SECURING THE NEO-LIBERAL CITY: RISK MARKETS, GENTRIFICATION AND LOW-WAGE WORK IN VANCOUVER

by

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Abstract

Private security guards have become an increasingly visible presence in urban centres across North America -- Vancouver is no exception. This research explores the growth of the private security industry and the working lives of frontline guards within the context of neo-liberal economic and governance policies at the national, provincial and municipal levels, inner-city revitalization projects, and the emergence of a two-tiered post-industrial labour market. Private security firms are conceptualized first and foremost as selling security as a commodity. The demand for security services, or ‘risk markets’, have developed in Vancouver due in large part to the contracting out of formerly public services, dissatisfaction with public policing services among groups and individuals with resources to purchase alternatives and mounting social tensions resulting from inner-city gentrification and growing poverty and homelessness. Low wages, lax labour standards and limited regulation make private security services both affordable for clients and profitable for security entrepreneurs. Based on interviews with frontline security guards and representatives from management at private security firms, this research finds that guards occupy a contradictory social location as both low-wage workers and as agents of social control contracted to police some of the poorest and most marginalized members of society. This study asserts that while the presence of private guards can address some of the real and perceived security concerns in Vancouver’s increasingly economically and socially polarized inner-city, there are contradictions inherent in the city’s current approach to both urban development and policing. These contradictions include the reality that urban gentrification and government policies aimed at attracting investors, tourists and upper-income consumers to Vancouver inevitably contribute to the social problems that make the inner-city undesirable, that the security industry has a vested interest in generating demand for their product, and that low-wage guards have little stake in the order they have been contracted to uphold.
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Chapter One: Private Guards in Vancouver’s Changing Inner-City

In March of 2002, I moved into a new housing co-op on a mostly commercial street in Vancouver’s Chinatown. Having re-located from a quiet residential corner of east Vancouver, one of the first things that stuck me was the presence of uniformed private security guards patrolling the streets. My eighth floor apartment overlooks an alley. Several-well used dumpsters along with two small nooks providing protection from the rain made the alley a busy place, leading me to take up the habit of alley watching, particularly in the late evening. Several times every night, private security guards made their rounds, either on foot or in a marked patrol car. Each night they moved more-or-less cooperative homeless persons and drug users along from this dark, otherwise empty alley, sometimes being verbally and even physically abusive. One guard would often
'borrow' cigarettes from some of the economically marginal people in the city, while another would painstakingly destroy pieces of cardboard that potentially could be used as seats or wind shelters.

A bit of background research revealed that the activities in my back alley are not an isolated phenomenon. Overall, it is difficult to measure levels of private security expenditure because security functions are increasingly embedded in the design of products (OECD, 2004), from cars to homes, and, I will argue, in revitalized neighbourhoods and cities. Despite difficulties in measurement, the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (2004: 9) estimates the private security industry's turnover at between 100 billion and 120 billion US dollars annually. British Columbia has seen a 141% increase in the number of people employed as security guards between 1991 and 2001 (Vancouver Sun, 2003), almost five times the average growth rate of employment in all industries -- and the numbers continue to rise.

When security guards are hired, they assume a position of power and authority. The extent to which that power can be exploited when dealing with socially and economically marginalized populations was evident in the alleyway behind my building. Yet, there is also evidence to suggest that urban private security work cannot be understood in terms of a simple binary between the oppressed and oppressor. Security guards, who tend to be non-unionized, are five times more likely to be injured on the job than public police officers (Rigakos, 2002). Private security guards earn on average only $11.01 per hour nationwide; most of the guards who took part in this study earned less.

Over the course of this research, I encountered countless stories of violence and abuse on the part of security guards against, for the most part, very powerless individuals.
However, there seems to be something more than a straightforward abuse of power by overly zealous guards. Many of these accounts came from security guards themselves, as they explained that the reality of their jobs necessitates using tactics that are outside of the law:

We’re not allowed to use any means of restraint, no handcuffs, like we use zap straps\(^1\) when we can, but we’re not allowed... Now, if there’s a fight with five people and there’s two guards, you’re getting your ass kicked, what do you do, stand there and take a beating for the crappy wage you’re getting? (Jimmy\(^2\))

Guards also spoke extensively about the high demands placed on them by clients, a lack of respect from higher-income people, poor training and the reality of working in an industry where employers are continually looking for ways to cut labour costs in order to remain competitive. Understanding the nature of private security work in Vancouver requires an examination of issues extending well beyond incidents of abuse of the poor, the addicted, and the mentally ill at the hands of ‘rogue’ security guards. While it was witnessing these types of incidents that originally turned my interest toward this topic, they are not, in and of themselves, the focus of this research. Rather, this research focuses on the social and economic conditions that give rise to these sorts of extra-legal privatized policing activities.

I take the position that the size and nature of Vancouver’s private security industry has been affected by several interrelated phenomena, including: new inner-city revitalization projects, competition among cities (as well as individual neighbourhoods) for investment and tourist dollars, the city’s emergence as a post-industrial metropolis and ‘gateway’ to the Pacific Rim, economic polarization, the rise of a ‘new middle class’

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\(^1\) Plastic restraints
\(^2\) All guards and security companies are referred to using a pseudonym
with a preference for urban living, labour market deregulation and the increasing
privatization of formerly public services. Throughout this project I argue that, on the one
hand, markets for a range of security products are attributable to particular approaches to
city-building. On the other hand, the availability of these types of security services are
essential to the success of many city-building projects. In spite of the symbiotic
relationship between Vancouver’s city-building projects and the private security industry,
there are a number of contradictions inherent in the current approaches to both urban
development and policing in Vancouver that remain unresolved.

In this research, I delve into the contradiction inherent in doing urban private
security work in the context of both increased homelessness and visible poverty on the
streets, and a labour standards regime that results in poverty level wages and poor
working conditions for frontline guards. I explore the ways in which private policing
interacts with other elements of the push toward privatization of formerly public service.
Finally, I look at the relationship between the growth of localized private security patrols
and the creation of a commodified city to be sold on the increasingly competitive world
market.

**The political and economic context of security work in Vancouver**

In the spring of 2001, the BC liberal party was elected with a sweeping majority
to form a Provincial government on a platform underwritten by neo-liberal economic
ideals. Neo-liberalism “posits the process of restructuring as an inescapable necessity
which demands that previous definitions of the common good, such as social welfare, be
replaced with market liberal definitions such as ‘efficiency’ and ‘competition’ ” (Brodie,
1994: 56). In this context, the role of government in providing services directly to citizens is called into question.

The Liberal government began its economic restructuring program with a 25% across-the-board tax cut. This cut resulted in diminished levels and availability of income assistance, increased pressure on single parents to find paid work, an erosion of labour standards, and greater reliance on the private sector to provide formerly public services, including services related to security and corrections. Through this research I explore the growth of private security firms as a result of privatization and the idea of “responsible citizenship” espoused in neo-liberal discourse. I also explore the role that private security companies, and more specifically the guards they employ, play in the transformation of the city of Vancouver in a manner that fits with city-building dictates that reflect neo-liberal principles.

Private security companies and the work security guards do are related to the current neo-liberal economic and social policy context in two ways. These firms embody the practice of privatization of once public services. Inherent in privatization is the pursuit of profit through a reduction in labour costs. At the same time, these companies supply the bodies needed to do the ground work necessary to mitigate the negative effects of neo-liberal practices. This work includes policing private property, detecting poverty-related crime such as shoplifting and petty drug dealing, and eliminating visible signs of homelessness from city streets in an era of diminishing social support.
**Research puzzles**

The key puzzles that I aim to address through this research centre on a set of apparent contradictions inherent in neo-liberal city building practices as they have manifested themselves in Vancouver, particularly in relation to the consumption of private security. The first contradiction involves the relationship between neo-liberal practices and security threats (both objective and subjective). The number of homeless people on Vancouver city streets doubled between 2002 and 2004 (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2005), leading to new perceived risks. Increased homelessness has also created an unfavorable climate for attracting investment, tourists and higher-income homebuyers. This sharp increase in homelessness corresponds with the closure of a number of low rent residential hotels, the loss of low income rental housing stock to conversion, and a two year time limit on income assistance benefits put in place by the British Columbia Liberal government as part of an overall restructuring program. While the comprehensive restructuring of BC’s economy has allowed the government to market British Columbia as a good place for business with low taxes and a ‘flexible’ labour force, the negative fallout from the resultant policies has the potential to drive away tourists, investors and homebuyers.

The second apparent contradiction revolves around the desire of city politicians, developers and business people to reduce crime and ‘disorder’ as part of their plan to revitalize Vancouver and market it as a world-class city, and the fragmentary approach to policing that has been adopted. As funding for state-sponsored community policing centres has been cut by both the provincial and the municipal government, responsibility for security provision is being handed off to individuals, resident’s associations and business improvement associations. But in order to secure tourist markets, investors, and
major events like the 2010 Winter Olympics, Vancouver as a whole must be sold as a safe place to work and visit. Privatized policing solutions tend to have a crime and ‘disorder’ relocation effect, rather than a crime reduction effect. Security guards push petty criminals, the homeless, the addicted, the mentally ill and even skateboarders off the property they have been contracted to patrol, but are in no way responsible for what happens once the individuals leave their site. The result of this crime relocation strategy is that the consumption of private security services in one location generates demand for equivalent or even more aggressive security services in adjacent areas. In some cases, the race to enhance security services while ensuring that they remain affordable has led to practices that may in fact detract from security. These practices include hiring low-cost companies that do not train or license their guards in accordance with provincial regulations, and encouraging illegal practices among guards in order to deter ‘disorderly’ or criminal activity. While security companies benefit from this ever-growing market for their services, residents and visitors to the city are left with widely divergent levels of security in different areas and the ghettoization of poverty is intensified. This affect leads businesses and residents adjacent to those areas to outlay more resources on security services in order to prevent ‘spill-over’. At the same time, middle-class people with constraints on the amount of private security they can purchase feel the negative effects of crime relocation, as crime and ‘disorder’ are pushed out of areas of the city that cater to elite residents and tourists.

The third contradiction I address stems from the reality that privatized approaches to urban policing rely on a pool of low-wage, vulnerable workers for their success. While private security guards are actively engaged in the policing of the poorest of the
poor in Vancouver, they themselves make up part of the bottom tier of the post-industrial service economy. Some of the same government policies that have lead to increased homelessness and extreme poverty, such as cuts to social programs and labour market deregulation, negatively affect security guards as working-class people. Ironically, in the course of their work, some guards are unwittingly lending support to a development trajectory that excludes them from living in the city where they work.

**Study overview**

This study begins with an overview of my theoretical orientation. I have adopted a neo-Marxist political economy framework for this project, and take the position that neo-liberal economic and governing principles at the international, national and provincial levels have created the conditions under which the private security industry has been able to flourish. Chapter Two also outlines my methodological orientation and describes the data generation process for this research. Methodologically, I look to the work of Karl Marx and his intellectual heirs, most notably Dorothy Smith (1987, 1990, 2005), more specifically her concept of the ‘relations of ruling’. ‘Relations-of-ruling’ refers to the web of practices and relations of power that organize social and economic life in advanced capitalist societies, of which we are all a part. The data generation process for this research included qualitative interviews with fourteen frontline security guards and five representatives from management at four different private security firms. Data generation also included an examination of policy and legislative documents related to criminal and property law, the private security industry, the labour market, and city development. Finally, I highlight promotional materials created to sell condominiums, neighbourhoods, private security services, and the city of Vancouver as a whole.
Chapter Three introduces the concept of ‘risk markets’, the central organizing concept for my analysis of the private security industry. I begin by laying out the extent to which a security economy has developed in the OECD countries. I move on to look at some of the debates within the scholarly literature, centering on how to best theorize neoliberal security arrangements. I position my work within the neo-Marxist literature on private security, adopting George Rigakos’ (2002) concept of ‘risk markets’. The idea of “risk markets” emerges out of Rigakos’ observation that private security must be recognized first and foremost as a commodity in order to be fully understood. While I adopt “risk markets” as a lens through which to examine Vancouver’s private security industry, I also draw on the insights of other neo-Marxist theorists with a macro-level focus, arguing that it is important to understand the broader economic and political context out of which markets in “risk” emerge. It is also important to be cognizant of the reality that the risk markets I am investigating have emerged in a postcolonial and postindustrial urban centre. This socio-geographic context both intensifies the demand for security services and results in policing relations that are reminiscent of the colonial policing practices that facilitated the dispossession of Aboriginal people living in what is now Vancouver and the emergence of a settler city.

Chapter Four begins with an overview of the history of private security work, arguing that we are witnessing a re-emergence, rather than an emergence, of privatized forms of policing and security provision. The literature suggests that the form policing takes, whether public or private, is reflective of the dominant mode of production of the time. Thus, while risk markets have changed and evolved, they have been a fairly enduring feature of capitalist development. In Chapter Four I also look at the demand for
labour to provide privatized policing services, arguing that it is important to consider not only the types of risk markets that have developed, but also who does (and has historically done) the work of meeting changing security needs.

Chapter Five explores the contemporary evolution of risk markets at the international, national and local levels. This chapter begins with a look at the growing international market for high-end mercenary firms to intervene in international conflicts. I take the position that, while the work that these firms do is quite different from anything happening in Vancouver, this “risk market” has emerged out of the same political and economic context as the market for residential patrols in Canadian urban centres. I move on to examine the evolution of private policing in Canada, arguing that there are markets for a broad range of services in this country, and that the demand for more proactive and interventionist services is clearly growing. Chapter Five ends with a look at local risk markets in Vancouver, including ‘labour relations’ work, formerly public security services, residential security, mobile patrols, personal protection, canine patrols and ‘community policing’.

Chapter Six reviews the academic literature on contemporary city-building practices in order to draw out the linkages between urban development, private security and low-wage work. I look at the range of actors identified in the literature as having a role to play in both urban development and the growth of risk markets. I then explore the concept of ‘quality-of-life’ in both city-building and policing discourses, as well as the impacts of designing cities for tourists. Within this context I review the literature on city-building in Vancouver specifically, suggesting that trends in Vancouver are reflective of broader processes underway in much of Western Europe and North America, while
remaining attentive to the specific ways in which city-building is being undertaken in Vancouver.

Chapter Seven examines the experiences of private security guards as low-wage workers, paying particular attention to the impacts of policy choices aimed at ‘flexibilizing’ BC’s labour market on these workers. I begin Chapter Seven by presenting some of the reasons that the guards who took part in this study gave for coming to security work, as well as providing some information about their educational and employment histories. I move on to look at wages and working conditions in the private security industry, with a focus on labour legislation, regulations, and the administration of labour standards in British Columbia. Chapter Seven ends with a discussion of the position of immigrant workers in the labour market generally, and in the security industry specifically.

Chapter Eight provides an overview of the regulatory regime, both formal and informal, for the private security industry in BC. There has been increased emphasis placed on regulation and professionalization within the industry by both governments and certain company executives since the mid 1990’s. Training and licensing requirements were put in place to enhance standards in the industry in order to legitimate an expanding role for private security providers in the province. Guards report that these requirements are not always enforced and do little to ensure quality and professionalism in the industry. While a number of security companies are failing to meet the minimum requirements already in place, others would like to seen the standards raised to reduce competition from fly-by-night firms and to improve the image of the industry. In this chapter I also discuss some of the informal regulatory strategies used to motivate security guards, as
well as some of the informal rewards of security work. This chapter concludes with an examination of the internal disciplinary practices employed by security companies to ensure compliance from their workforce.

Chapter Nine provides an overview of the enforcement tactics available to private security guards in their work. While guards are limited in their legal power, they are able to draw on a number of areas of law to facilitate their work. When patrolling public property, guards are able to exercise the powers granted to all citizens who witness a crime in progress. Security guards working on private property are also able to use the authority invested in them as agents of the proprietor under the Trespass Act to enforce conditions on, or remove persons from, the areas they are contacted to patrol. Security guards often draw authority from their relationship with the public police, or by threatening public police involvement if the person or persons in question do not comply with their requests. Guards also use people’s lack of knowledge or confusion about the extent of private security guards authority to achieve compliance.

Chapter Ten examines the role the security industry plays in facilitating a particular approach to city-building in Vancouver. This chapter explores the relationship between development trends in the city of Vancouver, the evolution of risk markets and the work of front line security guards. It begins by identifying two fundamental contradictions facing Vancouver politicians, developers and business owners who have chosen to embrace neo-liberal city-building practices. The first contradiction is the need to attract investment through pro-business government policies, such as weak labour standards and cuts to social spending, while managing the evitable fall-out of the resulting poverty and desperation. The second contradiction involves the decision to
fragment governance and rely on privatized policing solutions that inevitably lead to
crime relocation rather than crime reduction, and hence an ever-growing demand for
more heavy-handed security services. I move on to examine three development projects
in Vancouver: the Concord Pacific Place mega-project, the redevelopment of Yaletown
as a quality-of-life district, and the creation of a tourist bubble around Gastown. Each of
these projects highlights the pivotal role that private security services play in
Vancouver’s revitalization. Chapter Ten also looks at the role of private security guards
in Vancouver’s poorest neighbourhood, where they contain the population within specific
geographic limits while paving the way for would-be gentrifiers. Chapter Eleven
concludes with a look at the Carrall Street Greenway project, a city-initiated public-
private partnership that is helping to link together Vancouver’s fragmented, privately
governed residential mega-projects, quality-of-life districts, and tourist bubbles, while
facilitating further gentrification and the emergence of new risk markets.

I begin Chapter Eleven by reflecting on some of the limitations of this research.
Next, I explore the benefits of having explored the issues under investigation through a
historical materialist lens, and the ways in which the concepts ‘relations of ruling’ and
‘risk market’ have guided this project. After exploring the theoretical relevance of this
study, I move on to look at the more concrete political lessons that can be drawn from
this research. First, I discuss the appeal of the private security industry. I move on to
examine the question of whether or not, in spite of the economic success of the industry,
private security has in fact lived up to its promises. I take the position that while the
consumption of private security services does seem to have a ‘crime’ relocation effect
and deters certain activities such as panhandling, sleeping in public, petty theft and open
drug use, the quality of the services clients are purchasing are not always what they seem to be. I also argue that low and modest income Vancouverites do not benefit from the privatization of security services, and that in some instances, by virtue of their position as exploited workers, guards may in fact contribute to property crime and disorderly behaviour. Finally, I discuss private security in Vancouver in light of the unresolved contradictions raised in this chapter.
Chapter Two: Theoretical and Methodological Approach

George Rigakos (2002) argues that it is important to look at security work as a commodity bought and sold on the open market and produced through the use of alienated labour. This theoretical approach has guided much of my thinking about the work of security guards in Vancouver. At the same time, urban risk markets emerge as part of a broader political economy that can only be fully understood by paying attention to fiscal policy at the provincial, national and international levels. Adopting a political economy approach is particularly important when looking at security guards as workers rather than simply as agents of social control.

In order to understand how private security work fits into the broader economic and political order, I turn to the work of Dorothy Smith. Smith (1987, 1990, 2005) has worked extensively on developing an approach to social research that allows researchers to bridge the gap between the experiences of individuals performing labour and the broader system in which their work is embedded. Smith is informed by the historical materialist conception of social and political organization originally developed by Marx and Engels. She argues that these theorists provide an alternative to the abstract and reified discourses of mainstream sociology:

Marx and Engels (1976), in their critique of those they describe as the German ideologists, propose to ground social science in the activities of actual individuals and the material condition thereof. They write an ontology for social science. History and society exist only in people’s activities and in the forms of cooperation that have evolved among them. They criticize the ideological reasoning of the German ideologists because it replaces the actual with the conceptual. The critique is more than one simply against idealism that treats historical change as generated by ideas. It is a critique of a method of reasoning about society that treats concepts as if they were agents (Smith, 2005: 54).
I follow Smith’s lead in looking to the work of Marx and those that came after to orient my analysis. I adopt a neo-Marxist materialist framework, arguing that systems of private property and wage labour are central to the phenomena under investigation in this research. I borrow Smith’s concept of “relations of ruling” as a conceptual tool for better understanding how work is organized to accomplish goals that might not be entirely visible from where that individual is located. Smith sees the experiences of individuals as they go about their daily work as an entry point into the social, economic and political relations of advanced capitalism. Her conceptualization of the relationship between individual activity and political economy, as well as her methodological commitment to grounding research in people’s experience, while simultaneously moving beyond that experience in order to explore the factors that have given rise to it, informs the approach to data generation that I bring to this research.

This chapter provides an outline of my general theoretical and methodological orientation, as well as data generation for this research. I begin this chapter by looking at private property, encoded in law, as both foundational to capitalism and as a site of continuous challenge, particularly in cities caught up in international property markets. Rather than approaching property as natural and neutral, I argue that it is important to be attentive to the process through which a particular model of property ownership came to take its hegemonic form and the power of an ideology that privileges private ownership over other property arrangements. I argue that, in order to fully understand private security work in Vancouver, it is important to be attentive to the role that private property plays in shaping not only the parameters of guards' work, but also their position in the labour market.
While the central focus of this research is economic and governing trends within the city of Vancouver, local economies cannot be understood in isolation of the broader global political economy in which they are embedded. I discuss Canadian political economy and the transition from Keynesian to Neo-liberal economic practices at the federal and provincial levels. I then move on to look at neo-liberal restructuring within an international division of labour in order to highlight the impact on low-wage workers. After developing this protracted account of contemporary political economy, I spend some time examining Dorothy’s Smith’s concept of ‘relations of ruling’ for its analytical utility for this research. I conclude this chapter with an overview of the data generation process for this study.

**Private property**

Private property is central to the phenomena under investigation. The emergence of private property as the dominant model of ownership is at the heart of both the constitution of the modern working-class, and the politics of real estate capitalism, both of which are central to this project. It is only with the emergence of private property as the hegemonic mode of social and economic organization that a contemporary notion of ‘the public/private divide’ emerges. At the same time, bourgeois control of the state apparatus meant that criminal law could be redefined, as legally sanctioned limits on the use of formerly common property erased many possibilities for life outside of the wage labour system.

In his look at property relations in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside -- the poorest urban area in the province, if not the country -- Nicholas Blomely (2004: xiii) links the loss of access to common lands by the peasantry in England to contemporary property
markets. He argues “[e]nclosures in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries swept away many traditional commoners’ rights in the name of improvement and monetization.” He goes on to explain that the process did not stop there. The enclosures put into place property relationships that left contemporary ownership of those lands -- which in some cases are situated in close proximity to London -- into the hands of modern day squires. Those lands are now the source of huge profits as they are caught up in the real estate bubble emanating out from London. The increased value of these lands has lead to rural gentrification that has only recently pushed remaining rural families out of the area. There is no one defining moment in the story of property: all that has come before affects current manifestations of property relations.

Vancouver does not exist outside of the historical processes set in motion through the erasure of the commons in eighteenth century England. Not only has the city been settled by many of the dispossessed that fled England and the rest of Europe as their way of life disappeared, Vancouver has been constructed out of a claim to property based on a colonial vision of ownership that emerged at the time of the enclosures. “English colonists in the New World took as given that enclosing, fencing, house construction and agricultural activity were clear acts that signaled private ownership...The absence of these spatial markers was then taken as empirical proof that native people had no claim to the land” (Blomely, 2004: 9). These colonial claims to property cannot be separated from the social relations of contemporary Vancouver:

Native grievances relating to aboriginal title have been unresolved since colonial settlement...While the issue of aboriginal title was easy to imagine as something outside the city, the visible presence of many native people in the city seemed to complicate things in important ways (Blomley, 2004: xiv).
The historical process of property appropriation that gave rise to European settlement in Vancouver continues to affect the ethno-cultural make-up of the city, as well as the distribution of power and privilege. First Nations people are among the most economically disadvantaged residents of Vancouver. The organization of property, particularly when encoded in enforceable law, shapes the social relations of a given society, affecting the conditions under which we live and work.

Blomley (2004: xiv) suggests that the meaning of property appears to be 'settled' in western cities. He writes: "what has been termed the 'ownership model' presumes a clarity and determinacy in the definition of what property is, and tells us which relationships between people and scarce resources are valued and which are not." He is referring to the hegemony of a property model that privileges either formally held private property or public (state owned) property and ignores other collective claims to property. Property is seen to bring permanency and stability, and as fostering "valued behaviors, including responsible citizenship, political participation and economic entrepreneurship. By extension people who do not own property (insofar as the ownership model is concerned) are treated with a good deal of ambivalence, suspicion, and even hostility" (Blomley, 2004: 4). Property ownership affects the relative ability of individuals to make claims to space in the city, and to make claims of community.

For Blomley (2004: 15), property is not simply designated and fixed, it must be continually and actively remade. He refers to the liberal ownership model as more aspiration than fact. Urban property relations and dispossession are continually challenged. Much of the work of private security guards is directed towards thwarting those challenges. The exclusiveness of Vancouver property markets means that security
guards, as low-wage workers, generally find themselves on the devalued side of the propertied versus non-propertied divide. Yet they are employed to stand in the place of the owners of defensible private space. The use of the privatized workers to defend property can be understood best within the context of economic policies that have created an increasingly polarized labour market and neo-liberal governance strategies whereby individuals and self-identified representatives of communities with adequate resources take up the work of governance, including the protection of property.

**Political economy and private security work**

The relationship between those who own the means of production and those who sell their labour power is at the root of Marxist thought. Despite these underlying social relations that define capitalism, the system has many transient features that have taken distinct forms at various historical junctures, both in terms of the relative power of capital versus labour, and in terms of the types of labour that workers do. The political economy of Vancouver is heavily influenced by the adoption of neo-liberal ideology and practices at the provincial and national levels, within an increasingly integrated global economic system.

Laissez-faire capitalism has been the dominant manifestation of capitalism in Canada. However, the country did see a brief experiment with Keynesianism at the end of the Second World War into the 1970s. When I discuss the changes brought about by neo-liberal ideology and policies, I am conceptualizing those changes in relation to the Keynesian economic model that dominated Canada during that period. Keynesian economics developed out of the ideas of John Maynard Keynes (1936). Keynes’ chief contribution to the field of economics was to rebut the underlying principle of classic
economic theory: regardless of economic downturns, capitalism has built-in equilibrating forces that allow markets to be self-regulating in the long run. Hence, government interference in the economy is at best unnecessary and at worst detrimental to the natural functioning of the market. Having felt the impact of widespread unemployment during the Great Depression, policymakers across North America and Europe were determined to avoid a repeat at the end of the Second World War. Most western governments turned to Keynesian principles because the theory promised governments the ability “to steer the capitalist state clear of both the political shoals of conservative laissez fair and the massive state ownership that socialism would bring” (McBride and Shields, 1997: 36).

Keynesianism was popular because it offered a series of technical solutions to deal with the types of crises faced by the capitalist order between the wars. Keynes promoted the development and funding of a network of social programs. He argued that “this spending could be legitimated, not as charity, but as an automatic stabilizer built into the economy to sustain aggregate demand in periods of cyclical downturn” (Wolfe 1985: 128). This concept is generally known as ‘counter-cyclical support’. During times of economic prosperity, state programs would be underused. However, in the case of an economic downturn, these programs would allow individuals to maintain their spending power. This would hasten an economic recovery, while avoiding the social misery of the Great Depression.

Keynesian economics expanded the list of responsibilities incumbent upon western governments to include full (or close to full) employment, high levels of economic growth combined with low inflation, and a more egalitarian distribution of incomes (McBride and Shields, 1997). These responsibilities were at least partially
fulfilled in Canada, with the growth of public education and social and health programs within the context of a Fordist mode of production where higher wages for working-class people, secured through union contacts, allowed them to contribute to economic growth through high levels of consumption.

The Keynesian consensus of the post-war period was short lived. By the 1970s, western capitalist states, including Canada, were facing a series of new ‘crises.’ The most commonly recognized of these crises was the Arab Oil embargo of 1973, which resulted in a sharp rise in oil prices by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. McBride and Shields (1997) note that this embargo was only the first in a series of hits taken by western capitalist economies during the 1970s. A second of the oft-cited reasons for the decline of confidence in the Keynesian model was declining rates of profit.

“Another was capital flight, as multinational corporations rapidly shifted their manufacturing investments to the newly-industrializing centres of the third world where pools of cheap labour could be readily found” (McBride and Shields, 1997: 47). This shift resulted in a period of de-industrialization in Canada, during which steelworks and other heavy industries shrunk, rapidly diminishing the pool of high paying blue-collar jobs.

In this context, a nearly hegemonic Keynesian consensus was gradually replaced with a neo-liberal consensus. This latter consensus is based on the premise that changing international realities mean that new market-based initiatives and deregulation polices must be adopted by all governments wishing to survive in the new global economy (Brodie, 1994). The neo-liberal consensus promotes a set of practices which include: the maximization of exports, reductions in social spending, the curtailment of economic
regulation, and the restructuring of national economies as part of transnational or regional trading blocks (Brodie, 1994). This consensus is a total reversal of the tenets of Keynesianism, which professes the need to ensure high levels of state spending in social services in order to ensure the ongoing functioning of the national economy.

In Canada, the process of welfare state retrenchment that accompanied the abandonment of Keynesianism has happened in two steps, due to the way in which powers and responsibilities are distributed between the provincial and federal government. British Columbia was, however, the site of the first attempt at a comprehensive provincial economic restructuring program in Canada, even prior to significant changes at the Federal level. In 1983, BC’s Social Credit government introduced twenty-six pieces of legislation which, taken together, “commenced a massive assault on the rights and entitlements of working people and the disadvantaged in BC” (Kube, 1984: 6). Then-premier Bill Bennett was confident that his government was “setting new standards soon to be copied throughout Canada” (Brownstone, 1984: 26). Bennett’s government expected that their policy choices would be criticized by trade unions and community groups, but did not expect a coordinated movement to emerge in response to the legislative changes. Such a movement did arise in the form of ‘operation solidarity’. Combining an escalating series of labour walk-outs with broad-based demonstrations, operation solidarity was able to force the government to amend or rescind a number of pieces of legislation, although a number of cuts (particularly those related to social services) went ahead as planned.

The federal government has since created conditions that have supported the current wave of retrenchment in British Columbia, which has intensifi...
election of the provincial Liberal Government in 2001. With the introduction of the Canadian Assistance Plan (CAP) in 1966, the federal government set the stage for a workforce that had more choice and power within the labour market, by enhancing supports to working people in times of unemployment. CAP provided a dollar-for-dollar matching of funds by the federal government for money spent by provincial governments on approved welfare and social service programs (MacDonald, 1999:73). The magnitude of the transfers under CAP allowed the federal government to set national standards pertaining to welfare entitlement and social services. The principles established by the federal government included: the right to income support regardless of the cause of need; that individuals not be forced to work in exchange for support; a prohibition against minimum residency requirements; and the right to appeal a decision (MacDonald, 1999:73).

The CAP allowed the federal government to provide counter-cyclical support in times of slow economic growth and high unemployment. Since CAP involved dollar-for-dollar matching of provincial expenditure, money spent to increase assistance to the unemployed translated into increased federal money coming into the provinces (Pulkingham and Ternowetsky, 1996). CAP funding provided more than income assistance. It also allowed provinces to develop childcare, home making and child welfare services. CAP money was used exclusively for social service and welfare programs, as health care and post-secondary education were funded through a system of block grants termed Established Program Financing (EPF) (Pulkingham and Ternowetsky, 1996). With EPF in place there was no competition between social assistance and the ministries of health and advanced education for scarce resources.
The CAP and EPF were short lived. By the 1980s, the Canadian federal government stated: "as a consequence of new economic, fiscal, and global realities, social policy has to facilitate and assist the occupational, industrial, and often geographic relocation that new economies require of the current generation of Canadians" (Prince and Rice, 2000: 91). In 1995, the federal Liberal government cemented the shift away from federally-mandated collectivization of social responsibility under the pretense of protecting the future viability of the social safety net (MacDonald, 1999). In that year, the federal Liberals introduced the Canadian Health and Social Transfer (CHST), replacing both EPF and the CAP. Together with a dramatic reduction in overall transfers, the CHST afforded the provincial governments much more discretion to restructure their economies.

In this national context, the Provincial government in British Columbia was able to implement its far-reaching restructuring program. This program set the stage for both the low-wage post-industrial economy that has led to the growth in private security firms and some of the extreme social inequality that has left so many property owners and business groups feeling that they need private security services. In April 2002, the provincial government revamped income assistance in British Columbia. While the Province's income assistance rates and policies were already a target of criticism from anti-poverty activists and scholars, support rates were reduced or, according to the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance, "simplified to create a standard rate for people under 65" (Government of British Columbia, MEIA 2002). Rates were reduced, and employable clients are now limited to 24 cumulative months of assistance in any five-year period. The $100-$200 earnings exemption for those who earned additional
income while on assistance was discontinued. Changes to income assistance have had profound impacts on levels of poverty in the city of Vancouver.

While cuts to social programs have most seriously and immediately affected those outside of the labour market, they also affect those at the bottom end of the labour market. A lack of redistributive policies, labour market de-regulation and meager social programs have a strong impact on the relative bargaining power of working people. The residual nature of social programs in Canada and other nations caught up in the neo-liberal drift creates a situation whereby employers can pay poverty-level wages and forgo paying benefits. Employees are forced to accept those wages due to the lack of social programs to fall back on. This process provides a subsidy to capital at both ends, through low wages and low taxes.

An analysis of the welfare state brings up important points in relation to the overall neo-liberal shift in Canadian politics because it illuminates the role the state plays in shaping private labour market conditions. As well as being responsible for income assistance policies that undermine working people’s relative bargaining power, the BC government has also drastically altered employment standards legislation in this province. Between 2002 and 2004 the BC government introduced three bills that resulted in approximately 42 changes to the provincial Employment Standards Act. A further 40 changes have been made to the Employment Standards Regulation since the Liberals came to power in 2001. At the same time, there have been major cuts to budget and staffing levels at the Employment Standards Branch (Fairey, 2005: 4) which oversees compliance with labour standards by employers. Some positive changes were made to the
labour standards system, including higher fines for employers who violated the Act.

However, Fairey (2005: 5) concludes that:

They are far outweighed in both number and significance by those that undermine the ability of the employment standards system to provide meaningful protection to all workers. Taken together, the changes have created an employment standards system that is less reliable, less transparent and less effective in providing a foundation of basic protection for workers.

One stated goal of the provincial government in introducing these changes to the employment standards system was to enhance workforce ‘flexibility’ in BC (Fairey, 2005). The discourse of labour market flexibility has been adopted in many jurisdictions as part of neo-liberal restructuring programs and is premised on the notion that labour markets have become too rigid in industrialized countries where labour standards were introduced at the height of the Keynesian/Fordist era. These ‘rigid’ labour standards are faulted for deterring investment, slowing economic growth and ultimately creating unemployment. In practice, the flexibilization of the labour market combines a movement away from standardized employment for workers, industry deregulation, and more stringent eligibility requirements for seasonal workers attempting to claim employment insurance benefits or wanting to access social programs. In British Columbia, the changes to the employment standards system have ‘flexiblized’ the labour force in a number of ways. First, the way that overtime is calculated was revamped, making it more difficult for workers to collect overtime pay. Second, minimum shifts were cut, giving employers the ‘flexibility’ to call in workers for two hour shifts. There was elimination of the right to sectoral bargaining rights and children as young as 12 are now allowed to work provided they have a parent’s permission. Finally, the Ministry of Skills Development

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3 The changes to overtime calculation will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6
and Labour Services introduced a new First Job Wage, which allows employers to hire workers who cannot document that they have had 500 hours of previous employment at a rate of $6.00 an hour. This rate is two dollars an hour less than the standard minimum wage in BC (Fairey, 2005). Taken together, the flexibilization of labour market regulations in BC have been very costly for vulnerable workers, including young people, single mothers and recent immigrants.

**Globalization and labour in Canada**

While the programs and policy shifts that affect individual workers often emanate from their respective provincial or national governments, it is important to keep in mind that these policy decisions are made within the context of an increasingly global economic system. For the purpose of this research, I discuss the globalization of the economy since the breakdown of the post-war compromise. A globalized (or at least globalizing) economy is nothing new. In his communist manifesto, issued in 1848, Marx overviewed the globalizing tendencies of capitalism:

The world-market [has] given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country...it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climates. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations (Marx, 1988: 58, cited in Panitch, 2003: 13).
Neo-liberal globalization can be described as an acceleration of the process that has long been underway in the industrialized world and its peripheries. Leo Panitch (2003) argues that there are several aspects that make the current wave of globalization in the context of neo-liberalism unique. First, the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the embrace of market principles by China and Vietnam have led to the rapid spatial expansion of capitalism. Second, there has been a sweep of capitalist ideals, values and culture that has accompanied the contemporary wave of globalization in a way that was not found at other points. Third, he points out that there is an increased self-identification on the part of the global capitalist class that stands above national identities (although he notes that this process is far from complete). Fourth, Panitch notes that advances in technology have revolutionized the flow of ideas and capital, creating a stronger worldwide system of finance and production. And finally, he argues that state governments have become increasingly geared towards fostering the growth of global capital accumulation. Taken together, these elements create a unique political and economic context, although one that has emerged out of processes underway since the early mercantile period.

As was previously noted, part of the impetus behind the shift away from the Keynesian model was the increasing threat of ‘capital flight.’ Rather than attempting to protect against this, successive Canadian governments have embraced the globalization of production through multilateral trade agreements, including the Free Trade Agreement and the North America Free Trade Agreement, resulting in what Broad (1995: 27) refers to as continental corporate restructuring. These agreements enhance the mobility of capital, in essence facilitating capital flight though the elimination of tariffs. In this context, a flexible labour market and low levels of taxation are presented to the electorate
as the only way of remaining competitive. Through these strategies, “capital has emancipated itself from labour” (Broad, 1995: 21). The most commonly cited example of this process is the phenomenon of runaway shops, generally associated with the rust belt of the United States. These factories have moved to Latin America where labour costs, taxes and environmental regulations are lower. This relocation is facilitated by trade agreements, because companies do not pay tariffs on products when they cross back over the border to reach the US market. This process is also occurring in Canada, particularly though the closing of American branch plants and threats of relocation if workers will not make concessions in terms of wages and benefits (Broad, 1995).

Despite its surface appearance, the international division of labour is not simply a dichotomy between those living and working the in ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ worlds. An examination of workers in the security industry in Vancouver makes this clear. Immigration and settlement are generally not seen as pertinent to discussions of economic restructuring, but the relationship between immigration and state restructuring, particularly in the areas of welfare state and labour market policy, cannot be ignored for a number of reasons:

First, since immigration is expected to respond to labour market needs, both today and in the past, it should be considered an explicit part of Canadian economic policy. Second, immigration is also directly relevant to Canadian social policy. Immigrants are expected to solve some of the demographic challenges of a country with a relatively low birth rate and a rapidly changing population. Immigration is therefore directly relevant to the capacity of the Canadian welfare state to continue to offer social security. Yet, immigrants are often scapegoated as one of the groups who are a drain on the system. Finally, a focus on immigration promises to bring important insights to an understanding of the nature and scope of changes in social policy, as such changes also affect immigrants themselves through services and universal rights that they may share -- or be denied -- with Canadian citizens (Arat-Koc, 1999: 32).
It is important to understand the ways in which real and perceived differences between western and non-western workers facilitate the creation of a flexibilized labour market as well as the privatization of formerly public services.

Immigration and globalization are multifaceted processes with differing effects for individuals. Panitch (2003:13) notes that, "[o]n the one hand, American governments [are] leading the drive to break down barriers on trade and investment; on the other hand the same governments [are] raising higher and higher barriers on the movement of people across their borders." Similar processes are underway in Canada, where there has been a series of neo-liberal shifts in immigration policies. Since the 1980s, Canada has seen both the creation of the business class immigration category and the introduction of bills restricting the ability of individuals to make refugee claims. Immigrants now have less access to the Canadian welfare state (Arat-Koc, 1999), meaning that they are increasingly commodified within the labour market, as rights and entitlements dwindle for the Canadian-born working class. Welfare state retrenchment has opened up labour markets as low-wage workers replace union jobs. This shift has a profound impact on the types of work that immigrants do in Canada, as well as the conditions under which they work.

While Canada has opened itself up for foreign direct investment, resulting in an emerging class of economically powerful business immigrants, it has also created a context where large numbers of immigrant workers with little power in the labour market provide investors with a cheap source of labour. This foreign direct investment has been critical to the real estate boom in Vancouver. At the same time, a pool of low wage immigrant workers has been central to getting development projects off the ground.
The post-industrial workforce, of which private security guards are a part, has emerged in the context of privatization, deregulation, the flexibilization of labour, and welfare state retrenchment within an increasingly globalized labour market. The post-Fordist, or postindustrial, workplace is characterized by the polarization of the workforce within a service-based economy. “Instead of a mass labour force of mainly semi- or unskilled workers, a smaller multi-skilled core workforce is required. The peripheral workforce of unskilled workers is low-paid, temporary, often part-time and increasingly consists of women and ethnic minorities” (Reiner, 1992: 777). Unlike their Canadian-born counterparts many recent immigrants become part of this peripheral workforce not because they are unskilled but because the skills they bring with them are not recognized by the Canadian government or professional associations. Immigrants who have been in Canada less than five years have the most difficulty integrating into the Canadian labour market of any group of workers in spite of the fact that they are more likely that the Canadian-born population to have a university education (Zaman, Diocson and Scott, 2007). Many security guards are drawn from this pool of highly educated recent immigrants.

Once employed in these peripheral jobs, immigrant workers are disproportionately negatively affected by government policy changes intended to ‘flexibilize’ BC’s labour market. They are also particularly vulnerable to exploitation by employers who do not adhere to even the nominal employment standards that remain in place. For example, a study looking at the experiences of 100 Filipino workers in BC between 2005 and 2006 found that sixteen percent of these workers had been paid the six dollar an hour ‘first job’ rate and that half of them did not receive a wage increase after
they had worked for 500 hours, the maximum amount of time an employer can legally pay this lower wage rate. The study also found that “When their rights were violated, if any action at all was taken, this took the form of participants quitting their jobs rather than demanding their rights or making a formal complaint” (Zaman, Diocson and Scott, 2007:4). The authors of the study argue that while workers tended to find new jobs quickly, the conditions were generally similar to those at their previous place of employment. This leads them to conclude that low unemployment has not enhanced these workers’ rights or improved their working environments (Zaman, Diocson and Scott, 2007).

The move to a post-Fordist economy means that traditional blue-collar jobs disappear, while insecurity and the lack of a safety net for the very poor can augment crime and perceived ‘disorder’, resulting in the criminalization of poverty and unemployment. These economic changes, then, affect both the employment structure and the social relations of the city. The very poor are forced into homelessness or crime, while a growing number of the working poor are deployed at the front lines between wealth and poverty in order to ensure the quality-of-life of more wealthy residents and tourists. However, these relationships between economic policy, a new employment structure and the changing face of the city are not always visible to us as we go about our lives. Dorothy Smith posits the concept of ‘relations of ruling’ as a tool for better understanding the way in which our experiences are both shaped by and work to shape the social world in which we live,
The relations of ruling

While a traditional Marxist political economy orientation is premised on a clear distinction between workers and owners, understanding the work of security guards requires a more nuanced approach. Smith’s concept of “relations of ruling” offers that potential. Smith (1987: 3) defines the relations of ruling as “the specific inter-relation between the dynamic advance of the distinctive forms of organizing and ruling in contemporary capitalist society and the patriarchal form of our contemporary experience” (Smith, 1987: 3). Smith conceptualizes the relations of ruling as the web of practices that bring individuals into line with the general form of organization required by the capitalist system. Rather than posit simple dichotomous relationships between groups -- for example, capitalist/worker -- “the concept of ‘relations of ruling’ posits multiple intersections of structures of power and emphasizes the process of ruling, not a frozen embodiment of it” (Mohanty, 2003: 56). Employing this concept, contradictions inherent in the positionality of security guards as both working-class people and enforcers of capitalist order can be explored, opening up space for an investigation into the fluid nature of power as it is mobilized in the process of neo-liberal city-building in Vancouver.

Smith uses the concept of ‘relations of ruling’ as a way of understanding “how power is exercised in local settings to accomplish extra-local interests” (Campbell and Gregor, 2004: 36). These relations are not abstract: they originate somewhere in human

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4 Smith deploys the relations of ruling as a conceptual tool to engage in Institutional ethnography, a methodological/theoretical approach she developed. Institutional ethnography orients the researcher to puzzles that emerge in everyday life as people actually experience them. Smith refers to these puzzles as ‘problematics’ and seeks to explore the activities and forms of organization that have given rise to those experiences. While I am informed by Institutional Ethnography, I cannot claim it as a method here as institutional ethnographies tend to focus heavily on the discursive organization of social life through texts and discourse, which is not the central focus of this project.
intention. But because that intention is obscured by their impersonal and institutional
nature, the relations of ruling are hidden from our immediate view. For example, security
guards are contracted by Business Improvement Associations to deter panhandling in
front of member businesses. These organizations are locally based, premised on the idea
of localized control and neighborhood involvement in governance and economic
development. However, these organizations require enabling legislation, and are also part
of a trend across western countries toward this form of governance. They rely on a
discourse of privatization, devolution, and community, which masks their un-democratic
character and helps brings diverse areas of the city into line with overall goals of urban
renewal, attracting investment, and reducing public spending. These organizations play a
critical role in organizing policing in a way that reflects the goals of neo-liberal city-
builders. By bringing rules, regulations, procedures and discourses from outside of
people’s everyday worlds to bear on the type of work that they do, people can be
incorporated into the relations of ruling without necessarily being entirely committed to,
or even aware of, their role in producing and reproducing broader system goals. I am
interested in exploring how individuals from working-class backgrounds, employed for
low wages with few (if any) benefits, come to be actively engage in directly controlling
the poorest of the poor and indirectly contributing to city-building practices detrimental
to their own well-being. As a researcher, being attentive to the relations of ruling
underpinning urban redevelopment in Vancouver and the position of security guards
within that web of relations can assist me to that end.
Methodological orientation

Marx taught us that it is important not to look at capitalist societies as they represent themselves ideologically from the top down, because the concrete experience of individuals within that society are often very different. He uses the example of the highly transparent nature of master-servant relationship of feudal times to illustrate the ways in which similar relationships between those who sell their labour power and the owner of the means of production are hidden in capitalist society. Marx (1970: 207) posits the notion that, despite the tendency of political economists to examine a given country by analyzing large-scale concepts such as population, those types of categories will only remain vague abstractions if the inquirer assumes them as a starting point. However, if an investigation moves in the opposite direction, and starts in the experience of individuals performing labour within that population, the inquirer will be able to develop an understanding “which is not a vague concept of a whole, but a totality comprising many determinants and relations” (Marx, 1970: 205).

Smith (2005: 57) notes that Marxist methodology has been a major influence on her work. She looks to Capital in particular, where Marx painstakingly unearths the tangible relations underlying such abstractions as ‘capital’, in order to get at the concrete ways in which surplus value is extracted from workers through the wage-labour system. She explains that: “for Marx, the concepts of political economy are not to be taken as the givens of a social science. They are expressing the social relations that have emerged historically, and it is these social relations that should be the object of investigation”. Concepts should not be privileged in such as way that they appear to exist independently of the concrete phenomenon that the social researcher observes in the social world.
Borrowing from Dorothy Smith's methodological approach, I will explore the contemporary relations of ruling that shape Vancouver's city-building trajectory, starting with what frontline security guards tell me about their experiences as they go about their daily work, as well as what their employers can tell me about the growth and structure of the security industry in Vancouver. Campbell and Gregor (2004: 59) note that there are two levels of data collection involved in research that attempts to link peoples' everyday activity to broader economic and social processes. Data must be generated to help the researcher understand what people do in their local daily settings. These data sets can be referred to as entry-level data because they provide a point of entry into the social relations under investigation. Security guards can provide this entry-level data by sharing how the world looks to them, nothing more. Therefore I have to take a two-pronged approach to data generation by using legislative and policy documents as well as promotional materials developed by the real estate, tourism, and private security industries to move beyond entry-level data and explore the relations of ruling in which guards' experiences are embedded.

**Data generation**

As part of this research, I used a range of methods and data sets to explore the underlying relations that are of interest to me. I divide the data sources I use for this project into three sets. The first set includes two types of qualitative interviews -- interviews with guards and interviews with management from security companies. Originally, I had planned to conduct interviews with representatives from business improvement associations that contract private security. After attempting to secure interviews using a formal letter, followed by two e-mails, and eventually a follow-up
telephone call with no response from any of the Business Improvement Associations contacted, I made the decision to rely on the printed and web-based materials produced by these organizations. The second data set includes relevant legislative and policy documents. The final data set includes promotional and representational materials produced by developers, staff at the City of Vancouver, and real estate companies. This data set also includes materials that promote the security industry itself.

Interviews

I began my inquiry by conducting a series of in-depth qualitative interviews with 14 frontline private security guards working in the city of Vancouver. I also conducted interviews with five management or owners from four private security firms. These firms range in size from approximately 1300 employees in the Vancouver area alone to just sixteen employees. Because my interest is primarily in how security work is embedded in the broader institutionalized relations of real estate capitalism and the development of high-end residential, shopping, and entertainment districts in downtown Vancouver, it was beneficial to talk to individuals from a wide range of firms on two fronts. First, there is high turnover in the private security industry, with clients often changing their security provider every few months. Generally speaking, no one firm is tied to any particular site in a permanent way. Turnover is due, in part, to the competitive nature of the industry and the constant emergence of new firms willing to provide similar services at a lower cost. It is also due in part to the changing security needs of clients. For example, many up-scale residential towers hire a very low-cost firm where few guards speak English to provide site security during the construction phase, but switch to a new firm once the tower is open and interaction with condo owners is required on a daily basis. Second, by recruiting guards for interviews independently of their employers, I was able to offer a
higher of degree confidentiality, and hence secure more candid interviews. It was also important to talk to representatives from management at a range of firms because different firms have different specializations and institutional cultures. I spoke to the representatives from management at their places of work, mainly in an office setting, although I conducted one interview in a Yaletown building where the co-owners of the company had access to a boardroom. I conducted all of the interviews with guards away from their work settings, generally in coffee shops or restaurants.

The first set of interviews, those conducted with frontline private security guards, provide the entry-level data for this project. I recruited guards in a number of ways -- by touring the downtown area of the city and handing out flyers to guards as they worked, through posters, through outreach to organizations serving South Asian immigrants\(^5\) and through word of mouth. Word of mouth was by far the most effective means of recruitment, although it did result in a particular sample. The guards I interviewed ranged in age from mid-twenties to late-fifties. Of the 14 guards I interviewed only two were recent immigrants, and ten identified as white. White and non-immigrant guards are likely overrepresented in this sample. Having the opportunity to speak to many Canadian-born, white guards did provide an opportunity to explore the ways in which some of these guards distance themselves from their recent immigrant counterparts, focusing heavily on their real or perceived lack of fluency in English. This was particularly interesting in light of the fact that immigrant guards are often better educated than their Canadian-born

\(^5\) The decision to outreach to organizations serving immigrants was made after it became clear through interviews with guards and company representatives as well as through direct observation that South Asian men are disproportionately represented among security guards and all attempts to reach out to South Asian security guards in person failed.
counterparts. However, more opportunity to hear about these and other issues from the perspective of immigrant workers would have been a valuable contribution to this study. All of the guards that took part in this study were men, despite my having been told by security company executives that approximately 10% of guards are women (although some of the smaller firms employed no women guards). My inability to recruit women guards is a major weakness of this study. The contradictory social location of security guards generally is undoubtedly complicated by gender given that some employers and guards that I interviewed displayed highly chauvinistic attitudes towards women, that security guards are very reliant on presumed authority in their work, and that security work tends to involve working irregular shifts or being on-call, both of which are difficult to balance with childcare responsibilities.

While I used questions to guide informants toward the information of interest to me -- mainly information about social status and employment background, working conditions, and the actualities of their workdays -- no formal interview schedule was adhered to. Interviews lasted from 25 minutes to over two hours. All interviews were recorded and transcribed in full. The goal of these interviews was not to generate data that would allow me to make definitive claims about what security guards believe, but rather to describe the realities of guards' working lives from their own perspective, as well as to identify who is employed in security, the work they do, and the conditions under which they do it. These interviews allowed me to begin to develop an account of how individuals are mobilized to do security work in the city. These interviews also provide an account of what clients want from a security provider, and the means by which guards attempt to meet client goals.
The second set of interviews, those conducted with management, came about in a different way. Companies were contacted through a formal letter of introduction on University of British Columbia letterhead. Representatives from management were asked to get in touch with me to set up an interview. I selected companies to contact based on their visibility. Only one company replied to the first letter, the rest got in touch after I sent out follow up e-mails. Company executives were able to explain labour practices, standards of expected behavior for guards, levels of turnover and broader demographic trends within their organizations. These interviews also yielded further insight into how government regulation and development trends affect the security industry. Again, no formal interview schedule was used. We discussed hiring practices, labour costs and disciplinary problems, as well as demographics within their company. We also discussed the state of the industry, government regulation, the needs and desires of clients, and the potential for growth in private security. Interviews lasted between half an hour and one hour. All interviews were taped and transcribed in full.

Policy and legislative documents

In order to better understand the nature of private security work, it is important to understand the legislative context. To that end, the second data set includes policy documents that shape the context in which private security work is done. Because so many guards discussed dissatisfaction with their wages and working conditions, I began by looking at the labour context in British Columbia. The Employment Standards Act, as well as policy documents that outline individuals' access to social assistance and other resources outside of the labour market, give a sense of how labour is organized from outside of any particular firm or industry. Over the course of interviews, it became clear that regulations around immigration and a lack of recognition of educational credentials
from other countries are also important to understanding private security work and its position within the Canadian economy.

