Reclaiming, Repurposing, and Re-creating Public Spaces

An exploration of groups and individuals who are creating alternative, counter and subaltern public spaces to meet needs and resist consumer capitalism.

by

Laurel Atkinson

supervised by

Jennifer Foster

A Major Paper submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master in Environmental Studies
York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

November 11, 2016

Abstract

Public space is a highly contested and subjectively defined area. Its discourse involves issues of power, inequality, access, ownership and marginalization, especially when the boundaries and demarcations of private and public space become blurred.

Individuals or groups reclaim, repurpose or re-create public space in ways that are alternative, subaltern, or counter to established uses. They do so for various reasons, including to meet real or perceived needs, to inscribe a desired aesthetic, to resist real or perceived injustices, to affirm or celebrate identities, and/or to feel a sense of belonging.

The process of reclaiming, repurposing or re-creating public space is often messy or non-linear, causing tensions or paradoxes, but may also provide an avenue through which dominant power structures may be challenged. Resisting such tensions or paradoxes is challenged by consumer capitalism, which works to homogenize, control and commodify space, culture or values wherever possible, co-opting social relationships and experiences of urban life into an impersonal system and perpetuating inequality.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, thank you to my husband, Andre Vallillee, for encouraging and supporting me to complete this degree, and especially for making the meals and doing all the weekend chores so that I could concentrate on writing. Thanks also to my unborn baby (name TBD) who gave me a very real deadline in which to finish my paper.

Thank you to members of WHIP (Way Hot Idea Party), most of whom are former MES graduates themselves, who helped me to explore options for returning to the program after a decade away: Cassie Barker, Andrew Mason, Jill Tomac, and Elanor Waslander.

Thank you to my supervisor, Jenny Foster, who went above and beyond to provide a great deal of support and guidance, without which this paper would not have been possible.

Thanks to those from the Toronto Public Space Committee who offered their time and energy for my research. My biggest thanks goes to Dave Meslin, who encouraged me to take a role in the Toronto Public Space Committee in 2005 and remains to this day an all-round great guy. Thank you to the nine core members who, in February 2006, took time to answer my survey questions: Alice Barton, Raj Bharati, Andy Brown, Andrew Chiu, Joseph Clement, David J., Kristin Li, Ron Nurwisah and Erin Wood. Thanks especially for the additional time that some members took for one-on-one interviews: BA, Alison Gorbould, David J., Dave Meslin, and Ron Nurwisah.

Thank you to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for providing me with a scholarship in 2005-2006, which allowed me to stay out of debt and focus on my research.

Special thanks to Chris Cavanaugh, who inspired and mentored me in 2004-2006.

Thank you to Dean Noël Sturgeon, who encouraged me to return.

Finally, thank you to my workplace, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, and especially to Bob Vaux, for encouraging this step and providing financial support.

Foreword

This Major Paper is the fourth and final component required to fulfill the requirements of my Plan of Study for the Masters of Environmental Studies degree. It is a synthesis of the other three components of the Area of Concentration in the Plan of Study: foundations, public space, and (public space) advocacy. The first three components were satisfied in 2004-2006, while the final component (Major Paper) was completed in 2016.

Component 1: Foundations – the overarching goal of this component was to achieve a conceptual framework that incorporated a broad spectrum of discourses in relation to public space advocacy and to inform all of my work. The three objectives were: to expand my knowledge of a broad spectrum of theoretical discourses, including pedagogy, education, the body, power relations, and public space; to extend my mastery of analytical thinking in the process of academic and creative writing; and to further solidify my understanding of discourses surrounding marginalization, diversity, inequality, and power, through both education and dialogue with my peers.

Component 2: Public Space – the overarching goal of this component was to explore the modern, Western concept of public space, especially how it is linked to discourses of equality and consumer capitalism. The three objectives were: to become familiar with the history of our modern concept of public space; to become literate in the concepts and language about public space and the modern city; and to become familiar with current discourses, both in theory and practice, about public space issues in Toronto.

Component 3: Public Space Advocacy – the overarching goal of this component was to engage in public space advocacy in Toronto through an immersive experience and participant observation with the Toronto Public Space Committee. The three objectives were: to become familiar in social action-focused education and learning, with a focus on other ways of knowing; to become familiar with the agendas, projects, discourses, and goals of public space advocates in Toronto; and to engage in public space advocacy in Toronto, in order to apply theory into practice.

Component 4: Synthesis – this Major Paper is the final component of the Plan of Study, and is a synergy of the previous three components. It provides a transdisciplinary approach that fuses together a multiplicity of processes and discourses that create and inform public space (and perceptions of public space) while also providing avenues of resistance to dominant power structures, such as consumer capitalism.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Situating Myself

I first enrolled in the MES program in the fall of 2004. As a white-water canoe guide and expedition leader for youth and adults, I was interested in exploring the intersections of feminism, experiential education and psychology, with an eye to develop new programs for teenaged girls in a wilderness environment that operated outside of the mainstream (and, in my view, ineffective) discourse of "building self-esteem." I felt my proposed work was validated through receiving a SSHRC grant; however, the more I researched and critically reflected on the outdoor recreation industry and the psychological development of adolescent girls, the less I felt that my proposed end product would be a meaningful avenue through which to impact young women.

With little experience in large cities, I felt isolated and alienated in Toronto. Forming community with my fellow graduate students as well as finding community-building, anti-capitalist organizations, like the Toronto Public Space Committee (TPSC), helped me to understand that I could have a role in creating the type of city or neighbourhood in which I belonged to and wanted to live. Joining the TPSC provided me with a sense of community, new friends, and agency to affect change in the big city. My graduate work shifted focus towards public space advocacy in Toronto, and my Major Paper sought to examine the philosophy of public space, the history of public space in Toronto, and used the Toronto Public

Space Committee as a case study to critically examine what constitutes progressive public space.

Themes explored in the original (2004-2006) analysis of the TPSC case study were diversity, community, and the definition of public space. In mid-2006, I made the difficult decision to withdraw from MES, due to mental health issues. At that time, I had completed my coursework as well as a large part of my major paper, having already conducted primary research and literature reviews.

After many life changes, I made the exciting yet daunting decision to re-enroll in the program in fall 2016. As such, my paper combines research conducted from 2004-2006 and in 2016.

Research Topic

The research focuses on public space, which is a highly contested and subjectively defined area. Its discourse necessarily involves issues of power, inequality, access, ownership and marginalization, especially when the boundaries and demarcations of private and public space become blurred.

This paper explores intersections between different uses of public space, looking at the differences in what has been established either formally (e.g. through government via by-laws) or informally (e.g. through repeated use over time) as an accepted use of space versus different and/or new ways of using such space. Such intersections often cause tensions or conflict but are examples of the ways through which dominant power structures are challenged, a process that is sometimes messy or non-linear. Individual differences as well as social differences (e.g. race,

socio-economic status, gender, etc.) bring further complexity and tension to any public space issue. Five themes are employed to frame an understanding of subaltern public spaces: power, gentrification and spatial marginalization, the body, community, and other ways of knowing.

Through formal and planned or informal and unconscious means, individuals and groups craft their own public spaces that go against the original design or function of a given space. Of particular interest are examples where issues of inequality are challenged and/or resisted in public space with the goal to foster social change. Creativity and play are often hallmarks of resistance to the established, formal uses of public space, since consumer capitalism works to standardize behaviour, ideologies, and attitudes.

Research Questions

The research questions seek to describe and uncover those places where 'new' ways of envisioning public space intersect (and often clash) with the 'old' or conventional ways of using public space. They also work to uncover elements or approaches that are useful in bringing about social change and/or encourage people to rethink 'business as usual' when it comes to planning, using, and thinking about public space.

Specific questions guiding the research will help in exploring the intersections and tensions between different users/uses of public space, and the gap between how public space currently exists and an imagined new way of creating and engaging with such space. Questions that guide the research are:

1) **How and why do individuals or groups use public or pseudo-public space in ways that are counter, alternative, or subaltern to the established or ordered (either formally or informally) use for said public space?** This question is guided by Henri Lefebvre's (Trans. 1991) theory that space is a social construction which affects how people and the State make use of and perceive space.
2) **How can alternative, subaltern, or counter uses of space change the formal (and/or often legal) nature of how public space is used?** The research and analysis is guided by a Foucaultian (1978) understanding of power and a Gramscian (Trans. 1992) understanding of cultural hegemony.

Research Methods

The research combines mixed methods, including a literature review, description of four case studies, participant observation primary research conducted via an immersive experience with the Toronto Public Space Committee, and an analysis of the case studies and immersive experience according to five major themes: power, gentrification and spatial marginalization, the body, community, and other ways of knowing.

Key Findings

The research provides examples of how groups and individuals reclaim, repurpose or re-create public space in ways that are alternative, subaltern, or

counter to established uses. The case studies demonstrate that public space is highly contested and subjectively defined, especially when boundaries between public and private space are blurred or not defined.

The research has shown that individuals or groups work to reclaim, repurpose or re-create public space for various reasons, including:

- to meet real or perceived needs,
- to inscribe a desired aesthetic,
- to resist real or perceived injustices,
- to affirm or celebrate identities, and/or
- to feel a sense of belonging.

The research has also uncovered various tensions, paradoxes and contradictions in the this process, including:

- social relationships are tightened and a sense of belonging is fostered at the expense of excluding others;
- other ways of knowing are inscribed onto space, but additional, other ways of knowing are not valued;
- individuals may feel less constrained to explore new ways to display or use one's body, yet reinforce dominant culture's exclusion of other (illegitimate or marginalized) bodies; and
- diversity and democracy may be valued as concepts yet inequality is perpetuated.

Resisting such tensions or paradoxes is further challenged by consumer capitalism, which works to homogenize, control and commodify space, culture or values wherever possible, co-opting social relationships and experiences of urban life into an impersonal system. In order to resist the tensions and paradoxes of consumer capitalism, bell hooks (2009) prescribes "an ethic of relational reciprocity" (228) and Iris Marion Young (1990) calls for a "politics of difference" (319).

Chapter 2: Public Space

This chapter provides an overview of modern conceptions of public space, as well as a brief literature review of thinkers, philosophers and academics whose works provide insight into the key themes explored in this paper, especially as they relate to public space.

Conceptions of Public Space

As a concept, the city is entwined with our understanding of public space and has been since ancient Greece, but only became a legitimate object for inquiry in the 19th century. The Industrial Revolution sparked a change not only in the nature of urban populations, but in how the city came to be understood, lived, and experienced. The idea of the city as a place of alienation, of crowds and noise, of vice and filth, of dangerous anonymity, has been around for a long time – noticeable in works ranging from Aristotle to the Bible. As cities grew in size and influence, the nostalgia for 'the way things used to be' became a theme in early sociologists' urban work.

The works of French poet Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), German sociologist Georg Simmel (1858-1918), and German thinker Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) capture and explain what was perceived to be happening to people in the industrial city, especially in terms of social relations. To them, the rise of spectacular consumer commodities associated with the Industrial Revolution was a shocking example of how city life was damaging modern human actions and

relationships, and each describes how such relationships play out in various public arenas, such as the arcades (pre-cursors to shopping malls) and the streets.

Similar to Baudelaire, Simmel and Benjamin before him, French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) saw how the increase of commodity fetishism pervades all aspects of everyday life. In *The Production of Space* (trans. 1991), Lefebvre muses that capitalism's flourishing existence is related to its occupation of, and especially the production of, space. Lefebvre's ideas marked a radical turning point in the way that the city and public space was thought of and perceived, as it became understood that space isn't just 'there,' it is *produced*.

Contemporary understanding of public space is linked to concepts of civil society and the "public sphere," a term coined by Jürgen Habermas' (b. 1929) in his first major work, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962). The ideology of the public sphere is the belief in a common good, based on the ideas of openness, liberty, and freedom. Habermas demonstrates how the history of these concepts in Western society are inextricably linked to public space itself. As such, public space has come to be seen as a living embodiment of democracy.

In the past few decades, there has been an explosion of literature exclusive to public space – especially concerning its encroachment under consumer capitalism. Until the 1990s and early 2000s, the term "public space" was not a widely recognized one: Lefebvre talks about the streets, Baudelaire speaks of the arcades, and Habermas mentions the coffee shops and salons. It was not until the anti-neoliberalism and anti-globalization movements collided with the realities of

privatization – informed by works such as Naomi Klein's No Logo – that academics began talking about public space in and of itself.

The past few decades have marked an increase in privatized space (e.g. gated communities) and pseudo-public spaces (e.g. shopping malls), while participation in public sphere activities (such as belonging to a political party or church congregation) has declined. Public space advocates, philosophers, and academics alike connect public space to democracy (and democratic institutions/the public sphere), linking privatization of the former with the erosion of the latter. As such, public space is seen as a site of resistance to anti-democratic policies and ideas, such as consumer capitalism. And whether or not public space advocates use the theoretical language of Lefebvre, they understand that public space is produced and negotiated – and that they can have a part in this production and negotiation.

The people and organizations actively working to reclaim, repurpose, and re-create public spaces today often use spontaneous creativity and language critical of consumer capitalism. For example, Ninjalicious' *Infiltration* (2005) is a resource that "offers a mix of the practice and theory of urban exploration in areas not designed for public usage," including tunnels, bridges, roofs, and hospitals (4). Likewise, David Tracey's *Guerilla Gardenening: A Manuelfesto* (2007) aims to empower the user to "garden[] in public space with or without permission" (6). In Toronto, activist groups such as the Toronto Public Space Committee and Newmindspace are examples of volunteer-run organizations that use creative action, art, and/or political know-how to bring attention to public space issues. These types of resistances have long-standing origins: both Benjamin and Lefebvre contend that

the spontaneity in everyday life - for example, through carnivals and festivals – are a way to undermine the alienation of modernity and consumerism. Likewise, the Situationists of the late 1950s and early 1960s, founded by Guy Debord (1931-1994), sought to resist consumer capitalism by reclaiming the city streets through *play* as a way to target the banality and lifelessness created by modern consumption (Rosemont 105).

Themes

There are countless themes that could be explored in order to better understand public space in the modern urban setting. Five themes are employed in this paper to frame an understanding of subaltern public spaces: power, gentrification and spatial marginalization, the body, community, and other ways of knowing. These themes were identified and selected because they are often employed by the individuals or groups that are reclaiming, repurposing or re-creating public space.

Power

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) and Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) are influential writers and thinkers on the topic of the capitalist society, especially as it relates to power, control, and human behaviour. Both theorists provide critiques of power structures but also offer opportunities for resistance and change.

Foucault's theory of power (1978) differs from conventional and dominant models of power (i.e. power is possessed by the dominant group to be exercised

over a subordinate group). Foucault stipulates that people (and/or the State) do not implicitly 'have' power; rather, power is exercised. It is at all times everywhere and often works subtly, as it is infused in everyday activities and discourse, meaning that it operates and is expressed in relationships and (public) space. As well, power (that serves the dominant group) is exercised by all individuals, not just those within the dominant group. In this way, it is not necessary to belong to either the dominant or the subordinate group. This becomes important when dealing with multiple intersections and ways of knowing, and allows room for other discourses (such as feminist and anti-racist). Foucault also maintains that where there is power (which is exercised anywhere and everywhere), there is also resistance(Feder 63), which is a useful lens through which to analyze alternative, subaltern, and counter uses of public space.

Through his theories of cultural hegemony in relation to capitalist power, Gramsci asserts that the prevailing norms, attitudes, and culture (often taken as a given, or 'just the way things are') are social constructs that are created and reinforced by the dominant ruling class (the bourgeois). Therefore, even though cultural mores or social norms might be seen by all (especially the non-ruling class, the proletariat) as natural or inevitable, this is not actually the case. Such socio-cultural structures serve to reinforce the dominant ideologies (which serve the interests of the bourgeois), thereby ensuring that the ruling class stays in power (Jones 27). Gramsci theorizes that a way to break out of this cultural hegemony (and resist capitalism) is for the proletariat to develop its own cultural practices and norms that specifically address working-class needs, issues, and concerns. In

Gramsci's vision, people are neither duped nor irrational, and he leaves room for choice through consent, which therefore allows for resistance to this system. Through this model, Gramscian theories help to explain why those in power remain in power and show that the way to challenge dominant hegemony is through political action and cultural creation, and not (necessarily) violence. A Gramscian perspective also helps to show how the mass media spread dominant ideology.

Using public parks and children's outdoor play spaces as examples, Cindy Katz (2006) argues that neoliberal practices (manifested through the privatization of public spaces) are a way in which uneven power relationships are reinforced. For example, even though a public-private partnership can create results that "look good" (e.g. a renovated cultural institution or a newly landscaped park), it can actually exacerbate inequality through preventing people from actively participating in how public spaces are created and used, enabling governments to further reduce funding to public places and institutions, which disproportionately affects the poor.

Gentrification and Spatial Marginalization

Although earlier philosophers, such as Baudelaire, invoked concepts of spatial marginalization, the term "gentrification" was not used until 1964, when it was coined by sociologist Ruth Glass (22). Gentrification is the process by which poor or working-class neighbourhoods (often with racialized populations) get re-developed to suit the middle- and upper-middle classes' (the 'gentry') consumption desires. The process of gentrification usually starts with 'bohemian' types – artists, musicians, students, etc. – who desire to live in the city but cannot afford steep rent,

so they move into 'undesirable' neighbourhoods. Private entrepreneurs then set up businesses (e.g. bars, restaurants, art galleries, etc.) to cater to this shifting demographic. The neighbourhood slowly becomes considered to be avant-garde, hip, or cool, and a wealthier (and more mainstream) class begins to buy houses cheaply, either to be refurbished or torn down to create condominiums or loft-type apartments. The transformed neighbourhood usually represents little of what used to be, and has now become a 'playground' of the rich. The side effect is that the original residents, often poor or working-class populations, are pushed out of the neighbourhood as rents skyrocket, land values increase, services diminish, and supportive networks fall apart.

Public and private sector officials in North America have been quick to adopt ideas and recommendations from Richard Florida's *The Creative Class* (2002), which critics argue are essentially tools for gentrification through urban spatial redevelopment. Just one year after the publication of *The Creative Class*, the City of Toronto launched its own Culture Plan, entitled, "Culture Plan for the Creative City." As well, in partnership with Canadian Policy Research Networks (a policy think-tank), two federal government Departments (Canadian Heritage and Industry Canada) held a conference in 2004 entitled, "Structured Policy Dialogue on Creative Cities."

