan Diego to walk to the highest point of Tepeyac and collect an assortment of flowers. Juan Diego was confused because it was winter and there was nothing but frosty dry brush on his journey to the hilltop. To his surprise, he found fresh castille flowers blooming beautifully far from their season. Our Lady of Guadalupe stated that these flowers would convince the bishop and everyone else who might doubt his vision. The bishop was in disbelief to see the tender flowers and, in that same moment, Our Lady of Guadalupe image was imprinted on the poncho in which Juan Diego carried the castille flowers.

Today, Our Lady of Guadalupe is the most important religious symbol of Mexico and one of most powerful female icons of Mexican and Mexican American culture (Rodriguez 1994). Her image travels across political borders along with faithful

immigrants. Often her image is one that's transforms a space into a place. When one adds meaning to a space, the space transforms into a place (Blackwell, 2015). The story of Our Lady of Guadalupe is crucial for the Latino Catholic, as it represents nature, a source of energy; without it there is no life (Rebecca, 2009). Our Lady of Guadalupe centers the Latino household, reminding the family of the importance of women, and thus, empowering Latina women to lead their homes church. Father Javier likes to entertain the crowd. He asks all the mothers to come up to the front of the church and receive a rose as his gift for Mother's Day. He asks their children and husbands love them, because they are vessels of love and purity like Our Lady of Guadalupe.

I look around church and notice many families with young children. This was a time of family reunion and practice their culture and religion. Their faith is evident as they hold hands as they lo Holy mass is a religious ceremony that is the most sacred and precious of all rites by Catholics around the world. It is considered by devoted Catholics to be a direct pipeline to God's loving grace (Davis, 2015). However, I get the sense that the Latino community in the Town attends mass for more than hearing the word of God. The church is after all is a negotiated space. Negotiated because, it is temporally shared by the English congregation (Blackwell, 2015). It is both a place of prayer and space of sanctuary where they feel safe, validated, and supported (Matovina, 2012). At the end of mass, I think about the woman's role and experiences in the household. This thought, brings me to analyze a space that is constantly being negotiated, I explain this negotiation in the next section.

The Household

The household, a place of meaning tends to be the root of a foundation for identifying and exploring an individual's culture. The following Sunday, I ask Maribel if I can observe her in her household while she gets ready for mass. Maribel is the first to rise in the morning. She boils water for instant coffee and then gently wakes her twelve year-old son. He stirs "five more minutes," complaining softly with eyes still closed. She goes back into her room and then wakes up her husband, Ramiro, who gets up at the first call. "Diegito get up we are going to be late!" This time her son gets up slowly and dresses up with the clothes that Maribel picked out for him, and then makes his way to the bathroom to brush his teeth. I observe a large Our Lady of Guadalupe alter with a burning candle and framed pictures of her parents. They have gray hair and After Maribel brushes her hair, she goes and picks and folds up Diegito's blankets from the living room and reorganizes the pillows on the couch. Five minutes later they are out the door on their way to mass.

There are some similarities between my own childhood experiences and that of Maribel's household. I think about my own mother. She too was the first one up on Sunday mornings, in charge of getting up seven yawning children and my father. My mother led us; taught us, and showed us that mass is community, a place of prayer, and a place where you can speak to God. What I didn't recognize then was that my home was constantly being negotiated in the hybrid culture created by my parents' Mexican and American culture and narratives, like many Latino households in the Town.

Catholics in the United States comprise the largest religious group, nearly a fourth of all its citizens. Latinos constitute more than one-third of U.S. Catholics (Motovia, 2012). And Latino households are the fastest growing demographic sector, accounting for half of the growth in the total U.S. population (Price, 2012). In other words, Latino Catholics are the fastest growing group in the United States. This demographic distinction has a great impact in reshaping the United States' focus on both religion and on the landscape. The Pew Hispanic Research Center confirms the ongoing influence of Catholicism on the Latino household (Pew, 2012). About 70% of Latino Catholics prefer mass in Spanish with at least one Hispanic clergy (Motovia, 2012; Pew, 2012). Thus, not only the Catholic Church becomes a place of similarity, belonging, and sanctuary for many Latino immigrants but, also for the future Latino generations. With faith as the foundation of the Latino household, cultural reproduction can be further broken down to into gender roles and other cultural outlets.

Like other American households, Latino households are points of social and cultural reproduction and, as noted earlier, it is primarily supported by the Catholic Church. Latinos in early migration periods into the United States advocated ethnic parishes, because they use the church as a mean to retain their sense of identity, language, and cultural practice,(Motovia, 2012). In the Latino household, the traditional social order breaks down with gender roles, with women being the primary carriers of the religious belief systems (Rodriguez, 1994). It is mainly the women in the household who have been expected, and hold, the responsibility to socialize and teach their children into the cultural belief and religious system. This includes the teachings of the Roman

Catholic Church as they have understood and learned from their own families (Rodriguez, 1994). As the largest congregation in the United States, the Latino community supports the Catholic Church to its existence.

The history of the Latino community in the United States has been a long and complicated one, particularly in California. Latinos, along with other ethnic groups, have fought for equality, justice, and a sense of belonging. Some scholars and critics argue that Latino immigrants aren't assimilating into American culture and that they are not interested in becoming citizens of America. Further, they argue that Latino immigrants simply want to temporarily attach themselves and feed off its host (Huntington, 2004). This assumption stems from no understanding Latino culture.

Failure for Latinos to assimilate in America can be attributed to many factors. Two main factors are regional concentration and persistence. Latinos tend to concentrate regionally in pockets, which create ethnic enclaves that help them keep their identity and language. Persistence is key to survival in the U.S.-- Latinos are known to endure humiliation, hardships, tough living situations, and family separation (Huntington, 2004).

However, scholars ignore the fact that Mexican or Latino immigrants are willing to adapt to American customs, but it is often in a form of hybridity -- they take what they can from American culture, and transform it, or they meet in the middle with their Latino culture. A good example is the role of women. In Mexican culture, women are to stay home and look after their children. However, in American culture working women are acceptable, and thus, the Latino household negotiates the role of the woman. When

children learn English, and start to speak it in the Latino household, again the household is negotiated. The Latino household in the United States is a dynamic hybridity. Constantly being challenged to negotiate and accept new American influences.

The Food Pantry

Toward the end of mass a basket is passed through every bench and money is collected to support other spaces connected to the church. One of those spaces is the food pantry. Father Javier makes an announcement: “This second collection goes towards the food pantry. The food pantry nourishes many people who need help in our community.” Without hesitation the congregation brings, out their wallets and purses, and pours money into the baskets.

The first collection of mass donations goes towards supporting other ministries, and keeping the lights on in the church and the church’s directory. Two volunteers take the four baskets that circulated around the church and combine the money into a bigger basket delivering it to the front. “Let us pray to our lord that one day this country will value our work and love us like brothers and sisters,” Father Javier concludes mass and asks the Mariachi to play “Cielito Lindo.” We all sing along to a song about the “brown” mountain ranges of Mexico, “Sing, don’t cry.” After church, I observe the Latino community as they engage with each one another for a few moments. To understand the participation of Latinos in the community garden, one must first consider connections of places and spaces in which community shaping occurs.