Second, I looked at documents that shape who is recognized as a security guard, paying attention to rules for training, licensing and regulation within the industry. While industry representatives were important in pointing me to the pertinent regulations and licensing bodies, the accounts of guards illustrated that there is no direct relationship between the laws and the actual practices of security work on the ground. These documents are none-the-less useful in terms of understanding how the private security industry is legitimated, as well as for highlighting opposition between formal versus informal accounts of how the industry functions. While private security guards do not have much in the way of legal powers derived from the state, they none-the-less draw on legislation to justify their work. I looked at the legislation through which guards draw their power, including the Criminal Code of Canada. Specific legislation, such as the Safe Streets Act and the Amendment to the Trespass Act 2004, go a long way in shaping access to public and mass private property across areas of the city. These legislative documents are interrogated for both the process through which they came into being, and the ways they facilitate neo-liberal city-building practices.

Promotional and representational materials

The third data set for this project includes promotional and representational materials. These materials are documents meant to sell Vancouver, or a piece thereof, to residents, tourists, and investors. These materials include advertisements in travel magazines, real estate development advertisements, and real estate billboards. They include pamphlets produced by tourism Vancouver and the Vancouver Board of Trade, as well as web-based marketing and promotional materials. I make extensive use of
marketing materials produced by business improvement associations. The media also produces a range of material that promotes Vancouver, and also highlights some of the ‘problems’ facing developers and promoters of the city, such as panhandling and homelessness. The specific materials that I have chosen to include in this data set relate to topics that came up over the course of interviews: tourism, new residential towers and shopping developments. They also include materials focused on gentrifying areas of the downtown core where private security guards are employed, such as business improvement area reports and vision plans. Finally, I look at promotional materials produced by security companies to market their services, in order to explore the extent to which the claims of the industry reflect the desires of actors involved in city-building.

I bring an interpretive approach to my analysis of these texts (Mason, 1996: 77). I look at these materials in terms of the textual messages (written and visual) that they convey and images that they conjure. I treat these materials as the product of human activity and look at why they were produced, their funding sources, and their intended audience. In so doing I have developed a clearer picture of how Vancouver is being represented and how its image is being marketed. This approach has helped me develop a sense of what security guards are being mobilized to accomplish. I look for messages about not only ‘security’, but also ‘lifestyle’, and argue that physical safety is only one part of what security guards are producing for clients through their work; they are also helping to produce a particular set of social relations within the spaces that they police.

In order to organize the mass of documents and other materials that do representational or promotional work, I made a choice to focus on the downtown core of the city. I begin with the central business district and then move on to the areas that
border it physically: Yaletown, The Concord Pacific Place development on False Creek, Gastown, and the micro-neighbourhoods that comprise the Downtown Eastside (Chinatown/Strathcona), as well as emerging micro-neighbourhoods, such as the International Village.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have generated a theoretically-informed framework for this study grounded in historical materialism. I have argued that property relations are fundamental to understanding the work that security guards do, as well as the broader political economy in which their work is embedded. I then looked at the importance of political economy as a tool for understanding the growth of the private security industry in Canada. The shift from Keynesianism to Neo-liberalism at the international, national and provincial levels over the past thirty years has had a profound effect on the nature of the labour market as well as the social relations of cities.

An important aspect of this project entails bridging the divide between the experiential realm of guards’ lives and the political economy that, in part, gives rise to those experiences. To that end I borrow the concept of ‘relations of ruling’ from Dorothy Smith and draw on Marxist methodological insights to inform data generation. I conclude this chapter with an overview of how data were generated for this research. I make use of three data sets: qualitative interviews, policy and legislative documents, and promotional materials, to generate an account of the relationship between low-wage labour, private security and city-building practices in Vancouver. In the next chapter I position my work within the scholarly literature on private policing and adopt ‘risk markets’ as the central organizing concept for this study.
Chapter Three: Risk Markets

The retrenchment of social programs and the privatization of formerly public services are defining features of neo-liberal restructuring. New spaces for entrepreneurial activity related to security provision have opened up in Vancouver as a result of the withdrawal of public security services (such as in-house hospital security) and cuts to funding for public programs (such as community policing centres). Markets for private security have also opened up in response to new sources of insecurity -- both objective and subjective -- that characterize life in post-industrial cities within a rapidly globalizing world. The proliferation of uniformed guards is indicative of a quantitative increase in levels of policing and surveillance activities, but also of a qualitative shift in how social order is maintained through the targeting of policing services to those who are willing to pay.

Most observers would agree that there has been a significant growth in markets for private security. However, there are fundamental disagreements over how to best conceptualize changes in the way security services are rationed and delivered, and over what these changes mean for the diverse individuals who live and work in urban centres. In order to begin to address the role that private security guards play in Vancouver's gentrifying neighbourhoods, as well as the contradictions inherent in that work, it is essential to locate this research within the conceptual and theoretical debates on private security.

In this chapter, I begin by laying out the extent to which an economy in security-related products and services has developed in the OECD countries caught up in the thrust of accelerated globalization. Accounting for this global context is important in
order to understand processes underway in Vancouver that have resulted in increased demand for private security services. I move on to look at some of the debates within the scholarly literature centering on how to best theorize neo-liberal security arrangements. The literature on contemporary private security can be broadly characterized as having one of three orientations: a pluralistic orientation that emphasizes the plurality of state and corporate interests at work in modern policing regimes, a governmentality/risk society orientation that focuses mainly on the techniques through which risks and potential security breaches are managed in neo-liberal contexts, or a neo-Marxist orientation that focuses on inequities in the targeting and distribution of policing resources.

I position my work within the neo-Marxist literature on private security and adopt George Rigakos’ (2002) concept, “risk markets”, as the central organizing concept for this research. The concept of “risk markets” emerges out of Rigakos’ observation that private security must be recognized first and foremost as a commodity. Rigakos develops the concept of ‘risk markets’ to distinguish his work not only from pluralist, risk society and governmentality theorists, but also from the work of other neo-Marxists. He criticizes instrumentalist Marxists, who he feels rely too heavily on accounts of private policing that focus on the role of the state as managing committee for the bourgeoisie and the role of private police in suppressing labour. Rigakos also argues that structuralist Marxist accounts of private security work focus too heavily on the role of the state in the development of private policing. He sees this focus as an inherent weakness, given that “Marx himself said comparably little about the state per se; he was more concerned about how capital was organized -- specifically, about the mechanisms by which value, price,
and profit operate. In this sense most Marxian analyses of the police have not seized hold of Marx's greatest contribution to knowledge" (Rigakos, 2002: 13). Previous studies of policing have not examined, for example, the relative productivity, both material and symbolic, of public versus private police and the impact that this productivity may have on macroeconomic trends in law enforcement. Nor have they examined security as a commodity, particularly its fetishistic aspects, and, so far, no study of private policing has adequately addressed how surplus value is extracted or how control of the workforce is maintained. Thus Rigakos contends that "[i]n sum, the need for revived Marxian sensibility in our analyses of contract private security stems from the rather inane observation that these organizations are, after all, out to make a profit: they must sell security" (Rigakos, 2002: 13).

While I adopt "risk markets" as a conceptual lens through which to examine the nature of new private security arrangements in Vancouver, I also draw on the insights of other neo-Marxist theorists, mainly those with a structuralist orientation, as well as those of theorists with a postcolonial orientation. While the commodification of security work is central to understanding policing trends in Vancouver, it is also important that those trends are contextualized within the broader economic and political context out of which risk markets emerge. This context includes the withdrawal or privatization of state services as well as increased social polarization due to the flexibilization of labour, an ideology of individualized responsibility, and the increased international flow of people and goods in advanced capitalist countries. The resultant social and economic inequality is racialized. British Columbia's colonial past is deeply implicated in contemporary settlement patterns within the city, as well as in the more general distribution of valued
resources, from jobs, to political power to real property. In this context, the marketization of security services has had a disproportionate negative impact on the lives of Aboriginal people living in urban centres, given that they are among the most likely to be homeless or under-housed, and thus to be considered a potential security threat by those in a position to contract private guards. Aboriginal people are also significantly less likely than other Vancouver residents to be in a position to purchase security services. The result is the perpetuation of policing practices that remove of Aboriginal people from the space of the settler city while their security needs are ignored.

**The security economy**

There is an emerging global security economy in the OECD countries. Stevens (2004) describes this ‘security economy’ as “a kaleidoscope cluster of activities concerned with preventing or reducing risk of deliberate harm to life and property”. The importance of understanding security as a commodity rather than just an end goal becomes apparent when the sheer volume of economic activity related to the desire to secure one’s person or property is taken into consideration. Demand for privatized security-related services and products emerges when individuals, businesses and other organizations seek a higher level of security services than the public police can provide, or when the state decides that providing these services publicly is too costly. Enterprising individuals and companies then step up to supply these services, while simultaneously working to stimulate greater demand. This is the essence of a privatized risk market. Currently, the security economy encompasses hundreds of thousands of businesses and individuals selling safety from malevolent acts threatening life, property and other assets and information. Safety can involve anything from electrical fencing to bodyguard
services (Stevens, 2004: 8). The demand for these services currently shows no sign of abating.

Stevens (2004) suggests that there are several reasons for the growing demand for security services. Individuals, businesses and government are all demanding increased protection against criminal acts, from fraud to vandalism. This growing demand is not necessarily tied to increases in the instances of criminal activity. Crime statistics in OCED countries indicate mixed trends, with ordinary crime on the decline and organized crime on the rise. However, demand for protection from all kinds of crime is on the rise. This demand suggests that perception (along with marketing on the supply side of the security economy) plays a major role in the demand for security services. While the choice to purchase security services is, at first glance, a highly individuated process, both the increase in people's sense of insecurity and the related demand for risk-mitigating products and services takes place within a context of accelerated globalization which spurs new insecurities, both real and imagined:

Expanding foreign trade stimulates increased transport of people and cargo. Growth in air, railroad and maritime transport increases the risk of security breaches that facilitate robbery and organized smuggling, thereby lending impetus to governments' efforts to tighten cross-border surveillance. Rising immigration weakens countries ability to impede clandestine threats, while fueling in some cases communities' sense of insecurity. The growing internationalization of production activities has seen communications and supply chains become increasingly global, specialized and fragmented giving rise to particular vulnerabilities (Stevens, 2004: 10).

The relationship between the market in security-related products and the changing political and economic context in OCED countries runs even deeper than these examples. With the liberalization of trade and the move from a Keynesian to a neo-liberal economic context, the risk-sharing features of the welfare state (such as the socialization of the
costs associated with the risks of unemployment or illness) have been eroded. Markets for security service have to be understood as emerging out of this context. Increased immigration and the changing demographics of Canadian society may also play a role by increasing opportunities for ‘clandestine threats,’ but perhaps more importantly by awakening subjective feelings of insecurity, sparking demand for protection from imagined alien threats.

Economic, political and cultural changes not only spark feelings of insecurity, but also promote the belief that it is up to each of us, as individuals, to protect ourselves from these threats. Canadian sociologist David Lyon (2004, 139) explains: “risk has become more individualized in the political-economic restructuring of the past three decades”. The move to increased private security consumption is related to the increasing role that privatized insurance systems play in advanced capitalist societies and the growth of what is termed ‘risk thinking’ among certain segments of the population. Risk thinking has contributed to demand for risk-mitigating products and services, ranging from traditional home and business insurance to health insurance and private retirement plans. In this context individuals are trained to be responsible for managing risk independent of broader social systems spurring the growth of the security economy. The flip side of this process is that those classes of persons deemed too high a risk for insurers and security providers are left in an increasingly vulnerable position, as are those who cannot afford privatized risk management schemes, such as life insurance or private security services for their neighbourhood.
Neo-liberal governance and risk markets

An overview of the global growth in security markets, as well as the political and economic context that generates demand for security-related products and services, illustrate that Vancouver is not an anomaly. However, understanding that an economy in security-related services and products is expanding across the OECD countries tells us very little about the impact that this may have on social relations in post-industrial cities generally, and Vancouver in particular. Exploring that impact requires the development of a theoretically-informed lens through which to examine these empirical trends.

Within the contemporary scholarly literature on private security there is general agreement that changes in policing practices are best understood by paying attention to increasingly neo-liberal modes of governance that are taking hold in advanced capitalist countries. The welfarist modes of governance that gained prominence in these nations in the post-war period are often characterized as a “big government” approach to ruling, which creates dependence while limiting individual choice and creativity. John Pratt (1999: 141) argues that neo-liberal rule has been articulated in relation to welfarism by shifting the burden of risk management from the state to individuals. He writes that: “what has been needed to affect this task is a complete reorganization of the forms of economic and social life that existed under welfarism”. Neo-liberal economic practices work in tandem with governing practices that encourage the off-loading of governing responsibilities onto smaller municipal and non-governmental bodies.

While there is general agreement that the shift from welfarism to neo-liberalism is an important element of modern security arrangements, the socio-economic impact of the adoption of neo-liberal forms of governance and related forms of policing is hotly contested. There are a number of schools of thought on contemporary policing practices,
inspired primarily by either the work of Michel Foucault (pluralist, risk society and
governmentality approaches), or Karl Marx (risk markets, instrumentalist and
structuralist approaches). I adopt a risk market orientation while paying attention to
structural elements that affect the form of those markets at a given moment. I begin by
addressing Foucauldian inspired theories in order to assess what can be learned from
these bodies of literature, as well as to examine some of the pitfalls of these theoretical
approaches.

The pluralist approach

In opposition to what are often described as reductionist tendencies within
Marxist sociology, “pluralist theorists insist that governmental power has multiple
objectives, and that the techniques applied to reach these objectives become differentiated
as they are dispersed through locales largely beyond the state” (Rigakos, 2002: 15). Thus
pluralist work on private security tends to focus on the broad range of civil society actors
that are now taking an active role in the provision of security outside of the state
apparatus, such as corporations, developers and strata councils. It also directs readers’
attention to the way in which space has been fragmented, so that rather than discussing
the policing of the city, pluralists tend to examine how a neighbourhood, a theme park, or
a shopping complex is policed.

Shearing and Stenning (1983) are among the most influential pluralist theorists
working in the field of private security studies. An important aspect of their contribution
has been their focus on the emergence of “mass private property”, that is, huge tracts of
land held by private companies, where the responsibility for maintaining control is vested
in those private bodies (Rigakos, 2002: 15). Mass private property refers to those areas
that, while officially privately owned, are treated by most as public property, the quintessential example being the shopping mall (Beck and Willis, 1995). Pluralist theorists have described this phenomenon as a new feudalism in North America, where huge tracks of property are now being policed by private interest and a form of internal order is maintained that is entirely site specific.

While the phenomenon of mass private property is relatively new in terms of criminological attention, the emergence of mass private property as a replacement for genuine public space in urban planning was apparent by the early 1960s (Jacobs, 1961). Rather than treating the city as an organic whole, mass private property divides the city into safe containers that can be accessed by cars and where free public mixing can be avoided. However, the semi-public nature of these private spaces means that in order to truly avoid public mixing these spaces must be vigorously policed. Their private status allows private guards the freedom to do the work of public police and more. For example, on mass private property searches as a precondition of entry (as is the case with some clubs and stadiums) are legal and can be conducted by private guards.

Pluralist scholars have been perceptive in recognizing the increasing role that mass private property plays in structuring urban life, as well as the implications of this phenomenon for policing. However, they have tended to ignore the underlying class relations that characterize the management of mass private property. Pluralist theorists tend not to comment on the fact that in many areas mass private property replaces public space. These semi-private spaces provide the only washrooms and drinking water so that those denied access to these spaces are also denied access to very basic necessities. This phenomenon illustrates Rigakos’ (2002: 15) claim that as private corporations take on the
role of “keeping the peace” on mass private property, the nature of peace is being fundamentally redefined.

There are some important insights that can be drawn from pluralist analyses. In pluralist accounts policing is recast from a monopolistic function characterized by the ability of a police force to draw on state power to legitimately use force, to a generic function where public policing is augmented by private services purchased by companies, property owners and community groups. However, Rigakos (2002:16) suggests that there are limitations to the pluralist approach: “[a]lthough it maintains that both the state and corporations are interchangeably important to the provision of security… it nonetheless adheres to the conceptual dichotomy between corporate and state security in earlier theorizing”. Pluralist approaches tend to ignore alternative policing arrangements that are not sponsored by either the state or large corporations, as well as arrangements where private security is hired by the state to manage public space. At the same time, the concept of mass private property as a new form of spatial organization does not account for the extent to which public space is being increasingly privatized in practice and policed by both public and private bodies, as well as hybrid bodies that defy classification.

The dichotomy between public and private space is far from straightforward, and trends in management of mass private property have implications for how public space is managed. In a report prepared for the Law Commission of Canada, Rigakos (2002:25) notes that “[b]usiness improvement associations in large urban areas have found that some consumers perceive downtown cores to be riskier than the controlled environment of a shopping centre. To provide a more pleasurable experience, some associations have hired security to patrol public streets”. Merchants, competing with the relative exclusivity
of mass private property are extending their storefronts out to encompass the streets around them. This extension requires a drift in policing practices. Public space is increasingly managed as though it were private. At the same time, more repressive tactics on mass private property lead to a parallel increase in repressive tactics on public property, essentially homogenizing policing practices in the face of increased fragmentation.

In other cases, the spatial dichotomy between public and private becomes even more complex. Jones and Newburn (1998: 41) write: “in simple terms the crucial aspect of a public space is its openness and accessibility by all. By contrast private spaces are those characterized by restricted access and, moreover, where access is governed by those who own the space”. They assert that only in theory is the dichotomy so straightforward. In fact, many spaces are characterized by degrees of openness, such as universities. At the same time, markers such as archways in residential areas and even security patrols can be used to make public space appear more private. Equally important is that the old thinking that public police patrol public space and private police patrol private space, inherent in the mass private property approach to conceptualizing the growth of private security, is quickly being proven false. For example, feminists have had many of their demands met for increased responsiveness to domestic violence from the public police in the private sphere of the home. Such a parallel will likely never occur with private policing (ironically the one exception perhaps being for individuals living in public housing). At the same time, “poverty and homelessness has led to the private lives of the destitute spilling out into public spaces” (Jones and Newburn, 1998: 46), leading many neighbourhoods to employ private police to patrol public residential streets, while their
private homes remain inviolable spaces. In this way, the city as a whole is becoming increasingly privatized, disrupting a straightforward distinction between public and private property in practice, even where the law is clear.

Pluralist theorists also draw on an inaccurate functional divide to describe the role of public versus the private police. Functionalist-oriented scholars argue that one of the primary distinctions between public and private police is that, while the public police are engaged in the retributive end of the criminal justice system, private security work is generally preventative in character and is more often concerned with loss prevention through surveillance (Shearing and Stenning:1981). In reality, there is an enormous degree of functional crossover between the two sectors. Public police routinely engage in preventative work. Ericson and Haggerty (1997) note that most public policing work does not involve laying charges, but rather involves suggestions to ‘move along’ or cease an activity. Over the last 30 years ‘[m]any functions that were once the exclusive domain of public police are now being performed by private agencies. In some instances, this means that private security is doing things that the public police used to do. In other instances, it means whole new areas of activities -- services that did not exist or were not widely available -- can be purchased” (The Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 5). In Vancouver, Toronto and Halifax, Business Improvement Areas hire security firms to patrol downtown streets. Private investigation firms investigate suspicious financial transactions, many of which are now dealt with internally rather than criminally. In some urban areas, private security guards patrol residential developments.

It is not only in terms of space and function that crossover between public and private policing exists, but also in terms of knowledge and personnel. Ericson (cited in
Jones and Newburn, 1998: 11) argues that the public police increasingly serve as knowledge brokers. His analysis “highlights how organizations outside the police access police expertise and information sources as part of their own security systems”. These sources are both public, such as probation officers, but also private, such as insurance companies. At the same time, a number of private security firms working in Canadian neighbourhoods provide the public police with information about people or activities in the areas they patrol. There has also been a large-scale movement of retiring police officers into the private security sector (Law Commission of Canada, 2002). Ultimately then, a pluralist analysis can bring to light the range of actors that are engaged in the work of policing in advanced capitalist states today. However, some of the complexity of these new forms of policing is lost in the binary of state versus not-state policing and public versus private space. In analyzing new forms of policing, attention to intersectionality rather than simply plurality is key.

**The Governmentality/risk society approach**

Pluralist conceptualizations of private security, with their focus on the shortcomings of state-centered theories that do not address the range of actors involved in contemporary policing, are closely aligned with theorists employing the Foucauldian concepts of ‘governmentality’ and ‘risk society’. Because ‘governmentality’ and ‘risk society’ are almost interchangeable in criminological terms, Rigakos (2002) considers them in tandem, and I will do the same. All of these theories address private security from the position that, with the advent of neo-liberalism as the dominant mode of governance in former welfare states, there has been an increased fragmentation and
individuation of governance, as well as an increased focus on self-governance rather than reliance on the state to solve problems for us.

Contemporary neo-liberalism has its philosophical roots in a particular view of the free society. In order to achieve this society, “a new set of ethical and cultural values had to be created… which would accord individuals and families the power to shape their own lives. If the powers of self actualization were enhanced, individuals would defend freedom itself” (Rose 1999: 138). In order to achieve this vision of the free society, individuals’ lives had to be re-structured into enterprise form. Citizens are to become responsible entrepreneurs rather than passive subjects. As Rose (1999) explains, “all aspects of social behavior are now re-conceptualized along economic lines -- as calculative actions undertaken through the universal human faculty of choice”. The private security industry fits well with the ideological and the economic tenets of neo-liberalism, where individuals and their self-identified communities are to become the governors of their own lives.

Scholarly work centred around the concept ‘governmentality’ has been very influential in the contemporary study of the private security industry. While it offers some useful insights, it also has some major shortcomings. Building on Foucault’s conceptualization of the modern art of governance or ‘governmentality’ as characterized by fragmented and fluid sites of power, Rose (1999: 17) envisions contemporary governance as built upon “a complex set of relations between state and non-state authorities, upon infrastructural powers, upon networks of power, upon the activities of authorities who do not form part of the formal or informal state apparatus”. The contribution of governmentality theorists is important because it draws our attention to
multifaceted relations of power that shape contemporary life rather than reproduce a binary between powerful and powerless actors or states and citizens. Rose goes on to argue that the specialized literature on governance revolves around two more specific themes: a normative theme, whereby governance is seen as either good or bad, and where good governance generally refers to less government, where government does the “steering” (setting policy) rather than the rowing (delivering service); and a descriptive theme. Specialized governance literature is descriptive in so far as it attempts to characterize “the pattern or structure that emerges as the result of the interactions of a range of political actors of which the state is only one” (Rose, 1999: 17).

Governmentality literature with a normative orientation supports neo-liberal modes of governance at the ideological level, while recognizing oversights and inefficiencies that must be corrected in practice. Literature with a more descriptive orientation focuses on making visible the ways in which contemporary governance operates, particularly in places where it is not superficially apparent because of the dispersal of control. It is the second aspect of governmentality literature that I find the most useful for understanding how neo-liberal modes of governance are related to the growth in the private security industry and to which I will turn first.

Rose (1999) presents a useful, richly descriptive analysis of the ways in which governmental thought territorializes itself. While there is a general tendency to think of governance at the level of states,

One can trace analogous governmental histories of smaller-scale territorializations: regions, cities, towns, zones, ghettos, edge cities and so forth. And one can also think in these terms about spaces of enclosure that governmental thought has imagined and penetrated: schools, factories, hospitals, asylums, museums, and now even shopping malls, airports and department stores (Rose, 1999:35).
This insight is important because, unlike a state or city police force, private security guards focus their activity on dispersed and very specific sites, be it a public institution such as a hospital, a piece of private property such as a shopping mall, or a neighbourhood or Business Improvement Area. Governance and the related provision of security are being increasingly left up to individuals and collectivities that make claims to specific spaces. Guards are mobilized to police these areas in ways that reflect the specific needs and desires of the client. These guards act only on the areas they have been hired to patrol. The governentalized state is not absent: it is able to harness already existing micro-fields of power, in order to “link their governmental objectives with activities and events far distant in time and place”. This is a useful conceptualization of how governance is coordinated, albeit in local and specific ways. However, it is important to understand this form of rule within a context of private property, which affects who gets to rule over micro territories that are increasingly governed outside of democratic forms of control, as well as within a context of privatization embedded in neo-liberal economics, where services such as security provision are off-loaded to the private sector. The socio-economic structure out of which new modes of rule emerge is not always visible in the descriptive work of governmentality theorists, limiting the usefulness of this body of scholarship for understanding emerging patterns of social relations.

As noted above, some governmentality literature also displays strong normative tendency. Stenson, who positions himself firmly within the governmentality school, suggests that:

The mentalities and rationalities of liberalism, before and after it takes on governmental form, embody styles of thinking which are self-scrutinizing,
vigilant and involve attempts to define and set limits to the powers of authority. While, as in any other critical work, existing social standards are judged against normative standards, these standards are not timeless visions of, for example, socialist, non-sexist or non-racist utopias (1999:51).

Other work on private security with a governmentality orientation is less openly hostile to feminist and anti-racist work, but also has a normative dimension. For example, Johnston and Shearing (2003) contend that private security is not in itself good or bad, it is a matter of practice and regulation. This view is at odds with a historical materialist perspective, which keeps in view underlying relations of power that frame capitalist relations despite changing transitional features of the system.

Johnston and Shearing (2003: 71) argue that in contemporary policing, ‘problem-solving’ has replaced surveillance as a central concept. A sense of social location is, however, absent in this analysis. Structured into capitalist societies are a series of power-imbalancesthat allows some groups to define problems and then convince others to submit to their authority. Solving problems as they are defined from above, (such as the cost of social programs deterring investment), requires that costs of problem-solving activities (such as labour market deregulations) be offloaded to women or low-wage workers. It may also require quieting the resistance of colonized people to the ongoing occupation of their land, as has been the case in many places in British Columbia. Rather than addressing the underlying omissions in their account of problem-solving based policing, Johnston and Shearing present a more benign example by referring to a previous article written by Shearing and Stenning (1987), in which they discuss the policing of the ‘Disney Order’ at Florida’s Disney World as an example of consensual, problem-solving based policing.
In this article, the authors argue that a variety of devices are deployed to solve people’s problems in a way that is compatible with the Disney Order so that compliance is achieved through consensual rather than coercive means. However, Disneyworld is a space that is quite literally metonymically linked with a fantasy that people have purchased. It is therefore in no way surprising that individuals and families who have chosen to come to Disney World precisely to experience the ‘Disney Order’ could be persuaded, through the use of subtle techniques, to comply with that order rather than resisting it. This is not to dismiss the key point that Shearing and Johnston (2003) are attempting to make -- that subtle techniques can be used to induce compliance, and that only very rarely is force necessary in contemporary policing, public or private.

Nonetheless, governing in the open spaces of neighbourhoods and cities rather than a theme park involves a much higher degree of coercion, and people have not necessarily made the choice to submit to the body that has assumed responsibility for ‘problem-solving’ in the area.

Tied to the idea of problem-solving based policing is the conceptualization of risk-thinking as shaping individual’s choices. ‘Risk thinking’ involves a proactive rather than a reactive process. Shearing and Stenning (1981) argue that with private security the focus on prevention means that guards are not so much looking for breaches of the law, as they are looking for opportunities for such breaches: ‘risks’. Risk society theorists such as Ericson and Haggerty (1997) imagine contemporary society as organized through, and governed by, a set of risk classifications. In this way each and every subject is both a potential source of risk, and responsible for mitigating risk. However, there are clear
inequities in the ability of differently positioned individuals to both protect themselves against risk and to apply the risk label to others.

Due to the erosion of the collective risk-sharing features of the Keynesian welfare state and the transfer of some forms of governance from the state to citizens and non-state actors, the idea of pluralism, and the concepts of governmentality and the risk society have been widely hailed as critical for understanding contemporary manifestations of both governance and policing. These terms dominate much thinking about the private security industry, because the emergence of this industry is conceptualized as being tied to the move away from a centralized state-based model of social control. Both of these bodies of work have made important contributions to our understanding of private security work because they open up the possibility of exploring the many intersecting sites of power that shape our contemporary experiences of both government and policing. However, the underlying relations of labour and property that underpin these emergent forms of governance are often lost in the technocratic language of both the governmentality and risk society models.

A neo-Marxist conceptualization of private policing

As Rigakos (2002: 17) explains: “Risk and governmentality theorists make indefensible claims about contingent history, the end of class, and the totality of surveillance mechanisms”. The omissions inherent in these claims lead me to adopt a neo-Marxist framework for my analysis of private security work within a neo-liberal context. Yet, as Rigakos (2002) explains, many Marxist theorists have failed to recognize private security as a commodity. They have focused on private security only as an instrument of state or corporate power, rather than recognizing the dynamics of security
for sale as an important phenomenon in its own right. While I adopt ‘risk markets’ as the organizing concept for this research, I also pay attention to the broader context in which those markets are embedded, and hence rely on the theorizations of some structural Marxists for understanding the role various levels of government play in creating a context that is conducive to the growth of risk markets.

**Why risk markets?**

Rigakos (2002) critiques governmentality and risk society thinking on three major fronts. First, he claims that many governmentality studies engage in an apoliticism; that is, each individual act of governance or risk management is isolated. In contrast to this approach, I conceptualize policing as a practice that is systemic and historically constituted, re-producing the inequities of the hegemonic systems of property and wage labour that define capitalism. David Garland (1999), who uses concepts and ideas borrowed from the governmentality literature, writes that there is a tendency for governmentality theorists to look at government as a problem-solving activity, happening “mainly through a perceptual grid of the programmes and rationalities that the authorities generate to deal with them”. Important questions about who defines the problems that need to be solved are left unanswered, and in many cases never raised. For example, Rose (1999: 27) analyzes the extent to which the mode of neo-liberal thought espoused by political thinkers, including Hayek and Friedman, have not been realized in political neo-liberalism. He argues that Margaret Thatcher was not attempting to realize the philosophy of Adam Smith, suggesting rather that the tactics enacted by Thatcher’s conservative government were “contingent lash-ups of thought and action, in which various problems of governing were resolved through drawing upon instruments and procedures that happened to be available” (Rose, 1999: 27). He argues that through this process the new
rationality, named neo-liberalism, provided a framework for linking up tactics and mentalities of governance in order to provide the semblance of a coherent logic. I agree that it would be a mistake to equate practical neo-liberalism as a direct mirror of its intellectual antecedents, or to assume that its logic is either internally coherent or understood in a complete and coherent way by all of its practitioners. However, I believe that something is lost in this analysis. Margaret Thatcher was not just reacting to 'problems.' She was reacting to the problem of massive labour disputes in the country's industrial and mining centres, for example. Conceptualizations of these 'problems' are not neutral; nor are attempts to solve them. They are also problems that continue to manifest themselves across the capitalist world. Therefore, I argue that she was not so much engaging in general 'problem-solving' as in quelling specific challenges to her form of class rule: a mode of rule espoused by Hayek and Freidman, even if the practical application varied slightly from what these men envisioned.

Second, Rigakos (2002: 17) charges that a historical myopia results from the privileging of “micro and contingent histories at the expense of long-term and durable accounts of risk and policing”. The focus on historical specificity and contingency runs the risk of rendering overarching relations of subordination and domination invisible. For example, in Vancouver contemporary private policing has to be understood within a context of the historical dispossession of Aboriginal people, who are among the poorest of the poor and are therefore among the most likely to come into contact with private police in the city. In order to understand the relations that underpin private policing work as it relates to contemporary city-building practices, there must be an understanding that current relations of property and power are built on top of something that came before,
and that ‘something’ has its roots in the colonial project and the appropriation of territory by Europeans. Longstanding relations based upon who owns property and who owns the means of production need to be understood in order to get at the heart of the relations that shape both who does the work of policing and who is the target of ‘problem-solving’ activities.

Third, according to Rigakos (2002:18) front line operatives appear as mere automatons in the governmentality and risk-society literature. This criticism is of great importance to this project because I am coming to my investigation from the position that working people help create the social context in which they live through their labour, and that both their agency and the ways in which agency is restricted needs to be fully explored in order to understand contemporary social relations. Rigakos (2002) found that while there is a high degree of disciplinary control and de-skilling inherent in private security work, guards quickly found ways to beat disciplinary controls and exercise agency in their work. He also found that promotions were profoundly affected by factors such as gender, and, hence, the positionality and social profile of guards is important for understanding how the industry operates.

Rigakos (2002) argues that at present there are two major schools that dominate Marxist studies of private police. First, there is the instrumentalist school, which depicts the state as a “managing committee for the bourgeoisie” (Rigakos, 2002: 10). Then, there is the structural understanding that sees the state as a place to focus an analysis of how private policing bodies were able to develop. He states that, “so far Marxian analysts of the police have not adequately considered how security is sold, how surplus value is extracted, how control of the work force is maintained and how security is symbolically
produced and reproduced dialectically” (Rigakos, 2002:13). Rigakos makes an insightful claim about the evolution of contemporary private policing demands, arguing that Marx was particularly interested in the fetishistic aspects of commodities and that this interest could include security. Rigakos (2002) argues that it is a fallacy to see private security firms acting on the basis of some mythic ethos of ‘social control’. Private Security firms are acting to realize profit, whether or not their image involves presenting a social control veneer to potential clients.

Rigakos (2002:148) offers several reasons for why he orients his analysis of the private security industry in general, and the Toronto-based firm, Intelligarde, in particular, around the idea of selling risk, or ‘risk markets,’ rather than the more widely used concept of the 'risk society'. First, he contends “contract private policing labour is centrally alienated and commodified labour” (Rigakos, 2002: 148). He feels that most accounts of the growth of private security work to date downplay the position of the guards doing this work as low paid vulnerable workers. Looking at security guards as agents, restricted by their positionality within a neo-liberal capitalist order entails looking at organizations and industries, not as they represent themselves, but in terms of the actual daily work that individuals do and the ways in which they understand that work. In this way we can begin to understand how working class individuals are incorporated into projects that may not benefit them, as well as at how they resist the dehumanization inherent in low wage labour.

Second, ‘risk thinking’ and ‘fetishism of security’ are inherently political phenomena. Rigakos (2002: 148) argues that many sociologists “have correctly identified the organizing logics and institutional rationales of risk systems but have failed to offer
perceptive critiques of these schemas. They have uncritically adopted these productions of knowledge as the actual organizers of society instead of revealing their legitimating function in late modern capitalism". In many ways risk systems appear to mirror the commonsense view of free markets as operating independently of human intervention. The need for a politicized account of these processes, grounded in an underlying understanding of inequality, is evident in many accounts of private security practices informed by pluralist and governmental thought. For example, in their analysis of problem-solving oriented policing, Johnston and Shearing (2003:3) note:

[O]ur subjective ‘sense of security’ is just as important to us as any objective measures of our ‘actual security’...Thus to be effective, security measures must address our subjective perceptions as well as more objectively identifiable threats to our safety. For most of us, when we feel safe it is because we have confidence in the steps we, or others, have taken to promote security.

Using a subjective sense of security in evaluating security programs is, politically, very problematic. For example, Johnston and Shearing (2003:102) refer to the 'broken windows' theory of policing; the idea that major crimes can be avoided if the minor incivilities that increase 'respectable fears' are vigorously policed, to justify their position that contemporary policing should be viewed mainly as a problem-solving activity. But evaluating the use of broken windows policing simply for its effectiveness as a problem-solving tactic erases deeper social problems. These theorists briefly (in three sentences) address some of the concerns that have been raised by critics who see broken windows policing as undermining due process and legitimating discrimination against minorities. However, the deeply embedded set of biases and assumptions that underlie white middle class ideas about what constitutes risk, and the need to address the possibility that the subjectively defined 'security' of some segments of the population may be at odds with
the concrete security needs of others, all need to be thoroughly explored in order to
effectively evaluate broken windows policing as a phenomenon. For example, in
Vancouver, a 'broken windows' approach to policing gentrifying neighbourhoods erases
the fact that the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver has been the site of well over sixty
kidnappings and murders of primarily Aboriginal women working in the sex trade. That
'problem' is marginalized while 'respectable' fears are pandered to, possibly increasing
the risk to other women in similar situations by driving sex work deeper underground.

Third, Rigakos argues that given the commodified form that both public and
private policing have taken on, in practice there is little reason to distinguish between the
missions of either. He explains that in Toronto, where his fieldwork took place,
Intelligarde officers "are private law enforcement that have been hired to control crime
rather than merely to minimize risk" (Rigakos, 2002: 150). In some cases new private
security firms are becoming de facto small police departments, albeit departments
operating for a profit. At the same time, many public police departments and officers are
exploiting new risk markets to realize profits. The use of 'pay duty' officers in many
municipalities is blurring the distinction between public and private policing in this
country and creating risk market niches that public police are eager to fill. In Vancouver,
an officer can make an additional $15,000 per year by requesting extra pay-duty postings
(working special events and movie sets). Yet, at the same time that highly trained (at
taxpayer expense) public officers are being contracted out to private events and
businesses, private security agencies are being hired to perform some of the functions that
police used to perform. Guarding bridges, providing access control at police stations,
maintaining court security, and issuing parking tickets have all been contracted out (Law
Commission of Canada, 2002: 19). While there is some reversal in terms of the functions of private security firms and public policing bodies, there is also increasing integration.

In Vancouver, a program called 'operation cooperation' facilitates knowledge sharing between the public police and private firms. The Vancouver police department meets with these firms to discuss policing priorities in the downtown core (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 20). It is important to note that this practice gives the clients of these firms an added voice in shaping policing priorities in their areas through this access to the public police.

This process of integration is further developed in some American jurisdictions. In Amarillo Texas the move towards a true public-private partnership is close to complete. In that city:

Beginning in August 1981, Allstate [security services] assumed responsibility, city-wide, for responding to alarm calls. Within the same period, Amarillo police hired private security officers to patrol the downtown core during peak hours in tandem with police. Today most clients call Allstate for minor emergencies or prowler calls (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 20).

There has been a high degree of policy transfer between Canada and the US in the field of private security provision. While there are no citywide private policing arrangements in place, parts of some major cities have increasingly come under control of private security firms. For example, “a large Toronto security firm has negotiated arrangements with two different landowners of over a dozen building complexes in the Cabbagetown area of the city, allowing security officers to assist their partners at adjacent properties” (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 17). According to the Law Commission of Canada (2002: 20), this arrangement “creates a multi-client, multi-tasked, multi-territoried, co-operatively governed policing service that closely mirrors the municipal
police service”. At the same time, “public police forces now actively compete for both mature and newly emerging markets” (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 22). There are circumstances under which the public police must ‘win’ contracts and then charge the cost to the municipality. This practice is part of the rationalization of policing in accordance with business principles. For example, in Ontario, the Police Services Act sets out provisions for municipalities wishing to establish their own police force.

“Section 5 of the Act was amended to allow municipal councils to ‘adopt a different method of providing police services’. Some private security executives have argued that this amendment allows them to bid on municipal policing contracts (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 22). This legislative change, directly reflecting neo-liberal governing principles, could ostensibly lead to Amarillo Texas style policing in Ontario towns and cities. A risk market approach can encompass both public and private bodies, because the focus is on the buying and selling of security services.

Finally, “a risk markets orientation examines the process of both surveillance and resistance in private policing in a dialectic of control...risk markets are cyclical and produce a constant spiral of fear along with the need to manage them” (Rigakos, 2002: 150-151). A risk market approach points our attention not only to who is doing the work of policing and how it is being paid for, but also to how markets expand -- an integral feature of capitalistic activity. Increased security in one area of the city, for example, can concentrate people and activities deemed undesirable in other areas, prompting a demand for more security in those areas. In addition, hostilities that develop as certain groups of people are more intensely policed can augment tensions, resulting in the need for more plentiful and more aggressive security.
Risk markets in context

While I adopt Rigakos' risk markets orientation as a useful tool for analysis at the micro-level, I believe that structuralist Marxist insights are also important in order to embed these markets in the macro-level structures that contain them. Neo-liberal practices and ideology allow, and in fact necessitate, the emergence of risk markets. In adopting a neo-Marxist approach to private security I commit myself to a theoretical framework for understanding private security grounded in historical materialism. I borrow my understanding of what a materialist analysis of private security work ought to look like from Spitzer (1993) in order to avoid some of the instrumentalist pitfalls identified by Rigakos as plaguing some neo-Marxist work on policing. Spitzer (1993: 569) argues that his work on the political economy of policing is materialist in so far as he begins with an "examination of the productive forces and the relations of production under a given set of historical conditions". However, he goes on to argue: "while it is important to ground a study of the political economy in policing in a thorough consideration of economic structure, we must avoid becoming reductive. At best the relationship between patterns of economic organization and policing is indirect" (Spitzer, 1993: 569). Hence a materialist understanding of private security must be attentive to both the role of the economy and other cultural and political factors that shape particular manifestations of policing.

Spitzer (1993: 571) provides an account of the political economy of policing that is not limited to a specific public or private body. He conceptualizes policing as "a pattern of social development through which coercive regulation is established, decomposed and recomposed in class societies". What makes the study of policing materialist is not "the positioning of a frictionless economic determinism, but rather an
emphasis on the concrete conditions of social existence and the significance of these
conditions in the changing relationship between the economic order, the state, and the
targets of the state's coercive power" (Spitzer, 1993: 569). These social conditions are
both economic and ideological. The modern state is more than "a reflexive cudgel
brought to bear on the rebellious and troublesome. It is a sophisticated system of
incentives and disincentives that is far more complex and diversified, and far more
dependent on ideological controls than any 'police state' scenario would lead us to
suspect" (Spitzer, 1993: 569). Neo-liberal economic retrenchment and the related
ideology of responsibilization, which have led to growth in both privatized forms of
insurance and risk markets, reward those who are able to take control of their own
security, health, education, and old age. The rewards come in the form of tax cuts, and
freedom from the responsibility for caring for those outside of your self-defined
community or family. There is also a series of disincentives in terms of an aura of
dependence attached to reliance on public services.

Ian Loader (1999: 374) echoes Rigakos's analysis when he argues that
contemporary trends in policing need to be understood in terms of the spread of a
consumer culture, suggesting that we are "witnessing the emergence of an uneven
patchwork of policing and security provision, increasingly dependent on the ability and
willingness to pay". He goes on to explain that "consumption involves not only a
material act; it is also an emotionally laden cultural performance" (Loader 1999: 380). In
a consumer culture, according to Loader, commodities operate to express identity and
symbolize one's place in the social order. He argues that consumption of public policing
may become a sign of weakness and dependence, like consuming public education or
health care. This approach is in sharp contrast to a depoliticized notion of fragmentation, in that power relations embedded in the economic structure are conceptualized as central to the ways in which the fragmentizing tendency of neo-liberal governance plays out on the ground.

If those unable to pay can be held to account for not having ensured their own security, there are serious ramifications in terms of the rights of marginalized groups to make claims on the state and the broader society. Spitzer (1993: 588) argues that while private police have taken over the domains of production, consumption, and recreation, public police are left to deal with the private problems that the corporate sector is not interested in. I argue that in many cases there are still profits to be made though the contracting out of services; nonetheless, "socialized policing has 'colonized' what is external to capitalist interests under existing historical conditions -- the social and personal needs of those who populate the 'non-productive' and 'marginal spheres'" (Spitzer, 1993: 588). Hence, risk markets emerge within a context of neo-liberalism that espouses privatization as a social good, and seeks to retrench the state wherever possible, in the process producing and reproducing uneven class relations based on access to property and income.

Uneven class relations are deeply affected by racialization and legacies of colonialism. Spitzer (1987: 58) argues that consumption communities now form the basis of patterns of social inclusion and exclusion rather than older notions of race and nation. What is missed in this comment is the way in which consumption communities are mediated by race and nation. While consumption communities are less rigid than other
forms of community, poverty has remained a racialized phenomenon in spite of changes to the legal status of people of colour and Aboriginal people.

In order to understand contemporary risk markets in Vancouver, it is important to be aware of the impacts of legacies of colonialism and racial discrimination on both the socio-spatial development of the city and property relations among those who now occupy it. Blomley (2004) notes that the creation of the city of Vancouver required the obliteration of Aboriginal geographies and property relations and the imposition of a Western property system that privileges private ownership. This property regime served as a powerful disciplinary agent, mapping the rights and sovereignty claims of Aboriginal people out of existence and legitimating policing practices that restricted their access to city-space. Blomley (2004: 114) explains:

Urban displacement, in the sense I use it here, seems to entail two separate maneuvers. First, native people must be conceptually removed from urban space. If located anywhere, native people are frequently imagined in the past or in nature. In either case, they are placed outside of the city. Secondly, displacement requires the concomitant emplacement of a settler society. This place is to be made into a white space through physical settlement and occupation.

Not only is urban displacement simultaneously a representational and a physical activity, it is also an ongoing process rather than something that was achieved at a single historical moment. Although much of the Aboriginal population with an ancestral claim to what is today Vancouver has been displaced, Aboriginal people from across the province and the country continue to migrate to Vancouver:

The link between dispossession and the settler-city endure today, although in different ways. For example, the growing population of native people within many settler cities speaks to the effect of nationwide colonial dispossession. In Canada, endemic poverty and a lack of a land base on the reserve compel the relocation of many aboriginal people to the city. By
In Vancouver, Aboriginal people are overrepresented in the poorest areas of the city. These marginal areas of the city, however, have become increasingly coveted real estate as the city expands. Once again, urban Aboriginal people are facing displacement. As neighbourhoods that house Vancouver’s urban poor and Aboriginal populations are re-imagined and re-developed, risk markets arise for companies willing to do the physical work of displacement.

Policing can also be used to criminalize and individualize acts of political protest, further solidifying existing relations of power based on race, class and colonial histories. Reiner (1992: 770) writes: “[w]hile police have always borne most heavily on the economically and socially marginal, one important factor which politicized policing in the 1960s and 1970s was the development of social groups with a clear consciousness of antagonism towards (and from) the police.” Gilmore (1999: 175) explains that the emergence of the Black Power movement struck fear into the heart of the white community. She argues that as anti-racist and anti-capitalist militancy increased “the state and its avatars responded by … individualizing disorder into singular instances of criminality that could then be solved via arrests or state-sanctioned killings rather than via fundamental social change.” The expansion of private policing services has intensified this process as property owners, business owners, and even the government take it upon themselves to contract policing services to undermine politically-motivated protests, housing actions and strikes.
Conclusion

Demand for security products and services is growing across the OECD countries. This demand has been fuelled by a number of factors, including the withdrawal of some state sponsored security services, increased potential for security breaches due to the accelerated globalization of production and consumption, and the exploitation of subjective fears by security entrepreneurs. The demand for security is increasingly being met by private entities, although both public and private policing bodies have an integral role to play in the new security economy. While there is broad-based agreement that the size of the security economy is growing and that neo-liberal political and economic trends are an important contextual element in terms of understanding this growth, there is theoretical disagreement as to how the changing security landscape can best be understood.

Much theoretical work informed by Foucault has been useful in terms of identifying the range of actors that are now involved in security provision and of disrupting state-centered models. However pluralist approaches to private security have not adequately addressed the interconnections between state and non-state activity in the field of policing. At the same time, governmentality and risk society analyses have not succeeded in illuminating the power-laden relations that underpin security work, the connection between contemporary modes of policing and what came before, or the role of human actors, particularly the working-class, in private policing endeavors.

A risk market orientation, which focuses on security as a commodity dependent on alienated labour for the extraction of surplus value and with fetishistic elements, is a useful corrective to some of the oversights of the pluralist and risk society/governmentality literature. Risk markets must be understood within the political,
economic and ideological context out of which they develop, and in this regard, other neo-Marxist work, as well as work attentive to the ongoing impacts of the colonial project on contemporary socio-geographic relations, can be of great value. While this chapter has focused on the nature of private security in a contemporary neo-liberal context, there are historical antecedents to today’s risk markets. Exploring both risk markets and the how labour has been recruited to fill market demands at various historical junctures can point us toward some of the enduring features of capitalism that give rise to markets in policing, as well as help us understand how risk markets that are emerging today differ from those of even twenty or thirty years ago. The history of risk markets will be the focus of Chapter Four.
Chapter Four: Risk Markets and the History of Capitalism

With neo-liberal economic policies come cultural and political changes. One of these shifts has been towards the increasing individualization of responsibility and the institutionalization of increasingly diffused governance models. Off-loading of governing and service delivery responsibilities to community and civil society groups has spurred demand for private security services. However, it would be a mistake to see the advent of risk markets as a distinctly contemporary phenomenon. Even a cursory look at the history of capitalist development demonstrates that particular risk markets have manifested at various historical junctures in the development of capitalism, and that enterprising individuals have been able to reap a profit by exploiting these markets as they emerged.

This chapter will begin with a look at the history of private security work, arguing that we are seeing a re-emergence rather than an emergence of privatized forms of policing and security provision. The historical literature on policing suggests that the form policing takes, whether public or private, is reflective of the dominant mode of production. Thus specific risk markets have emerged at particular historical moments to facilitate dispossessment of the British peasantry, to cope with changing social relations during periods of mass urbanization, and to control labour industrial towns. The size and shape of these markets have changed as the relations of production, consumption and governance have evolved. Through these periods, the role of the state in providing security services has waxed and waned.

Where a market for security services arises, so too does a demand for labour to provide those services. It is important to look not only at the types of risk markets that emerge, but also at who does the work of meeting changing security needs. Private
security enterprises have tended to rely on relatively economically vulnerable populations as a labour force. In keeping with a risk markets approach rather than a social control approach, I suggest that private security guards should first and foremost be conceptualized as alienated workers. I am informed by Lombardo’s (1981) ethnography of prison guards’ work lives, where he takes what he terms a ‘worker perspective’ as his starting point for understanding what guards do. This approach opens up space for seeing guards as workers who could stand in solidarity with the working class, rather than only as instruments of class oppression. At the same time, a worker perspective leaves room to investigate how working class people are mobilized to do the work of social control. Contemporary private security guards are not the first group of workers to be mobilized to do policing work that may appear at odds with their social location. I end this chapter with a look at some of the historical manifestations of this phenomenon.

Risk markets through history

Jacques Donzelot (1979: 8) argues that it is a mistake to equate the emergence of new techniques of rule with decisive breaks with the older systems that came before. He writes: “people doggedly persist in seeing the approach of the final struggle every time a new rule of the social game makes its appearance”. Risk markets are not a new phenomenon; they emerge at various historical junctures, taking on distinctive forms to reflect the social, political and economic climate of the times. In his historical look at the evolution of policing in London, McMullan (1995: 121) writes: “[t]here is no dramatic divide which separates the old from the new police. Residues of communal policing carried over with, and blended into, more pecuniary and professional types of
enforcement.” Policing has evolved alongside capitalism and other aspects of social organization into its present form, and this evolution is likely to continue.

While I make a distinction between private and public policing, it is important to note that not all non-state forms of security provision can be defined as private. To do so would be an anachronistic way of understanding older modes of social control. The ancient tradition of the Hue and Cry in Medieval England, for example, was a “collective, informal unitary and relatively spontaneous reaction to crime” (Jones and Newburn, 1998: 35). This system, in which the community actively policed themselves, differs from policing for profit. There are also significant differences between older, paternalistic models of corporate security characteristic of “company towns” in early twentieth century America and contemporary contract security relations. Yet, all of these manifestations of policing are reflective of the distinctive phase of the organization of labour, residence and consumption out of which they emerged. They thus are important if we are to understand modes of policing as embedded in broader systems of social organization.

**Policing the Emerging Property Order: The Black Act**

Contemporary policing, built around the concept of private property, is in many ways the product of the brutal process of order creation during the time of the enclosures in England. That period in English history is integral to the story of property, as well as being an important moment in the creation of an urban working class and privatized forms of policing. E. P. Thompson (1975) explores the meaning of this historical period with a focus on The Waltham Black Act of 1723 (“Black Act”). The Black Act was passed to outlaw resistance to the changes in access to forest resources. Thompson makes the
point clearly, although not explicitly, that while the creation of both property statutes and parallel criminal sanctions were bourgeois projects, the battle was waged on the ground by paid security staff and their servants.

The time of the British enclosures is of particular importance because it is here that the social relations of the feudal system were erased through law and replaced with a liberal conception of property ownership, a model that was then exported to what is now Canada and much of the rest of the world. New laws resulted in the hegemony of a private ownership model of property that changed the underlying structure of society, effectively criminalizing traditional ways of living. It is through this process of privatizing property that wage labour began to take on a hegemonic form and that the process of mass urbanization began.

The Black Act was composed of a number of laws that extended severe penalties for a series of new offences against property, as well as for “face blackening” (a practice used by poachers and wood thieves on private land). Understanding this period of history can tell us a lot about how risk markets emerge. Prior to the eighteenth century, the Crown, through the manor lords and landed gentry, controlled access to the forest and grazing lands in and around Windsor Forest. The changing political and property orders of the early eighteenth century resulted in the erasure of long-standing popular rights to turf cutting, wood collection, grazing and deer hunting. A changing political culture saw the emergent mercantile class replace the nobility as the dominant class. Laws were created to reflect changing views on the role of the state (Thompson, 1975). However, property was not, in 1700, protected by capitalist statutes. Rather, a legal property order had to be constructed and ratified in legislation.
The resultant changes in law were part of a fundamental shift in the relationship between the social classes in England. While there had always been official restrictions on deer poaching in Windsor Forest, the laws had not been enforced in the seventeenth century. Only after the Restoration, were laws consistently tightened and fines for deer poaching continually increased (Thompson, 1975: 59). Thompson (1975: 60) writes: “recourse to statute law was unpopular in forest districts. The keepers were more likely to get co-operation from the foresters if they affect an easy-going tolerance of small offences.” The manorial gamekeepers got little in the way of support from the local justices of the peace, and country people resented or ignored their authority in protecting their masters’ land and deer. According to Foucault (1977: 82), “one might say that under the Ancien Regime each of the different social strata had its margin of tolerated illegality: the non-application of the rule, the non-observance of innumerable edicts or ordinances were a condition of the political and economic functioning of society.” The Black Act, and its strict enforcement, served to turn the popular illegalities of country people into crimes that could and would be prosecuted.