Florida has been criticized for focusing on the consumption of culture and difference, rather than advocating for social redistribution. In *Struggling with the Creative Class* (2005), Jamie Peck calls Florida's version of gentrification "hipster emborgeiosement" (745). Peck points out that Florida's top examples of Creative

Cities are actually among the most unequal in the United States, and are celebrated as being 'diverse,' rather than being labeled as having a large marginalized population(s). Deborah Cowan (2006), a Toronto-based academic, calls this new process "hipster urbanism," and points out the paradox of how the new bohemians, in the search for something authentic and individual, are actually the driving force behind gentrification (22-23).

The Body

To many theorists, the body and space are entwined because the body is a site through which discourses of power and privilege play out in public spaces. Such discourses inform how public spaces are used, designed, and perceived.

In *Discipline and Punish* (1979), Foucault asserts that the body is the site through which dominant power(s) can achieve control of individuals. Using examples from the military, hospitals, prisons, and schools, he asserts that the modern approach of punishment and discipline aims to create "docile bodies," which are easier to control and direct, and therefore a tool through which to uphold uneven power relations: "a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (136). His approach also shows that through such discourses, individuals who are different (especially outwardly so, in bodily mannerisms and behaviour) are more likely to be ostracized, labeled, and/or seen as deviant.

In *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries* (2001), Robyn Longhurst explores the (marginalized) body in the public domain. Using a Foucaultian approach, she demonstrates how bodies deemed as "illegitimate" are marginalized within and

restricted from the public domain because they challenge societal norms. Illegitimate bodies include those whose boundaries are "fluid" in both an abstract sense (i.e. they are not easily categorized, such as transgendered people) and a tangible sense (i.e. they are seen as "messy" or "out of control", such as nursing mothers, homeless people, etc.). They also include those that challenge the dominant masculine discourse that favours the separation of the body and the mind. To Longhurst, individuals or groups of people who do not fit this standard are seen as lesser-than or Other, and dominant society works to exclude them from public space.

The body is a theme that also runs through much of bell hooks' works, as she explores how the body is intimately connected with a person's experience of the world. It is also a site on which power and privilege are inscribed; the bodies of those who are oppressed and marginalized (such as black people, the poor, etc.) are constantly judged, whereas "[a] person who is most powerful has the privilege of denying their body" (*Teaching to Transgress* 137). For hooks, the body is a site through which white supremacist capitalist patriarchy operates and on which is inscribed, and those of the dominant classes do not experience the same constraints that the oppressed and marginalized do.

In *The Ludic City* (2007), Quentin Stevens explores the importance of play as an informal yet crucial aspect to creating healthy and essential public spaces in cities. He gives agency to individuals in public space, contending that people change their outward appearance and behaviours – their "bodily action" – in urban spaces, allowing for a certain amount of freedom that may be otherwise constrained in

private areas (offices, places of worship, etc.) (46). To him, "[u]rban spaces can allow people to slip out of the mores of social and bodily control which normally govern everyday life" (46). Bodies are also a site through which people communicate with other individuals in public space, and are therefore responsible for "defining the social reality" of any encounters in public space (63). As Stevens does not specifically address marginalized bodies, his work may be criticized for ignoring issues of difference and marginalization.

Lefebrve contends that any resistance movement that works to reclaim public space must ensure that the body is also a site of reclamation: "Any revolutionary project today, whether utopian or realistic, must, if it is to avoid hopeless banality, make the reappropriation of the body, in association with the reappropriation of space, into a non-negotiable part of its agenda" (166-167).

Community

With the increasing zealousness of consumer capitalism, many theorists (for instance, Benjamin and Lefebvre) have decried how consumer goods have become the ultimate desire of our society. Much has been written on the desire to resist consumer capitalism and strengthen social relationships – and the key word in these discussions is often *community*.

Such discussions are laden with a sense of nostalgia, of something lost in the urban way of life. Simmel (1971) says that relationships are always changing, which is why it is easy to say that we have lost something through time – and why it is also easy to become nostalgic for these losses. Manuel Castells (b. 1942) sees our longing

for community as a reaction to our society's push towards conformity, as a way to enhance and seek out our own individuality, and that people look to form associations, communal ties, and bonds in order to resist conformity. Likewise, other writers, such as Miranda Joseph (2002), have tied the increase of the demands of consumer capitalism to our desire to find ourselves, our individuality, through community.

Modern discourse assumes that community is a worthy, valuable, and aspirational goal, even as "the term had acquired so many meanings as to be meaningless" (Creed 7). Any reference to the word community "may conjure to some degree qualities of harmony, homogeneity, autonomy, immediacy, locality, morality, solidarity, and identify, as well as the idea of shared knowledge, interests, and meanings" (Creed 5).

Recent literature has begun to question the role of established understandings of community as potentially harmful towards equality and inclusion. In his book, *Reconsidering Community* (2006), Gerald Creed contends that there are unintended consequences of society's love affair with community. He says that because "collectivity and exclusion are two sides of the same coin," there will necessarily be an 'out-group' of those excluded if we define a community by an 'in-group' (Creed, 4). In a chapter from *Feminism/Postmodernism* (1990) entitled, "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference," Iris Marion Young likewise posits that the notion of community becomes problematic because exclusion within a community ensures that conformity or the repression of differences will be propagated (300).

In addition, both Creed and Joseph contend that the modern discourse of community paradoxically supports and enables consumer capitalism (even as it claims that the two are opposites), and communities whose tastes can be exploited through consumer capitalism are seen as more legitimate. For example, individuals or groups that work or operate outside of established and standardized organizations (like businesses, non-profit organizations, unions, etc.) are often labeled as a "gang" or an "underground network", rather than given the status of a "community" (Joseph 28).

In *Belonging: A Culture of Place* (2009) bell hooks describes community as both geographical and relational, articulating the importance of having a connection to the land and the people therein. Quoting Scott Russell Sanders, hooks asserts that "community is about being able to … "weave ourselves into a place, so that we know the wildflowers and rocks and politicians, so that we recognize faces wherever we turn, so that we feel a bond with everything in sight"" (67-68). To hooks, building real community in an environment of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy "requires an ethic of relational reciprocity, one that is anti-dominion," rather than merely using the language of 'equality' to gloss over unequal power relations (87).

Other Ways of Knowing

Similar to hooks' assertion that true community requires "relational reciprocity," Iris Marion Young (1990) contends that the alternative to "community" is a "politics of difference," which allows for "openness to unassimilated otherness" (319). In public space, this means that people can see and understand difference and

"witness one another's cultures and functions [through] public interaction, without adopting them as their own" or having them co-opted into consumer capitalism (319). Similarly, Gerald Creed contends that the alternative to a modern discourse that objectifies communities is to understand that communities "are constituted by and constitutive of different regimes of knowledge" (31).

After the First World War and the failure of socialism and communism to take root in his native Italy, Antonio Gramsci surmised that the movement failed in part because organizers did not include the voices and cultures of those outside of the organized communist systems (such as the unions, the communist party) (Santucci 69). In this way, Gramsci asserted the importance of other ways of knowing to bolster the cause – including from peasants, secretaries, and farmers – especially those who did not identify as socialist or communist. He encouraged any individual in a leadership position within the cause to "throw himself, too, into practical life, and become an organizer of the practical aspects of culture" (qtd. in Santucci 141). As well, he encourages reciprocal relationships in all aspects of society, whereby "every teacher is a pupil, and every pupil is a teacher" (141).

Additionally, bell hooks makes use of language and concepts that are outside the accepted discourses of ways to know. For example, *love* is a theme that runs through her many works, which stands in stark contrast to a standard discourse that values rationality over emotions. In *Belonging: A Culture of Place*, hooks contends that "the presence of love" is the strongest force to resist the "domination culture" of white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (178). She also discusses "the importance of

creating a “community of care,” wherein “people are turned towards one another” in opposition to dominant culture’s individualistic approach (228).

Valuing other ways of knowing also entails valuing a person’s “lived experience,” which informs their own worldview and perceptions therein. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) is credited with coining this term, which contrasts an empirical or rational/scientific way of understanding the world. Dilthey contends that individuals form their own understanding and knowledge of the world around them based on their own subjective observations of the relationships, events, people, and occurrences they experience and witness (2-3). As such, a person’s lived experience is a vital way through which we can understand how and why people think and behave the way they do, and that an individual’s conception of reality is just as important to understand when attempting to fully understand a phenomenon, behaviour, or action.

Chapter 3 – Research Findings

This chapter has two parts. The first, 3a., presents four examples of alternative, subaltern, or counter uses of public space as case studies: Rebar Collective (San Francisco), Latino Urbanism (Los Angeles), Night Market (Seattle), and Marra Farm (Seattle). The second, 3b., provides details on the author's immersive experience with the Toronto Public Space Committee (TPSC). Also within this section is a description of the TSPC, as well as an overview of questionnaire surveys and interviews conducted in 2006, including an analysis on some of the initial questions posed through two themes: definitions of public space, and diversity within the TPSC and public space.

Case Studies – Overview

Essays found in Jeffrey Hou's *Insurgent Public Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities* (2010) were used as a jumping off point for the four case studies selected to describe and analyze in this paper. Each case study demonstrates a specific example of individuals and/or organizations transforming a public or pseudo-public space from its original design or purpose. The case studies were chosen as a whole because of the variety of actors involved, as well as due to the author's own interests in the specific example. Each case study takes place in an urban environment in the United States, and similar examples can be found in Canadian cities.

Rebar – San Francisco

Founded in 2004, Rebar is a self-described "collective of artists, activists and designers" (Merker 45) as well "an interdisciplinary studio working at the intersection of art, design and ecology" (*Park[ing] Day Manifesto* 1) in San Francisco. It is unclear how many members the group has had over the years, but three are described as Co-founders or Principal Operators on the website.

Rebar focuses on creative and tangible projects that create, repurpose and/or use public spaces as a way to "seed structural environmental change" (Merker 49), and a Kickstarter.com video claims that members are "concerned with the quality of life in public space" ("SOAK: an Ecological Urban Bathhouse"). The group works in what it describes as "niche spaces," those spaces that are "undervalued, or valued inappropriately for the range of potential activities within them" (Merker 49). It has created or participated in numerous projects that "open up" such self-defined niche spaces in order to "re-evaluate them through creative acts" (Merker 49). The group blends art (both physical and performance), play, and design to create interactive projects that it hopes will engage members of the public and change people's perceptions of what are possible or desirable uses of public space, especially in ways that challenge the status quo of consumerism.

To group members, a project can be successful in two ways: through people actively participating in their events, and through people experiencing their work after the fact, through (mostly online) images and stories. According to the group, even the act of witnessing an event afterwards still "influences people's notions of what is possible and acceptable in public space" (Merker 54).

Rebar credits Michel de Certeau and Pierre Bordieu, two 20th century French intellectuals, as influencers of the group's philosophy, and uses their concepts of spatial practices, power relations, and consumerism as guiding principles. Rebar's projects are reminiscent of the Situationist movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s, which used play to reclaim the city for the ordinary person (Rosemont 105), and the group even names some projects as "situations" (Merker 51).

Perhaps Rebar's most well-known project began as Park(ing), and has since transformed into an international event called Park(ing) Day. In 2005, Rebar took the "niche space" of a metered, on-street parking spot and "reprogrammed" it into a public park, complete with grass, a tree and a bench, for the duration of 2 hours in an area with limited public space (Merker 45). Through using creativity and playfulness, Rebar hoped to inspire passersby to use the space, interact with strangers, and think critically about how the space is valued for cars above other social, public interactions. The global Park(ing) Day event takes place on the third Friday of September. According to Rebar's Parking Day website, in 2011 there were 975 parks created in 162 cities across 35 countries on 6 continents[1].


The first Park[ing] Project (Rebar Group, *ParkingDay.org*).

In addition to the website, Rebar has created a manual and manifesto, whereby it encourages participants to think creatively about how to transform a

[1] No statistics on Park(ing) Day exist post-2011.

parking spot into a space that is useful for the public, and discourages any of commercialization of the event.

Rebar Co-founder Blaine Merker credits Park[ing] as the reason behind the City of San Francisco's Parklet Project. Launched in 2010 through the municipal government's Pavement to Parks program, the Parklet Project is a "collaborative effort" between the City's Planning Department, Department of Public Works, and the Municipal Transportation Agency, and "works with neighborhoods to create and test their ideas for new public spaces" (*PavenmentToParks.org*). Through the Parklet Project, individuals, groups and businesses can apply to create a temporary parklet within an on-street parking space, with an aim to "reimagine the potential of city streets; encourage non-motorized transportation; foster neighborhood interaction; and support local businesses" (*PavenmentToParks.org*). Through the program, five parklets were installed in 2010 and there are 70 to date (*PavenmentToParks.org*).

The Reveille Coffee Parklet, installed April 2014. Hosted by Reveille Coffee Co. and designed by Cameron Helland, of Sagan Piechota Architecture (*PavenemntToParks.org*).

Another large project of Rebar's is CommonSpace, which involved creating eight "interventions" in San Francisco's privately owned public spaces ("POPOS")

(Merker 51)[2]. These spaces (such as plazas, atriums, underground walkways, etc.) are usually negotiated by municipal governments with private developers in order to provide (pseudo-) public space in areas with high density and little public space. Such spaces are often critiqued as having the appearance of being public (and touted as such) but are in reality heavily regulated, surveilled and not freely accessible. Through CommonSpace, Rebar's intention was first to map San Francisco's POPOS, and then curate new uses suggested via surveys.[3] Events included the creation of a public napping space, a workshop to teach a type of Indonesian singing and dance, and an interactive game of Assassin. As with its other activities, Rebar sought to ensure that the transformations were not aligned with any commercial or consumer interests. Through these activities, Rebar hoped to demonstrate "generous urbanism," a tactic that "produces new cultural value" between strangers outside of the standard discourse of consumer capitalism (Merker 51).

Since the mid-2000s, Rebar's activities appear to shift away from guerilla theatre and closer towards design. According to the group's website, by the early naughts, Rebar also went by the name, "Rebar Design." In 2013, the group partnered with Nell Waters, a professional in the "alternative wellness industry" to launch SOAK, "An Ecological Urban Bathhouse" as a Kickstarter campaign. Branded as "an off grid rainwater fueled hot-tub sauna mecca for healthy hedonists," the aim of the original campaign was to raise funds to create a prototype spa from repurposed shipping containers that uses rainwater and solar power (*RebarGroup.org*). Merker

[2] In Toronto, these areas are known as POPS, or "Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces." They became formalized and regulated in 2013/2014 (City Planning Department, *www1.toronto.ca*).
[3] It is unclear who was surveyed and whether input into the process was representative of the public using these areas as opposed to people already connected to Rebar.

states a goal of the project is to "show that sustainability and indulgence are not mutually-exclusive values" (Rebar, "SOAK: an Ecological Urban Bathhouse"). At the campaign's end, Rebar managed to collect a little more than 10% of its $240,000 goal so the prototype was not built. However, in 2016 a website independent of Rebar was launched, with the promise to install the first SOAK "anti-spa" project in the neighbourhood of Mission Bay (*soakSF.com*). As of the fall 2016, SOAK is not directly partnering with Rebar, having its own website which promises the first baths "this fall" in the neighbourhood of Mission Bay (*soakSF.com*).

SOAK design concept (*Rebargroup.org*).

In 2014, Rebar seems to have cleaved into two "companies," although the group itself characterizes it more of an "evolution" which adds to the Rebar "portfolio" of works. The two companies are Morelab (an art studio "that creates innovative artworks, installations and experiences that examine our understanding of the social, political and ecological dynamics of space") and Gehl Studio, "a public

space design consultancy with a 45-year history shaping major cities, to scale up their practice of creating places for people around the world." (*RebarGroup.org*).

Latino Urbanism – Los Angeles

Through modifying built forms and structures in the neighbourhoods in which they live, worship, work and transverse, James Rojas describes how Latinos are changing public and pseudo-public spaces to better suit their cultural and economic needs and desires in Los Angeles ("Latino Urbanism in Los Angeles"). Such transformations are often counter to accepted and legitimized uses of spaces (e.g. municipal by-laws, codes, etc. and dominant Western norms) and are done in reaction to municipal service gaps (e.g. lack of transportation or parks) and/or to appropriate for cultural uses (e.g. religious and cultural celebrations). In addition to creating "great public spaces" which prioritize places for people to gather and interact, Latino place-making through spatial transformation is infused with cultural identity (Rios 99). The beginnings of Latino place-making in L.A. can be traced back to Latino civil-rights protests of the 1970s, and began through murals, art and architecture. The decline of manufacturing jobs also spearheaded the Latino street vendor culture that began to appear in the 1980's (Rojas, *Latino Place-making*, par. 8). In addition to being ways to affirm cultural identity, Latino spatial transformations have implications for how urban spaces are designed and planned (Rios 100).

According to the U. S. Census Bureau, in 2010, almost half of L.A.'s population identified as Latino or Hispanic, and Latinos comprise 97% of the East L.A.

neighbourhood population. By 2015, Latinos officially became California's largest ethnic group, overtaking the white English-speaking population (Watanabe et al., par. 6). Comparatively, Latinos disproportionately have lower income, education and job skills compared with those who self-identify as being white (*ibid*, par. 7). The areas of the city most Latinos inhabit (inner-city and inner-ring suburbs) lack municipal amenities and services, such as parks, open spaces, and reliable transportation, in comparison to English-dominated neighbourhoods. As well, even though Latinos are discussed as homogenous, this group is in reality comprised of a people of many races and ethnicities, and Latino neighbourhoods are often comprised of both immigrants and native-borns, and include both middle-class and the working poor (Rios 99).

As the highest percentage of public transportation users in L.A., Latinos have transformed existing spaces and created new ones to address this municipal service gap (Rojas 37). By biking to work, and even bringing bikes onto city buses, Latinos challenge the car-dominated public spaces in L.A. Well before the advent of 'car-sharing' services like Uber, informal and ad-hoc networks of private bus or shuttle lines also proliferated, with Latino entrepreneurs creating new transportation nodes based on community need rather than urban design.

The Ovarian Psyco-Cycle Brigade (also known as the Ovarian Psycos or OPC) is an L.A.-based group founded in 2010 by and for women of colour. Members self-identify as being "broke inner-city oppressed peoples and cycling is our only means of transportation," so the group uses the bicycle as a way to both resist dominant culture (both car-culture and white/male culture) and "empower womxn to take

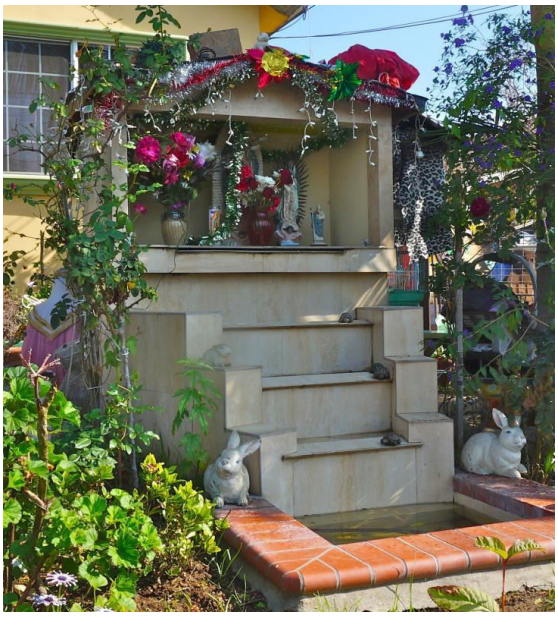
back the streets" (*Ovarianpsycos.com*).