“How can I close the gap between the garden and the Latino community?” I ask the director of garden. “I will teach you and you can teach them,” he replies. I observe the congregation at the end of mass, hanging out after church. I then realize that the lack of the Latino participation in the garden is not the problem or that they are out there in their corner, unwilling to participate. It’s the fact that one sees nature as separate from other spaces and overlooks the transactions that occur from within the Latino household and church, or the intersecting axes of differences that occur within these spaces. The divisions of these spaces create binaries of nature, that nature is separate from humans, but further separates social spaces and networks of activities. Cronon (2011) argues that as religion became monotheistic, humans responded to the physical world, and nature became singular. Thus, as religion has evolved so too have the binaries of nature. This project examines a Community garden project in rural northern California and the perception that Latinos do not participate in this green space. I argue that by separating landscapes, such as the El Jardín De Guadalupe, it overlooks socio-spatial relationships are overlooked, as are their connections to other spaces of social-cultural reproduction. In doing so, the internal conflicts that occur along the intersecting axes of differences are also ignored, such as race and class. Also ignored is the participation of Latinos in the broader spaces of the community and spaces beyond that community that support the existence of the garden This thesis examines the following questions: Has environmental and spatial culture differences impede or exclude the Latino community from participating the community garden? How has the garden changed with the presence of

the Latino community in the garden? How culture is embedded the garden and how has the understanding of culture change in the garden?

SIGNIFICANCE

About 90% of Latinos live in the United States' metropolitan areas, and the highest concentration is in the West and the Southwest United States (Maleve & Giordan, 2015). Consequently, Latino culture and environmental literature heavily focus on urban centers and larger cities located around the US-Mexico border and throughout the Southwest region, as they are fertile grounds of social and economic opportunities for immigrants (Nelson & Hiemstra, 2008). This thesis analyzes Latinos in rural landscapes where they are the fastest-growing minority group in a predominantly white community. Thus, Latino community research in rural Northern California is a "deviant case." The case is unusual and lacks attention in the world of scholarly research. It is my hope to add to rural, landscape, and community garden literature to this world (Shurmer-Smith, 2001).

Environmental culture primarily focuses on waste, recycling, pollution, toxicity, land and species conservation, nature's recreational activities, and the forming national state parks (Ray, 2013). However, the movement has not been inclusive to social and cultural spatial connections. Primarily created and studied by white scholars and activists, mainstream environmentalism has reached the consensus that Latinos, along with other minorities, do not participate in the movement (Ray, 2013). The use of public parks and green spaces by minorities is low, and environmentalists and geographers have tried to find why, but often miss their target (Byrne & Wolch, 2009, Pudup, 2008).

This thesis analyzes the relationship with the Community Garden Project and St. Francis Church, and more broadly the connection to the Latino community and how they are reshaping rural landscapes in Northern California. As grassroots initiatives aimed at revitalizing poor neighborhoods, community gardens intend to support low-income families (Pudup, 2008). Such green space is important in communities of need. Not only do they foster resilience and food security, but they also make accessible healthy and organic foods to households in a much more feasible manner. More broadly, community gardens are known for cultivating relationships with ecological biodiversity and facilitating an interaction between humans and the natural environment. Gardens represent unification, bringing together different ethnic groups and providing a space where gardening is the universal language. However, the community garden in the rural town of Northern California, is often portrayed as a white space by the Latino community.

BACKGROUND: SMALL TOWN IN RURAL NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

The town observed in this thesis is situated within Humboldt County in the Pacific Northwest, in Northern California, and is known for its natural beauty, diverse topography, rugged coastline, redwood forest, mountain ranges, and meandering rivers. Humboldt County is composed of 134,623 individuals (United States Census, 2010). Historically, major economic activities in the region were based on resource extractive industries such as timber production, fishing, and mining. However, in recent decades these industries have severely diminished due to unsustainable timber harvesting, tightening environmental regulations, outsourcing, and other economic factors. The economy has shifted toward a service-based industry, local businesses, and most recently the legality of cannabis cultivation has provided the county with control of a once informal economy (CCRP, 2015).

The history of the Town is like many other timber towns. A private company owned the Town during 1870s. The lumber mills in the Town attracted people from all over the United States, many of them European immigrants. As the timber industry declined, so did the population. In the 1980s, the Town's economy slowly shifted away from timber production and toward support for recreational activities such as hiking, camping, and fishing. Today, the Town promotes itself as the "recreational hub" of the Redwood region and for travelers of the Pacific Northwest. The Town is now the largest city in Southern Humboldt County, containing a population of 11,888 (Census, 2010).

Latinos make up more than 10% of the population in Humboldt County. Between 1990 and 2000, Humboldt experienced a major growth in the Latino community and the population increased by 64.6% (Figure 1). According to the County of Humboldt's Community Development Services Division, 8,210 Latinos lived in the county in 2000. That number is expected to increase to 18,505 by 2040 (Springville, 2010). Currently, the Town contains the largest Latino community in rural Humboldt County, about 17.4%, according to the California Center for Rural Policy. Latinos are the fastest growing minority group within the Redwood coastal county (Figure 1).

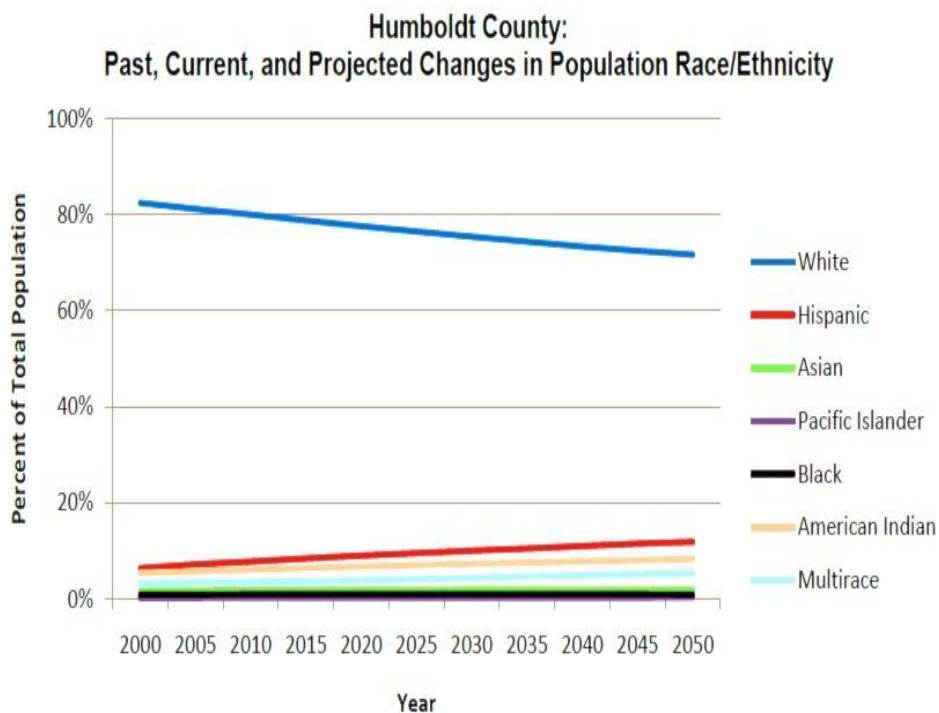


Figure 1. Past, Current, and Projected Changes in Humboldt County. Latino community is the fastest growing ethnic group. The following lines are descended in ordered as, White, Hispanic, American Indian, Multirace, Asian, Black, and Pacific Islander. (Source: CCRP)

The reason for Latino migration to the rural Redwood Coast is not fully clear. However, Selby (2000) explains that large timber companies were criticized for encouraging Latino immigrants to compete with locals with low wages. Malave and Giordani (2015) explain that more than half of Latino immigrants' name economic opportunities as their reason for migrating to the United States, and about 24% of Latino immigrants cite family reasons. In the Town, those two reasons are evident. From what I have gathered by conducting ethnographic fieldwork and surveys, historically, most Latinos have migrated for jobs in the fish industry, domestic cleaning, and lumber mills. Now, most rural Latinos work in the fast food industry and cleaning services.

