REFLECTING ON 1 OCTOBER

Using Research to Inform Public Policy and Heal Our Community

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018
6:00 - 7:30 PM
GREENSPUN HALL AUDITORIUM
On October 1, 2017, Las Vegas joined a growing list of cities in the United States home to a mass shooting, including Blacksburg, Virginia; Newtown, Connecticut; San Bernardino, California; Orlando, Florida; Columbine, Colorado; Fort Hood, Texas; Parkland and Jacksonville, Florida and other locations. In the weeks following the tragedy, the nation and the Las Vegas community, including UNLV, responded with tributes to the victims, short- and long-term memorials to those killed and wounded, and calls to investigate the circumstances that led to this tragic event and to find ways to prevent future atrocities. Following the one-year anniversary of the 1 October tragedy, researchers from UNLV and the Brookings Institution continue to explore the impact of 1 October through a variety of approaches. From quantitative exploration, to qualitative analysis, and from oral histories, to social media data collection, the presentations in this community forum explore Las Vegas’s response and offer scholarly research to contribute to better public policy and understanding.

Brookings Mountain West, in partnership with UNLV University Libraries, offers "Reflecting on 1 October: Using Research to Inform Public Policy & Heal Our Community," a community forum featuring four research presentations, each centered on the 1 October tragedy in Las Vegas. Following the presentations, featured contributors from UNLV and the Brookings Institution will respond to questions posed by the moderator.

**Agenda**

**6:00 – 6:05 PM**

*Welcome & Introduction*

William E. Brown, Jr., UNLV Director, Brookings Mountain West

**6:05 – 6:25 PM**

*The Unobservable Costs of Gun Violence in America: Lessons from the New Science of Well-Being*

Carol Graham, Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution
Mary Blankenship, Undergraduate Researcher, UNLV

**6:25 – 6:45 PM**

*When the Profane Becomes Sacred: The Public Policy Implications of Tragedy in Las Vegas*

Caitlin J. Saladino, Director of Strategic Development and Operations, Brookings Mountain West

**6:45 – 7:05 PM**

*Remembering 1 October: An Oral History of Individual Experiences and Reflections*

Claytee White, Director of Oral History Research Center, UNLV Libraries
Barbara Tabach, Oral History Research Center, UNLV Libraries

**7:05 – 7:25 PM**

*Shining Light on Tragedy: Collecting 14 Million Tweets Following the 1October Mass Shooting*

Thomas Padilla, Visiting Digital Research Services Librarian, UNLV Libraries
Miranda Barrie, Undergraduate Researcher, UNLV

**7:25 – 7:30 PM**

*Closing*

William E. Brown, Jr., UNLV Director, Brookings Mountain West

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**NOTE:** ALL IDEAS EXPRESSED AT THIS RESEARCH FORUM REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF THE RESEARCHERS AND ARE NOT THE OFFICIAL VIEWS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE INSTITUTIONS.
Gun violence and mass shootings have become a marker of life in America. The toll is harsh, and includes the 133 individuals killed in the Las Vegas, Florida, and Texas shootings, as well as the 96 Americans that die daily by firearms. What about the more difficult to measure psychological costs to society? In this presentation, we use subjective well-being measures—life satisfaction, stress, and worry—in daily Gallup data to provide insights. We first compare the effects of the same variables after different events to see if populations of closer proximity to a mass shooting respond differently (local effects). We next compare different populations at a constant time—the Las Vegas shooting—to see whether there were different reactions in Florida, which had already experienced a mass shooting at the time, and Texas, which had not (sympathy effects). We find evidence of both. The effects of such shootings on life satisfaction, stress, and worry, are higher in areas with greater proximity to the shootings, as in the case of Nevada and neighboring states versus the U.S. as a whole. Meanwhile, the population of Florida experienced more negative well-being effects after the Las Vegas shooting than did the population of Texas, which had not yet experienced a mass shooting. The proximity and frequency of such events heightens their psychological costs—yet another marker of the effects that gun violence has on the lives—and psyche—of increasing numbers of Americans.

When The Profane Becomes Sacred:
The Public Policy Implications of Tragedy in Las Vegas

Examining spaces and places as sacred versus profane has historically helped scholars understand suburban design and land use in metropolitan areas. However, this lens offers an interesting perspective on what might happen next for the City of Las Vegas following the 1 October mass shooting. The location of the shooting—a high value plot of land on the famous Las Vegas Strip—was perhaps the most profane undeveloped real estate remaining on the boulevard. This raises questions about how groups like the City of Las Vegas and the Clark County Commission might proceed with caution in the aftermath of tragedy as memorialization is discussed. This analysis suggests that unlike other examples of public memory post-tragedy, the 1 October tragedy transformed a generic, adaptable space into a meaningful, sacred place, thereby rendering future development unimaginable one of the most iconic commercial stretches of land in the world. As politicians and policy actors consider next steps, this presentation offers policy considerations in light of the unique aspects of the 1 October tragedy.