Thompson (1975: 207) argues that during the eighteenth century: “crime was coming to be defined by the propertied... since property was a thing it became possible to define offences as crimes against things rather than as injuries to men.” The Black Act served the purpose of criminalizing, often as capital crimes, the popular illegalities that had characterized communal life in a non-market economy. The local population fiercely resisted the legislated privatization of forest resources:

Blackening arose in response to the attempted reactivation of a relaxed forest authority. This provoked resentment among foresters generally, whether small gentry, yeomen, artisans or labourers. The resort of deer-poachers to more highly organized force may be seen as retributive in
character and concerned less with venison as such than with the deer as symbols of authority which threatened their economy, their crops and their customary rights (Thompson, 1975:64).

The rigidification of property also held a purpose deeper than protection of the deer, peat, and firewood; in fact, it was questionable as to whether or not protection of those resources was even a concern. For example, in Windsor Forest the deer supply was so plentiful that in 1640 the Grand Jury of Berkshire presented a petition against "the innumerable increase of deer, which if allowed to go on for a few more years more will neither leave foode nor roome for any other creature in the forest" (cited in Thompson, 1975: 55). The Black Act was directed less against individual instances of criminality, and more against the resistance that was mounting in face of the legislative erasure of common rights. The Black Act was a clear response to the resistance of customary land users to a solidifying property order.

Prior to the enclosures and the implementation of the Black Act, gamekeepers were employed by feudal lords to look after their forests. While there is a very clear overlap between the early gamekeepers of the feudal manors and the keepers who enforced the Black Act, some fundamental shifts occurred that speak directly to the specific role of the private security guard in capitalist orders. With the emergence of a privatized property regime, keepers saw a rise in their summary powers; they were empowered to confiscate not only timber but also tools and carts, to throw down fences, to search forest houses and to kill hunting dogs. These powers not only affirmed the right of property owners to protect their lands from encroachment, they also sparked fierce revenge among the forest people, creating a distinction between propertyless workers who served the interests of the propertied directly and other non-propertied persons. Thompson (1975: 63) characterizes the resulting animosity as, "in the most immediate
way, a conflict of force between Blacks and Keepers”. That is, while the Black Act was mainly a bourgeois project, the work of carrying out the desired social transformation was left to working people employed by the local bourgeoisie.

Prior to the enactment of the *Black Act*, the keeper was of minor social importance and had limited power. The result of extended powers combined with greater risks of injury was to create a market for a new kind of keeper. An example of the changing nature of forest policing is the emergence of the post of ‘under-keeper’, a new position that emerged once the need for eyes to secure forest resources made the investment worthwhile. Under-keepers on larger estates often had one or more servants, increasing the power and prestige of the head keeper. Not only did the creation of a new property order require an accompanying criminal code, it required the creation of new law enforcement networks to ensure that the order took hold on the ground. These law enforcement networks were explicitly oriented toward serving the needs of one social class. Thompson (1975) notes that even important head keepers, despite their power in the community as the head of a vast network of under-keepers and servants, remained relatively powerless against people of a higher social class. In this emergent bureaucracy, “the actual work of law enforcement was performed by servants” (Thompson, 1975: 97). Some keeper’s servants were shot by dissenters within the community concerned about the erosion of their traditional common rights. They often had their cottages destroyed and were ostracized by customary networks. Often times, their pay was in peat and fallen timber, resources that had previously been part of the customary rights of country people. In this way, some local country people were placed on the front line of the class conflict.
that accompanied the transition to a hegemonic system of private property relations, and ultimately to the urbanization and proletariatinization of the English peasantry.

The dispossession of forest people through the work of the keepers fuelled the mass urbanization necessary to realize the industrial revolution. In the cities, new laws and opportunities for law enforcement networks -- and profits from law enforcement endeavors -- arose because, as Foucault notes, the illegal breach of property rights “while resented by the bourgeoisie where the ownership of land was concerned, was intolerable in commercial and industrial ownership” (Foucault, 1977: 85). Hence the ideology of private property would be even more firmly enforced in industrial urban centres, where the opportunity for ‘crime’ was higher because of the juxtaposition of wealth and poverty in close proximity and because the tolerance for breaches of the law and general ‘disorder’ was lower.

The shift from communal to for-profit policing

Urbanization required the creation and institutionalization of a property and economic order in the face of major demographic obstacles. Characterized by the dissolution of pre-existing communal relations and a great concentration of wealth, urbanization meant that there were many opportunities for profits in private policing. McMullan (1995: 122) documents the development of commercial forms of policing between 1620 and 1750 in London. He argues that public policing in London during this era “continued to operate as a patchwork structure of law enforcement and, in theory, policing was still thought of as a local government task dependent upon local citizens serving in an official volunteer capacity and generally for a limited time period, part-time,
and usually unpaid”. These policing networks were neither preventative nor detective. Rather, they operated simply as a presence on the street after dark.

During this period “[a]pprehension was more often the task of the victim of crime and prosecutions of all kinds were primarily the business of citizens not government” (McMullan, 1995: 122). Risk was privatized, as the notion of a collective right to security had yet to be established. This lack of a public system resulted in a new market in private security. McMullan (1995: 123) writes: “policing in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was being reconstituted as a mirror image of the times, as a private service where, generally speaking, you only obtained what you paid for”. The English state during this period lacked the coercive capacity to directly exert compliance from citizens, nor could it rely on older communal ties of social obligation. Thus “it relied in London on a strategy of expanding the punitive net by increasing the offences punishable by death, stimulating direct community involvement by developing a ‘system’ of rewards and pardons, and cultivating a private market in police services”. Order was to be maintained by private persons -- either criminals or private agents -- looking to capitalize on rewards and shares of fines that were offered by the state to persons who recovered stolen property or helped to apprehend criminals. Thus “there would no longer be any need to look for anything so nebulous and unrealistic as the public interest” (Pringle 1958 cited in McMullan, 1995: 123). Private entrepreneurs in search of a pay-off could be relied upon to provide policing services in the early industrial city.

There were many manifestations of informing for profit (criminals reporting on other criminals for a fee or discharge) and private policing. In many cases, informers were entitled to a share of fines collected or property seized. In this way the state
contracted out policing work, albeit in a crude form. In other cases, informers collected rewards from private individuals who were the victims of crime. This practice developed into a market in ‘thief-taking’. Thief-takers often worked as prison keepers, functioning also as private entrepreneurs who, armed with warrants, profited from both ends of the patchwork criminal justice system by collecting a fee from the state for the criminals that they apprehended and additional fees for keeping the prisoners in their prisons. They also acted as informal insurance brokers, exploiting knowledge and connections in the criminal underworld in return for pay, and receiving stolen property to return to the original owner in exchange for payment. McMullan (1995: 125) notes that “profits were gained privately from rewards and forfeitures, and publicly an imperum in imperio was established whereby thief-takers became the informal, state-condoned local elite of crime as well as policing agents par excellence.” The thief-taking business, and the state’s decision to not only condone but to actively collude with it, reflects the capacity for privatized ‘problem solving’ built into liberal capitalism. The services provided by thief-takers were essential to the development of the sharply classed urban order of early industrial England. At this time, not only was new wealth counter-posed to new poverty - - a relatively enduring feature of capitalist urbanization -- private profits could now be generated by ensuring that the distribution of wealth remained intact.

The growth of thief-taking also reflects the role of the state in providing the framework in which new sources of profit making can develop in the field of policing. Changes to English law in 1691, 1693, 1699 and 1706 institutionalized rewards for those engaged in the private apprehension of felons and burglars, as well as creating certificates of exemption for parochial offences in exchange for apprehending highway robbers
(McMullan, 1995). Yet these individual businesses were not part of an overall crime prevention strategy on the part of the state. Rather, a system of privatized crime control (which, ironically, was often accused of being a source of crime creation) emerged where public services were absent and where a legally-sanctioned market existed.

Thief-taking was at times a physically demanding and dangerous task, but the most successful thief-takers -- who often had a criminal network working under them -- also worked as knowledge brokers:

While buyers and sellers met in the marketplace as autonomous agents, thief-takers and informers held the upper hand. They controlled the intelligence networks, profited from finders fees and intermediary payoffs, settled grievances and delivered the final product -- felons, stolen goods, protection of property -- to those who contracted their services (McMullan, 1995: 140).

While thief-takers were able to exploit specialized knowledges of both the criminal underworld and legal procedures, “those caught by thief-takers were frequently ignorant of the legal process and the ways in which it could be manipulated to their disadvantage” (McMullan, 1995: 140). Hence, thief-takers used not only the lack of public services to their advantage, but also the fact that those they policed were generally displaced country people and slum dwellers with little access to resources or formal knowledge. This dynamic is a relatively enduring feature of private security work, and explains how private security guards today are able to achieve results for their clients even though their legal authority is limited.

McMullan (1995) notes that the demand for order led people of property to band together into private civic groups for the prosecution of felons, so that the costs of investigation, apprehension and prosecution could be shared. Yet, this development cannot be mistaken for a return to communal modes of policing characteristic of smaller
towns and villages. In fact, the commercialization of policing during this period "jeopardized the voluntary, customary and unpaid basis of the watch and ward system" (McMullan, 1995: 126). As urban elites in London during the seventeenth and eighteenth century grew in wealth, communal forms of volunteeristic policing waned, in part because "the compulsory tasks of serving as constables or watch were unpaid, and directed valuable energy and time away from income earning ventures" (McMullan, 1995: 127). Financially-able citizens found ways to exempt themselves from policing functions, while continuing to control the policing process. In many cases they deputized their apprentices or domestics as replacements (McMullan, 1996: 122), creating a class of paid private police with an allegiance to those paying their salaries.

This off-loading of policing services onto paid domestic staff undermined the legitimacy of the system of watch where policing was linked to traditional forms of authority. These forms of authority were, in fact, disappearing with the emergence of commodified relations during the industrial period. At the same time, the thief-taking industry devolved into a vast criminal network as warehouses, controlled by thief-takers and filled with stolen goods to be returned or sold for a fee, sprung up across London (McMullan, 1995). The waning ability of privatized systems to secure and legitimate order, as well as the growing resources of the state, paved the way for a public police force in London.

**The state enters**

Spitzer (1993: 585) reminds us that "socialized (public) policing did not spring full-blown from the heads of the capitalist class; it evolved dialectically through several imperfect and at least partially privatized forms." Policing went through a phase of de-
privatization in the early nineteenth century, in response to the growing inability of a
patchwork of private policing agents to secure the urban environment, the illegitimacy
associated with many of these private bodies, and the desire on the part of some members
of the owning class to socialize the cost of theft and disorder.

According to Jones and Newburn (1998: 4) the ‘modern’ period in policing in
Britain began in 1829, with the creation of the New Police as a result of the Metropolitan
Police Act 1829. In some ways, the Police Act was a state solution to a problem that the
state itself had exacerbated, if not actually created though the thief-taking system.
However, the creation of the Metropolitan Police did not fundamentally alter the class
relations embedded in earlier private policing arrangements. The antecedent by two
decades to the Metropolitan Police was the Thames River Police. This force was created
through the efforts of the West India Company and represented the first large-scale
sponsorship of a policing body. It is important to note that the creation of this body was
directly tied to dispossession in England and the colonies during this period, which
resulted in corporate bodies accruing sufficient wealth to sponsor an entire policing body.
The Thames River Police were replaced after two years by the Marine Police
Establishment which was publicly funded yet continued to operate in much the same way
as it had as a private initiative. In fact, at the outset in 1829, the Metropolitan Police
were receiving 80% of their funds from the West India merchants (Spitzer, 1993),
making it ostensibly an early experiment in public/private partnerships.

Risk and the company town

The early industrial city resulted in a particular set of risk markets, which were
directly influenced by both state policy and the limited level of public service provision.
While these markets emerged as cities industrialized and urban poverty grew, other forms of capitalist organization also spurred the growth of markets for private policing. In a liberal democracy the political sphere is governed by democratic principles, but those democratic principles are not extended to encompass the economic sphere. This situation paves the way for a class-based mode of privatized policing that is both hegemonic and paternalistic, even when a public police force governed by the rule of law is also in place.

In company towns, class relations are characterized by a relationship of dependence between a single employer and a local labour force, even if public governing and policing bodies co-exist with the company. Paternalistic governance was the norm during much of the colonial period when large nationally-based corporations controlled newly colonized territories. In some company towns, internal private security was integral to how the company managed its own workforce, rather than being a source of direct profit. Other companies contracted out policing work, creating new markets for entrepreneurs with the tools needed to quell labour unrest.

‘Company towns’ grew rapidly in the United States after the civil war as the mode of production shifted from agriculture to resource extraction and industry (Spitzer, 1993: 577). In these towns a form of paternalist privatized governance developed, particularly in regard to immigrant labour. Companies often had local policing agents who would identify potential agitators and alert the company to possible sources of unrest. However, “under the pressure of working class militancy in the last quarter of the nineteenth century… industrialists began to look outside the local community to obtain more effective repressive controls”. The emergence of a national labour movement resulted in the growth of a market for firms like the Pinkerton Detective Agency, which could
provide espionage and strikebreaking services while leaving systems of dependence characteristic of corporate rule intact.

Robert P. Weiss (1987) offers an example of the changing face of corporate rule within a single corporation in his exploration of the policing of labour at the Ford Motor Company from 1930-1947. He demonstrates the range of ways in which company policing can manifest itself. Ford moved from a paternalistic mode of policing labour where, in exchange for the hitherto unheard of five-dollar day, employees were subjected not only to scientific management on the factory line, but also to the regulation of their family and social lives. Ford’s company police were sent to taverns and bars to ensure that company employees were not drinking or engaging in extramarital sexual relations. During the Great Depression Ford moved to a “big stick” system, bringing in strikebreakers to ensure labour discipline through economic hard times. But Ford quickly found that “all private detective agencies were involved in a central paradox: they had a strong interest in prolonging the very strikes they were hired to suppress” (Weiss, 1987: 116). Unlike other automakers, Ford overcame such difficulties by developing an in-house policing system which “consisted of 3500 roughnecks football players, wrestlers, ex-convicts, gangsters and broken down cops” (Weiss, 1987:115). Even the Knights of Dearborn and the American Nazis were involved in Ford’s police service (Weiss, 1987). The in-house system integrated policing back into auto-making. These changes did not represent major ideological shifts on Ford’s part. They were adjustments to the changing context in which his production process was embedded. Today, the decision to employ contract versus in-house private security is one that companies make based on the specific needs of their enterprise.
The National Recovery Act, 1933 and the subsequent Wagner Act, which together insured the rights of workers in the sphere of collective bargaining, resulted in a new comprise at Ford, facilitated by non-radical trade unions. As union membership was made mandatory, Ford was able to turn to union leaders to ensure that wage demands would not be unreasonable. In this way, labour became self-regulating. Through union dues, workers subsidized the cost of their own policing. At the same time, the post-war economic boom meant that the cost of wage increases could be socialized through higher prices for consumer goods. The Fordist mode of production then had a built-in policing mechanism that resulted in class relations that were less antagonistic than they had been in the past, and where particular policing markets disappeared or were greatly reduced in size. The shifting political and economic climates of both the depression and the post-war recovery shaped the face of corporate policing at Ford. Legislation affected the extent to which Ford could suppress labour, while the emerging social safety net meant that paternalistic social control was no longer viable.

**Risk markets and labour**

While security guards and their historical antecedents are workers, and low-waged and insecure workers at that, they are not ‘typical workers’. They exercise a great deal of power, both formal and informal. At present there is little research on security guards (Rigakos, 2002). Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that security guards’ working lives are generally structured through the long standing relations of wage labour that characterize capitalism. The power imbalance inherent in the wage labour relationship is intensifying due to neo-liberal economic practices aimed at reducing labour costs. This trend can be seen in the private security industry. South (1988: 103)
documents that the private security sector employs a disproportionate number of part-
time casual staff. He also found that companies often hire moonlighters who will forgo
pension contributions, or work under the table for a lower rate of pay.

There is a more substantial literature on the working conditions and work culture
of prison guards, another industry that, at least in the United States, is in the process of
being privatized, in part to cut down on labour costs (Shichor, 1995). Lombardo (1981)
and Shichor (1995) point out that prison guards are mainly working class people, with
little education and few employment opportunities. In his study of the working lives of
prison guards, Lombardo (1981) found that most guards, after having completed high
school, some post-secondary or military service, spent a number of years in typical blue
collar jobs such as trucker, construction worker or factory labourer. Lombardo (1981: 112)
also found that guarding work was characterized by a combination of fear, powerlessness
(in regard to both the inmates and the administration), and boredom. Most guards wanted
to “serve their sentence” as quickly as possible. Turnover in the industry is found to be
less during periods of high unemployment and in small towns where there are no other
firms offering similar work.

The enclosures and policing labour

In assessing the role of working class people in the erasure of the commons in
England, the policing of emergent urban centres, or the suppression of labour in the
industrial United States, it is important to look at the tensions between oppression and
agency. There is evidence to suggest that the work of policing capitalist development has
long been accomplished through the use of recently dispossessed or historically
marginalized collectivities. One manifestation of this process began with the British
enclosures during the sixteenth century. During this period large landowners fundamentally altered long standing agricultural practices by enclosing arable lands for private use. This resulted in a twelve-fold increase in propertylessness in a 100-year period. Linebaugh and Rediker (2000: 17) argue that since people are reluctant to give up a mode of subsistence that affords them some degree of independence, this new class had to be forced into factories and poor houses, criminalized, and even banished: “European capitalists had to forcibly expropriate masses of [peasants] from their ancestral homelands so that their labour power could be re-deployed in new economic projects in new geographic settings”. Through dispossession and the institutionalization of private property, peasants were forced into adopting a new class position in growing urban centres. This ongoing dispossession led to new problems related to social control. New risk markets emerged because the activities of the urban masses were seen as a potential source of disruption to orderly industrial development. The day-to-day work of policing did not fall to the industrialists, however. Some members of a newly emergent ‘respectable’ working class were deployed to this end.

Servants and slaves

Some of the ancestors of the dispossessed people that struck fear into the hearts of London’s respectable classes built the infrastructure of industrial capitalism. Without their labour, colonization and capitalism could not have developed into their contemporary hegemonic form. According to Linebaugh and Rediker (2000: 56), British colonialism was successful because England, through expropriation at home, created a huge desperate population that could be deployed to the new colonies. This population was in part achieved through the Beggars’ Act of 1598, which allowed offenders to be
banished from England after a second offense. These beggars were sent overseas to secure and lay physical claim to colonial territories. The English took possession of lands overseas “by building fences and hedges, the markers of enclosure and private property” (Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000: 44). In this way the most marginal English subjects did the work of actual physical dispossession across the empire.

The colonization of Ireland took precisely this form. Through the workhouses that emerged in urban areas after the enclosures, many British peasants were formed into an army to overtake the Irish in their homeland. These peasants had been deemed redundant as farmers and were placed in what amounts to holding pens in the form of workhouses, until a new use for their labour emerged. Colonial endeavors provided just such a labour demand, and the bodies of dispossessed peasants were mobilized to this end. After their colonization, groups of Irish peasants were sent to Jamaica to work alongside African slaves. The island experienced what would be viewed today as “cross-racial” slave revolts. The revolts were a nightmare for the planting class, and without a police force in place to help quell these revolts, they were on their own to develop a solution. The solution they found was to redeploy some of their slave labour to stand on the frontline in the case of future unrest. The result was a legal differentiation between servants (Irish) and slaves (Africans). Both were heavily controlled. For example, the 1652 Act to Restrain the Wanderings of Servants and Negroes restricted the movement of Africans and Irish alike. However, “the planters legally and socially differentiated slave from servant, defining the former as absolute private property and offering the latter new protection against violence and exploitation” (Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000: 127). The servants became a labour elite, working as overseers in the fields and also as an armed
militia used to put down slave revolts. The dispossession of these Irish militiamen by underpaid British soldiers demonstrates the way in which a large hegemonic system like British Imperialism is able to subsume many into its project, despite very limited rewards through an intensive system of hierarchy.

**Conclusion**

I have argued that alongside changing relations of production and consumption have come changing policing needs. Various entities, large and small, public and private, have consistently stepped up to fill market demand. I have also argued that economic necessity, combined with a relative measure of borrowed power, have historically led economically marginalized people to provide the requisite labour to ensure that the work of policing and surveillance gets done in a cost efficient manner. There have been transitional changes in the culture of capitalism with the collectivized insurance programs of the post-war period. Neo-liberal thought has since repositioned the values of individualism and competition above the risk-sharing features of the Keynesian welfare state. As neo-liberalism has taken hold over the past thirty years, risk markets have re-emerged and evolved. In the next chapter, I look at the range of contemporary risk markets emerging at the international, national and local levels.
Chapter Five: Emerging and Evolving Risk Markets

While risk markets have been a fairly enduring feature of western capitalist development, they have continued to evolve and take on new and distinctive forms. Accelerated globalization and the adoption of neo-liberal economic and governance principles at the international, national, and local levels have contributed to the changing form of some security services, as well as the emergence of new markets for security services. This chapter begins with a look at contemporary international risk markets.

There have long been mercenary firms willing, for a price, to become involved in internal and external conflicts in foreign countries. Under the current US administration there has been an expansion and a mainstreaming of this type of militarized private security service. Although the sorts of services offered by firms, such as American-based Blackwater USA, on the surface appear to have little in common with the types of private security services
currently on the market in Canada, the activities of transnational mercenary-style private security firms have to be understood as emerging out of the same economic and political context as locally-based Canadian firms. This chapter then examines the changing face of Canadian private security. The private security industry in Canada is not only growing, the types of services available are evolving. Ross Mcleod (2002), CEO of the Toronto-based private security firm, Intelligarde, describes Canadian private security as having evolved from a night watchman or ‘warm body’ phase, to a low-profile or ‘guards with blazers’ phase, with his organization ushering in a ‘third wave’ in private policing in Canada ‘parapolicing’. McLeod’s company offers highly visible, proactive policing. His staff employ a range of tactics generally reserved for the public police, such as mass arrests, roadblocks, the use of body armour and even horses. I argue that while there are viable markets for all three types of services in Canadian cities, the demand for ‘parapolicing’ services is growing. This chapter ends with a look at the broad range of risk markets in Vancouver

**International risk markets**

Internationally, researchers interested in contemporary private security arrangements have covered topics as diverse as Disney World’s customized approach to private policing (Shearing and Stenning, 1987) to the engagement of transnational mercenary firms such as “Executive Outcomes” to ‘secure’ diamond mines in war torn Sierra Leone (Douglas, 1999). Making sense of Vancouver’s risk markets requires an understanding of the diversity of activities that make up contemporary private security work, as well as some of the underlying similarities across the industry.
While mercenary firms like ‘Executive Outcomes’, working at the international level, have a long history, since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, there has been a growth in that particular risk market. For example, many North Americans are now familiar with ‘Blackwater USA’. This private security firm has been integral to the ongoing occupation of Iraq. The type of work performed by Blackwater operatives is much more complex and far reaching in its implications that any private security work in Vancouver, not to mention being both more dangerous and more lucrative. However, it is important to bear in mind that as Blackwater and other firms with an international focus go about their work providing advanced law enforcement and military training, engaging in counterterrorism activities, antiterrorism and diplomatic protection programs, or deploying their parachute team in war-torn nations (Blackwater, 2006) they are doing so within the same economic and ideological context as local firms providing burglar alarm monitoring or patrolling suburban shopping malls. The context has less to do with a pervasive fear of terrorism than with a hegemonic faith among those in a position to influence security policy in the efficacy of free market principles for addressing security concerns, real or perceived.

Blackwater USA claims to exist in order to support “security, peace, freedom and democracy everywhere” (Blackwater, 2006). The company works closely with local, state and federal law enforcement, the US Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, as well as non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations and ‘friendly’ nations from around the world (Blackwater, 2006). Blackwater markets itself as a problem-solving organization, able to respond to challenges faced by governments in a global context rife with sharp political and ideological cleavage:
We customize and execute solutions for a client to help keep them at the level of readiness required to meet today’s military, law enforcement, peacekeeping, and stability operations challenges. We continually prove to be faster, better, cheaper, and more efficient and effective than conventionally managed forces (Blackwater, 2006).

From the perspective of Blackwater executives, the issues that have lead to current global conflicts and instability can be managed through customized policing interventions. Eric Prince, Blackwater’s CEO, is a dedicated conservative Christian and has been actively involved in the movement to politically unite evangelicals, conservative Catholics and neoconservatives (Scahill, 2007). To focus exclusively on the company’s stated ideological position, however, directs attention away from the fact that Blackwater is, first and foremost, a for-profit enterprise. The company has more than $500 million in US government contracts, not even taking into account its secret “black budget” operations (Scahill, 2007). Blackwater has been so successful because the American government has adopted wholesale the neo-liberal economic principles of cost-cutting and increased efficiency through privatization. The executives and frontline operatives developing and implementing customized security solutions for their clients are not accountable to those who will be most affected by their work.

The private security industry in Canada

While there are no firms even approaching the size or status of Blackwater USA in Canada, since the 1960s Canada has been home to a range of diverse firms filling a broad range of market niches. These firms include “private security firms, insurance companies, forensic accountants and private ‘in-house’ corporate security” (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 60). Since the 1980’s, growth in the private security industry has accelerated. While reliable data on the size of private security in Canada do
not exist, the actual number of police officers in Canada has steadily declined relative to the population while the number of private security officers has grown. It is generally agreed that, at some point in the late 60s or early 1970s, the number of private security officers surpassed the number of public police officers in Canada (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 9). Statistics Canada reports that in 1996, Canada employed 59,090 public police officers and 82,010 private security officers. However, the Law Commission of Canada (2002: 10) notes that “this figure underestimates the actual number of private security employees because it only includes private security officers and investigators and does not include forensic accountants, insurance investigators or private ‘in-house’ security officers”. This number is small when compared to the American industry where private security workers outnumber public police 7 to 1, but the private security industry Canada clearly has a sizable and longstanding presence.

**The changing face of Canadian private security**

Security companies in Canada are surprisingly diverse. Not only is there a broad range of services available, new markets continue to emerge. Ross McLeod (2002), CEO of Toronto based Intelligarde, explains that 20 years ago the security industry was populated mainly by solitary guards employed only to provide a ‘warm body’ at a site during off times. He calls this the “night watchman” phase of the industry. Night watchman work continues to constitute a major risk market. A guard named Paul who took part in this study explained, “I used to joke that you haven’t really done security until you’ve watched a hole in the ground, paint dry, or grass grow, until one day I realized I’d done all three”. Although Paul has moved on to more high profile security
work, the industry is full of night watchmen. This type of work, described by McLeod (2002) as the first wave of private policing, is generally the domain of elderly immigrants:

I have seen different ethnic groups that have very elderly people still doing security work but it's just sort of on site, just sort of watch some trucks in a parking lot or something like that, it's not like any heavy duty security. (Jimmy)

While there will likely always be a place for the night watch in the world of private security, there is also demand for new kinds of services.

McLeod (2002) describes the second wave of private security as “low profile, or guards with blazers”. Night watchmen work, by and large, takes place outside of the public eye. As bank towers, business centres, and shopping centres became ubiquitous in North America, a market emerged for security people who were more presentable and professional. According to McLeod, most of the guards employed at these sites are younger than typical night watchmen, but in general, they are still not particularly committed to a career in the security industry. The job of a low profile guard is simply to observe and report incidents, and pass this information on to allow the criminal justice system to respond appropriately. These guards are there in large part for insurance reasons. Paul explained:

You know, a lot of the time securing something is not that important, it’s just the fact that you were there. It is all about insurance. Not insurance in the sense of insuring things don’t go wrong, I’m talking insurance in the sense of the companies.

There are profits to be made in providing “low profile guards in blazers”. In discussing the type of service provided by his company, the human resources director at Securiwise, the largest security company in BC, describes typical low profile security work:
We’re not compliance oriented, we are customer service oriented … Do we think that security officers need to be empowered to use force, or to use weapons? Not really, we don’t think that that is the role of security officers. Our role is to observe and report and not to take people down.

While the market for low profile guards clearly remains lucrative given the ongoing success of Securiwise, many clients now expect a little bit ‘extra’ from their contract security provider. According to McLeod, that expectation has led to the third wave in private policing.

McLeod (2002) argues that at some point in the 1980s the assumption that guards should do no more than observe and report began to change. He writes, “the industry had to become more active, visible and professional” (McLeod, 2002: 32). He describes ‘parapolicing’ as high profile, well-equipped people who can command authority and respect. McLeod (2002) attributes the demand for this style of private security to more private property and visible wealth offering temptation to potential criminals, and to overburdened public police forces that cannot meet citizens’ demand for security. Parapolicing will intervene and resolve a situation rather than merely observe and report. McLeod describes this company as “pushing the envelope” in terms of what the private security industry can offer clients.

There are several companies operating in Vancouver that are pushing the industry in the parapolicing direction. These companies have not gone as far as Toronto’s Intelligarde in terms of adopting tactics generally reserved for the public police. However, they do engage in a highly visible and proactive form of private security work. Guards are likely to be trained in self-defense and are willing to actively engage in conflict situations. These guards and the companies that employ them also tend to be eager to distance themselves from the image of the security guard as ‘night watchman’. The co-
owners of Streetwise, a small security firm in Vancouver, want to see the industry become more proactive and interventionist in its approach. They describe what they see as the problem with traditional security:

I mean if you’re 70 years old and you can barely walk and you’re watching a job site, I mean you’re not very productive so the police are just dealing with more work from them at the end of the day following up on all of the draw backs that we in the security industry have. We should be competent to get the job done.

They explain why they went into business:

We want to be proactive. We want to be on site. We wanted to bring something a little more security based, a little more focused to the needs of Vancouver, a little more professional. We kind of did our research into what was going on out there, you know, just the type of security that was out there was lacking in a lot of ways... We did some training in the states with domestic terrorism and stuff like that, so we also wanted to bring that aspect to here. After 9-11, we felt that that might be a kind of marketing tool that we could use to sort of ‘up’ our services. So that was our primary reason -- just sort of overall noticing what was going on out there and realizing that we had skills and the training to maybe take it to the next level.

These security entrepreneurs note that there is a growing market for the style of services that they provide:

We are usually the second line. So what happens is, they usually hire these East Indian companies to go in at a very small wage, and when something major occurs and these people do not perform, then we go in and clean up their mess. It’s unfortunate but that’s usually how we’re getting our work. And then we usually establish ourselves as a pretty decent company from that point we just carry on from there. In the downtown core, where there are so many different factors here with homelessness and B&Es and you name it, we usually haven’t had many problems getting [contracts] down here just because of our service and what we do down here (Streetwise).

Parapolicing is a very different job than traditional forms of private security work.

‘Parapolices’ are more than just a set of eyes and ears, they work proactively to deter
criminal activity and actively intervene in the face of behaviour they consider to be undesirable. With this style of private security, size and physical power become much more important. Thomas, who works for a company doing higher-end proactive security work, explains:

You’ve got a lot of security people that are, I’m not going to say smaller in stature but they don’t have the presence. If somebody was to say something and they were to say something back, there not going to look at ‘em and think “This guy means business”. Whereas I’m 6’2, 200 pounds. I don’t have a problem throwing people around.

Parapolicing tactics contrast considerably with more conventional, night watchman or low-profile approaches to security work. It is about being proactive, highly visible and interventionist. Vancouver currently has markets for all three styles of private security work. In this context multiple companies can coexist, providing a range of services while consumers are offered ‘choice’ in terms of the style of policing they feel is right for them given their needs and budget.

The range of risk markets in Vancouver

Security companies generally provide a range of services in order to access many risk markets. A representative from Cavalry Security, a firm with approximately 750 employees in Vancouver and four to five hundred employees in Alberta, describes the diversity of functions that his guards perform:

It really varies site to site. In general security is just a lot of just presence and providing a deterrent from people trying to break in. Say hospitals, they’re there to help locate missing patients, keep an eye on violent patients, anything in between. Fire alarms, fire watch, it’s really broad. There’s other things that we do. We have canine patrols, bike patrols, concierge stuff, everything.

A single security guard may find himself deployed to a wide variety of sites:
I’ve worked lots of malls. I’ve done Plaza of Nations a number of times. I’ve done private apartment building fire watch when the panel goes out. Lots of raves, I’ve done a couple of clubs. I started out doing a lot of strikes. (Names a mid size firm) actually got contracts out of the country, San Francisco, and sent a bunch of guards to do some strike fighting. I didn’t get to do that, I did the Molson Indy. (Jimmy)

Thomas also works at a range of sites:

I do construction security, so night shift or day shift when they are not working. We do concierge slash security services for different towers downtown. The company itself does personal security, so I’ve done security at people’s houses, personal protection.

The general manager of Charger Security, a mid-sized firm that started out doing mainly night club and special events work, explains that in order to compete in the world of private security, it is necessary to grow and branch out into new markets as they emerge:

Well, as a company, if you want to expand you’ve got to grow. You’ve got to move into new areas, so we got into mobile patrols, static sites, alarm response, private investigation, personal protection loss prevention, pretty much everything except for canine, which is the dogs.

There are a number of fairly standard services that can be purchased in Vancouver. They range from services targeted to individuals to those targeted toward multinational companies.

**Strikebreaking**

“Labour relations”, also referred as strikebreaking, is a risk market with a long history in North America. From the Pinkerton Detective Agency, employed to break mining strikes, to the policing of labour relations in Ford’s automotive factories, private security has historically been an important tool for disciplining labour. Securiwise, Vancouver’s largest company with over 100 employees and 30 years of business experience, began operations in the 1970s as a security force for the resource extraction economy that dominated in the province. Vancouver is now the centre of Securiwise’s operations, although they also have offices in Nanaimo and Victoria, as well as Dubai.
Although strike breaking is no longer a major aspect of their operations, in British Columbia today the policing labour relations is re-merging as a profitable risk market.

AFI International Group, an Ontario based company specializing in strikes and lockouts, has recently set up shop in British Columbia (Vancouver Sun, May 6th 2004). Company president, Darrell Parsons, explained to the Vancouver Sun: “all we do is labour”. The company works with employers to draw up contingency plans in the event of a lockout, to provide safe passage in and out of workplaces for managers, and gathers evidence for legal proceedings. AFI has over 400 employees that it moves around the country as needs arise, exploiting risk markets wherever they emerge.

Contracting out of public security services

Federal, provincial and municipal decisions to contract out formerly public security-related jobs have lead to new opportunities for security entrepreneurs. Across British Columbia there are now private guards working in security jobs, as contract security agents, that were once held by public employees. Vancouver Coastal Health, for example, contracted out their non-healthcare related services as a cost-saving measure. Housekeeping services were contracted out to Aramark Canada, laundry services to K-Bro Linen systems, and food preparation was handed over to Sodexho Canada ltd, which received a ten year $330 million contract (VCH, 2003). Security was in large part handed over to Cavalry Security, a Vancouver-based company.

Cavalry was awarded a five year $23 million contract to provide security at hospitals. The contract offers Vancouver Coastal Health five million dollars in savings while security services will be expanded across the authority by 23% (VCH, 2003). Those savings will likely come mainly from lower labour costs. Cavalry will be joined at
Vancouver General Hospital by Firstcall Security. San Antonio-based Firstcall Security was established in 1948. The company has 45 branches across the United States as well as 17 offices in Canada.

**Special Events, Bars and Night Clubs**

Bars and special events are a long-established risk market. For example, Charger Security, which has grown to over 300 employees in under ten years, began doing only special events and nightclub security. The company was initially founded to offer licensed and bonded personnel to provide security services to the nightclub industry. They have covered events ranging from the Vancouver Molson Indy and Canadian Idol to private raves. Charger security got in on the ground floor of a burgeoning private security market. As Vancouver develops its tourism and entertainment districts, new risk markets are continually emerging.

In 2004, the City of Vancouver launched a pilot program to have bars in the downtown core to stay open until four am. In order to monitor the change, a group of 22 bar and club owners organized themselves into 'Barwatch'. The later closing times were part of Vancouver’s attempt to revitalize the downtown core and bring in money. The later closing times have also resulted in a host of security concerns. Some of the issues are being dealt with technologically, with bar owners attempting to bring in ID machines where club patrons swipe their drivers licenses before coming inside. The demand for guards has also grown. Barwatch originally paid $735,000 to bring in extra public police, and eventually hired private security to augment the police presence. The security company ensures that there are more bodies patrolling the street, particularly along the Granville strip between nine pm and five am on weekends. The company’s guards “maintain constant contact with the police and doormen to make sure everyone is aware
of the troublemakers” (Vancouver Courier, August 5th, 2005). The company provides four patrol guards (working in groups of two) along the busiest four blocks of Vancouver’s nightclub district, along with a roving supervisor for back-up when needed.

**Mobile patrols**

Mobile patrols covering a limited area represent a newly emerging risk market in Vancouver. Business improvement areas and residents’ associations are major consumers of patrol services, because they have a vested interest in controlling a limited geographical space. Mobile patrols are a shared service carried out by a security guard or team of guards who patrol a predetermined area. Generally these patrols provide an agreed upon number of checks each night, at irregular intervals in order to ensure that potential criminals cannot discern their schedule. These services are available for residential and business clients. Patrols can be carried out on foot, bicycle or in a car. As Dark Pillar’s website explains, mobile patrols serve a number of functions, including: removal of undesirable persons from the client’s property, bylaw/parking enforcement; customer service; and deterrence of criminal activities by patrolling parking lots, roadways, pathways, buildings residence and the perimeter of any area. These patrols are interesting because even though security guards have little power when they patrol public streets, their presence can be a very effective tool for relocating undesirable persons, providing an overall feeling of security for clients.

**Concierge and residential services**

Another area of substantial growth for the private security industry in Vancouver has been in concierge/security positions, where a security guard is hired by a strata condominium complex. I asked the co-owners of Streetwise, which provides security for
many high-end buildings, why new residential towers in Vancouver were opting for
security rather than traditional doormen:

They want the security mentality. They want the presence, the deterrence. When you put somebody in a building, like say this tower, part of it is
customer service. But then, you're also checking all the doors around the
building. You want to check downstairs. You want to check the vehicles,
make sure no one breaks into any of the vehicles so that's the security
aspect of it, right. So if you can put the two together with security and
customer service...

Kirk, a guard who works in a residential tower, explained that these services do seem to
make a difference for the residents:

Some of the sites that our company works at we've had very little break
and enter, very little theft. The building that I'm at now has been there for
three years. I've been there for two years and we've had one break and
enter. So we're a very visible presence. I make sure that all of our staff
including myself, is out doing perimeters on a regular basis.

Given the level of high-density development currently underway, the demand for
concierge/security services is likely to grow. However, other people want more
individualized attention than a security/concierge service can offer. This has led to a
market in higher-end personal protective services.

Executive protection

According to the co-owners of Streetwise Security, the market for high-end
executive protection services has risen in Vancouver:

The executive of Telus, right now has security going with their kids to the
park and everything. There's a lot of prominent families that no one even
knows about around the city. Like we were just fortunate enough to be
involved with the owner of the Westwood Plateau Golf and Country Club,
Iranian gentleman. We're talking chauffeurs, Bentleys, you name it he's
got it. And he's got security at his place all the time. They don't want
problems, right.

A number of Vancouver-based companies offer custom protection for individuals, their
spouse and family, or nanny. These companies will provide a team which can include
any or all of the following: a team leader, responsible for running the operation; a personal escort section; a residential security team; a security advance party; security drivers; and operations room staff to manage the operation from an off-site location. The level of protection is limited only by the individual’s willingness to pay.

*Canine*

Another burgeoning risk market in Vancouver is canine patrols. Dark Pillar Security Services Ltd. prides itself as being the pioneer in canine security services in British Columbia. The company’s website describes an impressive array of canine-related services that extend beyond run of the mill watch dogs:

Our canine detection experts can scan your organization or facility for contraband odor including explosives, narcotics and weapons in just a few hours. Companies of all types, which are concerned about drug abuse making their way into the workplace and on campus, all over the world are employing K-9 detection teams.

Cavalry Security provides some canine services. According to their human resource manager, canine patrols are popular with both clients and guards:

People want it, but they have to be able to justify paying extra money for a dog. It’s essentially a higher billing rate...We’re starting up canine mobile patrols responding to alarms and stuff like that. It’s more of a presence. A lot of the guards want to do that [canine patrol], get experience.

Canine patrols are appealing to property owners precisely because they add an element of authority to a patrol that an unarmed guard cannot command on his own.

*Community policing as neo-liberal policing*

Private security companies are increasingly taking over the function of “community policing”. In Vancouver, privatizing tendencies in the area of policing have been exacerbated by the withdrawal of support for publicly-funded community policing
programs. While it was never clear that these programs were genuinely 'community' controlled, given the importance of sponsorship in financing community policing centres, they did include the opportunity for some measure of input and participation from interested residents.

In 1996, the Provincial NDP government began providing $150,000 per year toward the funding of 17 community policing centres in Vancouver. This funding was matched by the city, putting the total budget for community policing at $300,000, which could then be supplemented by local communities through the provision of space, equipment and services. In 2002, the Provincial Liberal government announced that it would cut the funding and replace it with $5000 one-time grants for special projects (Vancouver Courier, October 27th 2004). This cut came in the wake of a comprehensive restructuring of the provincial economy, which included cuts to most social services and a move towards privatization and off-loading of service provision to local governments and the voluntary sector. The city of Vancouver adopted the position that their participation in community policing funding was always conditional on the provincial contribution. While city council noted that community policing had been successful, they chose to end funding and to replace it with transition/terminating grants for centres that met certain criteria, including a large active volunteer base, the operation of an office with consistent hours, diverse funding sources, and the engagement of local residents and business community (Vancouver City Counsel, 2003), all of which are easier to achieve in areas with more resources.

After 10 community policing centres were closed in June 2003 due to budgetary cuts (Vancouver Courier, October 27th, 2004), citizens began taking matters into their
own hands in some areas. For example, members of the Dunbar Resident’s Association, claiming to be “under siege from an increase in graffiti, vandalism, car thefts and break-ins,” began a volunteer foot and bike patrol. The community originally had its own community policing centre. With the budget cuts there was an amalgamation, and the Kerrisdale/Oakridge/Marpole community-policing centre is now responsible for patrolling the city west of Granville Street. The Kitsalano area, which was also affected by the amalgamation of community policing offices, started its own volunteer patrol. The Dunbar area has become part of a very telling project.

In June of 2005, Charger Security announced that it would offer a year-long free patrol service to the community between West Boulevard and Dunbar Street and 33rd Avenue and 49th Avenue as part of a pilot program that they labeled “community smart patrol” (Vancouver Courier, June 15, 2005). The company’s general manager explained his position to the Vancouver Courier: “the police have a job to do. But in today’s society everybody in every aspect of the workforce is getting stretched in their job duties. We’re there to work with the police and be proactive with the community” (Vancouver Courier, June 15th, 2005). The program will, according to Charger, target property crimes, missing or lost children, unsecured homes and businesses, nuisance vagrants, aggressive panhandlers, and abandoned vehicles. When questioned on how the program would run for free, the company’s director of business development explained that the initiative will cost the company more than $150,000 as guards will use a Smart Car equipped with GPS, laptop computer and video surveillance to patrol the neighbourhood 24 hours a day seven days a week. He concedes that the program cannot run for free indefinitely and tells the Courier “the goal is to prove that once you build a sense of community and work together
you can beat crime... the secondary goal is proving that it can be an affordable and effective means of combating crime” (Vancouver Courier, June 15th 2005). Despite claims that the program is free, Charger has asked that residents and businesses pay 30 dollars per month for alarm monitoring (Vancouver Courier, June 20th, 2005). The bigger issue, however, is the way in which risk markets are being simultaneously picked up as public services decline, and constructed as people become accustomed to services such as a patrol that deals with “nuisance vagrants”, a service that the public police are not able to provide unless a crime has been committed. At the same time, the banner of ‘community’ is being used to describe a process that was entirely spearheaded by a private company based out of another area of the city. On July 10th of 2006, Charger Security’s president announced on his “Community Patrol Blog” that the “Community Patrol Program” would be expanded. He committed one million dollars to the project by 2010. The program is now running in Kerrisdale, a high-income Westside neighbourhood.

Layering of private security provision

The belief that the public police are no longer in a position to mitigate the risks posed to individuals’ homes, neighbourhoods or businesses by criminals of all types seems to be growing. In this context, many security companies are claiming to be complete security providers, the message being that all of an individual’s or business’s security needs can be met by a single private provider who can better understand and meet their needs than the public police. When a resident, business or organization employs private security in any of the capacities mentioned above, security work does not happen in isolation. For example, IMC Concierge & Security Inc., which specializes in providing security services to residential towers, offers a bike patrol program to
complement the security inside residential towers. They market this program on their website:

An increasing number of Vancouver area residents are asking for the extra security that bicycle patrols provide. A trained security guard on a bicycle is flexible and mobile enough to respond quickly, protecting property and preventing small incidents from snowballing into emergencies. Now IMC Concierge & Security Inc. has designed a Shared Bike Patrol service that is both effective and affordable. When three or four neighbouring strata title or rental properties share one bicycle patrol that coverage can cost as little as $5 per unit per month.

The owners of Streetwise explained that this type of multi-layered private security service expanding to cover an enormous range of public and private spaces:

When we first started it was construction sites and buildings. Now, we’ve got security within security. We’ve got mall security and then we’ve got our own security which we do within stores that we do for people. Then we’ve got loss prevention. It’s everywhere.

Kirk explains how multi-layered private security functions in the downtown neighbourhood where he works. He does concierge/security work in a tower. He is responsible for the perimeter and parking garage in the building, but not the streets or public space around it. He notes that: “There’s street patrol, but that’s run by a different company. It’s an independent company that does bike patrol and street patrol”. While individual strata councils are responsible for providing internal security, the developer is responsible for street patrols. Kirk explains, “They need street patrol to monitor all the sites that are being built”. While services are provided by a number of different companies, he notes that: “It’s good to maintain [communication], yes, not every security person does but the supervisors try to maintain open communications with all the other agencies because sometimes you never know you might need back up”. By purchasing dedicated on-site security along with mobile patrols that can be redeployed should a
situation arise, Vancouver’s urban condo dwellers can provide themselves with optimum security for a ‘reasonable’ price, while having the assurance that the shopping centres, entertainment districts, and public buildings that they frequent are also patrolled by private security guards.

Conclusion

Risk markets continue to expand and evolve at the international, national and local levels. At the global level, private security firms are taking on a more pronounced role in major international conflicts. In Canada, domestic risk markets continue to expand. The nature of services companies provide are, in some instances, becoming more heavy-handed and beginning to more closely resemble those provided by the public police. However, there is still a lucrative market in more traditional, lower-profile private security services. In Vancouver, markets have emerged for services ranging from ‘labour relations’ to canine patrols. Private security providers are also filling a number of service gaps left by the withdrawal of public funds from community policing programs and the contracting out of formerly public security services.

Whether a security company is intervening in international conflicts or guarding parking lots, these companies exist because there are clients willing and able to pay for the services they provide. This willingness to expend resources on private security services is due in part to perceptions of growing risks to persons and property. These perceived risks are as diverse as international terrorism and concerns about panhandlers driving away shoppers. Importantly, in each of these cases a decision has been made to address these insecurities through the private market. Within Canada, this demand for security services is concentrated mainly in urban areas (Law Commission of Canada,
2002). In the next chapter, I draw on the literature on neo-liberal and post-industrial city-building practices to argue that inner city gentrification in post-industrial locales opens up a range of risk markets for security entrepreneurs, and that, in fact, the existence of cost-effective private security has made some city-building enterprises that would have otherwise been untenable, not only possible, but quite successful.
Neo-liberal policy choices have had a profound impact on the emergence of new risk markets. While the language of neo-liberalism is often applied to processes occurring at the international and the national level, "urban processes and conflicts are not often framed in a similar language" (Blomley 2004: xv). Yet it is in the everyday space of interaction, where people live and work, that neo-liberalism happens as a practice rather than a discourse. It is in these spaces, for example, that racialized immigrant workers cook and clean for those at the upper end of the post-industrial labour market and where the wealthy and the poor alike, limited only by their access to resources, make ‘choices’ related to housing, childcare and transportation. It is also in these everyday spaces that feelings of security and insecurity manifest themselves. For example, in public parks and
at bus stops occupants of new upscale developments come face to face with those rendered homeless as a result of inner city gentrification and restrictive income assistance policies. George Rigakos (2002) notes that the emergence of new risk markets in Canada is primarily an urban phenomenon. In a report written on behalf of the Law Commission of Canada (2002:11), he explains that while statistical data about the security industry tend to be national in scope, “it is important to keep in mind that much of the discussion around these trends largely arises from developments in urban areas. Rural communities, out of economic necessity and/or tradition, tend toward a more voluntarist approach to augment local public policing”. Thus, the growing prominence of privatized policing should be seen less as a shift in Canada’s policing practice and more as a shift in the social relations of cities.

In 1984, Jane Jacobs critiqued economists from across the political spectrum for their reliance on national measures to attempt to explain and predict economic trends. She argues that even Marxism, with its orientation towards class rather than nations, focuses on national economies in any jurisdiction where variants of Marx’s theories have been put into practice. Jacobs (1984) argues that the assumption that the nation state is the best unit of analysis for studying how economies function is so deeply embedded in economics that it is taken for granted and so flawed that no economic theory has been successful in predicting the impact of the policies that they espouse.

Nations are political and military entities, and so are blocs of nations. But it doesn’t necessarily follow from this that they are also the basic, salient entities of economic life or that they are particularly useful for probing the mysteries of economic structure… once we remove the blinders of the mercantilist tautology and try looking at the real economic world in its own right rather than as a dependent artifact of politics, we can’t avoid seeing that most nations are composed of collections or grab bags of very
different economies, rich regions and poor ones within the same nation (Jacobs, 1984: 31).

Out of that ‘grab bag’ of economies, cities are among the most powerful. Urban economies have the ability to shape the economic life of other regions while containing a distinct and ever-changing economy of their own. Conversely, cities and their economies cannot be understood in isolation from the broader economic context in which they are embedded.

Cross and Moore (2002) explain that, in both North America and Europe, the rapid globalization of the economy is having a profound effect on the structure and function of cities, and that global cities have become critical nodes in advanced restructured economies. Blomley (2004) uses the term ‘urban neo-liberalism’ to describe the ways in which cities have restructured themselves in order to fit into that emerging global economic order. Through policies of de-regulation and fiscal austerity that emphasize public-private partnerships and ‘market-based solutions’ to urban problems, neo-liberal practices have had a profound effect on many cities. Urban neo-liberalism has been described “as a ‘process’ rather than a ‘fully actualized policy regime’. It is expressed through various forms of ‘creative destruction’ where the dismantling of Fordist relations and forms goes hand in hand with new structures and modalities of rule” (Blomely, 2004: 30). Neo-liberalism is not just an ideology or a set of economic practices; rather, urban neo-liberalism requires the adoption of particular spatial, such as the tactical cleansing of urban spaces (Blomely, 2004). In this way the work that security guards do can be seen as central to the neo-liberalization of cities.

I am interested in how the work that security guards do links up with the broader work of city building in Vancouver. Neo-liberal discourse stresses the role of individuals
and communities in governance, suggesting that they should retain control of resources and make choices that fit their individual needs, while finding customized solutions to problems that may emerge. In urban areas, private security patrols hired by individuals and local groups fit well with this governance strategy. Ironically, despite the focus on individual choice and customized problem-solving in neo-liberal discourse, there is remarkable congruence in terms of the choices that are being made and the development path being followed in western cities.

This chapter examines the literature on contemporary urban development practices in post-industrial cities. I look at the range of actors identified in the literature as having a role to play in terms of how cities are being developed and how risk markets are unfolding. I then move on to explore the concept of ‘quality-of-life’ in both city-building and policing discourses, as well as the socio-economic impact of building cities for tourists. I then turn my attention to the literature on city-building in Vancouver. This literature suggests that trends in Vancouver can be understood in the context of ‘policy drift’ from one location to another. These trends are also reflective of processes underway in much of Western Europe and North America. The locally-based literature points to the specific form city-building is taking in Vancouver. Taken together, these two bodies of literature illustrate how neo-liberal practices involve simultaneous homogenization and fragmentation, a twin tendency that has resulted in the growth of risk markets both across Vancouver and across the OCED states.

Global cities and the new world economy

For centuries, the world economy and the shape of cities have been deeply intertwined. While the early phase of industrialization led to practices that contributed to
the growth of an urban proletariat and of policing structures to manage this newly formed class, later phases led to company towns with a uniquely paternalistic mode of class rule. Sassen (2001:3) explains, “Beginning in the 1960s, the organization of economic activity entered a period of pronounced transformation. The changes were expressed in the altered structure of the world economy, and also assumed forms specific to particular places.” Some of the changes include the de-industrialization of former industrial centres, the rapid industrialization of the third world, and an increasingly internationalized financial industry. Her study of three ‘global cities’-- New York, London and Tokyo -- offers insights into the position that First World cities occupy within the international economic order, as well as into the social relations that emerge in cities in the context of advanced globalization and neo-liberalism.

