

The Politics of Contentious Proximity

by

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Abstract

How do diverse populations negotiate the terms according to which they live together within the shifting confines of urban spaces? How do these negotiations impact the social relations and hierarchies shaping daily living in cities? This dissertation explores two cases of localized collective action in Vancouver, Canada. It argues that these actions exemplify a particular form of political contestation: the politics of contentious proximity. Both cases involve groups of urban residents who, in response to what they conceive as the incursion of new demographic groups and physical forms in “their” areas of the city, deploy representations of the identities associated with different types of people and places as a political tool. These groups frame themselves, their political adversaries and the relations of proximity that exist between them in specific, strategic terms. They do so both to establish themselves as legitimate political actors—actors with a right to a voice in determining the shape of the places in which they dwell—and to assert their entitlement to material and symbolic resources.

This dissertation traces the representational strategies involved in both cases and the ways these strategies operate as processes of social construction. Further, it shows that the conceptualization and exploration of this politics has both practical and theoretical significance. It offers insight into the tactics residents use to respond to the changing demographic and physical forms of their cities, and, into the social and spatial exclusions on which these tactics are predicated. Moreover, it also makes two significant theoretical contributions. First, the politics of contentious proximity provides an alternative to two dominant lenses used to analyze urban contestation: NIMBY (not in my backyard) and ‘urban social movements’. Second, it contributes to the study of identity

within political theory by suggesting an expanded conception of identity politics. It adds to our understanding of the political phenomenon of “identity”, not conceived as some deep primordial aspect of one’s individual being, as it is commonly understood, but as something actors employ and deploy, for particular and, in the cases of the actions this dissertation explores, localized, political purposes within neighbourhoods.

Preface

I identified and designed this research program in consultation with my supervisory committee. I undertook all of the research, analysis and writing for this dissertation. None of this dissertation has been previously published.

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Prologue

The research I undertake in this dissertation is driven by two problems. The first is that, in a contemporary period defined by globalization and the movement of people, the ways diverse populations negotiate the terms accordingly to which they live together with the confines of urban space has become an increasingly pressing challenge. The second is that our normative and democratic principles regarding how we should live together seem far too disconnected from our real world experiences. In the following, I set out to ask *how* collective actors claim a voice in shaping the places in which they reside, in order to deepen our understanding of the gap that exists between our ideals regarding who *should* have a voice and the empirical reality of who (or what) actually *does*. Through this research I seek to build bridges between real world problems and practices, and the normative concepts and critical insights of political theory, in an effort to support the development of democratic governance, equity and inclusion in large, diverse cities.

This research is also driven by an observation about identity in the city—the observation that urban dwellers are doing things with identity that do not seem to fit neatly with typical conceptions of “identity politics”, or with the idea of “new” social movements. What I mean by this is that some urban dwellers are engaging with identity, and with politics, but not through belonging to a movement based around a shared group identity (“new” social movements), or through the effort to overcome marginalization or injustice experienced as the result of a shared group identity based on race, class or gender (“identity politics”). Rather, what I observe is that some urban dwellers are taking up identity as a political tool. They are strategically deploying representations of identity—the identities of different “types” of urban people and places—as a way of laying claim to particular material and symbolic resources, and as a way of negotiating the terms in which they, and their neighborhood, are understood. In this dissertation, then, I set

out to provide an account of this kind of engagement with identity and the ways it impacts patterns of inclusion and exclusion in the city.

Finally, this research is also driven by a deep normative commitment to exploring the historical, social-economic, political and cultural dynamics animating the place in which I reside. While both the cases of urban collective action on which this dissertation centers took place when I was child living in another West Coast city, the dynamics that underlie each of these cases continue to shape development and urban change in Vancouver to this day. The exploration of these cases has helped me to gain a much deeper understanding of the different spaces, histories and layers of the city in which I reside and it has helped to deepen my appreciation of the different kinds of diversities, traumas and achievements on which Vancouver is built.

Chapter 1: The Politics of Contentious Proximity

The general identity-values of a society may be fully entrenched nowhere, and yet they can cast some kind of shadow on the encounters encountered everywhere in daily living.

Irving Goffman, *Stigma*, 128-129

The throwntogetherness of place demands negotiation . . . [Places] implicate us, perforce, in the lives of human others, and in our relations with nonhumans they ask how we shall respond to our temporary meeting-up with these particular rocks and stones and trees. They require that, in one way or another, we confront the challenge of the negotiation of multiplicity.

Doreen Massey, *For Space*, 141

This dissertation is about politics and identity in place. It is about the phenomenon of urban political contestation and the ways this contestation functions to construct the identities of people and places. The work that follow engages these concerns through the exploration of the responses of some residents of two neighbourhoods in Vancouver, Canada to what they perceived as intrusions and intruders in ‘their’ places. Emerging in the wake of significant urban change in the city, the actions of these residents involve the strategic deployment of representations of the identities of people and places, and the relations of proximity that exist between them, as a way of engaging in political action.¹ These struggles center on the contestation of the terms in which both places and people are understood. They raise questions regarding who and what may legitimately define place and shape conduct within it; the conditions determining that legitimacy; the exclusions on which it is predicated; and, the limits

¹ I use identity in this dissertation to express the terms in which both people and places (and sometimes things) are understood.

that structural forces, reaching well beyond these specific locales, put on the ability of people, in place, to shape place. This dissertation, then, takes these micro-level, collective political struggles and their reverberations as its terrain of investigation.

Moreover, it argues that these two instances of on-the-ground collective political struggle and contestation (as well as other similar actions in this city and others) may be usefully conceptualized as the *politics of contentious proximity*.² Through the conceptualization of this politics and analysis of these actions, it asks how urban collective actors deploy representations of the identities of people and places as a political tool, and how these deployments construct associations between certain sets of meanings, values and powers and particular social groups. I take up these questions in an effort to deepen our understanding of: (1) the gap that exists between our normative and democratic principles regarding how we ought to live together and the ongoing power differentials and inequalities that give shape to daily living; and, (2) the way that political contestation, or at least this particular form of political contestation, reproduces, and sometimes challenges, these power differentials and inequalities.

The politics of contentious proximity, I argue, has both practical and theoretical significance. First, in a contemporary era marked by globalization and urbanization, the conceptualization and analysis of this politics provides key insights into the political tactics urban residents use to respond to and contest the changing demographic and physical form of the cities in which they reside. Analysis of this kind of politics can be engaged to deepen our understandings of urban collective action as a form of citizen engagement in diverse and multiethnic cities. Second, I suggest, the politics of contentious proximity may also be probed to correct some shortfalls, and address some unanswered questions, in today's scholarly literature

² I use the term “proximity” to indicate that this type of politics is intricately shaped by conceptions of physical and social nearness (and distance). This idea further developed in section 1.2.

about the political phenomenon of “identity” and its construction—a literature that often seems to overlook significant ways that representations of identities are at work in the world.

This opening chapter proceeds in the following way. It first introduces the two collective actions on which the remainder of this dissertation focuses; second, defines the politics of contentious proximity; third, outlines the contributions made through the conceptualization and analysis of this politics; fourth, develops the methodology employed in analyzing these collective actions; and, fifth, provides a brief summary of the chapters that follow.

1.1 CROWEs and Monsters

The two actions of concern to this dissertation occurred in the Vancouver neighbourhoods of the West End, on the ‘issue’ of sex workers in the 1980s, and Shaughnessy, on the ‘issue’ of “monster” houses in the 1990s. Both actions emerged in the wake of a period of intensification in ongoing patterns of change in Vancouver—particularly densification and demographic diversification—and occurred in areas of the city that were particularly marked by this intensification, although in very different ways.

Figure 1-1 The Neighbourhoods



The first case study involves political contestation occurring in the city's West End (located between the downtown core and Stanley Park) in the early 1980s. In the preceding decade, the area underwent a rapid transformation in terms of population and built form: particularly, rooming houses and three to five-storey walkup apartments were replaced by highrise towers, and the population of the neighbourhood increased dramatically. The West End was the first residential neighbourhood in Vancouver to incorporate a large number of highrises and, during this period, it was also, briefly, the most densely populated neighbourhood in Canada.³

³ One of the features that have come to define the downtown core of Vancouver, in recent decades, is its residential highrise towers. The West End was the first major area on the downtown peninsula to undergo this type of development. In the years that followed, however, other neighbourhoods on the peninsula built their own residential towers; and, as this form of construction spread, the design of the towers was improved and more stringent development regulations applied.

The changes in the neighbourhood were accompanied by an increase in street-level sex-work and growing tension between sex-workers and some residents of the area. This street-level sex-work—involving male, female and transgendered adult sex-workers and youth—had shifted from the commercial areas of Davie Street onto the residential streets in the surrounding vicinity. For some residents, this resulted in growing levels of anger and frustration: they associated the sex-workers with rising levels of traffic and noise in the area, increasingly inhospitable and unsafe streets and the declining reputation of the neighbourhood and its residents. In 1981, a group of residents formed CROWE, the Concerned Residents of the West End. During the years that followed, the group attempted to establish itself as the voice of West End residents on the presence of sex-work in ‘their’ neighbourhood, and to push street-level sex-work out of area.

The second case study involves political contestation in the upscale residential neighbourhood of South Shaughnessy (located to the south of Vancouver’s downtown core and False Creek) in the early 1990s and centers on the construction of so-called “monster” houses. Along with residents of a number of other neighbourhoods in the city, some residents of South Shaughnessy, championed by the Shaughnessy Property Owner’s Association (SHPOA), objected to what they saw as the changing character of the area. Particularly, they opposed the number of demolitions occurring and the erection of new larger houses of what they took to be questionable architectural taste. As a result, they engaged in collective action in order to “protect the character and quality of the neighbourhood” and, more specifically, to get City Hall to halt the demolitions and enact design guidelines regulating the architecture features and landscaping of properties in South Shaughnessy. Like CROWE in the West End, this group sought to position itself as voice of residents of Shaughnessy. However, in this case, other residents of the area rejected their stance, and another group—the Ad Hoc Committee for South Shaughnessy Heights

Property Owners' Rights—was formed in order to challenge SHOPA's claim that it spoke for the neighbourhood and to forward an alternative viewpoint on the new homes and the regulation of development in the neighbourhood.

The actions in South Shaughnessy were underwritten by changing patterns of immigration in Vancouver (Ley, 1995; Mitchell, 1993, 1997). During this period, both the ethnicity and economic class of immigrants settling in the city had begun to change significantly. The 1980s saw large increases in immigration from Asia as well as the creation of programs to encourage wealthy immigrants to settle and invest in Canada. Many Vancouverites associated the “monster” houses in South Shaughnessy with wealthy Asian immigrants—primarily from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

1.2 The Politics of Contentious Proximity

The two cases upon which this dissertation focuses occurred in different decades and in very different neighbourhoods, yet both involve a specific form of political action: urban collective action involving the purposive deployment of representations of the meanings, values and powers associated with different social groups or “types” of people, and with different “types” of places. These actions entail actors framing themselves, their political adversaries and other social groups in particular, strategic terms in order to assert their entitlement to particular material and symbolic resources; they employ these representations of identity *as a political tool* to help further their cause or agenda. The frames the groups mobilize are built through a series of

relational or proximate claims regarding the physical and social closeness to, and distance from, certain types people, things and places.⁴

These instances of urban collective actions do not fit neatly into the category of the broader literature on either “identity politics” or urban social movements, but overlap with and add to both sets of literature in a new and interesting way. Both cases involve collective actors who strategically deploy representations of identity as a way of engaging in politics, but they do not necessarily involve actors who seek to overcome systematic or historical exclusion or marginalization based on their identity or who organize and mobilize on the basis of that marginalized identity, as identity politics literature tends to understand this term. Rather, these actors seek to *use* particular conceptions of identity to achieve other material and symbolic goals, and these actions involve categories of people who do not appear to be marginalized, and for whom marginalization is not a central guiding theme.

These instances of collective action, I suggest, are best conceptualized as the *politics of contentious proximity*. First they focus particularly on *representation*, or on meaning making. They involve efforts on the part of collective actors to frame and control the terms in which they, their demands, their neighbourhoods or place, and their adversaries are understood. Moreover, this framing work is undertaken through the deployment of representations of *identity*. What is important to note, here, is that these representational strategies do not focus only on the identities of different groups and types of people. They also involve the representation of the meanings, values and powers associated with different places (and things). In this way, then, the concept of

⁴ In this dissertation, I employ the term “frame” in a colloquial sense—as denoting a way of depicting, or seeking to establish, the set of terms through which a problem or set of circumstances is understood. My usage is not meant to connote the more specified definitions of the term set out in the literature on social movements or social psychology.

the politics of contentious proximity evokes an expanded sense of the term “identity”, which suggests that it is something that we associate with places and things, as well as with people.

Further, the motif of *proximity* captures key aspects of these instances of collective action. Particularly, at work in the actions are interacting conceptions of physical and social proximity. As noted above, the framing strategies employed by these actors involve representations of social distance. They associate particular people—themselves, their adversaries—with particular meanings, values and powers and distance them from others. Yet more than this, the actions themselves arise as a response to issues of physical proximity: to what is viewed by some as the negative impact of the physical closeness of certain people and physical forms. These actors’ representational strategies suggest that the problem, as they perceive it, has arisen because socially distant groups and things find themselves in close physical proximity. Further, these actions build on the moral intuition that people residing in a particular place and who appropriately perform what Paulina Espejo terms ‘place-specific duties’—“being a good neighbour, respecting sacred spaces, fostering the local ecosystem’s resilience, sharing communal areas, and generally, participating in schemes of cooperation specific to the locale”—should have the right to exert a certain degree of control over the shape and form of the place in which they dwell (Espejo, 2016: 2). In this way, they build on the intuition that those closest to a place, those most physically and socially integrated with a place, should have a voice in shaping it.

Finally, these actions constitute a form of *politics*. These representational struggles are a form of contestation in which collective actors have come together to pursue particular symbolic and material resources. They further involve an engagement with social hierarchies and relations of power. Through the deployment of identity strategies, these groups not only attempt to obtain

particular concessions from government but also to position themselves as legitimate political actors: that is, as actors with a right to a voice in determining the shape of the place in which they dwell; and, as actors whose voice is recognized by the general public, media and government.

In many ways, the instances of the politics of contentious proximity that I explore are deeply ambiguous or even contradictory. On the one hand, these collective actions bring some of the economic and political forces driving urban change and some of the underlying social and spatial hierarchies shaping city living into the realm of public deliberation and discourse (Bourdieu, 1984; Giddens, 1984). Moreover, through these actions, citizens seek to intervene in the shape of their environment. These two sets of collective actions, in their purposiveness, represent a period of reflexive engagement with background identity values and hierarchies, as well as with the types of symbolic and material resources associated with different identities and places. In some ways, then, these struggles represent a moment of citizen empowerment and active, reflexive political engagement. They represent a moment when the terms under which change occurs within our cities become more visible and, therefore, more contestable.

On the other hand, however, the identity strategies that the collective actors deploy often seem to rely on traditional and accepted conceptions regarding who is valued in our society and who counts as a legitimate political actor. The actors involved seek political empowerment and political voice and, accordingly, often deploy associations that seem most likely to lead to the achievement of their goals. For example, actors might assert that they, themselves, are good, community-minded, middle-class citizens who value the nuclear family and the protection of property values. On this basis, they claim that they deserve to have a voice in determining the shape of their neighbourhood and community, and that other groups that do not share this

identity and these values do not. These actions, then, frequently represent a moment where particular groups of urban dwellers actively exert their right to shape the places in which they reside at the expense of other groups and other areas of the city; they represent a moment where well-known social and spatial hierarchies and binaries are reasserted and reproduced.

However, while the groups involved in these actions primarily represent their identity, and the identity of their place, in traditional terms, they themselves, and the places in which they reside, do not fit comfortably within the confines of these representations. The way, then, that these actions interpret, enforce and contest the meaning, values and powers associated with different places and people, and the types of proximities that exist between them, is not simply a matter of the representations of identity that are deployed by the actors themselves, but also of the interplay between these representations and alternative ways in which the people and places involved are known and represented; and, of the ways these representations occlude, counter and suppress particular alternatives.

In this dissertation I take up these instances of what I term of the politics of contentious proximity as a process of social construction. Moreover, I focus particularly on elucidating two tensions at work in these actions: that between building citizen empowerment and enforcing exclusion; and that between the frames the actors deploy and alternative ways that the groups and places involved may be understood. I analyze what this means for how these instances of urban collective action reiterate, reproduce and sometimes contest the association of particular sets of meanings, values and power with particular places and social groups.

1.3 Contributions

This dissertation makes important contributions to at least two areas of scholarly research. The primary contribution I work to draw out is to the literature on the politics of identity within political theory. The conceptualization and analysis of the politics of contentious proximity speaks to three lacunas in this literature: identity politics at the empirical level of urban contestation, identity politics as something which involves place as well as persons, and representation of identity as a political tool used by both the powerful and the marginalized in specific neighbourhoods. The second contribution is to the literature on urban collective action and contestation, through a new focus on the deployment of representations of identity in relation to both people and places, and the relations of proximity that exist between them, in specific urban neighbourhoods. The politics of contentious proximity, I argue, provides an alternative conceptual lens to ‘urban social movement’ and NIMBY frameworks for analyzing urban collective action and contentious proximities. The following sections examine each of these contributions in greater detail.

1.3.1 “Identity” and Political Theory

Since the 1970s, a common understanding has developed among many political and social theorists, particularly post-structural theorists, regarding the conceptualization of identity in respect to social relations. Theorists have increasingly argued that prevailing liberal representations of identity—associated with the conceptualization of the self as *a priori*, atomistic, essential, rational, autonomous—do not adequately capture our experiences of identity, which are central to our social realities. Further, they recognize that this standing way of depicting identity can have harmful social, political and psychological consequences. Theorists

ascribing to this position suggest that our experiences and realities are better represented when identity is understood as anti-essential, multiple, mobile and contingent. They acknowledge that our identities cannot be fully captured in our languages and through our schemes of categorization; and that ‘identity’, as something we speak about, share with others and mobilize around politically, is always a matter of representation—a position which is also fundamental to this dissertation. Moreover, this view stresses that our identities are never fully formed, but always under production.⁵ They are inextricably linked to our social situatedness and social locations, and they are socially constructed. (Bauman, 1996; Beck, 1995; Benhabib, 2002; Bickford, 1997; Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Butler, 1992; Cerolo, 1997; Connolly, 2002; Dallmayr, 1997; Dhamoon, 2006; Easthope, 2006; Fraser 1996, 2005; Hall, 1996; Hayward, 2003; Honneth, 1992; Huddy, 2001; Keith and Pile, 1993; Klinger, 2004; Maclure, 2003; Scott, 2003; Tully, 2000; Wedeen, 2002; Young, 1990).

This position asserts that identity is not something that can be thought or constructed in isolation. Rather, it implies that our identities are implicated in our social and physical nearness to and distance from other people. They are implicated in our situated positions within social, political and economic discourses; in our embodied experiences (in particular bodies); and in our physical locations and material conditions. To one degree or another, then, these social and physical locations and situations shape how we understand ourselves, the actions we undertake, and the ways in which we are understood and acted upon by others.

This understanding, then, also implies that our identities are related to our actions in complex and sometimes difficult ways (Cerolo, 1997; Emcke, 2000; Hall, 1996; Melucci, 1989;

⁵ This is expressed in the paradigmatic shift from a focus on being to a focus on becoming.

White, 1990; Jenkins, 1996). Our actions, nestled amid power relations and hierarchies,⁶ it suggests, are among the key factors implicated in the construction of identities, but not in ways that social actors entirely understand or are able to control. The ways we conceive our identities and the ways they are taken up, and assigned, by others stubbornly shape and constrain our actions, politics and access to both symbolic and material resources.⁷ Our social opportunities and realities, including our capacity for instrumental and politically transformative action, are thus shaped in ways that advantage—often inequitably—some individuals and groups and disadvantage others. Identity conceived in these terms is not only deeply enmeshed in our actions and social and physical locations; it is also deeply and inescapably political.

While this position on identity has proliferated within political theory, its spread is accompanied by notable absences. Depictions of identity as always under production, situated, socially constructed, mobile and multiple (etc.) abound: as Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper argue, “these qualifiers have become so familiar – indeed obligatory – in recent years that one reads (and writes) them virtually automatically” (2000: 11). Yet despite this reiteration and the complex linkages the consensus posits between identity, action, and our social and physical situatedness—and despite the ways these matters permeate and shape our everyday lives, activities and political engagements—political theory that explores actual grounded processes of social construction and identity is rare.⁸ This rarity, I suggest, becomes especially apparent when groups, individuals and processes that do not fit easily within the standing framework of what scholars and political actors have come to call “identity politics” are

⁶ As Jenkins puts it “identities exist and are acquired, claimed and allocated within power relations” (1996: 25).

⁷ Engin Isin and Patricia Wood suggest that “identity marks out groups as targets of assistance, hatred, animosity, sympathy or allegiance” (1999: 20). Or as Iris Marion Young says in *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, “the symbolic meanings that people attach to other kinds of people and to actions, gestures, or institutions often significantly affect the social standing of persons and their opportunities” (1990: 23).

⁸ This is not to say that this kind of work does not exist at all.

considered; when the scope of analysis is expanded beyond a focus on groups that seek to overcome systematic marginalization or exclusion based on some sort of shared group identity (Hayes, 2012). What of other modes of political action beyond the scope of “identity politics” that both constitute identity and are shaped by impositions of identity? What of the types of actions on which this dissertation centers?

This dissertation builds on the understanding that there is a need for more empirically informed theoretical explorations of actual situated and historical processes of identity construction at the micro-level. This work, I suggest, is particularly important for two primary reasons.⁹ First, its lack feeds widespread frustration with identity as a significant line of inquiry in relation to politics. Political and social theory and political movements are rife with complaints that a focus on “identity” distracts from material struggles, undercuts needed solidarity, or plunges us into relativism.¹⁰ These frustrations redirect scholars away from

⁹ Some scholars have noticed this shortfall in today’s scholarship. Sociologists Francesca Polletta and James Jasper, for example, say the following regarding the way collective identity is used and conceptualized in relation to social movements:

We still know so little about the cultural building blocks that are used to construct collective identities. Laws and political status have been studied as a source, but we should learn more about how intellectuals and group leaders use nostalgia and other elements of collective memory to construct a past for a group. What are other tools and raw materials of identity work? How important is place for example? What about bodily difference and bodily needs? (2001: 299-300).

And from within political theory, Rita Dhamoon contends that her conception of the ‘cultural’ opens up an important series of understudied questions including: “How are identities made and marked by processes of meaning-making through power? What are the outcomes of such significations? How are meanings understood by the self and others? In what ways are dominant and subordinating systems of meaning-making sustained?” (2006: 371)

¹⁰For some theorists (and activists), engaging with identity is misguided and often harmful: it orients political energy towards symbolic struggles and away from the material conditions underlying these struggles. Indeed, for many, the focus on identity often comes at the expense of attention to issues of equality and economic redistribution and, given the realities of the global economy since the 1980s—particularly increased economic insecurity and a growing disparity between rich and poor—identity has become too costly, and encompassing a diversion (Pritchett, 2005; Fraser, 2005; Brown, 1993; Kauffman, 1990; Gitlin, 1994; Harvey, 1996). As Nancy Fraser puts it regarding the feminist movement: “Effectively mesmerized by the politics of recognition, we unwittingly diverted feminist theory into culturalist channels at precisely the moment when circumstances required redoubled attention to the politics of redistribution” (Fraser, 2005: 299). In this way, a prominent point of frustration with the concept of identity and particularly with forms of politics prescribed by this focus is that it acts as a diversion from economic inequality and marginalization. It funnels critical political energy into symbolic struggles and analysis at the expense of material struggles and analysis. And, consequently, for some, theoretical engagements with identity play a role in perpetuating dominant power structures and undermine the potential for emancipatory politics.

potentially deeper analysis and understanding of how identities become attached to individuals and social groups despite the central significance of these attachments to political life and power-laced social relations. Moreover, the absence of grounded analyses of identity production and its political effects tends to reduce the consensus position on identity, despite its hard-won insights, to the status of a cliché. Brubaker and Cooper, for instance, capture this position well when they decry an overabundance of “ ‘identity talk’ – inside and outside of academia” and suggest that “the ‘identity’ crisis – a crisis of overproduction and consequent devaluation of meaning – shows

For others, the problem with engaging with identity is that it promotes fractionalization and balkanization (Pritchett, 2005; Wolin, 1993; Gitlin, 1994). To frame politics in terms of identity, to incorporate identity into our conceptions of justice, they argue, is to focus on what is particular to individuals and groups and therefore on what differentiates people from one another. For some theorists, this undermines the possibility of building consensus and solidarity across social divisions—a consensus and solidarity that many understand to be vital to healthy democratic societies or to how we ought to live together. As Iris Marion Young puts it, these critics

claim that group-specific political movements endanger democracy and make meaningful communication impossible. Focusing on issues of gender, sexuality, race, ethnic disadvantage, [they] assert, only divides and destroys public discussion, creating bickering and self-interested enclaves with no orientation towards transformative deliberation or co-operation (2000: 82).

Rather than thinking about politics in terms of what makes us different, and reifying such differences through our attention to them, many theorists suggest that we should focus on what brings us together—on what enables us to relate to one another in positive ways. In making a powerful case for this perspective, Sheldon Wolin argues that, rather than recognizing difference, it is building similarities across difference that should be understood as the most significant project of democratic societies. He claims

Commonality is . . . fugitive and impermanent. It is difference that is stable. How long differences can remain bracketed depends on how skillfully the politics of similarities is conducted and that depends on the most important aspect of similarity. Similarity in this context is not an empirical description but a normative aspiration. It expresses a will to share actively in a common experience rather than in a common life (Wolin, 1993: 472).

For him, the critical task and the often exceedingly demanding task of democratic politics is building and maintaining a sense of commonality and engaging with identity makes this task all the more difficult.

For still others, identity conceptualized as anti-essential mobile, multiple, and contingent—as an ongoing process that is social constructed—is unable to avoid or overcome the challenges of relativism and reification (regardless of the ‘rightness’ or ‘wrongness’ of these terms). In the words of Nancy Fraser, the “problem [of relativism] can put like this: Deconstructive anti-essentialists appraise identity claims on ontological grounds alone . . . They succumb, as a result, to a night in which all cows are gray: all identities are equally fictional, equally repressive, and equally exclusionary” (1996: 69). In this way, she suggests, the consensus position undermines the grounds from which we make value judgments about identities—the grounds from which we condemn practices producing injustice, marginalization and exploitation.

Concerns regarding reification emerge when the understanding that identities are ‘representations’ is thus coupled with the understanding that nonetheless, misrecognition remains a serious source of injustice—that our conceptions of identity are a significant source of injustice.

Or, putting aside the rather fraught language of justice, the understanding that our practices and institutions represent individuals and groups in particular types of ways and that this produces and reproduces the social, economic and political marginalization of some individuals and groups. Critics question whether it is possible to both affirm that the ways we categorize people is a harmful form of reification—that it is imperative that we actively attempt to recognize people in different ways—and that the identity of individuals and groups, eludes categorization. And, many conclude that all too frequently theorists of identity and of the practices associated with identity politics fail at this task; they conclude that while these theorists may pay lip service to the multiple, mobile and contingent aspects of identity, they tend to depend upon and reify essentialized identity categories.

no signs of abating” (2000: 3). This disparagement of the consensus as a cliché, then, centers on the argument that the words we attach to identity—“anti-essential”, “relational”, “situated”, “social produced”, “contingent”, “in flux” (etc.)—are becoming increasingly meaningless through inattentive overuse. Increasingly, this critique suggests, theorists attach these qualifiers to identity but do not establish what these words contribute, particularly outside of the realm of abstraction. Accordingly, I argue, exploring specific processes of social production and particular instances of both social and physical relationality can help to give concrete meaning to these terms, or clarify their uselessness.

The second and most significant reason I suggest for undertaking this work, however, is based on a simple observation that the remainder of this dissertation helps to illustrate: the observation that, despite all the conceptual difficulties of the term and theorists’ various frustrations with it, representations of identity are at work in the world. We employ them in our everyday lives, they are an important component of political struggles (both within and outside the realm of so-called “identity politics”) and they are an ongoing structuring influence on the options open to us in society. Moreover, the ways these representations are at work in the world cannot always be captured through the assumption of social construction. Indeed, there may be an ‘overabundance of identity talk’ within political theory, but this talk only engages identity in particular ways, and as a result, many aspects of the relationship between identity and politics are frequently ignored—particularly, its material and experiential manifestations in contexts other than what we call “identity politics”.¹¹ There is little focus on, and attention to, the ways

¹¹The lack of empirically-informed theoretical explorations of actual historical processes of identity construction within political theory, despite the proliferation of the consensus position on identity, I suggest, reflects dominant orientations within the discipline. Many political theorists are centrally engaged with the problem of identity. However, the nature of this engagement is presently bounded by the discipline’s standing preoccupations with questions of normativity or ‘what ought to be’, with state-centered analysis, and with conceptual critiques focusing

different material and symbolic resources become attached to different identities at the micro-level in the course of all sorts of politics. I further suggest that by failing to engage in these types of explorations, we are ignoring critical aspects of politics—we are ignoring especially the interrelationship between practice and activity and the ways meanings become attached to individuals, social groups and places.

on destabilizing dominant discourses and inspired by the emergence of post-structuralism and post-modernism. Thus oriented, theorists' engagements with identity have tended to coalesce around two primary points of inquiry: questions of justice and/or emancipation, and questions of how to best conceptualize identity or 'who we are.'

Theorists of the first orientation ask, often with an eye to the role of the state, 'what is the relationship between justice and identity', 'what is the relationship between recognition and justice?' or 'what theory of justice should be used to adjudicate claims of exclusion and marginalization?' (Taylor, 1994; Honneth, 1992; Fraser, 1996, 2005; Maclure, 2003; Harvey, 1996; Benhabib, 2002). They explore issues of identity as they relate to the questions of 'how we ought to live together' and 'how can we improve the ways we live together'; and in this way, they seek to address the social and psychological harm caused by the way we recognize and represent identity (both in our social structures and discourses).

As Jocelyn Maclure observes, theorists who thus explore the relationship between justice and identity frequently "appear to be animated by the "end-state" perspective" (2003: 12); that is, they focus on the shape of the ideal (or perhaps more ideal) society and how best to approximate this ideal. The frame of reference of this way of engaging identity is typically society-wide or state-wide (if not universal) and top down; these accounts tend to offer prescriptions regarding what the state should do, or how it should be ordered, to create a more just society. Warren Magnusson aptly describes this kind of work with this characterization: "Many [political theorists] devote their efforts to the activity Hegel warned us against: giving instructions to the world. These instructions consist of constitutional principles, norms of conduct, ideological orientations, or laws and policies, for which some sort of philosophical rationalization is offered" (2011: 111). Even where theorists reject the complications and history of the language of justice and instead focus on the relationship between identity and emancipatory politics or marginalization, they frequently maintain this level of analysis.

On the other hand, theorists of the second orientation are asking how to conceptualize identity: 'if identities are not essential and autonomous, what are they?', 'how might we conceptualize and engage with identity in ways that do not ultimately depend on essentialism?' or 'is identity the best way to conceptualize our experiences of who we are and, if it is not, what is the alternative?' (Young, 1990; Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Brown, 1993; Hall, 1996; Pritchett, 2005; Wolin, 1993; Gitlin, 1994; Emcke, 2000; Connolly, 2002; Kompridis, 2005; Tully, 2000; Dhamoon, 2006). Here, theorists criticize liberal conceptions of identity and subjectivity and seek to offer more compelling alternative conceptualizations.

Such engagements with how to conceptualize identity as "who we are" favour abstraction and what might be labeled 'deliberate fuzziness'. They attempt to theorize in a way that is heedful of the contributions of post-modernism and post-structuralism. That is, they strive to be attentive to what lies beyond the margins of our concepts and to the aspects of identities that escape our languages and modes of representation (White, 1990: 80). On this terrain, theorists seek out ways to conceptualize identity or "who we are" in a manner that, while not getting it exactly right (which, as the consensus pushes us to acknowledge, is most likely impossible), is more open or porous. In this way, they attempt to find modes of conceptualization that acknowledge and invite what escapes the confines of our representations rather than denying and erasing it. The result has been the proliferation of qualifiers that may be attached to the concept of identity or subjectivity—contingency, hybridity, multiplicity, performativity, schizoid, difference, fragmentation, diaspora, borderlands etc. and the primarily abstract theoretical exploration of, and debate over, how these qualifiers may help generate this openness and refusal of definitional closure (Isin and Wood, 1999: 17-19; Grossberg, 1996: 90-93).

Accordingly, I call for greater attention to how identities are constructed through situated practices. Discourse analyst Jonathan Potter captures the analytical orientation of this kind of work, and of the work to which I set out to contribute through this dissertation, when he says: “constructionist social science would benefit from taking seriously the issue of construction. Rather than treat construction as a taken-for-granted start point, it should consider construction and deconstruction as a central and researchable feature of human affairs” (1996: 207). Following Potter, but as a political theorist concerned with how certain meaning, values and powers come to be attached to particular social groups, I argue that there is a need for more political theory that explores particular, grounded processes constructing these linkages: for work that takes the construction of identity as a ‘researchable feature’ and analytically unpacks processes afoot in specific worldly, empirical examples of construction. In this way, I echo Rita Dhamoon when she calls for the examination of the “processes of meaning making.” As she puts it “examination of these processes makes it possible to contextually explore meanings/significations that shape the production, circulation, use and reproduction of messages that encode identities, difference and non-differences within contexts of power” (2006: 124). This dissertation, then, sets out to contribute to the exploration of how identities are constructed through micro-level situated practices. This work, I stress, requires taking our situated social and physical locations seriously as the site of action and as an aspect of social construction; and, I suggest, it can contribute significantly to the study of identities within political theory.

While the study of urban collective action and the politics of contentious proximity is certainly not the only way to explore how identities are constructed through micro-level practices, I suggest that it offers a fruitful avenue for pursuing this type of work. Beyond contributing to the exploration on the construction of identities through situated practices,

however, the analysis I build in this dissertation also addresses two other significant lacunae in the way identity is generally engaged within political theory.

First, while political theorists have devoted significant attention to the situatedness of our identities in terms of their relationship to dominant discourses, processes of marginalization and other identity groups, and to our situatedness within our particular bodies, they have devoted significantly less attention to our situatedness in places—that is, to our situatedness within particular material and physical locales that carry meaning (Cresswell, 2013). The instances of urban action that I take up in this dissertation underline what human geographers have long been arguing: that the meanings ascribed to, attributed to and taken as given by individuals and groups are intricately bound up not only with our embodied experiences but also with physical locales, places and landscapes (Massey, 1994, 2005; Ley, 1983; Duncan and Duncan, 2004; Tuan, 1975).¹² The interaction between the identities of people and places is a defining feature of both actions. In this way, I suggest, the exploration of these actions can help to deepen our understandings of the relationship between the identities of people and places, as well as to connect political theory to some of the more sophisticated work undertaken on this issue in other disciplines.

The second area to which engaging with the politics of contentious proximity can contribute is to a deeper understanding of the ways that representations of identity are employed in strategic action politics. The need for this kind of work, as I suggest above, is especially apparent when groups, individuals and processes that do not fit easily within the standing framework of what scholars and political actors have come to call “identity politics” are considered. Representations of identity are being deployed indirectly by groups as well as

¹² This is sometimes taken up within political theory and political science more generally in discussions of nationalism and national identity. What I am calling for is more particular (local) than this.

directly; that is, they are being deployed to contest other types of conflicts as well as those that center on achieving justice and inclusion or on overcoming marginalization. They are something collective actors *use* at the micro-level to engage in political contestation that is undertaken in order to achieve a range of different kinds of symbolic and material goals. I argue that the analysis of the politics of proximate identity helps to show that what we *do* with representations of identities when we employ them as a tool for undertaking strategic political action not only plays a role in the social construction of the meanings, values and powers associated with particular social groups; it also helps to construct the repertoires and scripts available to actors engaging in collective political contestation.

1.3.2 Urban Collective Action

Given ongoing patterns of globalization and urbanization, many cities in North America are accommodating more people; different cultural and socioeconomic groups are encountering one another in new ways and in new places; and pressure is mounting for the development of buildings and infrastructure that can accommodate greater population densities. As such, one of the major, and timely, contributions of this dissertation is to the exploration of how diverse populations negotiate the terms according to which they live together within the relatively limited confines of urban space—particularly, at the micro level and in the wake of demographic and physical changes. Through its focus on how groups employ the politics of contentious proximity in these negotiations, and on the reverberations of this politics, this dissertation adds to our understanding of urban collective action and contestation. While overlapping in significant ways with both concepts, I argue that the politics of contentious proximity provides an

alternative to two other dominant lenses used to depict and analyze urban contestation: NIMBY (not in my backyard) and ‘urban social movement’.

‘Urban social movement’, as it has been employed to explore collective action in cities, has been defined in both widely encompassing and quite specified ways. In terms of the former, it has been conceptualized as citizen action undertaken in order to achieve or prevent change in a given area of urban life, and as involving a wide range of different actions and objectives. Hans Pruijt, for instance, defines urban social movements as “movements through which citizens attempt to achieve some control over their urban environment” (2007: 5115). The more specific sense of the concept of urban social movement builds from the work of Manuel Castells who first coined the term. For Castells, urban social movements are “collective actions consciously aimed at the transformation of the social interests and values embedded in the forms and functions of a historically given city” (1983: xvi). As Mayer sums up Castells’ concept:

Only when they combine activism around collective consumption with struggles for community culture and political self-management, could they be classified as urban social movements, that is, capable of transforming urban meanings, and to produce a city organized on the basis of use values, autonomous local cultures and decentralized participatory democracy (2009: 364).

Conceived in this way, ‘urban social movements’ represent a radical and transformative (or at least potentially transformative) form of politics—they point to an alternative to “the city emerging from the interests and values of the dominant class” (Castells, 1983: 320).¹³

¹³ As Pickvance states, “to use the term was to identify oneself with a group of writers who distrusted established political parties and believed in the potential for radical change of non-institutionalized urban political action, and to separate oneself from those interested in well-studied groups like voluntary associations, NGOs and pressure groups.” (2003: 104)

Accordingly, work within this tradition has tended to focus on the impact of macro-level dynamics of urban transformation (Andretta, Piazza and Subirats, 2015: 205).¹⁴

The types of collective action and contestation on which this dissertation focuses are not usefully conceptualized as ‘urban social movement’, I suggest, as they represent a more particular category of action than the generalized version of this concept, while also eluding capture by its more restrictive definition. Taken broadly, ‘urban social movement’ encompasses both conservative and radical actions; and, the collective actions I take up might be seen as a subcategory of this concept. Yet, representing them in this way adds little to their analysis. The actions I take up are provoked by, and engage with, new, and contentious, proximities—the encounter of new social groups and physical forms. In this way, they represent a particular form of urban collective action, which I suggest is more usefully conceptualized in a way that captures these qualities. Moreover, these actions do not fit within the specified category of urban social movement, as they are not easily conceptualized as examples of transformative politics. Rather than mobilizing claims that challenge the mentalities and structure of the city or promoting change at a societal level, the instances of collective action this dissertation takes up make particular and localized claims. They make claims about what is owed to people living in a particular place, and about the way that place, and its people, should be understood.