I listened to many personal stories of how Latino individuals and their families arrived the Town. Many told me that it was the kinship derived from their culture that drove them to follow one another to the United States. "You stick together no matter what," a woman from Oaxaca, Mexico explained to me while we worked in garden. It was always a similar story-- a relative, either an uncle, cousin, brother, mother or a father came to the Town and established himself or herself with a job. Once they were on their feet they would bring their family members into the region.

A good example is my key informant, Juan. He came to the Town in the 1960s seeking an opportunity to change his life and of his family's. He got word through a friend about open jobs, and, eager to work, he quickly landed a position in a lumber mill. He spent most of his adult life working in the lumber mill until it closed in 1990. Juan, like many other immigrants, served as an anchor for his relatives from Mexico, including his two sisters who both have raised families in the Town. There has not been a

person in the Latino community who has not stated to me that a relative brought them into the Redwood Coast. There is little doubt that the Latino community is changing the landscape in Humboldt County, a landscape traditionally viewed as a white space.

The changing attitudes of old-timers in the community towards local Latinos have been no issue for the Latino community, as they continue to grow and support each other. These attitudes can be observed in local newspapers of Humboldt County as they have expressed different opinions about the Latino community. The California Center for Rural Policy analyzed 151 newspapers in the region in effort to understand how Latinos are represented in the North Coast media. The major themes, which suggest negative views of Latinos, which circulated from the study were “immigration” followed by “crime” (CCRP, 2015). Consequently, a stereotypical bias is portrayed of Latinos in the area by the media and the predominately white community. In the archival room of Humboldt State University, the “Latinos in Humboldt 1970-2008” folder is small, however, the newspaper clippings contained a lot of information. Headlines range of extremes from celebrating Mexican culture to sweeping raids and immigration deportations. In the early 1970s, the rural community appeared to accept Latinos, providing support to immigrants and even participating in Mexican holidays such as Cinco de Mayo, which suggests a neutral, supportive representation of the Latino community.

However, in the 1980s those headlines changed. Some of the headings, for example, read, "15 Mexican Nationals Arrested in Drug Probe, Police Say" (Hughes, 1994), and "Local Latinos Still Irked over Roundup of Illegals," (Johnson, 1994). As

timber production declined, jobs in this industry declined, and job competition increased (Selby, 2000). This is when the opinion of Latinos changed into a problematic view. They were once considered as a good source of labor to the county. As the economy plummeted, and desperate to hold jobs, the white community began to label their Mexican counterparts as drug criminals and illegals. It is easy to see the reason for the change of heart -- immigrants seem to be the scapegoat to problems in times of economic trouble (Huntington, 1990).

The Community Garden Project is both a ministry and a community garden, and it occupies the land adjacent to the Parish Activity Center and St. Francis Pantry Shelf. The garden was established in 2012 by the initiative of Bill, a member of the church and by St. Francis Church. The church owns the land and it is leased to Bill annually. The registration application to volunteer in the garden states, "Our mission is to create a sense of a community with the broader community and nourish the needy." Bill is also the director of the garden. He is a well-educated botanist, a professor of agriculture at a community college, and deeply passionate about his faith and the community.

The garden is set up in a way that the community of the church and the broader Town community can participate. One requirement of the volunteer is that one-third of their harvest goes to the pantry. This allows the pantry to distribute fresh vegetables to those in need. The pantry shelf is operated and managed by the church. Two times each month the congregations donate money during mass to both keep the lights on and keep the pantry running.

Home to the county's largest Latino community, the Town also contains some of the poorest individuals in the county. About 20.3% of the population in the town is living under the poverty line, and about 88.9% of the individuals who receive food from the pantry are unemployed. About 97.2% of the population receiving food is White and about 2.8% (only one individual) is Latino (CCRP, 2015). The pantry shelf is a landscape that is a crucial resource for many people who may be unemployed or low-income and need fresh food to stay healthy. The community garden is also intended to bring people together within the church, in which the majority of the congregation is Latino. However, the garden has consistently been a white space because one white individual does most of the work in the garden.

The director of the garden has allowed me to have a plot, about 1,800 square feet in size, to start an organic garden and help the community garden include the Latino public. I named the garden plot "El Jardín De Guadalupe," in honor of the Queen of the Americas, and in hope to call the attention of the Latino community. An image that is familiar to me, La Virgen De Guadalupe, was a central image in my household, as well as my friends' and relatives', household. She is a powerful saint within the Catholic Mexican culture and viewed the queen of the Americas, as she appeared to the poor Mexican Indian in the mountains ranges of Hill Tepeyac (Rebecca, 2009). I thought it appropriate to join faith and nature together, as Father Javier never fails to do in mass, to praise the queen of the Americas.

I found that the homilies by Father Javier serve much more than mass; church is a familiar place and space for a displaced community. The church serves as a familiar place

for the Spanish congregation, as most of them are immigrants. The church is a space of shared identity of both religion and, culture. Father Javier, the only Catholic priest in the Town, calls on families from their place of origin, often by the name of their native hometown. At least once a month a mariachi serves as the church's choir.

Often, at the end of mass, Father Javier will request "Mexico Lindo" as a closing song, a traditional secular song invoking patriotism and a sense of place in Town. Father Javier is very charismatic and, being an immigrant himself, can connect in a special connection to the Mexican Catholics in rural Humboldt. "Lord, we pray for our loved ones in Mexico, so that one day we would be reunited" is a weekly prayer made by Father Manny. By offering prayers for those relatives still in Mexico, he empowers the Latino community and gives them hope that they will one day be reunited. Finally, it is uncommon for Father Javier to walk out of mass with a chant, but today, he did just this. "Viva La Virgen De Guadalupe, the queen of the Americas!"

The Latino community is strong and organized in the Town and they support each other to reproduce their native culture in this new space. It may be difficult to see, but there is no doubt that Latinos have cultivated" or "is no doubt that the Latino has cultivated a sense of place in many landscapes throughout the Town, especially in the church where they can find refuge with Father Javier. This connection between the landscape and social and cultural reproduction has allowed the Latino community in this town to actively engage and more broadly serve the community.

Nonetheless, the Latino individual participation in the garden has been low and the director of the garden has assumed that the Latino community is not interested in

integrating into American culture, or in the importance of ecosystems. This is also the assumption of members of the broader community, as they have expressed to me in casual conversation that “Latinos are out there in their corner.”

Participating and engaging in the church, community garden, and in the community, has allowed me to gather ample data that paints a picture contrary to this belief. The single issue that the Latino community is not participating in the community garden can be broken down, revealing a complex set of interconnecting spaces and intersecting issues related to gender, ethnic, language, and cultural negotiation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Dimensions of Nature

Culture can be defined in many different and complex ways, but a simple definition is the following: “the total knowledge, attitudes, and habits shared passed on by members of society and such mental and spiritual manifestations lead to more visible forms of behavior and social structures that produce even more tangible material and artistic items and landscapes (Selby, 2000).” Understanding the definition of culture is important because, one understands how culture is spatially linked to landscapes. The literature of culture is mainly housed under anthropology, where the focus is mainly human behavior. This thesis highlights how culture is spatially linked, how culture is negotiated, how a new hybrid culture is being created, and how it changes a landscape.