Sassen (2001: 4) argues that comparing three cities with such diverse histories, but which have all undergone similar transformations within a brief period of time, requires “not simply a point-by-point comparison, but situating these cities within in a set of global processes”. Sassen focuses on global cities as sites of production, producing the specialized services needed by an increasingly complex and internationalized financial market. She also makes it clear that global cities are much more, in that they also are places where social relations embedded in the macro processes of global capitalism become concrete.

Cities are central nodes in processes that extend beyond their borders, but they are also key physical spaces where social relations are played out and where new markets for policing services emerge. As Sassen explains, the actual physical space of these key nodes in the global economy becomes an important commodity. “The sharp increase in
prices of central urban property we see beginning in the 1980s in cities such as New York, London, and Tokyo captures the new phase of spatial organization of the economy and the role of cities within it” (Sassen, 2001: 190). Cities that have become integrated into this global system as gateways and financial centres have experienced a parallel growth in international property markets. A concentration of financial and service firms and high-wage workers associated with those firms has contributed to the trend of rapidly increasing real estate prices. This process, while having direct local implications, is part of an international process of economic and spatial restructuring.

The gateway function of global cities has raised the importance of being located in these centres to participate in business, while the escalating prices have enticed international investors and buyers to become involved in property development in major cities. While the desire of firms to be located in the central business district of these cities has led to a pool of bidders -- some local and some foreign -- willing to pay high prices for downtown office space, the concentration of high-income earners associated with these firms led to a parallel market in residential property. “This led to a process of rehabilitation of what had been considered marginal areas and their reconstruction into ‘central’ areas... Only a few years earlier, these areas had been defined as undesirable, derelict, unworkable parts of these cities” (Sassen, 2001: 191). Hence the internationalization of the financial system has changed the physical space and social organization of major cities.

Given the trends she describes, Sassen (2001) argues that we are seeing the emergence of a post-industrial economy. She takes issue with the post-industrial model that was originally posited, “where the expansion of the highly educated workforce and
the centrality of knowledge industries will lead to an overall increase in the quality of life and a greater concern with social rather than narrowly economic objectives" (Sassen, 2001: 253). While she recognizes that several of the elements of the post-industrial thesis have been realized, as service industries have grown and high income gentrification has led to the increase in the quality-of-life for some, she also explores the effects of these developments on low-income residents in these cities.

Alongside the new knowledge elite, there has been an increase in low-wage jobs and a growing casual workforce in post-industrial centres. Since in the 1970s, there have been job losses in the manufacturing sector in New York, London, and Tokyo. Since then there has been a movement towards a ‘service’ economy, not just at the upper levels but also at the bottom levels of the labour market. She argues that these two groups of service workers do not simply exist along side one another, but rather that the development of a global city requires a large pool of low-wage workers in order to meet the needs of elite knowledge workers.

There have not only been changes in the types of work that individuals do, but also in the relative wages that they receive for this work. “Wages and salaries are embedded in a set of broad economic and political processes... Today there is a fairly solid consensus about the fact of growing earnings inequality in most highly developed countries” (Sassen, 2001: 223). In spite of diverse starting points there has been an increase in earnings inequality in most OECD countries, unrelated to initial levels of inequality. Canada and the United States have the most unequal distribution of earnings for both men and women (Sassen, 2001: 224). According to Sassen, increasing inequality can be partially explained by the growth of service industries, which have high
concentrations of high and low paying jobs. This type of labour market developed, in part due to deregulation of the labour market and the retrenchment of social programs in countries that have undergone a shift from Keynesian to neo-liberal economic policies. At the same time, the processes that polarize wealth in major cities have fuelled international property markets that push up housing prices in these cities, further exacerbating inequality between those who move to the city to be part of new knowledge industries and those who either lived there previously as part of the industrial working class, or have relocated, either internally or as international immigrants, to serve those elite workers.

According to Sassen, this is not just a case of growing inequality but also of a qualitative shift in the class relations of increasingly polarized cities. She explains that different types of economic growth promote different forms of social organization. The Keynesian and Fordist modes of production created a form characterized by the dominance of a middle class culture premised upon suburbanization and mass consumption. This mode of production shaped the socio-spatial relations of that era. She describes changing social and consumption patterns arising among the new middle class:

The new high-income workers are the carriers of a consumption capacity and consumption choices that distinguish them from the traditional middle class of the 1950s and 1960s. While their earned income is too little to be investment capital, it is too much for the basically thrifty, savings-oriented middle class. These new high-income earners emerge as primary candidates for new types of intermediate investments: stock, arts, antiques, and luxury consumption. The conjunction of excess earnings and the new cosmopolitan work culture creates a compelling space for new lifestyles and new kinds of economic activity (Sassen, 2001:341).

While the new middle class is not an elite economic class, the worlds of work and home of those who make up this class are increasingly differentiated from the worlds of
home and work of those at the bottom end of the service economy. This differentiation is creating a new class structure in global cities:

The high-level professional workforce in global cities is characterized by work and lifestyles that distinguish it from earlier forms of small elite of urban rich or the broader middle class. Their numbers are large enough in many cities and their preference for urban living is high enough that they have, as a stratum, re-inscribed a good part of the urban landscape (Sassen, 2001: 244-245).

The result is new socio-spatial relations where high-income gentrification and massive construction projects exist alongside increasingly spatially concentrated poverty.

Residential gentrification is more than just the rehabilitation of housing stocks. Rather, Sassen found that:

Residential rehabilitation was only one facet of a far broader process linked to the profound transformation in advanced capitalism: the shift to services and the associated transformation of the class structure and the shift toward the privatization of consumption and service provision. Gentrification emerged as a visible spatial component of this transformation (Sassen, 2001: 261).

Gentrification, then, creates its own social dynamics where wealthy individuals increasingly monopolize the space of the city, even as poverty levels grow, resulting in further privatization of the city. In the new urban order, low-income workers are both essential to the changing city and repelled from it by the very processes that require their labour for full realization.

**Dispersed governance and post-industrial city-building**

In his study of Los Angeles, Mike Davis (1990) describes how cities organized around upscale consumption and property markets imagine themselves, market themselves, and produce and reproduce class relations though the interaction of variously situated actors. His work offers insight into how markets in private security emerge in
response to contemporary city-building practices. Davis’s work is relevant for this project because, like Vancouver, Los Angeles is a relatively new city positioned on the western edge of the continent, and increasingly integrated into the Pacific Rim economy. Davis is clear that the city of Los Angeles has been constructed discursively as much as it has been built materially. The city is more than a collection of distinct publicly and privately held properties. Los Angeles itself has been marketed on the national and international stage to attract investment. He quotes Morrow Mayo, who says of Los Angeles: “it should be understood, is not a mere city. On the contrary, it is, and has been since 1888, a commodity, something to be advertised and sold to the people of the United States like automobiles, cigarettes and mouth wash” (Davis: 1990:17).

In arguing that Los Angeles is a “creature of real-estate capitalism,” Davis (1990: 25) suggests that Los Angeles had to be ‘sold’ to affluent mid-west residents as a whole rather than as a series of parcels of land as had been the pattern of development in the American west up until that point. He also argues that “the massive flow of wealth between regions produced population, income and consumption structures seemingly out of all proportion to Los Angeles’ actual production base: the paradox of the first post-industrial city in its pre-industrial guise” (Davis, 1990: 25).

The major influx of capital to Los Angeles continues to be international real estate capital. “Large scale developers and their financial allies, together with a few oil magnates and entertainment moguls, have been the driving force behind the public-private coalition to build a cultural superstructure for Los Angeles’s emergence as a ‘world class city’ (Davis, 1990: 71). Davis’s work is of particular value because he ties together multiple processes and actors (developers, homeowners, local politicians)
involved in creating and marketing Los Angeles without ever losing sight of underlying relations of power at work. He also reconciles the material and representational, writing that “compared to other great cities, Los Angles may be planned or designed in a very fragmented sense (primarily at the level of its infrastructure) but it is infinitely envisioned” (Davis, 1990: 23). The fragmentary nature of the planning process is understood within a broader context of imaging a city that can be sold to potential homeowners or investors. Politicians, developers, homeowners and business people are all important actors in the revitalization of small areas of any city, as well as the re-envisioning and re-development of cities on the whole. At the same time, politicians supporting privatization, development companies, homeowners groups and business improvement associations are all major consumers of private security services.

Politicians as city-builders

The way development happens in today’s post-industrial urban centres diverges sharply from previous eras of city-building. Inner city re-vitalization is not a new phenomenon, although the relative role of the public and private sector has changed. While there is a tendency to think of inner-city revitalization as a novel contemporary trend, the outflow of middle class residents from the central city and the lack of interest in inner city development in the post-war period were, in fact, a short lived phenomena in North American history, with big city mayors already pushing for redevelopment in the early 1950s. The 1950s were a time of frantic rebuilding of inner cities although the relative involvement of various institutional actors looks very different from the current fragmented neo-liberal approach to gentrification.

The post-war period was the era of large-scale, government-sponsored urban renewal projects. At that time, the conventional wisdom was that “in order to save
downtown, it was going to be necessary to destroy it” (Frieden and Sagalyn, 1989: 16). Whole blocks were to be demolished. These plans relied on clearing large areas for housing projects and freeways, and waiting for developers to come to them. Not only were these plans financially unviable because of a lack of developer interest, they were unpopular politically. Some of the major trends in American cities (and Vancouver, see Gutstein, 1975) included “slum” clearances and freeway projects. City governments went to work, clearing areas with federal monies in the hopes of attracting developers to build new projects. Developers did not want to build in these areas, however, as they did not believe that they could attract middle-class home buyers to the heart of the inner city. Local residents, displaced by the thousands, were outraged. This approach to urban development was soon to change.

Developers and the privatization of cities

The failure of large-scale government sponsored redevelopment was an impetus behind a new era in inner city redevelopment in major American cities. Frieden and Sagalyn (1989 explain that with the end of the renewal era, downtown coalitions were at a turning point. Their crusade for downtown was by no means a failure; they had built strong political alliances, both federal and local and had laid the groundwork for successes that would come later in response to new opportunities and new strategies. While all levels of government continue to be involved in the transformation of large cities, the key component of the new approach was the use of public-private partnerships to drive development and to encourage private enterprises to solve public ‘problems’. The new leading role played by the private sector changed the institutional matrix of city-building. As the private sector became an equal partner in -- if not the guiding force behind -- development, the process became increasingly fragmented. Along with
increased reliance on the private sector to design cities came an increase in the flexibility of arrangements between governments and developers. This era marked the dawn of neo-liberal redevelopment policy in North America.

The new style of negotiation between private developers and governments was "out of line with long-held notions of fairness in government" (Frieden and Sagalyn, 1989: 215). Yet, by the 1970s, public-private partnerships, negotiated on flexible terms, had gained considerable political support. Frieden and Sagalyn (1989) locate the move towards this type of venture in the failure of state-backed urban renewal programs in the USA, a general lack of faith in government in the era of Watergate and the Viet Nam war, and the inability of governments to reduce poverty and prevent crime in inner cities. At the same time, local governments were facing revenue shortfalls and thus looking for new sources of capital. "Encouraging private enterprise to solve public problems was one of the big ideas in government in the 1970s" (Frienden and Sagalyn, 1989: 216). However, re-building cities is only one part of the equation, a second part is attracting the 'right' kind of people back to the city.

*Neighbourhood Associations*

Davis (1990) criticizes the failure of urban scholars to notice the importance of residents' or neighbourhood associations in the development of post-industrial cities. Collectively organized, homeowners groups have been responsible for renaming local neighborhoods in order to raise property values, enforcing racial segregation in residential areas, and securing infrastructure improvements in localized areas at government expense. Some of these organizations have also mobilized to prevent treatment facilities and other services for the poor and addicted from coming to their neighbourhoods (Davis, 1990).
Davis recounts the story of an organization calling itself the ‘West Hills Open Zone Victims,’ a vocal southern California neighbourhood association, to illustrate the key role that these organizations play in shaping the social relations of areas within cities. In discussing the Open Zone Victims lobbying efforts, Davis (1990: 153) writes:

> From their agitated tone the innocent observer would have guessed that they had been the victims of some great, uncompensated tragedy...In fact no one in their neighborhood has died, the school was intact, the pollution was no worse than in any other part of the smog-choked Valley, and there had been no encounters of a third kind.

What had happened was that these homeowners officially remained residents of the Canoga Park district, despite their desire to be referred to as residents of West Hills in order to raise property values. Canoga Park was seen as “very slumish” and “to further fuel West Hills” search for community, local realtors spread the rumor that re-designation would raise home values by an instant $20,000” (Davis, 1990: 154). This story raises issues about the importance of representation in real estate capitalism. However, it also points to the ways in which homeowners associations and other groups with social and economic power are able to define the problems that they see as pressing and, in the process, co-opt terms like 'community' and 'victimization' to their own ends.

Davis lays out three ‘facts’ to help the reader understand homeowners in Southern California:

**fact one:** Los Angeles homeowners, like the Sicilians in Prizzi’s Honor, love their children, but they love their property values more.

**fact two:** ‘Community’ in Los Angeles means homogeneity of race, class and especially, home values. Community designation -- i.e. the street signs across the city identifying areas as ‘Canoga Park,’ ‘Holmby Hills,’ ‘Silverlake’, and so on, have no legal status. In the last analysis, they are merely favors granted by city council members to well-organized neighborhoods or businessmen’s groups seeking to have their areas identified.
fact three: The most powerful ‘social movement’ in contemporary Southern California is that of affluent homeowners, organized by notional community designations or tract names, engaged in the defense of home values and neighborhood exclusivity (1990: 153).

A fourth fact about homeowners’ association and strata councils is that they constitute a major risk market as consumers of mobile patrols, home alarms and security/concierge services.

Business improvement associations

Homeowners groups are powerful actors in contemporary urban governance, but they are not alone as non-elected representatives of community. Another powerful force in neo-liberal city-building has been Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). The world’s first BID was developed in Toronto, Canada in 1971 (Hoyt, 2005). A jewelry store owner and chairperson of the Bloor-Jane-Runnymede Businessmen’s Association Parking committee came up with the idea of a business district with a self-imposed tax on local property owners as a means of financing collective improvement of their area. He struck a committee that realized that such a project would require enabling legislation. The committee lobbied government and the requisite legislation was passed in December of 1969.

Business Improvement Districts are generally considered to be a North American phenomenon. However, more recently the phenomenon has spread to other regions of the globe, including Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (Hoyt, 2005: 3). BIDs engage in what has been termed community-based governance, allowing local participants within the business community to “craft solutions in a way that is sensitive to the local context and where state and local funding is limited...The BID model also
allows commercial interests to aggressively promote downtown areas by managing sophisticated marketing campaigns and outdoor events that attract visitors” (Hoyt, 2005: 3). The spread of the BID model reflects the increasing fragmentation and devolution of powers characteristic of neo-liberal discourse city-building, as well the homogenizing tendencies inherent in globalization.

In her cross-national comparison of BIDs, Hoyt (2005) found a high degree of policy transfer between states with BIDs. The concept of policy transfer refers to the way that policies and practices in one context are used to develop policies and practices in other settings. According to Hoyt (2005: 4), policy transfer occurs within networks, made up of public, private, or public-private actors, who collectively constitute a transnational system for promoting these transfers. This system leads her to suggest “the BID has emerged as an international model for urban revitalization because network actors, operating within policy networks, deliberately transferred BID policy and practices from one context to the next over time.” These organizations are quintessentially neo-liberal governing tools, with ramifications for social equality, democracy, and policing in cities.

Although rarely framed as such, BIDs are new governments, and operate with considerable autonomy. On the one hand, these privately funded organizations foster a changing attitude in the approach to revitalization, by aggressively promoting downtown as an exciting place to live...In contrast critics contend that BID-lead capital improvement campaigns encourage generic design schemes and diminish the perceivable distinction between different parts of the city or between cities. Additionally critics contend that BID ambassadors discriminate against people who live on the street by aggressively directing them to adjacent neighborhoods or to homeless shelter programs.
and that BID retail strategies discriminate against merchants that target low income customers (Hoyt, 2005: 21).

Currently, the cities with the most BIDs are Toronto, Canada (43), Vancouver, Canada (21) and Cape Town, South Africa (18). This growth in Toronto and Vancouver is due, in part, to encouragement by Canadian government. In Ontario, the provincial government made infrastructure grants available for city improvement, but only for BID organizations. In fact, 40% of Canadian BIDs receive financial support in the form of subsidies and grants from the government (Hoyt, 2005: 15). Despite the fact that most BIDs in Canada have fewer than 10 members on their governing board, 53% of BIDs report that they are very involved in policy advocacy, with only 9% reporting that they are not involved at all. These figures raise questions about who is representing communities in this era of neo-liberal governance.

In order to fully understand the link between security provision ands neo-liberal city-building, it is important to understand that 30% of BIDs claim that they are very involved in the provision of security and maintenance. One of the most important elements of neo-liberal governing strategies is that older modes of social exclusion are replaced with newer, more politically palatable approaches. BIDs have proliferated in South Africa recently, where 100% of BIDs report being very involved in the administration of security provisions (Hoyt, 2005). The first statute in South Africa enabling the work of BIAs was enacted in 1999, and there are currently 21 BIDs operating the in the major cities in the country, with 21 more under consideration.

The BID model gained popularity in South Africa in the late 1990s. With then end of apartheid business owners were becoming increasingly concerned with urban crime
and decay. Jean and John Comaroff (2006: 273) note that “the burgeoning violence endured by segregated black communities under apartheid has, especially since the late 1980s, spilled over into once-tranquil, tightly policed ‘white’ cities and suburbs.” However, they qualify this observation by explaining that there is more fuelling the obsession with crime and disorder in South African cities than actual rising crime rates. Images related to crime, security and ‘white’ vulnerability in the face of unruly racialized others are a pervasive feature of contemporary South African culture. “Bolted doors, patrolling dogs defending gated communities and dark figures cocking guns in the shadows appear even in adds for toilet paper and popcorn... Texts like these are haunted by the specter of imminent attack, above all, attack by unruly black youth” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006: 275). With the end of the formal apartheid system, which provided police with legal tools for regulating the access of ‘unruly black youth’ to ‘white’ urban spaces, a predicament has emerged “wherein disorder seems to exceed the capacity of the state to discipline or punish” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2006: 292). In this context, a market for privatized security services has emerged.

South African business interests researched urban renewal models in North America and adopted strategies that focus on the criminalization of ‘disorder’. In Cape Town, the Central City Improvement district’s number one focus is crime prevention. “The security program includes 160 dedicated security personnel in the CBD [Central Business District], including 60 Community Patrol Officers (reservists from the South African Police) and 100 private security officers that patrol on foot, horseback, and motorized vehicles” (Hoyt, 2005: 7). As older models for imposing segregation were disallowed, neo-liberal solutions were borrowed from North America where formal
apartheid has long been over but where racial and economic segregation has taken on new forms.

**Quality-of-life districts and private security in the post-industrial city**

Major cities are changing -- physically, demographically, and in terms of their production and consumption patterns. While changes are tied to global shifts in the organization of capitalism, they are localized in their manifestations. In Los Angeles during the 1980s, the gulf between property owners and non-owners intensified as “[s]tarter homes for under $20,000 (in real terms) -- the basis for family formation in the 1950s -- became extinct, while the percentage of Southern California households with incomes at the minimum mortgage threshold fell from over half to barely a quarter” (Davis, 1990: 174). It was also at this historical moment that the shift away from suburbanization as panacea for class-based and racial conflict began. Developers found a new market in multi-unit inner-city housing projects. “At the upscale end they introduced planned communities of condos and ‘townhouses’ (i.e. rowhouses for the middle class); at the lower end they constructed seeming infinities of ‘dingbat’ stucco tenements” (Davis, 1990: 176). The inner city was being re-envisioned and remade for a post-Fordist age. While housing was being created for two types of residents, only one group would have the power to form associations and make claims to community that would be recognized within a neo-liberal governing regime. This process was replicated in New York City, where there has been a sharp increase in homelessness since the 1980s. Several factors have contributed to this increase. They include larger numbers of low-income households, resulting in a growing number of homeless families -- particularly women with children -- and reductions in government subsidies for housing, due to
conversions and high-income gentrification (Sassen, 2001). While the low-cost housing supply shrunk, the market in high-end housing grew.

The major development projects currently underway in these cities are upscale residences close to downtown, increasingly combined with boutiques, restaurants, spas, and major tourist attractions. These new developments are not only marketed for their use value; they are in large part marketed for the ‘lifestyle’ they represent. Nevarez (2003) explains that, with the advent of a large pool of elite workers in post-industrial industries such as entertainment, software development and tourism, a new force emerged. These workers are in a position to demand good housing, recreation, entertainment and an aesthetically pleasing setting with restaurants and other upscale services, as well as proximity to their places of work. He dubs the areas that develop in response to these demands ‘quality-of-life districts’ in order to accentuate the extent to which place-based amenities are valued by elite workers. I borrow the term ‘quality of-life districts’ from Nevarez to describe some of the re-development projects underway in Vancouver.

Nevarez’s (2003) study centres around emerging ‘quality-of-life’ districts along California’s coastline. Many firms have relocated to cater to the preferences of elite workers who are tired of life in the Silicon Valley. While these districts are outside of the city, they boast many of the city’s services. He notes that:

Eliteworkersforwhomcitylivingdoesnotdetractfromquality-of-life but rather constitutes it (in the form of nightclubs, cultural opportunities, and so on) are likely to prefer an urban setting. For this reason, firms that place a premium on cutting-edge creativity, aesthetic experimentation, and (sub)cultural savvy tend to cluster in revitalized city centers like San Francisco’s South Market District, New York’s Silicon Alley, or Chicago’s Wicker Park (Nevarez, 2003: 67).

These districts become sources of great profit for business owners, developers and real estate holders within these areas. However, because many of these districts are
emerging in areas that either border on or replace long-established low-income communities, the development and marketing of ‘quality-of-life’ districts is constantly challenged. Quality-of-life is achieved by ensuring not only the right mix of amenities, but also the right mix of people. Hence, ‘quality-of-life districts’ are ideal breeding grounds for new risk markets.

Gentrification within a neo-liberal economic context creates fears for residents and consumers spending time in inner-city ‘quality-of-life districts,’ as well as perceived ‘problems’ for developers and marketers in the area, such as homelessness, panhandling and groups of disenfranchised young people. In this way, the development of ‘quality-of-life districts’ in inner-city areas leads to new markets for privatized security services. In many ‘quality-of-life districts’ local business improvement districts pay for private security patrols. In some cases business and residential associations are also pressuring governments for legislation that allows for the prosecution of ‘quality-of-life crimes’ such as loitering, panhandling, littering and sleeping in public -- behaviors that detract from the quality-of-life that consumer groups come to these areas to enjoy.

The term ‘quality-of-life policing’ was first popularized in New York City in 1994. At that time, then Mayor Rudolph Giuliani announced a policing strategy of proactive, aggressive enforcement of misdemeanor laws. The policy became known as the quality-of-life initiative (Harcourt, 2001). Giuliani’s initiative and others like it are informed by the Broken Windows thesis on crime control, which postulates that unaddressed signs of disorder in a neighbourhood, such as broken windows, invite further, more serious crime. Through the application of this thesis, the urban poor are criminalized even when no major offence has occurred. Those who commit minor
offences such as loitering can be scapegoated for violent crime, as well as for creating unease among consumer groups and standing in the way of revitalization. Fundamentally, “[t]he broken windows theory has transformed conduct that was once merely offensive or annoying into positively harmful conduct -- conduct that causes serious crime” (Harcourt, 2001:8). There has been significant policy transfer in terms of quality-of-life policing, with similar initiatives being adopted in other cities across North America.

One American approach to addressing urban disorder that has gained popularity in Canada is recent years is the adoption of ‘safe streets legislation’, a particularly aggressive type of anti-panhandling and anti-homeless legislation (Hermer and Mosher, 2002). The emphasis on ‘disorder’ in the form of panhandling and squeegee work⁶ in safe streets legislation “has created a climate where poverty and other expressions of social and economic inequality are translated into narrow questions of criminal justice and law and order” (Hermer and Mosher, 2002: 16). In this context, the social groups who are believed to detract from the ‘quality-of-life’ of consumers of the revitalized city are redefined as engaging in criminal behaviour and can therefore legitimately be physically excluded from ‘quality-of-life’ districts. In Ontario, where legislation designed to create ‘safe streets’ has been in place since 2000, there has been a reduction in so-called ‘quality-of-life crimes’ including the incidence of squeegee kids approaching motorists in revitalized areas. Because of the privatized nature of enforcement and pressure on the public police to focus their attention on tourist areas, this legislation has created no-go

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⁶ Squeegee work refers to the practice of approaching motorists and offering to clean their windshields in exchange for spare change.
zones for the urban poor, alongside districts where these laws are not enforced (O'Grady and Bright, 2002). The result has been intensifying ghettoization.

The ghettoization that accompanied quality-of-life initiatives in Toronto has also occurred in New York. Sassen (2001: 265) notes that in New York City, "segregation of blacks and whites has actually increased over the decades, reaching an all-time high in 1990, the latest year for which data was [sic] available." Thus, as explicitly race-based segregation policies disappear, new modes of social exclusion maintain the imbalance of social power, as well as the level of social comfort of certain groups.

Security and quality-of-life are so intensely intertwined that as districts are 'beautified,' they are also fortified. Davis (1990: 223) sees post-liberal Los Angeles as characterized by the defense of luxury through the repressive use of space:

The carefully manicured lawns of Los Angeles’ Westside sprout forests of ominous little signs warning: ‘Armed Response!’ Even richer neighborhoods in the canyons and hillsides isolate themselves behind walls guarded by gun-toting private police and state-of-the-art electronic surveillance. Downtown, a publicly funded ‘urban renaissance’ has raised the nation’s largest corporate citadel, segregated from poorer neighborhoods around it by monumental architectural glacis.

One challenge for developers is to create spaces that are inviting to desirable persons and, at the same time, uninviting to undesirable bodies. The exclusionary features built into urban redevelopment projects are oftentimes barely recognizable to those for whom fortified spaces have been designed, hence they do not detract from their overall quality-of-life. Spatial hardening practices, such as sleep proof benches, the removal of public toilets, and sprinkler systems meant to drench the homeless all mark out spaces that are off-limits to those who ‘do not belong’, while making spaces inviting for the target consumer group. In Los Angeles, this process is racialized as well as classed in its effect, the same can be said of similar processes underway in Vancouver. In
contemporary Vancouver, undesirable bodies are disproportionately Aboriginal bodies. Aboriginal people represent only 1.8 percent of the general population of Greater Vancouver, but make up 30 percent of the total homeless population in the region (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2005). About 70 percent of the homeless Aboriginal population is ‘street homeless’, meaning that they have no access to shelter and sleep on the street, in parks or in doorways (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 2005). Thus Aboriginal people are more likely, even than their non-Aboriginal homeless counterparts, to be considered out of place and to be negatively impacted by exclusionary features built into the urban landscape. These statistics illustrate Blomley’s (2004) contention that while the dispossession of Aboriginal people is nearly complete in Vancouver, their displacement from urban spaces is not. In this context, spatial hardening practices associated with inner-city gentrification must be understood as directly contributing to the on-going denial of the presence of Aboriginal people, and by extension Aboriginal property claims, in the city.

Ensuring the quality-of-life of some residents may put the basic physical safety of those who have been banished from revitalized areas in increased jeopardy:

In the propaganda of official boosters, nothing is taken as a better index of Downtown’s ‘livability’ than the idyll of office workers and upscale tourists lounging or napping in the terraced gardens of California Plaza, the Spanish Steps, or Grand Hope Park. In stark contrast, a few blocks away, the city is engaged in a merciless struggle to make public facilities and spaces as ‘unlivable’ as possible for the homeless and the poor (Davis, 1990: 232).

The presence of homeless persons betrays the promise of a downtown renaissance in the polarized city, resulting in the use of containment strategies by public and private policing bodies. “But this containment strategy breeds its own vicious cycle of contradiction. By condensing the mass of the desperate and the helpless together in such
a small space, and denying adequate housing, official policy has transformed skid row into probably the most dangerous square blocks in the world" (Davis, 1990: 233). In this way, the growing consumption of security services in some parts of the city has intensified social polarization as ‘crime’ and poverty are relocated and concentrated in ever-shrinking low-income areas, making these areas increasingly crowded and less safe for residents who are excluded from quality-of-life districts except perhaps as part of the new ‘serving class’.

**Security and the tourist city**

While the changing demographic mix of post-industrial urban centres has resulted in new markets in private security, it is not only local residents who are being protected by low-paid guards. Tourism often goes hand in hand with gentrification. Quality-of-life districts not only provide a space for new middle-class residents, but also for their peers from other cities around the world. The growing market in tourism has had a serious impact on planning priorities, as well as on the policing priorities of many cities. Judd (2003) notes that, while a century ago cities were engaged in a process of redevelopment to convert industrial spaces into livable places with water and sewage facilities:

More recently, a new round of infrastructure development has transformed cities. Cities all over the world have entered into a vigorous international competition for tourists. The terms of this competition require not only that they market themselves, but also provide a constantly improving level of facilities, amenities and services (Judd, 2003: 3).

Across the United States cities of all sizes have made the promotion of tourism a high priority, with 63% having built or planning to build a convention centre, 66% undertaking to build a sports stadium, 65% building or planning to build a festival mall,
an arts or cultural district, entrainment/restaurant district, or a cultural or historic site (Judd, 2003).

The privatization of cities through the use of security measures, including private security guards, is tied to the emergent post-industrial economy where tourism is a major revenue source. There is major competition among cities to attract tourists. In order to benefit from the growing tourism industry, cities have to market themselves as a product, rather than the goods that they produce. Part of this marketing involves creating an image of the city as safe and welcoming. However, Judd (2003:7) notes:

A burnished image [is] worthless unless the city came to reflect it in some essential respects. By building demarcated and defended tourist spaces, cities could hide the sordid and unsightly aspects of urban life. Domed stadiums, festival malls, and convention centers provided perfect enclosure and control. Pedestrian malls, redeveloped waterfronts, entertainment districts and parks are less encompassing environments, but they also can be reclaimed through intensive policing and surveillance. The issue Judd raises does not mean that the city as a whole has to be revitalized. Rather, the space of the city is increasingly polarized, with significant public and private investment going into areas aimed at tourists, while other areas, such as those housing low-income residents, are simply kept out of view.

Judd (2003: 6) writes: “like the downtown office complex, tourism has frequently developed as islands of renewal in sea of decay”. The problem of creating districts in which tourists can consume leisure and entrainment in cities where crime and poverty are significant issues has been solved through the creation of tourist bubbles. A tourist bubble is an area that tourists are urged to remain inside. All the facilities that tourists require are located within the bubble. In Miami, a tourist city with a reputation for crime, the local government implemented a program involving road signs designed to help tourists find their way from the airport to their seaside destinations without seeing the racialized
poverty of the city. The program placed large solar symbols on freeway exists that were deemed appropriate for tourists traveling to the beach. However, as Jonathan Simon notes:

Beaches lie at the end of virtually every Florida freeway, so that at some interchanges virtually all of the links are marked with the sun sign. The difficulties of the sun symbol reflect the political constraints on putting up the signs that would no doubt do the job -- the international distress symbol -- discouraging tourists from exiting the freeway into high-crime areas of the city. In effect, of course, the absence of a solar symbol does the same thing (2000:107).

Local governments and others with a stake in the tourist industry mediate tourist interaction with the spaces of the city. Their efforts make their cities palatable, and even pleasant for those with resources without addressing the root causes of poverty and urban decay.

Private security outside ‘quality-of-life districts’

While some of the largest new markets for private security services have been in emerging quality-of-life districts and tourist bubbles that cater to more affluent classes, there is a parallel market emerging in the policing of poorer communities. Unlike their well-to-do counterparts, these communities are not in control of the security services in their neighbourhoods. For example, in Los Angeles inner-city malls make extensive use of built-in security features, such as cameras and observation towers. These design features make it more inviting for businesses to operate in poorer communities. In these areas, local residents rarely have access to transportation, so that people have little choice but to accept these private policing tactics. As security is enhanced in semi-public spaces catering to low-income people, so too are their places of residence increasingly policed. Some housing projects in Los Angeles are fortified with fencing, mandatory ID passes,
and one even houses a substation of the LAPD (Davis, 1990). Visitors to housing projects are routinely frisked and tenants are forced back into their homes at night.

The phenomena Davis observed in Los Angeles have begun to emerge in Canada, as inner cities become polarized and antagonisms escalate. In Toronto, Ross McLeod’s Intelligarde has brought US-style private security to public housing. Intelligarde has taken over some public housing contracts in Toronto, where guards have been mobilized to engage in roadblocks and other heavy-handed techniques. These guards use both dogs and horses, while wearing bulletproof vests and ‘high authority uniforms’ (McLeod, 2002). They have pioneered the use of mass arrest techniques in Toronto social housing projects, using the Trespass Act as justification.

**Low-wage security work and the post-industrial city**

As markets emerge for security services on both sides of the residential spectrum, there are profit-making opportunities for managers and owners in the security industry, as well as employment opportunities for low-income people as frontline guards. Davis (1990: 250) notes that within Los Angeles County, where the security service industry tripled its sales and workforce between the early 1980s and the early 1990s, “[i]t is easier to become an armed guard than it is to become a barber, hairdresser or journeyman carpenter.” Security is big business, and “[a]lthough a majority of patrolmen are minority males earning near the minimum wage, their employers are often multinational conglomerates offering a dazzling range of security products and services.” The growth in markets for private security services reflects one side of the polarization of wealth and the creation of quality-of-life districts: it also reflects the creation of a privatized post-industrial workforce and the erasure of good paying jobs in the public sector. In Los
Angles, as in other post-industrial cities, "[t]he private sector, exploiting an army of non-union, low-wage employees, has increasingly captured the labor-intensive roles (guard duty, residential patrol, apprehension of retail crime, maintenance of security passages and checkpoints, monitoring of electronic surveillance, and so on), while public law enforcement has retrenched behind the supervision of security macro-systems (maintenance of major crime data bases, aerial surveillance, jail systems, paramilitary responses to terrorism and street insurgencies, and so on)" (Davis, 1990: 251).

City-building in Vancouver

Vancouver has followed the path of many post-industrial cities, orienting development around urban professionals and tourists. The result of this orientation has been increased polarization between the wealthy and the poor in the city, leading to growing concern over petty crime and general 'disorder'. Blomley (2004) explains that downtowns have become sites of massive re-investment, with resources being poured into public and private amenities such as libraries, recreational areas, sports complexes, and convention centres. Downtown has also become a site of middle and upper-class residential development. "Urban housing markets have become important sites for neoliberalization, as witnessed by the elimination of rent controls, state withdrawal from housing provision, and the facilitation of speculative investment in inner city sites" (Blomley, 2004: 31).

Hutton (1998) delineates processes that have shaped city-building practices as they have manifested themselves in Vancouver. He argues that while Vancouver is not a world-class city -- despite the claims of boosters -- along with other second tier cities (those with populations in the one to three million range), it is distinguishing itself as a
Second tier cities “are also subject to the imperatives of economic globalization and market integration and are thus increasingly part of extensive urban networks, markets and cultural systems” (Hutton, 1998: 3). Second tier cities also have much of the needed infrastructure to attract to elite workers wanting to escape either the suburbs or busier cities, leading to the development of ‘quality-of-life districts’.

Integration into global networks means that cities like Vancouver are increasingly part of international property markets. Vancouver has seen high rates of growth in population, employment, investment and trade over the past decade, even as other Canadian cities have lost ground in those areas. The city is one of the fastest growing urban centres in North America, and is currently becoming increasingly integrated into both the Pacific Rim economy and Vancouver-Seattle development corridor, rather than into the national economy. As Hutton (1998: 17) notes “over the past decade or so, the pervasive trend toward market deregulation and integration has also served to modify city-region/nation-state relationships in favor of city-regions”. Vancouver has grown in some of the key areas characteristic of post-industrial ‘global’ cities -- finance insurance and real estate (Hutton, 1998: 6). The economic restructuring of cities sets the stage for wider aspects of urban transformation, “including the interconnected processes of occupational, social, cultural, spatial and physical change” (Hutton, 1998: 6).

Artibise and Meligrana (2003) claim that Vancouver has been successful because city-builders have focused on making the city a great place to live, and hence a great place to visit, in order to attract both potential homeowners and tourists. Their work focuses primarily on the growth of Yaletown and the False Creek area. In many ways
these developments echo trends in other major urban centres that have developed ‘quality-of-life districts’ to accommodate the growing number of young professionals opting for ‘urban village-style’ living in reclaimed industrial and warehouse districts. These areas combine upscale condos with a park-like setting along the waterfront and retail, restaurant and entertainment outlets. While the trend towards densification in the urban core and mixed-use development has been heralded as enhancing both environmental quality and livability, these developments also have negative effects for less well-to-do residents. In East Vancouver the average two storey house now costs $437,000 (a 58% increase in four years). On the west side of Vancouver an average two-storey home now costs $900,000 (an 89% increase over four years) (Seven Oaks Magazine, May 31, 2005). During this period, real incomes in Vancouver have fallen by 2.7% (Seven Oaks Magazine, May 31, 2005).

On the surface, Vancouver has been successful in re-orienting itself toward a restructured economy. However, Hutton notes that Vancouver’s transformation has not affected all Vancouverites equally:

Occupational trends suggest the emergence of a two-tiered employment structure -- also prevalent in other Canadian cities -- whose effects include social polarization and a disturbing increase in poverty. The growing contingent of urban poor and the emergence of a distinct urban underclass appear in even starker contrast against the highly visible prosperity of much of the city -- as evidenced by gleaming commercial buildings, new theaters and other arenas of consumption -- the affluent and even opulent residential neighbourhoods (1998: 29).

Hutton (1998: 124) claims that the urban core of Vancouver is “contested space”. While a range of actors are actively engaged in pushing Vancouver toward ‘Global City’ status, other groups of Vancouverites are increasingly excluded as land-values increase, real
wages stagnate and as strategies to “cleanse’ the streets add to the stresses of the poorest of the poor in the city.

Who is building Vancouver?

Donald Gutstein (1975) offers a detailed account of the range of actors who shaped city-building in Vancouver in the early neo-liberal period. Gutstein explains that Vancouver’s development trajectory cannot be understood by examining the grand abstractions of geographers or planners:

I do not talk about pressures for redevelopment, market forces, location theories. In our society development is not caused by pressures, it is caused by individuals and corporations searching for profitable ventures… Individuals do appear throughout the book, but by virtue of the roles they occupy -- the mayor of the city, or the president of the corporation. To understand these roles we need to look at both the formal legal prerogatives of the role -- the mayor has the legal power to appoint aldermen to committees -- but just as important is the informal culture surrounding the role -- most recent Vancouver mayors have been millionaires or developers or both (1975: 7).

Gutstein identifies some of the familiar agents of downtown redevelopment -- investors, developers, financiers, real estate agents and real estate lawyers, construction companies, architects and government departments. He goes on to explain that there is not only a range of actors at work, but that there is also a hierarchy of decision makers, as city planning departments busy themselves with “a few more buildings here, a few less there, a little taller, a little shorter” (Gutstein, 1975: 21). Other actors direct the trajectory of the city, with multinational corporations steering the process while working with charter banks, law firms, old downtown families and associations, and finally city politicians.

More recent observers of Canadian cities (Hutton, 1998; Ley, 1996) have also noted the important role of the “new middle-class” in Vancouver city-building. As well, Vancouver is a growing international tourist destination. The city core serves a large and growing
international clientele, a trend that was greatly accelerated by Expo 86 (Hutton, 1998: 61). This expanding tourist market has lead to the growth of five star hotels, specialty shopping precincts and a major cruise ship terminal. While it would be a mistake to look at consumers as guiding the development of cities, well-educated service elites and professionals who generally work in the central business district and prefer urban living have also been a driving force by making gentrification a profitable venture.

*Vancouver's real estate heritage*

Gutstein (1975: 8) explains: "Vancouver has always been in the grip of promoters and speculators. Its history has been a series of real estate booms and busts. The majority of its politicians have always been associated with the real estate industry in some form or another." Hence the story of Vancouver's redevelopment is not a new one, nor has it happened in isolation from the past -- the city's history of land giveaways and planning priorities comes to bear on the present. According to Gutstein (1975: 11) "Vancouver is nothing more than an overblown company town. The company, of course, is the CPR."

At one time the railway company owned most of the land base that it is now Vancouver. Vancouver may have never developed to be anything more than a small logging community if it were not for the CPR.

Vancouver's growth can be attributed to an agreement between the provincial government and the CPR to make Vancouver the western terminus of the CPR. The railway was originally to end in Port Moody where, in anticipation of the boom that its completion would bring, real estate speculation was rampant. As land around Port Moody was being bought by speculators, the Provincial government was involved in secret negotiations with CPR executives that would eventually expand the railway to Coal Harbour in Vancouver. CPR executives recognized the potential profits awaiting anyone
who invested in real estate wherever the terminus was located. The company did not own any land in Port Moody aside from the site of the terminus itself and was therefore not enthusiastic about ending the railway in Prot Moody. Despite their strong bargaining position, the provincial government gave the CPR 6000 acres of land in downtown Vancouver, as well as one third of the lots in each privately owned block.

The agreement with the CPR was not the first such deal in Vancouver’s history, nor would it be the last. According to Gutstein (1975: 11), BC’s early provincial governments “had enacted a policy of the most reckless give-away of provincial lands and resources to private interests to undertake the most meager of developments.” These major land giveaways and the prospect of the railroad terminal drew waves of real estate speculators to the city, creating the first real estate boom in Vancouver’s history. Vancouver’s first mayor, Malcolm McLaren, was part of this early wave of real estate speculation. One of the largest property-owning syndicates in Vancouver, which made its fortunes when it received advanced notice of the CPR’s intention to end the railway in Vancouver, included David Oppenheimer, Vancouver’s second mayor, and John Robson, future premier of British Columbia (Gutstein, 1975: 61-62). It seems that in the Vancouver land development history, private interests have always superseded the public good. Despite ebbs and flows, the overall pattern has been “immense profits for a few property speculators, both local and foreign based, behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing between property interests and political parties, and a city administration controlled by real estate interests actively aiding developers and speculators in their activities” (Gutstein, 1975: 71).
Contemporary city-building in Vancouver

Vancouver's post-industrial city building has focused on a number of high density neighbourhoods which have, according to the City of Vancouver publications, revitalized downtown and offered a viable alternative to suburbia. Projects have been developer driven to the extent that the private sector has become the creator of complete communities, developing park systems, walkways, and amenities. While this amenity building has been sold to residents as the City extracting a toll from developers, it must be noted that these developers are marketing a lifestyle: landscaping and amenities are essential to the product they are creating. At the same time, zoning concessions granted to developers by the City, which greatly increase the value of land, have made city-building in Vancouver a very lucrative business. Through these projects, the city is moving in the direction of private sector lead development. The micro-neighbourhoods that are being produced in the process are themselves privatized both through built features and through the introduction of private security patrols into these spaces.

Hutton (1998: 33) points to some of the key physical sites that have helped create the physical infrastructure of post-industrialism in Vancouver. He includes "downtown corporate complexes; tourism, cultural and entertainment precincts in the central city; concentrations of design-oriented firms and institutions on the downtown fringe and in the inner city; a mid-town medical precinct, one of the largest in North America; the Port of Vancouver and Vancouver international Airport; and the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University and several other colleges and universities."

Interestingly, all of these sites contract private security services. Hutton (1998: 33) further cites urban mega projects as also having left a major imprint on Vancouver. These sites include Concord Pacific Place, which incorporates one sixth of downtown,
the Marathon development project which spearheaded the re-development of the city’s formerly industrial waterfront, and the construction of two large sports stadiums. Private security is an important feature of all of these projects.

Gentrification projects in Vancouver have been able to attract both investors and consumers to Vancouver’s inner-city. This gentrification is happening within the context of increased social polarization. Hence there is a growing demand for policing services, both public and private. Blomley (2004) explains that public space is increasingly under surveillance, while legislatively there has been a series of initiatives to target the poor and the homeless, including the regulation of panhandling, and zero-tolerance policies for actions particular to the poor, such as sleeping in public. Private security work, from site security to mobile patrols, to canine patrols, is integral to neo-liberal city building. By policing private space and helping to regulate public space according to middle-class values, security guards are at the frontlines of urban neo-liberalism.

**Conclusion**

With the shift to a post-industrial economy come new strategies to attract investment capital, homebuyers and tourists to the city. This shift has also resulted in a new occupational structure with jobs polarized at either end of the service economy. In many urban centres, including Vancouver, these trends have led to increased inequality and tensions between the have and the have-nots. One result of these tensions has been that post-industrial urban centres have become major sites for emerging risk markets as developers, business owners and residents attempt to deal with the fall-out of polarization and gentrification. Increased use of quality-of-life policing tactics and private security patrols cannot be understood solely as a ‘war on the poor’. Rather, ‘cleansing’ downtown
is a spatial strategy that links up with broader goals such as the maximization of the value of downtown real estate, bringing in investment and attracting consumers to downtown businesses. Ironically, most of the guards carrying out the social cleansing work integral to current city-building practices are finding themselves excluded from enjoying the quality-of-life the city they are helping to create has to offer. In the next chapter I look at the working conditions of private security guards. I examine the ways in which the restructuring policies introduced to make Vancouver attractive to investors have affected security guards, paying attention to the impact that neo-liberal city-building practices have had on the lives of these workers.
Chapter Seven: Private Security Guards as Low Wage Workers

Private security is a labour intensive industry. This chapter describes how individuals come to security work, as well as the political and economic context in which they become security guards. I begin by presenting some of the reasons guards had for coming to the security industry. I move on to look at wages and working conditions for private guards, with a focus on labour legislation, regulations, and the administration of labour standards in British Columbia. I argue that security guards tend to be vulnerable workers, and that neo-liberal policy prescriptions in the realm of labour law, as well as cuts to social programs and the privatization of former public service occupations, have facilitated the growth of risk markets. These policies have at once exacerbated social problems such as homelessness, generating demand for security services, and have
ensured that security workers, as part of the emerging post-industrial serving class, are readily available to do the work of policing neo-liberal city-spaces. I share guards’ stories of how lax enforcement of labour standards, disregard for health and safety standards, and irregular schedules have affected them and their families. I also examine how security guards reconcile their position as protectors of capital and property and at the same time as exploited workers. While changes to employment standards affect all security workers, the position of immigrant workers in the labour market generally, and in the security industry specifically, are the focus of the last section of this chapter.

**Vulnerable workers and the post-industrial economy: Coming to security work**

Security guards occupy a paradoxical social location with in the broader relations of ruling organizing Vancouver’s city-building trajectory. These workers are called upon to stand on the frontline of neo-liberal urban redevelopment projects and to police emerging quality-of-life districts across the city. They are employed to protect the homes and property of the wealthy and to do ‘loss prevention’ work for major corporations, all the while securing large profits for their employers. They are even employed to provide services to employers involved in labour disputes with their employees and to police public demonstrations against government policies that negatively affect poor and working-class people. Yet, guards cannot afford to move into gentrifying neighbourhoods, even as renters. They do not have the disposable income that would allow them to participate in the ‘lifestyle’ that Vancouver city-builder are working to cultivate. Often, guards find themselves working two or more jobs just to afford housing and transportation. These guards are not seeing the economic benefits of being employed
in a high growth industry; rather, they are often asked to work without proper safety
equipment and forgo benefits and overtime while working for near minimum wage.

Security guards I spoke with often had a keen sense of the contradiction inherent
in their position as low-wage workers and their work on the frontline of capitalist
development:

If there's some guy who wanders in off the street, you're seen as some
authority figure to him. But you're completely powerless to people that are
higher up the class scale. (Christopher)

I could see my boss went from a couple of trucks to all of a sudden a
Hummer and he traded up the Durangos to bigger SUVs. It seemed like
the office staff were getting paid more and more while the guards were
getting worked harder and harder. (Jimmy)

Many of the guards I spoke with did not come to security work by choice, but rather out
of economic necessity. Most workers in the security industry can be characterized as
vulnerable workers. Vulnerable workers are those who are least able to negotiate fair and
decent working conditions. They are not represented by unions and are disproportionately
women, recent immigrants, racial minorities and young people (Fairey, 2005).

South (1988: 103) found that the private security sector employs an abnormally
high proportion of part-time casual staff. Oftentimes companies hire moonlighters who
will forgo pension contributions or work 'under the table' for a lower rate of pay. His
findings bore out among the guards I spoke to. Overall, there is more scholarly work
available on prison guards than on private security guards. However, in the United States,
a larger number of prison guards are now private rather than public employees (Shichor,
1995). In his literature review, Lombardo (1981) shows that many people took prison
jobs after a period of unemployment or lay-off, or because an injury prevented them from
engaging in their former occupation. These findings were replicated among security
guards in Vancouver, who often have more in common, from a socio-economic standpoint, with those they police than those they protect.

Security guards are disproportionately young and/or non-white. As a representative from management at Securiwise, a large firm with over 1000 employees in Vancouver alone, explains:

We hire a lot of people between the ages of 20 and 25, that’s the economics of the industry, a lot of people who are recent immigrant, whatever age, I don’t know 35-55 about that.

While guards are overwhelmingly male, Rigakos, in a report produced for the Law Commission of Canada (2002) claims that there are proportionately more women in private security than in public law enforcement. Most guards come to the security industry for lack of alternatives, not because of an underlying desire to get into this line of work. The private security industry is one of the most rapidly growing employers in Vancouver. Many people looking for work quickly find themselves putting on a security guard uniform, as these men explain:

I realized how many jobs I coulda had if I just had those security tickets (BST7 1 and 2). Anytime I wanted to look for a job I am almost guaranteed work and that is something that you don’t find too often in Vancouver. So I decided one fine day I didn’t have the energy to go and pound the pavement, so I decided I would get the tickets and take the easy way out. (Daniel)

It’s just a paycheque. I don’t know if I’ve ever met anybody who wanted to be a security guard and then became a security guard and then continues to be a security guard as a career. I personally have never met one, it doesn’t happen. You take the job out of necessity and then you keep it because you have it. (Christopher)

A friend of mine needed a job and I knew one of the security instructors that was doing basic security training. I called to get the information for my friend who was 18 and not old enough to do it, but I needed a job anyways. So I said “What the heck. I’ll go take the training and do it for a

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7 Basic Standards Training
job”. Then it has just been the easiest job ever to get, so if I’m ever out of work, guaranteed security work anywhere, any time, all I need is to call somebody and get a uniform. (Jimmy)

When guards choose security work, they are generally choosing among a range of less-than-desirable options. Matt outlined his work history before he came to work in the security industry:

I’d been doing recycling work, I worked at a recycling depot, I’d done the odd telemarketing, door-to-door sales (Matt).

Security work is constantly available making it very difficult for guards with low levels of education to get out:

I didn’t even have my grade 12 and that’s kind of one of the reasons I’ve been doing this so long... I tried to move away from the city and get my education and do those things. I moved back to the city just to do a bit of security work at [high profile event] and because of this relationship I was in and the constant work available I just got suckered back into it for another three or four years. (Jimmy)

While younger guards often come to security work because of a lack of better alternatives, some older guards have had better jobs in the past, but have been negatively impacted by the restructuring of the labour market. Paul, a security guard for over a decade, discusses the way in which corporate downsizing left some older middle management workers in the position of working security:

Right now at [names a downtown site] they have a guard who was an accountant but he got a golden parachute. He’s actually living off that but he’s doing security mostly to keep himself busy, and so he doesn’t dip into the golden parachute too much. He’s one of the lucky ones, most of them they didn’t get anything or their golden handshake wasn’t all that golden. I mean they have kids, they’re stuck. I talk to these guys about their experience and I’ll be like “So why are you doing this? You’d think people would want your background and your experience.” They’re like “No, there are younger people with newer educations”.

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Kirk, in his fifties, explained how the economic downturn of the 1990s forced him into security work:

I used to have my own store and then in 1991 the economy took a little bit of a dive. The business that I had took a real big dive. I started doing things independently for a while and things weren't happening very well. I needed something, I needed a job. I was running out of money. An acquaintance of mine who works at a sports facility here in Vancouver said they were looking for people to do building security, I said, "I'm sure I could do that". So I went down and applied for a job and got the job, no problem. (Kirk)

Once in security, Kirk found himself trapped there despite his wealth of experience and excellent communication skills:

I applied for different jobs within [large attraction where he worked contract security]. Because I was hired as an independent contractor with an outside company they figured, "Well he only works security. He must not be good for anything else". So the mindset was wrong on the part of the building.

While many security guards come to security work because they have few options in the labour market, there are some workers in the industry who are committed to a career in law enforcement. For example, Larry, who now works both in public corrections and private security:

I had a goal of getting into law enforcement as a career. They always said security is a step in. It’s good experience. So you’re kind of encouraged to do it when you’re out job searching... The company that I worked for, a lot of guys actually were out of the military, so they had the experience and the skill set to work in that environment.

Larry was able to use his experience in private security to make a move into public corrections. However, he has been unable to make ends meet with his public sector job, even though he lives in an outer suburb where housing costs are lower. He now commutes into the city for both of his jobs.
Christopher makes a distinction between workers committed to law enforcement and guards there for a paycheque:

There is a big difference between, for the most part, the mentality of a cop and the mentality of a security guard. Cops want to be cops. They go to school to become cops. It’s their dream to be a cop. Security guards need to pay the bills. That’s it. There’s no real allegiance to the job. Nobody really has any noble sense attached to what they do. They, for the most part, sit around and talk about how bullshit the job is.