Ovarian Psychos' first "Clitoral Mass", 2010 (*Ovarianpsychos.com*).

In contrast to the car-focused culture of L.A., Latino culture focuses on people. Popular public bus stops, already a site of gathering, are adapted into places for vending fruits and vegetables, prepared food, and other commercial items. It is not uncommon to see colourful murals depicting Latino culture or history on nearby walls and fences. Latino culture transforms a space originally designed as a non-space, to be used only as a brief point between two more fully realized places, into a "major node" of "lively pedestrian and commercial activity" (Rojas, "Latino Urbanism in Los Angeles" 38). Such alterations not only meet economic and social needs but also help to reinforce a strong cultural identity, especially important within immigrant or diasporic groups (Rios 101).

Another example through which Latinos transform the built environment and challenge norms is in the space in and around the home. Although the house is considered to occupy the 'private' sphere in the dominant Western culture, Latino houses differ from modern 'Angelino' homes in that the cultural and practical needs of residents inform the surroundings. For example, the front yard of a typical Latino

home is a fluid boundary between the public and private spheres, where play, gatherings, celebrations and work take place, and the "Latino household extends its presence to all four corners of the lot" (Rojas, "The Enacted Environment," par. 1). It is not uncommon for permanent or temporal religious shrines to decorate the yard, or for a home's religious or cultural activities to spill out into the street. Through renting chairs and tables to demarcate events such as Catholic holidays or quinceaneras, Latinos temporarily change a space, co-opting intended uses for cultural and social reasons. Through such acts, Latinos express cultural identity and challenge existing codes and symbols of space (Rios 103). Such use of space is in contrast to the standard middle-class home where the front yard is manicured, bereft of toys or other objects, and gatherings take place in the privacy of backyard, out of site from others on the street.



Left: A Latino front yard, transforming the space into an environment conducive to social gatherings. *Right*: Religious shrine in Latino front yard (Rojas, "The Enacted Environment").

Likewise, underutilized areas such as freeway off-ramps, abandoned construction sites, or empty parking lots are appropriated as a common area for social gatherings, markets, and community gardens. Such spaces provide a place to share "a "common sense" of territorial identity" (Rios 101), in essence, "mak[ing] a home in someone else's environment" (Stephens, par. 4). They also address other very real needs, such as access to green space for recreation and relaxation, or growing food to supplement diet and income.

In an L.A. neighbourhood bereft of public parks or spaces to recreate and play, Latinos use the sidewalk around a local cemetery as a pathway and jogging trail for physical exercise and social gatherings. Although the sidewalk was not intended for recreational use, community members successfully organized and lobbied City officials to replace the crumbling sidewalks with a track-grade surface that could withstand the current use. The Evergreen Cemetery jogging path became the "first public sidewalk to be designated as a recreational space" in the U.S. (Aboelata 7), and stands as an example of Latinos transforming the intended use of space into an accepted and official use of space in that the City took ownership of the project and put its creation through its formal processes.

Evergreen Cemetery jogging path (McNary).

Today, Latino-driven urban transformations are being adopted into modern municipal language. Armed with the term "Latino Urbanism" to describe "a shorthand notion that encompasses adaptive strategies, behavioral idiosyncrasies, and informal design elements which is reshaping cities," city planners, politicians, architects, and designers are finding value in the Latino transformation that has been ongoing for decades (Stephens, par. 6). The current mayor of L.A., Eric Garcetti, has launched a program called "People Street," designed to make it easier for community members to add new public spaces or amenities therein, such as "plazas, small parks and bike corrals" (Hawthorne, par. 22). As well, the city is updating its zoning code, transportation plan, and health and wellness guidelines, all with an eye to make public spaces more people-friendly. Editor and journalist Josh Stephens proclaims that the Latino urbanism is destined to "become the dominant urban trend of 21st century America" (par. 3). However, Rios cautions that the upcoming challenge will be making use of Latino spatial transformations in a way that doesn't further marginalize Latino communities (107).

Night Market – Seattle

This third case study focuses on Seattle's Night Market as an example of how grassroots community activism launched a new way of using and reconfiguring a public space based on the concept of Asian cities' night markets. Jeffrey Hou (2010) suggests that the Night Market is an example of how public space in North America can be "reclaimed, reconceptualized, and reconstructed" (116).

In modern Asian cities, night markets offer informal and often illegal ways

for predominantly working class populations to access inexpensive food and goods in the off-hours. They temporarily transform public or quasi-public spaces, and are often noisy, chaotic places with entertainment and performances geared towards creating a lively atmosphere for the gathered crowds. Such Asian markets are quite popular and are an informal yet "critical part of the local economy" (Hou 111).

With its high Asian population, night markets have surfaced in West Coast North American cities in in the past few decades, often driven by desires to increase economic opportunities and/or to affirm or celebrate cultural identities. A first in North America, the Chinatown Night Market Fair in San Francisco appeared in response to the 1989 earthquake that disrupted local businesses. In Canada, Vancouver (which has the country's largest portion of Asian or Asian-descended residents [Douglas, par. 1]), currently boasts four night markets (Fleming and William-Ross, i), and the Vancouver suburb of Richmond is now billed as the largest night market in North America. In Toronto, the Asian supermarket chain T&T has hosted an annual weekend night market since 2009.

Hou points out that, in North America, public spaces and parks, ironically, are often not designed to facilitate large gatherings, so he sees night markets in such areas as a way to repurpose existing spaces as "a vehicle for community building and revitalization" (112). In contrast to Asian night markets, though, North American Asian-inspired night markets tend to work within the formal sector, organizing with local businesses and residents, and ensuring compliance with municipal by-laws and regulations.

In the early 2000's, Seattle's Chinatown-International District (or Chinatown-

ID) neighbourhood was dealing with a high crime rate, and local residents were looking for ways to increase safety and get more people out into public parks to deter crime and increase social bonds among neighbours. As well, neighbourhood organizations, including most prominently the Chinatown-International District Business Improvement Area (CIDBIA), began to push for changes that would lead to increased business and likewise shake the citywide perception that Chinatown-ID was not a safe place to visit or do business.

In the fall of 2005, two workshops involving youth and elders in the Chinatown-ID neighbourhood were organized by the Community Design Studio at the University of Washington in collaboration with the Wilderness Inner-City Leadership Development (WILD) youth leadership program, a project of a local non-profit that focuses on affordable housing and community development. The workshops' goals were to improve a neighbourhood public space to help combat both real and perceived safety concerns, as well as "to interpret the stories embedded in the immigrant communities of the district" (Landscape Architecture, par 2). Through facilitated discussions and activities, workshop participants chose the idea of a night market, based loosely on the Asian model, but with distinct differences that they thought would help get the most residents out. Hing Hay Park, central in the neighbourhood, was chosen through community consultation for the first night market, held in 2006. The audience for the pilot night market was the local community, and organizers specifically created "opportunities for residents to socialize" with each other (Hou 115). As such, the night market included more typical night market aspects (such as food vendors, performances and shopping),

but also included games and activities that were geared towards all ages (such as mahjong, fishing, ring toss, chess) in order to foster intergenerational and intercultural participation. The inaugural night market success led directly to the city giving a grant to have two night markets the following year (Hou 113).


Left: Facilitated workshops in 2005 at University of Washington (Landscape Architecture).
Right: People playing mahjong at the 2007 Night Market (*Commons.wikimedia.org*).

Numerous types of groups and organizations participated in the initial Seattle Night Market (e.g. municipal departments, local businesses, CIDBIA, police, University of Washington, residents' associations, etc.), which ensured that there were different but complementary event goals from the outset. Hou contends that these first several annual night markets were successful because they adequately addressed such varied goals, such as economic stimulation, public safety (real and perceived), community building, and recreation (115-116). To Hou, an additional success came from cross-cultural social interactions, as they provided opportunities to "transcend stereotypes" through providing "a more nuanced understanding of cultural diversity and complexity" and "cross-cultural learning" through infusing traditional Chinese cultural activities (including dance, martial arts, games, food)

rather than being focused solely as an ethnic celebration (118-9).

In 2012 (and since Hou's essay was published in 2010), the Night Market moved locations from Hing Hay Park to Union Square Plaza, a paved area in the heart of Chinatown ("Seattle Night Market to Move," par. 1). Visitors have increased tremendously: the first Night Market drew a few hundred people (mostly community residents) and the event now draws upwards of 25,000 people annually, consisting of city-wide residents and tourists alike (Kenyon, par. 4). As well, the CIDBIA is now the main organizer of the event, which has become less grassroots and more commercialized. Original and traditional activities, such as intergenerational games of mahjong, have been replaced by Asian-themed breakdancing and DJs, and local food vendors have been replaced by food trucks. The current marketing for the event bills it as a "massive street party," and the CIDBIA rep says the primary purpose is to get more people into the neighbourhood on a regular basis, and have them "think that it's a cool neighborhood to hang out in" (Kenyon, par.16). Such a trend of commercialization of night markets isn't uncommon among other North American markets. As reported by Christine Armario in the Seattle Times,

> Some U.S. markets are a distant echo of the cheap, raucous places that inspired them. Celebrity chef and food adventurist Anthony Bourdain is creating a huge New York City market he has said will be open late and have the feel of an Asian night market, but also have prepared food stalls by celebrated chefs like April Bloomfield. Others tilt higher end, charging $50 or more to enter and sample food and drinks from top local chefs. (par. 13)

On Yelp, the Seattle night market is rated 2.5 out of 5 stars (drawn from 206 reviews), with current threads of discontent touching upon the market's movement

away from its grassroots into a more commercialized affair and a lack of overall 'authenticity'. In rating the 2015 market, one Yelp reviewer, Sarah E., says:

> They should rename this to the ID food truck festival. Having been to real Night Markets, I was extremely disappointed to find a bunch of food trucks lined up and down the street. A real night market is a street fair, with delicious authentic asian food. What happened at this "night market" was sad, disappointing, and is another example of Seattle ruining good things. McDonald's was there. Effing McDonald's!! ("Night Market and Moon Festival")

It is unclear (and out of the scope of this paper) to determine if community members believe their goals are being met by the changed model. It is worthwhile to note, however, that since the early 2000s, the neighbourhood has seen many different revitalization efforts that together have led to increased economic activity, increased community perception of safety, and an overall reduction in crime (Boiko-Weyrauch, par. 5).

2016 Chinatown-ID Night Market (*Facebook.com/nightmarketseattle*).

Marra Farm – Seattle

Marra Farm is an urban farm located in the Duwamish River Valley in Seattle's South Park, a neighbourhood characterized by its high immigrant population, high crime rate and low household income (Mares and Peña 247). In addition, it is surrounded by commercial and industrial activity, and although restoration efforts in a nearby creek have been somewhat successful, the river valley remains marked by high levels of contaminants and pollutants (*ibid* 247).

In North America, growing food for both economic and cultural reasons in household yards has been around since the first settlers, and in an urban context is most prominent among immigrant communities. During the two World Wars, American and Canadian governments promoted urban agriculture as a form of patriotic duty in order to free up resources for the war effort. "Liberty" or "victory gardens" were marketed as a patriotic duty for all, especially to non-immigrant middle-class homeowners. Such gardens were tended on private property or in abandoned spaces, and in the United States in 1944, such gardens produced 44% of all fresh vegetables eaten in the country (Hynes, xii).

The modern context of urban agriculture is rooted in the civil rights and environmental movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s; going 'back to the land' through food production was a way to resist and subvert modern food system (Mares and Peña 242-243). In the current context, sustainable urban food practices are "a continuation of decades-long struggles by communities to control their own ecological and economic futures by creating sustainable and just neighborhoods" (*ibid* 251-252).

Modern community gardens often take place in contested spaces, such as abandoned lots, or on marginal lands, such as underneath hydro corridors. Issues of land ownership and regulations are often at the forefront of these areas, especially as urban land is valued only in terms of development and real estate interests rather than incorporating social or ecological benefits.

Unlike the majority of other urban farms or community gardens, the Marra Farm land has been used for agricultural purposes semi-continuously. An Italian migrant family owned and farmed the land until the early 1900s; it was purchased in the 1980s through the King County Open Space and Trails Bond Program[4] in order to keep it for public use and agricultural production, and the area is now owned by the City of Seattle (Hou, et al. 123). However, between the 1980s and late 1990s it "languished as a dumping ground" until local environmentalist John Beal began restoration work, clearing out an estimated 12.5 tons of garbage (Chansanchai, par. 16).

The 4-acre Marra Farm was established in 1997 (Hou, et al. 123), and is now part of the larger 8.7 acre Marra-Desimone Park. The layout was designed in a formal manner, with the City of Seattle engaging landscape architects and gathering input from local residents. Designs to improve and landscape the adjacent property were completed at the end of August 2016 (Seattle Parks and Recreation, par. 1). It is managed by the South Park Marra Farm Coalition, which is comprised of multiple

[4]The mission of the 1990, $41.8M (U.S.) King County Open Space and Trails Bond program was "to preserve open spaces and develop additional miles of multi-use trails. The Open Space program goal was to increase the useable undeveloped environment in the city by acquiring land through purchase, transfer, or donation to preserve as greenbelts, natural areas, recreation areas, and trails" (Seattle Municipal Archives, par.3).

organizations and individuals, including the City of Seattle, Solid Ground (a non-profit organization), and various farmers and gardeners. The Coalition's mission is "to build and expand Marra Farm's role in promoting community food security, providing a model for ecological urban agriculture, and fostering community involvement" (*Facebook.com/MarraFarmCoalition*).

The land itself is divided into plots and areas of various sizes; smaller ones for individual or household use, and larger tracts that are managed by the City of Seattle's "P-Patch" program and cultivated collectively. The P-Patch gardens rest on 0.13 acres, while Lettuce Link (a program of Solid Ground) and the Mien Community cultural garden each cultivate 0.75 acres, and the Seattle Youth Garden Works operates 1 acre (Hou, et al. 124).

Aerial photo of Marra Farm, April 2011 (Penna)

Food is grown for individual and household consumption, as well as distribution to a wider community network including school meal programs, senior citizen homes, and a local food bank. In addition to the garden plots, there is infrastructure that fosters an atmosphere of community and permanence, such as picnic tables, storage sheds, and interpretive signs (Hou, et al. 125). Students at the nearby elementary schools (of which 89% are eligible for lunch subsidies) are recipients of food grown by at-risk youth participating in the Seattle Youth Garden Works program, and themselves participate in growing and caring for small plots (Hou, et al. 134). Marra Farm staff and volunteers also welcome student groups from across the city to visit on field trips throughout the school year. Like South Park itself, Marra gardeners and farmers are ethnically diverse, and the space is a "second home" to many of the families who have plots there (Mares and Peña 249). The area is animated by Solid Ground through Lettuce Link programs and community events.

Although the area remains sandwiched between industrial and residential areas, Hamm Creek, located on site, has been day-lighted and restored through municipal and volunteer efforts, with environmental health and biodiversity, such as salmon, returning (Dizon, par. 11). Over the past two decades, Marra Farm, a "once-neglected open space … has been revitalized as a source of organic produce, education, and recreation" (Mares and Peña 136).

Immersive Experience – Toronto Public Space Committee

The primary research through participant observation and an immersive experience was conducted in 2005-2006 when the author was involved as a core member of the Toronto Public Space Committee (TPSC). Survey questionnaires and interviews of other core members were conducted February – April 2006 (Appendix A and B). Two key themes are explored in this section: definitions of public space, and diversity within TPSC and public space. The original intent was to benchmark the TPSC's philosophies against that of 'progressive public space' in order to provide the reader with an understanding of key attributes of progressive public space (i.e. inclusive, democratic, grassroots).

Overview and Description

The Toronto Public Space Committee was founded in 2000 by Dave Meslin, although his public space activism preceded the TPSC by almost a decade. In the mid-1990s, Meslin was immersed in anti-globalization and culture-jamming, influenced by anti-advertising discourses, such as Adbusters magazine. At that time, he organized anti-globalization "street theatre" events under the name "The Bank," and was involved with guerilla tactics such as paint-bombing billboards and installing guerilla bike lanes (*Personal Interview*). In 1998, he organized Canada's first "Reclaim the Streets" event, part of a U.K.-based, international anti-globalization movement that made use of creative play and a festival-like atmosphere to host "street parties," often coinciding with major international events, such as a G8 summit.


Left: Toronto's first Reclaim the Streets event, 1998. *Right*: Poster from Reclaim the Streets (1998 or 1999) (Smith).

Meslin created the TPSC in part because of these anti-corporate beliefs, but also in response to a proposed plan from advertising company Tribar Industries, which wanted to erect a video-billboard on the Bloor Street Viaduct, overlooking the Don Valley Parkway and part of Toronto's expansive public ravine system. Tribar's proposal was to "donate" $3.5M for a suicide barrier on the Viaduct in exchange for the City to override its own by-laws that prohibited this type of advertising (*Personal Interview*). Meslin formed the Committee, conducted research, made deputations at City Hall, started a petition, and engaged the media to drum up support. It was the first time Meslin says he took on an issue "politically", in that he was actively engaged in the formal democratic political process against a specific issue (*Personal Interview*).

For the first year or so, the TSPC consisted of just Meslin and a monthly e-newsletter. He created and launched a website in 2001, in response to the City of Toronto's proposed anti-postering by-law that sought to ban the ubiquitous posters from downtown utility poles (Keenan, "Space Cadets" 20). Through this second campaign, Meslin engaged dozens of volunteers to protest what he saw as an

erosion of both democracy and freedom of expression (*Personal Interview*). By 2003, the Committee now had enough interested volunteers to have a "Board of Directors" who since became known as Committee "Coordinators." A 2005 TPSC pamphlet printed states that the group is "dedicated to protecting our shared common spaces from commercial influence and privatization" (par. 1).

Journalist Edward Keenan states that by the early 2000s, the TPSC was established as "the loudest voice" in Toronto regarding all issues related to public space ("Space Cadets" 20). It was completely volunteer-run, and although core TPSC members were involved with making deputations at City Hall or leading various projects, Meslin remained the de-facto face and spokesperson of the organization. By the mid-2000s, TPSC had become a "major player in Toronto politics" (Keenan, "Making a Scene" 30).

