Ali Rabbani and Spencer Robertson Term: Winter 2019



Having done the preliminary research questions and having to change them we decided to do further investigation of the Graduate Students Union Pub. Ultimately we chose that we'd like to explore the theme of use/movement and the patterns that are present from individuals that attend the pub. To this end we also took it upon ourselves to investigate two other bars within the area, those being Einstein's and the Prenup Pub, both located on the South side of College street. Doing this allowed us to compare and contrast patterns of movement to and from the three bars that resulted in us learning about the people that choose that specific bar and why.

The Graduate Students Union Pub, located at 16 Bancroft Avenue, itself is largely frequented by post-undergraduate individuals, either graduate students that are also teachers' assistants, professors, department staff, or alumni. It is rather rare for undergraduate students to make use of the establishment, although there are no rules barring them from doing so. When speaking with patrons of the pub a recurring answer we had for why they chose to come to this specific pub and not another one was that it had become a tradition of sorts. Either they had gone there for years, the department frequently went there, or they considered it their regular bar entirely. The second most common answer was the convenience of it in terms of proximity of where they were coming from that it made the most logical sense for them to attend.

This presented an image to us of a community built around the Graduate Students Union Pub, as while it catered towards graduate students the most frequent attendees were in departments or offices located closest to the pub. A vast majority of the patrons we spoke with noted that they all arrived at the pub from the same location, often leaving together in groups, exclusively on foot. This also meant that most attendees had migrated to the pub from the West side of campus, with locations such as the Anthropology department and Sidney Smith Hall as frequent departure points before heading to the pub. We decided to follow up by asking how they travelled home and, unsurprisingly, responses varied and very few people travelled to the same location.

As previously mentioned, this inspired us to do reconnaissance at Einstein's and the Prenup Pub to see if there were similarities with patrons of those two bars. It turns out that there is, although for different reasons for each bar. Einstein's features a large student population, so we received typical answers in regard to proximity to the campus or their dwelling, followed by affordability, and finally the "tradition" aspect. This point of tradition was first raised in the GSU Pub, noting department traditions of heading there after work to relax or hold a casual meeting. Patrons of the Prenup Pub were often professionals that noted they preferred the pub for the atmosphere, beer selection, or menu, presenting a clear difference in clientele between the three locations.

Regardless, they shared similarities even if they themselves were not aware, such as how many patrons chose bars based off proximity to their location prior to arriving. Even for the Prenup Pub patrons, that noted they enjoyed the atmosphere and environment or staff, often were not extremely far from the pub. This further sparked our interest in the pattern of movement as it implied an underlying psychological decision to choose a bar due to proximity. If, as was often claimed, patrons chose the bar for reasons that average bars lacked, we should have seen more variety in where patrons had been prior to arriving at the pub, and not the answers we had that they were often within the general vicinity.

All of this was rerecorded into our map, with four key points that we will go into as follows:

- 1. Starting and departure points
- 2. How people arrived at the bar
- 3. How people were getting home from the bar
- 4. The reason behind their choice of establishment

Starting off, you will notice that the map features different types of lines, which denote mode of transportation. Dotted lines represent walking, solid lines represent public transit (TTC, GO Train), and zig-zag lines represent vehicle (Uber, taxi, personal). The assorted colours serve a purpose of what the individual was at the bar for. Yellow is proximity, pink is an event, orange denotes them as a regular, blue is for relaxation.

G denotes the Grad Pub, E denotes Einstein's, and P denotes the Prenup Pub.

You will also notice that these locations and others on the map feature corresponding numbers (such as G1, G2, E1, etc.). The squares with 1's represent the starting location of an individual's journey and the 2's represents the end of their journeys within the area we have designated. So, a G1 for example is where an individual would have started their journey to the Grad Pub and G2 shows where they ended their journey within the area. You will also notice that there are some squares on the boundaries of our map. If they are on a street, which means they continued walking on that street after they left the area. If they are in the street it means that they left the area via a public transit station.

In the end the area of our map is the entirety of campus as that is where a vast majority of GSU Pub patrons were coming from and they often chose the pub due to proximity. While most individuals came from the immediate vicinity there were some that came from further away, opting to travel to the GSU Pub when a closer bar was present. This implies a subconscious decision to choose the GSU Pub, even when a closer establishment is present. In terms of departing the GSU Pub, individuals frequently walked towards to varying forms of public transit as most of them no longer lived on or directly next to campus, having moved further away as graduate students.

Being in the downtown core, most people arrive at the bars via foot due to proximity to their previous location. A common trend we noticed was that people often departed from a specific location, often as a group that congregated there and then set out together. When departing however individuals would leave in varying forms of transportation, from walking home to Ubering a short distance.

We noted that this presented an tribe like mentality associated with the pubs. Individuals would meet as a group and then head over most of the time, with very rare circumstances seeing them heading there to meet someone already present. We also noticed that individuals chose a specific bar because others they were familiar with frequented it, even if there was no guarantee they would be there. This tribe like mentality was further reinforced by the answer of "tradition" when queried as to why they chose the bar.

While the breakdown notes specific reasons (such as an event or proximity) we asked why this specific bar if there were other bars in the area and were often met with that response. It portrays an almost mythological representation, that individuals choose a location because their ancestors (students before them) had brought them to it and even after they had graduated and moved on, they kept the tradition alive. Indeed, this was further instilled by two individuals at Einstein's that noted they were UofT alumni and made a habit of going to Einstein's at least once a year to catch up with each other and reminisce about their university days.

The conclusion is that while individuals may come from various locations and choose the GSU Pub for distinct reasons there was a recurring theme of tradition

present that invisibly guided their hands. While they claimed to go due to proximity it was far more prevalent that they went because others went, and those others went because people no longer at UofT went there with them. It created an overall tradition that has lasted for over a decade, as one patron noted, of a department ending their week by relaxing at the local pub. It is far less that it is the local pub, but instead it is THE pub, regardless of where they areit isit is noted as local, and this is present at other pubs from other patrons.