Ideas of nature have always been complex, especially in the history of the United States. Ideas of nature are often shaped by culture. As Europeans arrived in North America and began to acquire lands from the Native Americans, they also began to learn what nature means in a cultural sense or they also began to learn about the cultural concept of what nature means. They realized that the vastness of wilderness across their newly founded nation was soon threatened. Threatened by their own greed, development, and quickly growing population (Cronon, 1996). At one point, nature was called "The Last Frontier," the last landscape and space in which to conquer, these ideas of nature shaped, and continue to shape, American policy and culture.

The culture and tradition to protect nature in its most natural and wild form became male dominant. Historically, rugged white men were often depicted as the only capable of escaping the overwhelming urban centers and venturing into the wild side of America. The culture of American nature runs into two management ideologies: preservation and conservation. These ideologies were presented by male figures Muir and Pinchot. Muir was an environmentalist who believed that nature should be preserved, while Pinchot believed nature should be for the greatest good, for the greatest number of people (Marris, 2013). Today, the battle is no different. Today, environmentalists are asking: how can pristine wilderness and open spaces coexist with humans? How can preserve America's natural treasures? These types of question stem from binaries of nature and not only exclude ethno-racial minorities, but also create conflicts within communities (Marris, 2013).

Amid the argument, different views of nature arise; binaries of nature are created and establish new narratives. A good example is the battle of Bears Ears National Monument, in San Juan County in the state of Utah. Former president Barack Obama used the Antiquity Act to designate 1.3 million acres into Bears Ears into a national monument (Siengler, 2017). Local residents and old-timers in San Juan argued that declaring it a national monument wouldn't protect the land, but instead would only invite more visitors, causing an increase of foot traffic in the rural county. Residents in opposition expressed that out-of-state environmentalists were attacking and punishing them by pushing these new ideas of nature into their backyards.

Scholars who analyze these binaries of nature argue that some groups are absent from the conservation, usually minority groups. In the Latino community, there is a popular saying, "La tierra es vida," which means "the land is life," and it encompasses the belief that humans must respect the land because it is simply a source of life (Peña, 2005). Devon Peña (2005) argues that paying attention to the environmental dimensions of Mexican culture could help scholars avoid making the assumption that Latinos, or other ethnic groups, lack interest in environmental discourses.

The subject and object relationship is explained in the *Ecological Other* (2013) by Sarah Ray, who argues that environmentalists have taken the role of "ecological subjects" or "environmentally conscience," individuals whose economic activities are based on deciding to protect Earth's pristine landscapes. The individuals whose economic activities are not attuned to protecting nature are looked upon as reckless or as the "ecological other." Byrne & Wolch (2009) also argue that exposure to the right kind of nature uplifts individuals, making them healthy, morally proper, socially responsible, economically prudent, and intelligent. They further argue that environmentalism overgeneralizes ethno-racial differences the use of national parks, and overlook diverse understandings of space and place. National parks are not ideologically neutral spaces like most green spaces; rather their existence is created with a very specific belief about nature.

National Parks and outdoor environmental organizations unknowingly elevate nature as a separate entity, often with the absence of humans. For example, The National Park Service stated in 2006 that their aim is to protect parks' "natural condition, the

condition of resources that would occur in the absence of human dominance over the landscapes (Marris, 2013).” The protection of the environment is important. However, this statement contributes to binaries of nature that humans should be outside of nature. In academia, scholars add fuel to these theories unintentionally. Articles such as “Rambunctious Garden Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World,” where the argument is about the current conflicts protecting pristine nature and calling national parks “The Last Frontier,” meaning that these managed spaces are the last places where humans have not yet exploited. These ideas help create an image of American identity that separates humans from landscapes, the ecological other, and overlooks networks of connection, but most importantly how culture changes landscapes (Ray, 2013).

Cultural geographers understand that landscapes are constantly influenced by internal and external factors (Mitchell, 2002). Environmentalism, and its attempt to keep nature pristine, is often threatened by external social factors such as increasing development of urbanization and immigration (Ray, 2013). These fears change policies and laws that favor the separation of humans from landscapes. This can be observed in the early history of the United States. As environmentalist moralized ideas of pristine wilderness land dispossessions were taken place and claimed Native American and Mexican landscapes (Ray, 2013; Byrne & Wolch, 2009).

Currently, environmental anxieties lie upon geographical and political boundaries and the individuals who dare to cross them. The Mexican border is the boundary that receives the most attention by political officials, as it represents a variety of threats such as social and economic instability, drugs, illegal workers, and, most importantly, threats

to nature (Sundberg & Kaserman, 2006). Immigration from Mexico has been a continuous political issue in the United States and environmentalists have used it to create further binaries of nature. To protect the border, policy makers have re-directed border crossers into harsh deserts and unhabituated lands, which also happen to be America's treasures.

About 40% of America's protected natural landscapes are federally designated as national forests, national parks, national monuments, and national wildlife refuges (Sundberg & Kaserman, 2006). Increased border crossings in protected areas have enabled discourses of environmental threats to emerge, and subsequently empower the concept of the "ecological other." A story in the *National Parks* magazine quotes a park ranger, "There is a crisis down here, and it's going to take the future Americans' heritage away from them (Sundberg & Kaserman, 2006)." And in the *Arizona Daily Star*: "Ecologically, the entire border region is getting hammered by wave after wave of illegal border crossers," further defacing Latino immigrants. The strategy to use precious national natural resources is important in forging notions of environmental binaries. The threat to the landscape illustrates how a landscape reproduces culture, power, and identity (Robertson & Richard, 2003).

Landscapes represent various social constructs. However, landscapes must be understood as an interconnected relationship between a view and production, where the view of environmentalism creates a production that separates nature from humans. These landscapes are often national parks, wilderness areas, and preserves. Pierce's (1979) piece, on "Axioms of Landscapes," describes various rules to read landscapes as a text.

One of the rules is “The Axiom of Landscapes as a Clue to Culture.” This rule states that all man-made landscapes, from mundane to the extraordinary, provide evidence to values that society appreciates. In wider terms, a nation's’ culture is unintentionally reflected in a non-verbal dialect of landscape (Lewis, 1979). Nature, a landscape, a green space, tells us a lot about our culture and American environmentalism.

Reading nature’s landscapes in the United States can symbolize a process of transformation of environmentalism, but also capitalism, elitism, and power (Robertson & Richard, 2003). Reading the landscape as a text tells a story about who is privileged and who can enjoy nature. Mitchell (2008) argues not only does landscape is a readable as a text but, is also connected to other landscapes of networks.

Nature binaries are normalized further by environmental groups who wish to analyze or to close the gap between environmental and ecological others. However, current environmental discourse not only ignores the connection of landscapes to others, but also the intersecting axes of differences such as religion, culture, and identity of the Latino immigrants. One must ask, who is the imagined community that represents a threat to nature? Environmentalist views are connected to a range of distinct values, concerns, and power relations that can define who is the ecological other.

Community Gardens

Literature on community gardens associates them with overwhelmingly positive benefits (Pudu, 2008). The most common benefits are to bring a diverse community together from all walks of life, and to reshape landscapes into an ecological utopia

(Pudup, 2008). Community gardens are intended to bridge racially diverse groups, build social trust, and strengthen community capital (Armstrong, 2000). These gardens are often thought as a communal movement to address social, economic, and environmental policies at a local scale, primarily in urban centers where there are shortages of green belts. Sustainable public spaces are rare in urban dwellings, and though they are gaining popularity, it is often difficult for local governments and city officials to provide spaces for community gardens (Holland, 2004).