Alternatively, a NIMBY framework, with its specific focus on local opposition brought on by concerns about proximity and its attention to the micro level, captures many significant elements of the actions I explore; yet, I argue, this lens detracts more from their analysis than it adds. Taken generally, NIMBY connotes local opposition to particular relations of proximity (or

¹⁴ Castells argues that “urban social movements are not random expressions of discontent, varying from city to city, but rather they bear, in their structure and goals, the stigmas and projects of all the great historical conflicts of our time” (1982: 319).

proposed proximity). More specifically, NIMBYs are defined as “people that combine a positive attitude and resistance motivated by calculated personal costs and benefits” (Wolsink 2000, 53). A NIMBY scenario, in the specified sense, involves opposition to a generally desired public good (most NIMBY analyses focus on efforts to site various types of plants and facilities—waste treatment, electrical, wind etc.) based on their location: for example, NIMBYs might argue “We think wind farms are a good thing and they should be constructed somewhere. We just don’t want them in our neighbourhood.” While both my cases involve local opposition—to the presence of the street-level sex-work and the presence of monster houses—in neither instance is this opposition combined with a positive attitude. It would be stretching significantly to suggest that either is widely considered to be a public good by the general public in Vancouver.

Additionally, and most significantly, the NIMBY framework—in both its specific and general articulations—negatively frames the actions it is used to analyze, as well as the motivations of local opposition. The NIMBY label connotes not just local opposition, but also illegitimate local opposition (Gibson, 2005; Burningham, Barnett and Walker, 2015; Devine Wright, 2012). As Burningham, Barnett and Walker put it: “In everyday use, the term is a pejorative shorthand to denote irrational, selfish and obstructive individuals who fear change and stand in the way of essential developments. NIMBYs are considered parochial individuals who place the protection of their individual interests above the common good” (2015, 247). The NIMBY framework, particularly in its original applications, suggests that local opposition results from an ignorant and self-interested public in need of education from informed and community-minded experts and public officials.¹⁵ In this way, framing local opposition as “NIMBY” focuses

¹⁵Piller, for example, describes NIMBY in the following terms: “The NIMBY syndrome is a public health problem of the first order. It is a reoccurring mental illness which continues to infect the public. Organizations which

attention on the motivations of the groups involved and provides a rhetorical tool for discrediting and delegitimizing opposition groups and their positions.

Since the 1990s, the concept of NIMBY has been criticized by a range of academics for its overly pejorative and reductive representation of this opposition (Burningham, Barnett and Walker, 2015; Devine-Wright 2009; Bell, Gray and Haggert 2005; Hunter and Leyden, 1995; McAvoy, 1998; Young, 2012; Lidskog and Elander, 1992). Particularly, critiques of the NIMBY framework have questioned its representation of local opposition as purely motivated by self-interest and also suggested that local opposition to a contentious proximity is not simply something to be overcome through education, but rather a force that can make a positive contribution to questions of siting (or of proximity) and local democracy. Employing the lens of provides an alternative approach to the study of local opposition and contentious proximities. Particularly, it differs from NIMBY frameworks in two notable ways. First, it does not provide a set diagnosis or interpretation of the efforts of local opposition; rather, it takes up these efforts as its terrain of investigation. Second, it focuses on the tools, specifically the representational tools, employed by the actors involved in these conflicts.

Accordingly, through its focus on the politics of contentious proximity, this dissertation contributes to the study of urban collective action that lacks the transformative potential attributed to urban social movements while also providing an alternative lens to the NIMBY framework for analyzing local opposition centering on contentious proximities.

intensify this illness are like the viruses and bacteria which have, over the centuries, caused epidemics such as the plague.” (1991: 4)

1.4 Case Selection

The selection of cases in this dissertation is motivated by a number of factors. First, both the case of CROWE and the case of the “monster” houses involve the little explored uses of identity that inspired this project: the deployment of the identities of people and places as a way of engaging in political contestation for non-transformative political purposes.

Second, these cases are intricately connected to ongoing forces and patterns of urban change that have shaped the development of the city of Vancouver, and political contestation within it, for the last half century and, which continue to mold it today. Particularly, the case of South Shaughnessy, and the development of “monster” houses, is shaped by a cluster of interrelated dynamics: immigration, an inflated housing market, and foreign ownership and investment. Despite the fact that 25 years have passed since political contestation emerged in South Shaughnessy over the presence of “monster” houses, many of the debates that occurred at that time continue to this day. The case of CROWE in the West End, alternatively, is shaped by the transition to an increasingly post-industrial work force, the development of residential highrises and the movement of marginalized populations within the city, as different areas undergo gentrification. Not only do the dynamics of urban change underlying both cases continue to shape Vancouver, but these cases were also among the first examples of urban collective action occurring, in part, in response to these trends. In this way, they provide a benchmark for comparison. The analysis of these cases provides a benchmark for later considerations of how political contestation in response to these trends has changed, or failed to change over the period since these cases occurred.

Third, I selected these cases because they represent examples of the politics of contentious proximity occurring in neighborhoods of very different socio-economic status. This

case selection allows me to begin to explore how socio-economic status interacts with the politics of contentious proximity—to ask how the privilege of South Shaughnessy impacts the representational strategies deployed in response to “monster” houses and how the almost middle class status of the West End (during the period of CROWE, median income in the neighborhood was below the city average) impacts the strategies deployed in response to the presence of street-level sex-work. It allows me to explore the ways socio-economic status impacts how groups engage the politics of contentious proximity to assert their right to a voice in determining the shape of the places in which they reside.

Finally, I also chose to focus on these two cases because they allow me to engage in in-depth discourse analysis. Both cases have extensive document records accessible through the Vancouver Archives. Other cases had less substantial records, and the groups involved in still other cases, especially newer examples, have not made their documents publically available. (My feeling about this is that residents groups and community actors become more willing to part with their documents once a certain amount of time has passed). With the cases of CROWE and “monster” houses, however, there was enough publically available documentation to track the groups’ activities and to develop a well-grounded argument about the representational strategies they deployed.¹⁶

1.5 Mode of Analysis and Methodology

My approach, generally conceived, centers on theorizing through the exploration of on-the-ground conditions and actions. More specifically, I develop my analysis of the two instances of collective action on which this dissertation centers—the CROWE case and the “Monster

¹⁶ An additional benefit of these cases is that they occurred at the same time as many of the debates within the literature on identity politics that I engage with in this dissertation.

House” case—in two interconnected stages. I first focus on the collective actions themselves, and particularly the representational strategies that the actors deployed as they engaged in political contestation, and I use discourse analysis to draw out the social interpretations, relationships and power hierarchies evoked through the rhetoric of these deployments, and on which they depend.¹⁷

Discourse analysis, as a methodology and as I employ it in this dissertation, centers on “language and texts as sites in which social meanings are formed and reproduced, social identities are shaped and social facts are established” (Tonkiss, 2012: 406). It is a methodology that concerns itself with questions of *how*: “how a particular discourse describes things . . . how it constructs blame and responsibility . . . how it constructs stakes and accountability . . . how it categorizes and particularizes”; and, it builds on the understanding that discourse has power—discourses produce and construct as they describe (Rose, 2001: 150; see also Potter, 1996). Moreover, this methodology suggests employing a certain degree of modesty in making analytical claims. It is built on the understanding that there are many ways to interpret texts, and that any particular way is not definitive but open to reexamination and reinterpretation. Discourse analysis, then, does not aim to uncover truth or fact. Rather, it aims to provide a persuasive account or perspective that is well grounded in the texts it draws upon (Tonkiss, 1998: 260).

While some have labeled discourse analysis a ‘craft skill’—something that is best learned through doing—and discourse analysts have a reputation for failing to render their methodology explicit, Gillian Rose suggests that this methodology is frequently guided by seven

¹⁷As Stuart Hall defines it, “a discourse is a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e. a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic” (1992: 290).

considerations (Potter, 1996: 40; Waitt 179; Rose, 2001: 139, 158). Discourse analysis involves (1) attempting to leave behind any preconceptions regarding the material or problems one sets out to explore; (2) seeking to immerse oneself in one's source material; and (3) engaging with the details and nuances of this material. Building on this analytical ethos of open, and what might be labeled 'thick', engagement with texts, it then involves (4) identifying and drawing out key themes within source material. At this stage, the discourse analyst asks questions such as: "How are particular words or images given specific meanings? Are there meaningful clusters of words and images? What associations are established within such clusters? What connections are there between such clusters?" (Rose, 2001: 151). It also involves (5) engaging the truth claims at work within one's materials and asking "how a particular discourse works to persuade [and h]ow does it produce its effects of truth?"; (6) paying attention to the texts' complexity and contradictions; and (7) exploring the ways they utilize emphases and silences (Rose, 2001: 154, 158). The analysis I build in this dissertation attempts to employ this analytical ethos and is loosely modeled on the considerations outlined by Rose.

In practice, my analysis of each of my cases involves the following primary steps. First, I identify and draw out patterns of argumentation and framing within the actors' deployments of representations of the identities of people and places. I then analyze the rhetorical work accomplished by these modes of representation—particularly, the conceptions of social and physical nearness and distance asserted through these strategies and the ways these representations counter alternative ways of understanding the circumstances that the actions seek to address. Next, I turn to the analysis of how successful these actors were in controlling the way that the events in question were understood. To this end, I explore the degree to which actors' positions were echoed and supported by media, government and official institutions; how other

groups were able to mobilize counter frames; and to what extent the actions were successful in achieving the outcome desired by the groups involved.

In undertaking this work I rely primarily on two types of sources—the internal documents, publications and submissions to public bodies and governments of the actors involved; and, newspaper stories providing coverage of the actions. To draw out the rhetorical strategies of the actors, I analyze their policy statements and strategy papers, their submissions to government and government institutions and their statements to and interviews with media. To explore the actors' degree of success in achieving their goals and in controlling the framing process, I focus on analyzing statements made—to media and within their own publications—and actions taken by government leaders, officials and oppositional groups; and the ways the actions, and circumstances surrounding them, are represented in media.

All the primary documents associated with CROWE, SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee that I draw on in this dissertation are from the collections of the Vancouver Archives and are publically available. Regarding CROWE, the archive has extensive records from the group in its Gordon Price Fonds—including internal documents such as letters, memos, the group's membership questionnaire, draft copies of reports and much more. In terms of the activities of SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee, the archives also have some records from SHPOA, as well as an extensive collection of the documents and letters from both groups in its City of Vancouver Fonds.

I have deliberately chosen not to use interviews with participants in these actions. This is for two primary methodological reasons. First, the main focus of my analysis is on the content of the rhetorical strategies (publically) deployed over the course of these two instances of collective action and how these strategies mobilize, enforce or contest particular associations or clusters of

meaning, rather than the ways that individuals involved personally interpreted the actions and the strategies involved or their personal motivations for becoming involved (which interviews would better elicit). Nor is my analysis meant to be a retrospective understanding of the participants on their own identities or that of the others groups involved. (Though these are certainly interesting dimensions of these actions!). Second, both cases occurred two decades ago, which significantly impacts participants' perspectives on events. This gap in time increases the possibility of lapses in memory and of reinterpretation of memories in light of more recent events or even changing attitudes as they look back at those events and strategies of representation. Moreover, my focus is on how representations of identities were deployed at the time of the actions. In both cases, additionally, quite extensive document records exist. Accordingly, I have chosen to rely primarily on sources of data as described above through discourse analysis, as generated in real time in the course of the contestation.

In the second stage of my analysis, I juxtapose the rhetorical claims of the actors against the silences, suppressions and occlusions that underwrite these framing efforts and against alternative articulations of the places and populations they could evoke. As Rose notes, “absences can be as productive as explicit naming; *invisibility* can have just as powerful effects as visibility” (2001, 157-58). In my analysis, then, I attempt to engage with these silences and to “make conjectures about alternative accounts which are excluded by omission, as well as those which are countered by rhetoric” (Tonkiss, 2012: 417). Through this juxtaposition, I analyze how these alternative articulations may impact the ways these actions function as processes of social construction; that is, how they may be read as enforcing or contesting the association of certain sets of meanings, values and powers with particular locales and social groups. Moreover, I draw on this work to develop the twofold tension noted in Section 1.2: that between empowerment and

exclusion and between the actors' active deployments of representations of identities and alternative modes of representation.

To develop the necessary background conditions as they evolve for these alternative accounts, I also draw on census data to track demographic changes within the neighbourhoods and use planning documents, newspapers and secondary sources to provide a sense of each neighbourhood's history and development. Additionally, I draw on secondary sources in order to flesh out some of the particular issues with which my cases intersect—including the regulation of prostitution in Canada and the City of Vancouver, the changing form of the economy in Vancouver and changing patterns of immigration to Canada. In particular, my analysis draws on and is intellectually indebted to research undertaken on sex-work in the West End by John Lowman (1983, 1984) and Becki Ross (2012a, 2012b, 2010) and to studies on the phenomenon of “monster” houses in Vancouver's West Side neighbourhoods by David Ley (1995) and Katharyne Mitchell (1993, 1997).

While this dissertation is built on extensive primary document research and contributes to the empirical understanding of both the cases on which it centers (perhaps most particularly to the case of CROWE), especially through its use of systematic discourse analysis, its central contribution is to the conceptualization of the politics of contentious proximity and the exploration of how this form of politics impacts patterns of social and spatial inclusion and exclusion in the city.

1.6 Chapter Outline

The next five chapters of this dissertation analyze in detail the two case studies of collective action, using the methods described above. In Chapter 2, I outline the histories of both

neighbourhoods and explore the demographic and physical changes which occurred in the time leading up to the actions. In Chapter 3, I turn my focus to Vancouver's West End and the actions of CROWE. I take up these actions as an instance of the politics of contentious proximity and draw out the identity strategies the group deployed in their efforts to push street-level sex-work out of the area. I then analyze these strategies and assess CROWE's success at controlling how the presence of sex-work in the neighbourhood was framed. Chapter 4 explores alternative conceptions of the West End as a place and of the people who reside within it. It then sets out to provide an assessment of how the actions of CROWE may function as a micro-level process of social construction—that is, how they produce and sometimes contest social and spatial hierarchies and power relations. Chapters 5 and 6 undertake a parallel analysis focusing on the actions taken in Shaughnessy responding to the presence of “monster” houses. In Chapter 7, I conclude by returning to the question of what can be gained from conceptualizing these actions as the politics of contentious proximity, and to an account of the tension between empowerment and exclusion at work in these actions, as well as the interplay between the representation of the identities of people and places deployed by the actors themselves and alternative ways in which the neighbourhoods and the people who reside in them are known.

Chapter 2: Urban Change: The West End and Shaughnessy

This chapter introduces the neighbourhoods of South Shaughnessy and the West End as well as broader economic and social processes shaping the City of Vancouver (along with many other cities in developed nations around the world) over the last fifty years: particularly, globalization and the expansion of the service sector, densification and social diversification. The instances of collective action taken up in this dissertation, I suggest, emerged in the wake of a period of intensification in one or more these ongoing patterns and in neighbourhoods that were particularly marked (though in very different ways) by this intensification. Both sets of actions, or instances of the politics of contentious proximity, emerged when particular social groups came to encounter each other in new ways and places; moreover, they occurred in places that had undergone notable changes in their built form. Through outlining these development trends and providing a brief history of the neighbourhoods of the West End and Shaughnessy, this chapter contextualizes the conditions in which these actions emerged.

Figure 2-1 The West End and Shaughnessy



Map data ©2015 Google

2.1 The West End

The West End is one of Vancouver's oldest residential neighbourhoods and has many location-based attributes, particularly its proximity to the downtown core and Stanley Park, and its beaches and waterfront.¹⁸ Given these features, the neighbourhood first emerged as the city's upper-class suburb, noted for its tree-lined streets and large Victorian houses. Around 1910, with the development of streetcar lines on Vancouver's West Side (South of False Creek), the city elite began to relocate to the new, extensively planned and exclusive subdivision of Shaughnessy. As a result of this movement, the West End underwent a significant transition, beginning with the conversion of the large single-family homes into multi-family dwelling and rooming houses. As David Ley puts it:

the erosion of Vancouver's West End, its first elite neighbourhood of single-family mansions, was rapid and was associated [...] with the encroachment of higher-density uses. [...] The West End [...] underwent a period of rapid conversion and apartment redevelopment for a less-wealthy group of citizens, culminating in 1927 in a new bylaw that did not allow for single-family dwelling (1983: 249-250).

In this way, both the built form and the socio-economic status of the area had begun to change. The movement towards higher density uses associated with these changes would continue in the neighbourhood for the next fifty years.

¹⁸ One question on CROWE's membership survey asked residents what they liked best about living in the West End. The most common answers all referenced benefits of proximity—easy access to Stanley Park, the beach and downtown—and natural beauty—ocean and mountain views, tree-lined streets.

Figure 2-2 The West End in the 1940s



Source: Leonard Frank Photos, Vancouver Public Library 4466 (left), 6213 (right). Images in the public domain.

Between 1930 and 1960, low-rise apartments, occupied primarily by lower and middle-income bracket singles, replaced many of the original houses, and the population of the West End increased at a slightly faster rate than the city as whole. In the late 1950s and continuing throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, however, the pace of densification quickened significantly and increasingly came to define the neighbourhood. By 1970, high-rise apartment towers marked the skyline of the West End and the neighbourhood's population had increased by fifty percent (Vancouver Planning Department, 1985: 21).¹⁹ As one newspaper article describing the changes noted: "There is . . . breathtaking development of the West End, a hodge-podge jumble of high-rises, where God knows how many tens of thousands of people live in slender towers which clutch the sky" (Kirkwood, 1969). Indeed, in 1973, the area was "welcoming over 600 new residents per month" and the population was approaching 40 000 (West End Planning Centre, 1973; Gutstein, 1975). As a result of this rapid influx of residents, the West End became (for a brief period) the densest area in Canada.²⁰

¹⁹ Influenced by Le Corbusier, architect Arthur Erickson imagined and sketched West End as "a single high density mega building" during this period (Ley, Pratt, Hiebert, 1992: 235).

²⁰ The West End would eventually be surpassed by St. James Town in Toronto.

Figure 2-3 Rapid Change in the West End: 1965 (Top) and 1971 (Bottom).



Source: Unknown photo, Vancouver Public Library, 9419. © Unknown



Source: W. Roozeboom photo, Vancouver Public Library, 9609b. © Vancouver Public Library

In many ways, the rapid densification of the West End is linked to the changing shape of the city's economy—particularly the growth of the service sector.²¹ Though the service sector had always been an important part of Vancouver's economy, it began to expand significantly in the 1960s. As Barnes *et al.* record: "In the 1960s alone, employment in transport, communications, and trade increased by over 40%; in finance, insurance, and real estate the growth was approximately 75%; and in community, business and personal services it exceeded 80%" (1992: 180-81). Moreover, "even during the depression of the 1980s, the number of managerial and professional jobs in the city increased by 40 000. By contrast, other occupations declined by over 90 000." (1992: 187). The economy, as it emerged from this depression, was characterized by a decline in the importance of manufacturing and an increased concentration on services, particularly those associated with technology and specialized knowledge.²² By the mid 1990s, 80% of the labour force in the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area was employed within the

²¹ This shift towards post-industrialism, however, has not simply involved an increase in the number of service sector or professional jobs in Vancouver. It has also involved a transformation of the types of services and professions in which the city has predominately specialized.

²² Nonetheless, this economic turmoil still had significant consequences for the city's economy: it signaled a transformation in the types of services in which the city specialized. Previously, service provision had centered on the industries associated with the control and distribution of the staples sector, supplying the business needs of large firms headquartered in the city, and, most significantly, on the provision of services for household consumers. Following the economic downturn of the 1970s and early 1980s, a somewhat different service sector emerged characterized by small, specialized firms dealing in information and technology and specialized knowledge. As Barnes *et al.* puts it, "Emerging from this turmoil of the early 1980s was quite a different economy. Computerization fundamentally changed the nature of work and livelihood for many types of workers. The intangible commodity of information became the most valuable commodity of all and was now bought and sold around the world and around the clock" (1992: 184). Consumer services, which had previously dominated the tertiary sector within the city and particularly the city center, saw their share of the regional work force decline and were increasing dispersed throughout the greater metropolitan area; and,

By contrast, marketed producer services, which produced and exchanged information and depended upon electronic communications networks, had risen to prominence and were heavily concentrated downtown. By the 1980s, such functions as accounting management consulting, public relations, law, research, and engineering, which large companies once provided in-house, were widely offered by independent firms or partnerships that specialized in meeting the complex needs of decision making elites in both the public and private sectors. (Hardwick and North, 1992: 219)

various divisions of an increasingly diversified service sector (Statistics Canada, 1961-1996; Smith, 2000: 169).²³

During the 1950s and 1960s, the expansion of the service sector in Vancouver particularly involved an increase in the number of office, and office-generated, jobs in the city. In the five years preceding the 1971 Canadian Census, office jobs represented 63% of yearly job growth in the city and 75% of growth when office-generated jobs were included (Hayes, 1975: 10). As a city report on employment growth put it: “about 75 percent of . . . annual employment [growth] is generated by construction of office buildings” (Hayes, 1975: 4). And, additionally, the large majority of these jobs were located in the city center.²⁴

²³ The changing shape of Vancouver’s economy was already acknowledged by the city’s elite in the late 1960s and early 1970s and was reflected in the transformation of municipal politics that occurred in this period. From the late 1920s to the late 1960s, municipal politics in Vancouver was dominated (almost exclusively) by a single party or, rather, civic association: the Non Partisan Association or NPA. The NPA, during this period, was associated with growth, boosterism and the interests of traditional business elites. In the 1970s, the NPA lost control of city council to The Electors Action Movement (TEAM), a new civic association whose primary basis of support was among white-collar workers and the professional classes (Ley, 1980; Tennant, 1980; Gutstein, 1983). As Hardwick and North say of TEAM:

They recognized that a post-industrial society was emerging and that city residents were less and less dependent on jobs in the port and in primary industry. They saw the future of the city centered around management and service activities, from producer services to finance, tourism, and information industries. They sought to make the city more livable for a population engaged in such activities (1992: 208-09).

In this way, while the political upheaval of the late 1960s and early 1970s centered on public frustration with what was seen as the heavy handedness of City Hall—particularly, with regards to public consultation within the urban planning process—it also reflected the changing structure of the city’s economy. It represented a moment when white-collar workers and professionals began to assert themselves politically, and to leverage their increasingly significant position within the city’s elite (Gutstein, 1983).

Many from the political left were hopeful that the electoral success of TEAM and the defeat of the NPA would mean that poorer residents of the city and poorer neighbourhoods within the city would gain a greater influence with city council. TEAM did indeed open the door to increased public participation in city planning—instituting a process of neighbourhood consultation and planning—but many from the left quickly became disillusioned with what they saw as the continuing dominance of elite interests within the party (Gutstein, 1983). When the party disintegrated (about 10 years after its emergence) it was partly the result of its more left leaning members moving their support to the Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE)—the more traditionally left leaning civic association which had emerged around the same time as TEAM—and partly a result of the reinvigoration of the NPA. This reinvigoration was partly fuelled by the party’s acknowledgement of changing realities within the city and the creation of space for the new elite of the post-industrial economy. Similarly, one way to interpret the split with COPE in the 2000s, is to view the formation of Vision Vancouver as an attempt within the left to come to terms with the same new economic realities.

²⁴ This was something that would come to concern council, resulting in the Livable Region plan, which encouraged the development of a number of ‘town centers’ in suburbs of Vancouver.

The densification of the West End was undertaken with this in mind.²⁵ Council and members of the business community proposed that increases in density would generate a ready supply of clerical workers within walking distance of the downtown core to meet the demands of the growing office sector.²⁶ Additionally, such densification, they hoped, would provide a needed economic boost. Other development projects had slowed down and there were some signs of decline in the city center (Gutstein, 1983; North and Hardwick, 1992; Tennant, 1980). According to Hardwick and North, “the city and the province suffered an economic downturn in the early 1960s. Blight marred the fringes of the urban core, and Vancouver City Council was haunted by the specter of American-style urban decay, which it feared might imperil the regional centrality of the downtown area” (North and Hardwick, 1992: 208). Building up in the West End, it was hoped, would generate projects for developers, and the resulting increase in population would create a much larger pool of shoppers for downtown businesses (Punter, 2004: 18).²⁷

By the early and mid 1970s, however, support for increasing density in the West End had declined dramatically.²⁸ The pro-growth Non-Partisan Association (NPA), which had dominated City Hall for thirty years, was replaced by The Electors Actions Committee (TEAM), which

²⁵ Both City Hall and Vancouver’s business community encouraged the rapid densification of the West End. The 1956 City development plan for downtown Vancouver represented the West End as an underutilized resource and referenced a recent change in zoning regulations, which would promote taller buildings. The report describes the state of the neighbourhood and the changes planners hope to see in the following terms:

Most of the original homes have been converted to multiple use, or replaced by apartments. The form which this redevelopment took is directly attributed to the subdivision pattern and the City’s building and zoning regulations then in effect. Box-like apartments with 6 or 8 suites per floor were able to be built with only 12 feet between them and 12 foot yards. Frame construction, permissible up to two storeys, set a pattern for height with consequent monotonous appearance. A further and more serious disadvantage was the under-exploitation of density potential of this close-in residential area. The new Zoning and Development By-law encourages taller buildings with more open space (Sutton Brown, 1956: 3-4).

Moreover, as Gutstein records, Vancouver’s Downtown Business Association asserted that the vitality of the city’s central business district depended on the densification of the West End (1975: 100). Most commentators suggest that density in the West End was pursued because it could help with two things: providing economic stimulus and staffing the growing number of office towers in the downtown core (Gutstein, 1975; Ley, 1983; Hardwick, 1974).

²⁶ Moreover, it could do this without increasing the city’s traffic problems.

²⁷ Increasing property values were also a driver of growth.

²⁸ Indeed in the early 1963 and in 1972, city planners had asked council to curb growing density in the West End but their requests were denied (Punter, 2004: 19; see also, Petit, 1993: 7).

came to power on the basis of a platform founded on 'quality of life' and 'limited growth' (Ley, 193: 381). The political shift at City Hall reflected the growing frustration of many Vancouverites regarding unregulated development and a lack of citizen consultation in the city. In the West End, many residents began to express resentment regarding developer driven growth in the area (Horsman and Raynor, 1978: 226; Oberfeld, 1973).²⁹ Moreover, as opposition to unregulated development became more vocal, the need for office workers had become less pressing. A rapid transit system (the Expo Line of the Skytrain debuted at Expo 86), which would bring suburban workers quickly to the downtown core, was on the horizon; and construction was again booming in the city center, resulting in a supply of offices that outstripped demand (Gutstein, 1983: 102). Accordingly, downzoning measures were implemented in the West End and the rapid increases in density and population that had characterized the 1960s and early 1970s were curtailed. Indeed by the early 1980s, the population had decreased marginally (Statistics Canada 1961-1996).

Nonetheless, the West End of the late 1970s and early 1980s was marked by the dramatic changes the area had undergone during the proceeding decades—both demographically and in terms of its built form. The neighbourhood had become primarily a mix of mid-rises and high-rises, interspersed with a number of houses that had survived the various stages of redevelopment.³⁰ In 1981, the largest percentage of households in the West End consisted of singles (42% compared to 28.5 % in the city as a whole) and children represented only 4% on the population (compared to 17.5% in the city as a whole). The West End had the highest percentage

²⁹ Upon its election, TEAM attempted to institute community centered planning processes. In the West End, the objectives of this process included the following: the "preservation and improvement of West End as a desirable residential area for a large population; involvement of residents in all aspects of future planning; and finding alternative housing for people displaced by development." (Griffiths, 1973). As Mayor Art Philips put it: "It's part of an over all effort to decentralize planning in the city" (Thomas, 1973).

³⁰ In the West End planning documents of this period, the focus on downzoning was accompanied by a concern with heritage preservation. Many wanted to protect the remaining 'character' buildings.

of singles or “non-family” households (68%) of any neighbourhood in the city and the smallest percentage of children (Vancouver Planning Department, 1985: 23). Of the families living in the West End, a single parent headed the large majority.³¹ Moreover, 93% of West End residents were renters (compared to 55% in the city as a whole)—again, the highest percentage of any Vancouver neighbourhood—and their average income was slightly lower than that of the city as a whole (Vancouver Planning Department, 1985: 25). In many ways, the West End population in the late 1970s and early 1980s was dominated by the ideal workforce of a post-industrial economy, or of the growing service sector—young, relatively unencumbered and mobile adults (Hardwick, 1974: 63).³²

Given the rapid, large-scale changes to the area in the preceding decades, the huge influx of people into the area, and the departure of many residents—high rise development often involved many of the residents of the former lower density buildings leaving the area (the new developments usually meant increased rents)—commentary on the West End in the 1970s and early 1980s in popular media, planning documents and academic sources suggests that the neighbourhood was increasingly perceived as unsettled, and also unsettling. As one report put it, the West End had “reached a critical juncture in its history” (Sheehan, 1971).

³¹ Though many of the planning documents focusing on the West End spent a significant amount of time considering families, playgrounds and schools, the number of children in the area was expected to remain small. In this way, a part of this focus can be attributed to the desire to maintain enough children in the area to keep the schools open. In the words of one planning document, the signs “indicate no great influx of children” in the near future (Coates, 1973: 21-22). As is perhaps to be expected in an area where 95% percent of households did not include children, the *West End Public Opinion Poll* found that children’s playgrounds and services were not a concern for most West End residents (Burgess, 1972: 15).

³² In 1981, 52% of the total work force in Vancouver was employed in the service sector. In the West End 60% of the population were employed in the service sector (Statistics Canada, 1961-1996).

Table 2-1 West End Statistics

		WEST END	VANCOUVER
POPULATION	YEAR		
	1961	25359	384522
	1971	38130	426240
	1976	36942	409734
	1981	37175	414281
	1986	37297	431147
SINGLES Percentage of Total Population	1971	37	24
	1981	42	28.5
	1986	45	30
CHILDREN Percentage of Total Population	1971	6	23
	1981	4	17.5
	1986	4	17
RENTED DWELLINGS Percentage of occupied dwellings	1971	96	53
	1981	93	55
	1986	91	58
MOVERS Percentage of population over 5 years	1971	79	54
	1981	69	52
	1986	68	52
SERVICE SECTOR Percentage of total employment	1971	67	57
	1981	73	63
	1986	76	67
AVERAGE INCOME Household in Canadian dollars	1971	7247	9614
	1981	18261	24856
	1986	24482	32384
MEDIAN INCOME Household in Canadian dollars	1971	~	~
	1981	15036	19776
	1986	19021	24652

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada 1961-1996.³³

Contributing to such perceptions of the West End was the limited extent of community organization within the neighbourhood, as well a scarcity of information regarding the area. The *West End Opinion Poll*, a part of efforts by the City to construct a community plan for the

³³ The demographic figures provided for the West End here were compiled by combining data from census tracts 60 to 68.

neighbourhood, found that West End residents considered a lack of opportunity for citizen participation in the West End to be the fourth most pressing problem facing the neighbourhood and a lack of accessible information on the area to be the seventh (each of these issues was a more significant problem for younger residents and a less significant one for older residents) (Burgess, 1972: 13). Similarly, in their 1973 report, the West End Planning Centre, an initiative of TEAM to encourage more community centered planning, found that:

There is a lack of social analysis in the West End, and no organization to co-ordinate up-to-date data. Relevant data is hard to assemble. Many agencies and institutions serving the West End are controlled from offices outside the area which often don't know the complete effect of their programs in this area. Because of the high transiency rate and quick changes in the physical form of the area, there is a high rate of social change. (1973, 11)³⁴

In this way, the rapid changes experienced in the area made it difficult to gather information (and undertake citizen driven planning processes) and they also posed considerable challenges for groups attempting to organize on behalf of the West End as a unit.³⁵

In addition, another significant change occurring the West End at this time was the increasing visibility of the gay community around Davie Street. As Hiebert, Pratt and Ley put it:

[The West End has been a] location of choice among gay men in the city since the 1960s, but, despite that, hardly visible until the gay liberation movement of the 1970s, the area provided almost an ideal territorial niche for gay men opting to 'come out' . . . [B]efore the end of the decade, an article in the

³⁴ It was also found that community and social services had failed to keep pace with development and needed improvement (Griffiths, 1973; Anon., 1974).

³⁵ In their discussion of neighbourhood planning projects involving increased public participation during the TEAM era, Horsman and Raynor compare the success—measured in terms of (1) getting people involved and (2) in terms of getting them what they wanted—of efforts in Kitsilano and the West End. Efforts in the former, they argue, were more successful in both categories (1978: 243-44). This, they argued, was because there was much more existing community organization in Kitsilano than in the West End (ibid). In the latter, it was more difficult to link up with organized groups purporting to represent the interests of the community and with a clear set of concerns regarding the future direction of the area. As a result, most efforts towards citizen participation in planning in the West End involved survey work attempting to establish the pressing concerns of the community (the *West End Opinion Poll* is an example of this.)

Vancouver Sun proclaimed that gay men were ‘Out of the Ghetto’ and announced the ‘coming of age’ of Vancouver’s gay community. During the 1980s gay men laid increasing claim to the neighbourhood (1992: 240).

Yet, this emergence was hard fought. Homosexuality was only decriminalized in Canada in 1969, and throughout the 1970s and 1980s it was often characterized in the media and in some academic sources, as ‘deviant sexuality.’ Moreover, the existence of the gay community within the West End had become general knowledge in the city and beyond—an important and significant step in gaining broader acceptance for a traditionally marginalized group. Yet, it also resulted in groups and individuals visiting the West End in order to harass the community and, in extreme cases, to commit acts of violence against individuals perceived as homosexual.³⁶ In this way, at a time where social attitudes were ambiguous at best towards homosexuality within the city as a whole, the increasing visibility of the community, for some, contributed to anxiety within, and regarding, the neighbourhood.

Perhaps what was most unsettling about the West End during this period, however, was its built form, and the changes in lifestyle represented by that form. The West End had become not only the highest density area in the city (and the country) but also the first residential neighbourhood to undergo extensive high-rise development. In a city dominated by residential neighbourhoods consisting primarily of single-family homes, which, even decades later, were very resistant to increases in density, the new form of the West End faced sharp criticism.³⁷ During the 1970s and early 1980s, both popular and academic commentators lamented and lampooned the changes in the West End: the new shape of the neighbourhood was ‘ugly’;

³⁶ 1970s and 1980s planning documents on the West End do not directly mention the presence of the gay community or discuss community services of what may be needed by that community, though they frequently mention ‘swinging singles’.

³⁷ It was technically illegal to have a suite in a single-family home in most areas of Vancouver well into the 1980s.

‘detrimental to community’; ‘a developer’s dream and the people’s nightmare’. As one commentator remarked, the West End had become “a good place to invest—but not to live anymore” (Borbridge, 2007: 111). In his book *Vancouver Ltd.* Donald Gutstein writes:

In, 1973, with a population of over 40, 000 in a one square-mile area, the West End was one of the most densely populated places in the world. [...] And, of course, with so many people being packed together into mainly one-bedroom apartments, a whole host of problems have appeared: children, families, the poor, those fixed incomes being forced out of the area; noise, air and traffic pollution; alienation and loneliness in the midst of thousands of people; high crime and suicide rates; and a lack of community spirit. (1975: 98).³⁸

Concerns regarding density were also present among some residents of the West End and in the city planning literature of this period. The *West End Opinion Poll* found that 87% of residents felt that there were “too many or about the right amount of people” residing in the area (Burgess, 1972: 12). Moreover, 54% of those surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with the way the West End was developing (a percentage that climbs to 72% among young people and falls to 37% among the elderly). The survey ranked dissatisfaction regarding development in the neighbourhood as the third most concerning problem for West Enders (after parking and traffic, respectively) (Burgess, 1972).

Planning documents expressed uncertainty and sometimes distrust of the high rises in the West End. One document, for example, stressed concerns regarding the impact of density on the physical and social wellbeing of children. The document records that “studies of the mental well being of children who live in high rise structures far from nature and the ground are decidedly negative” (West End Planning Centre, 1973: 16, 22). Further, it expressed concern over public

³⁸ Yet as Coates records, “the aggregate crime rate is far higher for the West End than Vancouver City as a whole on a square mile basis. [However, o]nce the effect of density on the frequencies has been neutralized, the reverse appears to be the case” (1972: 23).

space and livability in extensively built up areas: it laments that the streets become just for “going through” and that there is a “growing concern among the citizens of all cities that perhaps something has been lost. The trees are gone, and the narrow street and the neighbourhood and the birds and the ability to see a smog free sky” (ibid: 26, 19).

Much of the negative commentary on density in the West End drew upon American urban experiences involving dense, inner city ghettos, inner city blight and ‘white flight’ (and often American urban research). As Warren Magnusson notes, “the rapid high-rise apartment development in the West End [...] heightened anxieties about the deteriorating quality of life in city”, and, fear that the city might be headed in the same direction as some of its neighbours to the south (1990: 179; See also, North and Hardwick, 1992: 208). In this way, high-rise development in the West End signalled a very visible transformation and generated a great deal of anxiety in both the West End and the city more generally, regarding the direction of change in the city. One *West Ender* article captures this sentiment well: "The inner city can be a pleasant exciting place to be or it can decay into a skid row type of area . . . What is the fate of downtown Vancouver? Is it to become another Detroit or New York, or will planners, developers and citizens be able to work in unison to make it liveable?" (Atkinson, 1975). Yet, as Hardwick suggests, while the West End had its detractors, it also offered an alternative to the single-family homes of the typical Vancouver neighbourhood—a lifestyle that some clearly preferred (typically young people whom he associated with the post-industrial economy) (1974: 203). He asserts that:

Although there is a wide-spread condemnation of the West End in the city at large, it is not shared by the majority of those who live there. It is a story of those preferring other urban environments, namely single-family detached homes, trying to superimpose their attitudes toward high-density living on others. In the end, those who appreciate the West End tend to stay there (ibid).

Indeed, another finding of the *West End Opinion Poll* was that 75% percent of residents were satisfied with their present life in the West End (Burgess, 1972).³⁹

The West End of the early 1980s had undergone rapid changes: its built form had shifted dramatically; it had experienced a huge influx of people; and the composition of its households reflected new post-industrial economic pressures. Thus, the Concerned Residents of the West End was formed in, and in relation to, a place emerging from a period of transition—a neighbourhood that was attempting to come to grips with its new form, and attempting to determine the terms in which its new form would be understood. The actions of CROWE and particularly the ways in which it framed the residents of the West End, and the West End itself would play a role in this process.

2.2 Shaughnessy

If the development of the West End, in many ways, can be seen as a story of densification, the development of Shaughnessy can be seen as one of planning and neighbourhood protection. Located on the west side of Vancouver, Shaughnessy was the city's first extensively planned community. Its creator, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), envisioned Shaughnessy as a particular type of place: a new and prestigious residential neighbourhood for the city's elite that would supplant "all previous ideas of where a fine house should be built" (McDonald, 1996: 156; Vancouver Planning Department, 1980). Moreover, the company strove to carve out the neighbourhood's exclusive status through design—managing the built form of the area, its landscape and its governance structures.

³⁹ This number is higher among the elderly and lower among young people, however. It is also lower in the areas of the West End that would come to host street-level sex-work in the early 1980s.

In 1884, in exchange for extending the transcontinental railway to Vancouver⁴⁰ the Government of British Columbia gave the CPR a land grant of over 6000 acres (MacDonald, 1977: 9).⁴¹ This grant included both areas in the downtown core of Vancouver and also a large section of land to the south of False Creek (covering much of the West Side of Vancouver). A portion of the latter would become the location of Shaughnessy Heights—named in honour of Lord Thomas Shaughnessy, the second president of CPR (SHPOA, 1990: 2). As Norbert Macdonald described the area: “with the exception of some logging roads and rough wagon trails, this immense nine-square-mile tract south of False Creek was largely untouched forest in 1886” (MacDonald, 1977: 9). CPR began to clear land in preparation for the new subdivision in 1908.

