



TRANSFORMATIONS IN PORTLAND & CASCADIA

GEOGRAPHIC REFLECTIONS

EDITED BY: RYAN CENTNER & LAURA ANTONA

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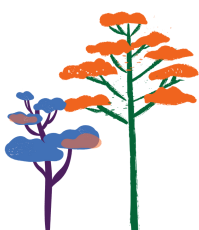
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Field trips are only made possible through the hard work and support of many people, both within and outside the university. We would like to express our gratitude to all those who contributed to making this trip a valuable learning experience for both the undergraduate students and staff that travelled to Portland across the past two years.

First and foremost, we are incredibly grateful to the organisations and individuals that we met with and who volunteered their time and resources in Portland across the past two years: Forest Park Conservancy (Chie Togo), Fortune & Glory (Jeremy Towsey-French), Lincoln High School (Chris Brida), Neighbors West/Northwest (Darlene Urban-Garrett), Nike World Headquarters (Dana Reames), Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods (Jona Davis), the Philippine-American Chamber of Commerce of Oregon (Jason Lim), Port of Portland - PDX International Airport (Brian Burk, Vince Granato, Irene Ng, Sara Smith), Portland Bureau of Transportation (Emma Sagor), Portland Frontrunners (Jordan Washington, Crys O'Grady), Portland State University (Carl Abbott, Sy Adler, Pronoy Rai, Greg Schrock), TravelPortland (Tin Bui, Michael Cavanaugh, Andrew Moore), Tri-Met (Mike McQueen, Tom Mills, Grant O'Connell, Dameion Samuelson, Jesse Stemmler), the World Forestry Center (Tim Hecox), and Ken and Leslie Centner. Thank you for deepening our understanding of your city and region, and for stepping into the role of educators to share your invaluable knowledge and insights. Your collective generosity is both inspiring and deeply appreciated. We are particularly thankful to Carmen Rojas, of the Marguerite Casey Foundation, for providing funding to bring our group together at local restaurants to discuss the key themes of the field course at the end of a busy week in both years of the trip so far.

In addition, we would like to thank the Department of Geography & Environment at LSE for their organisational efforts. Coordinating field trips with more than 30 participants is a huge ask, so we wanted to give a special thanks to Sam Colgate, Emily Douglas, Maya King, Amy Cox and the entire professional services team for their tireless support and assistance before and during our trips to Portland. A special mention goes to our colleagues: Aretousa Bloom, Austin Zeiderman, Camilla Royle, Frida Timan, Jeff Pagel, Julia Corwin, Maya King, Pooya Ghoddousi, and Tom Smith, who made these field trips a fun and rewarding experience for everyone!

This report was made possible with the encouragement of our colleagues and the financial support we were awarded by the Department of Geography and Environment at LSE. Thank you to everyone involved in the making of this report!



Finally, we extend our sincere appreciation to Mirha Butt for all of her editorial assistance, to Gabi Froden, who patiently worked with us to produce the illustrations and illustrative map that appear in this report, to the students who authored reflections for this report, and to Pooya Ghoddousi for his closing reflection on the wider impact of field trips.



"Portland has all the accoutrements of a big city, but the heart and soul of it is a small town, so that creates an intimacy in a large environment"

– Dean Devlin (director)

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FOREWORD

by Professor Hyun Bang Shin

Professor of Geography & Urban Studies, and Head of Department

Field trips are a vital part of geographical education in the Department of Geography & Environment, providing students with the opportunity to put theory into practice in real-world settings. From the foundational methods training in Year 1, including the residential trip to Juniper Hall, to the exciting Year 2 field trips to overseas destinations, these experiences are designed to deepen academic learning while fostering lasting bonds among students. Such trips not only serve as high points in students' undergraduate journeys but also leave them with enduring memories and practical insights that complement their classroom learning.

Portland, Oregon, USA, has been a featured destination for the past two years, offering students a rich environment to test classroom knowledge through meaningful interactions with diverse people and places. I am thrilled to introduce this Portland Report, which beautifully captures the reflections of both staff and students. This report exemplifies the collaborative spirit of our Department, where academics and students work as partners in the co-producers of knowledge. It is a testament to the thoughtfulness and engagement of all field trip participants.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the academic and professional services staff who dedicated their time and care tirelessly to make these field trips a seamless and impactful experience. Special thanks go to Laura Antona and Ryan Centner for their leadership on these trips and for their work in bringing this publication to fruition. Their efforts, along with those of the entire team, have made these field trips an invaluable part of our curriculum, enhancing both the academic and personal growth of our students.

The illustrations and illustrative map that appear in this report were designed and produced by Gabi Froden. Her visual representation of the city and our field trip is integral to the co-production of knowledge and the overall impact of this work.

<https://www.gabifroden.com/>





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

by Ryan Centner and Laura Antona

This report has been produced by students and faculty who travelled together on field trips in 2023 and 2024 to Portland and the greater region of Cascadia, in the Pacific Northwest of the US. It captures reflections on Portland's multi-layered urban transformations, exploring the city's contrasting identities as a progressive, sustainable hub and a site of significant social challenges, including homelessness, racial inequities, and gentrification, within a context driving for greater environmental sustainability and local development. Through a combination of group research projects and personal reflections, students critically engaged with Portland's socio-economic landscape, infrastructure, and governance, revealing tensions between the city's ideals and the realities of its residents' lived experiences.

Organised around four overarching themes — Geographies of Difference and Racialised Legacies in Settler-Colonial Cities; Experimental & Interventionist Urban Planning; Local Innovation & Regional Sense of Place; and Housing, Gentrification, and Homelessness — that structured the field trip, students conducted research projects and investigated how historical and current policies shape the urban environment. Reflections underscored the visible and invisible inequalities in Portland, showing how experimental policies, regional identity, and community initiatives both challenge and perpetuate these divides.

The report also includes insights on mapping practices, along with an illustrative map which depicts the field trip's scope and shows our encounters in Cascadia -- reflecting the way we experienced and interpreted its spaces. It concludes with Pooya Ghoddousi's reflection on the field trip as an 'assemblage', highlighting how our shared experiences in Portland and the wider region of Cascadia forged a collaborative learning environment that broke down institutional roles, fostering deeper engagement and immersion.

This report affirms the value of field-based learning in geography, offering critical insights into some of Portland's urban challenges and demonstrating the impact of immersive, experiential education in understanding and navigating contemporary geographic issues.



*"You can't stay in your corner of the forest
waiting for others to come to you. You have to
come to them sometimes"*

- A. A. Milne (author)



INTRODUCTION

by Ryan Centner and Laura Antona

Over the last decade, Portland has gained shifting notoriety for being, at turns, a hipster hub, the most liveable US city, a capital of cool, some kind of progressive paradise, one of the greenest cities in Americas, the epicentre of racial justice protests and intense repression by authorities, and a place caught in a dystopian spiral of worsening crime and proliferating homelessness. How can Portland be all of these things? The answer is deeply geographical, hinging on how the city is not just a single, unchanging landscape, but a space made up of many different places, populations, and moments with shifting conditions, sometimes very rapidly transforming, and always riddled by formative inequalities. Portland's contrasting identities reflect the complex urban transformations the city has undergone, as it grapples with the tensions between its aspirational image and the profound socio-economic challenges reshaping it.