One of the main reasons community gardens are manifested is to aid food shortages in food-desert locations or to keep cultural foods intact (L'Annunziata, 2007). While these green spaces aid food deserts, community gardens are also places in which cultural systems are supported during social and economic stress. Pudup (2008) argues that community gardens represent working in the absence of the government resisting the dominant food narratives. Armstrong's (2000) research claims that the establishments of the community gardens mirrors the attitudes of the residents towards their own neighborhood, creating a pride for an open space and love for nature.

Green landscapes assist the social well-being of all residents from either participating or for the strong natural aesthetics (Armstrong, 2000). Nearly everyone who is involved with these landscapes experiences good health, exercise, and social support from the community (Armstrong, 2000). Carrigan (2011) states that community gardens encourage getting out in nature and learning to work with the changing seasons (Carrigan, 2011). Pudup (2008) goes on to suggest that gardening expands one's' mind, mends the stress body, and fosters a human need to connect with nature and other people.

Bringing people together with nature connotes an idealized space to practice environmentalism. However, it is this same idealized space that limits community gardens to privileged, mainstream environmentalists (Ray, 2013). White dominant narratives generalize ethno-racial differences in green spaces and overlook diverse understandings of connection to space and place (Byrne & Wolch, 2009). Community garden literature, however, ignores that gardens can be places spatially codified as distinctively “white nature” (Byrne & Wolch, 2009). Mitchell (2008) argues that like money, landscapes are a social picture that conceals the actual basis of its value. Thus, community gardens, green spaces, need to be examined much more deeply, and it must be asked, “How, and why do they exist (Mitchell, 2008)? On the surface, community gardens are “common landscapes,” however, if one delves deeper, one can realize that community gardens are points of social reproduction, which connects them to other landscapes and the benefits of that landscape.

Elena L'Annunziata (2012) explains that while it can be generally agreed upon that community gardens do produce social and ecological benefits, there is little research that focuses on the complex cultural, class, gender, ethnic, and generational intersections that affect the articulation and experience of these benefits. Those intersections could be analyzed at community garden in the observed Town. This thesis is intended to fill in the gap and put forth research of Latinos, green spaces, and community gardens from a rural landscape perspective.

METHODS

Mixed methodology framework is a research design favored by many qualitative scholars. The qualitative approach for this research includes: Ethnography, collaborative participatory research, participant observation, landscape textual analysis, and surveys. Within this structure, opportunity sampling was implemented, as it allowed the research to follow a spontaneous route to follow new leads during the fieldwork (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010; L'Annunziata, 2010). In qualitative research, the number of participants or interviews are not of important, but the importance lies in whom and what we involve in our research (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010).

Ethnography is a great social research tool because it moves the research away from a controlled frame as seen in “cookie cutter” interviews and questions. Ethnography enables the researcher to be a part of groups, and observe entire cultural communities, and case studies. Ethnographic work not only reveals singular issues in the community, but also the wider conditions of the shared interpretations of community (Shumer-Smith, 2002). From ethnography arise the interpretations and descriptions of any shared learned behaviors, beliefs, and language (Creswell, 2007). As independent stories about individuals emerge, one can piece together a bigger picture of life in the rural Town.

Participatory research permits the researcher to build trust and relationships in the community, while other conventional research methods encourage distance, objectivity, and neutrality (L'Annunziata, 2010). Bergold and Thomas (2012) state that participatory research is a crucial qualitative approach because it joins together a knowledge- production

that leads to new insights in the community or a case study. For that reason, for about two years, I attended mass alternating every Sunday in English and Spanish. Attending both masses was important to understand both congregations, their relationship to the greater community and, most importantly, the community garden.

The community garden is where I spent most of my time, about eight hours a week. It was important to spend most of my time in the garden, not only because it was my primary focus but, because it also allowed time to read the landscape and analyze its ties to other places. The director of the garden allowed me to acquire a 1,800-square foot plot. I named the garden space El Jardín De Guadalupe. The next step was recruiting volunteers from the Latino congregation and work with me in the garden. I made an announcement at the end of mass and handed out flyers as people exited the church. The flyers contained basic information of the garden and my contact information. I also made an announcement in the Church's Sunday paper.

Participant observation is an unstructured, interactive method for studying people as they go about their daily life, where one can capture their vision of the world (Puri, 2010). Participant observation was useful to analyze mass and how each of the congregations uses space to create a sense of place and reproduce culture. Engaging with the community formally and informally provided the opportunity to attend church members' personal gatherings.

Participant observation and ethnography has been important for this thesis for many reasons: for one, it has sanctioned me to spend quality time with the community members, and two, I was able to get an insight of their household structure, culture, and their view of

nature. Overall, observational research provides a description and an understanding, rather than an explanation. Table 1. is a list of the people with whom I made the most contact with during these two years of observation.

Table 1. Main Contacts.

Maria--Garden volunteer	Bill--Director of the Garden
Gloria--Garden volunteer	Lorena--Garden volunteer
Roy--Key informant	Reina-- Garden volunteer
Father Javier--Priest	Estella--Roy's Wife

The textual analysis method is crucial to this project, as well. Peirce Lewis (1979) discusses in "Axioms for Reading the Landscape," the extraordinary to the mundane creations that humans put upon the land, he provides strong evidence of the kind of people we are, were, and are in process of becoming. Thus, culture of any community is unintentionally reflected in its ordinary vernacular landscapes.

Lewis claims that human landscapes, such as roads, cities, farms and so on, represent time, money, and emotion. Most importantly, cultural landscapes are intimately related to the physical environment. Reading the landscape also presupposes some basic knowledge of geomorphology and physical landscape. The landscape in the observed town, on a larger scale, is rural and white, and I have observed how Latinos reproduced landscapes such as Mexican mini-marts, religious regalia decorating their front porch, and Mexican flags flying high on their home.

Don Mitchell (2008), however, adds to the argument and explains one can discover much more than just emotion and passion while analyzing cultural landscapes. One can uncover how landscapes reproduce class relations and elite power. Reading the landscape as a text brings to the surface points of social reproduction that create networks that connect landscapes to other spaces complicating the Town's mundane landscapes. These connections are crucial to understanding how the Latino community is participating in the community garden, as well as in many other spaces.

Lastly, this project used open-ended surveys to analyze and gauge the consensus of the Latino community beliefs in community gardens and their views on nature. The surveys measured a sense of place in the Town within the Latino community. In general, surveys are a good method to discover potential barriers that keep the Latino community from participating in the garden, while not asking them directly with leading questions. In environmental justice or in environmental literature, it is often overlooked, or it is ignored altogether, what the Latino community thinks about nature. Surveys can provide this knowledge in a broad perspective. Most of the Latinos in Humboldt County are immigrants, and understanding what creates their sense of place is important. The survey also touched on some basic demographics to better understand the population sample.

The surveys were passed out at the end of mass at random while the congregation exited church. I had Father Javier give an announcement and plead the congregation to participate, as it would help me complete my research. I placed a pre-postage envelope with my home address with the survey. I asked them not to provide any personal information, as this was a confidential survey.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

While working in the community garden I met many different individuals who helped create a mosaic tapestry (Figure 2.). Different stories surfaced from both the Latino volunteers and of the community. While listening to stories I learned many sustainable, organic gardening skills, how to use drip irrigation, and how to work with the seasons. The director of the garden provided me with a packet of information about their mission and vision, rules of the garden, and what kind of vegetables are appropriate to cultivate at a given season. As an organic garden, the packet also provided information about using nature as a natural system to fight pests and weeds. In this section I will go over the results of tending the garden and reading the landscapes, and my results of attending both congregations.