Before any building occurred, however, CPR commissioned extensive landscaping work. To design and oversee this work, they hired Frederick Todd, a landscape architect from Montreal, who was heavily influenced by the work of Frederick Law Olmsted—an American landscape architect known for “romantic English inspired ‘country in the city’ designs” (Duncan, 1992: 41).⁴² As Katharyne Mitchell notes, the CPR “intentionally modeled [Shaughnessy] on the pastoral myths of the English countryside” (1997: 168). The subdivision’s curving streets were engineered to follow the contours of the land, were intersected by tree-lined boulevards and culminated in the “the Crescent”—a circular drive enfolding a park. CPR also spent significant time and money on removing, planting and manicuring trees, hedges and other vegetation in an effort to evoke the aesthetic of the English pastoral. This, they believed, would signal the neighbourhood’s prestige and woo the primarily Anglo-Saxon business and professional

⁴⁰ Originally, its western terminus point was to be Port Moody.

⁴¹ The movement of the city’s elite from the aging West End to Shaughnessy was also made easier by the installation of the Granville Street Bridge.

⁴² Olmsted designed New York’s Central Park.

community in the city away from the aging West End.⁴³ Prior to the construction of any houses the CPR invested well over \$1 million on infrastructure and landscaping in Shaughnessy (Mcdonald, 1996: 156).

Once this process was complete, CPR began to sell parcels of the newly curated landscape. The lots ranged from one-fifth of an acre to one-and-a-half acres (significantly larger than lots in other parts of the city⁴⁴) and were sold for \$10 000 per acre. Despite the fact that they were selling land, and not houses, CPR influenced the design and style of the homes constructed through a number of mechanisms. It permitted only single-family homes and, as a condition of sale, the houses built were required to cost roughly six times as much as the typical Vancouver bungalow.⁴⁵ The price was established to protect the “prestigious character” of the area (SHPOA, 1990: 2). Additionally, CPR set aside \$5 million for provisional financing. To encourage people to build in Shaughnessy, and to ensure the right types of houses were built (and to make money), the Railway offered loans that could be used to finance both the purchase of the land and the construction of a house (Duncan, 1992: 42).⁴⁶ To receive a loan, however, buyers were required to meet the CPR’s standards and “building plans were carefully checked, not only to ensure that they adhered to price guidelines, but also for their overall appearance including positioning on the lot, house style, and quality of building materials” (ibid). The houses built as a result of this process encompass a range of architectural styles including English Arts and Crafts, Tudor

⁴³ As Ley notes, “during the city’s first generation, from 1886 to 1915 almost three out of four foreign-born members of the elite were from the United Kingdom, and of the Canadian-born, perhaps half were the children of British immigrants.” (Ley, 1995: 187). Additionally, on top of this predominance of Anglo-Saxon heritage, Duncan argues that “when the country house style was transferred to England’s colonies and former colonies it became double coded, to signify not only the status of gentry which it did in England, but also an abstract concept of Englishness which was seen by Anglophile elites as the most prestigious ethnic identity” (1992: 41).

⁴⁴ Average lot size in Shaughnessy was 1500 meters squared. In other parts of the city the average size of detached housing was 370 meters squared. (Duncan, 1992: 42)

⁴⁵ Houses were required to cost at least \$6000.

⁴⁶ CPR offered financing for up to 90% of the price of the land (at 6% for eight years) and for up to 66% of the price of the building (to a maximum of \$5000) (Duncan, 1992: 42).

Revival, Craftsman and Colonial Revival, and had extensive, manicured gardens, with many trees and often gatehouses and stables (SHPOA, 1990).

Figure 2-4 Shaughnessy Heights 1920s and 1930s

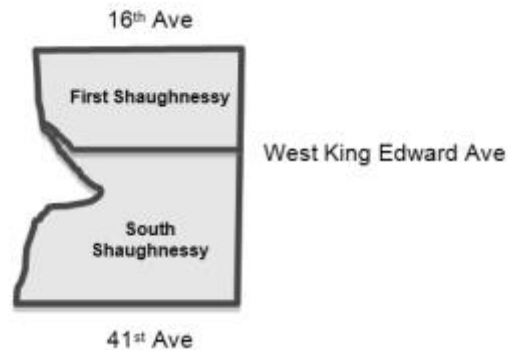


Source: Leonard Frank Photos, Vancouver Public Library 11278 (Top left), 11271 (Top middle), 11282 (Top right), 10444 (Bottom right), 10446 (Bottom left), 31227 (Bottom middle). Images in the public domain.

CPR's efforts to draw the city's elite to Shaughnessy proved successful. By 1914, 243 houses had been built (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980: 7). Approximately one-fifth of the city's leading businessmen and professional families had moved to the area and 80% of the neighbourhood's homeowners appeared on Vancouver's social registry (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980: 7; McDonald, 1996: 156). Given the success of the original development—First Shaughnessy—CPR expanded their efforts to include additional areas—Second

Shaughnessy and Third Shaughnessy (or South Shaughnessy) (SHPOA, 1992: 32).⁴⁷ These areas had many of the same landscaping and architectural features of First Shaughnessy but on a somewhat more modest scale. Both the lots and the houses were typically smaller.

Figure 2-5 South Shaughnessy



Just as the Canadian Pacific Railway sought to establish Shaughnessy as an elite and privileged neighbourhood through the design of its landscape and built form, it also worked to maintain this status through its governance structures: it sought to both establish tools to protect the ‘character’ of the neighbourhood and to gain recognition of Shaughnessy’s ‘special status’ from the local and provincial governments. Before beginning work on the subdivision, CPR successfully petitioned the provincial government to create the new municipality of Point Grey, which would include the west side of South Vancouver and include Shaughnessy (Gutstein, 1983: 193-94). The new municipality, CPR hoped, would protect its suburb from the working-class majority that dominated South Vancouver (ibid). However, once many of the city’s elite

⁴⁷ The Vancouver Heritage foundation describes the areas of Shaughnessy in the following terms: Shaughnessy consists of three subdivisions – First, Second and Third Shaughnessy. First Shaughnessy was developed in 1907 by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to entice the city’s elite to move from the West End to the newly-cleared area on the hill above 16th Avenue up to King Edward Avenue, with lots a minimum of 10,000 square feet. Curving streets were laid out on topographical lines, rather than the grid system common in most of Vancouver. Second Shaughnessy was created with smaller lots between King Edward and 37th Avenues. Third Shaughnessy followed in the late 1920s. (2015)

had bought into the neighbourhood (both figuratively and literally), CPR became concerned that this protection was inadequate. Accordingly, in 1914, they convinced a group of Shaughnessy residents to visit the provincial capital, in an attempt to establish Shaughnessy as a separate municipality from Point Grey. While the provincial government rejected this proposal, it established the *Shaughnessy Heights Settlement Act*, which “recognized and sanctioned the undertakings of the C.P.R. to ensure Shaughnessy's status in the City” (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980). The act made the neighbourhood a separate ward of Point Grey and required that taxes collected in the area would be used only within, or for the benefit of, the neighbourhood (Duncan, 1992: 43). Moreover, CPR further consolidated the special status of the neighbourhood in 1922 when the Province passed the *Shaughnessy Heights Building Restriction Act*. This Act removed control of zoning in Shaughnessy from Point Grey and enacted a special provincial zoning schedule for the area that prohibited subdivision (Duncan, 1992: 43). In addition, it expanded the neighbourhood's boundaries to include Second Shaughnessy and granted residents the power to seek out an injunction against anyone who violated that zoning (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980; SHPOA, 1992).

In many ways, the development of Shaughnessy over the course of the 20th Century may be read as an ongoing battle to maintain and protect its elite status—something that both the CPR and many residents saw as intrinsically connected to the character and landscape of the area. Protecting this status, however, involved ensuring that the “right” type of people moved into the neighbourhood. As Katharyne Mitchell states:

Fire and health regulations were invoked in the early part of the century to complement private zoning covenants, and the negotiation of building loans, sale of finished homes and securing of mortgages were scanned to ensure a buyer's proper ‘qualifications’ for living in the area. In this manner, a highly

effective informal strategy of exclusionary zoning operated in juxtaposition with more formal zoning measures. (1997: 166)

In this way, she suggests, the ‘exclusivity’ that Shaughnessy residents sought to maintain centered in part on the exclusion of individuals and groups based on both class and ethnicity.

As the CPR’s involvement in the area waned, its efforts to protect the neighbourhood’s reputation were taken over by the Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners Association (SHPOA). From its founding in 1938, SHPOA worked, quite successfully, to control ‘unwelcome’ developments in the neighbourhood. In the years following the Second World War, the group battled a surge in multifamily conversions resulting from the Great Depression and a housing shortage during the war.⁴⁸ During the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, it turned its attention to the size and design of new houses in Shaughnessy. Houses constructed during this period tended to be smaller than homes built before the war and they also tended to be located on smaller lots creating, as James Duncan puts it “a discernible shift in the landscape aesthetics away from the English country house look towards a new Californian model which was more middle-class”

⁴⁸ The Depression impacted Shaughnessy in a number of ways: some residents went bankrupt and were forced to sell their properties for as little as one-tenth of its former worth; many families began to take in boarders; and some large mansions were converted into rooming houses (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980). Following the depression, SHPOA worked to combat its impacts. Particularly, in 1939 the group successfully petitioned the provincial government to extend the *Shaughnessy Building Restriction Act* to 1970. Additionally, the Province granted the association the power to police zoning violations or to prosecute violators of the act (Duncan, 1992). This victory was short-lived, however, as the efforts of SHPOA to eradicate rooming houses and multifamily dwellings were once again stymied by a housing crisis during the Second World War. In response to the crisis, the Federal Government permitted multifamily dwellings in all single-family zones in 1942. This resulted in multifamily conversions and also a number of subdivisions in Shaughnessy (Duncan, 1992). Indeed, a survey in 1957 recorded that 30% of the houses in the area were multifamily dwellings (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980).

As with the great depression, after the war ended SHPOA worked to combat this movement towards multifamily dwellings. Duncan records that the group “appealed to the provincial government to ban all existing rooming housing, but the government compromised and banned all conversion after 1955. Any single-family houses converted before that date could remain as legal non-conforming uses” (1992: 45). He also notes that members of SHPOA actually patrolled the neighbourhood during this period, looking for any signs of building activity or code violations” (1992: 45). The group’s measures proved quite effective. By the late 1970s, the number of multiple-occupancy dwellings in the area had been reduced to 65 (down from 200 in the 1950s) (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980).

(Duncan, 1992: 45). While these houses were designed for single-family uses, SHPOA worried about the impact of their smaller size and ‘middle-class’ character on the neighbourhood.

Like CPR, SHPOA worked with, and lobbied, various levels of government to enact measures to ensure that the character of the neighbourhood was protected—which for the group involved maintaining and restoring its pre war character. In 1970, for example, the *Shaughnessy Building Restriction Act* was set to expire and control of zoning in the neighbourhood was to revert to the City. The zoning schedule the City developed for Shaughnessy, RS-4, established a minimum lot size of 882 square meters (Duncan, 1992: 45). This zoning was the product of consultation between SHPOA and the city; and both the residents association and planners worked to ensure that it would provide more protection against subdivision than had existed previously.⁴⁹ While these efforts suggest that Council and city planners were sensitive to the concerns of SHPOA and were willing to take fairly significant steps to address them, the association feared that these measures were still inadequate. In comparison to lots in the city more generally, and in other parts of the west side, minimum lot size under RS-4 was quite large. However, Shaughnessy had the lowest population density of any neighbourhood in the city and 882 square meters was still significantly smaller than the average size of properties in some areas of Shaughnessy, creating the potential for subdivision. Moreover, the proposed zoning schedule did nothing to address SHPOA’s concerns regarding the design and character of the homes constructed after the Second World War.

Accordingly, SHPOA created its own neighbourhood plan for First Shaughnessy designed to further protect what Duncan labels the ‘Anglophile character’ of the area (1992). The group brought the plan to Council in 1978 and, after consulting with both SHPOA and other

⁴⁹ During this process, moreover, SHPOA successfully lobbied the City to ask the Province to change the Vancouver Charter so that the organization could prosecute violators of the new zoning.

stakeholders,⁵⁰ Council enacted a modified version of the plan in 1982. Under the *First Shaughnessy Official Development Plan* the area was rezoned from RS-4 to FSD (First Shaughnessy District), a change that provided further protection against subdivision. The new plan also included extensive design guidelines to help maintain the pre-war character of the area and stipulated the institution of a Shaughnessy Advisory Design Panel to help with the administration of these guidelines.⁵¹ It stated: “The prime intent of the Plan is to preserve and enhance the special architectural and landscaping elements that combine to make First Shaughnessy a valuable character area . . . the intent is to preserve and protect the estate-image and single-family character of First Shaughnessy” (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980). SHPOA, then, was able to establish a new set of regulatory tools to employ in their efforts to protect and maintain the character of the area.

Yet, even in the wake of this victory, SHPOA had already started shifting its attention to new threats. The design controls established through the development plan only applied to First Shaughnessy and not to the remainder of the neighbourhood, where a new form of neighbourhood change was taking hold. In South Shaughnessy, and in the bordering west side neighbourhoods, there was a pronounced upswing in demolitions and in the construction of the new, much larger homes. Both the design of these homes and their landscaping, in the eyes of SHPOA, did not fit with the character of the area. These new development patterns, moreover, arose in conjunction with significant changes occurring within the city of Vancouver as a whole—particularly a changing housing market and shifting patterns of immigration.

⁵⁰The First Shaughnessy Planning Study Working Committee was created by city to look into plan. It was composed of SHPOA members, tenants, owners of legal non-conforming uses and representatives of the City of Vancouver Heritage Advisory Committee. Duncan suggests, however, that the committee was dominated by SHPOA (1992).

⁵¹ The plan also included a section that ranked all the houses in the neighbourhood on the basis of how well they reflected the “character” of the area.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the price of housing in Vancouver increased significantly, resulting in an ongoing housing shortage (Punter, 2004; Petit, 1993). While prices almost doubled between 1972 and 1974, more significant increases occurred in the early 1980s, spurred by the short-term boom in the BC economy, and in the late 1980s, in conjunction with shifting patterns of immigration (Ley, 1980: 243; Smith, 2000: 176). In some cases, the value of west side homes increased by as much as 300% (Hiebert, Pratt and Ley, 1992: 256). The ballooning market was spurred by population growth coupled with a limited housing stock.⁵² The expansion of the housing supply in the city was hampered both by limits in the availability of land and by restrictive zoning—the vast majority of land in Vancouver was zoned for single-family uses at this time.⁵³ Indeed city planning documents predicted that “Vancouver would run out of space in the early 1990s under current zoning and the metropolitan area could exhaust its land supply in about 20 years” (Petit, 1993: 137). Moreover, as the housing market took off, demand increased even more as the result of speculation. Vancouver properties took on value not only as places to live (or to earn rent from) but also as appreciating and lucrative investments.

Table 2-2 Population and Density in Vancouver

YEAR	POPULATION	DENSITY/ Sq. Km.
1961	384522	3404.66
1971	426240	3774.04
1976	409734	3627.89
1981	414281	3668.15
1986	431147	3817.49
1991	471844	4177.83
1996	514008	4551.16

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada, 1961-1996.⁵⁴

⁵² The shortage was also fuelled by baby boomers, who were increasingly entering the housing market.

⁵³ Mitchell notes that in 1976 there were more single detached units of housing than apartment units: “nearly 56 percent of the region’s housing was provided by detached houses and only 35 percent by apartment buildings” (1993: 33). This figure was higher in westside neighbourhoods and highest in Shaughnessy.

⁵⁴ Density was calculated by dividing population by area.

The increase in prices was also accompanied by an increase in demolitions and by a change in the built form of newly constructed houses. In Vancouver, prior to the late 1960s, houses rarely occupied the full lot space or full amount of floor space allowed them by zoning regulations. However, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, this began to change. New housing was frequently built to exploit floor space allowances, and setback regulations—that is, new homes were built as large as zoning permitted. On the east side of the city this new housing primarily took the form of the Vancouver Special: a large, square structure including “a flexible space for either an (illegal) rental suite or else for extended family members” (Ley, 1995: 193). On the west side, and in South Shaughnessy, a larger and more elaborate version of the special had begun to emerge. Among the reasons suggested for the larger houses was that modern families simply needed more space (this explanation was more common regarding large houses on the west side). Moreover, it was also argued that the extra floor space increased the developer’s and builder’s profit margins and provided more space for a secondary suite.⁵⁵

The changing housing market had brought issues of affordability to the forefront for many Vancouverites. The increasing cost of housing, both for homeowners and renters, created pressure to relocate. For some, the cost of living in Vancouver had simply become too high and they were driven to seek out more affordable housing options in the city’s suburbs. For others, the vast increase in the value of their Vancouver homes, and particularly their west side homes, had made them ‘house rich and cash poor’: they were unable to pay their much higher property

⁵⁵ Though they were still technically illegal, more and more houses in Vancouver had suites: “the Vancouver Planning Department noted that the number of suites had increased from an estimated 3000 in 1976 to an estimated 26,000 by 1986” (Petit, 1993: 93). Given the price of housing in the city, homeowners increasingly relied on suites to make their homes affordable. Many of new houses, particularly Vancouver Specials, were designed to convert to two or more unit simply by closing an interior door (Petit, 1993: 11).

taxes and were forced to sell their homes and move. Still others, in relatively better financial positions, relocated not due to the burden of property taxes but because the wealth represented by their houses far exceeded their earning power. By moving away from the west side and out of central Vancouver, they could access and enjoy that wealth along with a higher standard of living. In this way, while the increasing value of housing in Vancouver earned many Vancouverites substantial sums of money, it also contributed to geographic restructuring in the city and to neighbourhood change on the west side. During this period, people began to question who would be able to live in the city. As one city planning document noted, the high costs of housing and the lack of supply “could turn sons and daughters of Vancouverites away from their city”—a concern that for some residents was underwritten by xenophobic sentiments, as during this same period the ethnic composition of Vancouver was also shifting significantly due to changing patterns of immigration (Petit, 1993: 137).

In the early 1960s, metropolitan Vancouver was predominantly white (Hiebert, Pratt and Ley, 1992: 249-50). Less than 6% of the population, as described by the 1961 Census, was labeled as non-European—a category that included Indigenous people and people of Asian, African and Latin American descent. As the 1960s progressed, however, the ethnic composition of the city began to change as immigration from non-European sources—particularly, East and South Asia, increased. This increase began slowly, but picked up pace significantly in the 1980s. Between 1971 and 1986, there was a 422% increase in Metropolitan Vancouver’s non-European population (as opposed to an overall growth rate of 28%) (Hiebert, Pratt and Ley, 1992: 252). Or, to represent this shift another way, non-European groups accounted for over half of the net

population growth in Metropolitan Vancouver during this period.⁵⁶ Moreover, Metropolitan Vancouver attracted a higher proportion of Asian immigration than other metropolitan regions. This trend was particularly prominent within Vancouver proper (as opposed to the metropolitan region) where 80% of all landed immigrants in the 1990s were from Asia (Hiebert, 1999: 56).

This shift stemmed from a number of changes to the Canadian immigration system. First, in 1967, with the institution of the points system, Canadian immigration policy became officially non-discriminatory on the basis of race and ethnicity.⁵⁷ Second, in the following years, a number of additional immigration classes were also created. These classes were designed to attract business and investment. The Entrepreneurial Class, introduced in 1978, required those who wished to immigrate to Canada under this category to invest \$250 000 in a Canadian business while the Investor Class, introduced in 1986, required immigrants to have a net worth of over \$500 000 and to invest between \$250 000 and \$300 000 (depending on the Province) in government approved investment programs (Hiebert, Pratt and Ley, 1992: 254-255).⁵⁸ During this time, the Federal Government also gave economic-class immigration greater priority and took steps to make the process faster and less strenuous for immigrants in this class. In 1985, economic-class immigrants represented 32% of total immigration (Hiebert, 1999: 52). In 1988, that number had risen to 50% and, after briefly declining, it reached 56% in 1996 (*ibid*).⁵⁹

⁵⁶ The ethnic populations increasing at the fastest rates during this period were Chinese-Canadian, whose numbers increase threefold and Indo-Canadians, whose numbers jumped fivefold (compared to a total population increase of 30%) (Hiebert, 1999: 48). By 1986 there were also significant Filipino, Japanese, Vietnamese and Korean origin communities in Vancouver (*ibid*).

⁵⁷ Instead of focusing on country of origin, the new system focused on what immigrants could potentially contribute to Canadian society and more specifically the Canadian economy (as well as on ease of transition)—it assigned points largely on the basis of language, education and occupational skills. The points system, then, signalled a transition to an intake system structured around the assessment of capacities

⁵⁸ By 1988, the top ten source countries of ‘investor immigrants’ were: Hong Kong, Taiwan, West Germany, Macao, Lebanon, England, Iran, Kuwait, the Philippines and Malaysia.

⁵⁹ As Gillian Creese and Laurie Peterson note, these programs tended to privilege men (male bread winners), who were significantly more likely to qualify as business-class or investor-class (1996).

The shift toward economic-immigration was also particularly pronounced in Vancouver: in 1993, 31.9 % of business immigrants chose to settle in Vancouver, while 20.9 % and 19.3 % chose Montreal and Toronto respectively (Abu-Laban, 1997: 80). Moreover, between 1985 and 1996 the portion of economic immigrants increased from 27% to 67% of the total number of immigrants settling in British Columbia, while during this time the province received less than its share of refugees and family class immigrants (Hiebert, 1999: 52).⁶⁰ As Yasmeen Abu-Laban aptly notes, these changing patterns of immigration had significant implications. Not only was the ethnic composition of Vancouver (and Canadian society more generally) shifting quite substantially, so was the class background of immigrants (1997). Prior to the institution of the points system, most immigrants had entered the class hierarchy near the bottom. With the instatement of the points system and the creation of business-class and investor-class, immigration policy began to favour immigrants with relatively high levels of education, professional credentials or economic capital. As a result, immigrants began to enter the Canadian class/status hierarchy at a wide variety of levels; and in Vancouver, as Punter puts it, “one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Asian immigrants has been their affluence” (9) (Abu-Laban, 1997: 79; Hiebert, Pratt and Ley, 1992: 254-5). Moreover, wealthy immigrants began to purchase property in the city’s affluent west side neighbourhoods.

The ballooning housing market and the new larger houses springing up on the west side were often connected with Asian immigration and investment by both the press and the public.

⁶⁰ Daniel Hiebert records that landing forms indicated that the number of immigrants intending to settle in British Columbia rose steadily from 12240 in 1985 to 50500 in 1996; and that of the immigrants settling in BC, 85% also intended to settle in Vancouver (1999: 56). Additionally, business and investor class immigrants brought significant amounts of money into the country:

According to estimates in *Employment and Immigration Canada*, funds brought to British Columbia in 1988 . . . amounted to nearly C\$1.5 billion (Canada 1989). Figures from 1989 show approximate capital flow of C3.5 billion from Hong Kong to Canada, of which C\$2.21 billion, or 63 percent, was transferred through business migration (Mitchell, 1997: 169).⁶⁰

The sharp increase in housing prices in 1988 and 1989 “were frequently associated with the impact of Expo 86 on the city’s image and economy” and with the influx of immigration from Hong Kong in anticipation of its return to China in 1997 (Punter, 2004: 133). In the late 1980s the purchasers of the new, larger houses were also primarily Asians: Barbara Petit records that “according to east and west side realtors, the Chinese bought roughly 90% of new east side houses, 50% of used eastside houses, and 80% of new west side houses” (1993, 146). In contrast, the renovations market was 80% Caucasian, as was the majority of the market for used homes on the west side (ibid). In this way, the changing built form of homes in both Vancouver’s east side and west side neighbourhoods was linked to immigration, and more specifically Asian immigration.⁶¹

The number of demolitions and the new, large houses—labeled “monster” houses in popular discourse—were viewed negatively by many Vancouverites and sparked concern regarding the futures of west side neighbourhoods. As one *Vancouver Sun* columnist put it during the civic election of 1990, the west side was riddled by insecurity as the result of neighbourhood change; many residents feeling as if “the local fabric [was] unravelling towards a questionable future” (Lamb, 1990). Or as Michael Seelig, of the UBC School of Community and Regional Planning, pondered in a series of articles on neighbourhood change, “Will . . . council deal with the issue of drastic changes in character occurring in Vancouver’s residential neighbourhoods? Will time-honored planning principles of respect for history and continuity prevail or will Vancouver’s neighbourhoods become nothing more than a real-estate jungle?” (Seelig, 1992). In Shaughnessy, however, these new developments were viewed by many as the

⁶¹ Punter records that initially Vancouver Specials “were constructed by small-scale house builders on cheaper lots in the east side of the city for German, Italian, and Greek immigrants” (2004: 119).

latest threat to the character of the neighbourhood and emerged as a new target for the protectionist efforts of SHPOA.

2.3 Conclusion

In this way, I argue, political contention emerged in both South Shaughnessy and the West End, when particular social groups came to encounter each other in new ways and places; moreover, it emerged in neighbourhoods that had undergone notable changes in their built form. The next chapter explores CROWE's campaign to exclude street-level sex-workers from the West End and how it may be understood as an instance of the politics of contentious proximity.

Chapter 3: CROWE: Representational Strategies and Contentious Proximity

My wife was shopping one evening recently [when she was] accosted by three hookers who forced her back into our apartment [building]. [...] [H]er foot was hurt to the extent that x-rays were needed to document the extent of the injury. Two days later [...] after having a few drinks I took a pellet hand gun and went to the corner of Pendrell and Davie, shot the gun and warned two hookers to tell other hookers to leave my wife alone. They brought a charge against me and I spent the night in jail.

CROWE member (CROWE, 1981b)

Coming home from shopping I asked four prostitutes spread across the sidewalk to kindly let me pass. I was told to walk in the fucking gutter. The humiliation of having to stand with them to cross the street and being hassled and insulted by both punks and prostitutes. Being propositioned in objectionable language while on my OWN PROPERTY.⁶²

CROWE member (CROWE, 1981b)

The problem is, as one fellow described simply, “a land-use conflict.” Like where to dump your garbage so that it doesn’t block the roadways and clog up the beaches.

Vancouver Province (Garr, 1983)

In the late 1970s and the early 1980s, tension was building in the Vancouver downtown neighbourhood of the West End. The presence of street-level sex-work⁶³—involving male, female and transgendered sex-workers—had been increasing in the area and, more particularly,

⁶² Emphasis from the original document.

⁶³ A note on terminology in this chapter: I have chosen to use the term “sex-worker” rather than “prostitute” and “sex-work” rather than “prostitution”, given the negative connotations of the latter. My use of this terminology is not meant to signal a stance on the question of whether performing sexual service for compensation is a form of exploitation or a form of work.

had shifted from the commercial areas of Davie Street onto the residential streets of the surrounding vicinity. Moreover, the West End was increasingly represented in media reports of this period as a ‘hotbed of prostitution’. For some residents, this resulted in growing levels of anger and frustration: they associated the sex-workers with rising levels of traffic and noise in the area, increasingly inhospitable and unsafe streets and the declining reputation of the neighbourhood. In 1981, a group of residents came together to form CROWE, the Concerned Residents of the West End. During the years that followed, CROWE attempted to establish itself as the voice of West End residents on the presence of sex-work in ‘their’ neighbourhood. It published reports on the impact of street-level sex-work on the area, generated media attention on the issue, lobbied politicians at all three levels of government, and sponsored direct action within the community. The goal of the community organization was to push street-level sex-work out of the area. As one member of Shame the Johns—a CROWE affiliate—put it: “All we want is for them to move east of Burrard . . . We’re not trying to stop their business” (Anon., 1984b). Moreover, CROWE’s efforts to achieve this goal were underwritten by the strategic deployment of representations of the identities of people and places.

In this chapter, I trace the rhetorical strategies employed by CROWE in their efforts to push street-level sex-work out of the West End. I draw out and analyze the ways the group deployed representations of identities of both place and people, exploring how CROWE employs what I term the politics of contentious proximity. More particularly, I highlight the key themes animating CROWE’s framing strategies and establish that the group relied on what may be labeled ‘traditional scripts’ regarding social and spatial hierarchies as well as normalcy and deviance, in their efforts to establish themselves as a legitimate political actor, and to gain institutional and public support for their positions and objectives, using rhetorical strategies that

involved interactive representations of the identities of both people and place. I begin by fleshing out three central aspects of the framing efforts of CROWE: their conceptualization of what they take to be the problem, its causes and the way it should be resolved. Second, I engage with the ways that CROWE strategically deployed representations of people and place, drawing out key themes and clusters of meaning that animate the group's framing efforts. Third, I work to provide a sense of the 'resonance' of CROWE's frames; that is, I explore whether the group was able to achieve their objectives, the degree and type of opposition they faced and the amount of overlap between their framing efforts and media coverage of street-level sex-work in the West End, and between the policies and statements of institutional actors and public figures. Finally, I conclude the chapter by exploring how CROWE's efforts form an instance of the politics of contentious proximity.

This exploration of the actions of CROWE is built through discourse analysis of over 500 newspaper articles on sex-work in Vancouver and the West End, and of over 1200 pages of archival documents relating to the group. The archival documents include many of CROWE's publications, as well as many of the organization's internal documents. More particularly, they include reports; steering committee meeting minutes; strategy papers; journal and magazine articles that the group used as sources in their publications; transcripts of an educational conference CROWE held; correspondence between CROWE and residents of the West End, and between CROWE and officials from all three levels of government; the organization's membership survey; newsletters; a collection of news stories on sex-work in the West End; and briefs to the Fraser committee on Pornography and Prostitution, the federal government's Justice Committee, and to City Council. The news stories were drawn from the Vancouver Public Library's newspaper clippings files on prostitution in Vancouver and include stories from the

Vancouver Sun, Province, West Ender, Vancouver Courier, Times Colonist, Globe and Mail, New York Times, and Maclean's Magazine. The files consist of articles, editorials and letters to the editor.

3.1 CROWE's Prognosis

The rhetorical strategies that CROWE deployed in the early 1980s regarding street-level sex-work in the West End centered on the claim that *the increasing presence of street-level sex-work in Vancouver and, particularly, its increasing presence in the West End, constituted a significant problem with extensive negative consequences for the neighbourhood, its residents and the city more broadly.*⁶⁴ Moreover, it was primarily in making this claim that CROWE mobilized strategic accounts of the identities of people and places, and it is on the exploration of this claim that this chapter will largely focus. Yet CROWE's account of street-level sex-work in the West End also involved two other significant assertions: an account of how this 'problem' had arisen and an account of what needed to be done in order to resolve it. Before turning to how CROWE framed the 'problem' of street-level sex-work in the West End, and to the ways CROWE mobilized interrelated discourses on the identity of particular social groups and locales, I first provide an account of its causal story and favoured solution.

⁶⁴ The group was founded by two men—one homosexual and one heterosexual (Ross, 2012b). The former, Gordon Price, did extensive research on behalf of the group, wrote many of its publications and reports and was very influential in shaping its strategy. He went on to play a prominent role in Aids Vancouver and to become the first openly gay city councillor in Vancouver. Following his career in municipal politics, Price entered academia.

Ross describes the members of CROWE as "predominantly white, middle-class residents and business owners" (2010).

3.1.1 Causes and Solutions

Regarding the source of its problem, CROWE contended that *street-level sex-work was increasing in Vancouver—especially in the West End—as a result of a series of court decisions that undermined the ability of police to control the activity*.⁶⁵ While prostitution itself was not illegal in Canada at this time, some of the activities associated with prostitution remained criminal offences.⁶⁶ Of particular concern to CROWE was the section of the Canadian Criminal Code targeting street-level sex-work. Under section 195.1 “every person who solicits any person in a public place for the purpose of prostitution is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction” (Criminal Code, 1985).⁶⁷ The section, however, did not include a definition of

⁶⁵ The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) also argued that this was the cause of increased street-level sex-work. This explanation of the increase also dominated newspaper coverage of street-level sex-work in Vancouver, both before the formation of CROWE and during its existence. Moreover, among the first steps CROWE took, as an organization, was to consult with police and with the City, both of which took this perspective. An alternative explanation put forward by a number of sources was that a police crackdown on indoor sex-work—particularly, the closure of the Penthouse Cabaret and the Zanzibar in December, 1975—had forced more sex-workers to work on the street, and this had resulted in strolls emerging in the West End and around hotels in the downtown business district (Francis, 2006: 87-92).

⁶⁶ Prostitution related offences in Canada at this time included “living off the avails of prostitution” (Criminal Code, 1985: S. 212), “keeping a common bawdy house” (Criminal Code, 1985: S. 193, 194) and soliciting in a public place for the purposes of prostitution (Criminal Code, 1985: S. 195.1). In 1985, the government of Brian Mulroney replaced the controversial ‘soliciting’ section with a new law (Criminal Code, 1985: S.213.1), which made it an offence to communicate for the purposes of prostitution (Francis, 2006: 109). In December 2013, in *Bedford v. Attorney General of Canada*, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down these sections of the Criminal Code on the grounds that they violated Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Canada, 2013). Section 7 protects the rights to life, liberty and the security of the person. The Court ruled that the prostitution related offence of the Criminal Code were exposing sex-workers to increasing levels of risk of harm, and it gave the Federal government a year to propose a new law. If no new law were forthcoming, sex-work would be decriminalized. In response, the Conservative government of Stephen Harper proposed Bill C-36, which came into effect in December 2014. Bill C-36 was designed to move away from the treatment of sex-work as a “nuisance” problem and towards its conceptualization as a problem of sexual exploitation. This legislation makes the purchase of sexual services a criminal offence (Criminal Code, 1985: S. 286.1) as well as knowingly advertising sexual services (Criminal Code, 1985: S. 286.4), obtaining a commission from the sale of sexual services (Criminal Code, 1985: S. 286.2) and procuring a person to offer sexual services (Criminal Code, 1985: S. 286.3). Criminal sanctions for prostitution-related offences, then, were focused on the buyers of sexual services and on third parties profiting from the sale of sex (Department of Justice, 2015). However, some have suggested that the new legislation will make sex-work more dangerous, rather than less, and the current Liberal Government, under Justin Trudeau, has suggested that they are open to revisiting the legislation (Payton, 2015). It has also been suggested that it may not stand up to a charter challenge.

⁶⁷ Up until 1972, street prostitution had fallen under the section of the Criminal Code dealing with vagrancy offences. Under Section 171(1)(c) “every one commits vagrancy who, being a common prostitute or nightwalker, is

soliciting; and, consequently, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in 1978, in *R v. Hutt*, that “To constitute an offence . . . there must not only be a demonstration by the accused of an intention to make herself available for prostitution but conduct which is pressing or persistent.” Under this judgment, the act of offering to sell sexual services on the street was not a crime, but continuing to pressure a potential client once he had refused to purchase sex remained an offence. This ruling, together with a number of others,⁶⁸ CROWE argued, effectively decriminalized street-level sex-work in Canada: it made it virtually impossible to get a conviction under section 195.1 and thus undermined the ability of police in Vancouver to use section 195.1 as a tool to control street-level sex-work.⁶⁹ Moreover, they suggested, without an effective threat of criminal sanction, street-level sex-work began to increase significantly on the streets of Vancouver.

found in a public place and does not, when required, give a good account of herself” (Criminal Code, 1985). The shift to section 195.1, it had been hoped, would limit the discretionary power of the police in enforcing prostitution-related offences—particularly their power to harass women in public places. As the Royal Commission of the Status of Women put it in their report on 1970, under Vagrancy C “prostitutes are charged not for what they are do but for what they are considered to be” (Royal Commission, 1970: 370). Where Vagrancy C had focused on identity (being a prostitute), section 195.1 focused on activity (the act of soliciting in public). The Royal Commission played a significant role in achieving these changes (Francis, 2006: 81).

⁶⁸ In *Hutt v. the Queen* it was also ruled that a vehicle does not count as a public place (1978). Additionally, a constellation of other judgments contributed to making it significantly more difficult to get charges and convictions under section 195.1. In another 1978 judgment, the British Columbia Court of Appeal ruled in *R. v. Dudak* that the customer of a sex-worker could not be charged with soliciting. Offering to purchase sexual services, it was argued, did not fall within the definition of soliciting. After the ruling in *Hutt*, police began to look for strategies that would lead to charges and convictions under section 195.1. One such strategy was to charge individuals after they had approached multiple potential customers. Police and prosecutors argued that this should be seen as “pressing and persistent” behaviour. However, the 1981 ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada in *Galgot and Whitter* undermined this strategy, as it determined that approaching multiple people did not count as pressing and persistent behavior (the ruling drew upon comparisons to poppy sellers on remembrance day and politicians out soliciting for votes). Furthermore, as Jon Lowman points out, the soliciting law was also sexist: it suggested that men fell outside the definition of a prostitute (Lowman, 1983: 259). As the commentary in the Criminal Code (1977) puts it: “Since prostitution can only be carried on by a female, a person impersonating a female having engaged upon an arrangement in bringing about sexual gratification to another male cannot be convicted of soliciting for the purposes of prostitution” (Lowman, 1983: 259).

⁶⁹As Lowman puts it, “with these decisions the legal environment in Vancouver became highly conducive to the practice of street prostitution. The purpose of the prostitution law – to hide and contain prostitution – appears to have been thwarted” (Lowman, 1983: 281). This is reflected in the number of convictions recorded under section 195.1 in Vancouver, which fell dramatically following *Hutt* (Lowman, 1983: 282). Vancouver Mayor Mike Harcourt and the Vancouver Police Department also attributed the growth in street-level sex-work in the City to *Hutt*. However, Lowman also reports in his *Field Study* on sex-work in the Vancouver, commissioned by the Fraser

CROWE also argued that *the way the situation should be resolved was for politicians to enact legislation that would give police the tools they need to control street-level sex-work*. The solution favoured by CROWE (and by police departments in large cities across the country), and thought to have the greatest chance of success, was for the federal government to amend the Canadian Criminal Code to make it easier to lay charges against both sex-workers and their clients under section 195.1 (Price, 1981, 1983f).⁷⁰ As CROWE a spokesman put it, “Only law with effective sanction – that is, criminal law – gives police the tools they need to control street prostitution” (Price, 1983a: 17). Nonetheless, the group was ultimately looking for any solution that would successfully move street-level sex-work out of the West End and accordingly, they lobbied for, and supported (though ultimately doubted the success of), efforts by both the provincial and municipal governments to address their concerns (for example, attempts by the latter to use by-laws to address the issue).⁷¹ As CROWE put it in a resolution passed at one of the group’s first meetings (July 30, 1981), their primary objective was to pressure all levels of government to “immediately undertake the necessary actions to remove prostitution-related

Committee on Pornography and Prostitution, that statistics showed a decline in prostitution-related offences since the mid 1970s, suggesting that the decision in *Hutt* was not solely responsible for this decline (Francis, 2006: 100).

⁷⁰ In coming to this conclusion, CROWE consulted with both the Vancouver Police Department and with the City. This was also the solution favoured by both these groups.