Portland is located in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) of the US, or what some call the transborder bioregion of Cascadia, including the Canadian province of British Columbia. While this regional terminology has contested meanings (Janos and McKendry 2021), it always indicates the northwestern margin of the continent. Portland's peripheral location is pivotal in shaping its human geography -- a point on the map remote enough that some centres of power dismiss it (and many Portlanders are perfectly happy about that), whilst also being more closely linked to a quite different set of sites, such as Boise, Denver, Guadalajara, Honolulu, Phoenix, Puerto Vallarta, San Francisco, Seattle, Spokane, and Vancouver, rather than the usual roster of global cities.

With nearly 2 million people in its metropolitan area, Portland might not be the capital of Oregon, but it is the state's largest city and serves as the primary Oregonian economic nexus. Within Cascadia, it is the third-largest city, after Seattle and then Vancouver. Despite this diminutive status, Portland has had an outsized reputation -- for better, for worse, and many things in between.

This report is the result of two field trips to Portland in the springs of 2023 and 2024, where 2nd-year undergraduate students researched different aspects of the city's dynamic and transforming urban landscape. The report serves two main purposes: to reflect on what we (students and staff) have collectively learned about Portland's urban transformations through fieldwork; and to highlight the value of field-based learning in geography.

Over the course of these field trips, students were divided into groups to complete research projects on one of six topics, each focusing on a key issue shaping or reshaping the city. These included exploring the redevelopment of Portland's international airport, investigating food scarcity and inequities, examining the role of Forest Park and urban natures in the city, analysing aspects of Portland's urban governance and transport planning, assessing the city's housing crisis and the role of neighbourhood associations, and unpacking how Portland's identity is constructed, represented, and contested by various organisations and stakeholders in the city.

Before embarking on these research projects, students were introduced to four overarching themes to inform and deepen their understanding of Portland historically and contemporarily. While these themes were not rigidly imposed on their research, they provided a critical framework through which students could explore the city's challenges and opportunities.

The first theme, *Geographies of Difference & Racialised Legacies in Settler-Colonial Cities*, emphasised the importance of understanding how Portland's racialised history continues to shape its urban landscape today. Students were encouraged to consider how the legacies of settler-colonialism as well as exclusionary zoning and discriminatory urban planning and development practices have impacted BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities, affecting access to housing, public

spaces, and resources. Although not all projects explicitly engaged with this theme, it offered a lens through which to interpret the city's racial inequalities and the spatial patterns of inclusion and exclusion that continue to mark Portland's urban development.

The second theme, *Experimental & Interventionist Urban Planning*, invited students to consider Portland's reputation as a city that embraces progressive ideals through its pioneering approaches to urban planning. From its Urban Growth Boundary to innovative public transport endeavours, Portland has long been seen as a leader in sustainable urban development in the USA. By highlighting how these interventions have shaped the city's growth, students were encouraged to consider the unintended consequences of such experimentation. While some student projects directly explored governance and planning issues, this theme underscored the broader context of Portland's urban innovations, offering a critical backdrop for understanding both successes and shortcomings in the city's transformation across time.

Local Innovation & Regional Sense of Place provided a third framework for understanding Portland as part of the PNW region and Cascadia. Students were encouraged to explore how Portland's local identity is shaped by its environmental consciousness, place-based branding, and innovation culture, and how these regional dynamics intersect with social inequalities. Although some projects focused more narrowly on specific urban issues, this theme reminded students to consider how local developments interact with and contribute to a broader sense of regional identity, and how place-based branding can both foster a sense of belonging and obscure deeper social challenges.

The final theme, *Housing, Gentrification & Homelessness*, focused on some of the most visible and urgent issues facing Portland today. As a city grappling with a severe housing crisis, Portland's experience with rising rents,

gentrification, and an expanding unhoused population provided a critical case study for students to examine how urban transformation affects marginalised populations. This theme encouraged students to explore the intersections of economic inequality, housing policy, and public debates around homelessness, providing a crucial context for projects dealing with social justice and urban governance. Even for students whose projects were not directly focused on housing, the visibility of homelessness in the city made this theme an essential consideration in understanding Portland's evolving urban fabric.

These overarching themes, whilst not prescriptive, offered valuable frameworks for students to engage with the complexities of Portland's urban transformation. The result was a diverse collection of findings that reflect the interconnectedness of Portland's social, economic, and environmental challenges.

To bring these themes and topics to life in the field, we visited many sites and organisations, where local interlocutors graciously hosted us over the last two years: Alberta Street, the Bird Alliance of Oregon, Blanchet House, Bushwhackers, Cape Disappointment State Park, Del Rey Beach State Recreation Site, Forest Park Conservancy, Fortune & Glory, Haystack Rock, Lincoln High School, Mother's Bistro, Neighbors West/Northwest, Nike World Headquarters, Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods, Pips & Bounce, Port of Portland - PDX International Airport/PDXNext, the Portland Bureau of Transportation, Portland Frontrunners, Powell's Books, the Queer Affinity Safe Rest Village, the Toulon School of Urban Studies & Planning at Portland State University, TravelPortland, Tri-Met, Verde Cocina, and the World Forestry Center.

MAPPING OUR FIELD TRIP TO CASCADIA

Mapping has long been one of the most fundamental tools in geography. But it is never a

neutral one. While maps can be fanciful and evocative, they are always entangled with exercises of power and decisions about representation (Smith and Katz 1993). As Stephen Legg (2024) discusses, maps have frequently served imperial ambitions, fixing borders and territories in ways that privileged certain groups while marginalising others. Mapping has been used to enforce control, to extract wealth, to displace people, and to reinforce both global and local relations of power. Portland and Cascadia are areas that have historically been subjected to mapping practices that erased the lands, knowledge, and voices of Indigenous peoples, obscuring their very existence, as settler-colonialists shaped the region through their own cartographic representations, leaving impacts that persist to this day. Today, while geographers are often more critical and reflective in their use of mapping - recognising the need to create maps that are inclusive, sensitive, and mindful of the diverse experiences and voices they represent - maps can still enact violence.

On page 10, the illustrative map is a representation of our field trip to Cascadia, a map that does not focus on geographic precision, but that emphasises the experiences, emotions, and significance of the places we encountered. Portland, for instance, is purposefully depicted as disproportionately large, reflecting not only its physical dominance in the region, but its centrality to our field work. This intentional distortion aligns with the tradition of subjective mapping, as seen in Annelys de Vet's (2024) "*Making a Subjective Atlas of Palestine*," where cartographers take their cues from the lived experiences of individuals rather than conventional mapmaking norms. By amplifying the city's presence, and only the places where we spent significant time outside of it, the map becomes a tool for storytelling, highlighting the places that we engaged most.

Within this report, the map is a hybrid — part collective narrative, part geographic inquiry. It

shows our encounters in Cascadia and reflects the way we experienced and interpreted its spaces. By blending illustrative mapping with critical reflection, this report documents the places that defined our field trip and informed our collective understanding of Portland's transformations.

THE VALUE OF FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an important feature in geography education and allow students to develop a deeper understanding of the places they visit, especially as they engage with complex and layered urban environments like Portland. As our students stepped out from classrooms and onto Portland's city streets, they encountered theories and concepts firsthand, enabling them to apply academic frameworks to real-life urban spaces. Geography gains meaning and immediacy through fieldwork, which allowed students to grasp Portland's urban transformations in ways that lectures and readings alone could never fully convey. This experiential learning not only enhanced the students' academic understanding but also cultivated critical reflection, as we witnessed how Portland and Cascadia are evolving whilst contending with socio-political, economic, and environmental challenges.