While it is clear that the current structure of the labour market leads a range of people into the security industry, it is by no means random who ends up in this low wage occupation in a city with as much wealth as Vancouver. I found that it is not unusual for security guards to come from the same social background as those they police:

I have a bit of a unique perspective on panhandlers. My dad was an alcoholic and he panhandled for many years. He kicked the habit and I got to hang out with him and talk about things. I got to meet a lot of his street people friends. (Jimmy)

Christopher put it bluntly, “You know there’s not many billionaires’ sons or anything like that [working in security].”

While class plays a role in who goes into security work, there are other factors that force some people into the industry, as Paul, a long time guard explains:

Like say you had coke bottle thick glasses, like what kind of regular retail job could you get? You might be able to get a job at a McDonald’s, but there are plenty that wouldn’t. Or say you just weren’t quite clean cut enough, you can’t get a job right. Or what if you’re just a really really big guy. You’re not going to be able to get a regular retail job if you just don’t look right.

The move towards a post-industrial, service-lead economy in North America may mean that more working-class individuals will be integrated into for-profit policing work as other blue-collar jobs move offshore. For example, in California in the 1980s and 1990s,
prisons were used as a source of employment to jumpstart failing local economies (Gilmore, 1999: 184). In California, prison growth has taken the form of public/private partnerships. In these partnerships, working-class people are integrated into the prison economy either as workers or as prisoners. In Vancouver, the working-class people who find themselves in the private security industry are contending with a labour market and broader economic context where employment standards have been eroded and wages are low, even in high growth industries.

**Labour market restructuring in British Columbia and private security work**

British Columbia has undergone a process of economic restructuring over the past six years. This process had included large-scale tax cuts, reduced spending on social services, and the de-regulation of the labour force. This process brought much government policy into line with the neo-liberal principles of privatization, de-regulation, and liberalization. These changes have had an effect on the experiences of working people. Interestingly, the policies that have led to the increase in homelessness in Vancouver, and hence have driven the growth in risk markets, have also driven young men into the security industry:

I was destitute and it was the only job I could get. Literally one month of a welfare cheque and I was like ok, I’ll take the security job. (Christopher)

There were several major changes to income assistance implemented by the provincial Liberal government which made the program more difficult to access and more difficult to survive on. They also introduced time limits on the eligibility for benefits. These changes were meant not only to save money, but also, according to then-minister responsible Murray Coell, to curb ‘the culture of entitlement’ among welfare recipients in British Columbia. Punitive welfare policies have served their intended purpose of driving
large numbers of individuals into whatever work they can get. However, the changes to
income assistance did not happen in isolation. Those who can no longer access income
assistance or survive on welfare payments have been confronted with a restructured
labour market which makes low wage work an only slightly better economic prospect. By
making alternatives in the form of social programs unviable, workers are forced to accept
low wages and poor conditions, allowing for further retrenchment of labour standards in
the province.

According to David Fairey (2005: 4) of the Canadian Centre for Policy
Alternatives:

British Columbia’s employment standards system has undergone a
dramatic overhaul in recent years, with substantial changes made to nearly
every significant aspect of the law and its enforcement. Three government
bills between May 2002 and May 2004 (Bills 48, 37 and 56) made
approximately 42 changes to the Employment Standards Act, and a further
40 changes were made to the Employment Standards Regulation since
2001. At the same time there has been a radical reduction in budgets and
staffing resources for the Employment Standards Branch.

Employment standards “deal with issues such as minimum wages, minimum and
maximum hours of work, overtime pay, parental leave and statutory holidays. They
represent the minimum labour rights to which employees are entitled, a basic floor below
which employers cannot go” (Fairey, 2005: 6). Changes came about in British Columbia
because the provincial government was committed to increasing ‘flexibility’ in
employment standards law and administration. Minister of Labour Graham Bruce
explained that: “[t]hese changes are designed to promote self-reliance so employees and
employers can build mutually beneficial workplace relationships” (cited in Fairey, 2005:
11). The flexibilization of labour standards is in keeping with the neo-liberal principle
that the government should not interfere in the working of the private market, even a
labour market characterized by power imbalances between workers and employers. Fairey goes on to explain that, while the government stated that part of the motivation behind introducing these changes was to protect vulnerable workers, in reality they did the opposite within a labour market environment characterized by growing segmentation and polarization. Fairey argues that the concept of ‘flexibility’ reflects the role of neo-liberal theory in policy making in British Columbia. According to neo-liberals, ‘flexibility’ will increase competitiveness, creating more jobs. Certainly, there is some validity to this line of thinking, as demonstrated by the growth of the security industry. However, the question comes down to the types of jobs being created. Fairey (2005: 11) explains that the neo-liberal approach to job growth rests upon the notion that if workers know they cannot demand too much of employers or expect too much support from government, they will lower their expectations and wage demands, so that employers are more likely to hire them. This approach does not take into account whether or not people will be able to survive on the wages they are paid in these jobs, especially in areas like Vancouver where the cost of living is very high.

A review of actual changes to BC’s employment standards shows that, on the whole, the provincial government’s policies increase worker’s vulnerability and reduce their bargaining power relative to their employers. Fairey explains that BC’s employment standards regime is composed of three elements: legislation, regulation, and administration/enforcement. These three elements, taken together, exert a strong influence over people’s experiences as workers in the province. Changes have been made to all three areas in the pursuit of a flexible labour market. Below, I will outline these changes and their impact on security guards.
The legislative regime

Legislation, specifically the *Employment Standards Act*, sets out the overall framework of employment standards in the province of British Columbia. Bill 48 (May 2002), Bill 37 (May 2003), and Bill 56 (May 2004), collectively, made 42 changes to the Employment Standards Act, most of which had a negative impact on workers. The provisions of the Act no longer cover unionized employees. Prior to this change, unionized staff could not sign a collective agreement that provided them with working conditions below the minimum standards outlined in the Act. While the vast majority of security guards are non-unionized, this provision sets up the possibility of pseudo-unions, which eliminate workers' protections. As South (1998) notes, in Britain many security workers already forgo their rights in order to work. As you will see in the next section, many Vancouver-based guards are already forced to forgo their rights to breaks and overtime in order to get work. While these practices are technically illegal, the type of union envisioned in this legislation would allow employers to persuade guards to collectively sign away those rights.

Even where pseudo-unions are not in place, the Act has been modified to allow individual employees to enter into agreements with employers to forgo overtime pay they are technically entitled to. Employers are also no longer required to give employees 24 hours notice in the event of a shift change. The minimum daily shift for which a worker must be paid has been reduced from four hours to two, meaning that more of workers' earnings and time are eaten up by the cost of commuting, particularly given that many security workers, like other members of the post-industrial serving class, live in the outer suburbs because they cannot afford to live in the inner city where most security work is located.
While workers can now be required to work shorter days without compensation, they can also be required to work longer days without overtime pay. "Overtime pay was previously required for work in excess of eight hours per day and/or forty hours per week. Under new hours averaging agreements overtime may not apply for up to 12 hours of work per day, provided hours do not exceed an average of 40 hours over a four week period" (Fairey, 2005: 20). In the security industry, guards will often be asked to work an event for 12 to 14 hours of its duration, and then forfeit any shifts until another event. This law allows companies to use their non-standard staff to make lower bids on events contracts. When I asked Matt about pay, benefits and overtime he responded:

There was a bit of that but they kept most people in the part-time category to avoid that. They'd work you as much as they could without having to pay those sorts of things.

For employees who do not have an overtime averaging agreement with their employer, the shift length at which double time is paid was extended from 11 to 12, while double-time for all hours worked in excess of 48 per week was reduced to time and a half. The ability of part-time workers, of which there are many in the security industry, to access statutory holiday pay was reduced as employees now have to work 15 out of 30 consecutive days to be eligible. In addition, the requirement to schedule an alternate day off with pay for employees working statutory holidays has been eliminated.

According the Fairey (2005: 21) "some of the most significant changes to the Act have been to Part 10 with respect to the rights of employees to file complaints in the event of employer violations, and how complaints are to be handled by the Director of the Employment Standards Branch and his/her staff." The Director is no longer required to investigate all complaints, only accept and review them. The onus is now on the employee to prove that they have taken the requisite steps to resolve or facilitate the
investigation of the issue. The employee is now expected to confront the employer on
their own, using a 16-page 'self-help kit' before they are allowed to file a written
complaint with the Employment Standards Branch. There is also a new mediation process
which attempts to obtain settlement agreements between the employer and employee, but
does not allow for the investigation of systemic abuse by the employer. Given that the
employer tends to have legal counsel, while employees tend to represent themselves
(Fairey, 2005: 22), the process is inherently biased. At the same time, according to a
former branch official (cited in Fairey, 2005), because full branch investigations are no
longer mandated the intimidation of employees by employers is more likely. As we will
see later in the chapter, these changes to the legislation have certainly 'flexibilized' the
security industry, while seriously negatively impacting the lives of security workers.

**Regulation**

The Employment Standards Regulation “is the part of the law that is decided upon
by the government’s executive and does not require the assent of the legislative
assembly” (Fairey, 2005:15). While legislation deals with the broad parameters of
employment standards in British Columbia, regulation establishes policies stemming
from the Act, which change much more frequently than the Act itself. These changes
include such things as setting the minimum wage. “Over the period July 2001 to June
2004 there were 12 provincial government executive Orders in Council to make
approximately 40 changes to Employment Standards Regulation. Of those 40 changes,
34 were assessed to have either a negative affect on workers (the majority) or to be
legislatively neutral” (Fairey, 2005: 24).
An important change is the addition of a new regulation pertaining to the minimum wage, which allows employers to pay those with less than 500 hours of employment experience six dollars an hour instead of the regular minimum wage of eight. This change is important because security is an industry that tends to pay near the minimum wage, as Kirk explains:

In general, wages for security is minimum wage. That’s where we start at. I’ve heard people starting at eight dollars an hour. I’ve heard people starting at nine dollars. I’ve heard of people starting at 10, it varies, but it doesn’t go real high.

Not only is the industry highly competitive; many workers have no employment experience in Canada and hence are made vulnerable by this regulatory change because the onus is on the worker to prove they have worked 500 hours.

**Administration and enforcement**

Regulations, in and of themselves, are not always followed by employers in competitive low-wage industries. The administration and enforcement of the Act is therefore a key aspect of the employment standards regime in terms of the day-to-day experiences of employees. The administration, policing and enforcement of the Act is the responsibility of the Minister of Labour and Citizens’ Services, through the director of the Employment Standards Branch and his or her staff. The Employment Standards Branch has seen radical reductions in its budgets, staffing levels and resources since 2001. Staffing was reduced by a third between 2001 and 2004 (Fairey, 2005: 29). The budget of the branch was reduced by 16% over the same period, but Fairey notes that the reduction would have been greater if the cost of early retirement severance packages, and other short-term costs associated with office closures were taken into account. During the same period, the number of offices province-wide was reduced from 17 to 9. The
Lower Mainland now has only three: one in Vancouver, one in Port Coquitlam and one in Abbotsford.

Changes were made to the Act in anticipation of these cost-cutting measures to ensure that there would be fewer complaints coming through the offices. One employee of the Employment Standards Branch described these changes as “like turning off the tap” in terms of numbers of complaints (Fairey, 2005: 31). They included removing the section of the Act that required that Employment Standards to be posted in workplaces, office closures, the introduction of the lengthy self-help kit, the expectation that employees first confront employers on their own and the introduction of “so called partnerships with employer associations” to sort out complaints quickly (Fairey, 2005: 31). Without enforcement, Employment Standards are essentially meaningless. One regional manager who resigned in order to protest the changes to the Act stated that:

I always believed that the current employment standards legislation and branch policies, imperfect as they are, constituted an honest attempt to provide reasonable standards for employers and employees alike. This is no longer the case. The intent of this government is clear; create a façade of minimum standards that masks the reality of rampant exploitation. (Fairey, 2005:36)

This claim rings particularly true if you take into consideration that there are now few social programs in place for employees who leave an abusive employment arrangement.

Labour market de-regulation and the emergence of risk markets

These changes to the Employment Standards regime have had a negative impact on all low-wage workers, including security guards. Not only are conditions deteriorating in the private sector, but better paying public sector jobs are being replaced with low-paying contract employment. Some guards found work in the low-wage private security
market as public institutions laid off unionized staff as part of the overall drive towards ‘efficiency’:

They were trying to save money. There was a big shift towards privatizing or outsourcing and that [security] was one place where they could get away with doing it without too much hassle, so they did. They put out a bid for companies. I don’t know exactly when it started but I think it was about around the time that I got hired. (Carlos)

There was this one guy I worked with a really, really long time, which was funny because he was working in the hospital and then all of them got their pink slips when it went private. So he was unemployed and he got a job with us. (Larry)

Even full-time public sector wages are not keeping pace with the cost of living, prompting some workers to hold two jobs. Thomas, who was in the military for eight years right out of high school, explains that he works in both corrections and private security:

I started doing some fill-in stuff just here and there to make a little extra money. Then I decided I could dedicate more time so I got placed on the payroll. So I dedicate two days of my four days off from my full time job. He had originally gone into corrections because it was a stable job:

It kind of fell in order coming out of the military. A friend of mine I was in the military with got out and got into corrections, so that was my incentive. It’s a good job, stable, I figured I may as well. I’m not going to go back to school, I’m not going to go work at McDonald’s coming out of the military. (Thomas)

However, a full-time job is no longer enough for many to support a family, even in the outer suburbs where Thomas, like many guards I spoke with, lives with his family.

When I asked Kirk -- who will have to work security until he is 65 and then live on a government pension because he has no workplace pension or savings -- if there was anything he would like to add at the end of the interview, he said:
Whoever is licensing security, they should have proper guidelines for giving them proper benefits because it is a high risk job. Also, I think that it is time that the industry wakes up and the government issues a directive that the minimum wage in this industry should not be less than 10 dollars an hour because of the high risk involved, and graveyard shifts. These are not union jobs. Most of the companies do not provide any benefits and I think the government should do something about this.

On the whole, the risk markets that have offered these individuals employment emerge in the context of a low-wage economy. If wages get too high at a particular company, guards end up out of work:

I have had a lot of sites basically yanked out from underneath me. They either found somebody cheaper or they thought that they didn’t need security anymore or whatever. I asked the two guys that hired me how secure does this contract look, and they said we do a great job here, don’t worry you’re not going to have any problem. Low and behold a year later we were all out of work. [Names another large company] took over, and why did they do it? huge savings. (Paul)

What is important here is that the government is, in fact, regulating the industry, in so far as it regulates the working conditions in all areas, in accordance with neo-liberal principles. As we see below, these principles do not often benefit workers.

The reality of private security work

When private security guards describe their lives it becomes apparent how closely the challenges and struggles they face resemble those of other people living in poverty in Vancouver. While their policing function and the authority they exercise over even more economically marginalized people obscures the commonality of their situation, security guards often feel powerless in the face of exploitative employers and find themselves engaged in a constant struggle to survive in the face of low wages, a rising cost of living and an erosion of protection for workers.
Over the course of conducting interviews, I asked a number of guards about the biggest challenges facing them as security workers. Several mentioned working conditions:

I’d say hours and money, hours and money, the hours aren’t consistent enough. You may work one day, or one week and not the next so to do it as a full-time job. I don’t see it as feasible. I know people who do it full time and they work for two or three companies just to make ends meet. (Larry)

While Larry had the benefit of a public sector job, many workers in the industry do in fact work full-time. Not only are hours inconsistent and wages low, some guards have a hard time getting paid for the hours they had worked:

I mean that was one of the worst things about working with [large company], or with any company is that there will be massive discrepancies on your check right or, even small discrepancies. Since you’re paid so little, even if you miss a day of work you’re going to notice. There’s no way you could miss it right, and you always had to be calling up and having to hassle them, right… I knew people who had been fighting for over a year to get money that was owed to them. They had to keep on calling, and they’d be told “Hey your money’s going to be put on your next check”. (Paul)

Guards’ dissatisfaction with working conditions have to be understood within the context not only of their particular employers, or even of the security industry more generally, but within the context of a de-regulated employment standards regime geared toward creating a flexible labour market. The underlying rational, at the level of both government and individual firms, is that if people want to work, then regions and companies have to make themselves competitive. A competitive labour force generally means that investors and developers want to come to BC, while a competitive security industry means that more and more businesses, groups and individuals feel that it is something they can afford.

While new jobs have been created, they are not jobs that provide workers with security, financial well-being or flexibility in their own lives. Rather, as we will see, in order to
survive in a restructured economy guards are forced to work long hours without overtime pay and deal with shift changes with less than twenty-four hours notice. They are also less likely to be able to make a complaint and have it heard, even in instances where the already lax labour standards have been violated.

**Overtime**

Security guards tend to work irregular hours and often long shifts. Jimmy brought up overtime on two separate occasions over the course of the interview:

They just sent a bunch of us out there with like no training, no idea what to do -- just a couple of standing orders, and again don’t sit down, we want you standing right here 12 hours. This was August on the water, so daytime was smoking hot. The first paycheque I got, I had 130 hours and that was straight time at 8 bucks an hour. I was like “Come on, that’s almost double a two-week work period”. I was doing 12 hours, 13 days out of 14 for that period. It was just insane, and like I say, no overtime.

He explained how his company was administratively organized around not paying overtime:

Sometimes they’ll say “Hey, can you do it for straight time.” But most of the time they won’t and it’s very easy to get blacklisted… I know [names a mid-sized company] does not pay any type of overtime whatsoever. They have two companies set up. They have a Fraser Valley office and the Vancouver office, so if you work 100 hours in two weeks you get an 80-hour check and you get a 20-hour check from the other company.

I asked a number of other guards about overtime pay:

I know that they have to pay you, but I know that for some of the employees they’ve said “How come I didn’t get paid overtime on my check? And the boss says, the owner, just says “Do you want hours or do you want overtime. Because if you want overtime you’re not going to get more than your full-time hours. If you want extra hours you’re not going to get overtime.” (Paul)
After speaking to a number of guards who had worked at a range of firms it was clear that workers are routinely being asked to accept an informal labour contract in which they forgo their rights in order to get enough work to survive.

Not only are full-time workers denied their rights. Many workers cannot access overtime or other benefits that have been reserved for full-time workers in the new employment standards regime. Although they work full-time (or more), their time is spread between multiple employers. Richard explains how it works:

In order to work private security a company has to hire you and your license is through that company, but you can get what they call ‘multi-licensing’ because one company can’t give you full time hours or as many hours as you need. Well, you can do multi-licensing with two different companies, but both companies have to agree to it. Depending on the company you work for, the competition or personal relationships between owners bad blood or whatever, no multi-licensing.

So even where security guards can manage to get full-time work within an industry characterized by competition and in some cases animosity among employers, they are denied overtime benefits and statutory holidays because they work for multiple employers. When assessing the new ‘flexibilized’ employment standards regime in B.C, it is important to keep in mind that the worker-employer relationship is not a meeting between equals entering into a free contract, as neo-liberal theorists would suggest. For security workers, flexibility means long hours at low rates of pay, a lack of breaks or holidays, and an inability to complain about conditions. Not only did the guards I spoke to feel exploited in these ways, they also described being put in physical danger.

**Safety**

Ironically, while the security industry’s marketing rhetoric suggests that prudent business and property owners are willing to spend money on safety products and services
that minimize risk, many private security companies seem unwilling to invest in ensuring that proper safety provisions are in place for their workers. Thus, when security guards are contracted to ensure that clients’ property is protected, they are often put in real physical danger in the process. Although some guards were taken aback when I asked them if they were ever scared when on the job, many shared stories about their real or perceived lack of safety:

I was working twelve-hour shifts, over night and there was a time at which there was no relief at the end of it. I could have been hurt or whatever and nobody would have known because it’s in the middle of nowhere, nobody is going to hear me if I’m yelling. (Paul)

Paul went onto describe other dangerous situations in security

I think one of the scariest things is the bike patrol guys that are going through stairwells, essentially kicking the junkies out, going on to the next lot. The junkies go back in. You know, like these guys aren’t wearing any Kevlar vests anything like that. Somebody stabs them with a needle they’re toast (Paul).

Joe, who has a background in corrections and is nearing retirement, explained what he saw as a major safety concern for guards:

I think many, many of the security guards are exposed to situations where their life could be in danger, especially people working on open construction sites. There’s not even a fence around to protect yourself. There are always two, three people out there, and security guard is only one, so there are lots of security issues.

He went on to explain what it was like working in high-rises under construction in the downtown core:

We didn’t have any kind of communication tools. Its dark, you go through a building and they don’t even know if you’re injured or not. I mean you can’t see at night that well, Just little things that are important when it’s night and it’s dark.

I asked him why he thought training and safety was such a low priority in the industry:

I think because the companies want to make money and they don’t care. The companies want to make money at all costs and I guess they look at
what you need [the requirements] to become a security officer and they probably say “Well with what you have, you can expect to have a low wage”... so its all about profitability. (Joe)

Daniel echoed Joe’s sentiments:

I don’t like to be on the actual streets in traffic. They just got me into the traffic control course and I realized that they had kind of been putting me at risk previously by putting me in traffic without the traffic safety. So I was kind of a little bit choked. They didn’t really warn me about the dangers I faced. But they just need people to cover spots. They don’t care about your safety that’s the bottom line.

Some of the guards I spoke to refused to put themselves in danger:

I felt it was as dangerous as I make it. For the money that they were paying me I wasn’t willing to take any personal risk. Like, for instance, when I was doing one of the grocery store parking things there was a low-grade robbery where somebody was making off with a load of meat so I choose to preserve my personal security rather than risking it to deal with that situation. (Matt)

There are, however, some risks that cannot be avoided if guards want to meet client expectations and keep their job. For workers dealing with a drug-addicted population, the fear of physical injury is combined with a concern over communicable diseases:

I’ve learned that if you’re dealing with a street person you’ll be at risk for Hep A and B and if they are a hardcore needle user they will have Hep C. It’s not a question of “if”. And also too if they’re a needle user, chances are they either have full blown AIDS or they have HIV so hence the gloves, they’re your best friends. The low pay in consideration of what you have to, for lack of a better term, put up with. (Mark)

Despite these risks -- which are presumably one of the reasons that clients hire contract security rather than dealing with some of the issues themselves -- a representative from Securiwise downplays the danger. He holds security guards accountable where he recognized danger as existing:

Some sites are more risky than others. In general, is it dangerous? No. Working in a parkade at 10 o’clock or 2 o’clock in the morning where there are street people around, you’ve got to kick these people out, is that dangerous? Yes. But what we find is the danger usually lies in the security
officer not properly assessing the situation, putting yourself in the bottom of a parkade alone at night and having no sort of back-up around is really not a wise thing to do... There is some inherent danger but it is really more associated with just being out at that time of night.

This reasoning abdicates the company of responsibility because the security officer is seen as making bad decisions, even when he is expected to fulfill client expectations and is put in a site alone. By arguing that the dangers do not come from the job itself, employers can justify the lack of danger pay associated with security work.

Even though work can be very risky, some guards perceived a taboo against claiming Workers Compensation when they are injured on the job:

I think a lot of people in the security industry are already fed up with the red tape that they don’t even bother. You know, most of the guys are tough guys. They’re in the industry because they’re brawny or they’re big so I don’t think people deal with WCB a lot. (Jimmy)

As with overtime, the underlying power imbalance of the labour contract is ignored, and hence workers jeopardize their safety and forgo compensation for injuries in order to keep their jobs or desired sites.

**Scheduling and commuting**

Security guards experience ‘flexibility’ as constantly being on call, with little choice about when they work or ability to plan from day to day. They are working irregular schedules without guaranteed sick time:

The first company, they were giving me kind of like a horrific assortment of shifts. I’d work an afternoon, then I’d work a graveyard, then I’d work a day so it was really bad working conditions. And then the second company I worked for I had very little input about when I worked. They’d call me up and they’d expect me to work right away. (Matt)

Joe compares security work to his previous employment in the public sector where his schedule was set:
I find it a lot different. Public institutions, the wages are better and contrary to what a lot of people think we are treated better. In contract or private security it’s more like you’re just a body, just a body and a pair of eyes, and they treat you that way. Scheduling is a lot different. Like they’ll call you from week to week and they’ll change the schedule. (Joe)

It is important to note that the ability for Joe’s employer to change the schedule has been enshrined in law, by a government eager to make labour more flexible in order to compete in the emerging globalized post-industrial economy. Joe went on to explain that he doesn’t feel respected by his new employer because he is expected to work even if he is ill:

I had the flu for a week. I phoned in advance. The first day I thought I could still go to work, but I couldn’t and I phoned in about four or five hours in advance and I don’t think they liked that too much. The other time I had phoned in and said ‘Listen, I can’t make it to this shift’. He said ‘Ok, I’ll put you down for Sunday maybe you’ll feel better’. I said ‘I don’t think so but ok’. I phoned in Saturday night for the Sunday afternoon shift, which is almost a full day and the supervisor just wasn’t very happy because I didn’t phone in time. I almost hung up on him and said ‘Hey I’m not working it’. They don’t treat you that well and it seems when push comes to shove they kind of try to force you to work right.

Daniel shared this story:

Just today we had one guy that they called in from another site to come in because we’ve needed some extra guys. He was sick. He had a doctor’s note, he had bronchitis and a lung infection and he wanted to go home. The minute he stepped on the site they said he was going to be indoors and they put him outdoors. He couldn’t hack it out there he said ‘I need to go home’. They didn’t send him home. All day he was calling the main office to try to get someone to cover his shift.

Guards tend to work shifts that do not coincide with transit schedules designed for nine to five commuters. They can rarely afford either a car or accommodation in the inner city, so transportation is a major issue:

[Guards] are coming from all over the place. I mean lots of guys work hard trying to get a site near where they live. I was lucky because I lived close to Scott Road Skytrain so it wasn’t really all that onerous on me to get on the bus, catch a train and go downtown. Most of my security
experience has been working downtown... most people can’t afford to have a car at the wages that you’re paid. (Paul)

Thus a lack of inner city residential developments targeted toward those at the bottom end of the service economy, combined with poor public transit leave security guards scrambling just to get to and from their low wage jobs.

**Family Life and Security Work**

Guards in this study found it difficult to balance work and family life. Despite the contention of neo-liberal theorists that low-wage work is generally the domain of young people living at home, talking to guards it was clear that these poor working conditions affect the lives of families, not just individuals. In fact, guards with families are in some ways ideal employees because they have to take whatever work they can get:

This Scandinavian immigrant guy who had a family, this guy would work like 28 days in a month. He was crazy. He was one of those guys who could work any site and at any time. His number was like a jealously guarded thing amongst the guys who were working in the office because if you needed a body right away he was the only guy you could guarantee even if he had finished his shift two hours before he could work. He was just one of those people who could do it. (Paul)

While this particular guard was able to do it, irregular work hours and low wages that force individuals to take on multiple jobs are not easy on families. Larry, who works security as a second job, explains: “It’s a bit of a struggle, it can get a bit taxing at times but then of course if you need the money then you have to do the jobs, right”. Jimmy, who has a young child and is recently separated, described the impact of working in the security industry on his family life:

It destroyed it. I went from doing everything from crazy graveyards to do 16 hour shifts 8 days in a row in Whistler where I don’t see my family. I’m working all night to all morning, so I don’t really have the opportunity to talk to them for that long because I’ve got to get back to bed. I think that if I could have had a little bit more time with my family I might still
actually have one, I’m not going to blame the whole thing on the security industry but it did really wreck havoc on my family.

Thomas, who is also working two jobs, expressed similar issues: “I spend too much time away, like I said on my four days off I work two of them doing security, so I’m basically only seeing them two days full, before I go back to work again at corrections”.

There is a growing gap between what one earner can provide and the cost of living for families. Even prior to recent labour market de-regulation, families have been struggling to make ends meet in an environment where two parents have to work and there is no provision for daycare. Families with a parent working security are no different, as Kirk explains:

Usually, the ones with families both parents are working because it’s hard to raise a family on a security salary and there are quite a few people who work for security who work for two companies, so they’ll do one shift with one company another shift with another company. Or they might do security work for one company and do janitor work for another company.

(Kirk)

While insecurity and overwork are pressing problems for young families, they are also issues for older people. Kirk explained: “we’ve actually got two people beyond 65 with us right now. It’s mainly concierge work, not much security”. Given the lack of pensions in the industry, it is not easy to retire, especially given that individuals and their families spend much of their lives in poverty with little ability to plan for their futures. In this way, poor and working-class families are increasingly shouldering the burden of a de-regulated labour market across their life spans, from children who have no time with their parents to seniors who cannot retire. For these families, flexibility means insecurity, an inability to plan, and a lack of time and energy for their personal needs or those of their children.
Private security guards and class location

Security workers are shouldering many of the risks associated with the development of gentrified quality-of-life districts in the city. They are literally standing on the frontline between tourists and the ‘new middle-class’ which divides the revitalized city from the poorest and most marginalized members of society. Yet, some guards feel they are often treated poorly by more well-to-do people because they earn low-wages and work under poor conditions:

Well you get just snobs and stuff like that. My biggest problem is there are a lot of people that think a contract security guard is supposed to take a bullet for them, you know. The only way I can see why is because they’re assumed to be stupid, they make hardly any money, and are therefore just disposable people. (Christopher)

Despite some of the unique elements of security work, Christopher expresses a keen sense of class location, and sees his job as similar to all low-wage jobs:

It’s a job. Like wage-labour is inherently soul-sapping. I hate it. That’s probably why I’ve stuck it out this long. Where I am now is incredibly easy and there’s no stress involved. I have to work shitty hours sometimes but other than that it’s not a problem, it’s just that it’s wage labour. (Christopher)

While some guards recognize that they are just workers, due to their role in policing other employees, there is often animosity directed at guards from other employees leaving them without a sense of solidarity with either the consumer groups they serve or other members of the working-class:

I know there is a level of dislike. One of my co-workers was telling me about it today actually, when he had just wandered into the wrong lunchroom by accident into the [non-security workers] lunchroom and they just basically told him to fuck off. So they kind of mind their business. Some of the people are pretty good, but you know that most people don’t like us. (Daniel)
This distinction between security guards and other workers is in some instances enshrined in law. Although the guards that I spoke to all worked contract, it is important to note that Section 1 of the Labour Relation Board of British Columbia's legislative reference code excludes security guards from bargaining units, due to their role in the policing of other workers. Yet, ultimately, the experiences of security guards as workers does allow some guards to find solidarity with other low-wage staff:

I’ll stand around with the waitress. We’ll get a few minutes and she’ll come over and we’ll compare how shitty our nights were. (Richard)

In a competitive industry, a lack of solidarity among workers can benefit employers. Many security guards seem to have resisted building solidarity even within their own industry. This resistance became very apparent in discussions of ‘race’ and ethnicity in an industry that employs a large number of recent immigrants.

**Racialization, immigration and private security work**

Exploitation of racialized workers, and a tendency among the Canadian-born working-class to see foreign workers, rather than exploitative employers, as responsible for their troubles are not new phenomena in BC. During the nineteenth century as many as 14,000 Chinese men were brought to Canada to build the Canadian Pacific Railway. They were forced to perform dangerous work and endure appalling living conditions for meager wages. These workers were restricted from bringing their families to Canada and many died before the railway was complete. Most of those who lived settled in BC where they were barred from voting or entering higher paid professions once the railway was complete. The Federal government introduced a ‘head tax’ to prevent further Chinese immigration before outlawing such immigration altogether with the *Chinese Exclusion Act* in 1923 (Naiman, 2000: 259). Japanese and Indian immigrants faced similar
hostilities. These groups were all politically disenfranchised and restricted from certain occupations and from property ownership (Naiman 2000: 259). Racialized workers were generally paid lower wages than their European counterparts, making them a target for white workers who saw them as depressing wages and stealing jobs. White trade unions were key players in Anti-Asian riots in Vancouver in 1907 in which Asian homes and businesses were ransacked.

Today, there are a high proportion of new immigrants -- both those with few direct employment skills and professionals whose credentials are not recognized by the Canadian state -- working in the private security industry. Their experiences are organized not only through the local labour regulation regime, but also through the global division of labour, the immigration system, the rules governing the practice of professions in Canada, and enshrined racism about the value of education and experience from non-western contexts:

A lot of people in the industry are here from other countries. It's a job that they can get. I've worked with people who have Doctorates in other countries but because they don't have the Canadian equivalency to the degree or the certificate, they are unable to get a job here equivalent to what they were doing in another country. I worked with a doctor and they don't recognize his papers here in Canada so he has to be a security guard. (Paul)

One of the unique things with the security industry is that we get people that are, you know doctors, neurosurgeons, engineers from their country...They've got good work ethics. They've had to work hard to get where they are, but obviously it's a big shock to them... it's quite amazing to sit down with these people. You know, very established people in their own countries with credentials, but they come here and they're in the position of making 9 or 10 bucks an hour. So that perception again, it's getting better, but that perception of the security guard, of the high school drop out, with no education and a boozer type of thing is not the case. That guy in the uniform standing in the bank could be a neurosurgeon. (Charger security)
The supply of highly skilled immigrant labour is, in part, a consequence of global processes spearheaded by western capitalist projects. Other times, however, an exodus of middle-class workers is the result of very localized phenomena. An executive at Securiwise explains:

We can determine where the trouble spot is around the world by the applicants we get here... Several years ago we got a lot of Eastern Europeans when the situation was getting tough there. Years before that, we were getting people from Somalia. We are now seeing many more people from the Soviet Union, the Ukraine.

While the flow of immigrants is related to both international economic trends and local troubles across the globe, there are other processes at work located specifically in Canadian policy. Jamshid, an Iranian born security guard, explains: “My family are immigrants. We landed in Canada two years ago. Actually I am not a security guard. I am a dentist. In my previous country I was a dentist, not in Canada.” When I asked him if he planned to go back to dentistry he replied:

Yes, I plan if I can, it is hard, but I plan. The barrier is competition with applicants who want to get in the school, because for getting licensed everybody, internationally-trained dentists have to take a course in the dental school. Then after that they are able to take Canadian national exam, which is not too hard, but there is competition.

I asked if he knew that it was going to be this difficult to get into dentistry in Canada when he immigrated. He explained: “not that much, I knew there would be some steps, but I couldn’t anticipate how much it would be”. While this well-educated and articulate man is working for a small company based in the Downtown Eastside for $8.50 and hour -- a tremendous deal for his boss -- he gets no support or cooperation from his company in his attempts to alter his schedule to facilitate getting back into dentistry: “My employer tries to have, to fill places, and the company asks me to do some extra, to work extra shifts, if I cannot the employer gets mad”. While this story is unfortunate for Jamshid and
his family, his employment situation is also a loss for society. He is employed in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, where there is an overwhelming need for emergency dental services. Rather than putting his skills to work in that capacity, they are being wasted and a combination of government regulation governing the licensing of foreign trained professionals and his employer’s reluctance to facilitate his efforts at retraining are preventing that from happening.

Namvar ended up in the security industry, despite 25 years of experience working in a high-level position for the Indian government. I asked if he knew it would be so difficult to find work in Canada:

I thought originally that my kind of a background and my, maybe I was overconfident or something, I thought that my kind of background and education, 25 years of experience, it wouldn’t be that challenging.

Working in security leads to a lot of problems for immigrant men, particularly when they are supporting families. Namvar had a wife and two teenaged children, and was working for minimum wage with no benefits.

Failure on the part of the Canadian government and professional associations to recognize credentials and work experience means that capable and highly educated people are being forced to work where they are unable to use their skills. Security companies benefit from this situation. Some companies take pride in being able to recruit highly skilled workers for the low wages that they pay:

We look for potential. We will hire a recent immigrant with a PhD any day of the week. That person is going to be useful to us because we know the potential there exists there, ok (Charger).

Most of the immigrants we hire have, as you can imagine, university degrees. We like that. We think that is good for us. We think it’s great because these people do a great job. Sometimes their English skills are lacking the quality we are looking for but they have the ability, and we know that (Securiwise).
The co-owners of Streetwise, a smaller security firm shed light on how assumptions about ‘race’ affect their hiring practices:

We’re hiring a lot of Asians right now and it’s been a benefit... I hate to say it but they are loyal and they work hard. They’ve got a good work ethic and they are easy to work with. They are very respectful. They are very honest. They are very loyal. We’ve tried everything. We’ve tried the big bodybuilder guy and we find him sleeping in the corner at the end of the night.

Restrictions of immigrant professionals wishing to practice in their field are, on the one hand, a protectionist policy safeguarding the privileged position of Canadian-born professionals. However, there are groups of other Canadians that have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo in relation to this particular pool of workers. Workers who bring a lot of expertise and skill to low wage work but have a weak bargaining position in the labour market allow companies to provide clients with the quality services they expect while remaining competitively priced. This situation has been a source of enormous profits for security companies, while also allowing middle- and upper-income home and business owners to hire competent guards at manageable prices.

The class and race relations through which the lives of immigrant security guards are organized are complicated by the fact that while many recent immigrants, even from middle-class backgrounds, find themselves ghettoized in low-paying work, there is also a class of very wealthy immigrants that constitute an emerging risk market in Vancouver.

Unlike the past when immigration officials saw cheap and expendable labour as the only rationale for Asian entry into Canada, the nature and entry status of contemporary Asian migration to Canada have become extremely diverse. Thus, extremely wealthy Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong top the list of sources of the ‘investor immigrants’ (virtually an immigration policy for capital)... The major reason for the heightened interest in attracting Hong Kong business immigrants was the huge capital inflow into Canada, and particularly the west-coast city of Vancouver (Stasiulis and Jhappan, 1995:118)
The polarization of wealth within immigrant groups allows companies run by English
speakers to compete for contracts in areas where clients are mainly wealthy immigrants
from the Pacific Rim. Hence, flows of labour and capital interact to shape the face not
only of the city’s high-end real estate market, but also the low-wage workforce that
polices high-end neighbourhoods:

We’ve got a lot of Asian guys which is great because a lot of the buildings
that we work for as concierge are Asian majority. So it works out.
Whereas if I was to go in there, I’d be lost (Streetwise).

While white company owners rely on immigrant professionals as a cheap source of
skilled and reliable labour, some condemn immigrant-owned companies as ‘exploiting’
their work force and unfairly driving down the quality of the industry as a whole. A co-
owner of Streetwise was eager to share his views on this topic:

To put it bluntly a large East Indian contingency [sic] has taken over the
security industry right now... what we are finding is, let’s say a regular
job site you can bill out at 15 to 17 dollars an hour. Their guys are billing
out at, and I know this, this is documented, its 10.75 an hour, so if you do
the math and you do the minimum wage and the WCB payments and
insurance and bonding it doesn’t add up... what’s happened is a lot of
these people have immigrated here, let’s say from India and they don’t
have any pensions here. Basically, they’re using these people here, right,
exploiting them.

There is no doubt that many seniors from South Asia are being exploited in the industry.
However, when discussing the issue with Streetwise’s owners, it became clear that their
primary concern was, in fact, billing rates and not the rights of immigrant workers. Paul,
who has worked for many of the larger ‘white’ firms also brought up the exploitation of
immigrant workers in the industry. He did not attribute this exploitation to the race of the
company owners, but rather to the vulnerable position of these workers within the labour
market:
A lot of the time these people don’t know any of their rights. They don’t know about overtime and they’re just so grateful to have a job, any job. So even if they do know or sort of smell something fishy they just go along with it. It’s not just people of colour who have an ESL background. It is other people who get into the field. They know that they are being reamed over, but they still take it because they know that’s the situation. They want to keep their jobs. I think one of the scariest things is, there’s this company called Lacrosse security. I mean they underbid below minimum wage. How do they make a profit if they’re underbidding below minimum wage? Obviously they’re paying there guards below minimum wage. And you know, I’m pretty sure they probably have no radios. So the senior citizen who is doing the job, he probably doesn’t have really any English skills, he’s got no way of communicating with the outside world, he’s being paid less than minimum wage. It’s nasty.

While working conditions for new immigrants in the security industry are deplorable, Canadian-born guards tend not to fare much better. While workers in the industry could certainly benefit from working together to improve standards and wages, many of the guards I spoke to gave the impression that that was a long way off. Some white guards harboured explicitly racist sentiment towards other guards, or sought to disassociate themselves from people of colour doing the same work.

There’s not enough guards that speak English….at Charger we had a running joke that at 9:30 ‘David’ would come in, he’s the human resources guys, he would have his coffee, listen to his messages and run across the street to the immigration office with a sign, “Now hiring for security.” (Jimmy)

When asked about how he is treated while in uniform, Thomas, a white guard, expressed anxiety, not only about being seen as a low-wage worker, but as doing a job properly the domain of immigrants:

The first thing when you see somebody wearing a security uniform it is “Ok, he’s making 6 bucks an hour” you know… I’ve never had anybody frown upon me or make fun of me wearing the jacket, like they are not mimicking you or making any fun or any racial reference, because the majority of securities are other races right, they are East Indian or Asian. (Thomas)
Racial divisions in security are important because the industry is highly informal in terms of promotion and rewards. There is little unionization so that site selection, scheduling and position determination tend to be done at the complete discretion of the employer. The security industry is made up of a large number of vulnerable workers, including recent immigrants, commodified in an unregulated labour market. These workers’ vulnerability is exacerbated by the fact that even if these guards wanted to make a complaint, the long and confusing self-help kit that they would need to fill out is available only in English (Fairey, 2005). The situation becomes self-perpetuating as more consumers see private security as an affordable option, generating new demands, but also as new suppliers, underbidding each other, still strive to make a profit by further eroding wages and working conditions. While these immigrant workers are exploited by employers and face discrimination from their fellow guards, it is important to keep in mind that they are still in the position to wield authority over even more marginalized residents of Vancouver, including many Aboriginal people.

Conclusion

Private security guards occupy a highly contradictory social location. On the one hand, they police the poorest of the poor in Vancouver. On the other hand, they constitute an exploited and highly vulnerable workforce. Risk markets have emerged in part because of neo-liberal fiscal policies that lead to the polarization of wealth in large urban centres, as well as neo-liberal governance strategies that promote privatization and individualization of responsibility. At the same time, labour market de-regulation meant to promote investment and job creation, in fact, creates a pool of workers forced to accept low wages and poor working conditions. The pool is expanded as working and middle
class immigrants come to Canada and find themselves ghettoized at the bottom of the labour market. These conditions have allowed a mass market in security to emerge as companies can bill out at reasonably low rates but still make a profit because labour costs are so low. Many of the guards I spoke with recognized their contradictory position, but felt that there was little they could do to change it. This feeling is understandable given how closely the experiences of these workers reflect deliberate changes to British Columbia’s Employment Standards Act. Security guards reported routine violations of remaining labour rights, serious health and safety concerns, problems with transportation and scheduling, negative affects on their family lives and anxiety about their futures.

Private security companies are regulated through employment standards, just like all employers, but as we have seen, these regulations are minimal and poorly enforced. These companies are also regulated through the Private Investigators and Security Agencies Act ("PISSA") as private security-related businesses. While the training and licensing mechanisms in this legislation are meant to ensure professionalism and accountability in the industry, guards claim that the provisions of the PISAA do not ensure that guards are prepared to do their job and that enforcement is almost non-existent. In the next chapter, I will examine the scope and efficacy of the current mechanisms in place to formally regulate the private security industry, as well as some of the informal and internal ways in which private security guards are regulated and disciplined. Looking at informal regulatory and disciplinary practices helps to explain how guards are motivated and kept on task in spite of low wages and poor working conditions. It also reveals a process through which certain guards establish a sense of themselves as protectors of the innocent and vulnerable, which leads them to identify
more closely with the law enforcement apparatus, their company and their clients than with other low wage workers and people living in poverty. At the same time, a lack of formal regulation and oversight and disproportionate reliance on informal practices to regulate and discipline workers raises questions about accountability within the industry.
Chapter Eight: Formal and Informal Regulation of the Private Security

In 1997, a Statistics Canada review of security companies in Canada found that the industry generates an estimated two billion dollars in revenue and was comprised of 2,746 firms (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 10). The companies profiting from a booming demand for private security services range from small specialized firms and fly-by-night companies, to organizations that rival some public police forces. The West Edmonton Mall security service, for example, employs 50 security officers and “engages in more arrests and order maintenance than many suburban or rural Canadian police forces” (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 16). While more Canadians are turning to private companies to meet their security needs every year, it is less clear whether consumers are receiving quality services. As the presence of uniformed security guards on city streets, inside residential developments, in public building and in shopping and entertainment districts grows, it is integral that attention be paid to how security guards are regulated and how they are disciplined when a breach of the rules occurs.

This chapter explores the regulation, both formal and informal, of private security work in BC. Since the mid 1990’s, there has been increased emphasis placed on regulation and professionalization within the industry by both governments and some company executives. However, guards explained that while training and licensing procedures provide the illusion of quality control, in practice these procedures are relatively minor and are oftentimes flouted altogether without consequence. As is the case with employment standards, the regulatory burden for security companies is low and enforcement of regulations does not seem to be a government priority. This is in keeping
with the more general neo-liberal approach to industry regulation that has been adopted in British Columbia. Within this context, the private security industry occupies a paradoxical position. On the one hand, as new markets open up for private security providers, the public wants assurances that private companies are scrupulous, adhere to guidelines, monitor themselves for quality, and bear in mind civil liberties. On the other hand, many of the problems facing the industry are essentially structured into Canadians risk markets. They stem from low pay and training, high rates of employee turn over, cost cutting to ensure contracts and overstepping their authority to meet client demands.

While security guards tend to feel that formal governmental regulations have little impact on them as workers, there are other internal mechanisms that regulate employees. Security guards have not been able to secure the kinds of monetary rewards that would, on their own, promote commitment to the industry. There are other rewards, however, that help keep some workers motivated without cutting too deeply into company profit margins or elevating billing rates beyond what the market will bear. These rewards include small bonuses and symbolic awards or promotions (without a significant pay-raise). The promise of non-monetary recognition from their bosses, meaningless promotions or a sense of power and authority is not enough to motivate many workers. Thus, security companies employ a range of disciplinary techniques to maintain control of their workforce. Some companies introduce paramilitary forms of organization in order to ensure compliance. Many companies use electronic surveillance techniques to ensure that guards at isolated or dispersed sites are performing up to specification. The end result is that security services in Vancouver, like city-building practices more generally, have come to reflect neo-liberal approaches to governance. Government
regulation and oversight is kept at a minimum, while the private sector is empowered and encouraged to self-regulate within the context of the competitive marketplace.

A range of companies, each with varying levels of adherence to government licensing and training standards and vastly different company cultures and internal disciplinary practices are operating in various parts of the city, introducing their own vision of security and order maintenance in the sites they are contracted to patrol. Workers within the industry have few avenues for recourse where disciplinary action is carried out internally and informally, while the general public is left with no way of monitoring adherence to regulation or the extent of internal disciplinary problems within the companies patrolling their neighbourhoods, workplaces and residences. Overall, limited government oversight and informal approaches to employee regulation have resulted in the development of fragmented, inconsistent and non-transparent security services across Vancouver.

**The Oppal Commission**

Some guards and company executives cited the 1994 Commission of Inquiry into the Use of Non-Police Personnel, headed by Justice Wallace T. Oppal, as important in shaping the current face of the private security industry in British Columbia. This report was integral in establishing the current regulatory framework for the industry in this province. The inquiry did lead to greater government involvement in the regulation of the private security industry. This move is rooted in the assumption that greater privatization of policing is in the public interest, but that in order to make the continued growth of the industry feasible there needs to be oversight of private security firms in order to ensure that certain standards are maintained. The Commission’s Report opens by stating:
In recent years, communities and the police have recognized that we cannot reasonably expect police to respond to all reports of offences or community problems. Some types of enforcement work can, and should be, done by non-police personnel such as civilians, private security firms or auxiliary officers. This approach reduces policing costs and frees highly trained police officers to respond to serious crimes where police are most needed (Oppal, 2004: F-2)

Oppal makes the case that privatization would reduce costs because police officers demand higher salaries than civilians. The move towards increasing the role of private bodies in law enforcement is reflective of the more general shift towards replacing public service work with low wage contract or even volunteer work.

While Oppal’s report deals with the use of non-police personnel in a number of areas that range from enforcing parking regulations to doing lab work for the police, he highlights a few areas that he believes are particularly ripe for privatization. These areas include the monitoring of burglar alarms and neighbourhood patrols. According to Oppal (1994: F-9), “with increasingly strained policing resources, many policing agencies can no longer afford to use patrol cars to patrol small areas. However, private companies, who would contact police as needed, may be able to fill this crime prevention need”.

Oppal also argues that shoplifting (particularly if merchants’ associations pool their resources to hire security), break and enter investigations, and fraud investigations can be better handled by private firms.

Despite Oppal’s (1994) pro-privatization position, he argues that police agencies need to wait until there has been training and licensing standards, accountability mechanisms and performance standards put in place before beginning to rely too heavily on private firms. While Oppal’s recommendations for private security solutions seem to
have been embraced wholesale, only some of his proposals on regulation have been
adopted. Those that have been implemented have been enforced half-heartedly, at best.

Training

British Columbia has mandatory minimum training standards in effect for security
guards. This training is largely a result of the Oppal inquiry, in which he recommends
that the province ensure that non-police personnel are properly trained if they are to
assume a larger role in law enforcement. Larry, who worked in the industry when new
training standards were introduced, describes the change:

A lot of the training that I had learned, especially in restraint training and
that, I went on my own, took courses on my own, paid my own way. The
company did not provide any of that. It wasn’t until the later 90s when the
commission came out by Justice Wally Oppal that mandatory security
training came into effect where the companies were forced to put you
through a training course and such.

According to Larry, the previous lack of training had an impact on workers, both in terms
of injury to them, and their knowledge of the limits of their own powers:

You got lots of sprains, bumps and bruises and the occasional black eye
and split lip and stuff like that. There was one gentleman who actually
received criminal charges for excessive force who ended up being fired.
His career plans were to get into the military and stuff like that. That was
all thrown out.

Oppal recognized that the highly competitive nature of the industry meant that companies
were tempted to cut corners in terms of training. Hence he suggested making
standardized training mandatory for licensing, a recommendation that was adopted by the
provincial government.

The standardized training is divided into two parts, Basic Standards Training 1
(BST 1), and Basic Standards Training 2 (BST 2). The standardized training program is
overseen by the Justice Institute of British Columbia, but delivered mainly through
individual security companies and private colleges. The BST 1 program is generally offered as 40 hours of instruction (Justice Institute of British Columbia, 2007). However, some training programs offer the program over a shorter period. Daniel explained that when he was interviewed for a job at a large security firm, he was encouraged by his new employer to come into the training program halfway through. He achieved a 90% on the examination without any particular effort. In fact, he could barely recall taking the course. BST 2 focuses on the physical side of security, teaching potential guards proper restraint techniques and basic self-defense. The course is designed to be delivered in 24 hours of instruction. The Justice Institute invigilates all security exams. An executive from Charger Security explains how it works:

You cannot be hired or work as a security guard without the course. Even with this course it's not guaranteed you're going to be a security guard. And I use the word 'security guard' because that's the only title you can use. You can't use 'officer', officer is a different power of authority in BC, so it's guard. Once you've completed the course, the basic security one and two, that doesn't expire, it's only valid in the province of BC. Once you've completed that you can now apply, from a company. You can't do it yourself. You go to a company and say "Listen, I'd like to work." If you're hired, they will apply for a security license for you.

Companies and training bodies often point to this training as an example of the professionalization of the industry. In contrast, frontline guards overwhelmingly dismissed it as a 'hoop to jump through' with little practical value:

The training was a little bit funny. It was one week in class, basically just studying the manuals from the Justice Institute. Read a couple of manuals. It was really simple stuff, right. You read the page and then write down the answer (Daniel).

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8 There are currently 14 institutions providing this training in Vancouver with 12 more providing the training in the rest of the Lower Mainland.
I found it boring. It was two weekends. Usually it’s about a two-week course, but the reason why I went through this course was that it was just two weekends. It was kind of a crash course (Joe).

It was really kind of, you just sit there and you fill in the blanks. It’s not really hard. It’s meant for people who have poor language abilities and aren’t the brightest people in the world ‘cause that’s who populates most of security (Christopher).

I passed BST 1 and 2 and I didn’t even read the book. I could guess most of the questions. I basically skimmed through a few of the chapters, talked to a few guards about what was going to be on the exam and I still passed it. I mean, come on. That’s pretty pathetic, right... I don’t think that they really effectively convey what your job is like. If you took that exam I don’t think you’d really be qualified to work at a site because it doesn’t really tell you enough about how to do your job. You need to talk to some experienced people, learn some of the sketchier stuff and go from there. But BST 2 is the most laughable part of it. BST 2 is where they teach you how to do the take downs, how to do the arm bar locks and all that, right. So you do that for a couple of sessions and you learn how to escort somebody out with an arm lock or whatever. Give me a break, how is that supposed to stick? After a month, I don’t think even after a week I could remember, I barely knew how to do them when I passed the exam. Here they are trying to train us to actually do security work and it’s not going to stick. It just isn’t (Paul).

Jimmy argued that current training and regulation make it inadvisable to enhance the role and power of guards at this point:

We need to be given a little bit more power, but we need, if we’re going to have more power, we need to regulate it properly. The big joke in the industry is that BST stands for bullshit training. It is bull shit, like they don’t teach you anything. Like stare at this picture and tell me 15 things about it after I take it away. Well, I play memory with my kid, you know. So we definitely need more order, and there needs to be more accountability from the government, the companies and from the guards.