⁷¹ Though it was a possibility they discussed and that some of its members advocated, CROWE rejected the possibility of establishing a red light district as a solution to the “problem” of street-level sex-work in the West End. The step, they believed, would be both divisive and controversial: no one would want the red-light district to be in their area and setting up the district would take years (Price, 1983f). Given that street-level sex-work was already taking place in the West End, they worried that the area would be chosen to become the red-light district. Moreover, they also worried that even if the red light district was elsewhere, transsexual and male sex-workers as well as juveniles would be excluded from working in it and accordingly only a small portion of the sex-workers working in the West End would move to the district. As the group put it in its advice to its supporters on how to compose briefs for the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution:

Do not advocate red-light districts. Despite polls that indicate general approval, no one expects the district to be in their neighbourhood, or even remotely near them. It would take years to implement and probably be restrictive. But primarily, red-light districts do not guarantee that street soliciting will be stopped. In fact, a tougher law than the one currently proposed would probably be needed. So why not get control over street soliciting first before proceeding with red-light districts? (Alliance of Concerned Residents on Street Soliciting in Canada, 1983)

nuisances and disruptions from residential areas in the West End” (Oakes, 1981a).⁷² Moreover, they argued, if a solution to their problem was not forthcoming through the proper channels - government and police - residents would be driven to take matters into their own hands to ‘reclaim the streets’.⁷³

3.1.2 Framing the “Problem”

CROWE represented the presence of street-level sex-work in the West End as both a significant and particular type of problem, in response to what they saw as the deficiencies of three alternative ways to frame it: namely as a **moral**, **social**, and/or **nuisance** problem. Each of these modes of framing had been used in the discussion of street-level sex-work in the Canadian context in the decade preceding the formation of CROWE, but none seemed to offer what the group considered to be an adequate platform to achieve their desired end—the immediate expulsion of sex-workers from the West End.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, the types of inadequacies the group associated with each of these three frames were different.

⁷² The amendments CROWE wished to see included the following:

- I. That it be an offence for any person, male or female, to loiter or solicit in a public place for the purpose of prostitution;
- II. That soliciting be defined as:
 - i) approaching another person in a public place and offering to provide sexual services for fee, hire, gain or other valuable consideration, or
 - ii) approaching another person in a public place and offering to purchase his or her sexual services for fee, hire, gain or other valuable consideration, or
 - iii) accepting in a public place an offer to provide or an offer to purchase sexual service for fee, hire, gain or other valuable consideration;
- III. That soliciting need be neither pressing nor persistent to constitute an offence;
- IV. That for the purposes of the sections of the Criminal Code relating to loitering or soliciting for the purpose of prostitution, an automobile be defined as a public place. (CROWE, 1981a)

⁷³ The group states: “the status quo which exists in the West End cannot be maintained. One or the other groups has to give, either the residents or the prostitutes. Unfortunately, the resolution is not always achieved by peaceful means, particularly when the lawmakers refuse to respond to the needs of the residents” (CROWE, 1981a: 4).

⁷⁴ As reporters Jim Oakes and Kate Poole put it in a letter to the Vancouver Police Department: “Newspapers and radio and television stations have covered the prostitution situation in Vancouver as a social and moral problem. West End residents appear to be primarily (but not totally) concerned with its more immediate effects on their peace and privacy” (1981).

Framing street-level sex-work as a social problem was (among other things) a mode of representation favoured by women's groups in the 1970s and taken up in the Vancouver media in the mid 1970s. In 1970, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women specified that prostitution should be understood as a social problem rather than a criminal problem: that is, a problem that cannot be effectively addressed through criminal sanction (Francis, 2006: 81).⁷⁵ For the Royal Commission, prostitution represented a problem, but one that stemmed from the marginalized position of women in society, and which was best addressed by seeking to expose and transform the cultural and economic structures that resulted in such marginalization. Moreover, as criminologist John Lowman notes, in 1976 there was also significant discussion in the Vancouver media of the "new social problem" of street level sex-work (Lowman, 1983). Indeed a 1978 article in the *Vancouver Sun* quotes a representative of the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) who states that "the issue of prostitution is a social problem which only society itself can resolve" (Anon., 1978). Much of this discussion focused on juvenile prostitution and on what was happening in society—family breakdown, erosion of moral values, physical and sexual abuse, lack of social services—which was resulting in children turning to a life on the street.

The conceptualization of street-level sex-work in the West End primarily as a social problem represented a frame that CROWE actively sought to oppose, and which they associated with their political opponents.⁷⁶ The group wanted sex-workers out of their neighbourhood as quickly as possible and asserted that strengthening the soliciting laws was the best way to

⁷⁵ One section of the report records that:

Any proposed modification of the law (the report favours repealing section 164(1)(c) – "Vagrancy C") must be followed up with facilities and programmes designed to rehabilitate adult female prostitutes. These women should be protected from the influence of their former surroundings by being given help in finding a different environment and a new way of thinking about themselves and their lives . . . Since the socio-economic situation of most prostitutes is a major factor of their way of life, they also need training for work that will enhance their dignity as individuals. (Royal Commission, 1970: 71).

⁷⁶ CROWE suggested in particular that the feminist lobby, along with civil liberties associations, were their primary opponents (See for example, Price, 1983a: 4).

achieve this goal. Accepting the argument that street-level sex-work should not be conceptualized in terms of criminality ran counter to their favoured solution. Moreover, the conceptualization of street-level sex-work as a social problem tended to focus on its broad-based systemic causes, and addressing these types of issues—patriarchal social structures, economic marginalization, the retraction of the welfare state, family breakdown, for example—would be an amorphous and difficult task, the primary focus of which was unlikely to be the traffic and noise complaints of West Enders. Street-level sex-work conceptualized as a social problem tended to focus on sex-workers themselves as victims and left, from CROWE perspective, little room to address the concerns of the group being victimized by the sex-workers: the residents of the West End.

Whereas CROWE suggested that the representation of street-level sex-work as a social problem (at least in the short term) was inconsistent with its priorities and goals, the group also believed that framing it as a moral problem would undermine support for their agenda. For CROWE, efforts to move street-level sex-work out of the West End depended on the organization's ability to speak for the neighbourhood: that is, to espouse positions that the large majority of West End residents would back. This, the group suggested, was best achieved by bracketing discussions of the morality of prostitution, as such discussions would foster divisions rather than generating the broad-based support they believed their efforts required.⁷⁷ Accordingly, in their opening statement at their 1981 conference on street-level sex-work, CROWE stated: "As an organization CROWE does not pass moral judgment on prostitutes and

⁷⁷ CROWE's position regarding the morality of street-level sex-work comes through in the advice they gave to other groups preparing briefs for the Fraser Committee: "Avoid getting bogged down in a discussion of the merits of prostitution. The Fraser Committee will want to discuss alternatives if street soliciting is prohibited, but emphasize that the first step before any other alternative must be the control of street prostitution, particularly in residential and hotel areas" (Alliance of Concerned Residents on Street Soliciting in Canada, 1983).

CROWE does not promote any type of ‘witch hunt.’ CROWE is not the ‘anti hooker’ group it has sometimes been called by the media” (CROWE, 1981c). It was not that they considered prostitution intrinsically immoral or that they believed that all forms of prostitution should be criminalized, rather they asserted that street-level sex-work was generating significant disruptions within the West End—a claim they believed most West Enders could agree upon, whatever their thoughts on the morality of prostitution.⁷⁸ In this way, CROWE presented itself as not against prostitution per se, but against its presence in West End streets.

Of the three frames, the conceptualization of the street-level sex-work as a ‘nuisance problem’, a frame associated with the Vancouver Police (among others) was, at least initially, the most consistent with the concerns and agenda of CROWE. Indeed, the group argued that the presence of the sex-workers in the West End resulted in many ‘nuisance’ issues: they suggested that the residents of the West End were subjected to increased noise (resulting in lack of sleep), traffic (especially at night), foul language, litter, property damage, drug dealing, sex acts in public, embarrassment, intimidation and street violence “as a result of the great influx of prostitution and the practicing of their trade on our streets” (CROWE, 1981a).⁷⁹ An additional benefit of this mode of framing was that it provided a space to represent the residents of the West End as the victims, or at least as a group negatively impacted by nuisance created by the presence of street-level sex-work. In some ways, then, the nuisance frame provided a way to condemn the presence of street-level sex-work in the West End without falling back on the moral

⁷⁸ As one article in the *Westender* put it: “the group’s members want to make it clear they do not view the prostitution situation in the West End as a moral problem, but rather a nuisance one—a position shared by politicians like Mike Harcourt and Pat Carney” (Oakes, 1981a).

⁷⁹ See, for example, Street Prostitution in a Residential Neighbourhood: The Threat to Vancouver’s West End (CROWE, 1981a); CROWE’s Membership Survey (1981b); transcripts from CROWE’s conference on street-level sex-work in the West End (1981f); CROWE’s Report Number 1: “Violence related to street prostitution is on the rise.” (1983e); the West End Community Advisory Council’s brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (1984); and CROWE’s brief to the Fraser Committee (1984).

condemnation of sex-work itself, and it was not inconsistent with the group's efforts to change the Criminal Code to address their concerns. This, then, was a frame that the group did in fact deploy, particularly in its early years. However, CROWE eventually saw this frame of street-level sex-work as simply a nuisance—meaning a minor difficulty rather than a significant grievance necessitating immediate attention—as inadequate for their agenda.

Accordingly, CROWE began to argue that the 'nuisance' issues they associated with street-level sex-work should be understood as signs of deeper, and more significant problems. A flier CROWE circulated for a planned protest march concisely captures this sentiment:

Why are we so concerned about street prostitution? Sure, there's the late-night noise, the litter and the language. But there's a lot worse. Women who live in the neighbourhood are harassed by johns. Senior citizens are intimidated. The level of violence has risen and, with it, the level of fear and hostility. We are concerned about the survival of our neighbourhood and our right to a peaceful, quiet and safe environment. (CROWE, 1981e)

The group asserted in their internal documents, statements to the media, publications, and briefs to the municipal and federal governments that street-level sex-work in the West End would have long-term, negative effects on the neighbourhood. They argued that street-level sex-workers were fundamentally out of place (or perhaps above their place) in the West End and that if nothing were done to correct the situation, this would cause the destruction of the West End through a process of ghettoization (CROWE, 1982a, 1982d, 1984).

In this sense, then, the way that CROWE chose to frame the presence of street-level sex-work in the West End may be understood as a matter of physical proximity and social incompatibility, which leads to conflict and neighbourhood decay. They suggested that the nature of the West End as a place, and as a community, was irreconcilable with the presence of the street scene; that the physical nearness of such different, and distant, social groups—street-level

sex-workers and residents—was untenable. As a result, they contended, crisis was impending. The residents of the West End, they argued, were being pushed (by government inaction) towards a choice between confronting the sex-workers in the streets and perpetuating the destruction of their neighbourhood. In order to support this stance, CROWE deployed particular representations of the identities of the different social groups involved in the conflict, of the appropriate place for each of these groups and of identity of the West End as place. The following section works to articulate and interrogate the clusters of identity deployed by CROWE—to explore the meanings, values and powers that the organization associated with groups and places.

3.2 Representational Strategies

At work in CROWE's framing of the 'problem' of street-level sex-work in the West End—in its assertion that sex-workers were out of place—are claims regarding what kind of place the West End is, and should be, conceived as, and what type of people are, and should be, taken to be compatible with the neighbourhood. Particularly, to support its claims regarding the incompatibility of the street scene with the West End, CROWE mobilized through its various reports, publications and statements to media two mutually reinforcing clusters of identities distinguishing "West Enders" and "Sex-workers".

Table 3-1 "West Enders" and "Sex Workers"

West Enders	Sex Workers
Residents	Transients
Normals	Deviants
Tax-payers	Tax-evaders
Citizens	Non-citizens

3.2.1 “West Enders”

According to CROWE’s account, before the presence of street-level sex-work, the West End was a ‘healthy’ community—it was something valuable. In making this claim, CROWE associated a series of interrelated social roles and statuses with this community. First, CROWE suggested, it was a community composed of *residents*. As an anonymous spokesman put it when CROWE first took its campaign public in 1981: “Our position is simply that prostitution has brought with it activities that are incompatible with social peace and as such is not a proper activity on residential streets” (Oakes, 1981a). Or a CROWE spokesman added in 1982, “We just don’t want [street-level sex-work] in a residential neighbourhood. It must surely be apparent now to the hookers that we plan to continue the fight to return our streets to the people who live here.” (Anon., 1982b).⁸⁰ In this way, the group represented West Enders as residents and the neighbourhood as their home: the West End was a place in which they were invested and to which they had some form of relatively permanent attachment. As residents, they cared about

⁸⁰ In their second newsletter, CROWE reported that “in one building on Pendrell Street that CROWE surveyed, we found the average length of tenancy was 25 years.” (Crowe, 1982a: 5). Additionally, at a protest march held by the group, one of the marchers carried a placard stating “We’re not hookers, we live here” (Goad, 1982). For other examples of this emphasis on the West End as a residential area and as the home of West Enders see Price, 1983e and 1983b and Oakes, 1981.

their home and their neighbourhood; they had a stake in its future. Sex workers were transient or non-resident by implication.

Second, it was a community of '*normals*'—that is, persons whose actions were governed by civility and typical codes of social conduct. Though the normalcy of West Enders was usually signaled by emphasizing their incompatibility with the deviancy CROWE associated with street-level sex-workers, it was also stated explicitly within some CROWE documents and connected particularly to conceptions of civility. As one of the group's reports states, "for those who value safety and civility, the West End is becoming a neighbourhood to avoid – and certainly not one that normal people would consider moving into" (CROWE, 1983c).⁸¹ CROWE suggested that the basic field of relation of West Enders was to normal society. They were, CROWE suggested both implicitly and explicitly, polite, law-abiding, concerned about their fellow residents and invested in their community. Sex workers were 'abnormal' by implication.

Third, CROWE represented the West End as a community holding a particular economic position and particular economic values. West End residents were taxpayers; they were contributing members of society. Moreover, if not necessarily property owners, they were concerned with maintaining the value of property and their right to public space and private property; and, if not everyone was middle class, they had middle class aspirations. This economic position was readily apparent within both CROWE's internal and public documents. The following statement made by a member of CROWE in a letter to the Fraser Committee typifies the positions stated by other members of the group: "I expect the government to remove the prostitutes from the residential area and let us taxpayers live in decency and quiet as we have

⁸¹ In its brief to the Fraser Committee the West End Community Advisory Council (headed by Gordon Price) stated that in the West End, "standards of civility are [being] eroded as laws become unenforceable and the social structure changes. For many people, the breaking point has already been reached" (West End Community Advisory Council, 1984).

a right to” (Ziebeil, 1984).⁸² Regarding their relationship to property, CROWE asserted in their call for membership, that one reason to become a member of the organization and help in the fight to remove street-level sex-workers was that the sex-workers and those associated with the street scene had begun to view public property and ‘even private property’ as their own (CROWE, 1981d). One member of CROWE put it this way: “Although a taxpayer –I am unable to walk IN FRONT of my PROPERTY at 9 pm without [being] asked if ‘I am hooking’!! I am it seems [stepping] on the TERRITORIAL RIGHTS of the LADIES OF THE NIGHT”⁸³ (CROWE, 1981b).

Fourth, as a healthy community of normal, invested, taxpaying, property owning residents, the West End was thus composed of a certain kind of *rights bearing citizen* in danger of losing their basic rights. The residents of the West End, CROWE asserted, had a right to the public places of the neighbourhood, to enjoy a peaceful and quiet life and, moreover, to have some control over the fate of their community or their place. The following is drawn from CROWE’s opening statements at their conference on street-level sex-work in 1981:

Street prostitutes, along with their often drunken customers or attackers have in the last couple of years made it impossible for a growing number of West End residents to enjoy the rights most Canadians take for granted. . . CROWE maintains that the residents of the West End are entitled to the same rights to enjoy their homes (CROWE, 1981c).

Similarly, in their call for membership, CROWE states “the people who live in the West End are losing a basic right – the right to the peace, quiet and enjoyment of their neighbourhood.”

⁸² The following are a number of other examples of a similar sentiment being expressed by CROWE and its members: “this slum-like atmosphere these people generate is palpable and this neighbourhood is not a slum –yet. The saddest thing is the disruption of the lives of law-abiding taxpayers (not to mention small children) by this situation of street prostitution” (CROWE, 1981a); “the West End is a residential neighbourhood with the highest concentration of citizens in Canada and contributes a significant proportion of property taxes to the City of Vancouver.” (ibid); “My family has lived in and paid taxes in the West End since 1940 and we intend to continue to do so” (CROWE, 1981b).

⁸³ Emphasis from the original.

(CROWE, 1981d).⁸⁴ In this way, CROWE argued that the presence of street-level sex-work in the West End infringed upon the rights of residents. It disrupted their home life, their capacity to use the streets and ultimately their capacity to determine the type of place they lived in.

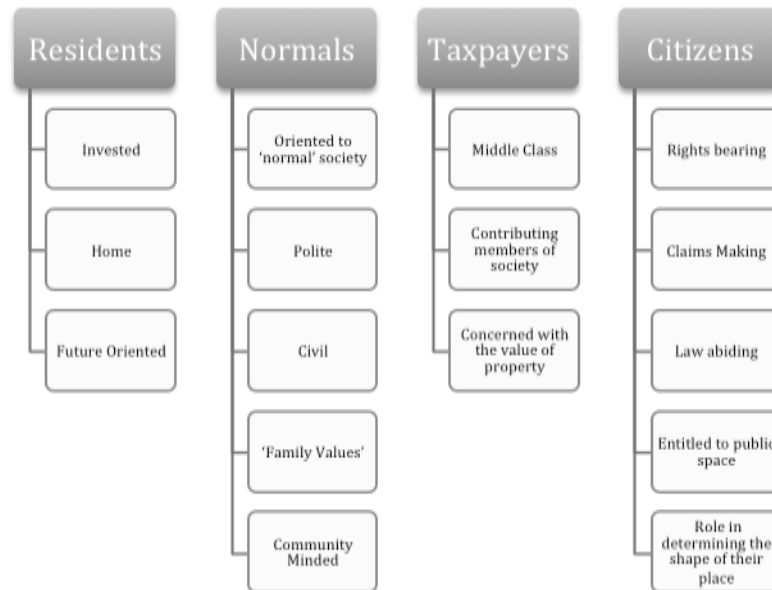
In addition, CROWE associated West End residents with concern for the wellbeing of “resident” women and children (a concern that apparently excluded women and children involved in sex-work, however). Street-level sex-work, they claimed, was particularly harmful for these groups. So-called “innocent” women, CROWE suggested were in danger of being mistaken for sex-workers and no longer felt safe walking through the West End or pausing on street corners.⁸⁵ Similarly, street-level sex-work also represented a problem for “impressionable” children living in the West End. CROWE expressed concern that West End children were attending school in a “hooker area”, and that encountering the street scene was teaching children and youth that street-level sex-work was an acceptable lifestyle choice.⁸⁶ As one placard carried at CROWE’s protest march of 1982 succinctly put it: “Stop Hooking, Our Kids Are Looking” (Goad, 1983). Or as a member of Shame the Johns asserted, “small children are harassed on their way to and from school” (Anon., 1984j).

⁸⁴ Also, as the group put it elsewhere, “CROWE is not a self-righteous group of cranky moralists, determined to rid the city of prostitution. We simply want the same rights to the peace and enjoyment of our neighbourhood that every other part of the city takes for granted. We demand the same degree of enforcement every other neighbourhood gets to maintain social peace.” (CROWE, 1981i).

⁸⁵ See for example, Tytherleigh, 1984; Anon., 1984k; Crowe, 1982a; Budgen, 1981; Price, 1984; Women of the West End, 1984.

⁸⁶ See Anon., 1980b; CROWE, 1981b, 1981c; Ziebeil, 1984; Anon., 1984j.

Figure 3-1 “West Enders”



3.2.2 “Sex-Workers”

CROWE represented the sex-workers as the opposite of to the categories of resident, normalcy, contributing taxpayers and rights bearing citizen. Thus, in opposition to ‘residents’ of the neighbourhood, sex-workers were invariably represented as *transients* and outsiders. They cycled through the West End and had no real attachment or concern for the area as a place. Even if some sex-workers did reside in the West End, it was not their *home*. This sentiment was succinctly captured on a placard carried in CROWE’s 1982 protest march. The placard read “We’re Not Hookers. We live here” (Goad, 1982). CROWE’s statements in the media, and in their own internal documents, consistently refer to the sex-workers as ‘invaders’ and ‘intruders’, who were unhealthy for the neighbourhood.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ See, for example, CROWE’s brief to the Fraser Committee (CROWE, 1984).

Second, the sex-workers were not ‘normal’ but anti-social *deviants* or undesirables (as they indicated by their willingness to sell their bodies for money).⁸⁸ They eschewed the basic norms of civilized society and adhered to the rules of their own particular subculture.⁸⁹ They used obscene language and were willing to operate outside the law—particularly, to use intimidation and violent tactics to assert their claim to the street.⁹⁰ Their basic field of relation was to their subculture and not to society more generally, or to ‘normal’ society. Consequently, they attracted their ‘natural’ compatriots: pimps, sexual predators (child molesters, individuals with violent sexual proclivities), drug dealers and other criminals.⁹¹ As CROWE’s *Problems and Positions* report puts it: the sex-workers “do not see themselves as part of the community; their support comes from their subculture. They do not accept the normal bounds of civility that is a prerequisite for a working community” (Price, 1983a). Or as a member of CROWE who did not want to be identified told the *Vancouver Sun*, “we’re not dealing with socially adjusted people here. They’re literally on our doorstep” (Halsall, 1981). And, as a consequence, CROWE suggested, the street-level sex-workers were out of control: “why don’t they effectively police their own to weed out troublemakers and “children” ... Why? Because they don’t care or they can’t . . . the prostitutes have shown they are incapable of self-regulation and control” (Price, 1983b).

Third, CROWE represented the sex-workers as *economically destructive*. In their brief to the Fraser Committee, CROWE stressed that it is not poverty that drives individuals to take up sex-work. As a newspaper editorial quoted in one of CROWE’s reports put it:

⁸⁸ See, for example, “West enders invited to help shape their destiny” (Tytherleigh, 1983).

⁸⁹ Vancouver mayor Mike Harcourt also connected the street scene with uncivil behavior (O’Brien, 1982).

⁹⁰ As one CROWE member told the Fraser Committee: “I feel as if I am living in an “open-air-brothel”, being exposed to the ugly looks of the prostitutes, their indecent behavior and language” (Ziebeil, 1984).

⁹¹ In a report titled “Violence related to street prostitution is on the rise”, CROWE suggested that the presence of street-level sex-work draws both crime and the socially psychopathic (1983c).

Some prostitutes are indeed victims of circumstances, particularly young teenagers who may run away from home for any number of reasons and find themselves destitute. But for the most part the people who ply this trade do so by choice. In a society with as many welfare safety nets as ours there is little need for anyone to turn to prostitution to put bread on the table, unless the desire is for an awful lot of bread (Anon., 1983b; CROWE, 1983b).

It is, CROWE argued, the “desire for lots of money, rather than an avoidance of little money, that seems to be the motivating factor in the decision to become a prostitute” (CROWE, 1984). Moreover, they repeatedly claimed in their statements in the media that the reason sex-workers wanted to avoid legalizing and regulating sex-work in Canada was to avoid paying taxes on their earnings.⁹²

Yet while sex-workers did not take up their trade because they were poor, CROWE asserted, the presence of sex-workers caused poverty and rearrangement of the geographic distribution of wealth. Not only did the presence of street-level sex-workers result in increasing incidents of property damage, their presence was also having a negative impact on property values. In 1981, an anonymous spokesman for CROWE told the *Globe and Mail*, “It’s [street-level sex-work] killing the neighbourhood. Apartment developers and investors are beginning to realize their investments are threatened” (Budgen, 1981). In its internal strategy papers of 1983, the organization also asserted that “property values are being visibly and directly affected. Prices are dropping for condominiums and realtors are reporting a direct connection with street prostitution . . . One major property owner (Amon investments) ha[s] applied for a reduction in property assessments because of the street scene” (CROWE, 1983a: 3).⁹³ Given declining

⁹² As one member put it in CROWE’s membership survey: “it is not right that that residents should be unable to enjoy the peace of their home, so that hookers can make a fortune in tax free dollars” (1981b).

⁹³ In 1983 CROWE also commissioned a report on declining property values in the West End from Montreal Trust. Particularly, CROWE asked the company to look for indicators of the economic impact of prostitution. In a letter to Montreal Trust a representative of CROWE stated: “what we are looking for are any signs in vacancy rates, rental

property values, the disruption and violence associated with the street scene and the stigma attached to its presence, CROWE suggested, only those who had no other choice would live in a “hooker area” and accordingly, the presence of sex-workers would result in the impoverishment of the area in which they work (CROWE, 1984; Price, 1984).

In this way, then, CROWE represents the sex-workers as the ‘other’ of the ‘resident’ of the West End. The unstated implication of this juxtaposition, and of CROWE’s outright statement that sex-workers break the underlying social contract governing society by their presence in a residential area⁹⁴, is that sex-workers should not be considered rights bearing citizens, or at least not in the same way as West End ‘residents’ (CROWE, 1982: 6; Price 1983a: 17). Given their behavior, and the identity they have chosen, they are not entitled to the same rights as residents to the West End. Their ‘right’ to public space and to live free from violence should not count in the same way as the rights of residents.⁹⁵ Given that sex-workers had chosen to forgo civility and the general rules of social conduct and interaction, they made a choice to expose themselves to increased harm, and their presence in the West End exposed others, who had not made that choice, to increased harm.⁹⁶ The sex-workers, CROWE argued, were victimizing the residents of the West End. As the group told the Fraser Committee “Prostitution

variations, market values of apartment buildings, and turnover that may indicate a difference between the hooker area and adjacent neighbourhoods in the West End” (Price, 1983d). The report eventually produced fulfilled this mandate, suggesting that values in the West End had decline by \$14 Million (Rose, 1984; Brett, 1983). This figure however, was of questionable validity. As one of the City’s housing planners pointed out, there were significant methodological problems with the report (Ouston, 1984).

⁹⁴ As the group put it:

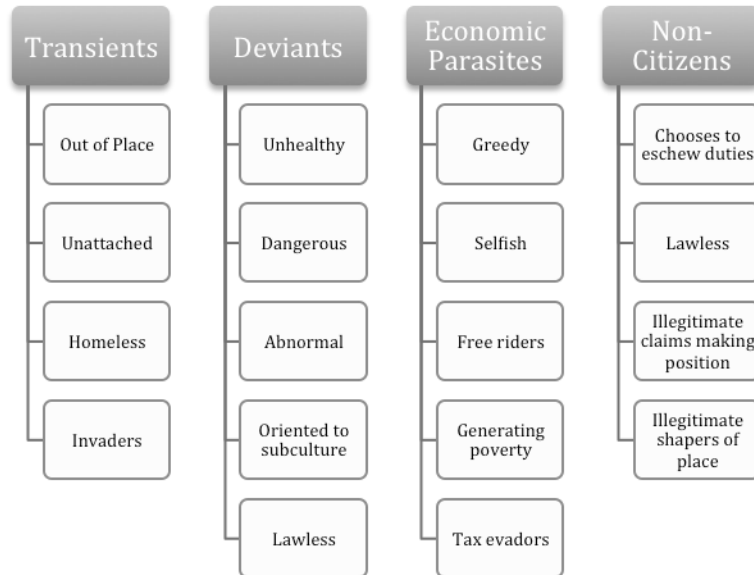
If solicitation on our streets is not seen to constitute a threat to public order, then the law may truly be judged to be an ass – or at least those politicians, alone in the Western world, who decriminalize prostitution, as the federal gov’t did in 1972, and then refuse to amend the law when prostitutes break the social contract by uncontrolled acts of solicitation in a residential area (CROWE, 1982a: 6).

⁹⁵ CROWE states “it is not prostitutes who are being oppressed; it is we, the residents of the West End” (CROWE, 1983e).

⁹⁶ See, for example, CROWE Report 7 (CROWE, 1983b).

is not a victimless crime. The victims are those persons who live in the area in which street prostitution takes place” (CROWE, 1984: 2).⁹⁷

Figure 3-2 “Sex-Workers”



3.2.3 Imagery of Place⁹⁸

Beyond the opposing terms in which CROWE represented street-level sex-workers and residents of the West End, the incompatibility between the two groups, and between the West End as a place and the street scene in close proximity, CROWE, along with sympathetic public figures and members of the media, used a particular kind of imagery to represent the West End itself in contradistinction to the ‘problem’ it faced. Here we find identity being used to frame not only people but also place. The West End before the street scene was characterized as a ‘peaceful’, ‘quiet’ neighbourhood known for its scenic beauty and home to schools and churches.

⁹⁷ As a reporter described one City Council meeting on the issue: “this . . . is not a place to make pleas about the downtrodden prostitute, a victim of child abuse or poverty or both, who continues to be a victim on the streets. The residents can’t sleep at night for the victim’s racket as she deals with her pimp or her customers” (Garr, 1983).

⁹⁸ I am using the term “imagery” here to suggest the literary device—using words to generate mental images.

Moreover, it was an area that had been building a vibrant community spirit. As the study undertaken by Montreal Trust on behalf of CROWE reported in 1983, the “conception of a vibrant and live community with a low crime rate has over the last years changed again because of the intrusion of street prostitution” (Brett, 1983). In this way, this image of the West End was juxtaposed with imagery that linked the street scene to terms such as ‘dirt’, ‘garbage’, ‘infestation’, ‘invasion’ and spectacle—particularly the zoo and circus.⁹⁹ One news story captured this contrast in the following terms: “in the genteel atmosphere of Pendrell Street Garden – a smooth grassy area raddled by snapdragons, the overpowering scent of roses in hot air and tall leafy trees – it was difficult to imagine the infamous Davie Street out there, close by” (Gartner, 1984). Moreover, at their first meeting CROWE passed a resolution that describes the situation in the West End in the following terms:

Hundreds of prostitutes, customers and ‘hookerlookers’ can fill the gracious tree-lined streets from eleven in the morning until four or five o’clock the following morning – seven days a week. No one is immune. Hookers solicit outside churches on Sunday mornings and even during weddings and funerals. Single women are constantly harassed by tricks offering money for sex. Even children are solicited. (CROWE, 1981a)

Or as Conservative Member of Parliament for Vancouver Center, and later Cabinet Minister, Pat Carney asserted, the presence of street-level sex-work in the West End represents an “infestation of a quiet and beautiful neighbourhood” (Cosgrove, 1981).

⁹⁹ Some examples of newspapers and public figures deploying similar imagery:

1. Alderman Marguerite Ford: “There are things we can do. It’s a housekeeping problem; it’s like any other kind of dirt. There isn’t any one solution; you just have to keep at it” (CROWE, 1981a).
2. *Maclean’s Magazine*: “Four years ago Vancouver’s west end was a quiet residential area. These days it is subject to sporadic invasions of by male and female prostitutes who turn tree lined streets into a drive-in brothel” (Greber, 1984).
3. *Vancouver Sun*: “West End residents can look forward to a summer of negotiating street barriers, some of them concrete and some of them human. What they can’t expect to enjoy is freedom from enforced attendance at a sexual circus” (Anon., 1982d); the “West end will turn into “sexual zoo” in summer if nothing is done” (Menyas, 1982).

3.2.4 Contentious Proximity

As preceding discussion has begun to suggest, the consequences CROWE associated with the presence of street-level sex-work were dramatic and extensive, not only because of the ways in which they were framing groups of people and places but because of the proximate relationships between them. Given the fundamental social incompatibility CROWE posited between West End residents and street-level sex-workers and their assertion that the sex-workers were out of place in the West End, the group argued that the situation was extremely volatile and the two groups could not continue to co-exist in such close proximity:¹⁰⁰

If the political system continues to prove impotent, there are only two options left for the residents of affected neighbourhoods: capitulation or confrontation. They can either get out and let the neighbourhood decay, or they can force the prostitutes out. There is no middle-class residential red-light district in the world, mixing families and hookers in a romanticized and convivial atmosphere.

(Price, 1983a: 26)

Or, as a CROWE spokesman succinctly put it in an interview with the Vancouver Sun: “It’s either them or us” (Anon., 1982a).¹⁰¹ In this way, CROWE argued that the close proximity of such socially distant and different groups would produce two results: the decline and decay of the neighbourhood, and conflict between West Enders and sex-workers.¹⁰²

Regarding the degeneration of the neighbourhood, in their second community newsletter (and in their brief to the federal Justice Committee) CROWE states:

¹⁰⁰ This position was also taken by the VPD, Pat Carney and Mike Harcourt.

¹⁰¹ CROWE also articulated a similar sentiment in their submission to the federal Justice Committee tasked with reviewing the laws related to prostitution in 1982: “The status quo which exists in the West End cannot be maintained. One or the other groups has to give, either the residents or the prostitutes. Unfortunately, the resolution is not always achieved by peaceful means, particularly when the lawmakers refuse to respond to the needs of the residents.” (CROWE, 1982d: 4; See also, Price, 1984)

¹⁰² This argument was also forwarded by local media. Radio host Barrie Clark (CKNW), for example, suggested that “we have a critical situation; the character of the West End will change for the worse if something isn’t done, and very rapidly.” (CROWE, 1982a: 2)

[I]n our opinion the indirect effects of street soliciting are capable of destroying the neighbourhood. [...] [S]treet prostitution in a residential neighbourhood is effectively a statement that order and peace cannot be maintained. Each prostitute is like a broken window that says “no one cares.” How can anyone care about a neighbourhood that allows prostitution to be conducted at all hours of the day, that allows its streets to be [...] commandeered by people who have “no sense of the mutual regard or the obligation of civility.” [...]. People use the streets less often; they stay apart from their fellows; they refuse to get involved. Soon it is no longer a neighbourhood – a place of attachments and concern – but simply a place where people live. Such an area is vulnerable to criminal invasion. (CROWE, 1982d; CROWE, 1982a)¹⁰³

And similarly in CROWE’s *Problems and Positions* report.¹⁰⁴

The social fabric of a community cannot withstand the pressure of street prostitution. The process of decay is inevitable. The hookers [...] move in, first discreetly and then disruptively. [...] They also attract those who disrupt the quiet and peace of the neighbourhood. Even those who would not normally behave in an anti-social way may feel that a neighbourhood that tolerates hookers on its corners is not worthy of respect. The atmosphere in the community changes from one of respect to one of disruption and then to one of fear. People stop using the streets during the night, then during the day. Old people in particular feel vulnerable. People who care more move out, particularly in a neighbourhood with a high rate of tenancy. Why stay around? Why fight? Those who care less move in. Landlords are not as vigilant in screening their tenants. The hookers start moving inside (Price, 1983a: 18-19).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³Also, in their *Problems and Positions* piece CROWE argued that “Street prostitution is capable of changing and destroying the social fabric of a healthy community” (Price, 1983a: 5); and, that “the livability of residential districts is being adversely effected [by street-level sex-work]. Street prostitution is becoming institutionalized; these neighbourhoods are seen as red-light districts, leading to a transformation in their character and quality” (Price, 1983a: 7).

¹⁰⁴ In writing the following, CROWE drew on James Q. Wilson’s ‘broken windows’ theory of policing, particularly, an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* titled “Broken Windows: The police and neighborhood safety” (Wilson and Kelling, 1982).

¹⁰⁵ Or as CROWE expressed these sentiments in attempting to attract membership:

We see a danger in allowing the situation to continue as it is. By not speaking out, we tolerate it. By tolerating it, we allow it to get worse. And it will undoubtedly do so, Week by week, the limits to acceptable social behavior are pushed back, the streets get noisier, more dirty, more intimidating, more violent. Those who can no longer take it move out, those who move in care less for the neighbourhood. A spiral of decline sets in. As each month goes by, things deteriorate. (CROWE, 1981d).

Already, CROWE argued, the West End was beginning to experience decay resulting from the presence of the sex-workers and had begun to acquire a dubious reputation.¹⁰⁶ The rest of the city, and even the province and the country more generally, had begun to associate the West End with street-level sex-work. As the West End Advisory Council put it “The West End is now regarded as a place where ‘anything goes’ – locally, nationally and even internationally”, and as CROWE further asserted in their literature on how the ‘problem’ came about: ‘People [come] from all across the country and continent, attracted by the reputation of Vancouver as an open town for prostitution” (West End Advisory Council, 1984; CROWE, 1981a).

Moreover, CROWE argued, the decline and decay generated by the presence of the street-level sex-work in the West End could also impact the city as a whole. In his brief to the Fraser Committee, Gordon Price, a founder and prominent spokesperson of CROWE, drew connections between the decline of the West End and the future of high-density development in the downtown core, particularly the planned upscale condo development around BC Place.

Is this the vision of Vancouver that people want – a dangerous, decaying West End and a Manhattan-style B.C. Place? A downtown core of extremes, where wealth and poverty are the only alternatives? Do we want to create a vast sexual marketplace in the heart of the city? The issue is not solely street prostitution. The issue is also whether the West End is worth saving. If the West End doesn’t work,

Similarly, in their brief to the Fraser Committee the *West End Traffic Committee* asserted:

The West End is not a theory! We are a case study of what happens to a neighbourhood when street soliciting rules unchecked and without controls of any kind, de facto, decriminalization. General livability declines, quality of life is eroded slowly but surely on many fronts. People feel intimidated and their private and public space is invaded. People move. Property values decline. Public spirit dissipates. A once proud and ordered neighbourhood is in swift decline. Even more social problems emerge. Public costs go up. Another inner-urban community is lost. (1984: 8).

¹⁰⁶ The West End Traffic Committee, an organization that had been involved in the traffic calming measures and mini park installations that had occurred in the preceding years, also describes feeling defeated and angry as a result of the situation in the West End. In their brief to the Fraser Committee they say: “Whenever we plan to improve anything now, the question is asked: ‘what about the street prostitutes? Will they benefit, abuse or destroy?’” (West End Traffic Committee, 1984: 6). They further suggest that they feel like their only option is to move (West End Traffic Committee, 1984).

then it's time we figured out why. This community is to some extent the model for the future. (Price, 1984: 9).¹⁰⁷

In addition, he suggested that a declining West End would represent a point of embarrassment for the entire city and raise questions about Vancouver's ability to create a livable and vibrant downtown core.¹⁰⁸ Further, CROWE also argued that if it were allowed to continue unchecked, street-level sex-work would spread to other residential neighbourhoods in the city, and that declining property values in the West End would represent a loss of revenue for the city as a whole.¹⁰⁹

Beyond the assertion that the presence of street-level sex-work would lead to the 'decay' and the 'decline' of the area, CROWE also argued that if nothing were done about the presence of sex-workers on West End streets, confrontations with 'residents' were inevitable. The group asserted that the presence of the street-level sex-workers had created an environment in which the current residents of the West End could not continue to live. As a result, they were faced with a choice of accepting that the West End was no longer their place and moving elsewhere, or fighting to maintain the West End as their place. This was the fight in which CROWE was engaged, the group suggested. This goes well beyond the idea of NIMBY because CROWE was not simply engaged in fighting something being located in their neighbourhood as opposed to

¹⁰⁷Elsewhere in his brief Price says that the West End was "one of the few high-density, lower-middle-income, socially diverse communities that actually worked" (Price, 1984: 3).

¹⁰⁸ Price argued:

What does this all say about Vancouver's ability to create and retain safe, livable, middle-class and mixed residential environments in the core? The densities proposed for BC Place start at the highest the West End was ever zoned for. Will BC Place and the outer ring of the West End consist of highly secure – and consequently expensive – apartments and highrises, while the inner core is dangerous, decaying and a severe social embarrassment to the entire city? (1983g).

See also West End Community Advisory Council, 1984.