REPORT STRUCTURE

This report is structured into three distinct further sections, each introduced with a concise framing of key themes and followed by a collection of reflections from students. The first section offers reflections on Portland as a whole, showcasing students' evolving perspectives on urban transformation and the city's geographical dynamics.

The second section centres on students' reflections about their individual research projects and fieldwork, sharing insights on diverse topics such as housing, public spaces,

and community initiatives.

Finally, the third section underscores the intrinsic value of field trips, as students highlight how on-the-ground learning informed their studies, brought academic concepts to life, and allowed them to reflect critically on geography as both a field of study and a tool for understanding society.

Through this tripartite structure, the report documents a journey that blends the subjective and the academic, allowing readers to appreciate not only the knowledge gained but also the transformative potential of field-based education.





Cape Disappointment

Astoria
Megler
Bridge

Forest Park

World Forestry Center

Nike Headquarters

Cannon Beach

PORTLAND

Field trip to Cascadia





PDX Airport

Alberta Street

Oregon Food Bank

Pips & Bounce

Tri-Met
Administrative
Office

Tilikum
Crossing

Public
Transport
Tour

DuniWay Track &
Terwilliger Totem Pole

Queer Affinity Village

Portland Bureau of
Transportation

NWN
Neighborhood
Associations

Oregon
Historical
Society

Portland
State
University

POWELL'S
BOOKSTORE



REFLECTING ON A TRANSFORMING CITY

by Ryan Centner and Laura Antona

This section brings together student reflections on the complexities of Portland's ever-changing urban landscape, focusing on the city's evolving identity and the socio-economic challenges it faces. Collectively, these reflections discuss how Portland's image as a progressive and inclusive city contrasts with the realities of houselessness, racial inequities, and gentrification.

While the city is often celebrated for its sustainability, inclusivity, and innovative urban policies, these reflections illustrate how these ideals are complicated. These reflections reveal how the students' experiences, observations, and conversations with local stakeholders have shaped their understanding of the city. They underscore the ways in which the governance of Portland's housing and transportation, for instance, can function in both interconnected and fragmented ways — with policies and initiatives that are simultaneously working to solve inequities while, paradoxically, contributing to them (or even creating new ones).

Together, these reflections offer an understanding of Portland as ever transforming.

NARRATIVES OF URBAN EXCEPTIONALISM IN A LANDSCAPE OF COMMON URBAN DILEMMAS

by Sive Lawrie

The idea of Portland exceptionalism was a common theme throughout the entire field trip. From the tourism agency, Travel Portland, to the professors we spoke to at Portland State University (PSU) and the transport planning organisation TriMet, almost every interaction we had with Portlanders generated a discussion of Portland exceptionalism. Simply put, it is the idea that the city is impervious to broader social problems due to its progressive and inclusive governance, and sustainable urban planning (Schmid, 2017). TriMet described Portland as the model for planning in North America, just as representatives of Travel Portland encouraged the popular portrayal of the city as a place for everyone – ‘yours to share’, in their current campaign – and a beacon of inclusiveness.

The idea that Portland is unusual or exceptional obscures the fact that it remains challenged by significant socioeconomic inequalities, just like any other major US city. It was constantly surprising to hear so many people speak of Portland as an “exception to the rule” when we saw such significant rates of houselessness every single day we were there. The vast scale and visibility of the houselessness crisis in Portland was unfortunately the first thing I noticed about the city. Even on our drive into Portland from PDX Airport, I counted more than 20 tents on the sides of the motorway. Most crucially, the clear lack of inclusiveness demonstrated by anti-houselessness planning and policy that we encountered highlights how Portland is not the inclusive utopia it’s often represented as being. One of the professors at PSU, Greg Schrock, described Portland as “a case study of what happens when federal government essentially abstains from their role in housing and mental

health services.” This suggested to me that Portland is not only affected by similar socioeconomic issues to the rest of North America, but that the high incidence of houselessness in Portland is a direct symptom of underfunded and disregarded public infrastructure.

Now as I reflect on the field trip to Portland, I can recognise how important it is to understand multiple perspectives. Although much work still needs to be done to expand equitable access to public transportation, Portland does have an unusually good public transport system within the American context. This is, and should be, commended as a positive thing about Portland, along with the many other success stories. However, it should not be used to obscure other issues that need to be addressed, such as the houselessness crisis, gentrification, and the disproportionate effect both these phenomena have on Portland’s ethnic minorities. My time in Portland emphasised to me how important it is that everyone is included and engaged in the governance and planning of Portland (or any other city) to ensure that resources are aimed at those who most need them and that the values of residents are fairly represented at all levels of decision-making.

REFLECTING ON REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CITY

by Amy Doherty

My research revolved around how Portland’s identity was advertised, reproduced, and influenced through promotional materials, digital marketing, and physical observations of the city. Through conversations, my research group of three classmates and I understood that the challenges recently faced by Portland, particularly the socio-political issues and impacts of Covid-19, have changed the way the city is perceived by both residents and visitors.

Using a combination of qualitative methods, we sought both to uncover the layers of such perceptions, and to investigate the strategies employed by various stakeholders to alter such thinking.

Through semi-structured interviews with the Travel Portland marketing team, it was highlighted that recent events – racial justice protests, military-style repression by Trump’s federal agents, spiralling public drug use, and police non-responsiveness – have necessitated shifts in their approach to ensure that the city’s representation remains both authentic and appealing. Many stakeholders, not only Travel Portland, discussed the promotion of diverse food options, tourist features, and the abundance of nature, in a shift away from a longstanding “Keep Portland Weird” message, the meaning of which has started to take on more negative connotations over time alongside Portland’s geographical transformations.

Through our own experiences, in a ground-truthing way, we compared the city’s marketed image with reality. We witnessed the discrepancies between the promoted ideal of Portland in contrast to the real experiences people faced. While we acknowledged that promotional materials will always highlight the beauty and culture of a place, we found that Portland had a more complex story, influenced by changing socio-economic and geographical circumstances.

We found that promotional materials, like brochures, leaflets, and maps, played a significant role in shaping perceptions. Travel Portland’s adverts creatively reflected what may be considered as the strengths of the city, positively highlighting the creative culture, unique ideas, and fun parts of Portland’s branding, in attempt to distract from the negative stories since 2020.

Overall, our field trip to Portland allowed us to conclude that to understand the representations

of a city, one must pursue a holistic approach. Combining and comparing the narratives which are found across promotional materials, digital marketing, and visitor experiences, we were able to gain a deeper understanding of Portland’s unique identity amid its geographical transformations.



Interconnections and Encounters in Portland

by Navin Vithana

The field trip to Portland was a rich and comprehensive learning experience that offered valuable insights into field research methods. By investigating the complexities of urban planning and community support in Portland, we developed unique understandings of the locality whilst gaining experience in utilising the research methods that we were taught.