In discussing his reservations about the growing lucrative market in canine patrols, Paul expressed a general concern with training and the way it is used to justify the growing presence of the industry:

One of the scariest things about security is how we’re taking over a lot of what should be policing functions, right. The people who get these jobs are again under trained, under qualified, unprepared. Basically they’re hoping, well I don’t even know if they’re hoping for this cause it’s just
about profit, but I think that they think that the procedures that they have in place, because they try to make it as dummy proof as possible right, where if you follow the procedures you won’t get in trouble.

It is not only frontline guards who often feel ill-equipped to do their jobs. Many companies promote guards into supervisory roles very quickly. These shift supervisors often receive little or no additional training:

I keep getting put into leadership positions that I’m not necessarily ready for, not necessarily qualified for, not necessarily trained for. But the thing is, I’m the best of the options that they have available to them at the time. (Paul)

Oppal (1994) discusses the lack of training for supervisory staff throughout the industry. However, supervisor training is not currently mandated in legislation and remains spotty at best. The human resources manager from Securiwise, one of a handful of firms that does provide supervisory training, explains that most supervisors in the industry are not prepared to do their job:

We’d like to see more supervisor training. We feel that in the industry as a whole, supervisors are under equipped to carry out their duties. More technical training on the equipment that they use, better understanding of the role of the security officer… we need to provide more value to our clients, so training has to be set up in a way so the security industry is more valued. Customer service, supervisor training, technical training, we need evolution, constant evolution.

While some executives feel that enhanced supervisory training would benefit the industry, the reality of the competitive marketplace is that companies that go beyond minimum training standards required by law find that it is a liability because it pushes up billing rates, making it difficult to secure contracts. At the same time, individual guards are not motivated to invest time and money in enhanced training themselves because they are unlikely to see any return on their investment.
The implementation of standardized training procedures for guards has legitimated off-loading of security provision to private firms. However, new training requirements seem to have provided the industry with an aura of professionalism, while doing little to improve regulation, accountability or the knowledge level of guards. Overall, the guards I spoke to felt that the standardized training has not succeeded in professionalizing the industry. The consensus among guards is that almost anyone who would have worked in the industry prior to the legislative changes would pass and that having completed the training does not enhance the quality of their work. The same can be said of the regulatory and licensing procedures currently in place in British Columbia.

**Licensing**

In Canada, a regulatory system is in place to monitor the public police. While its functioning and neutrality may be questioned, this system is firmly established in law. In contrast, there is little effective oversight of the private security industry. According to the Law Commission of Canada (2002: 43) “[m]ost provincial private security and investigators acts focus on regulating security firms as a business. They stipulate, for example, that security firms must have a license and they must be insured”. Security is different than other businesses, particularly as it expands into more and more areas of both public and private life.

The regulatory system for private security operates on a province-by-province basis in Canada. Generally, private security guards must undergo a basic criminal record and background check. In BC, security businesses are regulated though the *Private Investigator and Security Agencies Act* (PISAA). In accordance with the *PISAA*, each individual employee of a firm must be licensed to carry out their duties. Provincial
statutes cover contract security, where a client contracts security personnel from another company, but not in cases of in-house security, where the guard is an employee of the business where he or she provides security. In-house security guards are not required to carry licenses, and can engage in some activities prohibited for contract security, such as the use of restraints.

There are provisions in the Act for the production and display of security employee license and identification cards as follows:

A security employee must, while at work, carry on his or her person the security employee license issued under section 10 and an identification card issued by his or her current employer in a form approved by the registrar, and must produce them for inspection at the request of any person to whom the licensee holds himself or herself out to be licensed or any peace officer or inspector (PISSA, 1996).

While this formal licensing procedure is now in place, guards claim that on the ground things really have not changed from the situation prior to the Oppal report, despite the fact that security guards are increasingly taking over policing functions. Some guards feel that licensing is nothing more than a government cash grab. They also explain that there is not even an effective enforcement mechanism in place to ensure that guards are in fact licensed:

When I started I got paid nine [dollars an hour] and that was before I got my license. So they knowingly worked me illegally which is very standard, very, very standard in the industry (Christopher).

Jimmy, a guard from a different company, recalls the same situation:

Another, very common practice is sending out unlicensed guards. I was unlicensed. I was still doing my training and because I knew the instructor, the company needed somebody so they said “here’s your uniform”, and this was the first day I was supposed to start my training. Before the class even started, they came and slapped down the uniform and said “This is where you’re working tonight. You’re going to do 7pm to 7am. Go crash at home, get some sleep and get ready for work”.
A provincial government investigation in 2004 alleged that three out of every four new security guards being hired by BC’s largest firms started working without a license (Vancouver Sun, November 6th, 2007). When I asked Christopher whether there was any oversight to ensure that people presenting themselves as security guards are licensed, he explained:

Well, in theory pretty much any agent of the state, people like a government agent, can check your license because you have to have the physical license on you at all times or the police, they can check it, but I’ve never had it happen. When it does happen it’s not really a big deal, so theoretically on paper there’s oversight but it’s never enforced at all. Quite frankly I was glad because, like I said, I was destitute and I was able to start work the next day.

The Law Commission of Canada (2002) takes the position that these types of illegal practices are a function of the marketplace, not a break down of the internal regulating mechanisms of the market. The Commission states that the reason for such practices is obvious: “in a highly competitive market, the quickest way to extract profit is to operate with little or no overhead” (2002:50).

As well as being subject to pressures to compete within a competitive neo-liberal marketplace, any attempt at further regulation of the industry is affected by Canada’s commitments under some of the multinational trade agreements.

Any proposal to regulate investigation and security services in Canada must take into account Canada’s commitments under the North American Free Trade Agreement and the General Agreement on Trade in Services. These commitments prohibit measures that would discriminate against and among foreign services and service providers (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 53).

Because security is already partially privatized in Canada, Canadian regulation cannot discriminate against foreign companies. Canada can still engage in reasonable regulation
related to qualification and training standards, as long as this regulation is not
unnecessarily restrictive on the trade in security services. However, an influx of
American firms would change the face of the private security industry in Canada, forcing
Canadian companies to adapt in order to compete in the globalizing market place.

Resisting the race to the bottom

Looking at standardized training and licensing does not tell the whole story of
skill levels among security guards in British Columbia. While some guards came to
security because of the ease of getting licensed, others willingly augment their training,
arguing that it is important in order to stay safe and do their job well:

There are different types of courses that you can take that aren’t really
security qualified. Like you’ve got straight-edged weapons, like anybody
coming at you with something, you want to be able to defend yourself,
even if it’s a big steal bar, anything. You want to know what to do with
stuff like that, I would say it’s a necessity if you’re in a situation like
[downtown site]. (Thomas)

Some executives interested in taking over more policing functions also feel that lax
training standards and lack of effective regulation work to the detriment of the industry as
a whole:

It would be nice if they had perhaps certain arresting powers, maybe a
little bit more use of force, only when needed. But the problem with
giving them that is, what you’re going to find when you give them that, is
that it all comes down to training and the quality of people that you hire,
right. So who do you offer that to? Do you let every security company
have the authority to do that? Probably not, because the individuals that
are hired are not, like you look at a policing agency, whether they’re doing
a good job or not, but their hiring process is pretty thorough and they’re
trying to pick out the best candidates that are suited to the job. Now, if you
look at the security industry, if you were to push a very stringent hiring to
really hire good people, well, number one you better be paying a lot of
money and then you knock out two thirds of all the people who work in
security. That’s it and companies wouldn’t survive (Streetwise).

The co-owner of the company continued:
I mean, I saw a security guard hired at a bank who was special needs. I mean he was able to get through his BS1 BS2 somehow, but what’s his role? Is he there just to open the door, meet and greet, or does he perform a security function where he’s preventing three guys with AK 47s from coming in and robbing that bank? No, it’s not going to happen, but there should be a level of security I think and there should be some security guards who should be able to bear arms. I am more than confident how to hold a gun and so is [names co-worker] and I’d be more than happy to hold a gun in a bank and be a guard, do you want to use it? Probably not. But is it a deterrent? I think so. I think someone would think twice (Streetwise).

The two owners of Streetwise believe that there is a market for elite services, but a combination of restrictive legislation limiting the use of force among guards and preventing contract security personnel from carrying weapons, and low barriers to entry in the security industry are preventing those within higher standards in the industry from achieving their full potential.

Some large companies are already providing their staff with more training than required by law. Securiwise prides itself on offering more training options than other firms:

We offer BST and we also offer some advanced training courses as well -- site patrol training, conflict resolution training, diversity training, we’re very big on diversity... we offer supervisory training. In January we’re going to be offering a course on emerging technologies for security officers, with equipment they would be using, biometrics. We have a wide range of training. We also send our staff out for some courses. We send people to the Justice Institute for driver training, we send people for CPTED training [Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design].

Other companies, like Streetwise, bring skills from the public service:

We have basically taken all the principles that we’ve learned from the jails and stuff, in term of like use of force, conflict resolution, intervention, customer service, we pretty much take it all. Now, add that on to their BST 1 BST 2 training that they must have, so we’re taking these guys and were building them up to a different level, even in just like how to approach the police and things like that. Even our forms and documentation are way above anything like industry standards.
It may seem contradictory that, in an industry where it is difficult to find enough bodies to fill the jobs, some executives would like to see more training requirements put in place. From their perspective, stricter standards would reduce competition and raise rates:

In this economic setting there are many competitors out there who will offer what they characterize as essentially the same service for a lower rate. So because there is so much competition out there, and there are low barriers to entry, then the billing rates become depressed. So what do we need? We need the security industry to become, it must be held in higher esteem than it has. It has come a long way in the past few years. It has traditionally been viewed as a retired person’s job, a job for somebody just to sit around and stay awake. But that’s not what it is at all. We work in banks, we work in control centres, we do security planning for clients, we provide customer service. So, society has to view security differently, clients have to recognize the value of quality security and employees need to be better trained. We need better training in the industry (Securiwise).

The co-owners of Sreetwise take the position that unless standards in the industry are enhanced to a point that security guards can take on more of the roles generally associated with the public police, the long-term value of the industry is questionable:

Anybody can get through that BS1 BS2 course. Its spoon-feed information so there’s a lot of human error to that. A lot of these guards are being subject to, I mean if you’re 70 years old and you can barely walk and you’re watching a job site I mean you’re not very productive. So the police are just dealing with more work from them at the end of the day, following up on all of the draw backs that we in the security industry have. We should be competent to get the job done and not call on the police all the time and have the resources to deal with anything unless it gets to a stage where we can’t. But what we find is you’re constantly calling the police for like your back up. They’re your back up system. And then usually they are calling us, especially like in the beginning like “Why are you calling us? You guys can deal with this”. So, I don’t know, the police will always have their role and we’ll always have ours. It would be nice if ours could expand a bit so we could help them out more (Streetwise).

These companies want to see regulation and training standards in the industry enhanced to a point where private security can legitimately assume functions previously reserved
for the public police. Currently, the provincial government is working on new regulations to govern private security work in BC. Over the next two years a new piece of legislation, The Security Services Act, will replace the PISAA. The biggest change will be that in-house security, including bouncers, will be covered by the same regulations as contract security providers. Enhanced training standards may also be introduced, although the Justice Institute is not planning to add any additional hours to training courses for security guards -- any new material will be covered within the 40 hour time period.\(^9\) Unless oversight is built in to new regulations and legislation, it is unlikely that these changes will have much impact on how security work is done. Guards suggest that regulation of their behaviour and performance while on the job is primarily achieved through a system of informal rewards and punishments that have more to do with personal relationships, organizational culture and meeting client and company goals than with formal regulations, training standards or accountability mechanisms.

**Nepotism**

Because the security industry is almost entirely non-unionized, advancement, site selection, and scheduling are based largely on nepotism. There are fundamental divisions among classes of guards, as well as among individual guards, based on their personal relationship with the employer. Richard, a guard in his 20s, describes the divisions within the security industry:

> It is evident right away in the pay structure. Tier one guards start at 11 [dollars an hour] and tier two start at 9 [dollars an hour]. And you know, I'm not exactly sure what criteria they use. Some of it is objective, but some of it is subjective I'm sure.

\(^9\) Personal e-mail correspondence with staff at the Justice Institute
Richard, who was immediately placed in high profile sites with regular hours, explains the extent to which decent site selection and scheduling relies on forging a relationship with the employer:

The instructor [at the company] liked me so he wanted me not just to work for the company, but to work with him... He's a younger guy, sort of the same sense of humour, I can make him laugh. But also I think that he picked up on the fact that I’m fairly educated, and I have a martial arts background too, so we’d teach each other some stuff. We sort of developed a camaraderie.

Guards repeatedly mentioned that it was important to try to blend into the culture of the organization in order to secure reasonable working conditions. At the same time, the nepotism made possible by a non-unionized work environment increases competition among employees attempting to gain the employer’s favour, pushing some to devote themselves fully to the company despite the poor wages and conditions.

**Informal rewards**

Although most security guards come to the industry for a paycheque, McLeod (2002) explains that recognition of a job well done rarely amounts to a pay raise at his company:

For us rewards normally have to take a non-monetary form. We recognize an employee of the month. We present award certificates. We provide differences in rank, nomenclature, in clothing and accoutrements. Companies in Vancouver also use small and non-transparent incentives in lieu of good pay. Management relies on the fact that some security guards are motivated by a genuine belief in the importance of the work they do, or by the appeal of authority and a masculine occupational culture.
Bonuses and awards

A common practice among security companies in Vancouver is to offer one-time awards, gifts or bonuses to model employees. The human resources manager at Cavalry Security described such a practice at this company:

We give away a thousand dollars a month [divided among] three different people... We try and recognize the employee’s hard work, so we attract people that way.

I asked how the company decides who is going to get the bonus:

Well we have three different awards. One’s the unsung heroes, people who go in there doing their job never had problems that’s totally reliable. There’s the performance of the month. If there’s a really big incident and the officers just handle it exceptionally well, they qualify for that. And then the performer of the month, who through the month, just day in day out through a bunch of different situations is just outstanding. So the different managers of the different portfolios will give us notes and heads up and from there we take all those. We usually get like fifteen a month and we look at all those and we decide from there.

A manager from Charger Security explains how his company rewards guards for doing a good job:

Like, if we receive positive input on guards we find out what their hobbies and interests are and we get them, you know, gift certificates and bonuses and bring them into the office and thank them so they know that we appreciate what they’re doing.

A representative of Securiwise uses a similar technique. He described how these types of practices work as a motivational tool:

In business people can spend a whole year studying organizational behavior and how to motivate people. How do we do that? Well we try to have opportunities for them. We try to show our employees that working hard will lead to the next step... We try to recognize them when they do a good job. We have movie passes for people who do good work. We’ll put in our newsletter kudos to people. So we’ll do stuff like that.

Rather than genuinely acknowledging the valuable role that their employees play by offering job security, a living wage and health benefits, security companies rely on
techniques that promote competition among employees and provide recognition without any major outlay of resources.

**Promotion**

Promotion to a supervisory position is generally one way in which hard work, commitment and competence are rewarded within an organization. Being fast-tracked into a management position is a common way that guards are rewarded in the security industry as well:

I've only been here for about a year and a half. I started off just as a security officer in the mobile patrol division. I worked there for a couple of months and got moved right way into the operations centre and worked there for the last, just over a year I guess, 14 months. And then four weeks ago, I got promoted into this position here. So there's a fast track to move up in the company for the right people, so that's good (Human Resource Manager, Cavalry)

The general expectation among workers is that with the increased responsibilities attached to a promotion comes increased material benefits. Yet, in the security industry, guards who are promoted quickly often realize that it is not really the reward they thought it would be. I asked Kirk if there was a financial incentive to becoming a supervisor:

No. It's like somebody's getting 11 dollars an hour you're making 11.50, maybe 12 dollars an hour. You get a lot more responsibility, but not a lot more pay.

Paul echoed this sentiment:

I'm one of those people who always got promoted, always went to high profile sites. I mean, I liked the social interaction. You know, there's usually all kinds of benefits to working at a high profile site, but you know you're not really paid all that much more than if you were guarding a hole in the ground. And usually you had more time to do what you wanted to do, as opposed to what they want you to do. And the variation between how much you are paid and what you are responsible for can be huge.

Christopher described how strongly he disliked his job once he was promoted:

It was 100 times worse, because I was like constantly on call 365 days. Well, I didn't even last that long, but pretty close, longer than anybody else actually. But just on call 7 days a week 24 hours a day and the only
time you get a call when you’re not in the office is when there something “Oh so-and-so didn’t show up”. Because it’s a crappy job, because it doesn’t pay very well, there’s lots of people who just quit without telling you and just don’t show up. Then it’s my responsibility to deal with it. And so while I was management I had a way worse time than anybody else involved because everything was my problem.

He went on to explain:

While I’m management, I’m still just a freaking worker. It’s not like I have any real say over things and so my boss would be blah blah blah just make it happen, like make the logically and physically impossible just magically happen. It’s just a joke, well it was for me. Some people get a trip on the sort of illusion of power attached to minor management positions. Theoretically I had more responsibilities than like an assistant manager at McDonald’s which isn’t really management but I had just as little say over things as they did, or power over the situation.

For companies, the benefit of rapid promotions without commensurate pay-raises is twofold. New frontline guards are motivated by the possibility of moving into a supervisory role, and strive to demonstrate that they are capable of handling more responsibility. Once promoted, management can justify heaping more work and responsibility on employees by virtue of their new title while still paying what is essentially an entry-level wage. These rapid promotions point to the general weakness of government oversight and training standards within the security industry. In a context where many guards feel that their training leaves them unprepared even for entry-level security work, it is problematic that guards often find themselves placed in supervisory roles within months, with no additional training.

Prestige and authority

As seen above, one way companies reward employees and attempt to win the allegiance of their workers is through titles and limited supervisory power. Another way companies motivate guards is by focusing on the importance of the work that they do and the power and authority that they can draw from it. Carlos claimed that some workers in
the industry buy into the company’s rhetoric around the value of the security services they provide:

I realized that part of what this job does is that it makes you feel like you are contributing to society. So not only that you see some kind of individual power, but for these different people I’m sure it also makes you feel like, well, as they say a cop is like a social worker with a gun right. Well, in this case instead of a gun it’s a walkie talkie, but still you feel like you’re part of it, like you’re part of the larger project. This is important because it suggests that some security guards do not see themselves primarily as private sector workers producing profit for their employers. Instead they see their role as public servants. Private security executives have worked hard to promote this view of the industry. This public service image makes the presence of private guards on public property more palatable to the general public. Carlos’s comment suggests that embracing this image may also make long hours and poor working conditions more palatable for some workers.

While some guards are enthusiastic about their work because they feel that it is part of an important social project, other guards seem to enjoy the authority that comes with work in the field of private security:

You’re going to get people who are attracted to some kind of authority. They feel good because they can put on some kind of a uniform and it gets to some people’s head. But meanwhile it’s like “Come on man. You’re a ten-buck-an-hour rent-a-cop”. But some people let it go to their heads. (Richard)

The private security industry offers low-wage workers the chance to exercise a certain degree of power, either in the pursuit of a particular social goal or simply for their own personal gratification. Guards tended to feel that this is encouraged in the industry as long as it is targeted in a way that fits with client goals.
Gender Power

Security work can offer guards a general feeling of power and authority that some find attractive. There also seems to be an appeal to a particular brand of masculinity in certain segments of the industry:

It's all about getting some grease, you know picking up chicks, beating the shit out of people when you have to, getting in fights when you need to. There's this kind of Alpha mentality that some of them have. (Richard)

Some companies seem to motivate their guards by instilling them with the feeling that they are responsible for protecting vulnerable members of society, particularly women:

We usually hire males. I think we've had one female work for us since we started. The only reason that's an issue is that we find unfortunately in this industry as a security you're very limited in the power that you have, so when you're confronted with someone that's belligerent, especially at a site like [high end downtown tower], where you're solo, one man team, the only thing that saves you is your phone which is to call 9-11 and to call [names co-owner] and myself which takes us about five minutes to get there. You're on your own for, could be up to ten minutes. So there are some women that can handle themselves very well and can diffuse a situation a lot better than a man can. But for safety purposes, especially at night, it just gives us a piece of mind. We wouldn't want to put a lady into jeopardy at all, in any way shape or form. (Streetwise)

The co-owners of Streetwise felt that their decision not to hire women is chivalrous; however, their justification for employing only males is rife with sexist stereotypes. Ross McLeod (2002: 110), vanguard of the parapolicing model, expresses a similar prejudicial attitude about the abilities of women in law enforcement in outlining his position on hiring female guards:

On the subject of women in law enforcement roles, I doubt that they will make significant inroads into our organization. There are a number of reasons for this. All officers must meet operational standards. We can't 'carry' someone for the sake of window dressing. If you stick with Intelligarde, it's because you are good at what you do and are an asset to the company.
McLeod's comment suggests that he believes that women who have made inroads into other areas of law enforcement are not performing on par with their male colleagues and that policies encouraging the hiring of women in non-traditional occupations are ill-conceived. This perspective is keeping with the conservative worldview held by some guards -- a world view that Paul has suggested has contributed to poor working conditions because these guards' reject unionization.

Larry, who works for a high-end security company, offered his perspective on why his company has no female employees:

'It can be a pretty rough and tumble job and its takes a certain type of lady to get interested and to participate in that type of an atmosphere.' (Larry)

McLeod, the co-owners of Streetwise and Larry are all part of the 'parapolicing' movement in private security. In this more visible and interventionist form of security work, guards and executives have suggested that size, strength and an intimidating presence are qualities of particular importance. The value attributed to size and strength can be a powerful motivational factor for working-class men who have little in the way of economic power:

Once of high value in work and in war, physical strength was a standard by which we defined the roles, relationships and functions of males and females, of fathers and their families. These patterns of behavior and of human relationships still persist, though strength is no longer of much importance... But today is a time of transition and we are approaching a 'crisis of gender', the old definitions of manhood and womanhood based on differences in strength are decaying, while new ones have been established. (Gagnon, 1974: 139)

Gagnon (1974) suggests that this "crisis of gender began with the industrial revolution, where mechanization began to erode the importance of physical differences between men and women. In the post-industrial context in which these guards are working, knowledge and technical skills are highly valued attributes among workers and both social status and
material rewards are based largely on the ability to compete in the knowledge economy. As near minimum-wage workers, a number of whom noted difficulties they were facing in supporting their families, some male security guards garner self-esteem from their work based on the belief (real or perceived) that they are, by virtue of their work, charged with protecting the vulnerable, namely women.

There were certainly guards, mainly those working more low-profile security jobs, who mentioned that they enjoyed working with women guards and some even saw machismo as a drawback to working in the industry. The two recent immigrant men who took part in this study did not express any feelings of enhanced social status from their role as ‘protectors’ rather, they both focused on what they needed to do to have their educational credentials recognized so that they could regain the social and economic status they had lost upon immigrating to Canada. At the same time, women are making inroads into some areas within the private security industry. This is particularly true in institutions like hospitals where there has to be women on staff at all time. Yet, for some working-class male guards, particularly those hoping to see the industry move in the direction of parapolicing, security work is a place where they can display an aggressive masculinity and be rewarded for it.

Disciplining Guards

Security work is part of a complex set of relations of authority and subordination, whereby guards exert power over certain segments of the population, but that power emanates from the authority invested in them by clients and employers, who, in turn, wield a great deal of authority over them as workers. Security guards are, in part, regulated by a system of rewards administered outside of the formal labour contract. In
many cases, management relies on guards' personal commitment to security projects or individual desire for power and authority to elicit the desired results from their workforce.

For some guards, like Thomas who spent eight years in the military, appealing to a sense of pride in a job well done is a very effective management technique:

Like, when our company does a job, we do it well. We're not slacking at all, driving around in cars like all those other guys keeping warm. We're standing out in the middle of nowhere, protecting that building.

However, not all workers buy into this system of informal rewards or feel a sense of duty in relation to their job:

Tardiness is a huge problem. People you know calling in sick an hour before their shift, you know that sort of stuff. The general work ethic, the workforce, the hardest thing I’d have to say is finding applicants, suitable applicants. Ones that are going to do well in the company are the ones who have a good work ethic. You know, they have pride in themselves, they show up on time, they’re proud of the uniform, they’re people who do what they are supposed to do. That’s the toughest part (Charger Security).

I asked the human resources manager from Securiwise about disciplinary issues at his company:

It’s part of the business that clients will complain about certain people, sleeping on the job, not showing up, not doing patrols as requested… it’s a big part of our job. We try to have a manager on the road at all times, to have one work with people and help them. People aren’t necessarily bad, but for whatever reason it’s hard for a person to stay awake at four o’clock in the morning, but they have to.

Thus alongside a system of informal rewards within the security industry a disciplinary structure exists that is meant to keep individual guards on task.

I asked the representative from Securiwise if the disciplinary problems he mentioned meant that he had to fire a lot of people. His answer reflects a corrective approach to managing a workforce:
We don't fire many people. We prefer to try and resolve things. We don't say “Ok, you did one thing wrong, we're going to let you go”. We prefer to work with our people. Discipline for us is not a punitive action it's a corrective sort of thing. So we don't use it to bring a person down. We use it kind of to extinguish behaviours.

The manager sees himself as building guards. Ross McLeod has the same understanding of his role. The CEO of Intelligarde takes a highly paternal approach to managing his young male workforce:

Many of our employees in the field are very young. They are either still living with their families or have just moved out. As a result they may be lacking in life skills. Some are chronically late, or often disheveled. Their families have not always instilled certain elementary habits or a sense of discipline. Therefore, we sometimes have to take a quasi-parental approach to new recruits (McLeod, 2002: 100).

He goes on to explain the importance of instilling a sense of discipline among his guards:

At Intelligarde, it is imperative that we maintain a high level of discipline and scrutiny with our people. The testosterone potential among our people, especially when acting as a group is immense... For these reasons we have to adopt a paramilitary form of organization and discipline as opposed to a bureaucratic model (McLeod, 2002: 103).

Whether or not companies are actually achieving their goal, some guards in Vancouver certainly feel as though some supervisors are too militaristic in their approach to management:

It's a very fascist and authoritarian regime where you are put in your spot and you aren’t supposed to talk to each other and there are none of the things to make your job more bearable. People rat each other out and it is a very vicious and nasty environment (Jimmy).

It's like the military, right. I mean that’s one of the biggest themes of security work is that it’s a lot like the military. Like the radio codes and everything. Except it's like a really backwards incompetent military. (Paul)

Some guards actually seem to embrace the military aspect of the job:

One particular guy sticks in my mind. It was at a scrap yard and he was the guy that regularly guarded it. I would guess that he is ex-military or something because he had that real focused attitude, he didn’t have any real people skills but he spent tremendous amounts of energy creating order there. He even built a building for himself, yah, he was hard core,
there were definitely people who got into it that were into law and order type jobs. (Matt)

However, others find this style of discipline oppressive:

Working conditions are usually pretty brutal. I was doing 14 hours straight shifts overnight and it was bloody cold and we weren’t allowed to move, we weren’t allowed to talk to anybody… I don’t know, I think since 9/11 people are expecting soldiers. (Jimmy)

In order to address these issues some sites have engaged in highly refined forms of surveillance to instill discipline. Daniel describes the surveillance mechanism used at his site:

There’s a control tower that’s watching all the security guards in the areas … if people aren’t following procedures to a tee, then maybe there might be something to be worried about, maybe someone’s doing something wrong.

Electronic forms of surveillance that track guards’ movements are also becoming increasingly common within the security industry:

For some sites, our mobile sites, we have pipe patrols. So what that means is, you have this little, it’s like a marker or something like that, and then every site we have has like a little beam and you just touch it and record the time and date that you were there so the client can know you were actually there on time and if something happened you can get a time stamp on it (Cavalry Security).

Well, most sites are electronic nowadays so we can monitor any movement that anybody does because you have to go around with either an electronic card of some kind which they call a fob or a swipe card. So everywhere you go you’ve got to do your swipe so you know where they’ve been. Technically, they should have been in all those spots if they swiped the card there. Most sites have camera readily available across the site so you can monitor somebody through the cameras which is recorded (Kirk).

What is particularly interesting about the wand system is that it was originally developed by Intelligarde. McLeod pioneered the system using his own workforce, but now markets it to other employers, both inside and outside of the security industry. Security guards are
in effect being used as guinea pigs for new technology developed to police the working-
class more generally.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has provided an overview of the formal and informal regulatory
regimes governing private security work in British Columbia. As early as 1994, policy
makers seem to have accepted an expanded role for private police as both inevitable and
desirable. The ideal, espoused by the Oppal Commission, was a well-trained and
effectively regulated private security industry that compliments the public police by
providing quality services at a lower cost. Training and licensing requirements in BC
were meant to be the first step to that end. From the perspective of guards, legislated
training and licensing requirements have little bearing on their day to day work, and do
nothing to enhance their job performance. This does not mean that guards are unregulated
as workers. Companies rely on a number of tactics to enhance performance among their
guards. Many companies have also developed techniques for monitoring and regulating
guards’ behaviour on the job. However, rather than being oriented toward enhancing
public accountability, these informal internal regulatory practices are in place only to
ensure guards’ are meeting company and client goals. Like many non-unionized workers,
security guards are forced to contend with nepotism, unreasonable demands and
demeaning disciplinary practices. However, some guards also draw a sense of meaning
and self-worth from the possibility of rapid advancement within their company and the
power and authority that comes along with their role in the security apparatus. The
combination of rewards and discipline developed by security executives enables these
companies to motivate and control their workforce in the absence of either living wages
and job security or an effective training and regulation system. In the next chapter, I will examine the powers, both legal and extra-legal, that these workers have at their disposal when they go out on patrol and assume their role as discipliners on Vancouver streets. I also look at the variety of tactics and approaches that security guards bring to their work.
Chapter Nine: Powers and Tactics in the Private Security Industry

As workers, contract security guards are regulated through formal means such as provincial training and licensing requirements, as well as though internal company culture, and an informal system of rewards and punishments. As agents of social control, guards make use of both formal and informal sources of authority to regulate the populations and spaces they have been contracted to police. These formal and informal sources of authority are the product of the broader relations of ruling in which contract security work is embedded. In exercising formal and informal authority guards help to maintain, and in some cases intensify, longstanding relations of domination and subordination in Vancouver. This chapter explores the ways in which security guards’ work is organized through the formal legal system, as well as through an informal set of power relations based on presumed authority, knowledge of the law, and access to the public police and the justice system more broadly. These inequitable power relations allow security guards to exercise considerably more power over marginalized people than the legislative framework suggests.

When security guards are sent out to a site, they are in fact armed with little in the way of legal power. However, guards draw on a range of tools and tactics, legal and extra legal to help them in their work. When patrolling public property, guards are able to draw on the powers granted to all citizens who witness a crime in progress. Security guards working on private property are also able to use the authority invested in them as agents of the proprietor under the Trespass Act to enforce conditions on, or remove persons from the areas they are contacted to patrol. Security guards often also draw authority from their relationship with the public police or by threatening public police
involvement. In some cases, guards use individuals’ lack of knowledge about the extent of private security guards’ authority to achieve compliance.

There is significant variation between companies and among individual guards in terms of the types of tactics used to elicit the desired response from the people they are contracted to police. When clients evaluate the effectiveness of their private security provider the means that guards employ, so long as they do not interfere with the comfort and enjoyment of ‘legitimate’ users of the space, seem to matter much less that then ends, namely the relocation of undesirable bodies away from client sites. The result is that through the use of limited powers and assumed authority exercised in an relatively uncoordinated and dispersed manner private security guards are able to fundamentally reshape the ways in which urban spaces, both public and private, are perceived and used.

Using the Law

While security guards are regulated by licensing and training requirements that legitimate their role in policing, this system of regulation does not in and of itself confer on them any specialized legal power. Rather, security guards by and large draw their legal power from three sources: general provisions in the Criminal Code which confer on all citizens the power to arrest or use force in particular circumstances; the property rights of their clients; and their ability to contact the public police when they witness a violation of the law. While the legal boundaries of security guards’ authority are very narrow, some in the industry are quite adept at using the small amount of the legal authority that they have very effectively. This ability is problematic because these laws were not written with paid staff organized to perform policing functions on an ongoing basis in mind. The issue of whether or not paid security personnel should be treated as ordinary
citizens while on duty is the subject of ongoing debate within the judicial community. Currently, there is disagreement over whether the Charter of Rights and Freedoms applies to interactions between security guards and the public, given that they are not officially representatives of the state.

The Power of Arrest

In Canada, every citizen has the power to arrest under certain circumstances. Security guards are no different. They draw their powers of arrest from the Criminal Code of Canada, section 494, just like anyone who engages in what is generally referred to as a ‘citizen’s arrest’. Security guards, as private citizens, can arrest anyone whom they have witnessed committing an indictable offence, or whom they reasonably believe has committed an offense and is escaping from someone who has seen them commit said offence. Security guards draw further powers of arrest from their status as persons authorized by the owners of property to protect their possessions or property.

The guards I spoke with seemed fairly clear on the limits of their powers of arrest and how to use them effectively, even in cases where their clients do not fully understand their limited powers as security guards. As Mark explained:

A lot of people think that security have powers of arrest similar to police officers and it’s like, guess again. You know, it’s just like regular people

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10 The code reads:
(1) Any one may arrest without warrant
(a) a person whom he finds committing an indictable offence; or
(b) a person who, on reasonable grounds, he believes has committed a criminal offence, and
(1) is escaping from and freshly pursued by persons who have lawful authority to arrest that person.
(2) Any one who is
(a) the owner or a person in lawful possession of property, or
(b) a person authorized by the owner or by a person in lawful possession of property, may arrest without warrant a person whom he finds committing a criminal offence on or in relation to that property.
(3) Any one other than a peace officer who arrests a person without warrant shall forthwith deliver that person to a peace officer.
out on the street. I have no more authority to conduct an arrest than you or anyone else and the bottom line for it is, like a lot of people think that we can do it for them, like they’ll call us up and say “This guy was stealing”. It’s like “We can help you, but we can’t arrest him. You will have to be the one to arrest”. We always make sure too, because I’ve worked at like [names major urban shopping centres], we make sure that the merchant is going to say that, because you can’t just think the guy did it. There’s criminal law. It’s really cut and dry -- he either did it or he didn’t. (Mark)

Mark noted that he and his co-workers are in the position of explaining to clients that they cannot perform arrests for merchants who have witnessed someone shoplifting. This experience is interesting because delegation of this task is presumably why the merchant believes he or she is paying for security services. The concept of ‘helping’ to conduct an arrest, raised by Mark, requires further exploration. Although the merchant may be the citizen who officially conducts the arrest, the presence of security personnel changes the dynamic of the situation to an extent where the inability of the guard to actually conduct the arrest becomes a mere technicality.

When I asked Mark whether or not guards he worked with ever carried out arrests when they had not seen the crime, he explained that the burden on the arresting agent is heavy, and there are liability issues involved. As a result, he follows the law. But that is not always the case:

Technically, it’s the merchant still conducting the arrest. We’re assisting them. We are protected that way if it turns out to be a false arrest. We won’t stop someone. Well I shouldn’t say ‘we’; I personally won’t stop someone. I’ll go out with the merchant… The problem is a lot of merchants call us after they’ve lost sight of the person. Well you’ve lost sight of them. I’ve lost sight of them. Everyone’s lost sight of them. So we can’t arrest. We can ask them “Excuse me sir, there was an incident back at whatever store we were wondering if you would like to clear that up” or “We’d like you to come back”. Some of the trickier security guys will use what they don’t know. They’ll try and take advantage of what the individual doesn’t know. I personally don’t like running that way cause, I pretty much look at it this way: you either saw it or you didn’t. And if you didn’t, it didn’t happen.
Mark explains that companies can be held liable for false arrest, but these situations are generally dealt with privately, meaning that the extent of the issue is kept from public view. At the same time, he explains that the social characteristics of a person who is falsely arrested is important if the matter ever does go to court:

False arrests can be expensive. They are generally settled out of court. Very rarely will you see them go to court. The amount of money is generally determined by how it was conducted, the amount of physical force used on the person, if you took him all the way into the back of the store and also what the item is too. It sounds like it shouldn’t be like that but really it is. Judges generally take a dim view of you slamming a fifty year-old or elderly little old granny, whose stolen some cough drops, and you slammed her up against the wall and wrenched her arm out of the socket and walked her all the way to the back and then find out “Oh sorry -- we made a mistake”. Yeah, judges generally take a really dim view of that. That being said, if it turns out the individual’s a career thief, you’ve dealt with him before, he put up a big fight, you’re going to get a little bit more leeway.

The co-owners of Streetwise complained that they see the limited powers of arrest as an unreasonable barrier that needs to be dismantled in order to allow reputable security companies to do their job:

There should be a tier system. And the last tier of security should be almost equivalent to police status because you know right now our guys here are like referring to citizen’s arrest, but it means we’ve got to justify every single time. It’s tough for companies like us because all it takes is one time getting sued and we’re done, ‘cause it will never reach a law court. It will probably get dealt with out of court and if you’re getting hit 15, 30 thousand for an unlawful arrest you might as well pack your bags.

The major difference between the power of arrest of the public police and a security guard is that the public police have much more leeway in terms of arresting an individual on “reasonable and probable grounds” (The Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 34). A private person, including a security guard, must actually see an offence being committed. However, as Mark explained, most people do not realize that security guards do not have special powers of arrest. In practice, this ignorance works to expand their
power, particularly if their goal is simply to remove someone from the area quickly. In this regard, the mere threat of an arrest is a powerful tool.

The powers of security guards resemble those of police officers more closely in relation to private property. Trespass acts, in effect in most provinces, are an essential tool for most private security guards. Ross McLeod (2002) claims that his guards recite the trespass act like the gospel. The power of arrest afforded to all citizens is limited to indictable offences in public space. On private property, the power of a proprietor or his agent to engage in arrests is significantly expanded. Because they have been empowered by the owner of the property, security guards can arrest individuals for minor or summary offences, such as causing a disturbance or trespassing (Law Commission of Canada, 2002). As Christopher explains:

Property rights are transferred onto us so that we can, with their consent, apply our will over that property regarding who is allowed on it and who is not.

In the case of an arrest made by a guard on private property, like any arrest made by a private person, the individual must be delivered to a peace officer immediately. Individuals charged with trespassing can be issued a fine and will face prison only if they default. Most trespass arrests by security guards result in a warning and a ban from the premises. Therefore, while the process of arrest is granted legitimacy through the formal legal system, it takes place in a context where arrest and punishment are privatized.

Not only can security guards arrest in relation to minor offences on private property, provincial property law gives owners the right to prescribe conditions under which an individual can enter their premises. This provision is important in relation to the work of private security guards on mass private property. Security guards are able to enforce the conditions put in place by the owners. Owners and their private security
representatives can arrest or ban people for almost anything. They also issue notices prohibiting entry under this guise. Persons who have been banned from mass private property by a security guard do not have any appeal process available to them, regardless of the consequences that such a ban may have for them (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 40).

**Power of Search and Seizure**

While the power to search and seize property is generally limited to the public police, security guards can search patrons as a condition of entry into private space. For many, conducting these searches is a central part of their job, and not always a pleasant one. Matt explained that he actually quit a job mainly because he did not like asking people to let him search their bags. Christopher recalls having to deal with homophobic comments every time he was asked to search patrons at the gate to a stadium where he was employed as a contract guard. These searches are not technically a violation of civil liberties because entry into these spaces is voluntary. However, whether or not the decision to enter these spaces in entirely voluntary is not as clear-cut as it appears on the surface. Jones and Newburn (1998) note that much of the loss prevention work done in shopping malls and other retail establishments is aimed at staff, not customers. Both Matt and Christopher echoed this observation, noting that they were routinely asked to search employees. It is a leap to suggest, then, that searches and other forms of privacy invasion are consensual, given that service sector employees often lack other options for work. At the same time, shopping malls in poor areas tend to be the most heavily policed (Davis, 1990). These residents have little choice but to enter these establishments in order to obtain food and other necessities.
While it is not spelled out in law, search and seizure on public property by a private citizen, including a security guard, at times has been deemed legal by the courts. These cases typically involve a need to search for a weapon or evidence immediately after a crime. More important than the decisions of the courts to allow searches in certain cases is the fact that many people will comply with a request by a security guard to search their person or bags, as they are unclear on their legal rights vis a vis security guards.

*Use of Force*

The use of force by security personnel is a contentious issue. Security personnel draw their power to use force, like their power to arrest, from the *Criminal Code* of Canada. In British Columbia, licensed security guards cannot carry weapons such as batons, pepper spray, tasers or guns, nor can they use restraints. The justification for this ban is that security personnel should not be making arrests that require the use of weapons or restraint. Interestingly, security guards can use guard dogs, provided that they are properly licensed. In 1994, Oppal (1994:H-63) found that canine services were likely to become more popular in BC, writing that “the industry indicates that there may be considerable growth demand for guard dog services in the near future”. Paul disclosed that his company was encouraging him to take dog training, as it would make him much more valuable because they would be able to bill clients at a higher rate. His experience suggests that when guards are granted the power to use more tools, markets for those services emerge.

Within the security industry there seems to be a tendency to downplay the seriousness of inappropriately using force against another person. Most breaches that are recognized by the employer are handled privately as internal disciplinary issues, rather
than criminally. In my conversations with members of the industry, the term “assault” was generally replaced with the terms “hands on” or “laying hands”, when discussing their work and the consequences of those actions:

Like I know they’ve got rid of a couple guys after a while just because they can’t function in the public eye like that, especially in concierge. We had one guy who just happened to do a couple of ‘hands on’ people when he shouldn’t have, so they moved him to another site which was not direct work with the public. He was working a construction site. Well, he ended up putting his hands on a worker who tried to come in early one morning. Needless to say he was let go after three attempts. So you know, third strike you’re out. (Thomas)

Given the level of confusion around the rights of guards and the use of internal discipline to deal with breaches, it is no wonder that many guards lose sight of their own rights and limited powers. Paul, an experienced guard, offered this assessment:

A lot of the guards think that they are supposed to be getting into a fight, or think that they have more going for them as a guard then they do. I mean they really think that they are an agent of the law and that kind of thing. And they’re surprised when they get beaten down by a homeless person or a striker. They aren’t the police and they think they are and bad things happen when those people make those sort of fundamental misunderstandings about what their role is. I think that’s rife through the security industry.

The power to arrest, search, or use force is limited for security guards. In practice, however, guards can operate within the system without even realizing the limitations of their own power because of a lack of oversight, lack of knowledge on the part of public with regard to the powers of security guards, and the relative powerlessness of the individuals who are mostly likely to have negative interactions with private security guards. At the same time, their status as private citizens grants guards a certain level of immunity from the duties and responsibilities incumbent upon representatives of the state when working with the public.
The Safe Streets Act

As seen above, private security guards draw their power from general rights afforded to them as citizens, as well as from the property rights of their clients. In addition, there are other laws in place which security guards cannot technically enforce, but which they can make use of by exploiting an individual’s ignorance of the law or threatening to bring in the public police. This power has been intensified with the implementation of legislation aimed at curbing quality-of-life offences, in particular the Safe Streets Act (“SSA”). The SSA was a result of the lobbying work of ‘community-based’ organizations which came together under the banner of the ‘Safe Streets Coalition’ to pressure the provincial government. This coalition is an example of not just the privatization of policing, but also the privatization of governance and law-making in British Columbia.

Spearheaded by the Vancouver Board of Trade, the Safe Streets Coalition came together to express concerns “about the increased ‘disorder’ on city streets and the impact this is having on the quality-of-life of citizens and visitors” (Safe Streets Coalition, 2005). The Coalition demanded that new laws be put in place to deal with this growing ‘problem’. The Safe Streets Coalition includes 18 Business Improvement Associations (BIAs), ten Chambers of Commerce, residents associations from some of the city’s most upscale or rapidly gentrifying areas, the BC Apartment Owners and Managers Association, the Building Owners and Managers Association of BC, The Vancouver Hotel Managers Association, the BC Shopping Centre Association11 as well ASIS

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11 A full list of coalition members is available on the Safe Streets coalition website.
International's\textsuperscript{12}\ western Canadian chapter, the organization representing the private security industry in BC.

Many of the Safe Streets Coalition's recommendations were adopted almost word for word by the government in drafting new legislation. Bill M202 (\textit{Safe Streets Act}) deals primarily with "aggressive begging" but also outlaws "solicitation of a captive audience". A captive audience includes a person waiting to use or departing from an ATM, a person waiting to use a public phone or washroom, a person waiting for a taxi or transit, a person getting into or out of a vehicle or who is in a parking lot, and a person on a roadway. The legislation directly references 'squeegee persons'.\textsuperscript{13} The \textit{Safe Streets Act} is paired with Bill 72, an amendment to the \textit{Trespass Act}. The amended \textit{Trespass Act} affords business owners greater control over who enters and uses their premises. The amendment clarifies the rights of employees of property owners to deny access to other persons on the owner's behalf. The amended \textit{Trespass Act} also formalizes the right of an owner, occupier, or authorized person (generally a private security guard), to demand the name and address of anyone found on the premises or suspected of having been on the premises. An important feature of Vancouver's \textit{Safe Streets Act} is that repeat offenders can be banned from areas of the city.\textsuperscript{14} The \textit{Safe Streets Act} and the amendment to the \textit{Trespass Act} are now province-wide legislation rather than city by-laws.

The Safe Streets Coalition modeled their legislative proposal on similar laws in other jurisdictions across North America, most notably Ontario. Ontario's \textit{Safe Streets Act}\n
\textsuperscript{12} ASIS International was formerly the American Association for Industrial Security. The organization formally changed its name to ASIS International in 2002.
\textsuperscript{13} Both pieces of legislation are available in full on the government's website www.legis.gov.bc.ca
\textsuperscript{14} The coalition sees area restrictions as a better alternative to fines, the other consequence of violation. See www.safestreetscoalition.com
Act has been in force since 2000 (Hermer and Mosher, 2002). Beginning in the 1990s, a number of Canadian municipalities passed by-laws outlawing begging and loitering. In some cities, including Winnipeg, bans on begging were the subject of court battles waged by anti-poverty groups. Winnipeg’s anti-begging by-law was repealed when, after five-years in court, city officials conceded that begging itself posed no harm to people and recognized the right of the poor to make full and equitable use of public space (Hermer and Mosher, 2002). The drafters of provincial safe streets legislation in both Ontario and BC have attempted to avoid the types of legal challenges mounted against anti-begging by-laws by defining specific types of begging as harmful, namely ‘aggressive begging’ and ‘solicitation of a captive audience.’ However, the range of places where people are considered to be ‘captive’ means that begging is in fact prohibited in most areas of the city, creating an effective blanket ban on panhandling activities. The concept of aggressiveness is also open to interpretation given that “the definition of aggressive solicitation turns not on the conduct of the solicitor but on the feeling of safety and security by the person being solicited” (Schneiderman, 2002: 87). The end result is legislation that “is both extraordinarily detailed, and at the same time vague and sweeping” (Hermer and Mosher, 2002: 12). Ontario’s Safe Streets Act has been criticized on the grounds that it is discriminatory against the poor, that it limits freedom of expression and that it usurps federal responsibility for making criminal law (Hermer and Mosher, 200). When drafting the BC legislation, the Safe Streets Coalition explored constitutional arguments that had been made in relation to Ontario’s legislation and chose wording carefully in an attempt to avoid future challenges to the law.15

15 On their website www.safestreetscoalition.com the coalition notes that the legislation
While the Safe Streets Act covers the entire province of British Columbia, it is important to note the Act is only meaningful where it is enforced. O’Grady and Bright (2002) found that in Ontario, where the Safe Streets Act outlawed the practice of washing windshields in exchange for spare change, enforcement was limited to urban ‘hot spots’—downtown areas with a high concentration of hotels, upscale retail and restaurants. Thus, some squeegee work has continued in the city of Toronto, but away from tourist and commercial districts. Sue Ruddick (2002) argues that geographically targeted enforcement of safe street legislation restricts the access of the poor to ‘prime space’ in the city where they can engage in subsistence activities such as begging. Instead, the poorest of the poor are confined to ‘marginal space’ where they are permitted to sleep or hang out, but where they have little or no contact with wealthier individuals. In this way, safe streets legislation combined with geographically targeted enforcement facilitates inner-city gentrification by preventing undesirable bodies from crossing into ‘quality-of-life districts’. This spatially uneven application of the law is intensified where policing activities have been significantly privatized. While security guards cannot issue tickets under the Safe Streets Act, Mark explains how he makes us of the legislation:

You can basically dangle it, like you know “Hey, you’re panning within 20 feet of an ATM, Safe Streets Act or do you want to go for now?” “Ok, I’m gone”.

In this way, security guards use formal legislation, custom-designed by their primary client groups, to wield their informal power over the city’s most marginalized residents.

BC’s Safe Streets Act and the amendment to the Trespass Act were enacted and are being enforced in the context of a broader matrix of ruling relations. These pieces of has been drafted to avoid some of the problems with the Ontario act, which is currently the subject of a constitutional challenge.
legislation are the product of the collective effort of Business Improvement Associations and allied organizations. However, the successful adoption of the Safe Streets Coalition's legislative initiatives was dependent upon significant ideological agreement among member organizations and government actors, as well as the Coalition's ability to draw on discourses and policy prescriptions from other jurisdictions in shaping their legislative demands. The organizations that make up the Safe Streets Coalition have been empowered and granted legitimacy as official representatives of community by governments at the federal, provincial and municipal levels influenced by neo-liberal governmental thought, which encourages off-loading of governance to lower levels of government and ultimately to the 'community.' Importantly, safe streets-style legislation and policing initiatives have tended to gain popularity in jurisdictions were neo-liberal economic policies have already resulted increased poverty and homelessness. The introduction of Ontario's Safe Streets Act came in the wake of Mike Harris's 'Commonsense Revolution' which resulted in major cuts to levels and availability of income assistance in that province, while BC's legislation was drafted and enacted in the years following the introduction of Liberal government's comprehensive economic restructuring program. The Safe Streets Coalition has also relied on discourses and legislative precedents in other jurisdictions where business owners, representatives of the tourism industry and new middle-class residents were concerned with the erosion of 'public order' in urban centres.

Not only did the Safe Streets Act require government support and precedents in other jurisdictions, it required a viable enforcement mechanism. In large part, this has been provided by public police who have been directed to enforce the new legislation.
However, enforcement efforts have been bolstered by the availability of relatively low-cost private security guards. Guards can reference the Act when homeless and otherwise disenfranchised people cross over into prime space in order to encourage them to make their way back into the ever-shrinking marginal spaces of the city. The amended Trespass Act also makes it easier for guards to remove unwanted persons from mass private property. Guards’ enforcement efforts in turn alter the socio-spatial dynamics of the city in ways that are in line with the local and specific goals of BIAs and resident’s associations as well as with the broader goals of governments and large-scale developers interested in creating a city that is marketable to investors, tourists and homebuyers.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms

While security guards certainly have much less power than public police, in some ways they are freer to engage in proactive security work. For example, “in Vancouver, downtown security officers working on behalf of business improvement districts frequently distribute photographs of individuals caught shoplifting. This is because there is legal disagreement over whether or not and in what circumstances the Charter of Rights and Freedoms should apply to security guards. In general the charter does not apply to interactions between private citizens” (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 36). Thus, while the public police cannot openly identify accused shoplifters, security guards can -- not because of their status of guards but because they are private citizens. Where the disagreement over the status of security guards lies is whether or not they become agents of the state once they are involved in an arrest. More specifically whether the guard is arresting or detaining an individual.
The Charter requires that any person being arrested be informed of the reason for their arrest and of their right to seek counsel (Law Commission of Canada, 2002). Along with informing a person that they have the right to counsel, public police are bound to cease questioning or refrain from receiving more information from an arrested person until that person has exercised their right to counsel (Law Commission of Canada, 2002). The courts have ruled that the Charter does not apply in the case of detention by a private person. The Law Commission of Canada (2002: 29) gives the example of an employee of a company being detained by a security guard contracted by the employer to inquire about some missing funds to illustrate what constitutes a detention rather than arrest. In addition, searches made by a private person for a private purpose (not to gather evidence for criminal proceedings) are not subject to the Charter.

The central legal question for the courts in any case involving private security guards where the applicability of the Charter is at issue is whether or not the guard was acting as individuals or as agents of the state. Guards are generally regarded as private agents. If that is the case, there is no reason that a security guard must comply with the provisions of the Charter, except when they engage in an arrest under section 494 of the Criminal Code. This is in spite of the fact that when being detained by a guard, the person in question may not recognize this distinction, particularly when the security guard is in full uniform. Legal differentiation between the responsibilities of public and private police is especially problematic given the level of cooperation between the two sectors, and the ability of the public police to do work that would be forbidden under the Charter by employing private guards. Provisions in the Charter came into being before security had been significantly privatized in this country. At the same time, security
guards draw their powers from a patchwork of laws that were intended to address situations involving ordinary individuals who happen to come across a crime in progress, or are victims of a break-and-enter or assault and are forced to defend themselves before police respond. These laws were not meant to regulate a multi-million dollar industry employing thousands of people. Security guards are trained in the use of chokeholds, they spend their days and nights looking for breaches of the law, trespassers and disturbances, and are routinely engaged in conflicts in the course of their work. At the same time, the privatization of governance through BIAs and other non-governmental organizations means that the Charter does not apply to a good deal of the governing activity in Canada today. Not only has the provision of security been privatized to a large degree, in some instances the same organizations that are funding private security personnel are instrumental in shaping the legal context. As the security industry continues to grow it is imperative that this matter be settled.