¹⁰⁹ As the group put it in their second newsletter: "In the meantime, prostitution will spread. Hookers from Los Angeles to Montreal are waiting for the green light for the red light. Police report that prostitutes have already been sighted on streets in Fairview, Kitsilano, southeast Vancouver and elsewhere" (CROWE, 1982c: 2). Elsewhere CROWE stated that

In the opinion of CROWE, if it became apparent that street prostitution was entrenched in the West End and would continue into the indefinite future, there would be a major decline in values – and eventually in property taxes – that would impact the city as a whole. Not only would the loss in revenue have to be made up from other communities and businesses but social service and policing costs would increase at the same time. (1984b).

elsewhere (although this was certainly part of it), but rather it was a battle over the very meaning of the ‘West End’—its continued existence in the terms it was being defined by CROWE. Moreover it was also the fight that they had attempted to win through responsible collective action:

We researched the problem; we held a conference; we wrote brief and letter and signed petitions. We became aware of countervailing opinion and the power of the feminist lobby. We became even more aware of the costs of delay as the neighbourhood began to change around us and the social fabric became torn and unraveled. (CROWE, 1984).¹¹⁰

However, given that West Enders had tried traditional channels of collective action without result and given that the neighbourhood was already experiencing decline and decay, CROWE argued, government inaction was pushing residents towards taking a more direct approach—towards confronting the sex-workers in the street. Indeed, it was pushing the situation towards violence.¹¹¹

3.3 The Resonance and Success of CROWE

As a community organization, CROWE worked to establish itself as the voice of West End residents and as a vehicle that represented their interests and positions. Moreover, it deployed clusters of identities in order to legitimate the group’s right to a political voice: to legitimate themselves and their claims; and to require recognition and action from government and society more generally. Yet, how successful were the framing tactics of the group? The

¹¹⁰ In the organization’s constitution, CROWE states that the purpose of the group is “to endeavor to reduce, resolve and/or eliminate those conditions which are a threat to the social fabric and stability of the community” (CROWE, 1983f).

¹¹¹ CROWE states, for example, “If prostitution is allowed to continue on the street, particularly through next summer, events will move towards violence” (CROWE, 1981a). Similarly a *Globe and Mail* article recorded that “The CROWE spokesman thinks it is only a matter of time before there is violence between the residents and the prostitutes.” (Budgen, 1981). Both Vancouver Mayor Mike Harcourt, and Vancouver Center MP Pat Carney also emphasized the potential for violent confrontation in the West End in the media and in Ottawa.

following section explores the resonance of representational strategies deployed by CROWE in terms of the amount of neighbourhood support they garnered among individuals living in the West End using membership numbers relative to population, their success in achieving their goals by examining the “solution” eventually enacted to the “problem” of sex-work in the West End, and the significance and size of the opposition CROWE faced. I will also analyze the degree to which their way of framing the presence of the street-level sex-work in the West End was successful by examining the degree to which their framing is reflected in media coverage, and the statements of government leaders and officials addressing this issue.

3.3.1 Neighborhood Support

By some standards, CROWE established only a limited amount of active support from West Enders. Representing a neighbourhood of around 38 000 residents, the group reported having 145 members in 1982 (Anon., 1982a).¹¹² Moreover, the organization’s internal documents suggest that membership and resident support were an ongoing concern. Shortly after it was founded, CROWE conducted a door-to-door membership drive in the apartment buildings located in the areas impacted by street-level sex-work. Though members of CROWE who conducted the drive reported that most people were sympathetic to the organization’s goals, very few were willing to join. They found that “people [were] willing to advocate harsh retributions against prostitutes but were not even willing to attend meetings” (CROWE, 1981g). This same frustration animated CROWE’s strategy papers of 1983, which stated that “There is a general perception that ‘something should be done’ but the feeling is soft – that is, there is not a

¹¹²CROWE’s affiliate organization Shame the Johns (STJ) reported having a phone list with 400 names and a core group of around 60 (Mackie, 1984).

sufficient sense of outrage or concern so that individuals or groups will take on the issue as a priority. They hope or trust that ‘someone else’ will look after it.” (CROWE, 1983a: 4).

Despite internal concerns regarding its lack of membership, CROWE still represented itself as the voice of the residents of the West End and claimed to speak on behalf of the West End as a neighbourhood. Indeed, given their limited membership, the group sought to take (official) positions and perspectives that they thought most residents of the West End would support (for example, they avoided framing sex-work as a moral issue). For one of the organization’s founders, Gordon Price, successfully achieving CROWE’s objectives depended on the group’s ability to access such support. As he put it in an address CROWE’s steering committee in 1981: “we must be truly a citizens’ organization—one that accurately reflects the consensus of the neighbourhood. Without that, we have no legitimacy, we will have no strength or endurance” (Price, 1981).¹¹³

3.3.2 Goal Obtainment

Despite CROWE’s limited membership, they eventually succeeded in their efforts to push street-level sex-work out of the West End. In 1984, Attorney General Brian Smith petitioned the Supreme Court of British Columbia to issue an injunction making it an offence for sex-workers to solicit in the West End, as a result of the escalation of direct action in the streets of the West End and the increasing possibility of violent confrontation.¹¹⁴ In 1984, a new group—Shame the Johns—was formed in order to take direct action against the sex-workers.

¹¹³ This concern with taking positions that garner consensus is also reflected in CROWE’s insistence that they are not taking a stance on the morality of prostitution.

¹¹⁴ After touring the West End and speaking to residents and sex-workers during his visit to Vancouver, Paul Fraser (of the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution) stated “There is a galvanization of what I can only describe as hatred” (Rees, 1984).

The group organized night time marches, confronted sex-workers (though this was not officially encouraged), recorded the license plate numbers of suspected johns, and threatened to publish their names and confront them at their homes.¹¹⁵ As Becki Ross notes, despite the new name, Shame the Johns was more of a subsidiary of CROWE than a separate entity, and there was significant crossover in membership between the organizations (2012b: 608).¹¹⁶ As the group's activities escalated, it was reported that its members had received multiple death threats (See for example Anon., 1984h; Anon., 1984i). As the situation on the streets in the West End became more volatile, Brian Smith took a more aggressive approach, using militaristic language and saying he wanted to support the 'residents' of the West End: "We are going to declare war on these people and drive them off the streets" (Anon., 1984g).¹¹⁷ The Supreme Court of British Columbia ruled in favour of an injunction in the summer of 1984.

While there was originally some concern regarding whether it would work, the injunction proved very effective. One spokesman of STJ describes its impact in the following terms:

¹¹⁵ STJ reported having a phone list with 400 names and a core group of around 60 (Mackie, 1984).

¹¹⁶ Shame the Johns was established to pursue direct action in the streets—some of which entered questionable legal territory—and, accordingly, to protect the lobbying efforts of CROWE. During the period when Shame the Johns emerged, the Fraser Committee's review of the laws on pornography and prostitution was on the horizon. The distance from direct action generated by the establishment of Shame the Johns, it could be argued, allowed CROWE to present itself as reasonable citizens (as opposed to protest-happy vigilantes). Soon after the inception of STJ, the steering committee of CROWE passed the following motion which is suggestive of the eventual relationship between the groups: "That the direction of CROWE be toward centralized organization, media contact, general publicity through conferences, etc., but that broad-based citizen action be encouraged through smaller neighbourhood and building groups, with unity and communications emphasized between CROWE and citizens" (CROWE, 1981h). Moreover, at this time Gordon Price was also attempting to establish some form of funding partnership with City Hall for the preparation of CROWE's brief to the Fraser Committee. The eventual outcome of his efforts was the creation of a paid community coordinator position to be held by Price and the establishment of the West End Community Advisory Council to oversee this position. Originally, Price had proposed that CROWE provide the oversight for this position but this suggestion was rejected. Like with Shame the Johns, however, there was significant overlap in membership between CROWE and the West End Community Council. It is also a possibility that the role Price envisioned for CROWE and himself in relationship to City Hall might have been undermined had CROWE engaged in direct action in the West End.

¹¹⁷ Attorney General Brian Smith connected the injunction to the actions of STJ. As one newspaper article put it: "Spurred by concern that frustrated vigilante groups might take the law into their own hands, the provincial government announced Wednesday it will seek a BC supreme Court injunction to stop street prostitution" (Anon., 1984f).

Nobody dreamed [the change] would be that dramatic. The whole atmosphere is changed . . . it's as if a siege has been lifted. The noise level has dropped . . . I can't describe how much. The amount of traffic has dropped. There's no litter. People are using the streets and looking you in the eye. Women are much more relaxed (Mackie, 1984).

Similarly, a celebratory column in the *Vancouver Province* announced that the “War in the West End was over”: before the injunction, it continued, “prostitution was taking over. There were knifings, beatings and murder. Citizens were afraid for their lives. Property values dropped. Families moved out”, but now women and children were free to use the streets again and there were no more sex-workers on church stoops (Tytherleigh, 1984). Shame the Johns also told the *Vancouver Courier* that in the days preceding the implementation of the injunction, the group had received a letter claiming to be on behalf of the sex-workers working West End streets. The letter suggested that given the injunction and the ongoing conflict with STJ, they had decided to move. The letter said:

We have met and we've agreed to move across Burrard to Drake and Howe . . . After we move, please leave us alone. All we want is to go about our business and not bother people. It's hard enough as it is . . . Please do not disturb us. Let us help each other. (Horwood, 1984)

In this way, then, the sex-workers moved into other areas of the city.¹¹⁸ And thus CROWE could be considered successful in their campaign of deploying politics of contentious proximity to achieve their ends.

3.3.3 Opposition

While some individuals challenged CROWE's claim to represent the residents of the West End, no significant alternative to the group arose within the neighbourhood; that is, there

¹¹⁸ Following the injunction, complaints increased regarding the presence of street-level sex-work in Mount Pleasant and east of Granville along Seymour and Richards streets (Francis, 2006: 122).

was no other prominent group which claimed to represent residents of the West End that offered alternative positions or representations of the neighbourhood or the people within it to those of CROWE. Over the course of its campaign CROWE did face opposition from broad-based organizations including the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association and a range of women's groups (including the Advisory Council on the Status of Women; the British Columbia Federation of Women; the Elizabeth Fry Society; NDP Women's Rights Committee; National Action Committee of the Status of Women; National and Vancouver Associations of Women and the Law; and Vancouver Status of Women). Yet, both the BC Civil Liberties Association and the women's groups were primarily concerned with what legal measures were being put in place to regulate street-level sex-work and objected to legal changes CROWE sought in their efforts to push street-level sex-work out of the West End (Changes to the Criminal Code, the civil injunctions etc.). These groups did little to challenge the representational frames CROWE deployed at the neighbourhood level.

In terms of its representation tactics, the main opposition to CROWE came from the Vancouver organization known as the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes.¹¹⁹ The organization—which included sex-workers, former sex-workers, feminist activists and lawyers—sought to represent the sex-workers in the West End and to challenge both the legal measures demanded by CROWE and the terms in which they represented sex-workers. Particularly, they argued that sex-work should be decriminalized and that the city should use its nuisance laws to address issues in the West End. Moreover, they questioned the assertion that “bad

¹¹⁹ The Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes was formed in 1982 by a number of women working at Vancouver Rape Relief. A statement by the group written in the mid 1980s says that: “membership in ASP includes women who have grown up on the street, women who have been prostitutes, women who still work as prostitutes, and women who have a consciousness of the vulnerability to the male violence that prostitutes face” (Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes, 198-).

neighbourhoods” were the “natural” place for sex-work. As one representative of the organization put it: “Why should hookers have to work in the slums? [...] Why shouldn’t they work in the same neighbourhoods where the Johns live?” (Kaufman, 1983). Additionally, they also questioned CROWE’s framing of sex-workers as choosing to engage in sex-work because they want to make quick, easy money, suggesting instead that poverty and cuts to social services pushed women to take up sex-work (Bonn, 1983).¹²⁰

Beyond speaking to media and providing testimony to the Fraser Commission, the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes also organized a number of protest marches and the occupation of the Christ Church Cathedral in the center of Vancouver downtown core (Burrard and West Georgia).¹²¹ During one protest march, male, female and transsexual sex-workers marched to City Hall, accompanied by members of a number of women’s groups and the Gay Alliance (one of Canada’s first gay liberation groups). They called for alternatives to the criminalization of sex-work. As one representative of the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes put it: “We want all prostitution laws repealed, an increase in the welfare rate and juvenile prostitution should be addressed for what it really is . . . child sexual abuse and exploitation” (Cosgrove, 1983b). Thus, this group in identifying the potential harm to children focused on children who were ‘sex workers’ rather than, as CROWE had done, threats to children of ‘residents’ ‘exposed’ to the sight of sex-workers. Additionally, the group also organized another march in which sex-workers followed a neighbourhood patrol by Shame the Johns carrying signs says: “Dear John, We Love You—Ladies of the Night” and “Leave Us Alone” (Scott, 1984).

¹²⁰The connections that the ASP drew between sex-work and poverty would be reiterated by the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution when they published their report in the spring of 1985, and by John Lowman in his *Vancouver Field Study* undertaken for the committee (Lowman, 1984). After interviewing members of the VPD, sex-workers and representatives of social agencies, Lowman concluded that the “most significant factor in persuading someone to become a prostitute was economic necessity” (Francis, 2006: 101).

¹²¹ The group also suggests that they tried to work with both CROWE and the City to address the tension in the West End but that neither were interested (Bonn, 1983).

The occupation of Christ Church Cathedral was undertaken in order to protest Attorney General Brian Smith's injunction. Twenty sex-workers, supported by the church's Archbishop Douglas Hambridge, occupied the Church for three days in an effort to raise awareness of the perspectives of sex-workers, to open dialogue with parishioners and to work to build bridges with the broader community (Glavin, 1984b). As a representative of ASP noted of the occupation, "It's the first time we have had a chance to have a dialogue with the community" and as Archbishop Hambridge added, "I couldn't imagine a less aggressive group of people . . . one of their biggest concerns is that nobody listens. People will (now) hear what they have to say" (Cox and Schaefer, 1984). The occupation was also endorsed by the BC Federation of Labor, a number of women's groups and sex workers' organizations in other countries (Glavin, 1984b).

Yet, as the previous quote by Archbishop Hambridge suggests, the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes (ASP) struggled to get their perspective heard. The dominant resonance of CROWE's frames (and of traditional representations of sex-work) is anecdotally underlined by the efforts of representatives of the ASP and their sympathizers to insist that sex-workers should be treated as human beings who deserve a basic level of concern and respect. As a spokeswoman for ASP stated: "If you talk to hookers and treat them like human beings, you'll get a response. You won't get a response if you treat them like animals and pigs" (Galvin, 1984a). Or as one community outreach worker asserted regarding the imposition of the injunction barring sex-workers from the West End:

I definitely do not feel that the solution is to drive these prostitutes into an area where they have less protections against being beaten and raped. It's just going after people without any power, people who can't defend themselves. I can see the point of view of the residents of the West End, but I am convinced that the prostitutes aren't a bunch of moral degenerates (ibid).

Furthermore, when the Fraser Committee for Pornography and Prostitution visited Vancouver, the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes provided testimony to the committee in private because they had safety concerns about appearing at the public hearings (Bonn, 1983). In this way, these statements and circumstances suggest that it was a struggle for sex-workers and their representatives even to get a respectful hearing free from violence or the threat of violence.

3.3.4 Media Coverage

One of the most telling signs of the resonance and success of CROWE's framing tactics was the group's ability to position itself as the voice of West End residents in local and national media and have them frame the problem in the terms described above. News stories touching on sex-work in Vancouver's West End referred to and quoted representatives of CROWE as *the* voice of the neighbourhood, repeatedly using CROWE's framing of the issue. An analysis of the 391 articles in newspapers referencing prostitution in Vancouver from July 1, 1981 to July 31 1984 demonstrates that 49% forwarded the same conceptualization of the 'problem' of street-level sex-work in the West End as CROWE, or used the same conception of what was needed to solve the 'problem'; just under 10% used alternative frames or solutions such as those mobilized by the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes; and the remaining 41% of articles echoed neither CROWE's frames or alternatives.¹²² This analysis suggests that CROWE was extremely effective at the level of mass media in framing the problem.

¹²² The articles that neither supported nor opposed CROWE's frames tended to focus on legal developments regarding prostitution. For example, when the City of Vancouver made it a bylaw offence to buy sexual services on the street, there was a slew of articles recording how many 'prostitutes' and 'johns' had been charged under the bylaw and debating whether or not the bylaw would stand up in court. See, for example, the *Vancouver Province's* "Prostitute changes plea, fined \$350" (Anon., 1982e) or the *Sun's* "City bylaw prosecutions jam up" (Anon., 1982f).

3.3.5 Public Figures and Institutional Support

Beyond the reiteration of its positions in the media, CROWE was also able gain significant endorsements from public figures and institutions. It forged relationships with Vancouver Center MP Pat Carney and Vancouver Mayor Mike Harcourt, both of whom frequently attended CROWE events and expressed their support for the group in their respective political forums (and both of whom had come out strongly against street-level sex-work before the formation of CROWE).¹²³ Most importantly, the terms Harcourt and Carney used to represent street-level sex-work in the West End as a significant problem overlapped extensively with CROWE's.¹²⁴ In a letter to Justice Minister Mark McGuigan, Harcourt says:

It is our understanding that local community leaders and responsible citizens of Vancouver's West End community are considering confronting the prostitutes in the streets. They, we believe, realize the seriousness of such an action and the problem it presents to law enforcement agencies. However, they see it as their only alternative to selling their property or surrendering their leases and leaving the West End. If the latter were to happen, the deterioration in that community would be rapid. The matter is one of great concern to the city as a whole. (Harcourt, 1983: 2).

Indeed, Harcourt also goes on to argue that prostitution is not a victimless crime and that it results in the victimization of the community as a whole (ibid).¹²⁵ As he put it in one statement to the media: "the victims are all those who are denied the freedom to use public streets without

¹²³ Both Harcourt and Carney went on to have extensive careers in public office. In 1986, Harcourt transitioned into provincial politics. The following year he became the leader of the provincial NDP and of the Official Opposition, and in 1991, he was elected Premier of British Columbia, a position he held until 1996. Pat Carney was appointed to the federal cabinet of Brian Mulroney, following the election of a Conservative Government in 1984. She served as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources from 1984-1986 and as Minister of International Trade from 1986-1988. In 1990, she was appointed to the Senate.

¹²⁴ In addressing CROWE at their conference in 1981 Harcourt stated:

The West End is the worst hotbed of any neighbourhood in Canada. Your complaints are 100 per cent legitimate. The threats, the intimidation, the inability to sleep at night are not manufactured. I've talked to too many of you; I've been down through here. For anyone anywhere to say your complaints are just a bunch of nervous nellys is not true. . . In my opinion, this is one of the serious issues in this city: the right of people to enjoy their streets in safe, quiet neighbourhoods (CROWE, 1981c).

¹²⁵ He also suggested that residents are denied full use of the street they reside on, and the presence of street-level sex-work negatively impacts children and youth (Harcourt, 1983).

harassment [and] intimidation . . . the victims are our children who are exposed to the example of sex being bought and sold as a commodity. Surely that is a crime against everything that childhood ought to be” (Harcourt, 1984). Harcourt reiterates CROWE’s argument that street-level sex-work will destroy the West End as a place and that the grievances of West Enders should be heard and addressed. In addressing the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Pat Carney expressed similar sentiments:

Until this legislation is enacted, the problems of Vancouver’s West End will continue to escalate. A crisis is emerging in that neighbourhood as the residents threaten to fight back. The results will be tragic: in the short-term we will see increasing violence; in the long-term the result will be a growing disrespect for the law. As Vancouver’s Mayor Harcourt has pointed out, prostitution is not a victimless crime. As discouragement and frustration grow, the community itself becomes the victim. Only immediate action by the federal government can avert the destruction of this neighbourhood. (Carney, 1982)

And, as described above, Carney also uses the same imagery as CROWE to describe the sex workers as an ‘infestation’ in the West End. Additionally, representatives of the Vancouver Police Department attended CROWE events, and the VPD would refer residents who called the police to complain about issues associated with street-level sex-work to the organization (Hudson, 1984; see also Ross, 2010: 200-201).

Not only did the City of Vancouver—under Mike Harcourt’s leadership—support CROWE by attempting to address their concerns through providing bylaw solutions to control street-level sex-work and lobbying other levels of government to toughen the soliciting laws, it also provided financial support for the organization’s own lobbying efforts. Specifically, it provided the group with funding to put together their brief for the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution by creating a paid community organizer position for the West End and giving that position to the main spokesman (and researcher) of CROWE, Gordon Price. As

the *West Ender* described the position: “As well as dealing with high profile problems such as street violence, soliciting and noise and traffic, the organizer would make submissions to the Fraser Commission on Pornography and Prostitution” (Anon, 1983).¹²⁶

3.3.6 Policy Resonance

Just as CROWE’s arguments had centered on framing sex-work as out of place in the West End, the court injunction of 1984 was a location-based judgment: it made it an offence to engage in street-level sex-work west of Burrard Street. It did not ban soliciting for the purposes of prostitution in Vancouver (and probably could not have legally); rather, it banned it on the streets of the West End. Moreover, the official justification offered for both the City of Vancouver’s short-lived municipal bylaw of 1982 and the 1984 civil injunction echoed CROWE’s interpretation of the “problem” of street-level sex-work in the West End. As the so-called “Street Activities Bylaw” put it:

the presence of persons selling and purchasing sexual services on the streets in certain parts of the city
attracts persons to those streets and areas surrounding them and the noise made and uncivil behavior

¹²⁶The position of West End Community Organizer was created at the impetus of CROWE. Price records that at a meeting with Mike Harcourt on June 30, 1983, it was agreed that “a full-time community organizer, namely myself, would be contracted by the city to handle organizational work in the West End and to continue the work of CROWE to achieve change to the Criminal Code to deal more effectively with street prostitution” (Price, 1983c). His notes from the same meeting also suggest that the city’s social planning department was to help the community coordinator document the impact of street-level sex-work for the Fraser Committee. As the position was finalized, it determined that it should be, or at least be seen to be, a non-partisan position. Accordingly, Gordon Price resigned from CROWE before taking on the position and the West End Advisory Council was formed to provide some semblance of community oversight for the position.

As all this suggests, the claim to non-partisanship in appointing Gordon Price community organizer, was rather dubious, and both he and the West End Advisory Council were subject to sharp criticism. As a representative from Gordon House put it in a letter to Mike Harcourt after outlining the difficulties experienced by the organization in being included in the Council: “You gave up on this neighbourhood when you hired Gordon Price to co-ordinate the West End Livability Project last September . . . paranoia has increased among residents and misinformation about my community’s livability has been the order of the day.” (Gordon House, 1984). Or as another letter to the Mayor and City Council states, “As you may know, the West End Advisory Council has been harassing both johns and prostitutes verbally and physically . . . Why is the city paying him [Gordon Price] \$15 000 to do research on prostitution when he has already made up his mind about the issue?” (Anon, 1984e).

of the persons seeking to sell and purchase sexual services and those viewing such activity has seriously interfered not only with the rights of others to use the streets but also with the right of persons to peacefully occupy property adjacent to such streets. (City of Vancouver, 1982)

Or as Justice C.J. McEachern put it in his judgment granting the injunction:

What has happened in the West End is an urban tragedy that should never have occurred. What has happened is that a small but persistent and probably changing group of young men and women have taken over the streets and sidewalks of a part of the West End for the purpose of prostitution to the great discomfort of the neighbourhood. [...] What is in question in this case is whether prostitution may be practiced at the expense of a neighbourhood. (McEachern, 1984)

In this way, these legal statements reflected both the terms of the identity strategies CROWE deployed and their conceptualization of what was at stake when street-level sex-work was allowed to occur in the West End.

3.4 CROWE and the Politics of Contentious Proximity

The actions CROWE undertook in their campaign to push street-level sex-work out of the West End may be understood as an instances of what I term the politics of contentious proximity. A significant aspect of CROWE's politics focused on representation or on meaning making, of both people and places that existed in close proximate relationship to each other. In order to increase their chances of achieving their goal—the expulsion of the street-level sex-work from the West End—the group strove to define and control the terms in which the presence of street-level sex-work in the neighbourhood were understood. They worked to define this presence as a significant problem, to explain its causes and outline acceptable solutions. Moreover, in order to justify and legitimate their definition of the problem, its solutions and their own right to demand and require action from government, CROWE deployed representations of the identities of

people and places. They associated the “West Enders” and “Sex-Workers” with particular clusters of meaning, values and powers.

“West Enders”, according to the representational strategies CROWE deployed, were normal residents and citizens who contributed to the economy and protected property rights. Moreover, they exhibited an ethos of care: they were the guardians of resident women and children, and they were invested in maintaining and improving the neighbourhood. Their presence in the West End made it a particular type of place; it made it a community. Additionally, their identities were consistent with the “natural” beauty of the West End—with its scenic mountain views, its beaches and “gracious” tree-lined streets. “Sex-workers”, alternatively, were deviant, transients who had a parasitical relationship with the economy, and with the West End. They did not respect the social conventions of the community they “invaded”, contributed nothing to that community and failed to perform the basic duties associated with citizenship. Furthermore, they were associated with violent criminals, sexual predators and suburban rowdies. “Sex-workers” were out of place in the West End. They were a disruptive, infestation corrupting the natural environment and the people.

Thus, the “problem” of street-level sex-work in the West End, when conceptualized in these terms, may be understood as one of social distance and physical proximity. “West Enders” and “Sex Workers”, for CROWE, were incompatible social groups who could not exist together in one place, and the ongoing co-presence of both groups would have severe consequences—violent confrontation or the destruction of the West End. That is to say, this ongoing co-presence would transform the West End from a place that was compatible with “West Enders” to a place that was compatible with “sex-workers”. Accordingly, CROWE’s representational tactics suggested, in order to “save” the West End, the sex-workers needed to be moved to a place that

suited their characteristics; that is, a place that was dirtier, where people did not care, were not invested, and where normal citizens did not live.

What is readily apparent in CROWE's mobilization of these identity clusters, and in the imagery they employed alongside these clusters, is that they are built on traditional Western, liberal-democratic understandings about what social, economic, and political statuses and identities are considered valuable in society. Sex-workers, and particularly street-level sex-workers, hold a typically marginalized position within Canadian society (and within Western liberal democracies more generally), whereas taxpaying citizens hold a claims-making position which is generally considered to be legitimate—that is, a position from which claims may be laid against both government and society more broadly, and from which a response (at least of some sort) may be expected. In his brief to the Fraser Committee, one of the founders of CROWE posed the question: “Who owns the right to the West End and its streets – the residents or the street people?” (West End Community Advisory Council, 1984). The question was posed on the assumption that the audience would intuitively know that the ‘right’ answer should be the residents; and, moreover, that they should know that something was going significantly wrong if the question even needed to be asked.

At work in the representational politics of CROWE, I want to suggest, was also an underlying moral intuition about our political relationship to the places in which we reside. Particularly, it built on the understanding that living in place comes with certain obligations to that place and to others who reside within it. Moreover, it built on the (democratic?) understanding that those who reside in a place and care for that place (in both a social and physical sense) should have the right to a voice in determining the future of that place. Building on this intuition, however, the representational politics of CROWE suggests that the perspectives

and preferences of residents of the West End should count for more than those of non-residents because they live in the area and care for it. It also suggests that the failure to perform place-specific duties disqualifies one as a resident. Thus sex workers, for CROWE, even if they lived in the West End, were not residents and they should not be allowed to shape it as a place (see also Ross, 2012a: 139). Indeed, the group argued, they should be excluded both social and spatially from the neighbourhood. In this way, CROWE claimed that “residents” deserved to have a voice in determining the shape of their neighbourhood while “sex workers” did not, and they built their claim to a right to shape the place in which they resided by enforcing the social exclusion and marginalization of another group (see Ross, 2012b: 613-615).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the actions of CROWE as an instance of the politics of contentious proximity. It argued that the deployment of interactive representations of the identities of people and place, and of their proximity, was a central component of the group’s politics. Moreover, it suggested that CROWE’s framing strategies relied on traditional scripts regarding social and spatial hierarchies, and that this reliance is central to how these actions functioned as a process of social construction. The use of these scripts both reproduced elements of these hierarchies and brought them into the realm of public discourse. The next chapter builds on this work in order to explore the occlusions and silences at work in CROWE’s representational politics.

Chapter 4: CROWE: Strategic Silences and Social Construction

Building on the previous chapter's analysis of politics of contentious proximity, this chapter adds another layer, complicating and offering a more nuanced account of how CROWE, by constructing associations between particular meanings, values and powers and different places and social groups—by asserting sex-workers were out of place—*erased* other issues connected to the presence of street-level sex-work in the West End and the composition of the neighbourhood as a place. I will argue that the representational strategies deployed by CROWE constructed associations between social groups and particular meanings, values and powers, not only through what they said but also through their silences and their interaction with alternative ways that West Enders and the West End, as a place, were represented. This chapter focuses on, and fleshes out, some of these alternative modes of representation suggested by moments of conscious (and less conscious) occlusion within CROWE's framing strategies.

I begin by exploring CROWE's active efforts to suppress the representation of street-level sex-workers as victims; their reticence regarding potential connections between the presence of street-level sex-work in the West End and the increasing visibility of Davie Street as an emerging Gay Village; and their occlusion of features of the West End which suggest that it is a different type of place from other residential neighbourhoods within Vancouver. Then I will analyze how this impacted the ways the actions and representational strategies of CROWE built associations between particular meanings, values and powers and particularly places and social groups; and what this suggests regarding how these actions may be conceptualized as a process of social construction.

4.1 The West End and Street-level Sex-work

Perhaps the most readily apparent issue under erasure in CROWE's account of the presence of street-level sex-work in the West End is the perspective of the sex-workers or, even alternative frames that might render sex-workers as 'normal' or 'resident' or in sympathetic terms. As suggested in Chapter 3, CROWE's rhetoric actively countered the representation of sex-workers as victims. The group worked to undercut the framing of street-level sex-work as a 'social problem' and to dispute the perspectives forwarded by the most prominent representative of the sex-workers—the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes.¹²⁷ While CROWE argued against the perspective that street-level sex-work is a victimless crime, they asserted that the true victims of sex work were the residents of the West End and not the sex-workers. As the group put it in one report to its members: "it would be unfortunate if laws to control street prostitution were to flounder on the theory they might make victims of the prostitutes. The real victims in cities like Vancouver are the people who have to put up with the disturbances created by the growing numbers of hookers in downtown and residential areas" (CROWE, 1983b). Particularly, the group worked to frame street-level sex-work as a choice. CROWE asserted that the sex-workers were not forced to sell their bodies, but *chose* to do so as they wanted to make quick money (particularly untaxed money), just as they, unlike the residents of the West End, *chose* to expose themselves to the increased risk of violence associated with street-level sex-work.

One aspect of street-level sex-work in the West End that was particularly hard to reconcile with CROWE's representation of sex-workers as freely consenting to sex-work—as an individual choice—was that a significant proportion of the individuals working on West End

¹²⁷ As a representative of CROWE put it in reaction to the occupation of the Christ Church Cathedral: "Where the hell was the Church before? [...] Why weren't they working on behalf of the community when we needed them? I find it extraordinary and unbelievable that the Church should grant the hookers a forum when they did so little for us" (Fraser, 1984).

streets were underage—many as young as 14 and 15—mostly with limited education and few marketable skills. This aspect of the situation was brought to the group’s attention on a number of occasions. In a letter responding to CROWE concerning a number of questions it had posed regarding programs at Gordon House, a provider of community services in the West End, a representative of the organization stated that the average level of education among youth involved in their outreach program was Grade 6 (Morley, 1983). Social service workers and studies also suggested that many sex-workers—particularly the girls and women—were victims of physical and sexual abuse (CROWE 1981c, Brenkolt-Hogarth, 1981: 6).¹²⁸ CROWE, however, downplayed this aspect of street-level sex-work and depicted the sex-workers in the West End as adults. Their representational politics also occluded the social context that may have led them to street-based sex work in the first place. When the group did recognize the presence of children and teenagers, it argued that the stricter soliciting laws they called for would give social workers the tools they needed to get juvenile sex-workers off the street.¹²⁹

Additionally, CROWE’s argument that street-level sex-work was fundamentally incompatible with a residential neighbourhood obscured the locational benefits of the West End for sex-workers, particularly in relation to their own security. Studies by both criminologist John Lowman (1984) and sociologist Becki Ross (2012a, 2012b), which involved interviews with sex-workers and former sex-workers, suggest that these benefits were significant. As Lowman notes regarding the increasing street-level sex-work in Vancouver in the 1970s:

the problem of street prostitution was new only in certain areas . . . Vancouver’s prostitutes proved themselves able locational decision-makers in their migration to the streets choosing areas of heavy

¹²⁸ See also John Lowman’s *Vancouver Field Study*.

¹²⁹ CROWE did recognize that there were underlying social problem associated with street-level sex-work but took the position that these should be dealt with after the law had changed (CROWE, 1983d) See also, *CROWE report no. 4: Social service approach to street prostitution futile until law changes* (CROWE, 1983e).

pedestrian traffic . . . the Davie Street strip is the main thoroughfare of the most populous square mile in Canada, the West End apartment block area of Vancouver (Lowman, 1983: 284).

The West End was near the downtown core and the city's entertainment district. It had an active nightlife, cheap hotels and businesses that benefitted from, and catered to, the street scene (Ross, 2011: 135). Furthermore, as a busy pedestrian and residential area, it also had, to use Jane Jacobs term, 'eyes on the street'. Unlike an industrial or commercial area, in the West End the streets were well lit and there were people around at night. While this led to some intense confrontations between some West End residents and sex-workers, it also provided a certain degree of safety for a group experiencing rates of violence significantly higher than the population as a whole.¹³⁰ In the West End, there were people watching the street, ready to call the police not just to complain about the disruptions caused by sex-workers but also to report situations that were escalating and potentially violent. Even without active intervention, the presence of observers acted as a control, though certainly not a comprehensive or unqualified control, over violent behaviour.¹³¹ Additionally, the West End tract had a number of characteristics that others in the city did not. Most sex-workers in the West End were not addicted to hard drugs and did not have pimps or procurers (Ross, 2012b: 605). It was also the only place in the city where male, female and

¹³⁰ A study undertaken on behalf of a collection of the groups in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, in 1995, reported that: "99 percent of sex-workers had been assaulted on the job, often several times a year. This number included 62 percent who said they had been sexually assaulted, 52 percent who were beaten by a boyfriend, 48 percent who were beaten by a customer, 31 percent who were attacked with a knife and 30 percent who were assaulted with some other weapon" (Francis, 2006: 129-30). The connection between violence and sex-work was also reiterated by the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution when they published their report in the Spring of 1985. The report states that "Virtually all women prostitutes have been sexually assaulted, and some of them as often as three or four times a year; pimps are violent towards their prostitutes and prostitutes are violent towards each other. The competition to be on the street to earn some money is fierce. And [...] very little attention is paid to their specific needs in relations to social services" (Fraser, 1985: 394). Further, in the study he undertook on sex-work in Vancouver on behalf of the Fraser Committee, John Lowman concluded that "prostitution is an extremely dangerous profession" and almost all the sex-workers he interviewed reported being assaulted—being threatened with knives and guns, robbed, beaten, raped and run over with cars (Lowman, 1984; Francis, 2006: 102).

¹³¹ For an account of the conflict in the West End between street-level sex-workers and CROWE that focuses more specifically and extensively on the perspectives of sex-workers and how they were impacted by CROWE's campaign, see Ross 2010, 2012a, 2012b.

transgendered sex-workers all worked (Francis, 2006: 86). One sex-worker who had lived and worked in the area described it in the following terms in an interview with Ross: “We had a cultural community where we shopped together, we helped each other with outfits, hair and make up, we supported one another emotionally, in some cases we lived together [...] We had a culture of prostitution, with safety planning” (Ross, 2012b: 608). Many features of the West End, then, complemented street-level sex-work; and, in this way, pushing sex-workers out of the West End forced a vulnerable group into more dangerous areas (Ross, 2012a: 134).¹³²

4.2 The West End as home to Vancouver’s Gay Village

A second issue that was occluded through the representation tactics of CROWE was the possibility of connections between the West End as home to an increasingly visible Gay Village and the presence of street-level sex-work. The actions of CROWE and the “problem” of street-level sex-work in the West End occurred during a period when the gay community within the West End was working to assert its presence publically and gain recognition from the broader community. As Hiebert, Pratt and Ley put it:

[The West End has been a] location of choice among gay men in the city since the 1960s, but, despite that, hardly visible until the gay liberation movement of the 1970s, the area provided almost an ideal territorial niche for gay men opting to ‘come out’ . . . [B]efore the end of the decade, an article in the Vancouver Sun proclaimed that gay men were ‘Out of the Ghetto’ and announced the ‘coming of age’ of Vancouver’s gay community. During the 1980s gay men laid increasing claim to the neighbourhood (1992, 240).

¹³² In an interview with the *Vancouver Province*, Steve Bourne suggests that “majority of West end residents simply want the kids moved along to an area where they are no bother. The strip between Granville and Burrard, which Bourne said is already one of the most dangerous areas, would be the likely location for this move” (Berry, 1981).

To take up one indicator of this emergence, during this period the West End became home to an annual Pride Week Celebration, beginning in 1973.¹³³ In 1981, the celebration was officially endorsed by the City, and both Mayor Mike Harcourt and the Vancouver Chief of Police participated in festivities (Hossie, 1981).¹³⁴ In 1987 over 5000 people participated in the event, which had accumulated numerous sponsors.¹³⁵ The community was beginning to assert itself publically during this period and attitudes regarding its presence in the West End were (slowly and certainly not among the whole population) also beginning to shift.

Yet, the emergence of the gay community in the West End was hard fought. Homosexuality had only been decriminalized in Canada in 1969, and throughout the 1970s and 1980s it was often characterized in the media and in some academic sources, as ‘deviant sexuality’. In this way, despite the reality that attitudes had begun to shift, openly gay men still faced significant levels of prejudice. One columnist for the *Vancouver Sun*, for instance, both called for greater public acceptance of homosexuality and stated that gay men must address and take some responsibility for the perception that they are “engrossed ultimately with sex and do not have the decency or control to keep their hands off adolescents or children [and] that

¹³³ In 1975, a gay community/police liaison committee was formed in order to address increasing tension between the two parties over police harassment. At this time, representatives of the gay community “decided to spread the word that cruising and public sex had to be toned down, or police would continue arrests” (Anon, 1982c).

¹³⁴ Only one year earlier, however, when asked whether the city would endorse homosexual unity week the previous mayor, Jack Volrith stated “I doubt it, because as a general rule the city has been reluctant to become involved in official approvals and official proclamations relating to matters which might be somewhat controversial” (Anon, 1980). In October, 1980, during the civic election, the *Vancouver Sun* reported that the candidates meeting in the West End was the best attended of the campaign and stated that “the impact of the homosexual vote in Vancouver’s upcoming civic election is unknown but if attendance at an all-candidates meeting Sunday is any indication, it may be significant” (Dalglish, 1980). Moreover, an organization called “Gay People to Elect Mike Harcourt” worked to bring out members on the gay community to support Volrith’s opponent.