The diversity of talks and presentations organised as part of this fieldtrip worked to provide us with nuanced insights and connections between our individual projects and the wider governance issues across Portland. For example, learning about the rising land

values and resistance to high-density housing highlights how the community struggles to achieve affordable housing. Such connections also offer deeper insights into wider planning approaches; Oregon's implementation of urban growth boundaries (UGBs) indicates how urban development is managed whilst preserving natural resources. By understanding these wider approaches, we were also able to see how strategies were being introduced to address these wider issues. For example, the Portland Bureau of Transportation focused on using data to improve equitable urban mobility by addressing the racial, class, and gender dimensions of transportation.

My experience volunteering at Blanchett House and the Oregon Food Bank provided me with firsthand insights into the community's response to food insecurity. My observations of the diverse clientele (including low-income local families and immigrants) highlighted the widespread impact of economic challenges on food security in this area. Meanwhile, the visible dedication and community spirit amongst the volunteers illustrated the significant impact of volunteer-driven support systems on fostering resilience and solidarity within communities. Through informal conversations, the stories and motivations behind these individuals provided a deeper understanding of the human element behind these community support initiatives. Such a supportive environment among the volunteers, to me, enhanced the experience for the clientele, demonstrating to me the importance of fostering positive social dynamics in volunteer settings.

Throughout the field trip, the range of activities and speakers we encountered in Portland signified the interconnectedness of urban planning, housing, transportation, and community support in the city. While the field trip offered us a unique opportunity to practise research methods and learn more about them, it also led to us understanding the importance of civic engagement, transparency, and ongoing dialogue in urban planning processes.





REFLECTING ON FIELDWORK

by Ryan Centner and Laura Antona

This section of the report reflects on the projects undertaken by students during their fieldwork in Portland, highlighting the collective insights gained from their engagement with the city's urban and social landscape. The projects provided opportunities for students to apply their thematic knowledge, explore an issue of interest to them in the local context, and to understand ongoing urban challenges. This process offered students a means of gaining a deeper understanding of some of the pressing issues that define contemporary urban life in Portland.

Through these reflections, students highlight themes that they engaged with in their research efforts -- including urban inequality, community engagement, environmental stewardship, and food insecurity. While each project was unique, common threads emerged from the students' experiences - such as the ways in which Portland's progressive identity interacts with its socio-economic challenges. Students observed the contradictions between the city's reputation for innovation and sustainability, and the visible realities of rising housing costs, urban displacement, and dire homelessness. Their research also underscored the importance of community efforts in shaping urban spaces, revealing the significant role of local organisations and residents in actively reproducing *and* transforming the city.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

by Charlene Tai

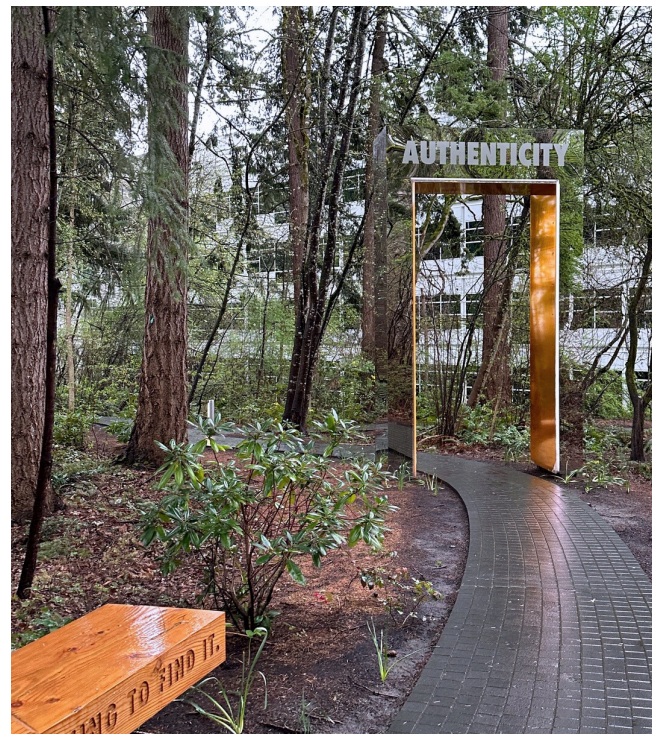
My time in Portland was marked by numerous insightful experiences, but particularly the ethnographic research I undertook in Forest Park. This went beyond a mere research opportunity for our group project; it provided a hands-on experience that deepened my understanding of both the environment and the local community's relationship with it.

As part of the Forest Park Conservancy's efforts to preserve and maintain forest health, they rely heavily on volunteers, involving them in planting native species such as ferns and removing non-native invasive growth. Participating in this volunteer program provided practical insights into the challenges and successes of conservation. It also underscored the essential role of the community in maintaining forest health. This experience highlighted the impactful work of the Forest Park Conservancy and allowed me to appreciate the extensive effort required to maintain such an expansive urban forest.

Conversations with passersby – casual hikers – enriched our time volunteering in the forest, as many shared personal stories and perspectives on the forest's significance, highlighting its role as a serene escape from the city, yet still within the city. One elderly couple shared a touching psalm on the beauty of nature, highlighting how deeply the local population cherishes Forest Park, not just as a green space, but as a crucial part of their well-being and community. This has stuck with me as it serves as a reminder of how our environment should be cherished. The vastness of the park is unfathomable until experienced, with an expanse that could not be captured on film, but it is measured at 2064ha, making it one of the largest urban forests in the US. Walking through it, I felt a sense of

smallness amidst the sprawling greenery and towering trees surrounding me.

Overall, this experience at Forest Park was more than just an academic task: it enhanced my appreciation for nature and highlighted the importance of community engagement in environmental stewardship.



UNDERSTANDING URBAN CULTURAL GEOGRAPHIES THROUGH REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CITY

by Ben Jacob

Within the broad human-geographical themes underpinning the Portland field trip – about racialised legacies in settler-colonial cities, local innovations and regional sense of place, interventionist urban planning, and critical geographies of housing – my group of classmates chose to research representations of Portland, understood as a drawing from and attempting to shape the city's cultural geography. Given the headlines the city has

made in recent years for subjects as diverse as Portland's Black Lives Matter protests, Oregon's unique drug laws, and region's devastating wildfires, we felt that this topic of representations would be sufficiently broad and pertinent as the focus of our research. As we explored representations of the city within both academia and the media, it became apparent that Portland's urban politics uniquely embodies many of the most pressing environmental and social issues of our time, making it an ideal focus for geographical study.

Personally, I was particularly interested in unpicking the eco-friendly and progressive identity that groups responsible for marketing the city such as Travel Portland seek to push. Portland's relatively unique Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), within the US context, differentiates it from the urban sprawl and associated environmental problems suffered by many other West Coast cities, while its commitment to improving zero-emission public transport and cycling infrastructure make it frontrunner in these regards at a national level. These policies have been challenged, however, in recent years by spiralling housing costs, displacing low-income and minority residents to eastern, often unincorporated edges of the city with poorer transport service and environmental quality, ultimately raising the question of whether the city's UGB should be relaxed.

Thanks to the careful planning of academic staff involved in the trip and the willingness of kind Portlanders to give up time in their day, we were able to speak with representatives of the police force, neighbourhood groups, and small business owners to better understand the impact of the opioid epidemic on the city. Portland has received criticism in the national media for its liberal drug policies – which are seen by many to embody the failings of progressive politics. Our visit came the week that Oregon Measure 110, which originally passed in November 2020 by popular ballot,

and served to decriminalise the possession of drugs – was repealed by the state legislature. In our discussions with different community stakeholders, we heard a range of opinions on the city's response to the crisis; while many people agreed that directing addicts towards rehabilitation services rather than the criminal justice system was the right approach, the Covid pandemic alongside a more general absence of the health infrastructure and spending necessary to tackle the crisis led to, in the words of one Portland Police Officer, 'the cart coming before the horse.'