Tending the garden and spending most of my time in that space allowed me to collect stories from individuals. Six Latina women participated in El Jardín De Guadalupe. I recruited them from the church, and other community members helped me spread the word in the broader community. Here, I developed relationships and initiated conversations about their perception of the garden, and asked why hadn't they participated before. We designed the plot, and together learned how to install a drip irrigation system for our garden. I encouraged that they sow and start their preferred vegetables and herbs. By mid-summer, the volunteers harvested potatoes, cilantro, cucumbers, squash, bell peppers, lettuce, and marigolds flowers. Though the rules stated that we should not attempt to grow produce out of season or the climate zone, the women

in our garden did. In this impractical attempt, I felt their nostalgia to their native foods such as tomatillos and cactus. During this experience, the barriers that keep the Latino community from direct participation of the garden surfaced to the soil. Some barriers included gender, language, culture differences, ethnicity, and citizenship. Furthermore, as we gardened I could observe human-environment interactions and how every individual had their own special connection.

Reading the landscape is one of my favorite tools in geography and research. I stood outside of the garden and I noticed how it read authority and discipline. Metal fence and locks, granting entrance to only those with keys. Inside, the order and structure of the garden present power; neat rows of lettuce and radishes reflect knowledge of agriculture and the way one sees nature. I compared the garden plots between the sustainable gardening techniques of Bill to the Latino plots. For example, Guillemina plot. Her plot with the help of the other volunteers helped to reshape the space of the garden. The garden began to illustrate Latino flavor and color. Analyzing the plots, one can understand that they are completely different, ranging from unorganized to completely neat, straight lines. The landscape emits and holds power and status. Comparing individual garden spaces, what surfaced was; distinct emotions, knowledge, and cultures are displayed in the different assortment of crops, herbs, and vegetables, creating a mosaic tapestry

Attending both the English and Spanish congregations at the church, I learned that Father Javier facilitates both masses. His approach with each congregation is the same, although Father Javier is Latino. He is very charismatic and loves to make everyone laugh.

I observed numerous times the differences between both congregations -- in the size and the ways in which they interacted with one another after mass. The Spanish mass is much larger. The benches usually filled up quickly, leaving people to stand in the back. After mass ended, the Latino congregation lingered and interacted with one another outside. Sometimes the ministries sell Mexican sweets. The English congregation, on the other hand, was smaller and they did not interact with one another after mass. The Spanish congregation celebrated important traditional events such as the 12th December, the birthday celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This is one of the biggest celebrations that the Spanish congregation puts together. Everyone attends mass at 4 A.M. and, with the help of the mariachi, they sing songs to Our Lady of Guadalupe. The children dress up in traditional Mexican attire, and usually the event is followed with traditional hot drinks and sweet breads.

Participating in the community was my favorite part of this process. I had the pleasure to be invited to celebrate the surprise 70th birthday party of my key informant. I felt like I was part of the family, as they included me in such a big moment. I was also invited to their granddaughter's first birthday celebration at their home. In that event, I was privileged to join in their conversations. I sat with the women in a separate from the men, while the men watched soccer on T.V.

I listened to the women talk about their life stories and how they arrived in the Town. We talked about where most of the women and men worked in Town and, most importantly, what they miss from their native country. Guillermina and her sister told me that the women worked in the fisheries, descaling fish, and the men mainly worked in the

lumber mills or in landscaping. I asked them how they had heard of the Town, being a small rural community. They all responded with the same answer. “I had a relative already living here, and they brought me up here.” The results of this research have helped me verify what I had already suspected. It has allowed me to tell a story, and discuss how, in this rural town, the Latino community is connected to green spaces, and how landscapes can speak.

BODY



Figure 2. The Entrance of the Community Garden. Photo by Author.

The absence of Latino individuals in the garden should not be viewed as their lack of involvement in the garden. The garden depends on the Town’s Latino population—it could not exist without them. Anxieties and concerns centering on the absence of Latino individuals, specifically their participation in the community garden, are a product of different ways of viewing the natural environment, a way of seeing “nature” as separate from society, disconnected from other spaces and places, some relatively near, others more distant.

In the case of the town, the community garden is vitally linked and produced by a network of places of social interaction, that includes, as examined in this chapter, at the

household and church, which then assumes formal responsibility for the garden. However, the garden is not the terminus or culmination in this interdependent network of places. The garden provides sustenance for the less fortunate members of the Town's broader community. My examination of how these spaces and places are fundamentally interlinked and work together to build upon one another in challenging longstanding binaries of society versus nature not only reveals how the Town's Latino population in fact is actively involved in the garden—even if their physical bodies are rarely seen there. This also shows how they are vitally interwoven into the broader community (Selby, 2000).

Drawing on primary data from my two years of field research, the central purpose of this chapter is to illustrate and explain how the Town's Latino population plays a significant role in cultivating the community garden, specifically how the garden is interlinked to other spaces of social reproduction where Latino individuals are more visible and how these points of social reproduction reshaped landscapes. In the process of exploring how these spaces are interlinked, I show how issues of gender, national identity, and culturally embedded understandings of “nature” underlay and ultimately the give shape to the garden. Although, my analysis of how the garden is a product of its connectivity to other spaces of social reproduction, it could also be considered on a geographic scope to include the magnitude of other places as distant as Mexico, South America, and as far as Rome. In this chapter I necessarily limit my analysis to the social and cultural interrelationships of four distinct places.

First, I begin with an examination of the household. As a point of reproduction, the Latino household negotiates with the challenges of citizenship and American culture. Second, I look at the church. The church provides both a spiritual and community space for many Latinos in the Town, but facilitates a fruitful relationship with the Latino community, ultimately with the church providing passage of validation in the town. Third, I focus on the garden itself. I focus on the structure, the geometry, and from the inside I observe some of the obstacles that keep the Latinos from directly to participate. I also analyze how the Latino volunteers changed the culture of the garden. Fourth, I turn my attention to the food pantry. Connected to the broader community of the Town, this space illustrates how the Latino community supports the entire white community.

The Latino Household

To understand why the perception that Latinos community has a lack of interest in participating in the garden, it's important to analyze the household. The household is a place of hybridity, a place in which American and Mexican cultures both mesh and struggle to dominate. Cultural differences are an immediate challenge to the Latino household. The household unit is a force of cultural and social reproduction, and, above the challenges, is resiliency and determination. Latino families are known to come together to overcome the harsh realities of the American Dream. In the United States, there are about 11.6 million Latino households (Malave & Giordani, 2015). In the Town, the Latino households are more likely to be Mexican, larger than the average American family, and Catholic (Malave & Giordani, 2015).

Language is one of the main barriers that keep Latinos from directly participating in the garden. As Latino communities congregate spatially in enclaves and in large groups, pressure to learn English is eliminated. Also, first-generation immigrants tend to hesitate to learn English for various reasons. It could be a personal choice. Learning a new language requires time, a scarce resource for most immigrants who hold multiple jobs. However, my research has illustrated that it's difficult for immigrants to become mainstream in American culture, as the community lacks social resources. Often, public spaces' signage and informational pamphlets are in English, and, as a predominately white community, bilingual officials are scarce. Like all immigrants, they rely on their family members step in and translate. For the broader community in the Town, this comes across as a lack of interest to assimilate into American culture.