¹³⁵ Additionally, in 1982, an association for gay business owners was formed—as one of the originators of the idea put it: “As socially, financially and politically aware business people, we all realize that the potential gay market is very large”—and there were also signs that the business community in general was beginning to open up more to the gay community (Shariff, 1984; Thom, 1982). For example in 1984, the Better Business Bureau of Vancouver began to publish a directory for gay and lesbian business people in the city (Anon, 1984d).

homosexuals have radically different moral standards than heterosexuals” (McMartin, 1984).¹³⁶ Moreover, while general public knowledge of the existence of the gay community within the West End was an important and significant step in gaining broader acceptance for a traditionally marginalized group, this visibility also brought unwanted attention; particularly, groups and individuals visiting the West End in order to harass the community and, in some cases, to commit acts of violence against individuals perceived to be gay.¹³⁷ In this way, the increasing visibility of the gay community, for some, contributed to anxiety both within, and regarding, the West End.¹³⁸ During the summer of 1979, a public meeting of the gay community was held which focused on increasing street violence against gay people (Jackson and Persky, 1982).¹³⁹ Moreover, in 1982, homicides related to gay men accounted for 20% of total homicides in the city (Cosgrove, 1983a).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ As a representative of the Vancouver Gay Rights Union put it reaction to a report to the City of Vancouver linking gay clubs and baths to the spread of STIs: “We are being singled out and targeted as a class of persons who have solicited juveniles . . . there’s a serious attack on our community. All of a sudden gay people get lumped into criminal activity” (Krange, 1984). The VPD supported the position taken by gay rights activists in reaction to this report.

¹³⁷ 1970s and 1980s planning documents on the West End do not directly mention the presence of the gay community or discuss community services of what may be needed by that community. However, they frequently mention ‘swinging singles’.

¹³⁸ Another significant event that CROWE is seemingly silent on is the developing HIV/AIDS crisis. The first case of AIDS in Canada was diagnosed, retrospectively, in 1979 (the first case in Vancouver was confirmed in 1981) and Canada’s National Task Force on AIDS was formed in 1983, suggesting significant overlap between the timeline of the HIV/AIDS crisis and the actions of CROWE. Yet, the public and internal documents of CROWE and the newspaper articles on street-level sex-work in the West End that make up my source material do not mention HIV or AIDS. A survey of the Vancouver Public Library’s news clipping archive, “Homosexuality 1980-1989”, suggests that the first reports of AIDS began to hit the mainstream in 1983 and that coverage of AIDS, organizing to combat the disease and to contest its framing as a “Gay Disease” expanded in significantly in 1985. In this sense, then, the activities of CROWE contesting the presence of street-level sex-work in the West End had concluded before this expansion of coverage of HIV/AIDS.

¹³⁹ This meeting was followed soon after by a protest in Robson Square focusing on police action regarding street violence.

¹⁴⁰ In the early 1980s, a series of stabbing led to suspicions in the community that a mass murderer was out to get gays (Anon, 1982c). While police found no indication of a pattern to the murders, the community faced ongoing instances of targeted violence and hate. At a gay unity softball game, to cite one example, a group handed out literature that stated: “if you see a queer walking along the street and no one is looking, beat him so he can’t walk again” (ibid).

Yet despite this overlap between the timing of the emergence of the Gay Village in the West End and the actions undertaken by CROWE, absent from the group's statements and publications is any reference to the possibility of a connection between street-level sex-work in the West End and the emerging gay community around Davie Street or any recognition that there might be a link between their campaigning for a particular kind of 'neighbourhood' and increasing violence against gay men, if this community was understood in the way that Pete McMartin of the *Vancouver Sun* described it. These oversights and absences are particularly notable because the connections were brought to the group's attention on a number of occasions and because a number of members of CROWE were a part of the gay community (Ross, 2012b: 611).

At CROWE's conference in 1981, a representative of Gordon House stated that around fifty percent of the street kids he worked with, teenagers selling sexual services in the West End, were young men who may be gay or bisexual: "We're talking about the sexual development for young people who don't find it comfortable in Prince George or Cranbrook to expose their homosexuality . . . These kinds know they can come to Vancouver and be gay" (CROWE, 1981c; Oakes, 1980). According to Bourne, many of these young men come to Vancouver, and more particularly the West End, looking for acceptance and a chance to explore their sexuality—a chance which, given the extent of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors towards homosexuality, is not easily available within their home communities, whether those communities are in the interior of the Province or other parts of the lower mainland.

However, Bourne continued, many young men come to the city when they are underage, often not having finished high school, and as a result, struggle to find work. Moreover, they often cannot participate in the established gay scene such as bars, pubs or lounges, which are venues

for those who are of age. As a result, some young men may turn to street-level sex-work as a way to make money and as an avenue for sexual development.

Beyond the issue of minor sex workers, there is also a connection on the client side of the trade that also links the growth of sex workers with the West End as the home of the gay community, namely the result of closeted gay and bisexual men attracted to the West End as clients of the sex-workers. For men struggling to hide or deny their sexuality, actively participating in the gay scene could both make denial more difficult and potentially result in exposure. Purchasing sex offered a more covert outlet for gay men struggling with their own sexual preferences.¹⁴¹

While some of CROWE's statements do recognize the presence of the gay community in the West End, these two kinds of connections that link the growth of that community with the increase in street-level sex-work in the West End are simply ignored. When CROWE does mention the gay community in the West End, it is associated with the 'residents' or with the constituency that the organization purported to represent. In opening their 1981 conference CROWE stressed that

As residents of the West End we have enjoyed the fact that many people with different backgrounds and lifestyles have made the West End their home. CROWE firmly promotes the traditional tolerance of the West End and the belief that every resident of the West End ought to be able to live his or her life in the pursuit of happiness regardless of race, religion, creed, age, sexual preference, occupation or lifestyle (CROWE, 1981c).

¹⁴¹ These connections between homophobia and street life were also echoed in a brief to the Fraser Committee by the Right to Privacy Committee (a Toronto gay rights organization):

When these children come face to face with the general homophobia of the society, especially at home or at school, they often leave their families or are simply thrown out on the street to fend for themselves. Very often it is a time when prostitution becomes an important means of financial support. It is not a time to turn them into criminals or 'deviants,' which is too often what happens when they come into contact with social agencies or the police... Given the homophobia of schools and families, putting together their sexual lives is very difficult for these young people. Although there are some gay youth organization, young gays are virtually excluded from the gay community because of age of consent laws and liquor laws" (Smith, 1984).

Or as a CROWE spokesmen said, “the West End has always been a tolerant community with a large gay population. We’re not making moral arguments, but want the problems associated with street prostitution dealt with” (Budgen, 1981).¹⁴² In this way, CROWE suggested that the West End as a place that was tolerant of diversity—including sexual diversity—was something being threatened by the presence of street-level sex-work.¹⁴³ The West End Community Advisory Council’s brief to the Fraser Committee argues, “Until recently, most people felt safe and comfortable in the West End. Its social diversity was one of its virtues. Now the trend is towards a homogenization of the previously diverse population” (1984: 6). In this way, they suggested that if nothing were done about the presence street-level sex-work in the West End, the neighbourhood would become a place that was only for sex-workers and their compatriots—that is, for “criminals” and “deviants”. The current residents of the West End would be forced to leave and the diversity of the neighbourhood would be sacrificed.

This silence on the connections between sex-work in the West End and social attitudes regarding homosexuality was also reinforced by CROWE’s representation of street-level sex-

¹⁴² CROWE also stressed the tolerance of the West End in their literature describing the groups and soliciting members: “The West End has the highest concentration of citizens in Canada. It is also one of the most tolerant neighbourhoods in the country, where people of all classes and customs live together” (CROWE, 1981d).

¹⁴³ This was certainly not a stance that everyone in the West End agreed with, however. As one West End resident put it in a letter to the *West Ender*:

The hookers of the West End are one of the city’s redeeming vices. As a resident living in the middle of the wicked West End, I can say I like the idea that there are such a wide variety of lifestyles available here. I’m very concerned that certain groups wish to get rid of the hookers – where to, God only knows. The West End is a safety valve. The only problem is that some people insist on dragging their polyester suburban way of life downtown. The hookers are not the problem, they are just the symptoms of what’s wrong in the suburbs. I propose the forming of a group called “WE-RATS” (West End Residents against the Suburbanites) that will be dedicated to the pursuit of happiness and the freedom to live as one chooses. Having hookers around makes me feel safe, because if fringe elements like hookers are left alone and allowed to go about their business in peace, so will you and I. Personally I’d rather not cast the first stone. (Riddette, 1981)

Additionally, among the opposition to the amendments to the Criminal Code favoured by CROWE were gay rights groups, both from Vancouver and other parts of the country. As noted in Chapter 3, members of the Gay Alliance accompanied the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes on their march to City Hall to protest the treatment of sex-workers. Ross also emphasizes that “a small number of vocal gay men hesitated to endorse the anti-hooker consensus” (2012b: 609).

work as largely 'heterosexual' in nature and hence a problem for West End 'resident' women.¹⁴⁴

In their brief to the Fraser Committee CROWE argued that:

Women walking along the street are subjected to intimidation and solicitation by men driving by. The wide-open presence of street prostitution has created a climate in which men believe that all women in the West End are for sale. The women of the West End are without question the victims of such circumstances. (CROWE, 1984).¹⁴⁵

While part of the reason CROWE drew special attention to the impact of street-level sex-work on women was that the organization considered women's groups (along with Civil Libertarians)¹⁴⁶ to be one of the main forces lobbying against the amendments to soliciting laws favoured by CROWE. But, it is worth noting that many of their arguments could easily be applied to men as well. If the 'presence of street prostitution has created a climate in which men believe that all women in the West End are for sale', it seems to follow that given the presence of male sex-workers, men ought to believe that 'resident' men in the West End were also for sale. It would also follow that men in the West End were experiencing harassment not just because they were being taken for johns, but also because they were being taken for sex-workers. There is an underlying heterosexist narrative of identity at work here, where the 'resident' women, but not the prostitutes needed to be protected through the paternal protection of the state (hence removing the street workers) but 'resident' men were not constituted as victims of solicitation in the same way; logically, however, they ought to be if the concern was that non-sex workers were being targeted for solicitation by clients looking for such services.

¹⁴⁴ The group's second newsletter issued a call specifically to West End women to become involved with CROWE given "the harassment and intimidation West End women must put up with as a consequence of street prostitution in this neighbourhood" (Crowe, 1982a). CROWE's third newsletter included a poem titled "The Hospital is in the Hooker District." The poem talks about how women have to be careful about their appearance going to hospital so they won't be taken for sex-workers (Crowe, 1982c).

¹⁴⁵ The group also planned to submit a brief to the Fraser Committee by "West End women" specifically. Large chunks of the brief, however, seem to have been written by Gordon Price at earlier dates.

¹⁴⁶ See for example *Pornography and Prostitution: Equal Time for Arguments of Equal Merit* (CROWE, 1982b).

Moreover, while a number of local and national media outlets drew connections between “gay-bashing” and carloads of “rowdies”¹⁴⁷—typically described as young men from the suburbs, who came to the West End to harass sex-workers—CROWE generally avoided (at least openly) suggesting one reason the street scene needed to be moved from the West End was that it was contributing to a climate of fear for many men living in the area, or that their language of a ‘quiet’ residential neighbourhood (despite their intentions to the contrary) was providing indirect support for justifying violence against members of the gay community engaging in ‘abnormal’ or non-monogamous sexual behavior.¹⁴⁸

4.3 A Different Kind of Neighborhood?

The third prominent occlusion structuring CROWE’s framing strategies is the terms in which they describe the West End. While descriptions of the West End figured prominently in the representations they deployed, the group primarily avoided features of the West End that distinguished it from other residential neighbourhoods. Yet in many ways, and the particularly at this point in time, the neighbourhood had many qualities that made it a different type of place from other residential neighbourhoods in the city.

The West End of the early 1980s, then, had undergone rapid changes: its built form had shifted dramatically; it had experienced a huge influx of people; and the composition of its households reflected new post-industrial economic pressures. In this way, CROWE was formed

¹⁴⁷ One typical example of this is an article in the *Globe and Mail* which, while describing the street scene around Davie, records “there are also the “gay bashers,” groups of young males who roam the side streets in cars and trucks searching for transvestites and male prostitutes” (Budgen, 1981).

¹⁴⁸ One place where this connection is made, however, is in an appendix to the West End Advisory Council’s brief to the Fraser Committee. In the appendix, a male resident of the West End in his 30s recounts a confrontation in the West End resulting in his older companion getting stabbed. While recounting the incident he says:

I am often times frightened by slow cruising vans, trucks and vehicles in general driven by young men with other male passengers. Having been the victim of physical abuse a few years ago, I am uncomfortable by the presence of the type that is predisposed to bash people around. (1984: 11)

in, and in relation to, a place emerging from a period of transition—a neighbourhood that was attempting to come to grips with its new form, and attempting to determine the terms in which its new form would be understood. Yet, CROWE's way of framing the 'problem' of street-level sex-work in the West End occluded many of the characteristics of the area that distinguished it from other residential neighbourhoods in the city. Indeed in some ways, CROWE's rhetoric may be seen to be in tension with the actual demographic characteristics of the neighbourhood's population.

While the reality that many of the sex-workers in the West End were minors was often glossed over by CROWE, a primary concern for the group, or at least a frequent reference in its statements, was that the presence of street-level sex-work in the West End was damaging for the neighbourhood's 'resident' children. As one placard carried in CROWE's protest march put it: "please stop hooking, our kids are looking." And while some of the corners often frequented by sex-workers were within a few blocks of the neighbourhood's elementary and high schools, the West End was also home to the smallest percentage of children of any Vancouver neighbourhood (See chart p. 86). Moreover, the number of children in the area had been declining since well before street-level sex-work became a presence along Davie Street. In 1971, children composed only 6% of the population of the West End (Statistics Canada, 1961-1996).¹⁴⁹ Reflecting on the West End, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Vancouver Centre, Emery Barnes, interpreted these population trends in the following way:

We really have to make a stand in the West End. Fifteen years ago this community had quite a different demographic and class mix – more children and churches – that has started to fade. The community has slowly gone through a negative transformation with respect to its integrity as a

¹⁴⁹ During the same decade the population of the West End remained somewhat stable. In 1971 it was 36 916, in 1976, 36 031 and in 1981 36 681 (Statistics Canada, 1961-1996).

community for families and the lifestyle you would respect in any residential area (CROWE, 1981f).¹⁵⁰

As Barnes' quotation begins to suggest, along with its comparatively low percentage of children, the neighbourhood also had a low percentage of families. Census Canada recorded in 1981 that 42% of West Enders were singles.¹⁵¹ In the city as whole, the percentage of singles was 29%. While discussing the different groups residing in the West End, City Planning literature in the 1970s and early 1980s frequently mentioned the growing presence of "swinging singles." CROWE's publications, in contrast, generally avoided focusing on the presence of "singles" while emphasizing family and children. Where they do reference this aspect of the neighbourhood, they suggest that prior to the 'invasion' of street-level sex-workers, the area had been changing:

After the building boom the image of the West End as a fragmented group of swingers, loners and non-conformists gave way gradually to a reputation of a neighbourhood with a strong community spirit. Evidence of this is the construction of the Community Centre with ice rink, library, Aquatic Centre, mini-parks, neighbourhood houses, and controlled traffic flow through street barriers and islands, all accomplished with a determined drive by community groups and local individuals (Brett, 1983: 3).¹⁵²

In this way, they suggested the neighbourhood had been moving away from its reputation as a locale for "swinging singles" and had been becoming more community minded.

¹⁵⁰ Before entering politics Emery Barnes played in the NFL and CFL, and worked as a social worker. He, along with his fellow NDP MLA Rosemary Brown, was one of the first black MLAs elected to the BC Legislature. In 1994, Barnes was elected speaker of the Legislature.

¹⁵¹ This number represents singles who are 15 years of age or older. If children under 15 were also included the number would increase to 45%.

¹⁵² This is also reflected in CROWE's references to transience in the area. Some of the group's internal documents suggest that it is difficult to maintain membership given the high degree of transience in the area. However, in other places, they also argue that the West End had been becoming less transient, and that people were beginning to think about it as home. (CROWE, 1981g).

Table 4-1 West End Statistics

		WEST END	VANCOUVER
POPULATION	YEAR		
	1961	25359	384522
	1971	38130	426240
	1976	36942	409734
	1981	37175	414281
	1986	37297	431147
SINGLES Percentage of Total Population	1971	37	24
	1981	42	28.5
	1986	45	30
CHILDREN Percentage of Total Population	1971	6	23
	1981	4	17.5
	1986	4	17
RENTED DWELLINGS Percentage of occupied dwellings	1971	96	53
	1981	93	55
	1986	91	58
MOVERS Percentage of population over 5 years	1971	79	54
	1981	69	52
	1986	68	52
SERVICE SECTOR Percentage of total employment	1971	67	57
	1981	73	63
	1986	76	67
AVERAGE INCOME Household in Canadian dollars	1971	7247	9614
	1981	18261	24856
	1986	24482	32384
MEDIAN INCOME Household in Canadian dollars	1971	~	~
	1981	15036	19776
	1986	19021	24652

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada 1991-1996.

Similarly, despite CROWE's rhetoric regarding attachments and home, 93% of the area's residents in 1981 were renters and turnover rates were high. Moreover, while CROWE frequently referenced the damage that street-level sex-work could do to property values, most West End residential buildings were not owned by residents of the area, and many residents were

worried about the impact increasing property values would have on their rent.¹⁵³ Indeed, West End planning documents both before and after the early 1980s devote significant attention to how to combat some of the negative impacts of increasing property values.¹⁵⁴ For many West Enders, maintaining and increasing property values meant increasing rent; and for some, it also meant that they would no longer be able to afford their current homes. While CROWE emphasized property values and asserted that the presence of street-level sex-work was negatively impacting property values (something it failed to show definitively), for many West End residents increasing property values had detrimental economic implications.

In many ways, the West End represented a different kind of neighbourhood from other areas of the city. Its built form was different; the composition of its households was different. And this was something that CROWE, at times, acknowledged. As the introduction to CROWE's membership survey asserted:

You have all no doubt heard that [the ongoing presence of the street-level sex-work] would not happen in any other neighbourhood. Just because we live in high-rise apartments does not make us second-class citizens. If West End residents could get more organized we could become a political entity (Burgess, 1972).

And, as one representative of CROWE told the Fraser Committee, the West End was not like other areas of the city and the community was “to some extent the model for the future. It is

¹⁵³ In many ways, increasing property values were driving development in the West End. As values increased, there was an incentive to add more units and, often as a consequence of this, rents would also go up. One of the primary goals of the City's planning initiative in the West End in the early 1970s was to find “alternative housing for those displaced by development” (Griffiths, 1973).

¹⁵⁴ Some early internal documents from CROWE also suggest that the group or at least some of its members, were also concerned with the impact of rising property values: “It is just not the immediate problems of solicitation and prostitution but we are watching exploitation on all fronts. We are finding property values being affected by the highest bidder with no regard for the integrity of the community; big ticket projects being thrust upon us without reference.” (CROWE, 1981f)

Vancouver's oldest, densest residential area. It has the potential to be better" (Price, 1984).¹⁵⁵ Yet, in spite of this, what makes the West End different from other residential neighbourhood in the city often goes missing in CROWE's framing of the 'problem' of street-level sex-work in the area—particularly in its most public presentations. Here, they frame the West End as place for families and property owners (or at least those who are concerned about property) who want to protect their kids and ensure the respectability of their women.

4.4 Constructing Meanings, Values and Powers

In the early 1980s, CROWE successfully represented the presence of street-level sex-work in Vancouver's West End as a locational problem—that is they represented the sex-workers as *out of place* or 'foreigners' in the West End, incompatible with West End 'residents' and a threat to the neighbourhood. Because of this framing, they succeeded in moving sex-workers out of the area; and, in the process, their terms regarding the issue were heavily reflected (see section 2.3.4) in the local, national and even international media. The concerns members of CROWE had regarding the presence of sex-workers, I suggest, came to represent a focal point for anxieties regarding the future of the neighbourhood and the way the area was perceived within the city more generally.

Thus, in the course of their campaign, CROWE deployed interactive representations of identity and place and their proximate relationship as a key part of their political strategy for achieving the goal of removing sex workers from 'their' neighbourhood. Their efforts ought to be understood not only as localized opposition but also as a key factor in the social construction of the identities of particular people and places during this period. As outlined in Chapter 3,

¹⁵⁵ Gordon Price, in his newly created position as "West End Community Coordinator", made this statement in his brief to the Fraser Committee.

CROWE deployed clusters of specific and often oppositional or binary terms, images and relationships to define the meanings, values and powers associated with “West Enders” versus “sex-workers” as well as the West End as a place. They represented West End ‘residents’ as responsible, mutually regarding, middle class, tax-paying citizens who were concerned with maintaining property rights, property values and with protecting women and children; and they played down demographic and economic characteristics of the population of the West End that did not fit easily into this frame. Alternatively, they represented street-level sex-workers as irresponsible, transient, tax-evading, deviants who had little concern for ‘normal’ society, and who associated with criminal elements. Moreover, CROWE suggested, “sex-workers” lacked respect for property rights and, values and through their choices and actions they had forfeited their identity as rights bearing citizens. Regarding the neighbourhood as a place, CROWE argued that before the presence of sex-workers the West End had been a vibrant residential community, known for its tree-lined street and natural beauty. After the sex-workers arrived, however, it was fast becoming violent, dirty, decayed and devoid of community.

What I want to suggest is that CROWE’s frames functioned as a process of social construction on multiple levels. On one level, their framing efforts reinforced traditional, Western liberal democratic identity relationships and hierarchies—that is they reinforced generally accepted understandings about what type of people are considered valuable by society and the powers associated with those groups. CROWE’s framing suggests that it is middle class citizens concerned with property, family and children who have the right to control the West End, and who can successfully lobby government to achieve their desired ends. Additionally, their frames reinforced the conception of sex-workers as a deviant identity. It reinforces the perspective that sex-workers have made the ‘destructive’ and ‘anti-social’ choice to sell sex on

the street and that accordingly, their voices did not count in our society in the same way as the voices of other types of people; and in this way, the increased level of violence they are exposed to is not a problem with which society more generally must concern itself.

Yet CROWE also associated themselves with these types of identities, status and values because they were (and are) useful tools for engaging in politics. They made these associations in order to assert that they, as (self-appointed) representatives of West End residents, deserved to have a voice that was recognized and heard by the municipal, provincial and federal governments, as well as by society more generally. They used these clusters of identities to contend that the West End had value as a place; and that they, as West End residents, had value and the right to have some say or degree of control over the definition of the public and private spaces in which they resided (and that their voices should count for more than the voices of street-level sex-workers). In this way, if the eventual success of CROWE may be seen as enforcing traditional statuses and identities, it may also be seen as enforcing the value and political presence of West Enders and the West End.

CROWE's actions, then, function as a process of social construction in another way or on another level. The group's campaign aligned the West End as a place, an area known for its emerging gay village, with assertions of value and successful political action. By extension, it associated the gay community around Davie Street with civility, and citizenship and oriented it against 'deviant sexuality' (though certainly not all members of this community supported CROWE's actions or positions.) It associated the gay community with positions of value and power and against a marginalized social group and in doing so, questioned the alignment of homosexuality with anti-social behaviour and deviance. As Ross puts it, "the opportunity for gay men to share anti-hooker indignation with 'normal' non-gay residents seems to have weakened

the negative stereotypes associated with homosexuality” (2012b: 610). It aligned the community with mainstream society and mainstream values (perhaps at the expense of a more vulnerable group and at the expense of less conventional aspects of the community’s identity).

In addition, the West End represented a new type of place within the city. Its built form was different. It catered to a different kind of household than the single-family homes of most other Vancouver neighbourhoods. It reflected an economic shift which had resulted in increased demand for a young, relatively unencumbered workforce. It was an area dominated by childless, singles who rented. Just as the framing efforts of CROWE associated the gay community in the area with positions of power and value, they also associated this different kind of neighbourhood (reflective of the emerging service sector economy) with those same positions. In this way, they lent legitimacy to the area and acted as a counter to some of the anxiety that had existed regarding the West End as a place: despite its density and form, people could still come together and undertake effective political action. These actions, then, may perhaps be seen as both enforcing and undermining traditional conceptions of family. Moreover, they may also be seen as playing a role in the legitimization of the lifestyle required of the new type of (urban?) worker demanded by a transitioning capitalist economy.

Furthermore, CROWE’s framing tactics also forwarded a particular conception of what citizenship means. Particularly, CROWE linked citizenship, the right to be heard by government and the right to exercise some degree of control over shape of public space to paying taxes, family and the middle class. Moreover, their frames also suggested that some citizens, by failing to meet certain social standards and norms forfeit the rights associated with citizenship.

The analysis of CROWE’s frames, I suggest, helps to demonstrate the complexity of social construction and relationality and to render these theoretical concepts in much more

concrete terms. Moreover, I also suggest that it helps to establish the value of conceptualizing the relationality of identity in connection to both people and place.

Chapter 5: “Monsters”: Representational Strategies

The whole thing started in the summer, when a Chinese-Canadian, Mr. Paul Lin, purchased an old property in South Shaughnessy. Immediately, a group of Caucasian residents in the neighbourhood circulated petitions asking for support to get him out of the area. When Lin tore down the old house to build a new one for himself, they told him that what he was doing was "revolting", and that he should "go back to where you belong; you do not belong to this country here."

Ad Hoc Committee

We've raised our family here, sent our children to the neighbourhood schools, participated in all kinds of community events over the years. Now many of the people who own houses in the area don't live here. The homes are empty. These homes are investments, perhaps one of many. You feel differently about a place when you live there, form friends there, become part of the neighbourhood and community.

Letter to City Council

Rights are null and void if not accompanied by respect and responsibility. The responsibility of all residents—be they recent or not—to respect the integral flavor and architectural identity of the community in which they choose to settle.

Letter to City Council

The price of "controlling" uncharitably so-called "monster" houses will be a "Monster Bureaucracy", creating and trying to operate a jungle of red tape. The attempt to dictate taste has dangerous precedents. . . . Despite protestation to the contrary it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the push for rezoning is largely motivated by hostility to newcomers and the perceived negative impact on a community anxious to maintain the status quo in a changing world.

Policy Statement of the Ad Hoc Committee

Whereas conflict erupted in Vancouver's West End over the presence of street-level sex-workers in the early 1980s, discontent sparked by development pressures simmered in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Vancouver's west side neighbourhoods, particularly in the upscale subdivision of Shaughnessy. Tensions in these zones of primarily single-family housing centered on the growing number of demolitions, and the style of housing constructed on the newly cleared lots. The new houses were large: in the eyes of some too large, too boxy and too grandiose. They tended to be built to maximum allowable heights and floor-space ratios, and¹⁵⁶ they typically featured "a grand entranceway and a two-storey entrance hall" (Mitchell, 1997: 163). Often, they had limited landscaping, few trees and little green space, featuring paved surfaces and ornamental fencing instead (ibid). Furthermore, the homes were frequently linked to Asian buyers (Petit, 1993: 98; Punter, 2004; Mitchell, 1983, 1997; Ley, 1995). The houses, which began to appear in the early 1980s, represented a sharp contrast to older houses in the area which were mostly smaller, much more extensively landscaped, built with different materials and in different architectural styles, and predominantly owned by people of Anglo-Saxon and European descent (Petit, 1993: 98). By 1990, over half the houses on a number of west side streets had been replaced (Hiebert, Pratt and Ley, 1992: 257). For some residents and community groups, the new houses represented a threat to the integrity of their neighbourhoods, and they began to rally to fight the encroachment of "monsters"—as the houses had come to be termed within popular discourse.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Frequently, these houses provided over 5000 square feet of living space (Hiebert, Pratt and Lay, 1992: 257).

¹⁵⁷ As one article in the *Vancouver Sun* represented the sentiment in Vancouver around the newly constructed large homes: "One can hardly spend a social evening these days without the issue coming up, usually with unanimous agreement that monster houses are terrible and something should be done to stop their construction" (Seelig, 1989).

Figure 5-1 “Monster” Houses¹⁵⁸



Source: Jonathan Layo photos © Jonathan Layo 2016

This chapter focuses on the rhetorical strategies that were mobilized in reaction to “monster” houses in the west side neighbourhood of South Shaughnessy and parallels the

¹⁵⁸ Photos from 2016. While many of the so-called “monster” houses are still standing in South Shaughnessy most now have significantly more landscaping and greenery.

discussion of CROWE's rhetorical strategies in Chapter 3. While the actions which occurred in South Shaughnessy share many elements in common with those of CROWE—particularly they both involve contentious proximities, the deployment of representations of the identities of people and places as a way of claiming a political voice and means of engaging in political contestation—they also diverge in important ways. Beyond the reality that the West End and South Shaughnessy were (and are) very different neighbourhoods, with very different built-forms and demographics makeups, CROWE was able to assert itself as the representative and voice of West End residents with little opposition, while in South Shaughnessy two opposing neighbourhood groups mobilized around the issue of “monster” houses, both claiming to represent area residents, and both engaging in representational politics. Unlike in the case of CROWE, neither of these groups was capable of entirely dominating the other. One group, affiliated with the Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners Association (SHPOA) and predominantly composed of residents of Anglo-Saxon and European descent, mobilized in an effort to halt the construction of “monster” houses in the area. In reaction, a second group, the Ad Hoc Committee for South Shaughnessy Property Rights Association (the Ad Hoc Committee), composed predominantly of residents of Chinese descent, was formed in order to contest SHPOA's claim to speak on behalf of South Shaughnessy residents and to counter their representations of both the neighborhood and the “problem” posed by the new houses.

Figure 5-2 Pre-war House in South Shaughnessy



Source: Jonathan Layo photo © Jonathan Layo 2016

In the following, I draw out the goals and rhetorical strategies deployed by both SHPOA and its supporters and the Ad Hoc Committee and its supporters¹⁵⁹ in their efforts to control the terms in which the presence of “monster” houses in South Shaughnessy was framed, and I show how the politics of contentious proximity animates this contestation in particular ways. Further, this chapter maps out the central themes and clusters of meaning mobilized by both groups in their efforts to establish or maintain themselves as legitimate political actors and to gain institutional and public support for their positions and objectives. As with the case of CROWE in Chapter 3, I argue that SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee employ rhetorical strategies that

¹⁵⁹ From this point forward I will refer to these factions as the Ad Hoc Committee and SHPOA, though not all the people who mobilized in support of their positions were officially members of these organizations.

involve interactive representations of the identities of both people and place, as well as the proximate relationships that exist between them.

To this end, this chapter will first develop the terms in which SHPOA conceptualized the “problem” posed by “monster” houses in South Shaughnessy, its causes and the solution the group favoured. It then maps out the key themes and clusters of meaning at work in the representations of identity deployed by SHPOA. Next it turns to the Ad Hoc Committee and its alternative representation of the “problem” posed by the monster houses, its causes and the solution they endorsed, as well as the representations of identity at work in its framing strategies. Having mapped out the different representational strategies of both SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee, the chapter then explores the resonance of these frames: it analyzes the success of each group in achieving their desired outcome; the degree of overlap between the group’s framing efforts and the frames employed by the media; the amount of support each group received from public figures and institutional actors; and the degree to which their positions were reflected in the development of policy. Finally, the chapter concludes with an exploration of how the efforts of these groups form an instance of the politics of contentious proximity.

Like Chapter 3, this chapter is based upon the analysis of newspaper articles on “monster” houses in Vancouver, and more particularly in South Shaughnessy, in both the Vancouver press and the English language press in Hong Kong, as well as from the analysis of archival documents relating to the issue of “monster” houses and to SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee. These documents include the position statements of both neighbourhood associations, publications, pamphlets, petitions, letters to elected officials, reports from city planners and minutes from City Council meetings. I also build from a number of significant secondary sources that address aspects of this case study: particularly, Barbara Petit’s (1993)

doctoral research on neighbourhood change and the single family landscape in Vancouver, James Duncan's (1992) analysis of landscape in Shaughnessy, and David Ley's (1995) and Katharyne Mitchell's (1993, 1997) work on the more specific issue of "monster" houses in Shaughnessy.

5.1 SHPOA's Prognosis

Similar to the rhetorical structure of the framing tactics of the Concerned Residents of the West End, the framing efforts of the Shaughnessy Heights Property Association were built on three main claims: the assertion that "monster" houses represented a significant problem, that is, a problem with immediate and quite far reaching consequences; an account of the evolution of the problem and of who and what was responsible for it; and an assessment of the appropriate solution. Again like CROWE, to represent the presence of "monster" houses in Shaughnessy as a problem, SHPOA deployed particular kinds of representations of the identities of people and places. Before exploring these deployments, however, I first touch on the causes SHPOA associated with the 'problem' and the solutions they sought, along with their representation of the problem.

5.1.1 Causes and Solutions

Unlike CROWE, which definitively linked the increase in street-level sex-work in the West End to a single cause (the changing legal status of prostitution), SHPOA argued that the construction of the "monster" houses in west side neighbourhoods was occurring because of a combination of factors. Particularly, they asserted that the "monsters" were appearing because builders, developers and speculators wanted to take advantage of the ballooning housing market. Larger houses packed more closely together, they suggested, resulted in bigger payouts, as did

houses built from lower quality materials. Additionally, they argued, the new houses were built to the taste of, or, in some accounts, to what builders and developers believed was the taste of, the main prospective buyers: wealthy Asian immigrants (Petit, 1993). Finally, they attributed responsibility for the ‘rampant spread of monster houses’ to the City and its failure to institute effective controls on the location and character of development—to its failure to protect neighbourhoods from ‘unrelenting market forces’. As one resident stated:

It's a sham[e] that these poorly constructed, wasteful eyesores have been allowed to plague [our] few distinguished neighbourhoods. There are other municipalities that realize tasteful quality design is an asset to a city's reputation and believe me nobody is bragging about Vancouver's growing tackiness (Smythe, 1993).

They suggested, then, that the construction of “monster” houses was being driven by the combination of economic incentives and a regulatory failure on the part of the municipal government.

Accordingly, the solution to the problem of “monster” houses favoured by SHPOA was for the City to enact zoning regulations and design controls that would prevent the construction of these houses in South Shaughnessy. Specially, SHPOA favoured the implementation of a zoning schedule that would control the size of new houses (through limiting floor space allowances) and the amount of lot-space they occupied, and which would prevent multifamily dwellings and subdivision. Moreover, they also favoured the creation and enactment of extensive design guidelines to ensure that any new housing or any renovations of the current housing stock would fit with what they took to be the character of the area. As one couple supporting SHPOA stated: “unless design controls over new buildings are implemented soon, the character of South Shaughnessy (built up over many years) will be destroyed in a very short time” (Craddock and Craddock, 1992b). Or in the words of another: “If we allow indiscriminate development in our

city we will have lost much of the beauty of Vancouver that millions of visitors come here to experience" (Somerville, 1992). Many of the measures to control growth and promote the retention of the area's character favoured by SHPOA in South Shaughnessy had already been implemented in neighbouring First Shaughnessy and the group had been heavily involved in the design and implementation of these measures. As such, they advocated for the extension of similar controls to the remainder of the neighbourhood (if on a slightly more modest scale—South Shaughnessy was not First Shaughnessy after all).¹⁶⁰ They set out to work with the City and its planning department—as the group had done numerous times in the past (See Chapter 2)—to enact this solution.

In July 1992, in response to the group's concerns, the City planning department proposed rezoning South Shaughnessy from RS-1—standard single family residential—to RS-5. RS-5 was a newly create zoning category that would reduce allowable density on RS-1 lots but, under this standard, owners could regain RS-1 density levels if they adhered to design guidelines (Fletcher, 1992: 5). While the new zoning schedule and design guidelines were being considered, SHPOA proposed a moratorium on demolitions, which was enacted by the City in 1992 (while it reviewed rezoning proposals for the neighbourhood).

5.1.2 Framing the “Problem”

In representing the construction of “monster” houses in South Shaughnessy as a problem, SHPOA worked to counter the conception that the controversy around the new housing was an issue of ethnicity or race. When SHPOA began to mobilize regarding construction patterns in

¹⁶⁰ Other groups in other west side neighbourhoods also wanted similar measures enacted in their areas. The area-specific zoning applied in First Shaughnessy was seen by many as the best way to prevent “monster” houses. (See for example, Blain, 1990)

South Shaughnessy, the question of “monster” houses was already pervasive within public discourse in Vancouver, and it was often connected to Asian immigration.¹⁶¹ Many public condemnations of the “monster” houses in the years proceeding SHPOA’s actions expressed overt racism. In 1987, for example, one Vancouver columnist stated:

The issue is that the hordes of Asia have moved in and are importing the ways of Asia. That means packing all the relatives into a single dwelling . . . In Calcutta, they live out on the sidewalk too . . . Given time, we too, could reach that state of bliss. Anyone who doesn’t like that sort of thing is a “racist” of course (Petit, 1993: 120).

Additionally, a number of the newly constructed “monster” houses throughout the city and metropolitan area were vandalized and pasted with xenophobic and racist graffiti. In 1991, police in North Vancouver attributed the burning of a Ku Klux Klan-style cross on the lawn of a home to a dispute over the home’s size and style (Petit, 1993: 181). Moreover, as Katharyne Mitchell records, as least one of the west side neighbourhood groups organizing to prevent the construction of “monster” houses was approached and offered support by white supremacist groups (1993: 20). Yet such overt expressions of racism were also widely, and publically, condemned. As one *Vancouver Sun* columnist put it:

In an Us-and-Them situation, one group discriminates against another group based on a perception of language or country of origin or religion or race. That sort of situation is not what this country is about; that is not what this province is about; and it most certainly is not what this city is about. (Lamb, 1989).

In this way, for many people, the more patently racist the objections to “monster” houses were, the less legitimate they were, and the less actionable they became for government.

¹⁶¹ In 1989, one *Vancouver Sun* reporter was asked to do a before and after shot of a block in Shaughnessy that had been “Hongkongified”, where “heritage houses are being torn down and replaced with feng shui palaces” (Bula, 1989).

Accordingly, SHPOA worked to assert that their objections to the “monsters” were not expressions of xenophobia. As one supporter put it in a letter to council: “While it’s true pockets of racism can rear their ugly head during times of tension, for anyone in a position of clout to imply that racism is at the root of this issue . . . is an affront to us all” (Anon., 1992). SHPOA framed the issue of “monster” houses as a problem of architectural design and quality. The new houses, they argued, were not only poorly designed and poorly constructed, they were also out of character in the neighbourhood. Preventing “monster” houses, then, was not about the ethnicity of the owners of the new houses: whether they were owned by recent Asian immigrants or Canadians of Anglo-Saxon descent who had been in the country for generations, they were equally objectionable. As one letter to the *Vancouver Sun* argues: “it is the height of cynicism and maliciousness to accuse people of racism when they try to protect their neighbourhood from these developers . . . Shaughnessy’s timeless beauty is an asset to our city. Can anyone tell me what its preservation has to do with racism?” (Rowe, 1992). In this way, SHPOA and its supporters suggested, what was really at issue was neighbourhood and landscape protection, and the ability neighbourhood residents to have a voice in determining the character of their community.

Thus, SHPOA framed the presence of “monster” houses in South Shaughnessy as a problem of character and architectural design, and as a problem of location and proximity. The “monster” houses were not just badly designed; their design was incompatible with both the other houses of South Shaughnessy and with the neighbourhood as a place. SHPOA argued that if zoning regulations and design guidelines were not implemented quickly, the construction of these new, and different, houses would do irreparable damage to the neighbourhood—it would change it into another (and a less valuable) type of place. In this way, whereas CROWE argued

that “sex-workers” and “residents” were socially distant and incompatible groups, SHPOA argued that “monster” houses and the neighbourhood of South Shaughnessy represented very different and, accordingly, incompatible landscapes. Moreover, they suggested that these two types of landscapes were unable to co-exist in such close physical proximity.