Perhaps what struck me most about Portland was how approachable people were, and their willingness to talk with us: upon hearing our non-American accents, most locals were keen to talk to us and find out the purpose of our trip. This made it much easier to talk to residents about their lived experiences and the challenges they faced within the city; during our short visit, we met some unforgettable characters who left me with a fond impression of the city, and a much better sense of how its representations are a part – but only a part – of its cultural geographies.

REMAKING PORTLAND'S PLACE ON THE MAP OF GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY

by Josh Felton

"Keep Portland Weird": A phrase connected to Portland over the last 30 years for its strong democratic political stance, the city's interventionist spatial planning formation, its outspokenly progressive stance towards identity politics, and the connection Portlanders develop and express towards their home community. This is not to mention the relationship international and domestic air travellers have developed with PDX's (Portland International Airport) iconic carpet. However, "Keep Portland Weird" generates a perception of a city located in the wilderness of the Pacific Northwest (PNW),

something Oregon and Washington residents are very proud of. However, this inward-looking orientation fails to recognise the global connectivity that Portland and the wider PNW boast. Across Portland and nearby Seattle, there are two international hub airports for Delta Air Lines and Alaska Airlines, plus the headquarters of global corporations Boeing, Microsoft, Amazon, Nike, Columbia Sportswear, and Starbucks. While PDX Airport has been voted the best airport in the United States multiple times, and Portland urban governance has been at the forefront of experimental reform – with successful innovations as well as logjams in making the city work well for all. Being immersed in this milieu of innovation for the Geography field trip, and learning from our numerous site visits across sectors, my experience of Portland went well beyond what “Keeping Portland Weird” encapsulates, suggesting instead ideas that can be extracted and transported around the globe; therefore, the term “Portlandness” may be more applicable (Banis and Shobe, 2015; Shobe and Banis, 2021).

On international arrival to PDX in 2023, the arrivals process was time-consuming and disjointed due to an outdated international arrivals process and an ongoing airport redevelopment. The PDX redevelopment (called the PDX Next project), with costs estimated to exceed US\$3 billion, to increase its flight capacity by 65%, has tried to focus on being ‘local’. Bringing in PNW-based architecture, Indigenous-sourced sustainable materials, cutting-edge logistics technology, local businesses, PDX Next is underpinning an overall ‘Portlandness’ in PDX as a gateway to the city and larger Cascadia region (Granato and Van Der Meulen, 2022). This has all been happen with the airport continuing its regular operations during redevelopment, with the expansion of one concourse, the addition of a new concourse, and elaboration of a new main terminal hall (Granato and Van Der Meulen, 2022), the first phase of which opened in August 2024. Throughout these new structures, an inclusive

design is at the core, celebrating the region’s diversity and leading the way as a progressive place for all.



PDX airport designs utilised community engagement in an effective way to find out the important aspects of the airport, from pre-security, ticket hall, wayfinding, and movement through the airport to create a PDX identity that combines all the best parts of the region. However, air travel is a highly controversial and subjective experience due to its economic and environmental factors. What about those who cannot access aviation due to economic, social, or environmental considerations? These are all important issues to weigh from a geographical perspective, especially as the city grapples with other struggles demanding attention as well as funding: houselessness, drug addiction, public safety concerns, and a metro population that has recently seen net outmigration for the first time in decades. While all of these challenges are affecting Portland’s standing in the world at least as much as airport connectivity, the money underwriting PDX Next has no/t drawn on public funds, but instead has been financed by the airlines serving the airport, which signals the confidence they are placing in keeping – indeed, enhancing – Portland’s place on the map of global connectivity.

LEARNING THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

by Gracie Coulwill

Witnessing the highs and lows of the city of Portland throughout the week was challenging to navigate as I observed the contrasts and parallels occurring spatially across the city. I am still taken back by the experience I had volunteering at an emergency food bank in northeast Portland. Taking the role of a “cart runner,” I helped the food bank users deposit pantry items from the cart into their car (or into bags if they were using the bus). Interacting with food-insecure residents of Portland revealed far more than I would have gained by purely observing from a distance. Many users of the food bank were migrants from Latin America or Asia, and many had limited or no English proficiency. Where necessary, I used my very limited knowledge of Spanish, along with context clues, pointing, and gestures, to communicate and understand users' needs. In one instance, I was trying to assist a mother and her young daughter with their cart when the mother asked how much Spanish I understood. Upon seeing her younger daughter smiling up at me by my feet, I shrugged and replied by singing the chorus of “Feliz Navidad”— to which the young girl and her mother burst into laughter. Midway through my session at the food bank, I was helping another English-limited mother and her young child. After finishing offloading their items into the boot of their car, I turned to see the daughter holding up a daisy she had picked off the ground for me, her face beaming with excitement. This moment humbled me — as this child offered me a gesture for helping her family.

At the change-over area, I was supposed to take over cart-pushing from the users. Many elderly users at the food bank initially declined such help, but usually handed over their carts after reassurances. An elderly Asian man declined

help and proudly exclaimed, “I am strong!” as I walked alongside him. To me these two moments with young children at the food pantry – along with my interactions with elderly residents – demonstrated their resilience. I walked away from Portland with a deeper understanding of human geography and the ways in which history, politics, and the U.S legal system continue to influence local communities

I am extremely grateful to the local leaders who spent time presenting to us and answering interview questions throughout the week, particularly those from neighbourhood associations, the police force, and Portland State University, who were able to share with us their local leadership experiences. I wish for a future in which every Portlandian is supported to the fullest extent possible, and I am proud to have been part of a cohort of undergraduate students invested in exploring ways to incite this.

GEOGRAPHIES OF FOOD INSECURITY, INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION, AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

by Emilia Clark

For the LSE Geography field trip to Portland, Oregon, I chose to research food insecurity in the city, which included volunteering at the Northeast Emergency Food Program (NEFP). My research centred around the three most common barriers to food bank accessibility I identified in my literature review: eligibility requirements, transportation, and language ability; and how said food banks experience and attempt to overcome these barriers. I was able to answer these questions through the four-hour volunteering session at the NEFP in which I observed their average day and held informal interviews with volunteers, many of whom volunteered every day the pantry was open.

Unlike some other food charities, they do not require any proof of need, which allowed a greater number of households to access help, especially benefitting those who were going through sudden and/or short-term food insecurity who may not have been able to access support to otherwise, and who would have difficulty proving need through formal channels at short notice. This insight from my observations deconstructed the interrogatory nature of food stamp/support applications and the concept of the 'deserving' poor that has become increasingly prevalent in social welfare politics.

What I found to make the NEFP special was their acknowledgement of their ethnically diverse users and their varying English-speaking capabilities. A large proportion of NEFP users spoke Spanish, Chinese, or Vietnamese as their first language,¹ and spoke little English. As a result the NEFP encouraged those who spoke multiple languages to volunteer, from my observations and conversations with volunteers, I found that the majority of volunteers spoke more than one language. Furthermore, throughout the site there were signage and food labels with multiple translations, which I believe helped to lower feelings of otherness amongst non-English-speaking users as they were able to retain some independence when it came to food selection, not having to rely on others to translate for them. I myself can only speak English but the volunteers at NEFP made it clear that wasn't an issue and that even if you were unable to communicate verbally with those you were helping, it didn't mean you couldn't create a welcoming atmosphere.