The TPSC was structured around various "campaigns," which were focused on promoting or creating a desired version of public space or advocating against a specific threat. Through its campaigns, the TPSC strove to remain fun and playful, research issues and policies thoroughly, and be transparent and open to the public. By 2004, it had 20-30 core members, who led and organized any one of its 5-10 various campaigns, with another 40-50 volunteers engaged in individual campaigns. The Committee met monthly in publicly accessible venues (like City Hall or Metro Hall), with individual campaigns meeting wherever the Campaign Coordinator organized their own volunteers.

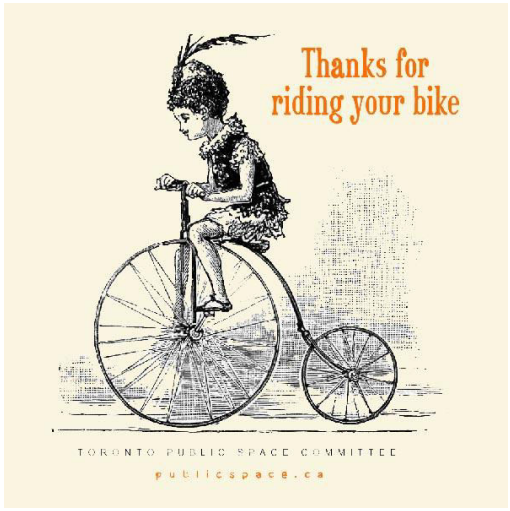
From 2001-2010, campaigns included playful activities and events such as Guerilla Gardening (planting flowers and plants to beautify areas seen as being

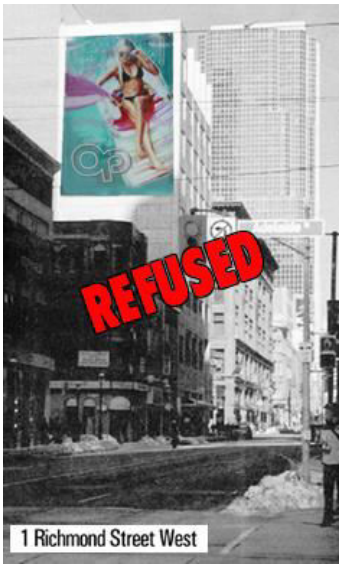
neglected), Human River (a parade to celebrate and explore the history of Toronto's buried rivers), and De-fence (a free chain-link fence removal on private property to encourage a more active street life). Other campaigns were oriented towards direct advocacy through political means: for example, members of the "Billboard Battalion" would police official requests submitted to the City for variances to municipal billboard laws, and make deputations against such proposed variances. Another example of this type of advocacy was the Street Furniture campaign, which worked to prevent the City from contracting out the creation and installation of street furniture (benches, bus shelters, and garbage cans) to advertising company Pattison. Such campaigns required enormous amounts of volunteer efforts, were solidly researched, and ran with little to no monetary resources.

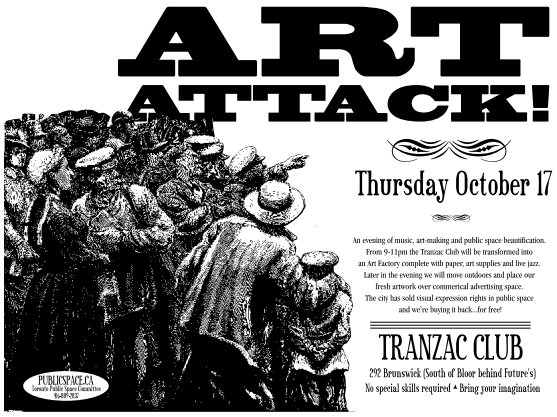
The TPSC engaged in advocacy projects in order to "affect municipal policy, help shape the debate and create a space for concerned citizens to get involved and participate" (Toronto Public Space Committee, "Coordinating Committee CD-ROM"). Through its more creative and playful events, the group sought to "lead by example by beautifying the city without a big budget, without sponsors and without logos" (Toronto Public Space Committee, "Coordinating Committee CD-ROM"). The group's success led it to be named as the "Best Activist Organization" by NOW magazine, where it was described as having been,

> [the leader of] discourse on city-building and … a champion of creativity at a time when our public spaces are under siege. From beating back concrete culture, huge video screens, monster garbage bins and the proliferation of advertising on our streets, to beautifying efforts that include guerrilla gardening, TPSC sees protecting public spaces as a fundamental pillar of a healthy democracy. (par. 26)

Through its actions and its messaging (on pamphlets, posters and the website), the TPSC took a "fun, casual approach" to its campaigns (Keenan, "Space Cadets" 21). As Toronto Life author Jason McBride further explains, the organization "made civic duty seem cool. Hipsters and homemakers alike [were] suddenly discussing such heady topics as free speech, healthy neighbourhoods and the nature of urban beauty" ("Space Cowboys" 23). Its volunteer base and newsletter subscriptions grew, and it had carved out a niche as the authority on all things public space in Toronto.







A sampling of various posters and images used by the TPSC, 2001-2005. *Clockwise from top left:* not affiliated with any specific campaign; image used to showcase success of Billboard Battalion; Human River parade poster; Art Attack party poster, where volunteers make art to cover over corporate ads in public spaces (Toronto Public Space Committee, "Coordinating Committee CD-ROM").

The group's monthly meetings were fairly organized, with a planned agenda circulated in advance, a Chair to facilitate, and minutes recorded and publicly available post-meeting. Introductions were done at the beginning of every meeting and acronyms were avoided (or explained) wherever possible in an effort to make newcomers feel welcome and prevent a cliquey atmosphere. The Committee and its individual campaigns kept records, conducted research, and presented reports. Discussion that required timely decision-making (for example, a request for an interview) often took place over email among the core members involved in the specific issue. The group had pro-bono legal and PR support, and trained its core members in dealing with the media. It created "how to" documents to help volunteers wade through bureaucratic paperwork (such as making deputations or filling out Freedom of Information Requests). TPSC members were fairly homogenous: most were young (20s-30s), University-educated, white, and downtown-living.

To make way for other creative endeavors – and partially because of burnout – Meslin decided to step away from the TPSC in 2005. "This [was] no small thing. For much of its history, Dave Meslin has been the Toronto Public Space Committee" (Keenan, "Space Cadets" 20). He planned and supported the transition of leadership to a more decentralized, 25-member "Coordinating Committee," each of whom was already a core member of the organization. The Committee set out to establish core values, and transition to a consensus-style approach without its founder and leader.

By 2010, the author noticed that most of the core members were either not as engaged with the organization, or had left it completely. From conversations and

personal experience, it was clear that this was partially due to burn-out, as TPSC was completely volunteer-driven and with almost no funds. As well, lack of consensus on key concepts (such as the definition public space) and future directions (for example, which campaigns to pursue) made it difficult to keep up momentum. By 2011, a few members regrouped to form a new organization, the "Toronto Public Space Initiative" which allowed them to continue the work of the TPSC on their own terms. TPSI campaigns were more focused around research and policy development, rather than playful activities. TPSI has not been particularly active over the last several years. Although the TPSC has had active social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter), it's only been in the past year that a new website has emerged. A new energy seems to be emerging within the TPSC, but it's unclear who is driving it. Current projects are in keeping with its original roots, with the website listing De-Fencing, Illegal Billboards, and Road Murals as current campaigns.

Participant Observation

The author joined TPSC in 2005, volunteering to conduct research that could be used to inform the group's campaigns and activities, as suggested by Dave Meslin. Initial research looked at a history of third-party advertising in Toronto, which fulfilled components of the Plan of Study through MES coursework. The author attended monthly meetings, but she felt like an outsider for at least the first six months; although TPSC strove to be inclusive at it monthly meetings, the core group seemed to be cliquish and exclusive. After a year, the author officially became the

Outreach Coordinator – not through a vote at meetings, but rather because it was suggested by Meslin. As Outreach Coordinator, the author was responsible for speaking on behalf of the organization at events and places at which Meslin or other core members were unable to do so. At the author's own initiative, responsibilities also included forming a volunteer research group, and encouraging undergraduate and graduate students to offer their research skills in exchange for school credit (if possible). When Meslin left the group in early 2006, the author became a member of the Coordinating Committee as the Research Coordinator, with responsibilities including conducting research and facilitating volunteers to research in support of various TPSC campaigns.

With Meslin's departure in 2006, the author, like some other Coordinators, began to feel more frustrated at the group's direction and processes. Previously, Meslin's leadership gave focus to the group's messaging and activities. As well, Meslin was very much the spark that drew people to the group in the first place. All TPSC members interviewed identified in some way that Meslin was one of the reasons why they got involved with the group (*Personal Interviews*). Alison Golbourd, for example, first heard Meslin speak at a TPSC fundraiser in 2004, finding him "charming and funny and ... so interesting" (*Personal Interview*). To Alison, "[Meslin] is an extraordinarily charming guy and I have to say that when I first met him I had a huge crush on him, which amazes me now, but the only thing that makes me feel better now is that *everyone* goes through it; like *everyone* goes through it" (*Personal Interview*). Meslin is indeed a personality to whom people are drawn, not just because he is well spoken and articulate, but because he genuinely

seems interested in individuals, always making time to engage in one-on-one conversations and agreeing to meetings or gatherings when asked.

Without Meslin's leadership, and with a new process focused on reaching consensus in decision-making processes, moving forward on key items was sometimes difficult and frustrating. For example, when the City introduced an anti-panhandling by-law in the downtown shopping district in 2007, the author was convinced that TPSC was best positioned to provide a voice against the proposed measures as it aligned (in her mind) seamlessly with a core Committee value of keeping public space public, especially in the face of new privatization that values consumerism over citizenship. Consensus to start a new campaign could not be reached because of one core member's dissent; he was strongly opposed to panhandlers, believing that they should instead work harder at finding jobs. In the end, consensus could only be reached to have the author make a deputation on behalf of TPSC at City Council against the proposed by-law, but no formal campaign to fight the proposed policy was launched. The author began to spend less time with the group, in part because of new employment, and in part because the energy, fun, and feeling of making a difference was waning.

Primary Research – Overview

In February 2006, questionnaire surveys were distributed following a monthly TPSC meeting and nine were collected (Appendix A). In addition to basic demographic information (name, age, occupation/gender), respondents were also asked how and why they got involved with the TSPC, and for how long. Key themes

respondents were asked about included how they perceive and define public space, as well as in regards to inclusivity in public space and within the TPSC. From February – April 2006, in-person, one-on-one interviews were conducted with five core members (Appendix B), four of whom also filled out questionnaire surveys. The same themes found in the survey questionnaires were explored more in-depth during the interviews.

Demographics

Survey questionnaire respondents were aged between 17 to 31 years of age, with 6 men and 3 women responding. With the exception of one 17-year-old high school student, the remaining respondents each had at least one University degree and were professionally employed in white-collar jobs (lawyer (2), journalist, architect (2), accountant, technology consultant) with an exception of one being employed as a nanny. Almost all had been involved with the TPSC for under a year, with one respondent being involved for 1.5 years.

Defining Public Space

Responses from TPSC members from the survey questionnaire to the question, "How do you define public space?" are varied, likely because the TPSC hadn't made a 'formal' definition as to how it defines public space. However, all but two of the nine respondents use ownership as a means of defining what is and isn't public space; to most of the respondents, public space is demarcated through how private space is owned and bounded. Ron Nurwisah says that "public spaces are the

spaces not owned by private citizens," which to him includes "parks, sidewalks, squares and more" (*Survey Questionnaires*). Likewise, Erin Wood says that public space is, "[a]ll of the spaces that fall outside of privately owned areas," and Alice Barton contends that "public space is everywhere that is not privately owned" (*Survey Questionnaire*). Andrew Chiu has a unique definition, but his definition is somewhat confusing[5]: "Where people gathered. Where there is an event happened, the public space took shape" (*Survey Questionnaire*). Joseph Clement is the only respondent who identified the difficulty of defining public space but, similarly, used private space in order to define public space. His definition also uses a blurry line to describe pseudo-public spaces:

> That's hard to say. We see private space and we understand it as part of our experience of space/place which is achieved while in public. I guess there are two catagories [*sic*] 1) private space percieved [*sic*] as public and 2) true publicly owned and lawfully occupied space. (*Survey Questionnaire*)

A number of the TPSC's campaigns focus on pseudo-public spaces that may be private but perceived as, or experienced from, public space. The Billboard Battalion focuses on third-party advertising signs erected on private property; De-fencing removes fences on private property; and Guerilla Gardening beautifies spaces which are seen as abandoned but are often on private property. Given the prevalence of campaigns that focus on creating and maintaining spaces regardless of property ownership, it is interesting to note that the majority of respondents (with the exception of Joseph) use strong boundaries between private and public in their

[5] The author surmises the definition is confusing due to a language barrier.

definitions of public space. It is as if there is a disconnection between the feelings or understandings of public space in the TPSC and how the members articulate this.

How to understand such a difference? One factor could be that the campaigns the TPSC is known for (and the campaigns that draw the most new members) are remnants of the earlier days of the TPSC, when the group was smaller and directed mostly by Meslin. The respondents had all joined the TPSC within the past one and a half years, and TPSC campaigns had already been established.

Another way to understand this could be a lack of critical reflection within the members of the group. Save for Andrew and Joseph (both of whom are architects, so have formal education in 'space'), respondents' answers are bounded by a mainstream ideology of ownership and regulation of spaces. Such answers don't challenge the status quo or norm, and only reinforce it. To further define how public space is not private space, Alice writes, "I'd say it's anywhere you can't get arrested for trespassing" (*Survey Questionnaire*). Perhaps a person couldn't get arrested for trespassing, but there are both formal and informal ways in which authorities do ensure that public space remains relegated for certain members of the public. For example, a homeless person could get charged for littering as a way to ensure that he 'moves on' from the public space that he is using. The respondents, on average, hold a fairly standard view of what public space is, even given their participation in a unique activist group.

The question, "what is public space?" was again asked in the personal interviews. The interview format allowed respondents to go into much greater detail:

Alison Gorbould

What public space means to Alison is more about what the concept of public space *does* to her, and how it makes her feel. She also feels that her definition – or even trying to come up with a definition – is somewhat impossible, as "it's such an idealistic thing" (*Personal Interview*). Following how public space has such an "effect on our psyche," Alison says, "the other thing that makes it important is that it's the space that in which we can be citizens and that we can react to each other, and interact with each other" (*Personal Interview*). She doesn't spend much time defining it as a specific, bounded area, made so by demarcations of private space or ownership: "It's, umm, I mean it's what's all around us. It's what we walk through as we go about our daily business" (*Personal Interview*).

BA[6]

At first, BA defines public space as others did – as space that is not private:

> Ummm, public space is everything that's not owned by private interests, be it a homeowner, be it a corporation. Yeah, anything that's not owned by a privately owned entity. So anything owned by the City of Toronto, I consider that public space (*Personal Interview*).

However, she continues right away by inserting the "visual landscape" in her definition: "Anything around you that I can see, to me is public space" (*Personal Interview*). She illustrates this concept by describing construction boarding and the wall on the Eaton Centre. These spaces, "though [they] might be owned by someone, I can see it…it's accessible to my eyes" and any billboards or advertisements on such

[6] BA chose not to be identified via her informed consent.

spaces "are in my public space" (*Personal Interview*). It is interesting to note that BA takes ownership over public space, by calling it "my" public space.

David J.[7]

David has a more conservative definition of public space. To him, public space has two requirements: that it is not private space, and that its intended function is for the use of the public. David thinks that "there's a distinction between city-owned [space designed] for a specific purpose [and] public space, like the sidewalks and the streets and things like that; […] parks are public space:"

> To some extent there are areas that are happening between public space and private space, things like Union Station, things like the TTC, which, while they are to be enjoyed by the public I don't think they should be treated as true public space because they're there to serve a specific function, they're there to move people quickly from point to point at a low cost, they're there to provide, you know, certain services and things like that. (*Personal Interview*)

Therefore, it is not merely enough for publicly owned infrastructure, such as the TTC or perhaps even City Hall, to be considered public space. To David, if a publicly-owned space has a primary purpose that is not for the public's "enjoyment," then it is not truly public space; public space is only to be used in a pleasing, aesthetic sense, via strolling the streets or sitting in the park. David identifies true public space only if it has no intention or purpose other than providing a certain amusement or recreation for its inhabitants.

[7] David J. requested to be identified via first name and the initial of his last name.

Ron Nurwisah

Like other respondents, Ron also has some difficulty in defining public space. His proliferation of pauses, sentence restarts, and abstract clauses (such as "it's the stuff that makes up communities") makes it difficult to easily decipher how he defines public space (*Personal Interview*). In essence, Ron says that he is beginning to see public space in a different manner than he did before, because of his involvement with the TPSC. Currently, public space to Ron "[is] like connective tissue; […] it's the stuff that binds" (*Personal Interview*).

Using a "cute adage" to illustrate how he defines public space, Ron says, "when somebody asks, 'How do you know it's pornography?' And the answer was, 'I know it when I see it,' I think it's the same with public space, for me… I know it when I see it. Ummmm. That being said [*laughs*], that can be challenged, so, you know" (*Personal Interview*).

Ron's inability to offer a concrete definition highlights not only his own shifting ideology, but also allows him to articulate that public space is not a clearly understood or bounded space. He leaves space for the unknown.

Dave Meslin

When I asked Meslin to define public space, he says he usually gives a different answer every time, because "it depends how idealistic you want to get" (*Personal Interview*). His definition of public space stands apart from the other interviewees as being the most progressive and/or non-mainstream. Meslin's ideal is that,

> Everything should be public space. […] I really believe in a collectively run society. I don't believe in this whole free-market competition thing,

> I just think it's so silly. We're raised with all these children's books promoting sharing and working together and we watch all these movies that teach us that greed is bad and people who are greedy don't win in the end, and we keep buying into this system that rewards greed. […] I think everything should be public, not just elementary schools and partially health care. Let's just make everyone public. (*Personal Interview*)

A common conception among TPSC members is that public space is at risk and is shrinking. As well, members often see the threat of consumer capitalism as a new threat, whereas philosophers and academics have been linking the two for more than a century. In sum, most of the TPSC members struggle to define public space, and understand it as being in relation to private space. Some members adopt language used by Meslin to promote the understanding that something on private space can affect public space. Meslin, however, retains the most radical view of what public space is.