Paralleling CROWE’s position regarding the presence of street-level sex-work in the West End, SHPOA argued that the construction of “monster” houses was a problem because their presence in South Shaughnessy was a destructive force, and if their construction were allowed to continue unchecked, they would adversely impact both the neighbourhood and the city more generally. Particularly, the neighbourhood’s character and heritage would be lost and it would be fundamentally changed as a place. As one letter to council put it: “The present encroaching rot must be stopped” (Devine, 1992). If nothing was done, the letter implied, the “rot” (or the “monster” houses) would spread and destroy South Shaughnessy. In this way, SHPOA argued that the continued construction of “monster” houses was forcing the residents of South Shaughnessy to mobilize in order prevent the destruction of their neighbourhood.

5.2 Representations of People and of Place: SHPOA

Underwriting SHPOA’s framing on the presence of “monster” houses in South Shaughnessy as a problem are claims regarding what type of place the neighbourhood is, and should be, and about the kinds of people and physical forms that are, and should be, taken to be compatible with this neighbourhood. Particularly, the group employed two mutually reinforcing clusters of identity that drew on the neighbourhood’s history of landscape protection to distinguish the “traditional” landscape of Shaughnessy from the landscape created by “monster

houses.” Moreover, while the group emphasized architectural and landscape types in their framing, they also associated different groups of people with each of these types.

5.2.1 Representations of Landscape

The representational strategies employed by SHPOA to conceptualize South Shaughnessy as a place drew extensively on previous definitional work undertaken by the group in relationship to First Shaughnessy. Particularly, they mobilized representations of place at work in the “First Shaughnessy Plan” and sought to expand this conception of place to South Shaughnessy (1982).¹⁶²

The framing tactics SHPOA used to represent the landscape of Shaughnessy in the “First Shaughnessy Plan”, which begin to belie the notion that there were not inherently racialized or cultural dimensions to the question of architecture and landscaping, can be seen as clustering around three connected claims. The first was that Shaughnessy was characterized by the aesthetic of *English countryside and the English upper classes*. The design guidelines associated with the plan described the neighbourhood in the following way: “The streetscape is reminiscent of an early period in England. Gently curving tree-lined streets, small quiet parks and lush private gardens create a distinctive estate-garden quality. The overall effect is one of stately country homes situated in an estate setting” (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980b, 6). Shaughnessy, then, was “park-like”, “profusely landscaped” and exhibited a strong relationship between the garden and the street. It exhibited, “late 19th Century visions of residential architecture and urban design, reflected in such phrases as ‘house and garden’, ‘picturesque landscape’, ‘garden

¹⁶² In 1990, SHPOA published the *Shaughnessy District Historic Style Manual*, which reiterated many aspects of the “First Shaughnessy Plan”. The manual, the group stated, “was prepared to illustrate the historic styles of building in the First Shaughnessy District of Vancouver. It will also be of use in the areas known as Second and Third Shaughnessy, where a strong similarity of styles and building character exists” (SHPOA, 1990).

city’, ‘naturalism’, and ‘country life’”, primarily, though not exclusively, inspired by British traditions (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980b). In this way, SHPOA suggested that its aesthetic—the “Shaughnessy genre” as the group called it—arose from its distinct architecture, its carefully cultivated landscape and vegetation and the interplay between these elements. Further contributing to the group’s association of First Shaughnessy with the English countryside and upper class sensibilities were the ways SHPOA described the neighbourhood. Beyond its characterization as ‘elite’, ‘exclusive’ and ‘prestigious’, SHPOA frequently describes the area as ‘charming’, ‘gracious’, ‘abundant’, ‘elegant’ and ‘sophisticated’, terms that are laden with both class-based and cultural connotations.

The second set of claims SHPOA makes regarding First Shaughnessy is that it represents a *unique urban ecosystem*. Though the term “ecosystem” is not drawn on explicitly, SHPOA’s framing of place plays on this idea.¹⁶³ Particularly, it represents First Shaughnessy as a complex and intricately connected system, which weaves together, and unites, variety: of trees and vegetation; of architectural types and building materials; and of elements—human, landscaping, architectural. SHPOA stressed that one of the key principles defining [good] Shaughnessy homes was their relationship to their neighbours:

Shaughnessy displays sensitive siting, design, and use of materials that can be described as “neighbourly”. This has produced a complementary relationship, which together with extensive landscaping has resulted in an extremely attractive and enduring streetscape. The composition, massing, siting, color, quality and use of materials and architectural style of Shaughnessy homes do not compete with each other but create the Shaughnessy “genre” that is so unique today. It is in effect a balanced form of architectural expression. (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980b: 7)

¹⁶³ At the public hearing on the proposed zoning changes, City staff noted that a number of speakers suggested that the issue with the houses was not their size but their “footprint”.

The area, they suggested, “has a special ambience comprised of several important elements: grand scaled homes; landscaped estate garden setting; and landscaped enclosure” (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980: 23). Moreover, as the *Shaughnessy District Historic Style Manual* notes, “The landmark character of the neighbourhood is derived from a consistent approach to design quality, craftsmanship, and landscaping that ties these diverse elements into a greater whole” (SHPOA, 1990: 2).¹⁶⁴ In this way, then, SHPOA suggests that Shaughnessy is composed of a range of elements fitting together to form a complex totality. Recurring within this idea is a rejection of anything that might disrupt or undermine the transcendent nature of what is imagined to be the whole.

SHPOA not only depicted First Shaughnessy as a ‘complex’ and ‘balanced’ whole, but also as a ‘natural’ or ‘living’ system (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980b). It emphasized that the neighbourhood had a harmonious relationship with ‘natural’ elements such as topography and climate. The streets of Shaughnessy, they asserted, “follow contours rising, falling and curving in an organic relationship with the land, instead of imposing a rigid grid or unnatural geometry”, while the architecture of the neighbourhood employed local materials that were “enhanced by Vancouver’s climate” (ibid 2). Additionally, they linked the area to ‘lush growth’ and ‘abundant vegetation’ and suggested that the pedestrian experience of Shaughnessy involves experiencing the [natural] ‘rhythms’ of the streetscape’s diverse elements.

¹⁶⁴Other publications also emphasize the complementary relationship of elements in the neighbourhood:

Shaughnessy displays sensitive siting, design, use of materials . . . This has produced a complementary relationship which together with extensive landscaping has resulted in an extremely attractive and enduring streetscape. The composition, massing siting, color, quality and use of materials and architectural style of Shaughnessy homes do not compete with each other but create the Shaughnessy “genre” that is so unique today. (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980b: 7)

And, the complexity and specificity of the streetscape:

The traditional street scape section in First Shaughnessy consists of these elements viewed horizontally in sequence: House facade/filigree/drive way/layering elements/screening/boundary enclosure/path or pedestrian walkway/narrow boulevard with mature trees/curb/car/street median/(wide) Boulevard with planting and a mirror reflection of this sequence to the house facade beyond (ibid, 29).

Yet if the terms in which SHPOA describes First Shaughnessy play on the concept of the “ecosystem”, they also take this a step further. Shaughnessy, they suggested, is not simply any ecosystem, rather it is a fragile and exceptional ecosystem—that is, one with significant and particular features and delicacies. Specially, SHPOA sought to emphasize the ‘uniqueness’, ‘sensitivity’ and ‘complexity’ of the area; and to emphasize that, given this combination of qualities, the neighbourhood was particularly vulnerable to anything that might disrupt its equilibrium. As SHPOA put it in the *“First Shaughnessy Plan”*, “because of the highly complex and sensitive nature of the area, attention needs to be given to protecting [its] special qualities” (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980: 16). The most significant threats to the neighbourhood at the time of the plan, SHPOA suggested, were multifamily conversions, subdivisions and smaller homes with “middle class” aesthetics, but other threatening elements included a lack of variety in fruit trees, visible parked cars and inappropriate materials used to construct retaining walls and chimney tops.

Finally, SHPOA also framed Shaughnessy in terms of its heritage value. Particularly, they suggested that the area represents an architectural legacy that serves as poignant reminder of the city’s past. In making this claim, they stressed that while Shaughnessy drew on the image of the English pastoral and many of its houses were inspired by English architectural styles, how they were built and the way they evolved was particular to Vancouver. The architectural styles were adapted to West Coast building materials and climate, and the landscape composed a unique blend trees and vegetation, both native and nonnative (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980: 1). Shaughnessy’s “delightful” homes, the Design Guidelines noted,

have been enhanced by Vancouver’s climate, which has promoted the lush growth of the great variety of native and exotic vegetation so necessary to the picturesque idiom, and so original to Shaughnessy

itself. In fact it is this very mature, even overabundant, landscape that focuses our attention on Shaughnessy's unique character. (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980b: 2).

And, as the plan itself stated:

the gracious homes situated on large profusely landscaped properties are a reminder of a past era. Shaughnessy is also rich in historical significance; many buildings can be associated with prominent families who settled in Vancouver during its early history (Vancouver Planning Department, 1980: 1).

In this way, SHPOA suggested, Shaughnessy had heritage value not only because it was one of the city's first subdivisions and home to notable citizens, but also because of its unique landscape and character. Moreover, SHPOA not only asserted that Shaughnessy had special historical significance, but that, in light of this significance, the neighbourhood represented a public good. They argued that the protection and maintenance of the neighbourhood contributed value to the city as whole—something the City would also assert when it enacted the “First Shaughnessy Plan”.

If a defining feature of good architecture in Shaughnessy for SHPOA was its “neighbourliness”, an overarching characteristic of the new large houses for the group was that they lacked this quality. More specifically, they suggested that while the traditional houses of Shaughnessy were ‘elegant’ and ‘gracious’, the new houses were ‘tasteless’ and ‘tacky’. In addition, these homes displayed a lack of respect for their neighbours and for the landscape. They replaced the gardens and green spaces so central to the “Shaughnessy genre” with concrete. They chopped down mature trees, they used building materials that did not fit their context and they broke up the flow of the streetscape. Shaughnessy was a place built on intricacy and complexity, SHPOA argued, and the new housing showed little respect for these qualities. The traditional architecture of Shaughnessy, for SHPOA, was premised on key relationships—the relationship of one's house with the homes of ones neighbours, the relationship between one's

house, garden and street, and the relationship between built and natural elements. The new houses were not designed to fit in and they disrupted these relationships.¹⁶⁵ As one resident put it “I am sickened to see what has been happening lately. Our lovely neighbourhood has been desecrated . . . So many beautiful old homes are being demolished and replaced by cold looking, tasteless fortresses” (Betuzzi, 199-). The new houses, then, stood out “aggressively”. They disrupted the delicate balances and complex relationships on which the landscape of Shaughnessy was predicated and, SHPOA argued, if left unchecked they would do irreparable damage to this landscape and deprive the city, more generally, of a valuable and exceptional heritage asset.

Table 5-1 Contrasting Landscapes

Shaughnessy Landscape	Monster House Landscape
English Pastoral	Modern
Complex Ecosystem	Fortress
Heritage Value	Commodity Value

¹⁶⁵ In a letter to the *Vancouver Sun* in 1988, one city resident described “monster” houses in the following terms: “A great many of the large square houses now being built offend two basic principles of architecture - namely that the building should be in harmony with itself and in harmony with its environment. The design of many of those homes is ludicrous and probably based on someone’s casual exposure to Lego” (Stevens, 1988).

Figure 5-3 Shaughnessy Landscape

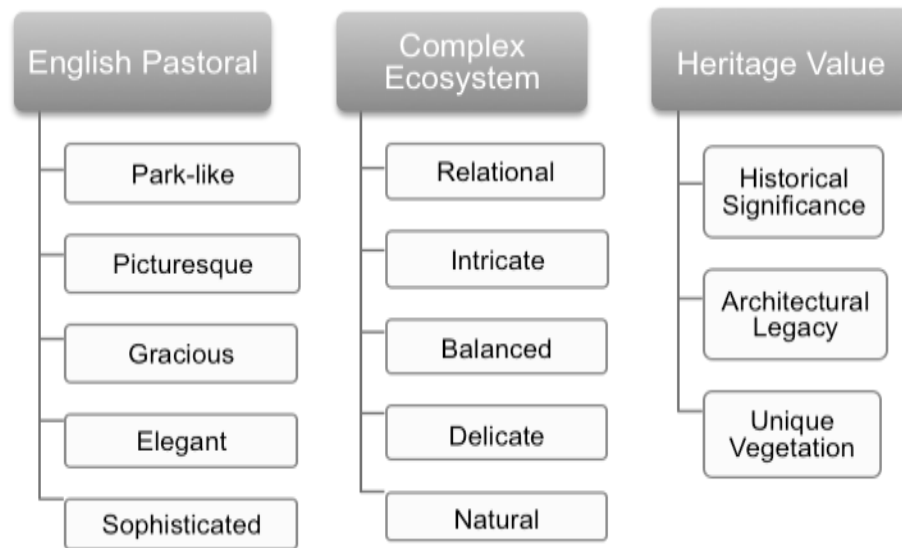
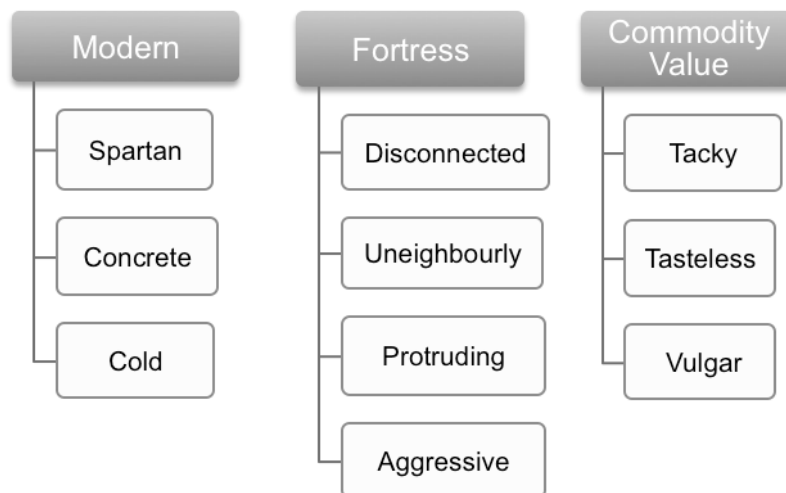


Figure 5-4 “Monster” House Landscape



5.2.2 Representations of People

Along with mobilizing a particular representation of the type of place South Shaughnessy was, SHPOA also mobilized a particular cluster of identities that it associated with the “monsters.” First, building from popular discourse about “monster” houses in the city more generally, it suggested that a large proportion of the individuals responsible for the new large houses were “special interests” and not part of the neighbourhood. Rather, they were builders and developers or investors and speculators who purchased properties in South Shaughnessy as *investments* rather than *homes*. As one longtime resident of the area noted, “many of the houses in the area have been demolished, lived in for a short time and sold to unknown speculative buyers” (Anon., 1992a). SHPOA suggested that the new houses were not owned by individuals who were committed to the community, and that they frequently had absentee owners (Anon., 199-). As one letter said: “We heartily welcome newcomers who wish to LIVE here and preserve the surroundings. What we do NOT welcome are developers” (Craddock and Craddock, 1992b).¹⁶⁶ In this way, SHPOA suggested that the owners of the “monster” houses were not real residents of South Shaughnessy.

During the public hearings SHPOA asserted, “properties, our homes, are not commodities or poker chips” (Ley, 1995: 197). Real residents of Shaughnessy, they posited, had a relationship with the neighbourhood that went beyond the economic. Special interests, alternatively, were motivated merely by economic incentives: they were driven by greed and cared little for the community of South Shaughnessy outside of the amount of money it could make for them. One letter to the city expressed it thus: “I wish to express my desire to have my neighbourhood protected from the fast-track fast-bucks, rapid development as currently is the trend” (Fontana,

¹⁶⁶ Emphasis from original document.

1992). Or as another threatened: “you may not wish to rock the developers’ boats - but you can be sure a lot of us will rock yours if the NPA [Non-Partisan Association] continues to show obsequious pandering to big interest money over community integrity” (MacGregor, 1992; see also, Bates, 1992 and Craddock and Craddock, 1992a).¹⁶⁷

Second, supporters of SHPOA and of downzoning questioned why people would choose to move to the neighbourhood if they wanted to change its character (Duggar, 1993). SHPOA suggested that those who chose to purchase and live in a “monster” house were irresponsible and disrespectful because they either did not care about the character and values of the community they moved into or they were ignorant of them. Regarding the latter, one letter cautioned: “there may be innocent newcomers who buy these structures only to realize at a later date the concerns which such homes are causing their neighbours” (Craddock and Craddock, 1992b). And as a member of SHPOA indignantly asserted “I cannot understand how *anyone* could go to another country and insist they can build against the wishes of an old established neighbourhood. The effrontery and the insolence takes my breath away” (Mitchell, 1997: 173).¹⁶⁸ Another resident defined the problem of the “monster” houses in the following terms: “this issue has come to the forefront . . . because something that cannot be replaced is being replaced by something that can be. In this case, [by] homes and landscaping that show no aesthetic sympathy to the heritage of the community” (Anon., 1992b).¹⁶⁹

This destructive ignorance, or lack of respect and regard for neighbours and for the city’s heritage, SHPOA and its supporters suggested, was not simply indicated by the new home owners “tasteless” decision to purchase a monster house but also by their landscaping choices

¹⁶⁷ At this time both the Mayor and the majority of council members were members of the Non-Partisan Association.

¹⁶⁸ Emphasis from original.

¹⁶⁹ Emphasis from original.

once in residence. Particularly, they argued, residents of “monster” houses showed a marked lack of respect for the trees and vegetation that many South Shaughnessy residents strongly associated with the character of their neighbourhood.

While SHPOA devoted most of its efforts to deploying representations of the character of South Shaughnessy, and of the character of “monster” houses and their owners, they still made a number of claims regarding the neighbourhood’s residents; their claims regarding place implied still others. Particularly, they suggested that residents of ‘traditional’ Shaughnessy homes were community minded and good neighbours. Moreover they were appreciative and respectful of the complex relationships that made up the neighbourhood. Whereas the special interests behind “monster” houses were concerned with investment, they were invested in their neighbourhood. Moreover, they, like their landscaping, were “tasteful” and “abundant”—or “classy” and “well-to-do” whereas the monster house owners were described as “vulgar” and “unneighbourly”.

Table 5-2 “Residents” and “Monsters”

Shaughnessy Residents	Monster House Owners
Neighbourly	Unneighbourly
Residents	Absentees
Invested	Investors
Tasteful	Vulgar (new \$)

5.3 The Ad Hoc Committee for South Shaughnessy Property Rights Association

As they had done in the past with regards to First Shaughnessy, SHPOA sought to work together with the City to push through the zoning changes they believed were necessary for the protection of their neighbourhood; yet, unlike the organization’s previous interventions, these

were met with significant resistance. The opposition to their efforts was not from the City, however, but from within South Shaughnessy itself. A counter movement—the Ad Hoc Committee for South Shaughnessy Property Rights Association (the Ad Hoc Committee)—was quickly mobilized as the new zoning proposals were set to go to public hearings.¹⁷⁰ The organization contested SHPOA's claims that they alone represented the residents of South Shaughnessy and that the zoning changes they advocated were supported by the residents of the neighborhood. The Ad Hoc Committee's volunteers went door-to-door collecting signatures on a petition opposing the changes (they gathered over 400 names); began a letter-writing campaign to the City, as well as other levels of government and public officials; distributed flyers against the rezoning; sought out media coverage for their position both within Vancouver and Asia, hired lawyers to represent their interests; and began a lawn sign campaign to retain RS-1 zoning and to the proposed zoning changes. As a result of the clash between the two groups, tensions in South Shaughnessy quickly escalated. The lawn signs in particular were a focus of vitriol. One resident of the neighbourhood, for example, noted, "in the past week nearly every lawn sign in our area has either been knocked down, stolen or destroyed" (Chan, 1992a). A member of the Ad Hoc Committee describes the situation in the following terms:

These signs were systematically vandalized, destroyed, and stolen at night. Some signs ended up having swearwords hand scribbled on them, and one house (one of the "New Boxes") with a sign had an egg thrown at it. Then the battle escalated. One night, Paul Lin's house, by now well under construction, was spray-painted with swear words and phrases like "Die Young" and "Ban RS-1."

¹⁷⁰ David Ley records that "although no letters had been received from private citizens of Chinese origin to offset the protest of Anglo-Canadians up to the summer of 1992, over a quarter of the correspondence received by Council relating to the proposed downzoning of South Shaughnessy later in the year came from this source" (1995: 198).

Furthermore, Lin discovered that someone had trampled on his roof and damaged it.¹⁷¹ (Ad Hoc Committee, 1992)

Putting is simply, a member of SHPOA told Council: “Feelings are running high in Shaughnessy. It’s unpleasant” (Ley, 1995: 197).

At the public hearing on the proposed zoning changes, over 130 people signed up to speak. In order to accommodate all the speakers, the hearing was extended from one night to five (held over the course of three months), making it the longest public hearing in the city’s history up to that point. During the public hearings, the Ad Hoc Committee displayed its organizational capacities and political acumen. Mitchell records that “After the first meeting in September, leaflets were sent to Chinese homeowners in the area, urging them to ask Chinese friends in the lower mainland to attend the rest of the hearings in a show of public alliance” (1997: 172).¹⁷² Moreover, the literature distributed by the group was also written in Chinese, whereas previous information about the proposed downzoning had all been in English. At the public meetings, the Ad Hoc Committee worked as a coordinated team (ibid), as Ley describes: “[they] acted as a well-organized block, seated together in a large group and waving small flags in unison when one of their number presented a brief” (1995: 197). At the end of the day (or rather five days), 61 of the 91 briefs presented at the hearings rejected the proposed downzoning—that is, they rejected the measures that SHPOA hoped to enact for the protection of the neighbourhood.

5.4 Reframing the prognosis

In their campaign against the proposed downzoning, the Ad hoc Committee for South Shaughnessy Property Owner’s Rights countered SHPOA’s framing of the problem of “monster”

¹⁷¹ Lin’s property had been an ongoing point of contention.

¹⁷² Representatives of Chinatown’s heritage and business interests took little interest in this struggle (Madokoro 2011: 21).

houses by themselves deploying representations of the identities of places and people. While agreeing that the problem was the result of special interests groups, they suggested that those interest groups were not ‘greedy capitalists’, but rather SHPOA and its supporters. These people, the Ad Hoc Committee asserted, were using their connections and previous working relationship with the City to further their own agenda, and that agenda did not represent the will of the people of South Shaughnessy (MH53). As one letter questioned: “how could a small group of residents persuade the City to initiate a rezoning proposal?” (Fraser, 1992). SHPOA, they suggested, only represented a small portion of the community and should not be accepted as the legitimate representative South Shaughnessy residents. Moreover, the Ad Hoc Committee asserted, despite SHPOA’s arguments to the contrary, the frustrations expressed by residents of Anglo-Saxon and European descent were motivated by xenophobia. In this way, the Ad Hoc Committee sought to reintroduce and support the assertion that contention around the so-called “monster” houses was rightly framed as an expression of racism. Moreover, given their reframing of the problem of the “monster” houses, they also associated it with different causes and solutions than those asserted by SHPOA.

5.4.1 Causes and Solutions

The Ad Hoc Committee argued that the problem of “monster” houses was not the result of a combination of economic incentives, poor taste, and regulatory failure, as in SHPOA representation; instead, they asserted, it was actually caused by a small number of well-connected and small-minded residents of South Shaughnessy, motivated by racist sentiments and a fear of change (and jealousy of the greater wealth of new residents). This minority of residents was attempting to exert their influence at City Hall in order to effect regulatory change that went

against the wishes of the majority area residents. Moreover, this group was generating tension and anxiety, perhaps even fostering property damage, within the neighborhood. The right solution to the problem of “monster” houses, then, was certainly not to indulge these people. Instead, the Ad Hoc Committee contended, the real solution was for the City enact the actual will of the community in South Shaughnessy—and thus seek out and listen to input from *all* community members rather than just a select few—and, if they did, they would naturally reject the proposed new zoning (and retain RS-1).

5.4.2 The “Real Problem”

In this way, the Ad Hoc Committee not only sought to reframe SHPOA’s representation of the issue of “monster” houses as a problem of design; they also sought to dispute the claims about proximity at work in SHPOA’s representational politics. SHPOA’s contention that “monster” houses are incompatible with the landscape of Shaughnessy, the Ad Hoc Committee’s own frames suggest, was simply a mechanism for masking the real issue: that some Canadians of Anglo-Saxon and European descent were uncomfortable co-existing in close proximity with Canadians of Asian descent and Asian immigrants—that the former saw the latter as out of place in the upscale neighbourhoods of Vancouver’s west side. In this way, the Ad Hoc committee represented the situation as a problem of racist special interests.

5.5 Representation of People and Place: the Ad Hoc Committee

At work in the Ad Hoc Committee’s reframing of the problem of “monster” houses are claims regarding what kinds of people support the proposed downzoning and what kinds oppose it. Moreover, the group also supplemented this representational work with claims regarding what

types of places both South Shaughnessy and Canada are, and should strive to become. Thus one can elicit the following from the Ad Hoc Committee's framing of the two groups:

Table 5-3 SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee

Supporters of SHPOA	Supporters of the Ad Hoc Committee
Racist	Unbigoted
Autocratic	Democratic
Special Interests	Majoritarian
Fiscally Irresponsible	Fiscally Responsible
Parochial	Modern
Bad Canadians	Good Canadians

5.5.1 SHPOA

The Ad Hoc Committee represented SHPOA and its supporters not only as a special interest group, but as a special interest group for *racists* (Ad Hoc Committee, 1992b, 1992c). The language of “neighbourhood protection”, they argued, was just a cover for underlying prejudice. As one resident of South Shaughnessy captured this sentiment: “This whole miserable business is . . . not about houses but about people. In the subconscious of some, too many new immigrants are moving into what hitherto has been the privileged enclave of long-established residents” (Spencer, 1992). The “monster” houses, suggests another supporter of the Ad Hoc Committee, were actually quite different from one another and only had two things in common: “(i) they were all built within the last 6 or 7 years, and (ii) they are mostly owned or occupied by Asians” (Chan, 1992a). Moreover, he continued, “it takes someone with very strong prejudice to label them all as “New Box”, perhaps someone who strongly dislikes anything or anyone new”

(ibid).¹⁷³ Additionally, the Ad Hoc Committee suggested, the opponents of the new, bigger houses failed to appreciate that Asian families had different needs and structures. As one letter writer put it: “Asian families usually require large houses, to accommodate several generations in the same house, as well as to entertain visiting friends and relatives from overseas” and accordingly, the proposed zoning would act as a bar to Asian families living in the area (Chan, 1992; See also, Anon., 1992c and Ad Hoc Committee, 1992b). Further, Katharyne Mitchell records that some supporters of the Ad Hoc committee also suggested that Asian families needed larger houses because they, unlike white Canadian families, respected and cared for their elders and took responsibility for their extended families (1997).¹⁷⁴

What is more, the ways both SHPOA and the City consulted with the neighbourhood regarding the proposed zoning, the Ad Hoc Committee suggested, displayed the inherent racism underwriting the proposed rezoning. While many homeowners were not fluent in English, no information on the proposed changes had been provided in Mandarin or Cantonese. Katharyne Mitchell records that at the hearings, “Chinese speakers complained that the survey distributed by the Vancouver Planning Department had not been translated into Chinese, reducing the information necessary to make informed decisions about the proposed changes” (1997, 172). She also notes that at the public hearings, white members of the audience heckled speakers using a Cantonese interpreter. In this way, the Ad Hoc Committee stated, it seemed as though

¹⁷³ Or as another resident said, “if I am to judge by the undercurrents at the public meetings, the comments and attitudes of some sitting near me, I would say that their motive is racist and that downsizing is designed to discourage Chinese families from settling in the area!” (Wu, 1992).

¹⁷⁴ This position was also forwarded by the West Side Builders Association. At the first public hearing on the changes association president Barry Hersh stated that “the changes will send ‘a clear discriminatory and racist signal’ from city hall to the Asian community. ‘If these new building bylaws as proposed are brought into effect, it will be akin to returning to the early 1900s where some of our land titles specifically excluded people of certain origins from owning land’” (Farrow, 1992).

Canadians—and more particularly the opponents of “monster” houses—were ‘welcoming to Asian money but not to Asian people.’

Second, the Ad Hoc Committee asserted that SHPOA’s supporters were not only racist, they were also *fiscally irresponsible*. The proposed zoning changes would result in a decrease in property values in South Shaughnessy, which was bad for both the residents of South Shaughnessy and for the City (Hui, 1992; Tang, 1992; Hsieh, 1992; Ad Hoc Committee, 1992d; Johnstone and Johnstone, 1992). The reduction in property values, it was suggested, would reduce the amount of money the City made through property taxes. Moreover, establishing and enforcing the proposed design guidelines would be a heavy burden on the City, both in terms of money and staff time. These costs, however, were insignificant in comparison to the real financial burden the Ad Hoc Committee suggested the proposed zoning would impose: they would discourage foreign investment in both Vancouver and Canada (Ad Hoc Committee, 1992c; see also, Ley, 1995: 199). In a letter to the then Premier Mike Harcourt, for instance, one supporter of the Ad Hoc Committee notes that business immigration in the first half of 1992 brought over 2 billion dollars into British Columbia and Hong Kong business investors brought 500 million dollars (Anon., 1992d). He further asserts that if the proposed zoning changes move forward, “the ‘Bridge Across the Pacific’ will be broken” (ibid). The Ad Hoc Committee argued that implementing the proposed changes would send a clear message that Asians should take their businesses and investment dollars elsewhere.¹⁷⁵ In this way, they equated acceding to the wishes of SHPOA to poor financial and economic management.

¹⁷⁵ Katharyne Mitchell notes that “of the many people I interviewed in Hong Kong, *all* had heard of the controversy around the houses and landscaping” (1993: 15).

Third, the Ad Hoc Committee framed SHPOA and its supporters as *parochial*. As indicated by their fixation on heritage, they were stuck in the past—scared of both new things and new people. In their position statement the Ad Hoc Committee declares:

We believe that nothing is more important than restoring the harmony within our community so unhappily breached by the over-reaction of some long-established residents to newcomers and the inevitable winds of change in Canada's modern, dynamic society (1992d).

SHPOA and its supporters, they argued, sought to cling to an idealized past in a changing world, and as a result they were trying to enforce homogenization and conformity. One opponent of the proposed zoning, for example, questioned what exactly would be required to ensure “compatibility” with the character of the neighbourhood. He asked:

[W]ould, say, a cookie cutter Tudor look for the whole neighbourhood be required? Will the residents' clothing and cars be next considered “incompatible”, and legislations brought in to require wearing period clothing from the 15th Century and using horses for transportation rather than cars? (Tang L., 1992)

SHPOA was unwilling, the Ad Hoc Committee suggested, to admit they lived in a changing world, and accordingly failed to recognize that “modern” families might need bigger homes.¹⁷⁶ As one supporter of the Ad Hoc Committee noted at the hearings (though perhaps not in the most convincing expression of this frame): “We decided to build our own dream home for our own family needs. It was a family project. Everyone was excited by new house. Now [as a result of the proposed downzoning] the children will have to sleep in the basement” (Ley, 1995: 199). The real problem some residents had with the extravagance of the new houses, some supporters of the Ad Hoc Committee insinuated, was not that their opulence was ugly, but rather that it made some

¹⁷⁶ As one representative expressed it in a letter to council on behalf of the association “The current RS-1 square footage . . . is barely sufficient for modern living” (Hsieh, 1992).

residents of South Shaughnessy—perhaps those facing greater budgetary constraints—jealous (see Tang L., 1992; Ad Hoc Committee, 1992c).

Moreover, the Ad Hoc Committee asserted, SHPOA and its supporters were unwilling to recognize the very real difference that already existed in the neighborhood, both in terms of architectural styles and the views of its residents. The representations of South Shaughnessy and its residents forwarded by SHPOA were incongruous with the actual neighbourhood. To make this point, the Ad Hoc Committee submitted a photo series of houses in South Shaughnessy in order to demonstrate the difficulty in clearly delineating between characteristics of “monster” houses and homes of the traditional “Shaughnessy genre” when looking beyond the most extreme examples. As one resident supporting Ad Hoc put it: “It is possible to find examples of both attractive and unattractive houses, built under a variety of zoning bylaws, at any time in South Shaughnessy's past, to support any position on this issue” (Tang, 1992). In their position statement the Ad Hoc Committee noted, “as to preserving the “character” of the neighbourhood, it is debatable what that character may be. Unlike First Shaughnessy, South Shaughnessy has a mix of houses, ranging from bungalows to homes of the Georgian, Tudor, Spanish, Dutch Colonial and international style” (Ad Hoc Committee, 1992a). In this way, they suggested both that what counted as the “Shaughnessy genre” was far less clear cut than SHPOA suggested and that South Shaughnessy was a more architecturally diverse area than First Shaughnessy.

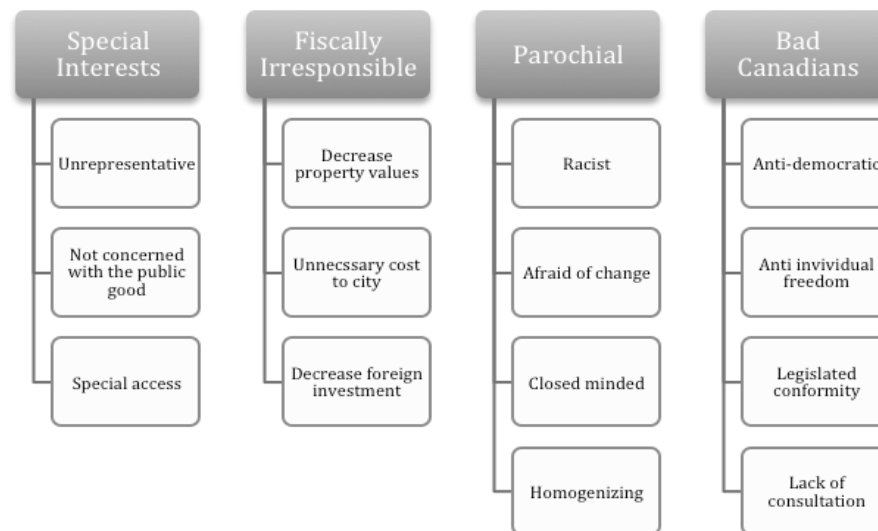
Fourth, the Ad Hoc Committee argued that the position of SHPOA was fundamentally at odds with Canadian values. The undertones and outright racism undermined assertions that Canada was a multicultural society that celebrated difference. Moreover, the desire of SHPOA and its allies at City Hall to implement their policy goals regardless of the will of the community was anti-democratic. The majority of South Shaughnessy residents did not want the changes and

the original consultation process had been inherently flawed. City planners and SHPOA, one commentator stated, “often talked about a two-year or two-and-a-half year study that supposedly justifies the current rezoning proposals. The problem is, they seem to be the only people who knew about them” (Lok, 1992; see also Johnstone and Johnstone 1992). Additionally, the Ad Hoc Committee questioned the definition of compatibility:

Houses that some people consider "incompatible" with the neighbourhood may please others for adding interest and variety. How does one define compatibility? Is Tudor incompatible with Georgian because they came from distinctly different periods and architectural styles? If the goal was preserving “heritage,” then we should have preserved the Indian dwellings that were here first. (Ad Hoc Committee, 1992a)

In this way, the Ad Committee claimed, the proposed zoning and design guidelines were an attempt to ‘legislate taste’ (Ad Hoc Committee, 1992d). SHPOA, through its allies at City Hall, was attempting to dictate what individuals could do on their own, private properties, and in doing so it was attempting to undermine both property rights and fundamental individual freedoms. As one letter to Council noted, “it does not seem equitable to let one or more persons have the power to interfere on what styles of house somebody else can or cannot live in” (Tang L., 1992). In this way, the Ad Hoc Committee implied that opponents to “monster” houses were essentially failing as Canadians: they lacked respect for difference, equality, democracy and individual freedom.

Figure 5-5 SHPOA and its Supporters



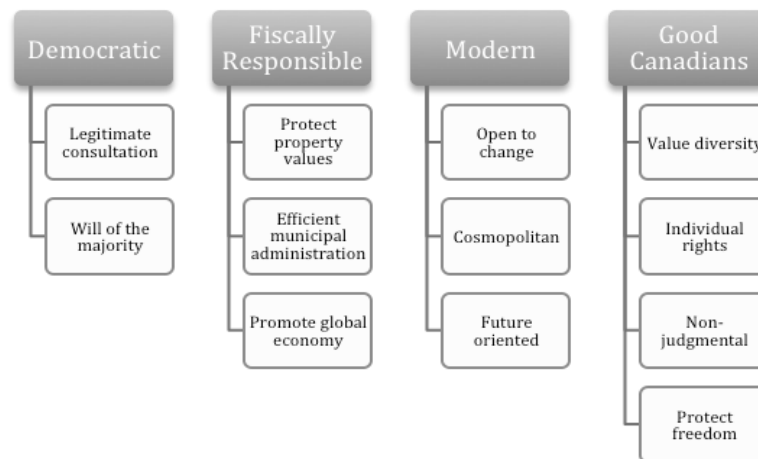
5.5.2 The Ad Hoc Committee

In contrast, the Ad Hoc Committee and its supporters, many of whom were new immigrants, suggested that they had more respect for Canadian values than some of the residents of South Shaughnessy whose families had lived in the country for generations. As the group's position statement put it: "Our members believe in co-existing with our neighbours in a spirit of peace, harmony and goodwill. We believe in harmony within the diversity that is modern Canada" (Ad Hoc Committee, 1992d). The Ad Hoc Committee valued democracy and simply wanted a legitimate consultation process in which the will of the majority of neighborhood residents would prevail. Moreover, they envisioned South Shaughnessy as a place that was respectful of difference—different styles of housing, different sizes of houses to meet the needs of different families and different people—and not a place of judgment, prejudice and legislated conformity. Additionally, the Ad Hoc Committee supported the responsible and efficient use of

public funds and maintaining a strong Canadian economy in a globalizing world. They, unlike the backward looking Anglo-Canadian minority in South Shaughnessy, were oriented towards the future.

Additionally, they supported individual freedom and property rights. As the group stated, “We do support good architecture [but] we believe that preferred design elements should be introduced by way of encouragement and incentives, and not by way of penalty which robs us of our private property rights” (Keean and Chang, 1992). Or as another letter writer asserts: “To meet the challenge of a new age . . . we should be willing to give freedom of spirit, the freedom to choose. This is the way for our city to grow into the future” (Yuen, 1992). As responsible citizens and diligent proponents of liberal rights and freedoms, the Ad Hoc Committee worried about what kind of a precedent would be set if government began to regulate expression on private property. Some of their supporters, they noted, had come to Canada from Hong Kong to escape the fallout of its return to China—they had come because of the vaunted economic freedom and democracy of Canada. Yet, they had begun to question if Canada were actually the type of place it was purported to be. As one member of the Ad Hoc Committee stated, “we don't know whether or not we are living in a democratic country”; and the group's position statement asserted, “In our free and democratic society, things should be done by way of incentives. Only in an autocratic and dictatorial society are things done by way of penalties” (Ad Hoc Committee 1992c, 1992d). In this way, they suggest that the imposition of new zoning regulations and design guidelines threatened fundamental freedoms and was inherently undemocratic.