Transportation was also a key barrier I identified during my research and while the NEFP themselves couldn't take action to improve transportation during the field trip, my course mates and I were able to talk to and question those who worked for the city's public transportation agency (TriMet), which gave me clear information as to how solutions are being

devised to reduce the barriers to accessibility faced by those who require public transport to reach food banks. TriMet have implemented the 'Honored Citizens Scheme' in which those on low incomes and/or receiving food stamps received discounted fares as well as being the focus of broader attempts to increase the number and frequency of buses or trams that served food banks.

The Portland field trip was academically engaging, and the activities provided insightful information which helped me answer my research questions. With more time in Portland, I would've loved to return to the NEFP and to visit more sites to gain a broader understanding of how accessibility barriers have been experienced and tackled by food banks.







REFLECTING ON FIELD TRIPS

by Ryan Centner and Laura Antona

This final section of the report explores the transformative role of field trips for undergraduate students, and how field research shapes understandings of geographic regions and urban environments. For students, the field trip offered an immersive opportunity to connect theoretical learning in the classroom with real-world experiences and challenges. Witnessing houselessness and community activism, listening to practitioners and community organisations about their work, and reflecting on the legacy of settler-colonialism all enhanced the students' understanding of this context - Portland, Cascadia, and the US - but also of theory and places far beyond.

These reflections also show that the field trip offered a lens through which to view Portland's evolving geography. They underscore how urban transformations can be shaped by small decisions and coincidences, that constantly remake the city over time.

This section closes with a longer reflection written by a colleague, Pooya Ghoddousi, who travelled with students on the two field trips to Cascadia. His writing recounts moments that created affective bonds between those of us who travelled, and reveals the wider power of field trips.

GEOGRAPHICAL PATHS NOT TAKEN

by Margarita Yakovitskaya

On the last day of our field trip, we drove out to the Pacific coast, and stopped at Astoria, a small, picturesque port city. With a population of just over 10,000 it sits where the Columbia River flows into the Pacific Ocean. Despite its stunning location, in many ways it seemed just like what I imagined any other provincial US city to be. As we were crossing the river into the state of Washington, I wondered what life is like in such a scenic and serene place, so far away from what I find familiar in Europe.

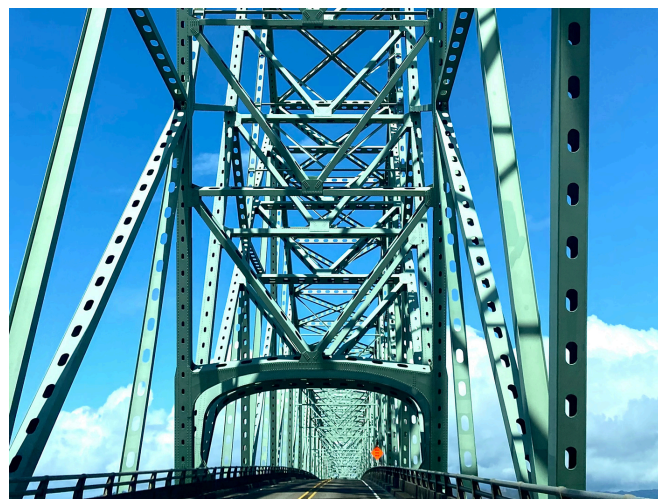
My primary research focus was urban Indigeneity in Portland, and this inevitably led me to explore the broader history of Native Americans in the state of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. This is something I have always found captivating: as a young girl, I devoured novels about the lives and struggles of Native Americans under US rule. Having never visited the US or studied US history in depth, I had a very vague idea of the historical or geographical context of those stories.

Fieldwork allowed me to explore this interest and deepen my knowledge, both through primary research and further reading. It was through this reading that I stumbled upon the history of Fort Astoria, the first US settlement west of the Rocky Mountains

Prior to its establishment in 1811, Europeans had claimed this land, but without a long-term physical foothold; in contrast, it has been home to the Clatsop people for centuries. Eventually, over the 19th century, Astoria would become a major hub for fur, timber, and salmon trade, both domestically and internationally. Fort Astoria is central to colonial histories and Native American struggles in the region, as its establishment helped pave the way for modern-day Washington, Oregon and Idaho becoming colonised – first as the jointly UK/US-administered Oregon Territory, and eventually the American states we know today.

Learning of Astoria's transformation from Indigenous settlements to one of the biggest centers of economic activity in the Columbia River basin to the quiet town that it is today made me reflect on the unpredictability of the trajectory a place's transformation through time and space can take. The quiet town that I observed, where many move to retire, was where the first trade relations between white settlers and Native Americans were established in the region, with potential to become the biggest port for a burgeoning US presence in what is now called the Pacific Northwest. Yet it gradually declined in significance, with ships eventually bypassing it on their way to Portland. Had the British, via Canadian endeavours, outperformed the American settlement there, or had the river currents been less treacherous, or had the buildings been built further apart to prevent fires (as the city was devastated by blazes), I could have been visiting a very different Astoria.

Being in the field made me realise that a lot of what we consider inevitable and take for granted about a place likely arose due to myriad small coincidences and decisions that ultimately shape place trajectories. By examining issues visible in the city of Portland, such as increased drug use, through this lens, I saw that they too often arose as unintended consequences of circumstances and policy decisions. And while dramatic shifts are rare, even a small step in the right direction may end up being geographically transformative.



LEARNING TRANSNATIONAL LESSONS THROUGH FIELDWORK

by Areeba Ramzan

In my second year of university, I had travelled to Portland alongside my classmates to carry out my first field research abroad. Particularly, I focussed on food banks in Portland given that I had prior experience working closely with the homeless community in London by organising soup kitchens. Homelessness is significantly more rampant in Portland, with streets lined up with makeshift tents. Upon visiting a community kitchen and volunteering at a food bank, it quickly became fascinating how communities from all corners of Portland mobilised support and action in such an organised, planned and efficient manner. While the homeless lacked their own permanent, personal physical spaces, these initiatives created liminal spaces of care - they could finally feel a sense of belonging and comfort they lack elsewhere.

We first visited Blanchet House, a community kitchen, and spoke to the community engagement manager. She passionately spoke about the community aspect of this space, stating that their main requirement was to make the homeless feel as if they were eating at a restaurant with others so they can speak and share their stories. The attention to detail here was evident through handing out community care packages, the layout of the space and the wellness room that all attendees could have access to. This space of care was meticulously designed to humanise the homeless in a world where they are constantly dehumanised when they are outside of this physical space.

We also had the opportunity to volunteer at the Northeast Emergency Food Programme, which held food banks for low-income families. While the demographic was different, the approach to care and community mobilisation overlapped with Blanchet House. We had the pleasure of speaking to other volunteers and first-hand

interacting with some of the families. Through years of experience, their organisation and efficiency was inspiring - especially as I have volunteered in similar fields in London before.

Food security is vital to quality of life, especially of the homeless and the low-income families. In the absence of regional policies addressing such gaps, grassroots organisations take admirable steps to feed the hungry. But not only this, they additionally foster spaces of care that are essential to many. I have learnt many lessons from my experiences in Portland that I plan to apply with my volunteering at soup kitchens in London.