The garden is not promoted or advertised in Spanish. Huntington (2013) argues that the magnitude of immigration, persistence, and concentration of Latino immigration tends to perpetuate the use of the Spanish language. The language is passed through consecutive generations, securing the use of Spanish in the community. Bill, among others, expects the Latino community to assimilate and learn English. As the Latino population increases and there is direct participation in the mainstream community of the Town, he sees them out in a corner, away from the rest of the community and unwilling to assimilate or to be part of the broader community. Huntington's observations of Latinos holding their native language through consecutive generations may delay the Latino community from learning English, maintaining the barrier in the community.

Communication is an obstacle for Bill, the garden, and for prospective and future Latino volunteers. Language barriers can be seen in the relationship with Guillermina, the only volunteer that has previously been in the garden before I took on as a project and Bill. Bill and Guillermina have trouble communicating. Bill's frustration with Guillermina is that she does not know how use special skilled sustainable methods such as drip irrigation and proper ecological plot organization (Figure 4.). Bill is frustrated that her garden plot is s jumbled, with no specific structure, and that it does not resemble the geometrical garden he manages (Figure 3.). Not being able to communicate effectively sends unclear messages between them both.



Figure 3. Bills Garden. Photo by Author.

In the perspective of the Latino community, they are often unaware of such assertions. To Guillermina, the structure of her own garden is not an issue. Her problem stems from cultural differences that structure the Latino household. Guillermina and I

spoke many times while gardening. I asked her what she thought about Bill. To my surprise, she was shy to ask anything from him, saying, “I just do not want to bother him. He seems busy. To “prevent any problems” Guillermina prefers not to use any water directly from the community garden. She hauls jugs of water from her home and waters her plot by hand. She brings all her tools and seeds. This shyness comes from the household, as the Latino culture is patriarchal. To some degree, the men control the household. Guillermina shyness towards Bill is validated, and, in her view, it is the proper way of handling the situation. Yet, environmental scholars overlook this language barrier.

The patriarchal gender relationships in the Latino household are different from those in United States. Machismo centers the family. These gender roles structure the Latino household and it can impede direct participation in the garden. I realized this on a sunny day in July during my training with Bill. A Latina woman in her mid-forties named Maria came up to me and asked if she could help. “I am so glad you are here,” she said. “I always walk by and I just see Bill working alone, and you know, as a married Latina woman, I can’t be seen alone with another man.” In Latino culture, it is disrespectful for married women to be seen with men other than their husband.

Binaries of nature do not allow the white community in the Town to directly see the gender and cultural differences that the Latino household reproduces and how it reshapes spaces, like the garden. Bill, who wishes to see more Latino volunteers in the garden, overlooks these conflicts of the household. Maria told me that she only sees Bill working alone in the garden during her morning walks, so she keeps her distance. It is

important to understand that this cultural limitation connects the Latino household back to their place of origin, in this case, Mexico. Diversifying the community garden could tear down gender limitations that stem from the household. If the community garden would commit to encouraging different ethnic groups to participate and use their native language, then Latina women would not find themselves alone with Bill or with other men. Culture differences from spaces of social reproduction are connected to other spaces through a network connectivity and again, it is not only overlooked by scholars, environmentalist, but by the broader community.



Figure 4. Gloria's Garden. Photo by Author.

Latina women also lead the family. Though women in the patriarchal Latino household are thought to be meek, passive, and self-sacrificing towards their families, they play a significant role in structuring the family. They are strong, enduring, and the backbone of the culture (Rodriguez, 1994). Rodriguez (1994) states that Latina women's

maternal role in the household allows them to lead the family in various outlets, specifically in the context of religion, as it is a significant dimension in their culture.

Latina women lead their family to church, as well. The Latina women oversee, instill, and teach cultural traditions to their children. The women encourage the family to consistently attend mass and be close to God. Often this is beyond attending church. They organize with other women in the community and pray together in their homes while teaching their children to utilize the rosary to pray. I witnessed this first hand while I attended the birthday party for Gloria's granddaughter. Observing the structure of the family was a beautiful moment. The women were in charge, though they sat apart of the men. Witnessing Gloria's interactions in her household, it became evident that in Latino culture everything is interrelated and interconnected with the women and Our Lady of Guadalupe. It is interrelated and interconnected in the sense that religion is part of the culture. Latina women follow gender roles in culture, but lead in religion.

Under the Latino household, Our Lady of Guadalupe is central to the Latina women. In Gloria's home, there is a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe surrounded by fresh flowers and burning candles. I asked her if attending mass was something the entire family agreed to attend. She laughed, saying "Yes, but when it is time to go, I am the one who runs after them and gets them ready to go." I asked her why that was. She replied, "Because that is what my mother taught me." Traditions and traditional knowledge was passed down through generations.

The household, as a point of social reproduction, is both interconnected and independent of the church. They are interconnected because the women's faith in Our

Lady of Guadalupe is central to their daily lives, and this leads Latino individuals to the church. The women gain power as they lead the men to church. Social factors in the household are independent, culturally. On many levels the Latino religious culture worldview is their only worldview. The Latino household in the United States is a product of duality, meaning it gives way to two cultures. In the traditional Mexican culture the women are relegated to be at home, and in the United States the culture encourages participation of women in the broader community. Women in the household are able to negotiate with American culture and participate with their faith in Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The Church

The Catholic Church tends to be the strongest influence among immigrants who are responsive to their traditional and cultural rituals with devotion. The small parish in the Town was erected in 1909 and was adopted by the Diocese of Santa Rosa (St. Francis Parish, 2016).



Figure 5. The Spanish Congregation. Photo by Author.

Motovina (2012) explains that Catholic parishes across the United States are effective and operational because they serve an overwhelming Latino congregation. Although it is evident that the Latino community is the largest congregation in the Town and across the United States, Latinos tend not to register with the church. The reason is contributed to another cultural difference-- citizenship. Most immigrants do not register with their church because they do not want to be in a system that might discover their illegal status and put them at risk. Formal documents and registrations worry the Latino household, as they fear to being caught as an illegal immigrant and be deported.

Therefore, it is difficult to make an estimate of how much money the Latino community contributes to the church. My ethnographic observation has showed me that the Latino community is the largest congregation and makes significant contributions, both in monetary and volunteer value. In the Town, St. Francis depends on the Latino households, as they are the largest congregation compared to the English congregation.



Figure 6. The English Congregation. Photo by Author.

The shaping of space and place is crucial to fostering a relationship with a landscape, and this relationship is between the church and the Latino community Figure 5., can portray two things: one, the congregation is larger than English-speaking congregation shown in Figure 6., and two, though it is an important place for the rural community, and like many parishes in the United States, it is temporally segregated by

time. Segregated by time because in certain time of the day the space is occupied by the either the Spanish or the English-speaking congregation.

Celebrating Mother's Day, Father Javier asking the children to send a loving message to their mothers from the altar, they clapped their hands as they sang songs to Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Mariachi sang patriotic songs. It is these kinds of moments that create a sense of space at the church. At first glance, Figure 5. is a beautiful picture, colorful and dynamic, however, what one does not see in the moment of the photograph is the connection, the relationship between the Latino household and the church.