Importantly, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into force when the Canadian Constitution was repatriated in 1982. At this historical moment, Canada formally severed its last colonial ties with Britain (Stasiulis and Jhappan, 1995). The repatriation of the Constitution and the new Charter of Rights and Freedoms promised not only the realization of full statehood for Canada, but a reconstitution of the relationship between citizens and the state. The provisions of the Charter were meant to guarantee all Canadians, including Aboriginal people, the right to substantive equality in their dealings with government. This principle was to be upheld by the highest court in the country. There are many concerns related to judicial interpretation of the Charter in cases involving the meaning or substantive equality particularly in relation to Aboriginal
people, income assistance recipients and people with disabilities. However, as the case of privatized policing suggests, there is another significant issue at work that has undermined the benefits of the Charter from the perspective of marginalized Canadians. In the early 1980s, welfarism was beginning to be eclipsed by neo-liberalism as the dominant political ideology among Canadian governments. At the precise historical moment when marginalized Canadians had their right to substantive equality vis a vis the state enshrined in law, the state began its slow retreat from many areas of social and economic life. Thus the privatization of policing, and of other public services that disproportionally impact the most marginalized individuals and groups in society not only effects the quality of services, it also seriously undermines the ability of those groups to assert their right to equitable treatment.

Piggybacking on the Police

In BC today, policing networks are developing that incorporate a number of public, hybrid and private security providers. According to the Law Commission of Canada (2002: 15):

In many urban areas, we are witnessing not simply two-tiered policing but multi-level policing; the public police contract out patrol services to private security firms; in some instances, private security firms help fund public police investigations: private police resolve complaints that were once the exclusive domain of public police; public police and private security firms co-operate in investigations; and private security organizations hire public police to provide security for private functions.

The emergence of a multi-leveled policing system is reflected in the way that security guards go about their work, using their authority to its limit, and drawing on the public police when necessary. Christopher describes how it works:

See, like the public police respond to a crime for the most part and a private security guard is supposed to sit there and be a deterrent. So
usually, if something does happen, then it goes from one to the other. Like if there’s a break-in a private guard will call the police, ‘cause they can actually do something.

The interplay between the public and private policing systems is evident in the way in which security guards piggyback on court orders, especially no-go orders restricting persons from a specific area and arrest warrants. Mark explains:

90% of the business in loss prevention and in security is repeat customers basically. So odds are they’re on the system. What the [police] will do is, they’ll release them, if they’re going to release them, with what’s called an undertaking to a peace officer and they’ll say like not to come into the store, whatever store it is, and they may even say not to be within a two block radius of this store or to be within a two block radius of Skytrain stations, because Skytrain is generally known as ‘crimetrain’ with police and security... So the officer may say, “You’re not allowed to be around here”. If you’re held overnight the judges generally go a step further. They usually do the no-go. They also usually say “No contact direct or indirect with the person who arrested you”.

Because of the centralization of data banks with information about individuals with criminal records and the sharing of information between the public and private sector, these no go-orders and warrants can be used by guards even when they have nothing to do with the site in question. Mark explains how he makes use of police databases:

There would be a number that you could call with VPD or such. You say this is my name, I work for this company, this is my ID, I have one Smith, John Joseph in custody for shoplifting his date of birth is blah blah blah. Can you give me a check and make sure he has no warrants and no no-gos? They’ll say yeah or nay if it turns out he does have warrants or he does have a no-go and they’ll ask you, “oh he does have a no-go where are you?” Oh I’m calling from Safeway at Commercial and Broadway. Excellent, he’s violated his patrol conditions we’re going to actually have an officer attend (Mark).

In this way, private agents are able to exercise a significant level of added authority over people involved with the criminal justice system because of the institutionalized sharing of information and enforcement tools. At the same time, the
mere threat of bringing in the public police if someone fails to move along or cease an activity, whether or not the police would actually respond, was cited by a number of security guards as an important tool in their work.

**Uniforms and Symbolic Authority**

As with the regulation of the industry more generally, looking at the laws on the books does not give a complete picture of the relationship between security guards’ work and the legal system. Security guards are also able to use their knowledge of the law (or more specifically the ignorance of the law on the part of the public) to meet client demands. In policing, presenting an authoritative image can be just as useful as genuine legal power. Thus, uniforms and other accoutrements are very important tools for security guards. In many urban areas in Canada “private security guards wear uniforms and drive cars that, on first glance, are almost identical to those of the public police” (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 17). Most provinces have legislation stipulating that private security uniforms and vehicles must be clearly distinguishable from those of the public police. “In practice, however, this distinction is not always maintained” (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 18).

Even as uniforms and cars become more like those of the public police, some guards are going a step further, embellishing their uniforms themselves. Christopher explained that people buy “big fancy gloves and stuff like that you have on belts”, noting that “if you have a whole bunch of indecipherable things hanging on your belt it probably looks more intimidating to other people”. Some private security executives argue that “their officers should look like the public police and need handcuffs, body armour, batons and utility belts because, just like public police officers, they are engaged in proactive
policing" (Law Commission of Canada, 2002: 17). Police associations, on the other hand, have been critical of this tendency because some citizens believe they are interacting with the police, or fail to appreciate that private security guards, regardless of ornamentation, do not have the same level of legal authority as a public police officer.

The importance of a uniform was echoed again and again by guards, many of whom seem to believe that it is the uniform, not the license or legal power, that actually allows them to do their job effectively:

The uniform is the only thing, I think, that differentiates you. I could put you in a uniform right now and you'd be a guard. It doesn't matter what you look like. Even if you had orange spiky hair, boom you are a security guard... people don't see you, they see the uniform. You're not a human being, you're that uniform in security. (Paul)

You know most panhandlers when they see somebody with a uniform they start walking. You know, especially with mall security. Mall security is much more nasty than your average security, right. So I think that it has been drilled into most homeless people's minds that hey, if I see a mall security guard coming my way I should start walking right. (Jimmy)

I asked Christopher about the impact of the uniform on how he is perceived:

People basically respond to the uniform the way that they are used to responding to other people in a uniform. Like some people might feel intimidated, some people might be disrespectful...

Within the private security industry, uniforms serve as symbolic markers of authority, assisting guards as they go about their work. However, it is not only the appearance of the guard, but also visible markers among those they are charged with policing that help private security workers do their job.

Profiling

While the work that private security guards do varies greatly, from providing security checks in airports to patrolling abandoned buildings, most guards are, at least in part, hired to police social boundaries. A key element of their job is to distinguish
between those who belong in a given space and those who do not. The range of social sorting work done by the private security industry extends beyond that of frontline guards. Corporations hire private detectives to run background checks on potential employees, and credit card companies refuse to activate accounts for persons with suspicious sounding names (Lyon, 2004: 136). This process of inclusion and exclusion is carried out entirely outside of the official judicial system, where persons are entitled to due process before they are sanctioned. Frontline security guards engage in a base form of social sorting, and the sanctions for those who do not belong happen well outside of the view of the law.

In some cases a guard’s decision to target a particular individual is based on his actual experience with the person in question:

Like many times, it’s like this is a career thief. If they saw that individual walk into the store, they would literally just walk out to the front of the store and wait for him to come out and kind of bluff their way through it...
(Mark)

Often, however, security guards are simply on the look out for people who fit particular profiles or just look ‘out of place’:

A lot of people ask “How do you catch thieves?” And it’s like, “Well I’m not looking for thieves”, “Well sure you are, you’re trying to catch thieves”. Yah, I’m trying to catch thieves, I’m not looking for thieves. “Well, what does that mean? How does that work?” If I was to be suspicious of everyone in the store I would catch no one. What I am looking for are people who are out of place. They’re not acting like normal shoppers. Thieves don’t act like normal shoppers, that’s how I find the thieves. Everyone who walks into a store and does not act like a normal shopper is not necessarily a thief, they could be for lack of a better term ‘kooky’ but they’ll stand out. (Mark)

Paul noted that the vigor with which security guards police social boundaries varies from site to site. He described the situation at a downtown mall located on the
border between a very low income area and new high-end residential towers and entertainment facilities:

Like I mean, you know [names mall], that's a pretty nasty site. Especially when they first started out, it was famous for being the worst site in the company. Part of the reason why was because even in Pacific Centre Mall, even if you're somebody who is, you know, not entirely appropriate to be there, looks mildly sketchy, you can go into that mall and do whatever. But in [mall], they're really on you to go after people, not let them in, harass them, follow them around...

While neither Paul nor Jimmy (who also mentioned this site) brought up the issue of race in relation to profiling and harassment activities, it is important to note that this particular mall is located directly across the street from a large Aboriginal housing complex. Private security guards employing rudimentary profiling techniques to facilitate their work have nothing to rely on except visible markers of race and class. This can result in blatant discrimination against Aboriginal people. While participating in a research project currently being conducted by Pivot Legal Society, one Aboriginal man told this story about an interaction he and a friend had with private security personnel on mass private property:

This incident happened at [names site] during the Christmas holidays. A friend and I went for a walk to view the Christmas display and then all of a sudden we heard this voice behind us, it was two security guards. "I think you guys have to leave right now" they said to us. "What on earth for?" [They said] "you guys have been here too long" and we had just got there. And they chased us away until we got off the premises, they walked right behind us and that was an insult to me. We just walking around, sober, straight as a judge, just viewing the Christmas displays and whatnot and they followed us all the way off the premises.

The governmentality and risk society literature suggest that in neo-liberal contexts individuals are categorized and managed based on their level of dangerousness, or the

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potential risk that they pose. At least at a discursive level, people are no longer targeted for removal from urban spaces because they are coded ‘Native’ or as ‘indigent’, but rather because they are perceived as risky. What is important to keep in mind is that, in practical terms, these ‘risk categories’ closely parallel older grounds used to justify social exclusion.

**Soft and Heavy-Handed Approaches to Security Work**

In an industry that prides itself on being proactive, there is pressure on guards to curb any potential problems before they start. Not only do guards need to sort out who belongs at their site, they have to ensure that undesirable bodies leave and do not come back. Some security guards seem willing to violate the law and employ violent tactics to that end, while other guards achieve compliance through more conciliatory means. Upon examination of the security industry of Vancouver, it becomes quickly apparent that there are differences between the types of sites that companies patrol, the demographics of their workforces and how they represent themselves through uniforms and promotional materials. There are also differences in the types of tactics that they condone. An executive from Securiwise responded to my question about different cultures within the security industry in this way:

I really don’t want to comment on any specific company for obvious reasons, but I think some companies are probably more focused on certain venues. Some companies may be better suited for working in bars or event settings, whereas other companies may be more suited towards customer service. Some are suited towards construction sites. So yeah, there are very different cultures out there, there sure are. Some companies are more militaristic.

Christopher talked to me about a mid-sized company notorious for its heavy-handed tactics:
Like we’ve hired people from that company. I’ve personally hired them and it’s just immediate physical violence on people. I worked with one guy, he was working for the company that I work for now and [names the company] was working on the other side of the fence, so this guy is like yelling and screaming and throwing stuff. So my friend, is like “Hey” to the [names company] guy, “Can you get this guy he’s on your side of the fence”. So he just comes up from behind, in a full neck lock, boom. You are just not allowed to do that, you are absolutely not allowed to put somebody in a head lock. And it’s that type of stuff. They are constantly getting into fights. People are always thrown out of places. They have no problem pushing people around and being really thuggish about it. The angle of my company is completely the opposite. That stuff never happens. It’s absolute last case scenario.

While not universal, the use of physical violence as a compliance tactic is not uncommon in the security industry, as these guards explained:

When they were training me, one guy was going on about how you beat people without leaving marks. He did patrols for some of the buildings that were squatted by the homeless, so he’d use phonebooks. He’d put the phone books up against them so that he could hit them without leaving a bruise. (Matt)

I know when [names company] first got hired they started to break fingers. It was harsh and I think the property management knew about it, but it took about three months and [names the site] was a cleaned up and nobody came around. Nobody caused trouble and people knew, don’t sleep in the underground, like just stay away from [the site]. And it’s not like these guys broke every junkie’s fingers but there was a couple of times (Jimmy).

Some [guards] will try and make comments like ‘I’ve already seen you five times today if I see you again I’m going to take you down a stairwell’. Why? It’s pointless, it’s stupid. That being said, they kind of take advantage of the fact that if in doubt between panhandler and security officer, police will generally go with the security officer. Courts will generally go with security officer. The public will generally go with security officers. So the panhandler, even if he is telling the truth, is not going to be viewed as telling the truth, so in essence the power-mongers kind of use that as a way to get away with it and kind of use it as a fear tactic. And sometimes they actually commit it. (Mark)

While these tactics constitute assault, as these guards explained, they can be a very effective way of achieving compliance, and ultimately leaving clients -- who do not see the ugly reality of how their site was cleansed -- very satisfied. The extreme
marginalization and criminalization of populations security guards are employed to police means that, while guards themselves may be engaging in violent criminal activity as part of their work, the threat of legal sanctions is low.

Despite violence in the industry, there are guards who report spending their working days trying to avoid conflict. These guards employ non-confrontational tactics as they go about their work:

Some places it’s like “Oh, can you go move that bum away?” But I’m usually really nice about it and its like “Look, right, I’m going to get fired if this doesn’t happen, here have a smoke”. You know, stand out there and talk to the guy, make it look like I’m standing there convincing him to leave when really I’m just bullshitting for a while and then the guy leaves. (Christopher)

Mark explains how he deals with one ‘nuisance’ group -- skateboarders. He tries to avoid confrontation, and recognizes that it is this group of young people and panhandlers that keep him in a job:

Skateboarders are always a problem in downtown Vancouver. I shouldn’t say problem like as in they are a problem. It’s kind of them and panhandlers and there’s two different ways to approach it. I kind of look at it this way, they are job security for me, because if they weren’t coming there I wouldn’t have a job or there’d be less hours to go around, so I love em. I actually come out, I chit chat with the skaters like “Hey guys, what’s going on. You guys know why I’m here right. Alright, you guys have got to go”. Or I can say “Hey, you know what guys, why don’t you go down to Scotia?” Scotia Bank has got, it’s like the mother of all rails for skaters, they salivate over it, so you chit chat...

While other guards at Mark’s company take a more confrontational approach when dealing with street-involved people, from his perspective coming on strong is really not worth it:

You get some guards who are like “Ok buddy get up and get out of here”. But that’s just putting yourself in danger because you don’t know, there’s a lot of unstable characters that live on the street, you don’t know if they’re going to come at you with a needle. So some people are really
mean and horrible and stuff, but that's just setting themselves up for big trouble. You mouth off anybody, anybody can throw a punch. I'm not there for that. I just put in my time and go home.

Security company executives are business people. From their perspective there is not really anything to be gained from attacking or injuring homeless and other destitute people. It is about getting the job done in an efficient manner. In high profile sites, where there are customers around, the sign of a good security guard is the ability to manage social exclusion without creating a scene. I talked with a representative from Cavalry about what he wants from his guards:

Just keep it low key. Never go in hard-headed and hard-handed and try and force 'em, because you're not going to get respect without respecting everyone. Especially vagrants, I mean, they're people too, so keep it cool with them and they'll respect you a lot more and probably comply a lot easier. So other companies are just throwing water on vagrants to get them out of site, and it's just not going to do anything.

I asked him what sorts of tactics his company generally uses:

What I'm looking for is people who would rather resolve a situation with no confrontation. That's one of my scenario questions that I ask: “How would you remove a vagrant?” And things I'm looking for, you know, is first thing, stay clam, ask him a few more times to leave, think of other places he can go, you know help him go, but you have to be a bit firm.

The primary goal of private security work is to prevent crime and vandalism. However, at many sites an equally important role is the minimization of ‘disorder’, ensuring the comfort of consumer groups using the space the guard is responsible for. While the presence of certain undesirable bodies may detract from the comfort and enjoyment of shoppers or tourists, so does a loud or physical confrontation. Mark explained as he discussed violence against panhandlers:

I know it happens, but it's also taken outside of public view because nothing should inhibit the shopping experience.
Clients contract security guards in order to impose order over space. A large part of their work is to avert trouble before it happens and to ensure that spaces feel comfortable for the types of people clients want to attract. Guards approach this work using a range of tactics from overt physical aggression to verbal persuasion or even commiseration. The decision about which types of tactics to deploy seems to be based on the type of site, the culture of the security company, and the personality of the guard. What is important is that. At the end of the day, security guards effectively impose social order over a given space or risk losing the contact to another company.

Conclusion

Security guards use a range of formal and informal mechanisms to control the spaces they are contracted to patrol in the absence of legal powers that specifically stem from their status as licensed (or presumably licensed) guards. Using the power of citizen’s arrest enshrined in the Criminal Code, property laws, presumed authority and various forms of extra-legal coercion, these workers can help uphold a particular form of order in the spaces they police. While security guards have a number of tools that they can draw upon, it is important to bear in mind that these workers are themselves tools, contracted by Business Improvement Associations, strata councils, shopping mall, developers and even governments to help them meet their broader goals of attracting new businesses and investment, bringing in tourists, consumers and home buyers – all the while reducing public spending on policing. In the next chapter, I explore the concrete relationship between the work that private security guards do and some specific city-building projects in Vancouver, as well as to the project of revitalizing and marketing of
Vancouver as a whole. I also look at some of the contradictions and tensions inherent in the approaches to city-building and policing that have been adopted in Vancouver.
The bulk of private security work in Canada takes place in major urban centres (Law Commission of Canada, 2002). In Vancouver, not only is there a large private security industry, the industry and development projects are inextricably linked. Urban revitalization projects and marketing efforts aimed at investors, tourists and homebuyers have led to extensive opportunities for security entrepreneurs, while development projects have, in part, relied on the work of private guards for their success. People in the security business are keenly aware of the linkages between growth opportunities for their companies, development and revitalization projects, and changing demographic and consumption patterns in the city of Vancouver:

You know, we've got all the condo's coming up, we've got 2010 coming up, you know the city's expanding. The community, I think is the next big
wave is residential community patrols. That’s why we hit that market first. We really believe that’s going to be the next area. (Charger Security)

I know that we’ve got one construction site here. We worked under Amecon [the developer], then we worked under Baywest properties which is the property management company that takes over all the towers. They use our full security/concierge service and it just keeps growing full circle. (Streetwise)

As up-scale developments replace older housing stocks and areas of the city gentrify, security guards literally stand on the frontlines of change, as Paul explains:

One of my last high profile gigs was [large downtown hotel] and my job was basically to stand in the lobby and go out front from time to time and make sure that people weren’t panhandling on the street. You know, this was probably the most interaction that I ever had with homeless people. They were just really not used to a guard being out there because [the hotel] never had security before and they had the run of the street. So, you know, I was basically breaking new ground. I guess a lot of the time when I was working downtown the ground had been laid for me by many other generations of guards, basically moving people along. In this case, I was breaking completely new ground.

This chapter explores the relationship between development trends in the city of Vancouver, the evolution of risk markets and the work of frontline security guards. It begins with a look at two fundamental contradictions facing Vancouver politicians, developers and business owners who embrace neo-liberal city-building practices. The first contradiction is the need, on the one hand, to attract investment through pro-business government policies, weak labour standards and cuts to social spending and, on the other, to manage the inevitable fall-out of these policy choices. The second is the decision to fragment governance and then rely on privatized policing solutions which inevitably lead to crime relocation rather than crime reduction and an ever growing demand for more heavy-handed security services.

This chapter then examines three development projects in Vancouver: the Concord Pacific Place mega-project, the redevelopment of Yaletown as a ‘quality-of-life
district', and the creation of a tourist bubble around Gastown. Though each has its unique character, each serves as examples of the gentrification of the city, the move toward a post-industrial economy and the privatization of city development and governance. Each of these projects also highlights the pivotal role that private security services play in Vancouver’s revitalization. Next, I explore the role that private security guards are playing in Vancouver’s poorest neighbourhood, in containing the population within increasingly constrained geographic limits and paving the way for would-be gentrifiers.

The chapter concludes with a look at how the Carrall Street Greenway project, a city-initiated public-private partnership, is helping to link-up Vancouver’s fragmented, privately governed residential mega-projects, quality-of-life districts and tourist bubbles while laying the ground for further gentrification and the emergence of new risk markets.

**Contradictions in Building a World Class City**

Vancouver politicians, property developers and business people are actively working to attract tourists, international investors, and potential homebuyers to the city. Their bid for prosperity and international status has resulted in increased reliance on private companies to build the infrastructure needed to achieve recognition as a world-class urban centre. One of these companies is Concord Pacific Development. In a self-produced magazine (Concord Living Magazine, Vol. 3) Concord Pacific Development describes how its convention centre project will help revitalize downtown and bring business to the city:

Concord Pacific’s plan for a new downtown convention centre will add new luster to the arts, entertainment and cultural heart of our city. It will give Vancouver the large-scale facility needed to attract major conventions…create a new park and civic plaza…and give new life to downtown Georgia Street. All with no significant physical or environmental impact on the city!
On paper, the Concord Pacific Development project looks like a win/win proposal. The Company will expand its Vancouver holdings, while the city benefits from new infrastructure, park space and tourist dollars. However, there is another side to the story of Vancouver's revitalization ambitions.

On August 18th 2006, the Vancouver Sun ran the front-page headline “Beggars, Drug Dealers Kill Convention Business”. Tourism industry leaders warned that “aggressive panhandlers and drug dealers are damaging Vancouver’s international reputation as a safe tourist destination” (Vancouver Sun, August 18th 2006), noting that “the situation has become so dire that beggars and drug dealers have even been accosting tourists inside the gilded bathrooms of the landmark Fairmont Hotel Vancouver.”

The Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association estimates that Vancouver hotels have lost contracts worth $500,000 due to ‘aggressive panhandlers.’ The general manager of the Hotel Vancouver claims that pushy panhandlers are leading convention planners to take their business elsewhere. Rick Antonson, president and CEO of Tourism Vancouver argues that “if Vancouver is not careful, within a year or two we can lose our international reputation...when you see aggressive panhandling in an article about Vancouver it’s not a good thing” (Vancouver Sun August 18th 2006).

There is a fundamental contradiction at the heart of Vancouver’s revitalization strategy. When dire poverty stands in stark juxtaposition to opulent consumption, tensions inevitably erupt. A pro-privatization government position may have successfully attracted investment capital, but, it has undermined public services and eroded working-class wages. At the same time, entry into international property markets and the conversion of low-rent buildings and neighbourhoods into upscale condos and ‘quality-
of-life districts' has raised property values in the city, bringing increased homelessness and a loss of access to public and private space for the city's poorest residents. One result of these tensions has been mounting feelings of insecurity and discomfort among the consumer groups Vancouver's city-builders have been working so hard to attract.

As business owners and developers attempt to resolve this contradiction, there has been an expansion of risk markets in Vancouver. The director of Vancouver Civic Theaters, who is responsible for the major theaters in Vancouver's downtown core, has hired extra security for the Queen Elizabeth Theater to "run interference with panhandlers", while business owners on Seymour Street, a retail strip on the east end of the downtown core, have hired private security guards to patrol the street and adjoining laneways in an attempt to manage the drug trade in the area (Vancouver Sun, May 13th, 2005). The case of the Seymour Street strip illustrates the second contradiction inherent in Vancouver's neo-liberal approach to city-building, particularly in the area of security. Privatization and the fragmentation of governance through Business Improvement Areas encourage the adoption of individualized solutions to problems related to crime and quality-of-life issues. This approach to urban problems result in geographically-based policing strategies that simply relocate undesirable activities while failing to the address root causes of these activities. The human resources manager from Cavalry Security put it bluntly: "It's sort of a joke in the industry that police officers are crime prevention, security officers are crime relocation". The Seymour Street area is a prime example of the "crime relocation" effect of fragmented policing efforts. Seymour Street business owner Igor Kivritsky claimed that the problems in the Seymour area can be attributed to
Vancouver Police Department crackdowns in the city’s Downtown Eastside\(^\text{17}\), just a few blocks west of the retail area. He remarked that “[w]hen they cleaned up the Downtown Eastside, that entire population moved into our neighbourhood” (Vancouver Sun, May 13th, 2005).

Geographically-based police crackdowns are ill-conceived as a means of addressing the drug trade and rates of addiction in the city of Vancouver, but do succeed in opening up new risk markets as drug-related activities are moved into areas that house established businesses serving tourists and middle-class shoppers. Private patrols along Seymour Street costs each business owner $500 per month. Nevertheless, Kivritsky feels that business has been so negatively affected that it is a worthwhile expenditure. The inevitable consequence of the addition of security patrols along Seymour Street’s retail strip will be further crime relocation, spurring new risk markets in adjacent areas.

Not only does the ‘crime relocation’ effect of fragmented security and policing practices in Vancouver lead to an increase in the absolute number of private security guards on the street; it also contributes to a market for more interventionist private security services. Again, the case of the Seymour strip is illustrative. The Seymour area is already part of the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, and is therefore already patrolled by the Downtown Ambassadors, security guards clothed in red jackets and stylized hats who focus on customer service as well as security provision. Kivritsky explains, “Ambassadors are nice people, but they are not like big, tough doormen. These are the types we need on the streets [security guards who provide a

\(^{17}\) Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside is notorious for high rates of injection drug use and street-level prostitution. The Seymour Strip is only a few blocks east of the Downtown Eastside.
more intimidating presence]... No drug dealer is going to be afraid of a Downtown Ambassador". As private security services expand to cover more of the city, clients want not only their own targeted security, but also ‘tougher’ security than their neighbours in order to relocate crime away from this area. The competitive nature of the marketplace means that clients will always have the option of contracting more heavy-handed security if their current company is not achieving the desired results.

Attempting to build a prosperous world-class city through neo-liberal economic restructuring and urban gentrification inevitably leads to contradictions. Reduced public services, income inequality and a lack of affordable housing all result in social problems that negatively affect not only those who have to cope with poverty, social exclusion and homelessness, but also tourists, business people and consumers. As areas of the city are “cleaned-up” in isolation from broader social service and drug treatment reform, panhandlers, people sleeping outdoors and drug users may be relocated, but the underlying problems are not remedied. Thus attempts to rectify the first contradiction inherent in Vancouver’ approach to city-building generates a second contradiction; the fact that security services (public or private) targeted at a specific geographic location inevitably leads to increased demand for security services in adjacent areas. Not only is there increased demand for private security services, clients begin to demand security services that not only parallel, but actually exceed, those of their neighbours.

These contradictions have led to the proliferation of new opportunities for security entrepreneurs. The Downtown Vancouver Ambassadors patrol the 90 blocks that comprise the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA) on foot and bike at a cost of $580,000 annually, or 32% of the Business Improvement Area’s
2004 budget. Vancouver's downtown core also contains a large underground mall that spans many city blocks, all of which is patrolled by a team of private security guards. The DVBIA also sponsors a Loss Prevention Officer Program that costs the Association $240,000 annually (VBIA, 2004). When this programme is combined with store security, targeted street patrols, bank security, bouncers and concierge staff in downtown residential buildings, the size of this market is staggering. With risk markets emerging in areas adjacent to the downtown core, the possibility for profits for security entrepreneurs seems limitless, but underlying contradictions in Vancouver's approach to city-building remain unresolved.
Urban mega-projects and private security: Concord Pacific Place

Figure 6. Remembering False Creek’s Working-Class History

The origins of the Concord Pacific Place Development

The story of Vancouver’s Concord Pacific Place, a massive upscale condominium development located on 166 acres of waterfront land on the banks of False Creek on the Downtown Peninsula, is intimately tied to the city’s evolution from a site of Aboriginal settlements, to a frontier resource town to a post-industrial metropolis. At the time of European settlement, what is today False Creek was part of the territory of the Squamish
people who had lived, hunted and fished on the site for at least 500 years (McDonald, 1996: 5). Sawmilling began on False Creek in the mid-1800s. While the introduction of sawmills did dispossess the Squamish people and deprive them of their traditional livelihoods, they were not entirely displaced. Many were employed as mill labourers. A Squamish settlement, Snauq, existed on False Creek housing Aboriginal labourers into the 1880s (McDonlad, 1996). An economic depression in the 1890s lead to increased protectionism among white trade unionists who urged employers to replace unskilled Aboriginal and immigrant workers with European labourers. During the same period, the very presence of Aboriginal settlements along False Creek and in the city more generally came under attack with newspapers, white citizens and even the clergy speaking out against the ‘disorder’ and ‘immoral activity’ caused by the growing presence of Aboriginal people (McDonlad, 1996: 59), leading to the mass displacement of Aboriginal people from the city.

The City of Vancouver (2003) describes the evolution of that part of the city now housing the Concord Pacific Place development in neutral terms that erase the Aboriginal history altogether:

Before 1986, False Creek, like most of Vancouver’s waterfront, was a focus of heavy industry and the supporting railway. Sawmills and factories surrounded this water basin. In a startling transformation, virtually all the industry moved out to be temporarily replaced by the Expo 86 World’s Fair. After the World’s Fair closed, the lands were sold to a private developer and rezoned. Redevelopment has been proceeding ever since. Much of the planned development around False Creek is built out, including the former Expo lands, now Concord Pacific Place, and the Citygate development to the East (City of Vancouver, 2003: 9).

Even putting aside Aboriginal claims to the area, the fate of the formerly industrial Expo lands has been the subject of on-going controversy for over 20 years. The land around False Creek experienced a process of dispossession that began when between 500 and
850 tenants in low rent hotels were displaced to make way for the World Fair (Blomley, 2004: 51). Expo '86 was pitched by the government of the day as a way to bring global attention to Vancouver as an emerging world-class city. Blomley (2004) explains that in many ways Expo 86 did serve its intended function. The World Fair helped Vancouver become more securely integrated into global capitalist networks, many of which centered around downtown property markets. After Expo '86 the land was sold to Concord Pacific, a Canadian subsidiary of Hong Kong-based Cheung Kong holdings headed up by Li Ka-Shing, purported to be Hong Kong’s wealthiest individual (Hutton, 1998: 127). Since the 1990s, there has been ongoing construction of luxury condominium on the property.

Developing and marketing an urban mega-project

The Concord Pacific Place development “vividly illustrates the globalization of urban development, specifically the influence of Asian-Pacific multinationals and overseas Chinese in Vancouver’s redevelopment; the role of mega-projects in urban restructuring; and the critical interdependency of capital, culture and technology in late twentieth-century metropolitan growth” (Hutton, 1998: 127). The project also demonstrates the reality of the privatization of urban planning and development in Vancouver.

Concord Pacific Place is actively promoted as a lifestyle-oriented community.

The development company produces a promotional publication, Concord Living Magazine, in order to market the project. The overarching focus of the publication is clearly ‘lifestyle’:

The excitement of the downtown waterfront lifestyle is a living reality for residents of Concord Pacific Place. From dawn ‘til dusk and well beyond, they’re out enjoying the endless attractions in and around their beautiful neighbourhood. Dazzling arts and entertainment events...major league
sports action...kayaking, rollerblading and other activities...dining in an international choice of restaurants. All of it enhanced by a park-like setting that’s simply out of this world (Concord Living Magazine, Vol. 8).

Concord Pacific Place developers and marketers reference the area’s Aboriginal and working-class history in articles like “Sawmills to Sophistication”, which tells the story of the area’s transformation from the “native village” which existed on the “pristine shores of false creek” (Concord Living Magazine, Vol. 1) to the “Jewel in Vancouver’s crown” that it has become. Not even a hint of the dispossession that had to take place around False Creek in order transform the space into one where “homes, parks and boats thrive on its shores, along side galleries, theaters, specialty shops, restaurants, bistros and the city’s two premier sporting venues” is evident in the article.

The Aboriginal and working-class history of the space is at once embraced and erased in the company’s promotional materials. Even the names of some of the developments refer to the working-class history of the area, including “Cooper’s park – the Newest Jewel” (Concord Living Magazine Vol. 8). The park is named for the “now-vanished Sweeny cooperage” that once thrived by making barrels. The marketing of this redevelopment project has been so successful that new residential towers routinely sell out prior to the building having been completed.

Hutton (1998) argues that the success of the Concord Pacific Place development can be attributed to four preconditions necessary for successfully negotiating the transition to more advanced stages of economic development: the infusion of capital, technology and entrepreneurship; the ascendancy of the professional and entrepreneurial elites in this advanced service economy; the emergence of a new local identity; and a more prominent international image for Vancouver. While these have all been important elements of Concord Pacific Place’s success, there is another factor at work. As the city
is being remade by some, others are being excluded. In order for inner city sites to be
successfully redeveloped to suit the preferences and tastes of the ascendant class, there is
a need for security providers able to do the necessary ‘ground-breaking’, and a class of
low-end service workers.

*Private Security at Concord Pacific Place*

Security is promoted as a selling feature at Concord Pacific Place. Concord
Living Magazine (Vol. 4) assures potential residents that they will enjoy an imperceptible
“security net” around their home, explaining that:

As a Concord Pacific Place resident you’ll enjoy the exceptional piece of
mind that comes with living in a master planned community including a
fully integrated security system. Approaching your building you’ll simply
activate your remote infrared control to access the double security gates
inside the parkade...Built into every unit is a user-friendly security system
that includes door sensor, motion detector and audible alarm.

These built features are included, in part, to address real security concerns, but
also to assuage potential homebuyers’ fears about living in the inner-city. For some
would be residents, machines alone are not enough to provide genuine peace of mind.

However, the people at Concord Pacific have addressed their concerns, assuring potential
buyers that they will be protected by “an on-site community policing centre shared by the
Vancouver Police Department and private security” (Concord Living Magazine, Vol. 4).

Despite cuts to community policing budgets, Concord Pacific Place was able to open its
own community policing centre “as the result of a multi-level partnership” (Concord
Living Magazine, Vol. 3). The volunteer run centre co-ordinates patrols carried out by
both the Vancouver Police Department (who patrol the development on privately donated
bicycles) and private security (Concord Living Magazine, Vol. 3). Most of the towers in
the development also have individual on site security guards.
Kirk, who works in one of these towers, explains that he is glad he had made the move into concierge work in Concord Pacific because it allows him to combine customer service with security work:

My job now, it does involve security. We have to do perimeter patrols, making sure the exterior is secure, making sure the people’s apartments are locked up. If there is a business in the building, then making sure that everything is secure for that as well. But it also involves doing things for people like receiving packages, receiving dry cleaning, ordering taxis. It is basically the same as concierge jobs would be in a hotel... there’s not as much security as I was doing. I’m getting older. I decided to get into something less stressful. Security can be stressful if you get people with bad attitudes, very drunk, very stoned.

However, Kirk still has to do outside perimeter checks and runs into many of the same issues he faced in his previous job:

I make sure that people aren’t hiding in the bushes. Sometimes you find junkies hiding in the bushes hitting up. One night we found somebody trying to get onto somebody’s patio because they were being chased by the police from someplace else where they had broken into. The police were around looking for him. One of our guys found him on a patio and called the police, and of course he’s the guy.

The co-owners of Streetwise see the private security industry, particularly though the provision of concierge services in upscale residential towers, as playing an important role in Manhattenizing downtown Vancouver:

When we took it, it was a concierge/security position, but when we initially took on the contract, our vision was concierge to the next level. See, we always look at things to the next level, we wanted things where people could call our guy get a taxi, have the taxi ready for him, let the pizza guy up, like New York. New York is concierge in the true sense, where the guy will arrange anything that a tenant requests and have it at their disposal at the front desk, dry-cleaning whatever and that doesn’t exist here in Vancouver. So what happens is, you’re a concierge, but really you’re just a glorified security guard, right. But there are certain regions [in Vancouver] where I can almost say they are concierge, I mean they look really good...
They explained that, in many areas of the city, there are still too many problems related to homelessness and addiction for their guards to be able to focus on providing a true ‘New York-style concierge’ experience for their clients. However, by combining tower-specific security with mobile neighbourhood patrols, Concord Pacific Place has been able to minimize the impact of urban social problems on their residents.

Security, whether provided by the public police or private guards, is two sided. On the one hand the property and ‘quality-of-life’ of residents of Concord Pacific Place are protected, but on the other hand, achieving that security and piece of mind generally involves the active policing of other, less affluent groups. An example of the impact of privatized policing directed by developers and wealthy consumer groups at Concord Pacific Place has been an assault on one False Creek tradition -- water squatters. Until recently, approximately 80 urban residents occupied boats on False Creek, some for 20 years or more. In the summer of 2006, they all received marine eviction notices and were informed that the police would be enforcing those notices. Boat dwellers claim that False Creek developers and the new condo residents put pressure on the city government to move in. One long time boat dweller explains, “In False Creek people have lived on boats longer than there have been kayakers or condos” (Georgia Straight, June 29-July 6th 2006). However, times are changing. Concord Pacific Place is in the midst of developing its new ‘Quayside Marina’. Quayside will be the first strata marina in an urban centre on the west coast of North America. Along with remote security gates, the marina will be patrolled by security personnel (Concord Living Magazine Vol. 8). While the city originally expressed concern with the privation of False Creek, and actually rejected a plan for “Lagoon-style” buildings set out in the water (City of Vancouver, 2003), the
Quayside project, with its private security component, will replace the houseboats with yachts, suggesting that the privatization of False Creek is already underway.

Concord Pacific Place is being marketed as “setting the pace for the spirit of our city into the 21st century”. The company suggests that “Concord Pacific Place is where Vancouver is going” (Concord Living, Vol. 1). There may be more to this claim than mere marketing hyperbole -- Concord Pacific Place represents the culmination of post-industrial, developer-driven city-building. It brings together middle-class Canadians and international capital creating not only upscale inner-city housing, but also a luxury lifestyle that can be bought and sold on the open market. The effects of the social polarization resulting from this urban development are kept hidden from view by private security guards, themselves trapped at the low end of the service economy.

**Yaletown: Creating and Securing a Quality of Life District**

*The Origins of Yaletown*

Yaletown, directly adjacent to the Concord Pacific Place development, is an example of a North America wide trend toward re-developing urban industrial areas as ‘quality-of-life districts’. Hutton (1998: 22) notes the importance of quality-of-life for middle-class urban professionals:

> Factors such as amenity, culture and community, which in the past were generally regarded as contextual factors, are now increasingly viewed as major influences on urban development and transformation...with the mobility of skilled labour and capital, amenity and quality of life are regarded as important aspects of comparative advantage for cities and city-regions.

Hutton (1998: 130) cites Yaletown as “a particularly rich example of urban transition and reconstruction in a post-industrial society,” illustrating the linkages among economic restructuring, occupational change, and urban housing market preference.
Like neighbouring Concord Pacific Place, Yaletown’s beginnings are humble.

The area owes its name and history to the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). Yaletown was originally developed to house work gangs brought in to service the new CPR yards on False Creek. The name Yaletown comes from the town of Yale in the Fraser Canyon, from which most of the original workers re-located after the completion of the railway. The area was stocked with family housing, as well as rooming houses for single men, and evolved into a working-class community with a school and a church (Hutton, 1998). By the 1970s, industry had begun to decline in the area. Yaletown went from being a vibrant working-class community to a wholesaling and warehousing district with a relatively high vacancy rate and a reputation for housing an active sex and drug trade. However the ‘decline’ of Yaletown was short-lived. By the late 1970s and early 1980s the area was attracting a new group of users. These new residents and business owners were generally ‘creative professionals’ attracted by cheap rent, proximity to their downtown suppliers, and “artisans’ natural preference for environments with character” (Hutton, 1998: 130).

The transformation of Yaletown reflects an emergent post-industrial occupational structure in Vancouver. It is also reflective a trend whereby artists, attracted to a somewhat gritty environment, function as gentrifying pioneers18 paving the way for those who want a more polished downtown experience.

*Developing an urban ‘quality-of-life district’*

Contemporary Yaletown serves largely as a shopping district for young urban professionals and is also home to a burgeoning residential market. While the initial wave of gentrifying residents in Yaletown were artists and small business owners, the district has become a popular residential area for the “new middle-class” in Vancouver (Hutton, 1998).

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18 See Ley (1996) for a thorough discussion of this phenomenon.
New residential projects in Yaletown generally take the form of “high quality conversions of three- to eight-storey brick industrial buildings, originally constructed in the first few decades of the twentieth century. Many of the building also feature street-level retail, restaurants and cafes.

Los Angeles Times writer, Margo Pfeiff, describes the idealized Yaletown lifestyle in her article “Destination Canada: From Seedy to Soho in Vancouver”. She explains that while Yaletown used to be nothing more than “a seedy warehouse district… boutiques, nightclubs and restaurants have transformed Yaletown into the city’s trendiest neighbourhood”. In her glowing review of the spas and restaurants of Yaletown, Pfeiff explains that:

Roughly eight square blocks bounded by Nelson, Homer, Drake and Pacific streets, Yaletown is safe and easily walkable; gentrification has squeezed out the prostitution and the drug trade that once haunted its streets. Even the early bohemian pioneers were forced to flee as the area - - and the rents and condo prices -- moved upscale (Los Angeles Times, October 13, 2002).

Interestingly, the seediness that characterized Yaletown prior to its reawakening has, alongside the formerly industrial character, become a marketing tool. For example, Lucy Mae Brown’s Restaurant “was named for the proprietor of the 1900s-era brothel and opium den that the restaurant occupies” (Los Angeles Times, October 13th, 2002).

However, any genuine remnants of that era of the area’s history are in the process of being squeezed out.

Privatized governance and private security in Yaletown
In 2004, the Yaletown Business Improvement Association (YBIA) put together a five year plan entitled ‘Yaletown: Looking Forward’. Its vision included addressing design flaws in the public realm, and establishing town walking routes through the
neighbourhood in order to improve the overall aesthetic quality of the area. The YBIA plans to become even more involved in marketing and lobbying efforts. It also pledges to lobby city hall to have part of the parking meter revenues from Yaletown returned to YBIA for Yaletown-specific projects.

While the Yaletown BIA is involved in beautification, marketing and lobbying efforts, the bulk of its $298,000 operating budget, after administration costs, goes towards security, which was estimated at $62,000 for the 2006-2007 fiscal year (YBIA, 2005). Security was one of the key priorities identified in the YBIA five-year plan, with the association pledging “to increase private security patrols and develop subsidy partners with residential strata councils”. Currently, the YBIA contracts private security to conduct patrols of the entire 20 blocks that make up the district, as well as to issue security alerts warning business owners about “criminal and suspicious individuals” (Yaletown Business Improvement Association, 2005). The YBIA has also been able to protect itself against the erosion of community policing programs by privately sponsoring a new community policing station.

Private security and privately sponsored public policing have helped Yaletown become a successful ‘quality-of-life district’. In a telephone survey conducted by a marketing firm hired by the YBIA in 2003, Yaletown residents ranked a feeling of personal safety was number two after convenience as a reason why they chose to live in Yaletown. Residents also cited an above average level of satisfaction with the private security patrols (Yaletown Business Improvement Association, 2003) suggesting that private security measures sponsored by the YBIA are having the desired effect, instilling a sense of security among the consumer groups that the association works to satisfy.
Gastown: Creating a Tourist Bubble

Gastown’s History

Gastown was the original site of European settlement in what is today Vancouver. When “what is now the modern Vancouver was a ramshackle cluster of saloons, general stores, brothels and gambling chambers the residents called it Gastown” (Bannerman, 1974: 3). The birth of Gastown is popularly attributed to the arrival of John Deighton to the area in 1867. Deighton, known by the name of Gassy Jack, was a successful riverboat pilot operating out of New Westminster. He was known for “living lavishly, consuming generous quantities of food and liquor and enjoying the favors of numerous women” (Bannerman, 1974: 7). Within 24 hours of arrival, Deighton managed to slap together a saloon and start selling liquor.

While local historians love to attribute the birth of Gastown to Deighton’s arrival, his decision to set up shop in the area has to be understood in the context of the pool of mill workers already living there. Yet, Deighton succeeded in attracting more workingmen and other business owners to the area prompting rapid growth. In spite of Deighton’s commercial success, however, Gastown was a source of embarrassment for public officials. The city’s “respectable citizens were determined to show a “sophistication that was yet to arrive; efforts negated by the veritable army of prostitutes, gamblers and hard-drinking woodsmen” (Bannerman, 1974: 14). The history of class tensions in Gastown has carried over into the present as the area is revitalized and marketed as a tourist district. Developers, business owners and tourism industry leaders have consistently worked to market Gastown to affluent classes, while having to contend with the reality of poverty, homelessness, addiction and sex work in the area.
Revitalizing Gastown: a work in progress

As has been the case in other cities and neighbourhoods, the pioneers of Gastown's contemporary re-development were artists. Bannerman (1974) credits the area’s revival to the Arts Council walk in 1968. The council walkers, made up of “about 200 of Vancouver’s finest citizens, dressed in expensive raincoats”, marched through the historical area to draw attention to the squalor they saw as blighting some of the cities finest landmarks. While city officials planned to destroy much of the historic neighbourhood and begin re-development from the ground up, the walkers had a vision for the area that involved refurbishing older buildings in order to create an architectural and artistic precinct.

A changing approach to city-building, centred on preserving the character of neighbourhoods and landmarks, begun to take hold in the 1970s. It resulted in the area being granted special purposes historical zoning in 1974 (Blomley, 2004: 81). The zoning regulations that made it viable for the area to be persevered had a second consequence; they put private property owners in charge of maintaining the historical character of the area, the incentive being increased land values. Blomley (2004: 81) notes that “[b]y placing the ownership of private property at its core, a planning regime is created that encourages owners to enhance the value of their property through acts of exclusion and policing of the urban poor, many of them residents of Gastown”.

Bannerman (1974: 3) was on the scene during this early period of Gastown’s gentrification. He saw only positive impacts stemming from the changes underway:

Out of that ruin, at a pace surpassing the boomtown era of the gold rush, dedicated young businessmen created their dream: an aesthetic reconstruction program to accent pioneer British Columbia life, but also providing today’s residents and visitors the opportunity to enjoy the rollicking merriment of Gastown before the turn of the century.
What Bannerman saw in 1974 was only a shadow of what was to come. Today, Gastown is home to a number of upscale condo developments as well as restaurants and shops catering mainly to tourists. Adjacent to the city’s major cruise ship terminal, convention centre and downtown core, the area’s location has made Gastown a major tourist attraction for both local and international visitors.

As in Yaletown, the Gastown Business Improvement Society (GBIS), which represents Gastown property owners and business owners, capitalizes on the area’s past in promotional materials. For example, the GBIS tells the story of the rise, decline and revitalization of the area on their website.\textsuperscript{19} In the GBIS’s account of the area’s history, the long tenure of some of the poorest of the poor in Gastown from the 1930’s through to the present day is entirely erased:

\begin{quote}
Today: Gastown is a refreshing mix of old and new, downhome and upscale, a place for tourists, Vancouver residents and office workers alike. Various shops have the streets buzzing during the day. A host of restaurants and nightspots keeps the area humming into the wee hours. And, more and more, Gastown is becoming home to permanent residents, just like in the old days (GBIS, 2006).
\end{quote}

The reality is that Gastown has always been home to permanent residents, many of whom have proven quite reluctant to leave.

\textit{Tailor made security for a tourist district}

Despite fairly successful revitalization efforts, Gastown is caught up in the contradiction inherent in gentrification projects where conversion of low-income housing leads to social problems such as homelessness that detract from the area’s desirability. At the same time, because Gastown is in walking-distance of many of the city’s remaining low rent residential hotels, displaced former residents and other people living in poverty

\textsuperscript{19} www.gastown.org
often come to the area to panhandle or collect recyclable materials. Not surprisingly, the GBIS has responded to activities issues by contracting private security services.

In Gastown, private security guards serve a dual function. They are there to “keep the streets safe” and deal with the poor and addicted in the area, but they also serve a public relations function. “They assist visitors and workers by providing directions, walking people to their cars and helping them to find area attractions”. The security officers patrol the streets seven days a week year round (GBIS, 2006). Because the area is geared toward tourists, the guards wear cowboy hats with their uniforms in order to add to the ambiance of an old west town while they meet tour buses in order to ensure that panhandlers stay away from arriving tourists.

The human resources manager from Cavalry Security shared his feelings about security work in the area:

I mean Gastown, it’s a totally unique site for us. The officers that work there, we have to have a lot of respect for them because of the stuff they put up with the stuff they have to handle. I’m sure they’ve always needed security down there…

The Gastown Business Improvement Society contracts security patrols for the streets in the area, while a number of adjacent facilities, such as the Harbour Centre Mall, Simon Fraser University Campus, the convention centre and the cruise ship terminal all contract their own private security personnel. Private security guards act as a containment barrier on the eastern edge of the district, ensuring that the number of poor residents crossing the divide between the residential hotel district and Gastown is kept to a minimum.

The Downtown Eastside: Containment and Gentrification

Vancouver is not all upscale mega-projects, ‘quality-of-life districts’ and tourist bubbles. Other parts of the city are home to impoverished residents with a very different
experience of security and policing. Based on his experience working in various areas of the city, Kirk notes there is a bias in terms of services from the public police, depending on the income level of the residents:

In general it depends on the site. Like where I am right now [a condo tower without units under a million dollars] like if I call 911 the police are there almost instantly. Somebody’s there very quick because it’s a very high end building. But in some other buildings, maybe that have been there a long time and they just started with security, and that are mostly rentals, and the police are there on a regular basis for whatever reason, they might not come as quick. It depends on the site. (Kirk)

The increased privatization of policing is only intensifying longstanding trends in terms of the limited police response to the security needs of low income people. This does not mean that people living and spending their time in low-income areas avoid interaction with private security guards. While private security is generally consumed in middle and upper-class neighbourhoods, low-income communities, especially as they begin to gentrify, are also prime risk markets as is evident in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside.

Defining the Downtown Eastside

Vancouver’s earliest commercial centre was not in the present day downtown core, but rather in the blocks outlined by Cambie and Carrall streets east to west, and Hastings to Water streets north-south. These blocks are now part of a contested space referred to by some as the ‘Downtown Eastside’. Blomley (2004: 32) argues that “the place that is now the Downtown Eastside, just to the east of the city’s downtown core, has been produced in a complicated and fractured geological layering of material and representational processes, caught up in local and increasingly global networks”. He explains that the Downtown Eastside has been produced as a material space through rounds of capital investment and disinvestment reflecting the shifting Vancouver real estate market. It also owes its contemporary form to the exclusion of Chinese and other
racialized immigrants from other parts of the city during Vancouver’s early years, to the loggers, miners and other seasonal resource workers who found cheap housing in the area during the off-season, to those living on fixed incomes who came to the area as the era of migrant seasonal workers came to a close, to the deinstitutionalization of psychiatric patients in Vancouver, and to the large number of Aboriginal people who have come to the city and made the Downtown Eastside their home.20

The Downtown Eastside has been created through successive waves of settlement, but it has also been constructed representationally. “Long coded as a place of dubious morality, racial otherness, and masculine failure, after World War II the area become labeled Vancouver’s ‘Skid Row’, as pathological space of interlocking moral and physical blight” (Blomley, 2004: 34). This image of the Downtown Eastside persists, with one Vancouver city staffer going so far as to describe the area as “no longer part of our city” (Blomely, 2004: 35). However, as many residents and activists in the area understand, the Downtown Eastside is certainly ‘part of the city’. The area’s contemporary form is inextricably linked to neo-liberal policy choices at all levels of government that have allowed ‘quality-of-life districts’ and upscale residential housing markets to flourish alongside the abject poverty visible on certain city streets.21

Pondering Revitalization

While residents and activists attempt to counter the pathological image of the Downtown Eastside, another group of stakeholders is also looking to change public

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20 Aboriginal people account for only 1.8 percent of Vancouver’s population, but account for 8.4 percent of the population of the Downtown Eastside.

21 Although problems facing impoverished residents of the Downtown Eastside have certainly been intensified with the neo-liberal economic restructuring programs and increased gentrification in the inner city, Laura Huey cautions us to remember that the post-war economic boom and other indicators of the “golden age” of welfare capitalism had little impact upon skid rows and their residents.
perception of the space. Due to years of disinvestment, land values in the area were
greatly depressed. By the late 1980s, property markets in Vancouver took off and a policy
of promoting densification in the downtown core gained prominence. In that context land
in the Downtown Eastside began to look attractive to investors. While this land was
cheap compared to the rest of the downtown area, in order to make it a profitable place to
invest some changes had to occur. As Blomley (2004: 35) explains, “some development
interests seem prepared to acquiesce to the ‘disappearance’ of low-income residents of
the neighborhood, while others actively promote it”.

Whether the Downtown Eastside remains a space reserved for the city’s poorest
residents revolves, in part, around the issue of housing, given that cheap housing has
drawn people to the area for generations. Part of the plan to change the face of the
Downtown Eastside has included closing hotels that cater to residents on income
assistance, or raising the rents above what a person on assistance can pay (Blomley,
2004). There has been a net loss of low income housing in Vancouver in recent years,
although the exact numbers are debated. Pivot Legal Society reported in late 2005 that
the city of Vancouver had over-represented the amount of low-income housing in the city.
While they counted spaces that had been created, they failed to take into account the loss
of low income housing due to conversions and rent increases. While the city had reported
a 99-unit gain in rooms for low-income singles, Pivot found that when the closures are
taken into consideration there has actually been a 514 room shortfall. One result has been
growing homelessness in Vancouver. Figures collected as part of the Greater Vancouver
Regional District’s 2005 homeless count suggest that the number of homeless people in
the city has increased by over 100% since the last count in 2002. The increasing number
of homeless people on the street has raised concern over the impact that their presence is having on the quality-of-life of other residents and visitors to the city.