GENDERED GEOGRAPHIES OF HOUSELESSNESS

by Mirha Butt

Whilst my research interest has long been feminist geographies, I was first encouraged to explore the topic of female houselessness in Portland after a conversation I had on a bus ride to Portland's Japanese Garden. I quickly befriended a Portland resident (after she warned me about a suspicious stain on the bus seat). This woman informed me that she was on her way to one of Portland's many women's shelters, where she worked as a domestic violence mentor. According to her, services targeting homeless individuals have historically been modelled on the male archetype of drug addiction and sleeping rough, not paying sufficient attention to traditionally female issues

of violence, temporary houselessness, and familial responsibilities. This especially piqued my interest as a previous discussion my cohort partook in with a police officer, at one of Portland's Neighbourhood Associations, focused on Oregon's Measure 110 and drug decriminalisation's specific effects on houselessness. However, I was yet to hear an explicitly gendered perspective on Portland's houselessness issue.

This woman, upon hearing about my field research task, shared that she had previously experienced domestic violence from an ex-partner, and was forced to rely on Portland's women's shelters before she could find work. What I found especially moving was that she did not describe these shelters in practical terms of temporary emergency response and short-term housing but rather as a space of safety and empowerment, where she could begin the process of healing and prepare for her future. Women's shelters in Portland, I began to realise, not only serve as safe havens, but are psychologically informed environments that enable empowerment and recovery beyond mere safety.

This simple ten-minute conversation was the catalyst for me to explore the topic of female houselessness and women's shelters in Portland in more depth, but it also led to one of the greatest challenges in my fieldwork. Whilst a perfect informal, unstructured interview, time constraints and a lack of planning beforehand meant I was unable to cater my questions based on a pre-planned research proposal; with such a sensitive topic, I was also unable to get sufficient consent to reference her in my research project. After I'd exited the train at the Japanese Gardens, I was also forced to sit in a corner and scrawl down everything I could remember, though memory may be unreliable.

Ultimately, I was very grateful for this simple conversation for not only giving me an important topic for my field research but for giving me an unfiltered, valuable insight into the lived experience of homeless women in Portland.

THE USEFULNESS OF LANDSCAPE IMMERSION

by Sarina Rai

"Houselessness in Portland is everywhere." Leading up to our trip, it felt as though I was constantly being told such a phrase, either

directly or indirectly, before it was eventually engrained into my mind and understanding of the city, as a visitor who had never yet stepped foot there. As my study focused on houselessness in Portland, I attempted to engage with many representations of the issue to prepare and plan for my research. Countless depictions of the city in news articles, images, videos and lived experiences detailing the scale of the issue allowed me to develop some level of understanding. A piece from the New York Times focusing on experiences of loss resulting from the city's houselessness and drug crises particularly stood out to me, a deeply emotional story illustrating the tragedies experienced by those affected and their loved ones. Despite this, however, it was still undeniably difficult to recognise its true extent as an 'outsider' - living in London where houselessness is also a visibly prominent characteristic, I questioned how dissimilar the two contexts could really be.

My first encounter with houselessness in Portland was following our nine-hour flight as we drove from the airport towards the hotel, roughly one to two hours after arriving in the city. In awe of being in a new country, I sat in the coach with my eyes glued to the windows trying to take in as much of the landscape as possible when I quickly came across a noticeable trend. Dotted around on patches of greenery on either side of the highway were tents – not just a few but dozens planted across the stretch of land alongside the roads. It was true, houselessness in Portland was everywhere. Whether we were travelling in the coach from PDX International Airport, walking around Downtown, or riding the bus through SE Division Street, the effects of Portland's housing crisis were clearly demonstrated in its surroundings as we became witnesses to the phenomenon we had heard so much about. It was something that no amount of research could have prepared me for, incomparable to anywhere else I had visited, and only legible to me once in the field.

Conducting research remotely can certainly be fruitful to an extent, but this trip allowed me to

realise that you can never fully grasp the reality of a city without experiencing it first-hand. Looking at images of encampments on the internet through a screen simply cannot emulate the same feeling one feels when directly seeing a person sleeping on the corner of a block with only a sleeping bag to lie upon, surrounded by broken glass and litter. Given the emotionally charged nature of this topic, immersing yourself in the context is essential for developing an understanding that cannot be attained from simply reading, watching or listening about a place. Fieldwork also showed me something perhaps not so obvious from third-hand accounts; the persistent sense of community across the city's residents, the collective empathy felt towards those in crisis, and the unwavering hope Portlanders retain in search of a better future.



OBSERVING PORTLAND, SEEING GEOGRAPHY LESSONS MATERIALISE

by Isabella Trow

One of the most notable insights I gleaned from the field trip was the realisation that fieldwork is a continuous process. During the trip, I became increasingly engaged with my research question,

frequently discussing it with classmates, lecturers, and local residents outside of designated research opportunities. The week provided constant opportunities for research and data collection, offering a variety of perspectives on my chosen research topic – namely, the effectiveness of Measure 110; a law related to the decriminalization of drugs in Oregon, which voters approved in 2020, and came into force in 2021. Although initially passed by a sizeable voter margin, this legislation became notably controversial, and its impact was evident while observing daily life in Portland. Observations and discussions with classmates and locals highlighted the high numbers of the houseless population struggling with plainly obvious drug addiction – posing visible dangers to themselves and others in their behaviours – and the insufficient availability of rehabilitation services. A particularly vivid memory was watching a houseless individual being treated on the street for drug-related issues, clearly in severe pain. It was unsettling to realise how normalised this sight had become, especially as a local noted that this was not an unusual occurrence in Downtown Portland, with the high visibility of such problems being said to further contribute to the stigmatisation of the houseless population.

I was also privy to numerous discussions about the unusually quiet nature of Downtown Portland, in contrast to a much more bustling recent past – an emptiness that became evident when observing the city. For instance, at 9 a.m. on a Monday on March 2024, the streets were notably vacant, lacking in activity. Lecturers pointed out the decline in Downtown Portland's usage following 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Trump's order for violent repression of racial justice protest by federal troops, and rampant consumption in public of decriminalised drugs, which has spurred other criminal – or at least threatening – behaviours. These all culminate as a local urban transformation that warrants much greater investigation given Portland's slow recovery post-pandemic.

FIELD TRIPS AND ASSEMBLAGE: A CLOSING REFLECTION FROM AN ACADEMIC

by Dr Pooya Ghoddousi

We're driving in a large American Ford with five students from Portland to Cape Disappointment in Washington. We are in one of the six cars carrying 30 second year students and seven members of staff at different organisational levels. I'm driving and my colleague, Maya is the copilot and DJ. She created a shared playlist where students could add their songs to the queue. We spot Mount Rainier in the distance and point out the patches of forest in various degrees of degradation. It's a beautiful sunny day with a fresh breeze, beautiful scenery along the way, changing landscapes and climes, forests, massive bridges, little towns, and a protected area by the Pacific Ocean where we spot dolphins, seals and a bald eagle. Coupled with the scenery are a variety of songs coming one after another, some added by Maya upon our request, and some added by the students via a link she shared. When we open the sunroof, a palpable sense of elation rises in the car. We are very present in the moment, thanks to the effect of music, being away from home, and moving together in this breathtaking landscape. We offer each other chewing gum and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups that were bought in the Safeway in Astoria. The barriers of our institutional roles are falling.