Diversity in Public Space

In an article entitled, "Spaces of Difference: Reflections from Toronto on Multiculturalism, Bourgeois Urbanism and the Possibility of Radical Urban Politics," authors Kanishka Goonewardena and Stefan Kipfer (2005) briefly discuss the history of multiculturalism in Canada in order to demonstrate how an understanding of *difference* shapes not only one's behaviour, but political policies as well. Canadians' current conceptions of multiculturalism stem from national discussions of 'visible minorities' in the 1970s and the 1988 Multiculturalism Act (Goonewardena and Kipfer 671). The seemingly liberal understandings of diversity and multiculturalism were born around the same time that Canada began a

conversation regarding 'political correctness' – when the media, academics, and government(s) began listing things to do (or not do) in order to achieve equality. In order for the mainstream to understand how to navigate this new field of difference and diversity, easy-to-follow prescriptions were given: diversity is good; therefore, more diversity should be added (*ibid* 671-672).

Drawing on Nancy Fraser's work (1997), Goonewardena and Kipfer discuss three types of difference: difference that should be abolished (such as class), difference that should be made universal (such as sustainable living), and difference that should be enjoyed (cultural traits, such as music or food). Using these three categories, the authors demonstrate how a Canadian understanding of multiculturalism has shaped the mainstream conception of diversity, which reduces the larger and more complex discussions of equality and social justice into an easy-to-follow, easy-to-package formula, that focuses on the differences that are to be enjoyed.

Simplified and readily identified (i.e. visible) signifiers easily displace the struggles *against* social injustice into the struggle *for* culture; likewise, a prescription to promote equality is to add more diversity. In this context, it is assumed that equality can be achieved by both seeing and consuming difference.

During the Coordinating Committee's first few meetings without Meslin as leader in early 2006, diversity was discussed fairly frequently, usually in the context of shared musings that the TPSC lacked it. During such discussions, there were several basic assumptions at work that weren't overtly identified. For instance, diversity itself was not defined, but it seemed to be assumed that it meant a *visible*

difference (i.e. non-white, non-young). A second assumption was that adding more (visible) diversity would make the group 'better,' perhaps because the group would become more legitimate. A final assumption was that because the group's philosophy and goals were for the betterment of the city, they were therefore good for everyone. The idea of going out into the suburbs to start up new chapters of the TPSC was floated around with enthusiasm – as long as somebody else would do the legwork. It was acknowledged that it would be 'good' for the TPSC to be active outside of the downtown core, based on the assumptions that both the organization's goals and diversity were good.

In the times that the TPSC held discussions on diversity, the conversation would inherently end with an acknowledgment of whiteness and privilege within the group, and a desire for more diversity – but never in the context of larger socio-economic political relations, or an investigation into *what* diversity is, and *why* it is good.

TPSC members who were interviewed held similar beliefs as to the inherent goodness of diversity. Even when prodded, usually respondents couldn't articulate why, exactly, diversity is good, therefore providing a snapshot into the inability for this mainstream ideology to do more than reduce difference to the visible and commodifiable. It is interesting to note that although respondents weren't prompted using the word "diversity," and were instead asked about inclusivity, almost all used the word in their responses, which is how diversity emerges as a theme worth exploring in this research.

David J.

In interviewing David, it was evident that 'diversity' is synonymous with the visible and tangible representations of the Other. One of David's main points, when asked "what are the benefits of public space?" was that the presence of the Other was necessary to get a fuller world view:

> Well, I guess part of the advantage is that it's a way you can get people from different groups, from different parts of the [*pause*], whether it's different demographics, different age groups, ethnicities, you know, socio-economic categories and whatnot, it's where you can actually get people together of one space. (*Personal Interview*)

David is convinced that being around those different from him is a good thing, but he struggles with the 'why' of it. It takes prodding to have him uncover why this is so:

> L: Okay, but why is it important to interact with people of different socio-economic backgrounds?
>
> D: I don't think we get a lot of opportunities outside of this space. I mean […] I go to my work, I take the subway to work, into the building, maybe walking around at lunch, coming back, and unless time sitting at a public park or something, I'm not really exposed to different parts of the community. I mean I work at a place that's very, I mean even though they market themselves as, and serve a broad group of customers, it's a very homogenous group of people providing this service.[8] […] Or even if you're not talking with someone, just interacting with people, and seeing how people interact in general, if you're sitting at a park or in public space, and there's people from different ethnic communities, just seeing how they interact with people, where there are, you know, these very different people from very different backgrounds around you, you know, you just might not get that in your regular mindset, whether it's on the subway or the commuters, you kinda just lose touch with that. (*Personal Interview*)

[8] David lists his profession as "Technology Consultant & Entrepreneur;" he has two undergraduate degrees in each of Business and Political Science, and an MBA (*Survey Questionnaire*).

David recognizes that he lives within a homogenous group: he's white and educated; the people he socializes and works with are white and educated. What's more is that he recognizes that there is something *wrong* with not encountering "people from different ethnic communities," but still hasn't identified why. After I ask him once more, he again demonstrates his inability to articulate exactly why being around other people is good:

> L: Ok, I'm just going to go back again […]. I want to go back to the *why*. *Why* is it important to you to be able to be in a non-homogenous group?
>
> D: Well, I think because this isn't a non-homogenous group in Toronto, especially when you look at a lot of these, ummm, and you have to be aware that … because if you live a very specific… if you went to work and you dealt with the same people all the time and you came home and you dealt with the same people, whether it's your family and friends and whatnot all the time, and you weren't exposed to other perspectives, whether it's other cultures or other things like that, you wouldn't necessarily be aware that there are other people out there (*Personal Interview*).

His solution is the tangible act of visibility: seeing visible minorities is equivalent to *knowing* what's going on in a community. The act of seeing somehow allows the viewer to feel connected to the community. Seeing becomes an act of bearing witness to a socio-economic divide, without all of the messiness of experience. Commodification through visibility becomes the same as understanding socio-economic problems, and the problems of the Other.

However, David does say that it is important to get "exposed to other perspectives," but only so that we can "be aware that there are other people out there." David doesn't necessarily want to be challenged in his own worldview is – merely to reinforce that other perspectives exist.

Dave Meslin

From all the interviews, Meslin alone addresses the issue of racial diversity and inequality head-on in bringing together the philosophy of the TPSC and the homogeneity of the group, even without being prompted by questions naming diversity. He identifies a desire to deal with more "pressing" issues than public space:

> But one of the reasons why I'm moving away from the [Toronto] Public Space Committee is because I want to broaden the range of issues I can address. And those issues are kind of….they're…I don't know. Not the most pressing issues for those who are the most oppressed. Know what I mean? […] So I'm trying to work on that, I'm trying to work on issues that aren't downtown white groups. (*Personal Interview*)

Ron Nurwisah

Although Ron doesn't use the word 'diversity' during the interview, his language is peppered with the same concepts inherent in established norms of multiculturalism and diversity in Canada. When asked whether or not the TPSC is inclusive, he answers,

> Yes. I would say that it is. Umm… you know… we don't, we don't say that if you're old we don't want you here cause you're, y'know, poor, we don't want you here, because you're not a student, we don't want you here ummm, and I think that's a great thing and the fact that we try to keep the meetings open, I mean *really* open, a little *too* open sometimes [*laughs*] … if that's not inclusive, I don't know what is. It's like, we pretty much hang that sign out on the door saying anyone welcome, please come in, I mean, how much more inclusive do you want to be, you know? (*Personal Interview*)

As Ron illustrates, the TPSC is open to anyone and everyone, so he therefore sees the group as being inclusive. The meetings are advertised online and the public is

invited to attend. Of course, this negates hidden boundaries, especially the culture at work in the TPSC.

In following his initial answer, Ron quickly follows his assertion of the TPSC's inclusiveness by listing members who are visually different to him:

> I think, you know, the fact that we have people of colour in [the Toronto] Public Space Committee and I think that's a sign right there, I think there's a real difference in ages, and it would be interesting to get more, more of the elderly involved, but I think they are, I think they're kinda indirectly involved, that would be useful, and, umm, I…don't think we have anyone with a disability … who's disabled in the group but ummm that's not saying that we wouldn't be open to that …you know, so I think that the group as a whole is fairly inclusive. (*Personal Interview*)

The fact that Ron highlights a "real difference in ages" being as being (at the time of the interview) ages 18-30 shows a mindset different than someone who may actually come from a different socio-economic background, or be of a different age. Certainly, the lifestyle and activities of the 18-30 group of the TPSC would lend almost any demographer to categorize the group as belonging to the same generation, and if not the same peer-group. Ron next lists the people of colour in the group (of which there were, at the time of this interview, there were 3 out of 45 or so members).

BA

BA agrees with Ron in that the way the TPSC operates is "very open and inclusive," and, like Ron, also "that it strives to" be diverse. "But," she continues,

> when you look at the membership, it's kind of homogenous. I mean, I assume that everyone comes […] from similar walks of life, university educated or college educated, we all have jobs or are students, we come from an artistic background, and yeah you don't see many people that

> are from different walks of life than that. And maybe that's just my perception, but that's how I see it a little bit. (*Personal Interview*)

Without prompting, she continues to say why she thinks a more diverse TPSC would be good: "I think it's a problem in the way that we're missing out on something that could help us shape our message, that could help us shed light on different ideas, but I don't know how to do it" (*Personal Interview*). BA is honest that she doesn't know *how* to become more diverse. However, she feels that diversity could help the group become *aware* of different issues – that true diversity means a different message, or even different issues altogether, and isn't simply relegated to visual difference. She mentions that it would be good for the Coordinating Committee to follow through on talk of attending diversity workshops "'cause I don't think it's something even I totally understand myself" (*Personal Interview*).

Alison Gorbould

During the interview, Alison spends some time talking about TPSC's weaknesses: it's lack of formal structure and the inexperience of the members. However, she is able to uncover differences within the group that might not initially be apparent:

> I mean, I think about Scott[9]. Scott would never join a socialist group. I mean, he's not a socialist! [*laughs*] That's one of the things that's so exciting is that even though it's mostly young, and still mostly white, there's a real range of people, I mean Scott is an insurance broker or something, and he's a Catholic and he wears a suit every day, and April's a kindergarten teacher, and Jack's an arborist, and we have all of these different strengths that are really unexpected. It's kind of exciting. (*Personal Interview*)

[9] All names referred to by Alison have been changed, as these individuals did not have the option to consent to having their identities, or connection to the group, revealed.

In contrast to other interviewees, Alison discusses differences that are not merely visible in nature. Hidden within a joke, she makes an observation about the difficulties of working with a difference of opinions or worldviews: "And honestly, it's easier to work with a group that's not that diverse because we all agree on stuff (*laughs*)…" (*Personal Interview*). The TPSC finds it difficult enough post-Meslin to come to consensus on a whole range of issues, even with its homogeneity; Alison has no desire to add to this difficulty by become more diverse.

One reason that institutional racism remains unchallenged in mainstream discourses may be because most people don't reflect on why diversity is good, or even what diversity means. In public discourse, diversity seems relegated to tokenism, the presence of a 'visible minority,' even if such a person belongs to the same socio-economic class and peer group. The TPSC is a good example of such thought. This isn't to say that the TPSC is inherently racist, or that its members are unique in the spectrum of other such groups. Rather, the TPSC is 'normal' in the sense that, like boardroom CEOs or political party campaigns, it asks itself questions of diversity and representation without truly understanding what such issues mean. And it is this lack of understanding that allows the cycle of white activism and white issues to be reproduced in everyday life, including within the government, the media, schools, etc.

Chapter 4 – Discussion/Analysis

In this section, the case studies and immersive experience will be analyzed individually and in relation to one another according to the major themes: power, gentrification and spatial marginalization, the body, community, and other ways of knowing.

Power

The case studies presented in this research are examples of how individuals and organizations create new space or use/repurpose existing space in new ways that challenge established power structures. Each also demonstrates various degrees of success in changing such established or formal power structures.

As the dominant economic power structures, neoliberalism and consumer capitalism affect the creation and organization of public spaces as well as people's behaviours therein in many ways, both formally and informally. For example, formal by-laws organize and govern uses of public space (such as regulating what behaviour is and isn't allowed) and may be reinforced by mores. Because consumer capitalism works to homogenize and standardize behaviours, individuals who resist such standardization of behaviour and norms in public space challenge the dominant economic structures through creating new spaces that encourage new behaviours and norms, or at least challenge other individuals to think of different ways of using existing public space.

Both Rebar and the Toronto Public Space Committee purposefully resist consumer capitalism through creative campaigns that challenge ownership of public or pseudo-public spaces while operating within (or just on the edge of) existing laws. Through its Park(ing) project, Rebar worked within the existing San Francisco by-laws and discovered somewhat of a loophole: the by-laws gave a time limit for parking (2 hours) but had no description of acceptable uses (i.e. to park a car). Through creative means, it invited onlookers to become curious through disrupting existing norms, thereby encouraging onlookers to envision a cityscape that prioritized people over cars. Through its Guerilla Gardening campaign, TPSC blurs borders between public and private space, challenging assumptions of what such spaces should be used for and inviting the public to take ownership over perceived neglected spaces.

A primary way through which consumer capitalism and neoliberalism create or modify public space is through privatization, which "reinforces uneven relations of power and privilege" (Katz 118). According to a 2005 TPSC pamphlet, campaigns focus on "protecting our shared common spaces from commercial influence and privatization," most especially through anti-advertising efforts (par. 1). Meslin uses the term 'visual pollution' to describe how advertising from large corporations influences the public domain, even if it is located on private space (e.g. the side of a building). To him, the "biggest obstacle" to successfully advocating against third-party advertising "is that people are just used to it … I think it's hard for people to imagine a street or transit without billboards, without ads" (qtd. in Reinhart, par. 27). This sentiment works within a Gramscian understanding of cultural hegemony

and Foucaultian understanding of power/knowledge, in that power is at all times everywhere, and reinforced from all groups/classes, not just the dominant ones (Gutting 50). To Gramsci, resisting existing economic power structures through changing the culture is just as important as changing the ownership of the means of production, and the best way forward is for the proletariat to create, live, and transfer their own culture (Ducombe, par. 4). In this way, we can see the actions of TPSC and Rebar in a greater context of cultural creation that challenges dominant economic power structures. Likewise, the TPSC motto of seeing public space in Toronto as 'my living room' also challenges assumptions of private/public property demarcations reinforced by consumer capitalism.

It should be noted that neither group wants to change or overthrow the dominant economic structures; both instead seek to inscribe their own tastes and preferred uses onto public spaces. Such alternative uses may run counter to neoliberal tendencies towards privatization of public space, but they can be absorbed into existing municipal power structures and end up echoing a mainstream sentiment. Members of each group feel they have a right – even a duty – to inscribe their own versions of public space onto the landscape, without, for example, consulting residents who live or work most closely to the specific public space and who may be the most affected by public space changes. Questions of spatial marginalization will be explored further in this paper.

Community gardens and urban agriculture, such as Marra Farm, challenge neoliberalism through providing new ways to use urban land outside of the established, centralized and institutionalized modes of production and consumption

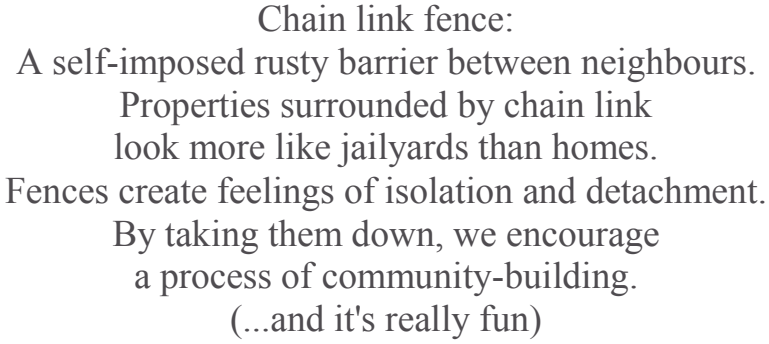
of food. In a neoliberal society, land (especially urban land) is valued by its exchange value in the real estate market and is zoned according to use (industrial, residential, or commercial). Through using land in a way that is outside the boundaries of measureable consumer value, the garden plots at Marra Farms challenge dominant power structures. In addition, through creating food for people within the community to eat, gardeners are also resisting the commercialization of modern food processes, which disconnect people from food production and centralize food production and distribution outside of urban centres.

Likewise, Latinos in Los Angeles are using their homes and yards for food production, thereby creating ways outside of existing power structures to sell and distribute their food, which also challenges existing laws and norms. Gramsci sees gardening as a way to combat cultural hegemony in that it is infused by aspects of a proletariat culture, and represents so much more than merely plants (Jones 32).

The Seattle Night Market began as a way for Asian minorities in a Seattle neighbourhood to create space for culture and provide opportunities to change a public park from an underused and dangerous place to an animated community hub. However, the Asian markets on which the Seattle Night Market is modeled operate outside of established by-laws, whereas the Seattle Night Market has always operated within formal processes and by-laws.

Although each case study provides an example of how individuals and groups create new space or repurpose existing space in new ways that challenge neoliberalism and consumer capitalism, it is unclear whether such spaces will be co-opted or reabsorbed by dominant power structures because of their popularity or

success. For example, the City of Seattle is working to transform the greater area around Marra Farm into a public park, and has over time placed tighter controls and restrictions over gardeners' activities, sometimes causing tension (Hou, et al. 250). Likewise, the local BIA has moved Night Market away from the initial park setting, and the event is now marked as a "massive street party" (Kenyon, par. 1), becoming less a means for residents to create safe community space and more about bringing consumers into the BIA district and offering standardized/commercialized food and music. In the case of Rebar and TPSC, the groups' messages often manifest through the language of aesthetics rather than economic power structures.



Screenshot from the 2016 TPSC website describing the De-Fence project, with language emphasizing the aesthetics of houses with chain-link fences (*Publicspace.ca*).

Gentrification and Spatial Marginalization

The case studies show how marginalized communities are reclaiming, repurposing, and re-creating public spaces, but also demonstrate how such new uses may open up the possibility being co-opted by the dominant class and being used as a means of gentrification and other forms of spatial marginalization.

As explored in Chapter 2, gentrification generally entails the influx of new capital into urban working-class or poor neighbourhoods, eventually leading to a displacement of the existing residents as the neighbourhood changes to suit the new middle-income tastes. In *Belonging: A Culture of Place*, bell hooks offers a more personal account of what gentrification looks like from her perspective as a black woman:

> Living in major cities and watching gentrification in real estate, any observer could witness a process wherein groups of more liberal whites would purchase housing in neighborhoods that were people primarily or solely by people of color/black people. The "cool" white folks would declare their movement into these neighborhoods was a gesture of solidarity, of openness to diversity. Yet more often than not their presence usually raised prices and increased real estate taxes. Often they were coming from the privileged class. Rather than adding to diversity their presence usually pushed out the under privileged colored folks. (75)

Gentrification often comes on the heels of resident working-class, marginalized communities successfully shaping the public space in their neighbourhoods to suit their desires and needs. New businesses catering to changing demographics often use coded language that further marginalizes residents, for example in describing the neighbourhood as "authentic" or "edgy" (McClean 158). As well, gentrifiers have a tendency to inscribe their own values on such spaces, at times adopting a "frontier" attitude that negates or erases spatial practices of current (and marginalized) residents, describing the areas as empty or undiscovered (McClean 158).