While some interests have attempted to physically cleanse the Downtown Eastside of undesirable residents, others have worked to change public perception of the area. Blomley (2004: 68) explains the way in which the vibrant history of the Downtown Eastside has been erased on a number of official maps of the area, noting that “[o]n a number of maps, the Downtown Eastside is chopped up into balkanized sections. On some projections the name disappears completely”. Business and property owners in Strathcona, Vancouver’s oldest residential neighbourhood, have long attempted to distinguish their neighbourhood from the rest of the Downtown Eastside. Strathcona lies to the immediate east of the Downtown Eastside, with some of the area lying well within the boundaries that low-income activists claim as part of their neighbourhood. The neighbourhood differs from the rest of the area in that it contains a large stock of single-family homes (many of which have been entirely redone in heritage style). There has been a significant loss of rental housing in the area in recent years, as homes are bought up and remodeled, converting cheap basement suites into luxury ‘garden suites’.

The Strathcona Business Improvement Association (SBIA) has been actively marketing Strathcona as a viable place to do business. This marketing entails a very particular representation of the area and its residents. In their Business Opportunities Report, produced to lure business to the area, the SBIA employs a contradictory but well-used strategy in the battle to gentrify the Downtown Eastside. On the one hand, the low cost of land and rental space is used to lure investors, while the situation that has resulted in these low land prices (particularly the ghettoization of drug users, the de-
institutionalization of psychiatric patients, the concentration of social housing and increasing depths of poverty) has to be rendered invisible. This has meant that the SBIA has had to actively work at mitigating the effects of the poverty in the area in order to lure both investment and consumers to the area.

Blomley (2004: 76) explains that “[t]he neo-liberal project of spatial cleansing by removing the undesirable -- such as beggars and the urban homeless -- from public space relies on moral deliberations about who should be where” (Blomley, 2004: 76).

Consumers of private security express a moral right to live and conduct business in a space free from nuisances associated with extreme poverty, unaddressed mental illness and addiction. The decision to socially cleanse an area is also part of a straightforward economic equation where urban landscapes are seen as a potential site of profit, but where profit can only be realized by making the space attractive to higher income residents, quality-of-life oriented consumers and tourists. This is where the work of private security guards comes into play in the Downtown Eastside.

Policing Vancouver’s Poorest Neighbourhood

Blomley uses the concept of ‘frontiers’ to discuss the material and conceptual boarder between long-time residents and the new pro-gentrification interests in the Downtown Eastside. Blomley (2004: 79) explains that “frontiers, of course, are also borders: despite ideological appearances, they are not simply imposed on empty space, but mark out a line of conflict between two antagonistic spaces. To that extent, frontiers can be sites of struggle and violence”. With the help of new higher-income residents and property developers Business Improvement Associations, the new city-endorsed representatives of community, have been able to lay a claim to the area. Predictably, they have put bodies on the ground to enforce their claim.
Attempts at cleaning-up the downtown Eastside have not been entirely private. The municipal government has promoted change in the Downtown Eastside by adopting broken window-style policing of neighbourhood. In the summer of 2006, the city launched a pilot project which had city crews clean-up Downtown Eastside alleyways. Councilor Kim Capri claimed that if crews cleaned the alleys of debris and human waste, disorderly conduct such as drug dealing and vandalism will be reduced. "It's the broken windows theory, which essentially means that people will care about where they live if it's cleaned up and keep it that way" (Capri, quoted in Metro August 9th, 2006). Even pro-gentrification business owners understand that it is doubtful that the theory applies in this straightforward way when hundreds of individuals live in the alleyways without access to washrooms or running water. A business owner also interviewed by the Metro (August 9th, 2006) Fleur Zad Mehbigholi of La fleur hair studios, was dubious about the program. She notes that the "problem" is not garbage, but people. She pointed out that "it is bad for business when people hang around outside and throw garbage around".

Dissatisfied with city council's plan, private businesses and organizations have decided to address what they see as the real problem in the Downtown Eastside -- low income residents. In order to facilitate gentrification in and around the Downtown Eastside, the Strathcona BIA has engaged in "beautification projects and litter patrols". The Strathcona BIA also contracts 9000 hours of street patrols every year (Strathcona BIA, 2005).

Hence the process of 'cleaning up' the Downtown Eastside, a project that has eluded successive city governments, is being attempted privately, by those who have gotten in on the ground floor of the real estate and commercial markets in the area and have a vested interest in the seeing the project succeed.
The SBIA is not the only Business Improvement Association working toward the
gentrification of the areas in and around the Downtown Eastside. Chinatown also has a
business improvement association. Blomley (2004: 147) argues that the location of
Chinatown speaks to the generalized racism of Vancouver society. During the late
nineteenth and early twentieth century, the government and the Euro-Canadian
population drew both formal and informal boundaries. Asian immigrants and people of
Asian origin were restricted to living and conducting business within those boundaries
(Anderson, 1991; McDonald, 1996). The Chinese community was forced into a small
area with little urban infrastructure. “At the same time, the way in which such
communities were obliged to live (often at high densities, in substandard housing) was
itself seen as further proof of the undeniable alienness of “Orientals” when juxtaposed
with the ways in which the white population used propertied space” (Blomley, 2004: 147).

The area of Chinese settlement in the city, official designated Chinatown in the mid-
1890s, was designated a public health risk reinforcing racist stereotypes about Asian
immigrants. Chinatown, which was originally a legislated ghetto for Chinese workers and
was built-up through the on-going work of those immigrants and their descendents, has
now been “re-discovered” by Euro-Canadian powerbrokers.

Beginning in the 1970s, all three levels of government, working in conjunction
with members of the Chinatown business community, sought to redevelop the area as a
marketable tourist commodity (Anderson, 1991). Chinatown was re-envisioned as a
tourist destination that could attract both Lower Mainland residents wanting an exotic
escape from suburban life, and out-of-town visitors. The streets were re-designed with
dragon shaped street lamps. Other built features are continually upgraded, including the
recent addition of a huge gateway, ornately decorated with lions guarding the western entrance. Despite these efforts, improvements to the physical infrastructure have not been enough to achieve the desired end of gentrification. The Vancouver Chinatown Business Improvement Association (VCBIA), along with beautification and marketing campaigns, funds 24-hour a day, seven day a week security patrols of the entire Chinatown area (VCBIA, 2004).

Christopher explained that in areas like Chinatown in the Downtown Eastside, security guards are breaking new ground, making their work both more difficult and more dangerous than that of guards working in other parts of the city:

Like the Downtown Ambassadors, they get paid a little more than usual. They get made fun of because of their hats and that kind of thing, but you know they do it. I think it's easier now for the newer people who have gotten hired on because people are used to them. They know hey, you see the guys in the funny red hats the funny red jackets you start moving along. But the nastier parts of say Chinatown they [the guards] aren't as pretty and the work is a lot more dangerous.

He noted that the rough nature of the area has led to a distinctive style of private security not found in the more upscale areas and sites where he works:

The guys who do Chinatown are just strange. They are the types that you wouldn't stick in a room full of rich people. There's not many guys like that who work with me... I don't know where the hell they get those guys. From the looks of it, it's a goon squad, plain and simple. I think that's their job 'cause they don't seem to have any emphasis on how they are presented. They don't try to clean them up in anyway... No, they are there for a goon squad, to kick junkies around. They are like the private militia of the Chinatown Business Association. But you always see the same guys, so that means that they've lasted and they show up on time and they handle things pretty well.

Jamshid explained that, when working as a guard in a bank in Chinatown, confrontations with drug users and people with mental health issues were a mandatory part of his job:
People in Chinatown they are, excuse me, crazy people, and maybe junkies and addicts. So, my employer and my manager asks me, for example, to confront them.

Gentrification is far from complete in the area. However, Chinatown’s contract security guards, through their confrontations with “crazy people, junkies and addicts”, are contributing to the revitalization of the area, in spite of being paid only $8.50 per hour.22

**Bringing it all together: The Carrall Street Greenway project**

The City of Vancouver describes the Carrall Street Greenway project as “a major public realm, community building and economic revitalization initiative” (City of Vancouver, Engineering Services, 2007). When completed, the project will provide a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly corridor linking up False Creek on one side of the downtown peninsula, with the Burrard Inlet on the other. The Greenway will also link Chinatown, the Downtown Eastside and Gastown into a single streetscape, building on the areas’ heritage characters.

The Carrall Street Greenway Project is part of a broader city initiative, the Downtown Historic Greenway, currently under development (City of Vancouver Engineering Services, 2007). Once the greenway is completed, there will be a network of three walking routes that connect the historic areas of downtown Vancouver. The downtown library will serve as the central hub where all of the routes meet up. The routes will connect up Chinatown, Gastown and Yaletown. The central library branch in downtown Vancouver is a consumer of private security services, as is the surrounding downtown area, and the three historic areas that will be linked up.

The Carrall Street Greenway Project is an example of the role the city plays in connecting various private sector-lead developments of the neo-liberal city, turning

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22 Conversation with Jasmid.
fragmented spaces into part of a coherent whole that can be marketed on the regional, national and international stage. While this project is city-led, it has already received considerable private sector development funding. The city is seeking further “partnership opportunities in the public and private sectors for sharing the costs and responsibilities of constructing, maintaining and promoting the Carrall Greenway”. Security provision will likely be one of the maintenance costs associated with the project.

Conduit policing, the policing of areas that link together all the spaces of the city that middle-class residents and tourists might want to travel between, is an established practice in neo-liberal cities (Johnston and Shearing, 2005). The Carall Street Greenway will link up the new International Village site, which occupies land between the Downtown Eastside on the edge of both Gastown and Chinatown, and Concord Pacific Place, all of which currently employ private security. International Village is currently outside the scope of any established BIA, yet developers and business owners in the area are eager to promote it as a new quality-of-life district. Currently, the lack of BIA-funded street patrols means that individual developers have had to bear the cost of crime relocation (through site-based security services that include perimeter checks) as they attempt to gentrify the area. As International Village and other sites along the Carrall Street Greenway develop there will undoubtedly be no shortage of security executives looking to capitalize on emergent risk markets along the route.

**Conclusion: private security and the changing face of Vancouver**

The face of Vancouver is changing and private security guards are playing an important role in facilitating many of those changes. While transformations are occurring in a fragmented, site-by-site fashion characteristic of neo-liberal city-building, newly
emerging quality-of-life districts are simultaneously being linked together as the city itself is reconstituted and re-packaged for sale on both local and international markets. Private security has been central to this reconstitution of atomized spaces and of the city as a whole.

Gentrification and related security work, both public and private, have resulted in the emergence of risk markets in other areas of downtown. As the poor are pushed out of the downtown core, ‘problems’ emerge not only in outer areas of the city but also in suburban areas where rents are lower. In describing the growth he sees in the security industry, Larry noted that not only are markets expanding within the city of Vancouver, but also in outlying areas:

I can see the industry really expanding, especially with the taxing on policing resources you’re seeing it downtown. In certain areas of Vancouver where there’s 24/7 security patrols which are replacing policing because they are just so overtaxed they can’t respond to everything. So you have the community working in like a triangle approach. You have your community, your private security and your policing all working together to help target high crime populations or high crime areas. I’m starting to see it throughout the Fraser Valley as well... They have gated communities and they are like small cities. It’s all gated all the way around and they’ve got stores and it’s all run by private security.

Social issues are exacerbated by the lack of community services in these areas. At the same time, increasing property values and the emergence of global property markets in the suburban areas surrounding Vancouver have spurred the growth of new risk markets in these areas. Crime and poverty are not inherently geographic phenomena; they have been both concentrated and redistributed geographically by the use of property law and public and private policing. Policing efforts aimed at quelling the social consequences of poverty and marginalization do not address the underlying issues that lead to these problems. Most of the urban poor living on the Downtown Eastside were not born and
raised there; they have relocated as they have become ‘hard to house’ due to long-term
poverty, mental health problems or addiction. By arguing that social problems can be
fixed by re-shaping geography or adopting increasingly forceful policing tactics, the
central relationship between the polarization of wealth, neo-liberal policies and
developer-led city-building initiatives is rendered invisible. In this context, risk markets
continue to emerge even as low-income areas are ‘cleaned-up’, leaving fundamental
contradictions unresolved.
I have taken an eclectic approach to my study of the private security industry in Vancouver. Rather than focus on the industry as a discrete entity, I have conceptualized Vancouver’s private security industry as developing in response to new ‘risk markets’. Risk markets have emerged at various historical junctures as a result of a broad range of interconnected social political and economic conditions. I argue that in contemporary Vancouver, the conditions that have led to a growth in risk markets include the adoption of neo-liberal economic and governance principles by local, provincial and federal governments, Vancouver’s changing occupational structure, the city’s entry into international property markets and changing demographic and immigration patterns. Thus, as a researcher, I have had to be attentive to all of those issues.
I begin this chapter by reflecting on some of the limitations and shortcomings of this study. I also look at the ways in which the theoretical and methodological approaches that have informed this research have resulted in a study that contributes to the fields of police studies, labour studies and urban studies. I argue that by using the concepts of ‘relations of ruling’ and ‘risk markets’ to inform my analysis and by situating localized phenomena within a historical and global context, this research makes visible relationships between seemingly disparate times, places and fields of study. It also contributes to a growing body of neo-Marxist literature that challenges the binary between the oppressed and the oppressor in classic Marxism, focusing instead on multifaceted relations of power without abandoning Marx’s central thesis that relations of domination and subordination are structured into the capitalist economic system.

After addressing the theoretical and analytical issues raised in this research, I move on to address the more politically pragmatic questions of why risk markets are continuing to expand and whether or not, in spite of the economic success of the industry, private security has in fact lived up to its promises. I argue that the appeal of the private security industry stems largely from the fact that it fits well with the ideals of personal responsibility and consumer choice that are highly valued among demographic groups with social and economic power. While the consumption of private security services does seem to have a ‘crime’ relocation effect, and deters certain activities such as panhandling, sleeping in public, petty theft and open drug use, the quality of the services clients are purchasing are not always what they seem to be. In some instances, guards themselves contribute to property crime and disorderly behaviour. I take the position that these shortcomings of privatized security arrangements cannot be resolved through tighter
regulation or oversight. Rather, I end this chapter by arguing that there are at least three fundamental contradictions inherent in Vancouver’s approach to city building and policing. First, policies aimed at attracting investment, tourists and the ‘new middle-class’ to Vancouver have been partially successful, but have also resulted in an increased polarization of wealth in the city. This polarization has in turn led to homelessness and other social problems that are at odds with the vision of Vancouver that is being marketed to investors, tourists and middle and upper-class homebuyers. Second, fragmented and privatized approaches to city-building have led to an inequitable division of policing resources, increased ghettoization of crime and social problems rather than a reduction of these concerns. This approach to city-building has also led to ever-expanding risk markets in the context of security providers who have a vested interest in ensuring that the demand for their product does not wane. Third, an inherent contradiction exists for frontline security guards as low wage workers. They are forced to work long and irregular hours for less than a living wage, with few benefits and without proper safety provisions in place, all with the goal of upholding an economic and social order that leaves them without the resources to participate fully in urban life. Although these contradictions can be at least partially managed in the short-term, they will likely prove irresolvable in the longer term.

Risk markets, urban development and the relations of ruling

This research was born out of my observations of interactions between homeless persons and contract security guards in my neighbourhood. My goal throughout this study has been to shed light on the social, economic and political structures that have given rise to those interactions. My approach to this task has some definite drawbacks
and limitations. First, by focusing on the structural factors that give rise to particular patterns of social relations, the agency of the individuals engaged in those interactions is at times subordinated in the analysis. The reality is that each guard brings a unique set of values, motivations and approaches to his work. While this research has presented a fairly comprehensive description of the work security guards do and the socio-economic factors that have led many of them to the industry, perhaps too little attention has been paid to the meaning that guards themselves attach to their work, the extent to which they are conscious of the contradictions inherent in their work and how they live with those contradictions. Second, consumers of private security services are at times essentialized throughout this work. In focusing on the complexity of guards' positionality, some of the complexity of the positionality of the new middle-class is ignored. Like security guards, these individuals come from diverse background, choose inner-city living for a variety of reasons, and have a range of viewpoints on issues related to homelessness and poverty. At the same time, they contend with their own economic struggles and very real concerns related to crime and safety. Third, because this research draws on many bodies of literature -- policing, urban development, political economy, and labour studies -- the complexity and diversity of the scholarship in each of the these areas of study is not always given the attention that it deserves.

In spite of its limitations, this research has allowed me to better understand the complex social, economic and political relations that gave rise to the incidents that I witnessed through my window. This research has also contextualized the actions of private security guards -- actions that I initially saw only as examples of bullying of the

23 This weakness in the research is compounded by the lack of diversity within the sample of guards interviewed for this study discussed in Chapter Two.
poorest of the poor by more powerful individuals. Three theoretical and conceptual tools have been integral to my approach. First, I began this research by positioning myself within the Marxist historical materialist tradition. Materialists approach social research from the perspective of the real material conditions of people’s lives (Naiman, 2000: 338). While individuals are conceptualized as active agents in their own lives, that agency is constrained by their position within the broader socio-economic system. The advanced capitalist economic system in which the private security guards I interviewed are embedded can be traced back to the emergence of private property as the dominant ownership model during the time of the British enclosures, the subsequent urbanization and proletarianization of the British peasantry, and the spread of that property model across the globe through colonial projects. Thus, while I had originally conceptualized the role of the guards, as both low-wage workers and discipliners of the very poor, as a novel subject position arising in a post-industrial neo-liberal urban context, individuals occupying a similar standpoint have in fact been integral to the development and spread of capitalism.

Second, borrowing from Dorothy Smith, this research has been informed by the concept of ‘relations of ruling’. As noted in Chapter Two ‘relations of ruling’ refers to the web of practices and relations of power that organize social and economic life in advanced capitalist societies, of which we are all a part. Understanding the lives of security guard is a key element of this research. However, drawing on the concept of relations of ruling to guide my analysis has allowed me to do more than simply recount their experiences and observations. Interviews with security guards provided an entry point into the web of relations and practices organizing social life in post-industrial
Vancouver. A central theme in this research has been the way in which the work that guards do contributes to larger city-building projects – projects that do not necessarily serve the interests of guards themselves. Working outward from the experiences of guards directed me to a broad (but my no means exhaustive) range of actors, policies and practices influencing city-building in Vancouver, the city’s labour market, and trends in policing.

Third, throughout this research, I have been informed by the concept of ‘risk markets’. This conceptual tool has guided me through an investigation of the historical, political and economic context out of which various forms of security and policing services arise. Risk markets emerge where there is a demand for security services beyond what the state is willing or able to provide and where there are client groups willing to pay to have those demands met. In the contemporary context, risk markets have emerged as a result of neo-liberal economic and governing practices that encourage the privatization of formerly public services, devolution of governance to local governments and private bodies, and the flexibilization of labour.

Rigakos (2002) suggests that a risk markets orientation is helpful for conceptualizing privatized security arrangements because it highlights the centrality of the profit motive in many policing enterprises. Rigakos (2002) developed the risk markets approach over the course of his research with Intelligarde, a Toronto-based security company. He recognizes that Intelligarde was not the industry standard at the end of the twentieth century, but notes that the company’s unique approach to private security does not, in and of itself, make a risk markets orientation inapplicable to other types of security firms. He explains that “A risk markets orientation may or may not be applicable
to other private policing contexts, not because it is a limited approach that seeks to make sense of only one particular form of contract private security, but rather because it is a general orientation based on existing theories that may or may not have other significant exemplars" (Rigakos, 2002: 23). One substantive contribution of this study is that it demonstrates the broader applicability of a risk markets orientation. Because this study focuses on security work in Vancouver generally, rather than a particular company, various concrete examples of risk markets are explored. Thus, this research has demonstrated that a risk market orientation is, at a minimum, applicable to the majority of private and semi-private security work being carried out in Vancouver today.

The more significant theoretical contribution of this study is that it delineates an interdependent relationship between risk markets (and by extension the alienated labourers on which those markets rely) and broader social, political and spatial projects ranging from British colonial expansion to contemporary North American urban renewal. Similar to Rigakos’ 2002 study of Intelligarde, which is unique in that it takes an ethnographic approach to the study of private security work, this study focuses on “doing security work from the perspective of line officers” (Rigakos, 2002: 3). However, for the purposes of this study, the work that guards do is contextualized not only within the local market for security services or a security company’s internal corporate structure, but also more broadly within the development and evolution of capitalism and colonialism. I argue throughout this research that we are witnessing a reemergence rather than emergence of privatized forms of policing and that neither the positionality of security guards nor risk markets are purely contemporary phenomenon. Rather, risk markets have been a feature of projects ranging from the establishment of company towns in early
industrial America, to the occupation of Iraq. While each example is unique, in every case a market emerged for security services and security entrepreneurs stepped up to meet the demand. Risk markets are not simply a by-product of these projects: security entrepreneurs and workers have played an integral role in their execution.

This study provides historical and international examples of risk markets and highlights the critical role of for-profit security work in range of inter-related capitalist and colonial projects. The specific intention of this study, however, has been to explore the emergence of new risk markets in relation to one specific project - - the contemporary revitalization of Vancouver’s inner-city. Security guards are contracted to respond to diverse market demands in Vancouver. These range from senior citizens sent out by fly-by-night security companies to protect construction sites, to customer service-oriented security services in established tourist districts and high-end residential towers, to confrontational guards engaged in aggressive interactions with drug users and petty criminals on the frontiers between newly gentrifying neighbourhoods and marginal spaces within the city. Despite being delivered in an uncoordinated manner and with only nominal formal oversight, security services in Vancouver are more than a fragmented collection of products available to meet a range of market demands and budgets. As diverse as their work seems, all of these guards are contributing to a final product- a world class ‘quality-of-life’ city to be marketed on a global scale. In advancing this analysis, this research contributes not only to the field of private security studies but also to urban studies by concretizing the process of gentrification and urban displacement in Vancouver.
A final contribution of this study is the emphasis on the class and racial relations underlying private security work in Vancouver. A risk market orientation makes visible the reality that private security services are first and foremost for-profit enterprises. As policing is commodified, those individuals and groups with access to resources are increasingly in a position to dictate policing priorities. The end result is that private security services contribute to the socio-spatial organization of the city in ways that are deeply racialized and classed. The policing priorities set by Vancouver’s major consumers of private security services, including BIAs, strata associations and property developers, have tended to be related to ‘quality-of-life’ issues such as panhandling, homelessness and open air drug use, as well as minor property crimes. As these policing priorities are pursued, underlying power relations based on economic and social status are reproduced in the socio-spatial layout of the city. While the rhetorical and legal context is new, with a discursive emphasis on managing risky populations or eliminating particular behaviours rather than on excluding individuals on the basis of race or social status, the impacts closely parallel older modes of social exclusion. Aboriginal people, the homeless and the mentally ill are forced to exist in the most marginal spaces of the city. Conversely, those with access to private property are in a position to use their resources to extend their control of private property to cover an expanding range of public spaces within the city.

Demand for security services is undeniably racialized and classed given that certain groups are in a better position to purchase privatized policing services than others. Exploring risk markets from the perspective of frontline guards, however, suggests that they are organized through relations of class and racial power that are more complex than
binaries of rich versus poor or Euro-Canadian versus racialized other suggest. This study enhances our understanding of these relations by emphasizing the unique positionality of security guards with the broader relations of ruling. The class position of security guards and their contradictory social location as vulnerable workers and discipliners of marginalized populations has been highlighted throughout this research. Security guards mediate the relationship between those who are building and consuming the 'quality-of-life' city and those who are being displaced in the process. At the same time, security guards' social location is a product of the very economic and political relations that have given rise to the growing polarization of wealth and poverty in Vancouver. These relations have generated demand for the security services while simultaneously bringing about the social and labour market policies that have pushed working-class people and recent immigrants into this low-wage industry. In this context, guards' own security is often undermined, both directly as they go about their work with minimal training and safety provisions in place, and indirectly as post-industrial Vancouver becomes less and less accessible to the working poor on which business owners, tourists and middle-class residents depend.

Further research is required to fully explore the ways in which racial/ethnic identity and gender complicate the social location of guards, yet some issues are apparent even from this limited study. For example with the tightening of airport security since September 11th 2001, concerns have been raised about racial profiling of travelers. What is often absent from these discussions is the reality that many of the contract security workers charged with screening airline passengers are themselves people of colour. At the same time, with the high proportion of people of colour, particularly South Asian men,
employed to guard construction sites as marginal spaces are transformed into prime
spaces, the racialized dynamics of urban gentrification in a postcolonial settler city are
complicated as marginalized recent immigrants are contracted to stand on the frontline of
the ongoing displacement of urban Aboriginal people.

These racial dynamics are further complicated by the reality that some of the
major urban redevelopment projects in Vancouver such as Concord Pacific Place have
been built with international capital and house international elites. The dynamics of the
settler city are continuing to evolve with recent immigrant guards being asked to police
displaced longer-term residents of the inner-city, both Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian, in
order to accommodate the lifestyle demands wealthy non-European immigrants alongside
those of the Euro-Canadian middle-class. Finally, the attitude of some Canadian-born
guards toward their immigrant colleagues highlights a central theme of this research, the
ways in which solidarity among the working-class, which is more critical than ever in this
era of economic retrenchment and eroding labour standards, is undermined by complex
dynamics of domination and subordination that allows some members of the working-
class, regardless of their own marginalization, to wield power over others.

The appeal of private security

The growing demand for private security services in Vancouver is directly
intertwined with a particular approach to economic and urban development. This
approach includes a two-tiered service economy, cultivation of a lucrative and largely
private urban real estate market, gentrification projects aimed at attracting a new middle-
class population with disposable income to the inner-city, and the marketing of the city in
the global arena. The market for custom policing services in Vancouver is also reflective
of a larger resurgence of privatized forms of policing, and mirrors moves in other
jurisdictions toward “quality-of-life” policing strategies. Vancouver’s security industry
has filled a number of policing gaps identified by residents and business owners, while
contributing to new employment opportunities in the region.

The appeal of private security services can be understood by looking at the
ideological, demographic and cultural context out of which the modern security industry
has grown. The decision to contract private security services fits well with neo-liberal
ideals of privatization, personal responsibility and consumer choice. The human
resources manager of Securiwise explained that increased privatization of property, and an
enhanced awareness of the limited role that the public police can realistically play in
protecting private property interests, have led to the growth of risk markets in Vancouver:

There’s tremendous growth in the industry. The research that I’ve seen
seems to indicate that it’s really not 9/11 [September 11th, 2001] based,
it’s based on the changing, you know, culture of society. Police have
never really been responsible for protecting the interests of private
businesses. Some people may believe that, but the role of the police is to
protect people and public spaces and to enforce the law. But there is an
increasing privatization of property... so we see the opportunity in this
privatizing mentality.

Inherent in this “privatizing mentality” is an appeal for individuals to take more
responsibility for their own security and to take independent steps to mitigate risk to
themselves and their property:

The community and business owners they’re really seeing, you know, that
we really need to take it on ourselves now. We need to help clean up our
area providing some safety to ourselves and our property... and the
citizens I think that they need to take responsibility. It’s the way things are.
(Charger Security)
Private security services are popular because they provide people with a feeling of confidence that comes from knowing that they have done all they can to promote their own safety and security.

McLeod (2002:15) explains that he saw the potential market for his parapolicing services in the values, preferences and consumption patterns of the post-war generation:

I am a member of the post-war baby ("boomer") generation who are now firmly in charge of North America's institutions. We are used to getting what we want and I think we will get what we want in policing services. When I started my career in private policing people thought I was crazy, my competitors and police critics on the public side viewed me and my organization as dangerous and radical. About five to seven years ago, we came to be seen as 'leading edge'.

What is important about McLeod's comment is that the emergence of his form of highly-visible, full-service private policing has been driven by the demands of a politically and economically powerful demographic group that, on the whole, has embraced the concepts of maximization of self-interest, privatization, and consumer choice. Within this consumer-led, for profit-policing model, security entrepreneurs ensure their own success by responding to changing consumer preferences, all-the-while working to generate new demands for their services. Security industry promotional materials are full of key words that contrast sharply with those normally associated with policing, such as 'promoting the public good', and 'upholding the rule of law'. These materials promise customized services tailored to meet the demands of individual clients.

Another selling feature of private security services is their proactive orientation. Not only do these services reduce the likelihood that an individual's property will be targeted for crime, it alleviates some of the feeling of powerless that comes along with being the victim of petty crime and knowing that the public police can do little to address
the issue after the fact. The human resources director at Charger Security explains what
he sees as the appeal of private security:

Property crime is out there. It’s never going to disappear. People are tired
of getting their cars broken into two or three times a month. They are tired
of getting their doors kicked into their houses. They are tired of being
fearful. The police have a job to do but they are reactionary. They just
don’t have the resources to be proactive.

Proactive, rather than reactive, service is possible with private security because, unlike
public police, security personnel are targeting a property or area of concern at all times.

In their promotional materials, security companies are eager to demonstrate that they will
provide customized service, not a ‘cookie cutter approach’, as has theoretically been the
approach of the public police:

Our philosophy is not to simply ‘cookie cut’ our corporate methods for
each new client. Rather we believe that each client has its own particular
needs and focus and that our company must be willing and able to adapt
our methods to these particular client needs (Concord Security, 2003)

The Paladin difference is in the details. It’s in the way we take a holistic
approach to our clients’ security and don’t offer cookie-cutter solutions or
off-the-shelf answers. (Paladin Security, 2005)

The appeal of private security lies in the role that security providers can play in
mitigating the impacts of property crime and ‘quality-of-life’ infractions in the context of
shrinking public security services. Rather than settle for generic, reactive security that
does not address their specific needs and concerns, demographic groups with
considerable purchasing power want proactive service tailored to meet their individual
needs. At the same time, low wages and competition within the industry have made these
services accessible to a wider range of individuals. Despite government and consumer
support for the private security industry and the tremendous economic and political
resources of many of the clients purchasing private security services -- from residents
groups and BIAs to major developers and governments – the private security industry does not seem to be living up to its promises.

The broken promises of the private security industry

The private security industry has made big promises: to save governments and taxpayers money, to provide quality custom services that meet all of our security needs, to create new jobs, and to make the city safer and enhance quality-of-life for everyone. We have been assured that government regulations, standardized training and limits on the powers afforded to private security guards are in place to ensure that these private entities are competent to do their jobs, are effectively monitored and are measured in the actions they take. The competitive marketplace is said to ensure that consumers of private security get the services they need at a reasonable price, while labour laws and regulations ensure that workers are treated fairly. However, what this limited study suggests is that the private security industry in Vancouver is not living up to its promise to anybody: those who are policed, clients, industry workers, or those working and middle-class people who want security services but cannot afford to pay.

Targets of private policing

There have been ongoing concerns raised by some of the most marginalized residents of Vancouver about their treatment at the hands of the Vancouver Police Department.\(^\text{24}\) There is also evidence to suggest that the very real security concerns of vulnerable women, in particular mainly Aboriginal ‘street-level’ sex trade workers, have been routinely ignored by the Vancouver Police Department, leading to the murder or

\(^{24}\) See, for example, Pivot Legal Society’s report “To Serve and Protect,” based on the affidavits sworn by impoverished Vancouver residents related to police misconduct. Available at www.pivotlegal.org
disappearance of at least 61 women between the early 1980s through to 2001 (CBC, 2007). The same populations that have complained of mistreatment and indifference from the public police are the primary targets of private policing efforts. For example, a central role played by private security guards, particularly in the Strathcona area, is relocating sex trade workers to the most dark and dangerous areas of the city. While public police in Vancouver have been shamed for the lack of attention and concern shown for the lives of these women, private security guards are being deployed not to protect them, but to force them to adopt less safe practices. This work is not being done to uphold the law, but to appease the business owners paying the security bill. The targets of private policing activities must contend with both the privatized enforcement of laws that criminalize the very poor, the addicted and the mentally ill, and the use of illegal tactics by guards who are rarely held accountable for their actions.

Modest income people

The impact of the privatization of security is most heavily felt by those who are targeted by private guards. However, there is also an impact on members of the general public who may not be targeted by private security guards, but do not have the resources to contract guards to protect them and their property. The human resources manager from Cavalry explained that private security work is site-based:

If someone sees a security officer, they don’t really know what the site is, so the businesses right around it are sort of protected a bit too. But they just go down the street where the security officer can’t find them and can’t see them.

The customized, proactive service promised in the industry’s promotional materials is predicated on willingness to pay. The Cavalry representative I spoke to explained:
Ideally, every site would have cameras, high fences, tons of security guards, stuff like that, but there’s a budget, so you do what you can.

When left to the private market, security is reduced to a cost-benefit analysis where you get what you pay for. Those who cannot pay are either forced to compromise or are excluded altogether:

Like we had one site just opened up. And they had like five or six break-ins in the first few weeks. Well we got there, nothing happened for the 8 hours or 9 hours that we were there. But once we left at 6 in the morning, then guess what happened. We would hear about it, but we were like “It’s your strata, we’re only mandated here for 8 hours a night. Now, if you guys want to increase your fees…” (Streetwise)

Private security firms offer choice and custom service in policing. But the reality is that choice and custom service come at a price that not only the very poor, but also many homeowners and small business owners, are simply unable to pay. Those who cannot pay are ultimately held accountable for their inability to purchase security services:

You know [names a retail strip in the downtown core] was really bad, and they wanted their clientele back, they wanted their clientele to feel safe when they went down there. At least they said they wanted that, but when it came down to a dollar figure, there were three who, yeah, that’s what they wanted, the others were like “Maybe we don’t need it that badly”. (Charger)

The executive protection market points to the way in which a private policing system creates a tiered security regime, where the levels of security afforded to a particular site may bear no relation to objective security needs:

I had one instance when I was supervisor and one of the guards was guarding a rich guy’s pool house to make sure that his beer wasn’t stolen. The whole situation was bizarre. This guy was paying more than the beer was worth having this guy guarding the beer, and giving the guard a hard time. (Matt)

While Matt’s story seems rather benign, taken to its logical extreme this style of security provision can have a devastating impact for poor and some middle-class people.
New risk markets are already emerging in the United States in the field of disaster relief.

Naomi Klein (Georgia Straight. Nov. 8th 2007: 21) writes:

I used to worry that the United States was in the grip of extremists who sincerely believed that the Apocalypse was coming and that they and their friends would be airlifted to safety. I have since reconsidered. The country is indeed in the grip of extremists who are determined to act out the biblical climax -- the saving of the chosen and the burning of the masses -- but without any divine intervention... Thanks to booming business in privatized disaster relief, we're getting the rapture right here on earth.

Privatized disaster relief, like private security, offers customized, targeted services to those who can pay. The level of service is limited only by the client's budget. During the 2007 wildfires, mobile units rushed around southern California extinguishing fires for wealthy clients who paid, on average, $19,000 to have their homes sprayed, while neighbours' homes went up in smoke (Klein, 2007). Klein (2007) explains “with public fire departments cut to the bone, gone are the days of rapid response when everyone was entitled to equal service”. Some companies are now charging a one time $50,000 fee and annual $15,000 fees to ensure “comprehensive catastrophe relief” should a terrorist attack, disease break out or a natural disaster hit their city. For a premium fee, a hurricane evacuation can be turned “into a jet-setter vacation”. As one company executive explains: “the reality of it is that FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) has no infrastructure” (Klein, 2007). Rather than urging the government to seriously address the poor performance of the public body responsible for disaster relief, wealthy citizens are able to purchase the degree of protection they feel is required for their families while leaving their less privileged neighbours to fend for themselves.

Security Workers
The security industry has promised to create new jobs for Vancouverites. That promise has certainly materialized. However, many of these workers are not properly
equipped to do the job that is required of them, nor are they compensated with a living wage, benefits or reasonable working conditions. Cuts to social programs have left working-class people and recent immigrants with few choices except to take whatever job is available to them. Changes to labour laws, introduced to make BC's workforce more 'flexible', have resulted in longer working hours without overtime and less recourse for workers in cases where employers violate the already weak labour standards. At the same time, the competitive nature of the private security industry has led companies to cut corners in terms of training and safety standards. Gentrification in the areas where most security guards are employed has meant that these workers cannot afford to live close to the sites where they work, leading to long and expensive commutes. Fundamentally, private security guards are, like many members of Vancouver's urban proletariat, excluded from the benefits of the emerging 'world class' city they are helping to build.

Clients

Based on my research, there is evidence to suggest that the private security industry may not even be fulfilling it promises to those to whom it is ultimately accountable -- clients. Private security may have a deterrent effect on crime and 'disorder':

I would say it does. It's kind of like having a scarecrow to scare the birds. It's a visual deterrent, whether the guard is actually interested in it or not. (Matt)

However, most of the security guards I spoke to explained that, while some companies market themselves as providing new or unique services, in reality guards rarely play more that this "scarecrow" role:

The image of the company is very sort of young and slick, lots of handsome young guys in suits. That was sort of the niche market where
they work, like high class events. The company never watched parking lots, stuff like that, so everybody has to have seamless English, you have to be decent with people and somewhat eloquent... whenever a company tries to grow it runs into the same labour problems as every other company. So, its standards begin to drop so that it is less impressive, it has to become more like the other, bigger companies, despite the greatest visions of my illustrious leader. (Christopher)

I asked Christopher if clients get what they paid for when they contract private security.

He laughed, and then explained:

No, no not at all. They don’t know that it’s a bunch of unlicensed slack jawed morons. It’s really bad, there’s a lot of really great people, and then there’s a lot of people I really wouldn’t want anywhere near me otherwise. It’s strange, but it has a lot to do with the image. No, no they totally don’t, they don’t have any idea what they are getting. It’s a bunch of bullshit and it’s all smoke and mirrors, but it’s that smoke and mirrors which makes us the money. It doesn’t matter, even if the guy’s a complete moron, if he looks sort of fine in a suit, then when you have eight guards going to work some classy event like a billionaire cocktail party, that’s the one you put by the fire escape that no one’s going to talk to. He still commands the same rate of pay from the client for billing purposes even though he might not have a lot of sense, and might be the last person you would really want having anything to do with your party.

Other guards echoed Christopher’s feelings:

They always lie in their reports, and I know because I’ve done it a couple of times myself because I fell asleep or whatever. A lot of times you lie, not because you were sleeping or whatever, but because you were busy doing some other work but they wanted you to have, come hell or high water, eight patrols done that night. Well, are you going to make sure your report after your shift and make sure your patrols are done, or are you going to write your report faking that patrol so that you can leave your shift? (Paul)

The first job I worked, I showed up at the site and the guy I was relieving showed me where to sleep. He was talking about the new carpets they had gotten and the possibility of stealing them, so I realized pretty quickly that you were basically paid to look like a security guard. You weren’t necessarily trained. You didn’t necessarily have to act like a security guard. I realized that anybody could get the job. (Matt)

The reality is that there is little oversight in the industry, because effective supervision would be another cost, either driving up billing rates or driving down profits. There are
clear problems with the way that security services are currently delivered through the private market. One response to these shortcomings has been the introduction of enhanced training and licensing requirements. However, this research suggests that there are fundamental contradictions at work that cannot be resolved through simple changes to the way in which security guards are regulated.

Private security work and the contradictions of neo-liberal city building

*Wealth and Poverty*

The private security industry, in its current manifestation, has developed in tandem with the re-emergence of lazier-faire liberalism as a hegemonic political ideology, a move away from welfarist social programs, the increased dispersal of the manufacturing process, the growing importance of real estate capitalism, and a focus on services as a source of profit. Urban redevelopment projects, particularly those focused on creating ‘quality-of-life’ districts in inner-city areas, are related to changing policing practices in two ways. First, the availability of these policing services has meant that gentrification could begin in areas that were previously deemed no-go zones by the middle classes. Second, the potential profits to be generated from inner-city real estate development projects and the increased demand for urban space by new middle-class groups have meant that the market for private security services is booming as new areas of the city are continuously converted into quality-of-life districts. A feedback loop has been created where the existence of private security firms in Vancouver has allowed a particular vision of Vancouver to be realized, while simultaneously leading to the sustained growth of risk markets.

I suggest that increased reliance on private security provision in Vancouver is the result of pressure to maximize profit in inner city real estate and tourism markets, and the
desire of new-middle class groups to ensure that they are protected from the negative impact of increased economic polarization of the post-industrial city. These localized urban phenomena are taking place within the context of neo-liberal economic and political trends at the international, national, provincial and local levels. In neo-liberal discourse, the concepts of ‘responsibility’ and ‘community’ are used to make the withdrawal of socialized service provision and stricter limitations on the state’s responsibility toward its citizens palatable. Neo-liberal practices are often framed in the language of choice. Free market principles are conceptualized as providing individuals with the freedom to decide which types of services -- from child care to policing -- they will consume. However, the ability to exercise choice is not spread evenly across the population. The work of security guards entails the restriction of choice among economically marginal groups, and also illustrates the way in which their own choices are restricted by virtue of their class position, immigration status and the broader labour market.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of new professionals, managers and brokers of all types in global cities (Sassen, 2001). This ‘new middle class’ lives in the new condo towers in Concord Pacific Place and Yaletown’s converted warehouses, frequents the restaurants and boutiques of the city’s emerging ‘quality-of-life districts’, and visits the city for business or pleasure. Sassen (2001: 342) argues that “[w]hat is notable is the extent to which a numerically small class of workers imposed such a visible transformation -- of the nature of commerce and consumption -- on key areas of these extremely large cities”. In Vancouver, the imprint of these workers is evident in ‘quality-of-life districts’, entertainment zones and converted inner city housing. However, there is
a second element to this trend. Vancouver’s urban core has also seen both the loss of low-rent housing, resulting in increased homelessness, and an increasingly polarized labour market.

In order to highlight some of the tensions inherent in the economic and social polarization underway in global cities, Sassen (2001: 335) poses a number of questions:

At what point do these tensions become unbearable? At what point is the fact of homelessness a cost also for the leading growth sectors? How many times do high income executives have to step over the bodies of homeless people till this becomes an unacceptable fact or discomfort?

It is clear that these tensions are affecting Vancouver’s city-building trajectory. Private security companies have found a way to capitalize on the visible toll that increased economic polarization is having on the face of the city. Their services mitigate some of the impact of poverty and homelessness in the short term, but the reality is that there are real limits to what the private security industry can accomplish, particularly as the problems associated with economic polarization continue to escalate.

*Fragmented and individualized policing services*

City-building in Vancouver has assumed a fragmented and privatized form characteristic of neo-liberal approaches to governance. A number of fundamental tenets of neo-liberal ideology have been embraced in British Columbia, including off-loading governing responsibilities to smaller entities, increased use of public-private partnerships, privatization of service provision, and the individualization of social responsibility.

Private security fits well with this governance model. Yet, while this privatized approach to service delivery is purported to reduce costs and enhance efficiency, the risk markets that have developed within this neo-liberal context have an internal logic that leads to ever-growing demand.
While there are low-cost private security options available, developers, business owners and residents ultimately find themselves spending more to achieve their security goals:

A lot of the time what I find is some place goes to rack and ruin and people are doing all kinds of things that the property managers or whatever doesn’t want being done there. So they probably start out hiring some cheapo company and nothing really happens, or the guard gets hurt or whatever, and then they hire a much more effective company and they pay a lot more. For a month or two the stack of incident reports is huge and then after a couple of months, or even a month, it all quiets down because the people in that neighbourhood know for the most part not to come to that area because there’s security there and this is security that will actually do something. (Paul)

Not only does effective private security come with a price tag for clients, but as one area of the city is ‘cleansed’, the homeless, mentally ill, petty criminals and street youth do not disappear — they are simply relocated. This effect is the essence of a privatized approach to addressing social problems, where individuals or organizations can purchase security as a private good, and thus have no interest in pressuring the state to offer a sustainable solution in the interest of the public good. This approach also ensures that risk markets continue to expand and evolve. BIAs, individual business owners and residents’ associations all strive to have the most effective private security patrols in order to ensure that their property or area of interest is less desirable to ‘problem’ groups than that of their neighbours. In the context of neo-liberal city building, the geography of gentrification and the geography of risk markets are intertwined, with one re-enforcing the other. But the real shortcomings of fragmented and individualized approaches to private security are not addressed. Importantly, private security companies, as for profit entities that benefit from ever expanding risk markets, have no vested interest in seeing these tensions resolved.
The role of the guard

The processes that are changing the face of cities are also affecting the labour market. “The globalization of manufacturing and of key service industries has been a crucial factor in the growth of the new industrial complex dominated by financial and producer services” (Sassen, 2001:334). This, in turn, has affected the shape of downtown development, as owners of former industrial lands seek out new profit-generating uses for their properties. These new uses, from residential developments to new shopping and entertainment districts, have been, in large part, marketed to new middle-class groups and require a large, low-wage serving class to be viable.

I could have investigated some of the issues of interest to me in relation to the role of this serving class in gentrifying urban centres by looking at the experiences of the post-industrial proletariat in Vancouver (those working at the bottom end of the service and hospitality industries or finding work as casual labourers) more generally. People employed in these areas experience the contradiction of particular city-building practices that require a large number of low-wage labourers in order to build and staff emerging ‘quality-of-life districts’, but which simultaneously exclude low-income people. However, that process is only one element of the contradiction of interest to me. In Vancouver, homelessness and wealth are, in large part, segregated because the borders within the city are actively policed by frontline private security guards. Yet, the tension between the important role that the ever increasing number of security guards play in maximizing property values and profits in inner city neighbourhoods, and their own poverty and inability to get ahead in the city, may eventually become a contradiction too large to resolve. Already, tensions inherent in the role played by private security guards are impacting the quality of service that clients are actually getting.
Sassen (2001: 335) notes that within post-industrial cities -- where there is growing polarization between those at the top end of the emergent service economy, and those at the bottom -- “the growing inequality in the bidding power for space, housing, and consumption services means that the expanding low-wage workforce that is employed directly and indirectly by the core sector has increasing difficulty living in these cities”. Private security guards are part of the bottom end of the service economy, although this fact is partially obscured by the power they wield over even more marginalized populations.

At times security guards experience the contradiction between their socially-recognized position as agents of social exclusion and their experiences as members of the excluded post-industrial urban proletariat. One place where this tension is evident for some security guards is in working labour disputes:

I've mostly worked strikes where it hasn't been violent. The worst that happens is people insult you or whatever. I wasn't asked to do anything really nasty there, so thank God. But it's just you know, you represent management, and you're representing their interests and they treat you as such. (Paul)

The contradiction that security guards experience as working people and as representatives of management or of property owners is exacerbated by the very low wages, lack of occupational health and safety standards and flouting of labour laws that are rampant in the industry. Because security guards are treated so poorly as workers, some reported feeling justified in engaging in illegal money-making practices while on the job as a means of compensation:

I mean the reason people like working in the nightclubs, particularly the front door, is that if there's a line up, you can get some grease [a bribe] that's it. You know some doormen downtown they make a real good living doing that. Shit, say you're going to the Caprice or something like
that, you know, some fancy place I’d never go to. It’s ten bucks to get in. You got people pissing away cash. They don’t care about throwing the doorman twenty, thirty bucks per person to get in. By the end of the night the doorman’s made two, three hundred bucks, more than they’d make all week doing security. (Richard)

You’ll go to raves and find guards selling E, selling wrist bands, doing whatever they can get away with to get a little bit of extra money... I’ve made a lot of extra money at raves being able to do these kinds of things. Any smart guard has. But at the same time, the people that I’ve ever been corrupt with, it’s got to the point where you’re so choked with the boss for not paying your wages that you’re like, whatever. (Jimmy)

Kirk was explicit in identifying that security guards can actually be a threat to security because they are low-income people with access to very high-end spaces:

We have occasional thefts. You know, in-house theft from security people... It’s opportunities. Most security guards are working 10 dollar an hour jobs and you’re looking after multimillion dollar complexes, so temptation is there.

Because of the competitive nature of the industry, employers do not feel that they can raise wages in order to enhance worker morale and reduce temptations. Instead, some company owners have tried to address these issues by introducing tighter disciplinary techniques and electronic surveillance measures to monitor their guards. Paul explained how these practices -- in particular the introduction of electronic wands used to track guards on patrol -- are actually reducing the quality of security services and decreasing employee morale. He noted that guards take offence to this form of invasive monitoring, leading to resentment toward the employer and client and potentially low-level sabotage:

There’s always the ones who break their wands. I mean there is a lot of guys who would use an amazing amount of effort to make sure that it wasn’t obvious that they had broke it, but would break the wand because they didn’t want to do the work, or because it was demeaning, or they felt that it was disrespectful that “Hey. Here I am. This is basically my dog leash to make sure that I’m doing my job”. A lot of people are insulted by them.
He explained that more invasive disciplinary techniques are not the answer, and, in fact, detract from security guard’s desire to do a good job and take pride in their work.

The funny thing about it is that it actually degrades the patrol because, you know, I had a pretty good work ethic and I would actually do my patrols. But with wands, all you’re doing is looking for the spot, you’re not even looking at what you’re supposed to be looking at because all your looking for is the spot ‘ting, ting, ting’. Eventually you come up with ways that you can shorten your patrols, because all you have to do is hit the spot then technically you’ve done your patrol, right, regardless of whether you’ve actually seen anything.

The move toward privatized policing, particularly where formerly-public security services are contracted out, has been spurred by a desire to save money. There are trade-offs. Public workers, making a union wage and with legitimate channels through which to voice grievances, have a much more vested interest in doing the job they have been hired to do. At the same time, while neo-liberal economic theory rests on the assumption that the competitive marketplace enhances the quality of products, the case of the private industry suggests that competition can actually detract from the quality of service, as executives cut wages and working conditions in order to secure contracts without negatively affecting their profit margins.

**Conclusion**

In 1994, Justice Wallace T. Oppal made a number of recommendations above and beyond those that were adopted by the government of the day around training and regulation in an attempt to ‘regulate away’ the inherent problems of off-loading policing to the private sector. For example, he recommended a ‘use of force coordinator’ to evaluate which force options would be available to security personnel, arguing that this approach would allow the government to “ensure public safety and accountability of the industry” (Oppal, 1994: H-62). As the private security industry expands, the provincial
government is once again considering new legislation and regulations to ensure that people's rights are being respected and that security guards' authority is limited. However, what this strategy ignores is that much security work takes place below the regulatory radar. At the same time, the power imbalances that characterize interactions between guards and many of those that they police, the nature of a competitive market place, governments eager to off-load responsibilities, and a general culture in which uniforms convey authority, taken together mean that these types of recommendations will not, in and of themselves, solve the problems inherent in the privatization of policing.

Despite the shortcomings of the private security industry in Vancouver, a neo-liberal approach to economics and governance at the provincial level and the current approach to city-building at the municipal level ensure that the industry will continue to grow, whether or not the underlying concerns and tensions are addressed.

Neo-liberalism is based upon some basic tenets of classic liberal ideology, particularly the conception that individuals striving to maximize self-interest will ultimately contribute to the broader public good. Purchasing private security services is promoted as a responsible choice that maximizes the self-interest of individuals by ensuring that persons, clients and properties are protected, while ensuring that the city as a whole is increasingly secure. However, those who cannot afford policing services are left in the situation of, at best, having their policing priorities ignored as client groups who have behaved responsibly and hired private security steer policing services toward their goals. At worst, they become the target of private security guards enforcement work, even in cases where they are more likely than their more affluent neighbours to be the victim of serious crime. This inequitable approach to policing certainly did not begin with
the re-emergence of private security. However, in the case of private security guards, there is no mandate beyond meeting the expectations of the groups or individuals who pay their salary.
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Appendix A

Interview Schedule- Private Security Guards

1. How long have you been working in the private security industry?
2. What kind of educational or employment background did you have when you came to the security industry?
3. Can you tell me a little bit about where you live and your family life?
4. Why did you decide to get started in private security work?
5. What kind of training did you get when you were starting out?
6. Did that training prepare you for the work you were going to do?
7. Can you tell me about the types of sites and events that you have worked?
8. What is an average shift like for you? What is expected of you?
9. Which groups of people do you typically interact with? What is the most difficult group of people to deal with?
10. Do people treat you differently when you are wearing your uniform?
11. What are wages and working conditions like?
12. Do you ever feel in danger in your job?
13. What are the best aspects of the job?
14. What is the hardest part of the job?
15. Can you tell me a little bit about the demographics of your co-workers?
16. Are clients’ expectations of you as a guard reasonable?
17. Do you think that private security companies are living up to what they promise clients?
18. In your experience, are there differences between companies?
19. Why do you think that the industry is growing so quickly?
20. What changes would you like to see in the industry?
Appendix B
Interview Schedule- Private Security Company Management

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your company? (history, number of employees, services you provide, philosophy)
2. What is your position in the company?
3. Why did you decide to get into the security industry?
4. What was your background coming into the industry?
5. What can you tell me about the demographics of your staff?
6. What makes a good guard?
7. Why do people want to work at your company?
8. What are rates of pay and benefits like at your company?
9. What types of challenges do you deal with as an employer?
10. Can you speak to some of the differences you see between companies?
11. What are your thoughts on current training and licensing standards in the industry?
12. What is your company’s relationship like with the public police?
13. Can you tell me a little bit about your marketing strategy?
14. What are clients looking for when they contact your company? Is it a challenge to meet client demands?
15. Why do you think that the industry is expanding so rapidly?
16. Where do you see growth occurring in the industry in the next five to ten years?
Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Currie, D.H.

DEPARTMENT
Anthropology & Sociology

NUMBER
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INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT
UBC Campus

CO-INVESTIGATORS:
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CERTIFICATION:
The protocol describing the above-named project has been reviewed by the Committee and the experimental procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board by one of the following:
Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair,
Dr. Susan Rowley, Associate Chair

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the experimental procedures.