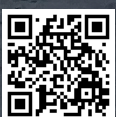
We start joking with one another. One of the students is accused of hacking the system to get more of his songs played, all in good spirit. Humour is adding another level of bonding and melting away hierarchies. We appreciate each other's taste in music, through compliments and moving about and waving our hands to the tunes. Throughout the day, we manage our convoy by tracking each other's movements on the Find My app, as well as two WhatsApp groups, one for staff and one for staff and students. When we get to the second stop, a vast sandy beach, we drive up along next to the other vehicles. There is a team spirit growing in each car, leading to a playful rivalry between us. When we get out, several of the students venture into the cold waters along with me and my colleague, Austin.

This was one of many events during our field trip when such dynamics transpired among us, melting away the individual boundaries, institutional hierarchies, and merging us together into assemblages. Other examples of these intensive moments during this trip were an outing for a group dinner and ping pong. Interestingly, the competitive games of ping pong were very effective in breaking away our usual roles as senior or junior academic staff, professional services staff, and student. When standing on both sides of the ping pong table, we were just two (or four) humans, playing at a level playing field. There were lots of giggles and jokes, along with sharing food from a self-service make-your-own-taco that helped the process of forging our collective assemblage.



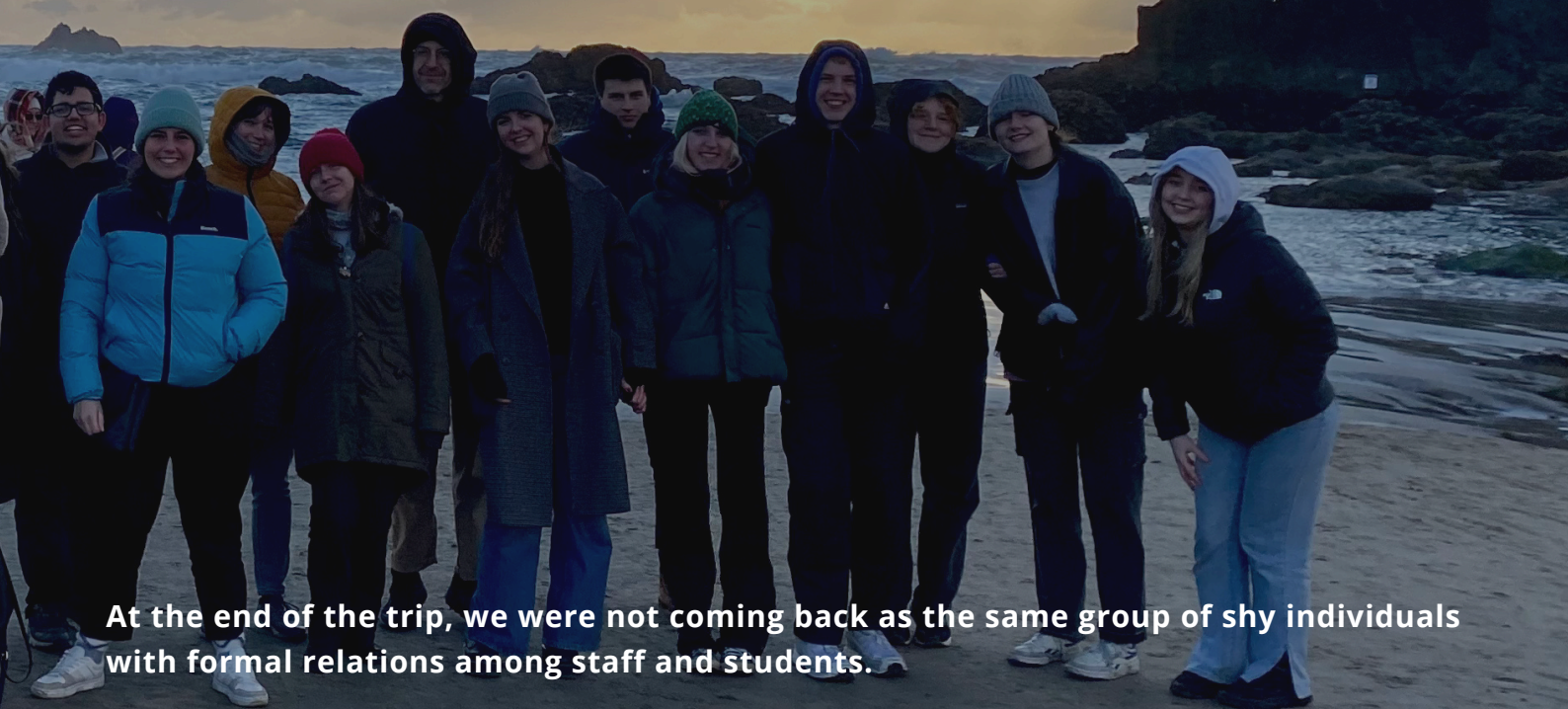
An assemblage is a human-nonhuman coming together with emergent agencies. Simply being together and moving together in shared spaces, along with sharing affects, music, humour, and food are the prerequisites for forging an assemblage (Ghoddousi and Page, 2020; Ghoddousi, 2021; Dittmer, 2013; Protevi, 2009). This is in line with a Deleuzian cartography of an assemblage that defines it by its longitude (ensemble of relations of speed and slowness, or rest and movement among its constitutive elements) and latitude (the ensemble of affects or intensive states that occupy a collective body) (Deleuze, 1988: 127-8). We spent nine days together in close quarters, flying together, driving together, and some running and swimming together, establishing the longitude of our assemblage like a flock of birds harmoniously moving in space, sometimes in unison, and sometimes in smaller groups. The sharing of food, music, humour, and caring for one another when students and colleagues became unwell established our latitude, the affective glue that gave the assemblage its consistency. Some of these moments of affective exchange, like the sharing of music in the car, were so intensive that they led to what I call goosebump moments, or campfire events that increase the consistency of an assemblage (Ghoddousi and Page, 2020).

Beyond our face-to-face moments of co-presence, we also had the electronic means of tele-copresence helping us choreograph our movements in space and share affects through witty comments, photos, and Spotify playlists [1]. In fact, I am



listening to the music as I'm writing this piece, to reminisce on the affective mood of the field trip - a perfect example of what Elliot and Urry (2010) called affect storage and retrieval. The assemblages thus formed may be transitory, but they live longer than ephemeral affects that bond them together. They also leave their imprint on our individual and collective subjectivities and their emergent agencies, which are in line with the pedagogic aims of the field trip. The rapport that was established among us helped the students be more present, pay attention, and immerse into the experiential learning of these excursions. It also fostered better team spirit.

This atmosphere helped students gain the self-confidence to ask questions from the locals at every encounter, which was met with great praise from academics and practitioners in Portland. The breakdown of the staff-student barriers has also meant that students showed up much more often at our office hours after returning from the field trip, and I feel that they put more heart into what they did — a fact also highlighted by their voluntary contributions to this report. Even running into students outside university is not the same experience anymore. Now we have formed bonds of belonging that would last far longer, potentially beyond our times at LSE.



At the end of the trip, we were not coming back as the same group of shy individuals with formal relations among staff and students.

We were an assemblage.

We were inspired.

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