The Los Angeles Latinos presented in the second case study provide an example of a marginalized community creating new, alternative public spaces to meet social, economic and cultural needs. Some of their efforts (e.g. increased use of

bicycles as transportation, colourful murals, or using public space as gathering places) have found legitimacy through being adopted by Mayor Garcetti's official municipal plans. However, marginalized communities are usually located in areas with fewer amenities (i.e. places that lack public transit, public parks), and as new amenities become formally recognized and inscribed onto public spaces, such communities are at risk of displacement. Communities where Latinos have inscribed new, more socio-economically and culturally relevant uses in public space are now being affected by gentrification as such uses are now legitimized and recognized as desirable. As Hawthorne (2016) explains, in the L.A. neighbourhood of Highland Park, "immigrants are already feeling financial pressure to leave neighborhoods that are being actively remade in their image — or marketed precisely for the appeal that Latino Urbanism has lent their sidewalks and streets" (par. 34). The Latino culture that was responsible for challenging established norms and uses of public spaces is now at risk of being romanticized and commmodified to suit middle-class financial resources and consumption desires.

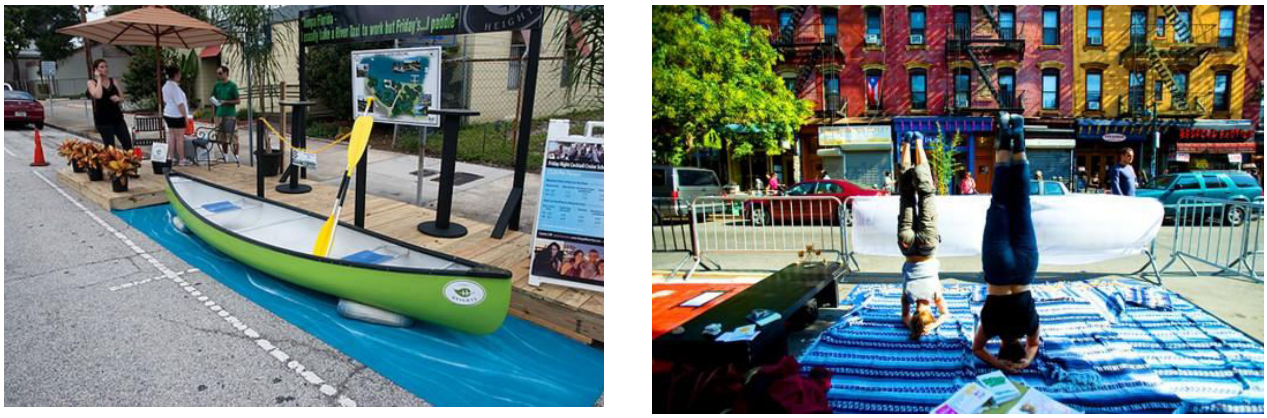
In the case of Seattle Night Market, the event has changed remarkably over the past several years. What began as a community-driven cultural initiative, aimed at residents to reinforce social bonds and create safer space in an existing neighbourhood park, has increasingly become a consumer-driven affair that caters to individuals outside of the neighbourhood. As the event organizer, the BIA's mandate is to bring more consumers to the area and promote the area as a shopping destination. The original food stalls, with food created by local community members, have been replaced by food trucks that are more mainstream, including, for example,

McDonald's. What is not clear, however, is whether this change is welcomed by community members themselves. The Night Market has been part of a multiplicity of changes over the past decade to reduce crime and bring more 'eyes on the street.' If local residents are pleased with a reduction in crime (Boiko-Weyrauch, par. 18), then how much does it matter if a visitor to the event is displeased when she can't find her authentic cultural cuisine? Alternately, if local community members cannot access or afford to live in a gentrified neighbourhood, then their marginalization will continue as they are pushed out of the newly changed neighbourhood to one with (again) less amenities and (likely) higher crime.

At a glance, the Marra Farm case study is a success story of how marginalized communities can work within dominant and formal structures (e.g. the City of Seattle) to create new spaces. The City was among the first in the U.S. to legitimize community gardens and urban agriculture by bringing them into the official city plan. Staff members are creating a municipal park directly beside Marra Farm, bringing new amenities to the area both for the residents and for visitors. The City's leadership on initiatives like this helped to make it recognized as "the most sustainable city" in the U.S. in 2014 by STAR communities (Somerfield, par. 1), "a nonprofit organization that works to evaluate, improve and certify sustainable communities" (STAR communities, par. 1). However, the area where Marra Farm is located – the Duwamish River Valley – remains extremely contaminated from nearby industrial lands, even with restoration efforts undertaken on Hamm Creek. The residents there "are subject to a high degree of environmental health threats and are likely to live sicker and die younger than residents of other Seattle

neighborhoods" (Conklin, par. 3). It could be argued that the City is more interested in creating a space that suits non-residents' desires for parkland while ignoring residents' concerns about the health of the land, especially as community gardens are increasingly adopted as an accepted use of public space by the middle-class.

In the case of Rebar, organizers met and operated out of the Mission District, a prime example of gentrification in San Francisco known as being artist-friendly but also for displacing existing Latino populations (Pogash, par. 2). The group is cognizant of the 'risk' involved with any successful project, in that it can lose its effect if it is taken up into the mainstream, merely to become a spectacle or festival that moves into the domain of capitalist society. The paradox in this is that their activities comprise a very narrow understanding as to what public spaces *should* be, especially as their membership appears to be comprised of non-marginalized individuals. The Park[ing] Day website provides information on how individuals in cities across the world can host their own Park[ing] Day event while keeping "true" to the mission (e.g. no advertising sponsorship, but can involve local businesses). International Park[ing] Day projects are often led by businesses, and further inscribe the middle-class tastes and consumption desires on public space.



Images of Park[ing] Day in Seattle demonstrating specific tastes: *left*: a canoe; *right*: yoga (*RebarGroup.org*).

Furthermore, it could be argued that the anti-car culture Rebar espouses is because group members are afforded transportation choices that other (marginalized) residents may not afford.

Deborah Cowan (2006) uses the term "hipster urbanism" to describe the process by which hipsters modify the urban landscape through inscribing their own values onto public spaces. She describes the process as hipsters' "struggle for good design against evil, for public spaces for the well dressed though slightly scruffy" and "for livable streets and people-friendly places" (22). The paradox, Cowan contends, is that these individuals are searching for something authentic and individual, but are actually driving gentrification (22-23). Both Rebar's and TPSC's projects fit Cowan's definition of hipster urbanism in that they "are actively working to institutionalize themselves in the city" through "allies in government and business," as well as consisting of "young white professionals" seeking to ""reclaim" the downtown in denial of their own occupation" (22).

There are some interviewees who are more interested in issues of marginalization and equality. For example, Meslin fundamentally believes that the proposed City's anti-postering by-law was anti-democratic, and would have an equal effect on a "resident of Jane-Finch" as a downtown hipster. However, he does pause to challenge this deeply-held belief when he says, "maybe I'm being undemocratic by trying to impose my view of what a healthy city would be" (*Personal Interview*).

In 2007, after Meslin had left the TPSC, the municipal government was considering a proposal to make panhandling illegal in the downtown core, contending that shoppers didn't feel safe and that panhandling was disrupting

businesses in the area. A deputation was made on behalf of the TPSC by the author, arguing that "the city's sidewalks and public spaces are open to all … not just those of use who have the luxury of being a consumer" (qtd. in Moloney and Vincent, sidebar). As previously discussed in this paper, not all TPSC members were supportive of this stance.

The case studies show how new uses of public spaces, especially by marginalized communities, can be taken up by formal structures that, at first glance, can seem like a 'win.' Unless actively resisted, when new uses of public space are brought into a more mainstream consciousness or more formal structure (e.g. policies, laws), there is often a corresponding effect of spatial marginalization and gentrification.

The Body

As discussed in Chapter 2, the body is a site through and on which issues of power and dominance can be used to control individuals, and 'illegitimate' bodies can be marginalized and excluded from the use and design of public space. At the same time, however, bodies provide a tangible, and even intimate, connection between individuals and their surroundings. As well, public space may offer an opportunity for individuals to be less constrained by societal mores and take ownership to create their own public space (Stevens 46).

The case studies presented in this research provide examples of individuals using their bodies to reclaim or repurpose public space, changing the use, design and perception of public space.

Various TPSC campaigns challenge established norms of how bodies (and which bodies) should exist in public space. Much of the TPSC's focus has been against third-party advertising in public spaces, officially because of the Committee's anti-privatization of public spaces and anti-consumerism stance. On a personal level, Alison Gorbould, who led the Billboard Battalion campaign, is cognizant of how mass media marketing carries dominant messages related to legitimate/illegitimate bodies. Part of her visceral reaction to a proliferation of public space advertising is that many ads shame bodies that are outside of an accepted societal ideal, which has implications on her (and other women's) behaviour. She contends that if third party advertising weren't so ubiquitous, carrying the same images of ideal beauty (thin/white/young/docile), "I wouldn't have the body image issues I have" (*Personal Interview*). Her work with the TPSC is a very real way that she is able to fight back against consumer capitalism messages that shame her, giving her agency to create a public space that, even in a very small way, provides more space for 'illegitimate' bodies, as she perceives her own to be.

Through making a deputation against the City's proposed anti-panhandling by-laws in 2007, the TPSC fought against a proposal that would further restrict illegitimate bodies in public space. The focus of the deputation was to maintain that all bodies have a right to public space if it is indeed to be truly public. As the member of the deputation, the author asserted, "one of [TPSC's] most important tenets … is that everyone has an equal right to public space, regardless of socio-economic class or background. … Moving forwards with [this by-law] is simply a way to try to legislate who does and does not have the right to access public space"

(*Personal Notes*). Robyn Longhurst (2001) contends that homeless and panhandlers' bodies are marginalized in part because they are seen as loose, messy, or out of control. Councillor Michael Thompson, who was the most vocal proponent of the by-law, echoed this sentiment when he said that the panhandlers "[are] essentially out of control" (Trevisan, par. 3).

To further give space to illegitimate bodies, Dave Meslin asserts that there are times when public space should be privatized, if this act supports marginalized communities and those who do not have access to their own private space: "For example, if … a homeless person is sleeping on a bench, I would see that as their private space, that's their house, and I would give them all rights to that bench that someone who owns a house would have" (*Personal Interview*).

Some of the more playful and creative campaigns also invite TPSC volunteers to use their body as an instrument in the creation/reclamation of public space. The De-fencing campaign is what first brought David J. into the group: "I liked the idea of it being a very tangible thing" (*Personal Interview*). Likewise, Guerilla Gardening transforms public space in a physical way, using hands to dig and plant in soil. The fact that these campaigns take place in broad daylight – and not under the cover of night – shows how TPSC volunteers feel empowered to act as agents of creating their own public space. To Meslin, "guerilla tactics [are] a way of just taking space, and making space in a society that doesn't want to you to have that space" (*Personal Interview*), echoing a Foucaultian notion of dominant power structures working to create 'docile bodies.'

Images from TPSC's De-fencing campaign. *Above:* chain-link fence before removal. *Below:* TPSC volunteers after removing a fence as part of a TPSC Defencing project (*Publicspace.ca*).

In speaking of her childhood growing up in Appalachian Kentucky and her family farming the land, bell hooks (2009) sees farming and gardening not only as an important way to connect through her body to nature, but also as a "place where one could escape the world of man made constructions of race and identity" (7). Gardening provides a tangible, bodily connection to the natural environment and to food. At Marra Farm, gardeners often speak to the importance of the physical connection to the land and to creating their own food. According to a 2008 video posted by Solid Ground on *Youtube*, two youth gardeners use corporeal ways to vocalize why they like gardening on the Farm: one says, "I love gardening 'cause the feel of dirt through my fingers is just glorious. What's grown in my garden tastes so good because I know my hands helped it." Another child says, "when plants grow I

feel my heart expand." Marra Farm, and other community farms and gardens, provide ways for individuals to step outside a dominant ethos that favours the mind over the body.

Similar to TPSC campaigns, an important aspect of some Rebar projects is that bodies are the means through which space is physically reclaimed. As well, it is as important for bystanders or onlookers to witness the act of bodies reclaiming this space as this becomes a way for Rebar to further challenge perceptions of what a public space should or could be used for. Rebar's Park[ing] project would not have had the same effect if the space were modified and nobody used it; the true transformative act occurs only when bodies enter and use the new space. In this way, this Rebar campaign could be seen as an example of Lefebvre's (1991) assertion that any true resistance that challenges a spatial configuration can't be successful without bodies the concurrent appropriation of bodies as well (166-167).

However, Rebar's SOAK project provides idealized versions of bodies. Campaign materials and literature show happy, young, fit white bodies; the promotional video likewise shows the same ("SOAK: an Ecological Urban Bathhouse"). The message SOAK sends is that this urban spa is really only for certain bodies – those that fit a standard and social norm conducive with the group's own members as well as societal standards of what bodies are desired.

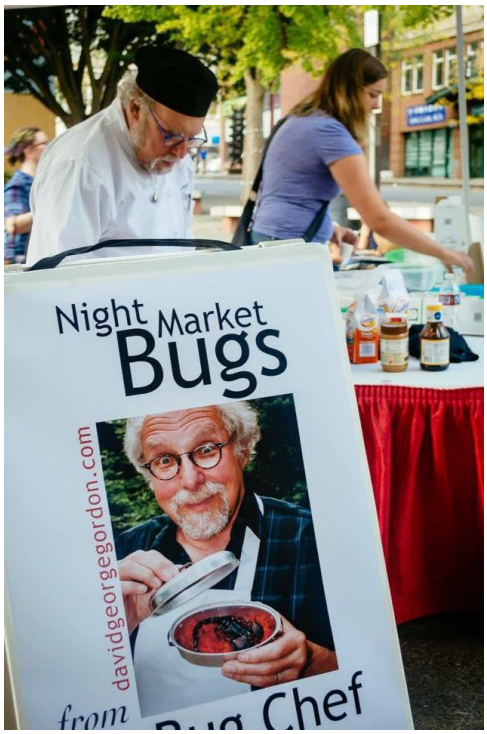
Idealized bodies in the 2013 SOAK campaign (Rebar, "SOAK: an Ecological Urban Bathhouse").

Similar to Rebar's Park[ing] project, in the case of Latino Urbanism in Los Angeles, Rojas (2013) contends that Latinos "use their bodies to reinvent the street" (par. 2). Because Latino culture prioritizes social interactions, the very act of putting a body in a space itself challenges established norms redefines the space. For example, when Latinos use the front yard of the house (or even spilling out onto the sidewalks and streets) for large social gatherings like weddings or quinceaneras, Latino culture in L.A. challenges the standard design of residential space that was designed for such social gatherings to take place either inside or in the backyard and out of view. Similarly, when Latinos take up space at transit nodes (such as popular bus stops) through illegal entrepreneurial activities, they reclaim and repurpose public space by physically using their bodies in a challenge to the dominant car-oriented culture.

Latinos creating space by reclaiming via social and entrepreneurial means (Rojas, "The Enacted Environment").

The Seattle Night Market has now grown into a de-facto food-truck festival with some entertainment and vendors, an event that may be problematic for obese people. Because "large people are often seen as 'out of control'" and "indecent" (Longhurst 27) they therefore have more societal restrictions placed on them regarding food and eating. The very act of being engaged in a food-oriented event may prevent an already marginalized group from attending, thus fostering an exclusive environment.

In addition, traditional Chinese cuisine can prompt visceral reactions in a dominant Western society because of its difference. The thought of consuming chicken feet, pork head or insects can prompt strong bodily reactions from Western society. Ethnic cultural dishes that can be co-opted into a more mainstream, dominant culture, with the ethnicity stripped away or sanitized, are more likely to be welcomed. The Night Market's food trucks – rather than the event's original food stalls where food was made by community members – provide a more familiar way for Chinese 'inspired' cuisine to be consumed by the masses. For example, David George Gordon, also known as "the Bug Chef," was a vendor at the most recent Night Market. Chef Gordon belongs to dominant society in that he identifies as white, male, heterosexual and middle-aged; his food has won awards and been lauded by publications such as the New York Times (*Facebook.com/The-Bug-Chef*). Festival-goers also had the opportunity to have their photo taken with a sign reading, "I ate a bug," which inscribes language of bravery and showmanship on this act.



Left: The Bug Chef at 2016 Seattle Night Market (*Facebook.com/The-Bug-Chef*). *Right:* A festival-goer proudly displays the, "I ate a bug" sign (*Facebook.com/nightmarketseattle*).

The case studies presented in this research provide examples of how bodies are used as a way through which to inscribe meaning onto public space as well as demonstrating how power structures can work to further exclude marginalized bodies from public space. However, questions emerge regarding how public space reclamation, even if it begins as a way to challenge dominant societal norms regarding bodies, instead reinforce conceptions of legitimate and illegitimate bodies in space.

In the case of TPSC and Rebar, both groups see their physical acts of reclamation as a way to challenge dominant social norms of public space. However, it could be seen that the instigators are themselves privileged, and are repurposing public space in a way that still works to exclude already marginalized bodies. For

example, TPSC volunteers feel agency and empowerment when working to reclaim space, although their bodies are inscribing values attached to a specific type of body – namely those that are young, educated and white. Dave Meslin is cognizant of this paradox when he recognizes the danger of physically taking up too much space with his body: "I get so much attention [which] politically it's a big issue about taking up too much space, especially for me. I mean this is probably the biggest challenge, especially in a society that's already dominated by white men; that's a constant struggle for me" (*Personal Interview*). In the end, though, Meslin contends, "I know I'm doing good work" which assumes that his work is in deed "good," and also transferrable to other, marginalized bodies.

Community

The case studies presented in this research provide examples of how the concept of community is pervasive in public space advocacy. Each case study demonstrates, to a certain degree, aspects of community that include co-operation and togetherness, as opposed to individualism and isolation. Community is a term that is often assumed as a taken-for-granted positive force, which, in the absence of critical discourse, can work to reinforce or create inequality.