Remembering 1 October:
An Oral History of Individual Experiences and Reflections

In the first year after the 1 October shooting, the Oral History Research Center collected over 50 interviews. The result is a diverse collection of personal narratives that reveals the broad impact such a tragedy might have on any community. Within the oral histories for the Remembering 1 October project, a listener will discover the universal themes of survival, helping others heal, and the need to be of service to others. Among those interviewed are trauma doctors, first responders, an array of volunteers, and survivors. With the opening prompt, each narrator recalled learning of the event and immediately transitioned into what happened next. Experiences come to life and the reassuring image of Las Vegas residents coming together emerges—as do the unanswerable questions and individual lessons learned.

Shining Light on Tragedy:
Collecting 14 million Tweets Following the 1 October Mass Shooting

How do cities respond to tragedy? How do they remember? How do they heal? These are some of the questions researchers at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) asked following a mass shooting that occurred on October 1st at the 2017 Route 91 music festival. Pursuing questions like these depends on access to the history of Las Vegas. UNLV Libraries has long dedicated itself to making that possible. In the immediate aftermath of the shooting the libraries responded, collecting 14,108,104 tweets associated with the tragedy. These data, and similar datasets, provide insight into the ways in which communities respond to tragedy online. The 1 October Twitter collection presents a number of ethical and technical challenges, which we explore. Beyond the challenges associated with the dataset, the collection offers researchers a valuable look at the events of the night of the shooting and the days that followed from local, national, and international perspectives.
Contributors

Miranda Barrie is a Brookings Public Policy Minor student and Urban Studies major at UNLV. She currently serves as a data curation specialist with University Libraries, under the direction of Thomas Padilla. Formerly, Barrie served as a research assistant with the London-based think tank, Demos.

Mary Blankenship is a double major in Chemistry and Economics with a minor in Mathematical Sciences. She is a researcher in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry where she works with Dr. Clemens Heske. She has been an Office for Undergraduate Research Ambassador since 2017.

William E. Brown, Jr. received his undergraduate degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1978 and his graduate degree from the University of Michigan in 1981. He has held appointments as an academic research librarian, faculty member, and administrator at Yale University, the University of Miami, and the University of California, Berkeley, before joining UNLV in 2005. As UNLV Director of Brookings Mountain West, Brown coordinates the programs, lectures, and activities of Brookings Mountain West in Southern Nevada, including the Brookings Public Policy Minor at UNLV.

Carol Graham received her master’s degree in the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, and Ph.D. from Oxford University. She is the Leo Pasvolsky Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, a College Park Professor at the University of Maryland, and a Senior Scientist at Gallup. Her areas of expertise are in developing economies, inequality, Latin America, poverty, and well-being.

Thomas Padilla is Visiting Digital Research Services Librarian at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. He publishes, presents, and teaches widely on digital scholarship, digital collections, Humanities data, data curation, and data information literacy. He is Principal Investigator of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation supported Collections as Data: Part to Whole and the Institute of Museum and Library Services supported, Always Already Computational: Collections as Data.

Caitlin J. Saladino is a doctoral candidate of public affairs in the School of Public Policy and Leadership at UNLV. She holds a master’s degree in communication studies at Iowa State University. She is project manager and coordinator for the Oral History Research Center at UNLV. Her areas of expertise are in collecting and organizing oral histories, preserving family history, and Las Vegas history.

Barbara Tabach received her bachelor’s degree in education from Drake University and did master’s studies in journalism at Iowa State University. She is project manager and coordinator for the Oral History Research Center at UNLV. Her areas of expertise are in collecting and organizing oral histories, preserving family history, and Las Vegas history.

Claytee White received her bachelor’s degree from California State University, Los Angeles, master’s degree in history from University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and has completed work toward a doctorate at the College of William & Mary. White is the inaugural director of the Oral History Research Center for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Libraries. Her areas of expertise are African Americans in Las Vegas, the art of collecting oral histories, and oral history workshops.

About Brookings Mountain West

Brookings Mountain West is a partnership between UNLV and the prestigious Washington, D.C.-based Brookings Institution. The purpose of Brookings Mountain West is to bring the Brookings tradition of high-quality, independent, and impactful research to the issues facing the dynamic and fast-growing Intermountain West region. Building upon work at Brookings and UNLV, our community engagement and research initiatives focus on helping metropolitan areas like Las Vegas grow in robust, inclusive, and sustainable ways. Brookings Mountain West provides a platform to bring ideas and expertise together to enhance public policy discussions at the local, state, and regional level.

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@BrookingsMountainWest
@brkingsmtnwest
@brookingsmountainwest
brookingsmtnwest@unlv.edu
(702) 895-0088
unlv.edu/brookingsmtnwest