The church supports social reproduction. St. Francis enables and supports the Latino community to continue to practice their culture, which Rodriguez (1994) states is essentially their worldview. Father Javier reminds the Spanish congregation of their homeland, their sweet Mexico. Perhaps it is because Father Javier is also Latino. This puts St. Francis and the Latino community in a good and somewhat biased situation. Nonetheless, it is a good situation, as they find themselves in an isolated rural community in Northern California. Thus, the shared church space is much more affectionate. The church becomes more than a place which mass occurs. It is a place of refuge (Figure 5). It provides social support, informing the congregation about immigration issues on the local and national level, and, most importantly they say prayers for their relatives and families back in Mexico.

However, Father Javier's performance and attitude is the same with the English-speaking congregation-- he is as funny and charismatic. After all, his job as a Catholic priest is to provide marriage counseling, give spiritual direction, and devote himself to

the entire community of the Town. However, the Latino congregation does not attend mass because of a common characteristic with Father Javier. The Latino community attends mass because it is their culture, their faith, and religion. While this situation is situated in a rural town, it's true for the Latino community throughout the rest the United States. From day to day, Latinos face many forms of oppression, and the church is only entity that they can turn to.

The church is connected to many other spaces, too. It is connected to the local diocese in Santa Rosa. The diocese is connected to the mother ship of the Catholic Church in Rome-- the Vatican City. Furthermore, it is connected to the harsh history of the bloody crusades and invasions throughout Western Europe. Closer to home, the church is also connected to the history of the Spanish Missions of California, where the church colonized Native Americans to expand Catholicism in the name of God. The network of connections identified here helps us understand that that everything local is global. Therefore, the Latino participation in the in church connects them to places beyond the garden.

The Garden

The garden's energy holds a beautiful feeling of freedom. It is silent, and it emanates fertility, generosity, and healing. It provides life. It is pristine in the sense that there are straight lines of vegetables, there is a satisfyingly sweet smell of wet dirt, and holds the scent of abundance. Cabbages and broccoli sit beautifully in the center of a wide, green, leathery flower. Rows of blueberry bushes lavishly hold juicy berries

surrounded by dark green leaves. Butter lettuce and radishes sit in rows, evenly spaced quietly waiting to provide life. The garlic patch is a work of art. The young green tails poke through the rice straw and make way into the sky, all evenly spaced. The zesty cilantro's citrus fragrance twirls through the wind.

Everything is in order; there are no pests or weeds disturbing the life of the garden. A surrounding metal fence, reinforced with three locked gates, protects the beauty of the garden. In the midst of all that beauty one does not see the invisible lines that tie the garden to other spaces.

Without the Latino members of the church, the garden's existence would likely be impossible. Don Mitchell's (1996) *Lie of The Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscapes* argues that landscapes send an ambiguous message to the reader. They disguise labor and networks of connectivity. In the Town, at first glance, the garden does not give a complete story of spaces, places, and people. Mitchell further argues that landscapes must be understood as an interconnected relationship between what one sees and production (Mitchell, 1993). The amount of production of the garden is disguised as many participating in the garden, however, it is only one individual producing the work.

The garden landscape lies, too. From the outside one only sees Bill working in the garden. It is quickly misinterpreted by the Latino community as a space of a dynamic composition of nature: a white space. The dynamic composition is further misinterpreted as a space where only privileged individuals can take part of in such complexity. The misguided landscape, along with our thoughts of nature, divides spaces from one another.

Yet, one does not see the network that connects these spaces to one another. The church and the Latino community are all connected to this green space.

The connection to the church provides monetary support to keep the garden running. St. Francis provides the landscape for the garden. The garden is located adjacent to the church directory, and is leased to Bill for one dollar a year. This evidence alone indicates that without the existence of the church, the garden would not exist.

Furthermore, the ministries of St. Francis fund the garden by covering some the cost of the logistics in running a community garden. For example, the water, some fertilizer, and soil are the cost. Thus, it is important to note that without the Latino congregation, the funds for the garden would be minimal to none. Even if there were no Latino volunteers directly participating in the garden, they would participate through the network of connections of spaces.

Within the binaries of nature that environmental and the national anxieties perpetuate, interconnectivity is lost in our views. The loss of connection reinforces the separation of humans from nature. Bill, like other individuals, sees nature as a space of order in the wild, a space that he can manage and crop into perfect geometry. As a society, the conventional ideas of nature blind the visualization of the connections and how new culture changes a space, a garden.

Once I recruited the six Latina women, the garden began to enter in a phase of hybridity. The volunteers were willing and eager to learn from Bill's garden plot. They observed the nice straight lines of kale and lettuce and they appreciated the art. One day I came into the garden and I saw one of the volunteers had placed cacti, a native food, in

straight lines, just like Bill's straight lines of kale. The Latino volunteers began to do this with corn and Jalapeños. Soon, the Garden became a culturally diverse community garden with a mixture of knowledge of both American ecological systems and Mexican wisdom.

The Food Pantry

The garden is also connected to another space in the community. It is connected to the St. Francis Food Pantry. All volunteers agree to donate one-third of their garden's harvest to the food pantry. The mission of the food pantry is to "Extend the love of God in a special way to those in crisis through the distribution of food and referral to local social services." The food is distributed beyond the Town, their services reaching several rural towns in Humboldt County.

The Town contains some of the poorest individuals in the county. The food pantry serves about 20.3% of the population who are living under the poverty line. About 88.9% of the individuals who receive food from the pantry are unemployed. About 97.2% of the population receiving food are white, and about 2.8% (one individual) is Latino (CCRP, 2015).

In the Town, the food pantry is a landscape that is a crucial for many people who may be unemployed or low-income. What makes the St. Francis Food Pantry special is that it provides fresh organic food to recipients who otherwise would not be able to afford such healthy options. Typically, the average food pantry only provides dry, canned, and processed food, increasing unhealthy habits in low-income and poor communities. From

this end of spatial connections, like in the church, the Latino community is also actively part of the food pantry. They volunteer and help distribute food to the broader community. If we can step back and analyze spaces and places in the community we can see the connection of the Latino community from the household, to the church, to the garden, to the food pantry, and, finally to the broader community of the Town.

CONCLUSION

“El Jardín De Guadalupe,” the Latino plot within the community garden, became a successful story. The volunteers now oversee their own plots in the garden. My work as the middle person between the director and the Latino community unwinkled and solved communication issues. More and more Latino women in the Town now feel comfortable being in the garden, as there are more Latinas participating. The project is also sustainable. El Jardín De Guadalupe is now supported by a non-profit organization that will supply and support the garden with fertilizers, soil, seeds, starts, and information on how to be a sustainable gardener.

In the Town, spaces and landscapes transformed into places, the community garden became a place of hybridity. Where Latino culture infused in with the White environmental discourse. Both cultures took something from each other and negotiated with the space, created a place for the Latino community to set roots and sow a new challenge for their heritage.

This thesis has proven that understanding the connections of spaces and landscapes can help one understand how the Latino community in this rural town is participating. Not just in the garden, but with their role in feeding broader community and reshaping spaces and culture in the United States. I encourage further research within the Environmental realm, as well as within the cultural realm of Latinos living in rural communities, and the social networks that connect people with landscapes, and landscapes with one another connectivity.

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APPENDICES

EL JARDIN DE GUADALUPE

16 SEPTIEMBRE 2015



DE 6-8 PM EN EL CENTRO PAC DEL ST. JOE
2312 NEWBURG RD, FORTUNA, CA 95540

Interesado en el jardín o el pedazo de tierra ? Ven
a la reunión por información y oportunidades!!
Llaman a Elizabeth Moreno para mas información
y preguntas!