Public space is an avenue through which people can encounter difference. Being exposed to difference – through, for example, interacting with someone from a different culture or socio-economic bracket – is a crucial first step towards having tolerance and respect for difference. Passive exposure to difference also provides a stepping-stone towards active exposure to difference (i.e. choosing to interact more

with such difference). In a hopeful way, bell hooks (2009) contends that, "making the choice to look at images or read about people different from oneself, irrespective of whether those images are positive or negative, opens up the possibility that positive curiosity will be awakened and lead to positive contact" (57).

Community gardens – by their very name – make liberal use of the taken-for-granted sentiments associated with the word *community*. Urban agriculture spaces provide opportunities for residents and neighbours to socialize and connect with others, while simultaneously creating space that reaffirms cultural identity, for example through growing culturally-specific foods. Because of the social atmosphere of community gardens, this likewise provides an avenue for cultural transmission between gardeners through sharing foods, recipes, or seeds. Jeffrey Hou, et al. (2009) see community gardens as *collective* and *shared* places, which means that they can work against the privatization of public space: "As places of community gathering and collective actions, community gardens can help reconstruct the "social commons" – a shared space at the heart of the community that in recent history has been undermined by the sprawl of low-density single-use development and the privatization of public space" (189).

Materials (flyers, pamphlets) and websites about and connected to Marra Farm make liberal use of the word community, at times referring to the geographical location of the farm (it serves 'the community of South Park') as well as in a relational sense (a 'community event'). The Solid Ground non-profit website names the area as "A Model Urban Community Farm," and flyers promoting events talk about "growing community" and "cultivating community."

A 2015 poster for a Marra Farm event (*Facebook.com/MarraFarmCoalition*).

Lettuce Link Coalition Manager Lee Harper employs the language of community when she says that through the collective work on the farm, partners and volunteers are "all helping to create a stronger community" (Chansanchai, par. 4). She likewise reinforces the unity behind this community, stating, "We're clear on our collective vision" (Chansanchai, par. 3). In contrast to the Toronto Public Space Committee's public messaging, however, Lettuce Link and the Marra Farm Coalition address inequality issues through naming poverty and food security as they discuss community (*Facebook.com/MarraFarmCoalition*). The Seattle government website for Marra Farm likewise invokes many words that connote togetherness, but also includes concepts that address issues of marginalization, such as hunger: "We work to cultivate the innate values of community gardening: friendships, community

building, self-reliance, neighborhood open-space, environmental awareness, hunger relief, improved nutrition, recreation, gardening education, and therapeutic opportunities" (Seattle Parks and Recreation).

Latino place-making can create stronger social bonds by reclaiming spaces in ways that bring people together over shared cultural bonds. Rios (2010) contends the spatial practices of Latino urbanism show how "public space [is] a vital resource for cultural survival and resiliency," and events that foster cultural togetherness provide ways through which to affirm cultural identity, for example in celebrating a Latino religious-cultural holiday or event (101). This could be seen as an example of Gerald Creed's notion of how the act of 'creating community' can lead to creating an in-group and an out-group. A question that is raised is, to what extent are individuals who identify as both "in" and "outside" of an already-marginalized group further marginalized within their own community? Or, put another way, how does intersectionality play a role in a community that is already marginalized? For example, a queer Latina whose sexual orientation is not accepted by her immediate familial/religious/cultural community could face further marginalization as the group as a whole works to reinforce cultural community ties that exacerbate already unequal power arrangements. The paper has previously shown how one such group, the Ovarian Psychos, works to create a community for those who identify as disenfranchised and/or marginalized within other already-marginalized communities. Further research could be done to explore the relationship between intersectionality and community.

The Seattle Night Market case study invokes similar questions about reinforcing cultural community ties at the expense of marginalizing those who are part of, but perhaps on the periphery of, the community. Over the years, the event has become more mainstream and commercialized, focusing more on consumerism (via food and culture) rather than reclaiming a public park to support community interests in fostering a safer environment. The event is more about 'bringing in' people from outside the Chinatown-ID district rather than for its own community members.

However, even with the focus on consumerism, the event still has culturally-influenced happenings, such as Chinese-influenced music and activities (for instance, martial arts demonstrations or lion dances). To Hou, this provides the "potential for transcending stereotypes and provides opportunities for interactions … and a more nuanced understanding of cultural diversity and complexity [and] … cross-cultural learning" (118-119). As such, the Night Market operates not just for the Chinatown community itself to reaffirm and celebrate its own cultural identity, but also as a vehicle to promote and showcase the community's Chinese identity to a broader audience.

In Chapter 3b, the concept of diversity was explored in interviews with members of the Toronto Public Space Committee. David J. sees public space as important because it allows him to see, or even interact with, different "ethnic communities," even as he is unable to further explore why seeing or interacting with different communities is important:

> …just interacting with people, and seeing how people interact in general, if you're sitting at a park or in public space, and there's people from different

> ethnic communities, just seeing how they interact with people, where there are, you know, these very different people from very different backgrounds around you, you know, you just might not get that in your regular mindset, whether it's on the subway or the commuters, you kinda just lose touch with that." (*Personal Interview*)

As well, when asked why public space is important, BA uses the word community four times in her answer, which, similarly to David, demonstrates Gerald Creed's contentions that the discourse of community assumes that community is a good thing without needing to define it. To BA, public space is important because it "is what makes a community. I mean, it's, it's important because outside of our private residences, outside of our private office buildings, all the rest of it is public space. And that's what fosters a community, and that's what people engage in" (*Personal Interview*).

Both Rebar and the Toronto Public Space Committee see their work has firmly existing outside of existing consumer capitalist relationships. To emphasize this point, Blaine Merker says,

> We "give away" our work (that is, set up situations for people to use and enjoy, or to fulfill an unmet need) for anyone nearby enough to experience it because that is the only way we can to our work. The primary recipients are the inhabitants of the public realm, but there are many more who will experience this non-commercial transition through images and descriptions of our work. (Merker 54)

It is Merker's hope that the group's projects and situations in public space will create change and encourage social interactions. Similarly, the Toronto Public Space Committee's projects are done for the benefit of all. This raises the question, for whom are TPSC and Rebar re-creating and repurposing public space?

TPSC members make use of a language of ownership over public space in order to encourage people to be more involved with public space and public space

issues. Meslin uses the words 'my living room' as a way to encourage Torontonians to conceive of public space. To BA, public space is "a sense of identity, it's a sense of community; even ownership" (*Personal Interview*). In the introduction of *uTOpia* (2005), editors Jason McBride and Alana Wilcox invoke this language, while also giving clues for whom this early-2000s 'cultural renaissance' and public space advocacy is for:

> The city is becoming *ours* […] When we speak of ownership, we are speaking in an ideological or rhetorical sense, not an economic one. A city, by its very nature, is not owned; it is shared. Public space is public property. Especially for those of us – and there are many – unable to afford private property, a condo or house to call our own, public space is extremely important. Increasingly, our homes are outside: in the streets, on patios, in bars, on concert stages, in bookstores, in parks. Family extends beyond living room walls and includes the people who are in your band, who are on your basketball team, who help design your website and who are part of your burlesque act. […] Ownership also implies responsibility, and responsibility begets contribution. Contribution, in turn, engenders growth. […] We are trying to make home feel more like home." (10-11)

Although not explicit, a picture is painted of who makes up the 'in-group' in this type of community: white, educated, urban, and middle-class; hip enough to hang out in bars and patios, and cultured enough (according to these sensibilities) to be in a rock-band or a burlesque act. If TPSC and Rebar have shared ideas as to a collective ownership of public space, those who do not fit in this description are automatically excluded from this narrative. Heather McClean demonstrates how such public space advocates negate existing residents' and community members' existing contributions to shaping their own spaces, through using language that talks about sites of public space reclamation as "a blank slate, a frontier just waiting for investment and redevelopment to bring it to life" (158). McClean further contends that such a "lack of political self-reflection and the commodification of

space contribute to the transformation of working class and politically active neighbourhoods" (159).

Miranda Joseph (2002) cautions that community and capitalism are not two opposite concepts but rather mutually reinforcing. Alison of the TPSC bolsters this notion by talking about a homeless person she encountered often as *hers*: "there was that carving on King Street, just over one of the sewer grates, that a homeless guy had actually [made], he was, like, *my* homeless guy, when I worked at the CBC I used to buy him coffee and stuff all the time, and it was so nice to walk by there and go, you know, there's someone here" (*Personal Interview*).

In her conversations with Wendell Barry in *Belonging: A Culture of Place* (2009) bell hooks explores the danger of using a language of ownership, illustrating this through an example of privileged white people referring to Latina housekeepers as "My Mexican" (191). She further states, "to the extent that [people] are viewed as objects, they are disposable" (192). This builds on Joseph's and Creed's contentions that culture becomes part of consumer capitalism, and therefore commodifiable; likewise when people are commodified they can therefore become disposable.

Each case study uses language consistent with the discourse of community, including the inability to define community but its acceptance as a positive force; the creation of an 'in-group' and an 'out-group;' the commodification of culture; and increased marginalization of, or erasing, those in the 'out-group.' According to Iris Marion Young (1990), "existing in community with others entails more than merely respecting their rights, but rather attending to and sharing in the particularity of their needs and interests" (305). The Marra Farm case study stands alone as the one

outlier that addresses community needs and interests (e.g. poverty, food security), at least through the language it employs. It could, however, be argued that much of this is superficial as the structure of poverty reduction (e.g. healthy food to school lunch programs) operates within existing capitalist structures and bureaucratic frameworks, and doesn't necessarily challenge them.

Other Ways of Knowing

The case studies provide examples of how groups are working to create and reclaim public spaces through invoking and using other ways of knowing, in that their chosen discourses operate outside of established ones (e.g. capitalism). Other ways of knowing include valuing actions and beliefs that run counter to established norms, including, for example, valuing emotions and the body over scientific-rational discourse.

Although it operates within a municipal bureaucratic framework, Marra Farm supports other ways of knowing. It offers people the opportunity to grow their own food, in contrast to and in retaliation against a capitalist food system that commercializes and industrializes food and separates people from growing and harvesting their own food. Gardeners save and share or barter seeds and food from their plots, providing another way in which Marra Farm works outside of capitalism's profit-exchange mechanism. Mares and Peña (2010) contend that, "through the farming activities of indigenous migrants, urban community gardens can promote the *in situ* conservation of the genetic diversity of heirloom varieties and landraces and the environmental knowledge that is intertwined with this land

conservation" (252). And although Marra Farm operates within an existing municipal bureaucratic framework, it appears that staff members value other ways of knowing as well: the Farm solicits and accepts donations of seeds, but in 2011 the Coordinator, Sue McGann, refused to accept a donation of seed from a Monsanto subsidiary ("Home garden? Say HELLO to Monsanto," par. 7).

The Seattle Night Market provides a venue through which people are exposed to another culture, even if the 'other' culture presented is itself a mainstream or commercialized one. Perhaps in showing a mainstream version of Chinese culture, such as through blasting Asian synth-pop music, Seattle Night Market is indeed "transcending stereotypes" (Hou 118) about Chinese culture that might instead be infused with stereotypical or expected events: traditional and calming stringed instruments, or brightly coloured acrobatic spectacles. The Night Market could be seen as offering a chance to "witness one another's cultures and functions [through] public interaction", which, according to Iris Marion Young (1990), is a vital step in creating a politics of difference which truly values "relational reciprocity" (319).

Latino place-making in L.A. is itself a living example of employing another way of knowing to carve out and create new public space. Western uses of public space tend to demarcate specific areas with a specific use (e.g. land use zoned as commercial, residential, or industrial), whereas Latino culture works to add more and different layers to create a more complex space. For example, modern urban planning might dictate a single purpose for a space (e.g. this is a bus stop), whereas Latino culture works to provide an opportunity to inscribe many different types of uses onto a space (a transit stop, an underground taxi stop, a shop, and a social

gathering place). Not only does this other way of knowing meet the needs and desires of the residents and inhabitants, it can also have other benefits such as reducing crime. A study showed that the Evergreen Cemetery jogging path, once formalized, reduced crime in the neighbourhood (Abeolata 8).

The Toronto Public Space Committee uses language that values other ways of knowing. In the mid-2000s, the TPSC (via Meslin) developed a "core values" handout to guide and ground its work. These values are democracy, transparency, pragmatism, engagement, respect, action, fun, and independence. The "implication" for the value of "engagement" is further explored in the document:

> We seek to foster debate and open minded discussion as opposed to preaching and rhetoric. The TPSC treats those with differing opinions as partners in finding a solution which benefits all of Toronto. Our work demands that we try to engage the minds, hearts and imaginations of the broad citizenry. Wherever possible, it is better to discuss issues (internally and externally) face to face as opposed to via anonymous, impersonal or artificial mediums. (par. 4)

In this way, the TPSC strives to offer alternatives to a top-down approach of leadership. Whether or not the TPSC in the mid-2000s was successful in engaging a "broad citizenry" could be challenged, it remains that the group sought to exist outside of a standard norm of top-down advocacy, or even 'majority rules' through prioritizing consensus decision-making.

At one point in the personal interview with the author, Meslin states that there was a time when "everything used to be public space." When the author probed for further clarification, he responds with, "well, before lines were drawn in the ground delineating private space," and went on to provide a non-European, non-capitalism example of a time when "everything [was] public space:"

> "Long … I guess whenever humans … I guess it would've been whatever structures the First Nations communities built, but that would've been very small. So it's like, this entire field for hundreds of miles is public space but please don't come into my tent. When the Europeans came over they divided everything up into grids, they actually implemented a grid system right across Ontario which is still here now, and then everyone was assigned parcels of land, and they just left ribbons in-between so that people could get from parcel to parcel. […] They took space and they essentially privatized it all with a pencil and a piece of paper." (*Personal Interview*)

The capitalist, Eurocentric worldview determined the shape of colonization in North America (and elsewhere), and First Nations ways of knowing stand in contrast to this, especially as First Nations cultures are more collectively minded. However, the push from academics, community activists and First Nations members in the 1970s and 1980s to include indigenous ways of knowing into popular culture (including cultural institutions such as museums) and academia is now critiqued for having produced its own stereotypes and furthering racist and sexist narratives, regardless of how well-intentioned the original sentiment was (Walkowitz and Knauer 4). Certainly, Meslin is well-intentioned and means to give First Nations' knowledge and social organization a compliment, but his sentiment romanticizes all First Nations knowledge, reducing many cultures into one, and primitives the culture through, for example, his lack of understanding of nuanced and complex spatial boundaries, such as heredity trap-lines or inter-tribal warfare.

In their campaigns, both Rebar and the Toronto Public Space Committee value play, fun, love and joy in their public space advocacy, qualities which run counter to the established norms that value a rational-critical way of knowing as a more legitimate form of protest. (Fun is even listed as one of the eight TPSC core values). In this context, however, the activities of TPSC and Rebar can be written off

by a mainstream audience as being not serious, similarly to how anti-globalization protestors who use similar tactics (such as clowns, music, or puppets) are.

The case studies provide examples of other ways of knowing at work in the reclamation, repurposing or re-creation of public space. However, none of the case studies showed group members actively engaged in seeking to learn from others outside of their own values; rather, the case studies demonstrate how each group makes use of other ways of knowing themselves. Further work could be done to explore how public space advocates and reclamation projects actively look to learn from other ways of knowing, thereby creating a new space or culture where, as hooks (2009) says, "people are turned towards one another" rather than projecting values outwardly themselves (228).

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

The case studies and immersive experience described and analyzed in this paper are examples of how groups and individuals reclaim, repurpose or re-create public space in ways that are alternative, subaltern, or counter to established uses. Such individuals or groups do so to meet real or perceived needs, to inscribe a desired aesthetic, to resist real or perceived injustices, to affirm or celebrate identities and/or to feel a sense of belonging. The case studies also demonstrate that public space is highly contested and subjectively defined, especially when boundaries between public and private space are blurred or not defined. By analyzing the case studies through five themes (power, gentrification and spatial marginalization, the body, community, and other ways of knowing), the paper sheds light on the processes involved with reclaiming, repurposing or re-creating new spaces.

The analysis and discussion in this paper has uncovered various tensions, paradoxes and contradictions in the messy and non-linear process of re-creating public space. For example, the case studies demonstrate resistance to, or the challenging of, dominant power structure(s): the Toronto Public Space Committee resists consumer capitalism through working to prevent third-party advertising, and Marra Farm gardeners grow their own food outside of existing food production systems. At the same time, though, each case study shows how such acts can be co-opted back into dominant power structures, perhaps by being turned into commodities for consumption or through being absorbed into dominant structures: the Seattle Night Market has become a street party with commercialized 'Asian-

inspired' food vendors and is controlled by the BIA, and Rebar's [Park]ing project is essentially managed by the City of San Francisco, which uses it as a way to promote economic activity in the downtown core. Once commodified or co-opted into dominant power structures, such processes can promote or exacerbate inequality through spatial marginalization, even as original purposes of public space modifications may have been undertaken in resistance to inequality in the first place.

Other paradoxes and tensions uncovered in re-creating new public spaces include: fostering social relationships through 'building community' but excluding others in the process; inscribing an other way of knowing onto a space while at the same time not valuing additional, other ways of knowing; feeling less constrained to explore new ways to display or use one's body, yet reinforcing dominant culture's exclusion of other (illegitimate or marginalized) bodies; and being superficially open to diversity yet perpetuating inequality. Perhaps one of the biggest paradoxes of all lies in the definition of public space itself – in order for people to see themselves as having permission to reclaim or re-create public space, they may inadvertently take ownership over the space, thereby counteracting the very notion of having a truly public – and inclusive – space.

Many thinkers, philosophers and academics see consumer capitalism as the force behind the tensions and contradictions that come about through the process of inscribing new meanings and uses onto public space. Consumer capitalism works to homogenize, control and commodify space, culture or values wherever possible, co-opting social relationships and experiences of urban life into an impersonal system.

Georg Simmel sees this 'money economy' as dominant over all human relationships, reducing them to their exchange value and therefore ensuring a city dweller "reacts with his head instead of his heart" (Simmel 324). Similarly, Henri Lefebvre (1991) describes how 'commodity fetishism' pervades all aspects of everyday life, and consumer capitalism creates space in a way that undermines or prevents social relationships.

Resisting paradoxes when creating new public spaces is further challenged as the city itself has become a dominant force of consumer capitalism. Manuel Castells (1977) implicates the city government as being entwined with, and the precipitator of, capitalism, under the terminology of 'urban planning,' especially since it has become the purveyor of collective goods for public consumption (e.g. schools, transit, housing). Similarly, David Harvey (2000) describes how capitalism alters the spatial landscape to promote and accumulate capital, for example through public-private partnerships. Cindy Katz (2006) further explores this by demonstrating that infrastructure created through public-private partnerships (for example, a park) can look good but may actively prevent people from participating in the design and creation of new public spaces, which disproportionately affects the poor. This new urban reality makes it increasingly more difficult to find paths to resist dominant power structures. Further work could be done to explore ways to resist the paradoxes and contradictions uncovered in this paper as they pertain to reclaiming, repurposing and re-creating public space.

Other academics explored in this paper, such as bell hooks and Iris Marion Young, emphasize the importance of creating and fostering meaningful social

relationships as a way to counter the effects of consumer capitalism when re-creating new public spaces. In order to resist capitalist patriarchy, bell hooks (2009) prescribes "an ethic of relational reciprocity" where "people are turned towards one another" in opposition to dominant culture's individualistic approach (228). Similarly, Iris Marion Young (1990) calls for a "politics of difference" which allows for "openness to unassimilated otherness" when looking to create new public spaces (319). These sentiments are both a prescription and a call to action for individuals or groups that are reclaiming, repurposing, or re-creating new public spaces.

Works Cited

Aboelata, Manal J. "The Built Environment and Health: 11 Profiles of Neighborhood Transformation." *Prevention Institute*. July 2004.

Armario, Christine. "In US, Asian Night Markets Bring Taste of the Old and New." *Seattle Times*. 13 Jan 2016.

Atkinson, Laurel. *Personal Notes from Deputation Against City of Toronto Anti-Panhandling Legislation*. 28 May 2007.

Baudelaire, Charles. "The Painter of Modern Life." *Baudelaire: Selected Writings on Art and Artists.* Penguin Books, 1972.

"Best of Toronto." *Now Magazine*. 27 Oct 2005.

AB. *Personal Interview*. 17 Feb 2006.

Boiko-Weyrauch, Anna. "Neighbors, Police, City Officials Give Chinatown ID Fresh Start." *Seattle Times*. 14 July 2013.

Castells, Manuel. *The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. MIT Press, 1977.

Chansanchai, Athima. "Marra Farm Plants Seeds for South Park Community." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. 2 June 2005.

Chiu, Andrew. *Personal Interview*. 12 March 2006.

City and County of San Francisco, et al. *PavementToParks.org*. City of San Francisco. Accessed 20 Sept 2016.

City Planning Department. "What Are POPS?" City of Toronto. *www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=7b0c1459a55e4410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD.* Accessed 20 Sept 2016.

Clement, Joseph. *Survey Questionnaire*. 8 Feb 2006.

Conklin, Ellis E. "Seattle May Finally Get Its Environmental Justice Act Together." *Investigate West*. 20 April 2016.

Cowan, Deborah. "Hipster Urbanism." *Relay*, vol. 13, Sept/Oct 2006, pp. 22-23.

Creed, Gerald W. "The Seductions of Community: Emancipations, Oppressions, Quandaries." *Reconsidering Community.* Edited by Gerald W. Creed. School of American Research Press, 2006, pp. 3-22.

Dilthey, Wilhelm. *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences, Volume III.* Edited by Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi. Princeton University Press, 2002.

Dizon, Kristin. "John Beal: He Defied Death, Then Revived a Stream." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. 1 April 2002.

Ducombe, Steven. "Theory: Cultural Hegemony." *Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution.* beautifultrouble.org/theory/cultural-hegemony. Accessed 16 Oct 2016.

Culture Division, City of Toronto. *Culture Plan for the Creative City.* City of Toronto, 2003.

Feder, Ellen K. "Power/Knowledge." *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts.* Edited by Diana Taylor. Acumen Publishing, 2011, pp. 55-68.

Fleming, Jess and Lindsay William-Ross. "Guide to Metro Vancouver Night Markets 2016." *Daily Hive*. 25 Apr 2016.

Florida, Richard. *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How it's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life.* Basic Books, 2002.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality.* Translated by Robert Hurley. Pantheon Books, 1978.

---. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* Translated by Alan Sheridan. Vintage Books, 1979.

Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: a Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." *Habermas and the Public Sphere.* Edited by Craig Calhoun. CMIT Press, 1992, pp. 109-143.

Glass, Ruth. "Introduction: Aspects of Change." *The Gentrification Debates.* Edited by Japonica Brown-Saracino. Routledge, 2010, pp. 15-24.

Goonewardena, Kanishka and Stefan Kipfer. "Spaces of Difference: Reflections from Toronto on Multiculturalism, Bourgeois Urbanism and the Possibility of Radical Urban Politics." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. vol. 29, issue 3, Sept 2005, pp. 670-678.

Gorbould, Alison. *Personal Interview*. 16 Mar 2006.

Gramsci, Antonio. *The Prison Notebooks.* Translated by Joseph A. Buttigiec. Columbia University Press, 1992.

Gutting, Gary. *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford University Press, 2005.

Habermas, Jürgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society.* MIT Press, 1991.

Harvey, David. *Spaces of Hope.* University of California Press, 2000.

Hawthorne, Christopher. "'Latino Urbanism' Influences a Los Angeles in Flux." *Los Angeles Times*. 6 Dec 2014.

"Home garden? Say HELLO to Monsanto." *Good Food World*. 24 Oct 2011.

hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom.* Routledge, 1994.

---. *Belonging: A Culture of Place*. Routledge, 2009.

Hou, Jeffrey. "(Not) Your Everyday Public Space." *Insurgent Public Space: Guerilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities.* Edited by Jeffrey Hou. Routledge, 2010, pp. 1-17.

---. ""Night Market" in Seattle: Community Eventscape and the Reconstruction of Public Space." *Insurgent Public Space: Guerilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities*. Edited by Jeffrey Hou. Routledge, 2010, pp. 111-122.

Hou, Jeffrey, et al. *Greening Cities, Growing Communities: Learning From Seattle's Urban Community Gardens.* University of Washington Press, 2009.

Hubbard, Phil. *City*. Routledge, 2006.

Hynes, H. Patricia. *A Patch of Eden: America's Inner-City Gardeners.* Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 1996.

J., David. *Personal Interview*. 3 April 2006.

Jones, Steve. *Antonio Gramsci.* Routledge, 2006.

Joseph, Miranda. "The Supplementarity of Community with Capital." *Against the Romance of Community.* Edited by Miranda Joseph. University of Minnesota Press, 2002. 1-29.

Katz, Cindy. “Power, Space and Terror: Social Reproduction and the Public Environment.” *The Politics of Public Space.* Edited by Setha Low and Neil Smith. Routledge, 2006, pp. 105-121.

Keenan, Edward. “Making a Scene: A Bunch of Youngish Indie Rockers, Political Activists and Small-Press Literati are Creating the Cultural History of Toronto.” *uTOpia: Towards a New Toronto.* Edited by Jason McBride and Alana Wilox. Coach House Books, 2005, pp. 22-35.

---. “Space Cadets”. *Eye Weekly.* 15 Nov 2005, pp. 20-21

Kenyon, Sam. “International District Sheds Sketchy Rep with Night Market.” *The Seattle Globalist*. 9 Sept 2013.

Klein, Naomi. *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies.* Vintage Canada, 2000.

Landscape Architecture, University of Washington. “2006 Night Market Eventscape.” University of Washington. larch.be.washington.edu/features/design-activism/2006-night-market-eventscape. Accessed 13 Sept 2016.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space.* Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Blackwell Publishing, 1991.

Longhurst, Robyn. *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries.* Routledge, 2001.

Mares, Teresa M. and Devon G. Peña. “Urban Agriculture in the Making of Insurgent Spaces in Los Angeles and Seattle.” *Insurgent Public Space: Guerilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities.* Edited by Jeffrey Hou. Routledge, 2010, pp. 241-254.

Marra Farm Coalition. *Facebook*. www.facebook.com/MarraFarmCoalition. Accessed 20 Sept 2016.

McBride, Jason. “Space Cowboys: How a Small, Cash-strapped Non-profit Made Civic Activism Cool.” *Toronto Life*. January 2006, pp. 23.

McBride, Jason and Alana Wilcox. “Introduction.”*uTOpia: Towards a New Toronto.* Edited by Jason McBride and Alana Wilcox. Coach House Books, 2005, pp. 10-13.

McClean, Heather. “Go West, Young Hipster: The Gentrification of Queen Street West.” *uTOpia: Towards a New Toronto.* Edited by Jason McBride and Alana Wilox. Coach House Books, 2005, pp. 156-163.

McNary, Sharon. “LA's Famous Graveyard Running Path and Other Fitness Gems.” *Southern California Public Radio News*. 26 Sept 2016.

Merker, Blaine. "Taking Place: Rebar's Absurd Tactics in Generous Urbanism." *Insurgent Public Space: Guerilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities.* Edited by Jeffrey Hou. Routledge, 2010, pp. 45-48.

Meslin, David. *Personal Interview*. 30 Mar 2006.

Moloney, Paul and Donovan Vincent. "City Seeks Answers to Problem of Panhandling." *The Toronto Star*. 29 May 2007.

Night Market Seattle. *Facebook*. www.facebook.com/nightmarketseattle. Accessed 26 Sept 2016.

Ninjalicious. *Access All Areas: a User's Guide to the Art of Urban Exploration.* Ninjalicious, 2005.

Nurwisah, Ron. *Personal Interview*. 30 March 2006.

Ovarian Psyco-Cycle Brigade. *Ovarianpsychos.com*. Accessed 28 Oct 2016.

Peck, Jamie. "Struggling with the Creative Class." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 29, issue 4, Dec 2005, pp. 740–770.

Penna, Kathleen. "What's New, Marra Farm?" Solid Ground. *www.solid-ground.org/whats-new-marra-farm*. 7 April 2011.

Pogash, Carol. "Gentrification Spreads an Upheaval in San Francisco's Mission District." *The New York Times*. 22 May 2015.

Rebar Group. *The Park(ing) Day Manifesto: User-Generated Urbanism and Temporary Tactics for Improving the Public Realm.* Rebar Group, 2011.

---. *Rebargroup.org.* Rebar Group. Accessed 26 Aug 2016.

Rebar Group. "SOAK: an Ecological Urban Bathhouse." *Kickstarter.* Rebar Group. *https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1390256402/soak-an-ecological-urban-bathhouse.* 2 Dec 2013.

---. *ParkingDay.org*. Rebar Group. Accessed 26 Aug 2016.

Reinhart, Anthony. "One Man's Campaign to Take Back the Space." *The Globe and Mail.* 8 Oct 2005.

Rios, Michael. "Claiming Latino Space: Cultural Insurgency in the Public Realm." *Insurgent Public Space: Guerilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities*. Edited by Jeffrey Hou. Routledge, 2010, pp. 99-110.

Rojas, James. “Latino Urbanism in Los Angeles: A Model for Urban Improvisation and Reinvention.” *Insurgent Public Space: Guerilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities*. Edited by Jeffrey Hou. Routledge, 2010, pp. 36-44.

---. “Latino Urbanism: Transforming the Suburbs.” *Buildipedia.* 15 Jul 2013.

---. “Latino Place-making: How the Civil Rights Movement Reshaped East L.A.” *Project for Public Spaces*. 5 March 2014.

---. “The Enacted Environment: Urban Patterns.” *EnactedEnvironment.com.* Accessed 21 Oct 2016.

Rosemont, Penelope. *Dreams and Everyday Life: Andre Breton, Surrealism, the IWW, Rebel Worker, Students for Democratic Society and the Seven Cities of Cibola in Chicago, Paris and London: A 1960s Notebook*. Charles H. Kerr Publishing, 2008.

Santucci, Antonio A. *Antonio Gramsci.* Monthly Review Press, 2010.

Sarah E. “Night Market & Moon Festival.” *Yelp*. www.yelp.ca/biz/night-market-and-moon-festival-seattle. 15 Sept 2015.

“Seattle ID Night Market: Mahjong 04.” *Wikimedia Commons.* commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seattle_ID_night_market_-_mahjong_04.jpg. Accessed 20 Oct 2016.

Seattle Municipal Archives. “Department of Parks and Recreation Pro Parks Acquisition Open Space Photographs, 1966-2006.” City of Seattle, 2008.

“Seattle Night Market to Move to International District’s Union Station Plaza.” *Northwest Asian Weekly.* 21 September 2012.

Seattle Parks and Recreation. “Marra-Desimone Park.” City of Seattle, 5 August 2016.

Simmel, Georg. “The Metropolis of Modern Life.” *Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms*. Edited by Donald Levine. University Press, 1971, p. 324.

Smith, Christopher. “Reclaim the Streets.” *Visible City Project and Archive.* York University, 13 Nov 2006.

Soak, Inc. *SoakSF.com*. 2016. Accessed 21 Oct 2016.

Solid Ground. “Marra Farm: Growing Organic Produce and So Much More.” *Youtube.* SolidGroundWA. www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMQFhgcq45g. 31 May 2008.

Somerfield, Beth. “Seattle Recognized as the Nation’s Most Sustainable City.” *Office of the Mayor.* City of Seattle, 10 Sept 2014.

STAR Communities. “About Us.” STARcommunities.org/about. Accessed 7 Nov 2016.

Stephens, Josh. “Out of the Enclave: Latinos Adapt, and Adapt to, the American City.” *Planetizen.* 22 Sept 2008.

Stevens, Quentin. *The Ludic City.* Routledge, 2007.

The Bug Chef. *Facebook*. www.facebook.com/The-Bug-Chef-54701149989. Accessed 13 Oct 2016.

Todd, Douglas. “Vancouver is the Most 'Asian' City Outside Asia. What Are the Ramifications?” *Vancouver Sun.* 28 March 2014.

Toronto Public Space Committee. *Coordinating Committee CD-ROM.* 2005. CD-ROM.

---. *Toronto Public Space Committee.* 2005. Pamphlet.

---. *TPSC Core Values.* 13 Dec 2005. Handout.

---. *Publicspace.ca.* Accessed 10 September 2016.

Tracey, David. *Guerilla Gardening: a Manuelfesto.* New Society Publishers, 2007.

Trevisan, Matthew. “Toronto Tourist Dies After Attack by Panhandlers.” *The Globe and Mail*. 13 Aug 2007.

U.S. Census Bureau. “The Hispanic Population: 2010.” *2010 Census Briefs.* U.S. Census Bureau, May 2011.

Walkowitz, Daniel J. and Lisa Maya Knauer. “Introduction: Memory, Race, and the Nation in Public Spaces.” *Contested Histories in Public Space: Memory, Race and Nation.* Edited by Daniel J. Walkowitz and Lisa Maya Knauer. Duke University Press, 2009, pp. 1-30.

Watanabe, Teresa, et al. “As Latino Population Surges, Gaps in Income and Education May Shrink.” *Los Angeles Times.* July 12 2015.

Wood, Erin. *Personal Interview*. 20 Feb 2006.

Young, Iris Marion. “The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference.” *Feminism/Postmodernism.* Edited by Linda J. Nicholson. Routledge, 1990, pp. 300-323.

APPENDIX A – Informed Consent and Survey Questionnaire

Letter of Informed Consent: TPSC Survey Respondents

February 8, 2006

To _____:
Name (print)

Hello! I am currently a Masters student in York University's Environmental Studies program. I am researching the relationships between public space advocacy and the public in Toronto. In order to do research, I am surveying some members of the TPSC. These surveys will be used in my research, out of which a Major Paper will be produced. This Paper may or may not be published, either in whole or in parts.

I am hoping that you will be willing to take some time (20 minutes) to fill out this survey. You may choose whether or not I may use your real name. As well, if at any time you decide that you don't want the information you provided from the survey to be used in my research, you can simple let me know via email and your survey you filled out will be removed from my research. If you want or need more time to fill out the survey, I can be in contact via email, and we can decide if 1) you want to mail the survey to me, or 2) you want me to pick up the survey. Please feel free to write on the back of the paper if you need more room.

By signing below, you agree to the aforementioned conditions. Thanks for your time!

Sincerely,

Laurel Atkinson
Masters candidate, Environmental Studies
York University
laurel@publicspace.ca
416 604-2296

_____ _____

Signature **Date**

Survey Questions: TPSC members

Name:

Age:

Occupation:

Gender:

Other Self-Identifying Features:

Education:

Length of Residence in Toronto:

1. How long have you been a member of the TPSC?

2. Do you identify as being a public space advocate?

3. What made you decide to get involved with the TPSC?

4. Have you been (or are you currently) a member of other grassroots/non-profit/social justice/etc organizations before? Please list and describe any:

5. How do you define public space?

6. What are current public space issues in Toronto?

7. What do you think is the most important public space issue in Toronto? Why?

8. Describe what you feel are the best strategies to approach public space issues.

9. Who do you feel are “the public” of Toronto?

10. How important do you think the public of Toronto feel that the public space issues you’ve identified are? Why?

11. Do you feel that all members of the public participate equally in politically and democratically motivated organizations (ie: city politics; grassroots organizations; etc)? Why?

12. Is anyone excluded from these processes? And are there members of the public who willingly don’t participate in such processes? Why do you think this is so?

13. Do you give Laurel permission to use your real name in her writing? (circle) Y / N

APPENDIX B – Informed Consent and Interview Questions

Letter of Informed Consent: TPSC Interview Respondents February 8, 2006

To _____:
Name

Hello! I am currently a Masters student in York University's Environmental Studies program. I am researching the relationships between public space advocacy and the public in Toronto. In order to do research, I am interviewing some members of the TPSC. These interviews will be used in my research, out of which a Major Paper will be produced. This Paper may or may not be published, either in whole or in parts.

I am hoping that you will be willing to take some time (one hour) to be interviewed by me. This interview will be audibly recorded. I will travel to meet you, and will try to accommodate your schedule. You may choose whether or not I may use your real name. As well, if at any time you decide that you don't want the recorded interview to be used in my research, you can simply let me know (via email or telephone), and the interview, and any information obtained thereof, will be removed from my research.

I will contact you within two weeks via email or telephone to arrange a time to meet. Alternately, please feel free to contact me to begin this process.

By signing below, you agree to the aforementioned conditions. Thanks for your time!

Sincerely,

Laurel Atkinson
Masters candidate, Environmental Studies
York University
laurel@publicspace.ca
416 604-2296

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Interview Questions: TPSC members[1]

Describe your relationship with Toronto.

How did you get involved with TPSC?

What does your work with the TPSC involve?

Are you happy with your role in the TPSC?

Do you feel that the TPSC strives to be inclusive? How? What are the challenges?

Does the membership reflect inclusiveness? Why or why not?

How do you define public space?

What are some examples of public sapces in Toronto?

Who is 'the public'?

Who has access to public space?

Do you see public space as being 'threatened' in Toronto?

To what extent do you believe "the public" as a whole values or embraces the sapces which are important to the TPSC?

[1] Interview questions were not provided in writing to the interviewees, but instead asked orally during the interview.