Figure 5-6 The Ad Hoc Committee and its Supporters



The Ad Hoc Committee, then, like SHPOA mobilized of conceptions place. Particularly, they stressed that South Shaughnessy was already much more diverse than SHPOA acknowledged, in terms of its landscaping, people and the architectural styles of its houses. Furthermore, they raised concerns regarding what type of place the neighbourhood would become if the proposed new zoning were accepted. Under such zoning, they argued, South Shaughnessy would become a place of forced homogenization, exclusion and parochialism. One member of the Ad Hoc Committee asserted, “[currently] our neighbourhood's character may be summarized by the word respect, the respect for our neighbours’ values, judgments and freedom of expression. Retaining the character of the neighbourhood means retaining RS-1” (Ad Hoc Committee, 1992c). Moreover, the Ad Hoc Committee connected this discussion of the future of South Shaughnessy as a place to the future of Canada as a place and Canadian identity. They suggested that if Canada purported to be a place of freedom, democracy and multiculturalism, indulging SHPOA was at odds with these values and would make South Shaughnessy into a less

Canadian place. In this way, the Ad Hoc Committee questioned the kind of place Canada actually was and the kind of place it aspired to be.

5.6 Resonance

In the conflict over the size and design of new construction in South Shaughnessy, SHPOA asserted itself as the voice of residents. This claim, however, was contested by the Ad Hoc Committee: they contended that the views of the residents of South Shaughnessy were not, in fact, homogenous and that their organization actually represented the views of more residents of the neighbourhood than did SHPOA. In making these claims, both groups (and their supporters) deployed clusters of proximate identities in order to legitimate each group's right to a political voice: to legitimate themselves and their claims; and to require recognition and action from government and society more generally. Yet, how successful were the conflicting representational strategies of SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee? The following section explores the resonance of framing strategies deployed by both groups. That is, it analyzes the success of each group in achieving their goals, the degree to which their frames were reflected in media coverage, the amount of overlap between these positions and the statements of government leaders and officials and the extent to which they were reflected in public policy.

5.6.1 Resolution

If tensions in the West End culminated in a bang—or in confrontations in the street and an unprecedented and heavy-handed civil injunction—the conflict between SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee in South Shaughnessy ended with a whimper—or rather, a compromise (see Lee, 1993). While feelings ran high at the public meetings on the proposed zoning, over the

course of the process, numerous parties began to argue that a solution could be reached that addressed the main concerns of both sides. Even as the hearings were underway, the City began to receive letters and submissions suggesting compromise positions (Fletcher J., 1992; Hersh, 1992). These submissions emphasized that the real issue for SHPOA and its supporters was not actually the size of the houses but rather their character. Accordingly, it was proposed that instead of downzoning and imposing design guidelines, the floor space ratio and size requirements of RS-1 should be slightly reduced and a floor space bonus (larger than RS-1) should be offered for new developments and renovations consistent with the character of the area.¹⁷⁷ In this way, design guidelines would be incentivized rather than required, which addressed some of the main concerns of the Ad Hoc Committee regarding the ‘legislation of taste’ and the protection of individual freedom and property rights.

Over the next few months, this compromise position was studied and refined. Following the hearing the City formed a new committee of stakeholders—the South Shaughnessy Working Group—including members of SHPOA, the Ad Hoc Committee and builders active in the area. The city tasked the committee with finding the right compromise. In 1993, all parties endorsed the newly developed zonings options proposed by the Working Group. As a flyer jointly published by SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee endorsing the proposal stated: “Since January, the South Shaughnessy Working Group . . . have been meeting with City staff, and have arrived at a reasonable compromise position on the rezoning of our community” (“Rezoning South Shaughnessy”). Though the Ad Hoc Committee was a successful in blocking the proposed

¹⁷⁷ The zoning eventually applied was a revised version of RS-5, which the City currently describes in the following terms:

The intent is to maintain the existing single-family residential character of the RS-5 District by encouraging new development that is compatible with the form and design of existing development, and by encouraging the retention and renovation of existing development but also to permit conditionally one-family dwellings with secondary suites. Emphasis is placed on design compatibility with the established streetscape. Neighbourhood amenity is intended to be enhanced through the maintenance and addition of healthy trees and plants. (City of Vancouver, 2016).

downzoning¹⁷⁸, the zoning schedule that was eventually implemented reflected aspects of both groups' positions and had the support of both parties. As SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee jointly put it, "The individual property owner wins by being able to build a larger, more valuable and liveable home. The community wins because the homes are well designed and in keeping with the neighbourhood" (Ad Hoc Committee and SHPOA, 1993). The resulting zoning would become known colloquially among City planners as the "Mercedes Benz" of zoning—it cost the City a lot of money and time to develop and oversee, and it was coveted by many other Vancouver neighbourhoods (Punter, 2004).¹⁷⁹

However, while the zoning dispute in South Shaughnessy reached a resolution that was at least nominally acceptable to both sides, the discourses mobilized by SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee regarding the so-called "monster" houses continued to animate struggles for and against "neighbourhood protection" in other parts of the city and in the media. (See, for example, Aird, 1993; Bates, 1995)

5.6.2 Media Coverage and Framing

In the years preceding the confrontation between SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee in South Shaughnessy, the changing built form of Vancouver's single-family neighbourhoods, and of those in the metropolitan region, was covered extensively by the city's media. This coverage delved into connections between immigration, foreign investment, the booming housing market, ongoing housing shortages, shifting family structures and neighborhood change. Mitchell records that "at the same time as the physical changes were contested, a fierce battle over ideology was

¹⁷⁸ As Mitchell describes the public hearing process "By raising the specter of racism . . . the Hong King Chinese and west-side builders effectively controlled the public hearings and defeated the SHPOA designed effort to restrict further development in the neighbourhood" (1997: 172).

¹⁷⁹ This form of zoning, to this day, continues to be coveted by other neighbourhoods throughout the city.

waged in the media. Countless articles, editorials and letters to the editor on the ‘Asian invasion’ emphasized the strangeness of the new houses and, implicitly the new house-buyers” (1997:171).¹⁸⁰ Yet, especially with time, numerous other articles reflected on the racist undertones of public discourse on “monster” houses (Ley, 1995: 193). As one journalist diagnosed the situation, within this discourse, “traditional white elite racist attitudes were disguised under such ‘thinly veiled rubrics’ as ‘threat to our neighbourhoods’” (Jackson, 1989). Similarly, another article quotes a Vancouver architect who suggests that “when it come to the question “monster” houses . . . “it eventually comes down to freedom of expression, along with disguised racism” (Monk, 1990). Moreover, when NDP housing critic Jim Karpoff suggested that “Vancouver’s booming real estate market is creating a lot of social stress, not just because it is pushing house prices beyond the reach of many people but because significant numbers of offshore buyers are among those helping to drive up property values” and called for controls on foreign ownership, the *Vancouver Sun* ran an article entitled “A xenophobic grunt from the left” (Anon, 1989).¹⁸¹ The article suggested that the message these kinds of statements send is that Vancouver is unwelcoming to immigrants and that it does not want foreign investment (ibid).

¹⁸⁰One *Vancouver Sun* article quoted a west side resident as stating “I have no concern that most of the people moving in are from Hong Kong . . . I am more shocked at the ugliness of the houses. They are square, boxy and they stand out like sore thumbs” (Braham, 1989). This sentiment was common in letters to the editor and in quotes from west side residents.

¹⁸¹ Much of the media coverage regarding “monster” houses was shaped by ongoing debates regarding the status of Vancouver single-family districts and on whether secondary suites should be permitted. These debates raised questions regarding Vancouverites’ conceptions of family. As one article put it in 1987:

What the owners of many of these houses are saying to society is that they need a bigger house than the one next door. They need more room for their families, for their parents, children, grandchildren. Society’s reply is unsympathetic. To appease those who protest loudest, society juggles a few bylaws, hones the fine print on illegal suites and votes to outlaw second kitchens in newly built homes, as if crossing an extra self-cleaning oven off the blueprint will ensure single family housing has a maximum occupancy rate. In its municipal guise, society takes a swipe at the family unit itself. It’s no accident that many of the double-kitchen houses sprouting up on urban landscapes are built by Indo-Canadians, Chinese-Canadians and other ethnics whose cultural support systems are built on a tradition of extended families (Fralic, 1987).

The piece goes on to emphasize positive aspects of extended families living together and to assert a family’s right to decide how many family members they want to live with.

News stories on “monster” houses also began to appear in the Hong Kong press, where the issue was primarily framed as one of racism (See, for example, “Canada’s ‘Unwelcome’ Mat”. Bielenberg, 1990).¹⁸² According to Mitchell,

In 1989, Hong Kong television crews flew to Vancouver to film a story on monster houses and tree removal, and to investigate reports of an increasing number of racist incidents involving Chinese Canadians in the city . . . racism, particularly against the Chinese, was explicitly linked with urban battles over changes in the built environment. (1993: 46)

Or as Hong Kong’s *South China Morning Press* expressed in an article that questioned whether the ‘love affair’ between Hong Kong immigrants and Vancouver was over, there is “a nagging perception that Hong Kong people are not so welcome as they once thought they were” (Anon., 1990).

In this way, while more news articles in Vancouver reflected the frames of SHPOA, positions overlapping with frames of the Ad Hoc Committee were also very visible. Barbara Petit argues that during this period, “media coverage expressed . . . many different views . . . it reflected a confusion about the issue and a search to understand it” (1993: 182). It reflected multiple perspectives and framing around the neighbourhood change remained unconsolidated.¹⁸³ Accordingly, the representational politics of both SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee drew on and resonated with some of this coverage. Both groups were able to take up, develop and contest arguments and positions that had already been widely publicized.

Furthermore, both organizations were easily able to gain media attention and coverage for

¹⁸² See also: “Is the love affair with Hong Kong Immigrants Over?” (Anon, 1990).

¹⁸³ Indeed, protests by Chinese Canadians in 1989 regarding how the media was covering stories focusing on Hong Kong immigration and investment, following week-long series on the topic on CBC and in the *Vancouver Sun*, led to introspection within the media regarding their reporting of immigration and racism. Particularly, media outlets debated how to approach the subject in an unbiased way, how much space should be given to coverage of racist attitudes and what kinds of immigrants coverage should focus on (they questioned whether it was biased towards wealthy immigrants who settled in west side neighbourhoods). See Francis Bula’s in-depth piece for the *Vancouver Sun* on these debates within the *Sun*’s newsroom (1989).

their positions and their efforts. While Vancouver media was generally more sympathetic to the position of SHPOA, the Ad Hoc Committee publicized their position on, and interpretation of, the proposed zoning changes in South Shaughnessy in both the Vancouver and Hong Kong Press (see Farrow, 1992; Ad Hoc Committee, 1992a). Moreover, they were able to leverage the threat of feeding the story of Canadian racism to the Asian media.

5.6.3 Public Figure Support and Policy Resonance

As outlined in Chapter 2, SHPOA and residents in Shaughnessy had a long established relationship with both the Province and the City and had historically been able to use this relationship to oblige both levels of government to acknowledge and often, act upon their demands. Particularly, SHPOA maintained a close working relationship with the City. This relationship was reflected in the speed at which the City responded to the demands of SHPOA and in their prominent role on committees working on planning issues in the area. In the years preceding the conflict over zoning in South Shaughnessy, SHPOA designed the “First Shaughnessy Plan” and proposed it to the City. The City then worked closely with the group to refine and implement it. Additionally, in 1990, the City implemented the “Pitts Bylaw”, a measure privately funded and developed by Third Shaughnessy resident John Pitts to protect the character of his block and the surrounding area (it applied to around 200 houses in the area between Granville and Maple Streets and 37th and 41st Avenues) (Mitchell, 1997:170-171). According to the terms of the bylaw the measure was designed to encourage “neighbourly development by preserving outdoor space and views and by ensuring the bulk and size of new development is similar to existing development including the maintenance of healthy trees and planting which reflects the established streetscape” (Ohannesian, 1990). Before submitting his

proposed bylaw to the city, Pitts had undertaken a survey of his neighbours to show council that they were in favour of his measure, but, nonetheless, the implementation of a bylaw developed by a private citizen was an unprecedented step for the city. As one article put it:

Vancouver council took the historic step Thursday night of approving a private citizen's zoning bylaw that substantially restricts the size of new housing in the affluent South Shaughnessy . . . The city's planning department endorsed the bylaw, although it considers it a stop-gap measure to help control monster house construction while other design-oriented zoning measures are devised (Lee, 1990).

Furthermore, the proposed zoning changes in South Shaughnessy that sparked the conflict between SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee had been developed at the request of SHPOA and its supporters (or perhaps in response to their vocal protests). Although the City was already engaged in studying the issue of neighbourhood change on Vancouver's west side (for an area that included South Shaughnessy, East Kerrisdale and West Oakridge) in order to design new zoning regulations, SHPOA and its supporters felt that this process would be too slow. In response, the City not only sought to address the group's concerns by developing zoning changes specific to South Shaughnessy and moving up the timeline for the proposed implementation of these changes, but, as with the "First Shaughnessy Plan", they worked closely with SHPOA in designing the proposed changes.

This close working relationship between City Planners and SHPOA is further reflected in a significant crossover between the documents of both groups. Many city reports and official planning reports on the neighbourhood—those focusing on both First Shaughnessy and South Shaughnessy—used the same language (in sections word for word) as previous documents published by SHPOA and presented to the City by the association. In this way, the city employed SHPOA's language to describe the history and landscape of the neighbourhood.

On a broader level, moreover, despite the claims from west side residents regarding the City's failure to take action to prevent demolitions and the construction of "monster" houses, Council instituted a number of measures over the years leading up to the conflict in South Shaughnessy that suggest a degree of support for the purported goal of SHPOA's representational politics—neighbourhood protection (or at least a degree of responsiveness to citizens promoting this goal). Particularly, through the 1980s and early 1990s the City revisited zoning regulations in single-family neighbourhoods in order to combat the "Vancouver Special" and the "monster" house. These measures attempted to address these issues through increasing the size of required setbacks, limiting lot coverage and controlling the size of homes (though they were generally seen as having only limited success). As one newspaper article described this process in 1990, "the monster house has raised its ugly head once again on Vancouver City Council's agenda. And architects are skirmishing with city planners about how to eradicate the bloated five-and six bedroom boxes that have been the source of controversy in Vancouver's single-family neighbourhoods since the mid-1980s" (Godley, 1990). The result of this particular attempt was that Council unanimously passed a bylaw to reduce the allowable size of single-family houses in the city by twenty-two percent (Bramham, 1990). In 1990, the City also increased property taxes. The hike was designed so that owners of rebuilt homes would face a steeper increase and the measure was linked to discouraging "monster" houses (Odam, 1990). Furthermore, the City also worked to design a tree replacement bylaw, which was implemented in 1991. As *Sun* columnist Jamie Lamb put it "Yes, after years of hearing residents complain about the developer down the street destroying all the trees on a lot to accommodate a new monster house, the city of Vancouver is set to introduce its tree-replacement bylaw" (1991). In this way, the measure was undertaken in large part to address concerns that new construction and

particularly “monster” houses were destroying the landscape and green spaces of west side neighbourhoods.

Just as the concerns and goals expressed by SHPOA resonated with a number of municipal policies in the years preceding the zoning conflict in South Shaughnessy, they also found support among members of Council. As David Ley records, at first Vancouver City Council supported neighbourhood protection “with an unusual initial consensus among councilors, normally sharply divided between the right and the left of the political spectrum. The right supported a measure of controls on development because Shaughnessy and Kerrisdale represent its electoral heartland, the left because they endorse neighbourhood self-determination” (1995: 193).¹⁸⁴ As early as 1987, Mayor Gordon Campbell was described in the press as being on “a crusade against monster houses and illegal suites” (McMartin, 1987). Or as Campbell himself put it while campaigning for reelection in 1990:

You may rest assured that I have not ever been in favour of ... "densification". I have consistently ... said that residents should determine the character of the neighbourhood ... I said that our Council, if elected, would pursue a policy of neighbourhood protection (Petit, 1993: 158).¹⁸⁵

During this same election, the main opponent of Campbell's Non-Partisan Association (NPA), the Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE) ran on a program that would “decentralize and democratize” planning. This program, they suggested, would “give people more power over such recently incendiary issues as monster houses, demolitions of affordable rental housing, transit corridors, viewscapes and heritage trees” (Jackson, 1990). In this way, neighbourhood protection

¹⁸⁴ Punter records that “a decisive moment in Vancouver's planning history occurred when the Non-Partisan Association mayor and council decided that existing residents and property owners in neighbourhoods should be allowed to choose their own forms of zoning and design guidelines” (2004: 147).

¹⁸⁵ Like Mike Harcourt before him, Gordon Campbell transitioned from municipal to provincial politics. After serving as Mayor from 1986-1993, he became the leader of the BC Liberal Party in 1993. In 2001, Campbell became Premier of British Columbia, a position he held until 2011.

was a significant issue during the election campaign for both the main civic associations.

However, some statements and policies of public figures and institutions also resonated with the positions of the Ad Hoc Committee. As one newly elected NPA Alderman, Tung Chan, told the *Vancouver Sun*:

I agree with a friend who said that when a Caucasian lives in a monster house, it's referred to as a mansion, but when a Chinese person lives in one, it's called a monster house . . . Those same people aren't necessarily racist, but they have had trouble reacting to the changes which are affecting their neighbourhoods. I hope to be able to help in this regard by getting people to talk to their new neighbours more, by encouraging an atmosphere in which people try to understand each other (Monk, 1990).

Additionally, when a Vancouver lawyer sued the City for negligently allowing a “monster” house to be built next to his west side home—he claimed that it negatively impacted the value of his property—the British Columbia Court of Appeals ruled against him. In explaining the ruling, Justice Harold Hollinrake stated that a property owner cannot sue because of “how something looks in the eye of the beholder” and asked, rhetorically, “Is there such a thing as the reasonable man when it comes to the esthetics of building construction?” (Still, 1990). His judgment continued, “There is no duty of care that I am aware of to maintain the esthetic appeal of one's property so as to support the property value of one's neighbour's property” (ibid).¹⁸⁶ This argument resonated particularly with the positions forwarded by the Ad Hoc Committee regarding the ‘legislation of taste’.

¹⁸⁶ The Court suggested that the homeowner may have experience a loss of use and enjoyment but not an economic loss.

5.7 The MonsterHouse Conflict and the Politics of Contentious Proximity

Like contestation in the West End over the presence of street-level sex-work, contestation over the presence and construction of “monster” houses in South Shaughnessy can be usefully conceptualized as an instance of the politics of contentious proximity. The oppositional tactics of both the Shaughnessy Heights Property Owner’s Association and the Ad Hoc Committee for South Shaughnessy Property Rights Association focused on representation and meaning making: both mobilized conceptions of people and places and the impacts of their proximities. To promote their desired outcomes—in the case of SHPOA rezoning and design guidelines and for the Ad Hoc Committee the retention of the existing zoning schedule—each group worked to define and control the terms in which the presence and construction of “monster” houses were understood. The groups mobilized competing prognoses: they each provided oppositional conceptions of what the “problem” actually was, and what was at stake, along with an explanation of what caused this problem and how it could be effectively (and “justly”) resolved. Further, in their efforts to justify and legitimate their own prognoses, and their right to demand and require action from government, both groups deployed representations of the identities of people and places. They associated the landscape of South Shaughnessy, the presence of monster houses and the proponents and opponents of these houses with particular clusters of meaning, values and powers.

The representational tactics of SHPOA focused primarily on what was signified by landscape and architecture. The landscape of South Shaughnessy, for the group, represented a unique urban ecosystem defined by an intricate and delicate balance of natural elements. Moreover, it evoked the aesthetic of the English pastoral—it was picturesque, gracious and sophisticated. Given its cultivated and unique landscape, vegetation and architecture, SHPOA

suggested, the neighbourhood provided a unique heritage legacy to the city. These elements made South Shaughnessy a particular type of place, home to a community of residents who reflected the qualities of the landscape in which they resided. Accordingly, the “residents” were “sophisticated”, “tasteful” and “neighbourly”. They valued and nourished the intricate connections and relationships between their properties and their neighbours’ and between themselves and their neighbours. They were invested in their community and its legacy. “Monster” houses, alternatively, were “cold”, “concrete”, “disconnected”, “unneighbourly” and “aggressive”. They were “commodities” and not “homes”. The sparseness of their gardens—the lack of trees and plant life, for SHPOA, was a particular affront and a physical expression of the inherent unnaturalness of the houses. Just as the residents of South Shaughnessy reflected its (true) landscape, the owners of the new houses reflected the alternative landscape they represented. They were “vulgar”, “unneighbourly” and “disconnected”. Moreover, they were not real residents of the community, they were absentee owners and developers who viewed the neighbourhood simply as a commodity or money-making venture. Like street-level sex-workers in the West End according to the rhetoric of CROWE, according for SHPOA, “monster” houses and consequently, their owners, were out of place in South Shaughnessy.

The Ad Hoc committee, alternatively, asserted that at issue in the “problem” of monster houses was not types of landscapes and architecture (or respect for West Coast values) but types of people. Particularly, they suggested, proponents of the rezoning and of design guidelines were “fiscally irresponsible” “special interests” who would override the actual preferences of the majority of residents of South Shaughnessy, force the City to absorb unnecessary administrative costs and deter foreign investment in Vancouver, in order to enforce their own vision of the type of place South Shaughnessy should be. Moreover, the vision of South Shaughnessy these special

interests sought to enforce was based on parochialism and xenophobia. They wanted to use “landscape” controls as a tool for maintaining South Shaughnessy as a place for only white Canadians; they wanted to make it a place of forced homogenization and exclusion. In this way, proponents of the proposed rezoning and design controls, the Ad Hoc Committee suggested, were “bad Canadians” who did not value diversity, freedom or the protection of individual rights. They themselves and the opponents of the proposed rezoning, on the other hand, were “fiscally responsible”, “modern” and “democratic.” They valued and respected the preferences of the majority of the residents of South Shaughnessy and promoted individual rights and freedoms; that is, they were “good Canadians”. Further, their representational strategies suggested, they wanted to ensure that Shaughnessy was a “good place”—a place of inclusion and diversity of people and properties, which respected individual freedom.

In this way, while both SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee represented the “problem” of “monster” houses in very different ways, their representational strategies may both be understood as involving contentious proximities. For SHPOA, “monster” houses stood out “aggressively” in South Shaughnessy. The houses and the rest of the neighbourhood were incompatible landscapes representing incompatible social values forced into close physical proximity. Moreover, if the development of the new houses were allowed to continue, they argued, it would destroy the neighbourhood; that is, it would transform it into a place that reflected the design and values represented by the “monsters”. The Ad Hoc Committee, however, framed the issue of incompatible landscapes as a deflection from the real problem. The real contentious proximity, they suggested, was the presence of a vocal and well-connected minority of racist and parochial white Canadians and a diverse, open-minded majority within the same neighbourhood (and perhaps more particularly, within one of Vancouver’s most elite

neighbourhoods). In this way, the solution to the problem of “monster” houses, the Ad Hoc Committee posited, was not to require only a particular type of house or garden in South Shaughnessy or to require only a particular type of people. Nor was it to force some people out of the neighbourhood or create barriers to their entry. Rather, the solution was to stop a racist minority from dictating the kind of place South Shaughnessy would be.

Just as CROWE mobilized familiar and widely accepted scripts regarding the relative positions of “street-level sex-workers” and “tax-paying citizens” in order to occupy a claims-making position, both SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee also drew on established and deep rooted discourses regarding what and who counts as good and bad—legitimate and illegitimate—within the city of Vancouver and within Canadian society. The Ad Hoc Committee positioned itself as the champion and protector of liberal democratic values, or Canadian liberal democratic values: particularly, diversity, individual rights, majority rule and due process. Or in other words, they drew on a discourse of liberal democracy in order to occupy a already established position from which claims may be laid against both government and society more broadly, and from which a response may be expected and is (to some degree) required. SHPOA, alternatively, drew on a history of traditional Anglo-Canadian landscape preferences and on the historical status of Shaughnessy in Vancouver.

The representational politics of SHPOA also shared with CROWE the underlying moral intuition that living in place comes with certain obligations to that place and to others who reside within in. It built on the understanding that those who reside in a certain place and care for it (in both a social and physical sense) should have a voice in determining the future of that place; it also built on the intuition that those who are contributing members of a community, who respect its norms and are embedded within it, should have a far weightier voice than outsiders.

Moreover, and again like CROWE, SHPOA's representational strategies suggested that the category of "outsider" should be understood as including both people who do not live in the community and people who may reside there but are not community members—that is, people who are not invested in the community and who fail to recognize or respect its norms and values.

The Ad Hoc Committee also built their position on the conception that the residents of South Shaughnessy should have a voice in determining the future of the neighbourhood and that their voice should count for more than outsiders, but for them, however, the distinction between a resident and an outsider meant something different. Their frames suggested that "outsiders" were strictly people who did not live in the neighbourhood and "residents" included anyone who resided with South Shaughnessy. "Residency" did not depend on a shared conception of the community in the way that SHPOA conceptualized it. One way to read this is that, as such, the Ad Hoc Committee's representational politics implied that residency did not depend on the degree to which one respected the norms of the community or to which one was embedded within the community. However, I suggest that what they actually implied was that SHPOA was misconstruing and misrepresenting the actual values of most of the residents of South Shaughnessy, along with their conceptions of the community's norms (and what they ought to be).

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter employed the lens of the politics of contentious proximity to explore the political contestation that occurred in South Shaughnessy in response to the construction of "monster" houses. It argued that the deployment of interactive representations of the identities of people and place, and of their proximity, was a central component of the politics of both SHPOA

and the Ad Hoc Committee; it also outlined the representational strategies of both groups and the relationships of proximity they evoked. The next chapter builds on this work in order to explore how the opposing representational strategies of SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee sought to occlude certain aspects of the conflict and how contestation between the two groups resulted in the exposure of some of these aspects but not others.

Chapter 6: “Monsters”: Silences, Exposures and Social Construction

Like the Concerned Residents of the West End, the ways the Shaughnessy Heights Property Owner’s Association and the Ad Hoc Committee for South Shaughnessy Property Rights Association deployed representations of people and place emphasized certain clusters of meanings, values and powers, and occluded others. However, unlike in the case of CROWE, the framing efforts of SHPOA on behalf of what had been the dominant and long-standing interests of the neighbourhood came up against a politically savvy opposition with significant social and economic resources—the Ad Hoc Committee—which worked to undermine the representations of identity deployed by SHPOA through the mobilization of their own counter frames. In the previous chapter I argued that the politics of both SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee involved the interactive deployments of representations of people and place; particularly, both groups employed these representational tools in their efforts to claim a legitimate political voice as well as to pursue certain, symbolic and material objectives. Further, I suggested, these instances of collective action can be usefully conceptualized as instances of the politics of contentious proximity.

Building on this work, this chapter draws out patterns of erasure and silence at work in the representational politics of both these groups, and it explores the ways the climate of active contestation between the two groups exposed some of these patterns but not others. Moreover, it contends that the actions of these groups built associations between certain sets of meanings, values and powers and particular social groups and places through both the occlusions and exposures created by their framing tactics, and the contestation between them. In so doing, it complements but also challenges accounts of urban politics which ignore identity politics *and*

political theory literature engaged in identity politics, which neither engages with urban life and cities, nor, as I have argued, the proximate nature of identity (that is the role played by place, but also by groups defining themselves in proximate relationship to each other).

Like Chapter 4 regarding the framing work of CROWE, this chapter fleshes out the conscious, less conscious, and unconscious silences underwriting the representational politics of SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee. It first develops the ways that contestation exposed occlusions at work in the framing strategies of both groups: particularly, SHPOA's avoidance of the changing ethnic demographics of South Shaughnessy (and the city of Vancouver more generally); the Ad Hoc Committee's erasure of the economic drivers of "monster" houses; and SHPOA's occlusion of difference within the neighbourhood. Next, it explores a silence that permeates the frames of both groups: specifically, the privileged position of South Shaughnessy within the city of Vancouver in comparison to other neighbourhoods. Building from this analysis, the chapter then examines how these occlusions and exposures impact the ways the actions and representational strategies of both groups build associations between certain meanings, values and powers and particular places and social groups, and conceptualize the proximities that should exist between them. It engages with what this suggests regarding how these actions may be conceived as a process of social construction—especially in light of the contestation between the two groups and the compromise position that they eventually reached regarding zoning in South Shaughnessy.

6.1 Immigration and the Changing Ethnic Composition of Shaughnessy

As Chapter 5 suggests, SHPOA actively sought to counter the conceptualization of the "monster" house problem as centering on ethnicity or race—as it was portrayed within some

media coverage in the late 1980s and early 1990s. SHPOA's objections to the new big houses focused on their design and fit with the neighbourhood; the people they associated with the houses were primarily developers, builders, investors and speculators. Because of this, they suggested, their issue was not with the new residents of the neighbourhood themselves, and certainly not with their ethnicity or race; it was with people whose primary relationship with the neighbourhood was economic.

However, these framing tactics occluded demographic changes in Shaughnessy and the intersection of the changes with the issue of "monster" houses. In the years preceding the dispute, the ethnic composition of the neighbourhood, like that of the city, had been changing. Between 1986 and 1996, the population of Vancouver increased by 82 861 people, or by 19%, but the population of Shaughnessy remained relatively stable (Statistics Canada, 1961-1996). Despite this stability in its population size, the neighbourhood was undergoing a fairly significant demographic shift. In the census of 1971, over 70% of residents identified their ethnic origins as British and over 86% identified as British or European (*ibid*). Slightly less than 3% of residents identified as Chinese while 0.6% identified as Japanese—the only Asian ethnicities listed on the census (*ibid*).¹⁸⁷ By the mid 1980s and early 1990s, however, the number of Asian ancestry residents—and particularly Chinese ancestry residents—of Shaughnessy had increased significantly.¹⁸⁸ In 1986 at least 11% of residents identified as Chinese, and by 1991 and 1996, this percentage had increased to 20% and 28% respectively (*ibid*).¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ When I say "identified as" this is meant to indicate only that they recorded that ethnicity on their census form.

¹⁸⁸ Chinese ancestry residents represented the largest Asian ethnic group in the neighbourhood by a significant margin.

¹⁸⁹ These percentages underrepresent the percentage of residents who identify as ethnically Chinese, as they do not include individuals who identify as having multiple ethnicities.

Table 6-1 Population Change in Shaughnessy

Date	City of Vancouver	Shaughnessy ¹⁹⁰
1986	431,147	7553
1991	471,844	7670
1996	514,008	7446

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada, 1961-1996

Table 6-2 Shaughnessy Residents Identifying as Ethnically Chinese

Date	Identify as Ethnically Chinese ¹⁹¹	Total Population of Shaughnessy ¹⁹²
1986	855	7553
1991	1550	7670
1996	2095	7446

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada, 1961-1996.

Table 6-3 Mother Tongue

Date	Mother Tongue – English ¹⁹³	Mother Tongue – “Chinese” ¹⁹⁴	% of single responses ¹⁹⁵ – English	% of single response – “Chinese”	Total Single Response
1986	5985	565	81	8	7350
1991	5510	1040	74	14	7500
1996	4335	1980	59	27	7335

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada, 1961-1996.

¹⁹⁰ The demographic figures I use to represent Shaughnessy are based on combining census tracts 21 and 28. They do not include census tract 20—half of which is in Shaughnessy and half outside. In 1991, census tract 20 had a population of 2523; census tract 21, 4392; and, census tract 28, 3278 (Statistics Canada, 1961-1996). Census tracts 21 and 28 are both entirely within the boundaries of Shaughnessy.

¹⁹¹ Based on single responses. That is, those respondents who only identified with a single ethnicity.

¹⁹² Number based on census tracts 21 and 28.

¹⁹³ Numbers include only single responses.

¹⁹⁴ The census provided only one category for Chinese dialectical groups.

¹⁹⁵ Number based on census tracts 21 and 28.

Despite SHPOA's claims that their problem with "monster" houses was not about the ethnicity, support for SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee was divided along ethnic lines (though certainly not exclusively). One City document summarizing the public hearings on the proposed changes for the mayor and council, for example, provides a list of the speakers for and against downzoning (City of Vancouver, 1992: 5-9). Of the thirty-six speakers in favor of downzoning (SHPOA's position), thirty-five had non-Asian last names. Of the sixty-one speakers in favor of retaining the existing zoning standards (the Ad Hoc Committee's position), forty-four had Asian last names. As Ley records "when Mayor Campbell insisted at the public hearing that 'This is not an issue divided along racial lines' his remark carried limited conviction for many hearers" (1995: 200). When the Ad Hoc Committee reframed the problem of "monster" houses as caused by the xenophobic attitudes of some white Canadians and suggested that claims about landscape character and economic incentives were simply proxies for racism, therefore, it had ample evidence to draw on.¹⁹⁶

The efforts of the Ad Hoc Committee to connect the "monster" houses to xenophobia served both to expose the changing demographics of South Shaughnessy occluded by the representation politics of SHPOA and also to highlight ways that the dispute in South Shaughnessy intersected with changing patterns of immigration. Particularly, the representational politics of the Ad Hoc Committee drew attention to the role of all three levels of government in actively seeking out and pursuing Asian immigration and capital, another aspect of the "monster" house issue occluded by SHPOA's efforts to reframe the problem in non-racial terms (Abu

¹⁹⁶ One supporter of retaining RS-1 suggested that if Anglo Canadian "face up to the real issue [fear of immigration and difference] and don't dress up their hidden fears in talk of bricks and mortar and misguided architecture" the dispute in South Shaughnessy could be quickly and reasonably resolved (Spencer, 1992).

Laban, 1997; Creese and Peterson, 1996; Mitchell, 1997, 1997b; Ley, 1995; Magnusson, 1990; Hiebert, 1999; Hutton, 1994).

For Vancouver, globalization had meant an increasing and purposeful orientation towards the Pacific Rim: specifically, concentrated efforts to attract Asian investment and immigration to the city, and to develop trade and financial networks throughout the area (Barnes, Edgington, Denikee and Mcgee, 1992; Ley, 1983; Magnusson, 1990; Hiebert, 1999; Hutton, 1994).¹⁹⁷ Indeed for many politicians and business people during the 1980s, this orientation had become an imperative. While politicians on the left and right of the political spectrum advanced different strategies for overcoming the economic turmoil of the decade's early years, both sides agreed that Vancouver needed to liberate itself from "its dependence on the provincial resource base and ultimately to [become a] relatively autonomous center of global capital—connected to Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo, Los Angeles, and Toronto, but subordinate to none of them" (Magnusson, 1990: 174). Networking with the Pacific Rim, then, was at the forefront of Vancouver's strategy for dealing with the new global and economic realities of the decade for all levels of government, and for politicians ranging across the ideological spectrum.¹⁹⁸

As Warren Magnusson puts it:

¹⁹⁷ In 1992, Barnes, Edgington, Denikee and Mcgee argued that:

In recent years, trading links between Vancouver and the Pacific Rim have expanded considerably, and it is clear that any continuation of this trend will consolidate the city's position within the dynamic and growing region and further shift its trading and orientation from the rest of Canada. Of course, Vancouver has long shipped goods across the Pacific. But the expansion of this interaction after 1943 was a decisive factor in the rise of the port of Vancouver to pre-eminence in Canada and its position as the largest port (by tonnage) on the Pacific coast of North America. (1992)

¹⁹⁸ When Vancouver was hit hard by the economic depression of the early 1980s, there were competing strategies regarding how to promote economic recovery—a neo-conservative one, associated with the provincial government and a social democratic one, associated with the City of Vancouver. The left and right agreed on the need to attract investment dollars but disagreed on the best way to go about doing so. The left argued that Vancouver's competitive advantage lay, essentially, in a lack of poor people and the problems associated with poverty, and that therefore it was worth continuing to invest in an extensive welfare network and keep spending to ensure high employment. Yet as Magnusson notes, what this indicates is that they had accepted the terms and goals of a globalization frame (1990). Both sides agreed that there was a need for the city to get free of "its dependence on the provincial resource base and ultimately to [become a] relatively autonomous center of global capital—connected to Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo, Los Angeles, and Toronto, but subordinate to none of them" (Magnusson, 1990: 174).

Vancouver's development as the center for Canadian economic relations with the Asia Pacific was a concern of all three levels of government in the 1980s. The Asia Pacific Foundation (to enhance cultural ties) and the Asia Pacific Institute (for business promotion) were launched in Vancouver by intergovernmental agreement. The two senior governments adopted complementary programs to attract immigrant entrepreneurs (especially from Hong Kong) and passed legislation to free offshore banking operations in Vancouver from certain taxes and regulations. The latter measures were intended to make Vancouver an international financial center, especially for Asian capital. (Magnusson, 1990: 183)

Or as Abu Laban summarizes:

While recent Vancouver immigrants come from a number of countries, the growth of immigration and the proportion of investor immigrants from countries of Asia, particularly Hong Kong, in part stems from a concerted attempt by political elites to attract Asian capital and business people to Vancouver prior to Hong Kong's 1997 return to the control of China (Abu Laban, 1997: 82.)

Moreover, along with setting up institutes and undertaking trade missions, the federal government also opened offices in Hong Kong and a number of other Asian cities to advertise immigration to Canada and help potential immigrants through the immigration process.¹⁹⁹

Not only did the Canadian government pursue immigration policy that facilitated the immigration of wealthy Asians, and particularly Hong Kong Chinese, they also instituted a number of measures that made Canada a more attractive home for their money.²⁰⁰ As Mitchell records, "financial borders were . . . dismantled in the 1980s, with the crossing of previously regulated boundaries and fixed lines of control in the banking industry" (Mitchell, 1997: 164). With the removal of these borders, investment in Canada became easier, as did moving

¹⁹⁹This orientation towards the Pacific Rim was also emphasized in symbolic terms. In 1988, for example, the provincial government appointed David Lam as Lieutenant Governor—the first Chinese Canadian Lieutenant Governor in Canadian history.

²⁰⁰ Mitchell also notes that the vice president of the Hong Kong Bank of Canada, David Bond, "said of the business investors moving to Canada: 'If I was the czar of immigration, I'd send a fleet of Boeing 747s to Hong Kong to pick them up. This is a unique chance to engage in a transfer of human and financial capital that is unprecedented anywhere in the world.'" (1997, 170).

significant sums of money into (and out of) the country. These measures, it was hoped, would prove attractive to Hong Kong residents worried about the fate of their assets under Chinese rule.²⁰¹ Beyond the easing of financial barriers, the provincial government also sought to attract Asian investment and capital by selling a significant piece of land in downtown Vancouver—the former site of Expo 86—to prominent Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka Shing at a highly discounted rate. While the sale was negatively received by large portion of the Vancouver press and general public, the province argued that the sale was an investment in the city’s future. Li, they asserted, was an investment trendsetter and, the sale would signal his endorsement of Vancouver: other investors would follow Li, resulting in economic growth and helping to put the city on the map internationally.

The Ad Hoc Committee’s framing of the “monster” house issue as one of racism—the racism of white Canadians who were unwilling to welcome Asian immigrants into their neighbourhoods, particularly their elite neighbourhoods²⁰²—raised and emphasized questions not only regarding the underlying insecurities of some Canadians in respect to the changing ethnic makeup of Canadian society but also regarding a (potential) disconnect between public perceptions of immigration and the actions of government. Particularly, it emphasized a tension between the conception of immigrants as ‘newcomers’ who should be grateful to their new country for taking them in and who should work carefully to learn the ways of their new home; and the conception of business and investor class immigrants as wooed and pursued by all three

²⁰¹ Along with government, the banking sector in Vancouver also strove to present itself as hospitable to Asian immigrants and to Asian investment—developing a range of programs catering to this demographic (see Mitchell, 1997: 170).

²⁰² Katharyne Mitchell suggests that “the reaction against the streetscape changes in Shaughnessy betrayed the profound fear that the symbols of the established and dominant Anglo group were being eroded and, with them, the rare rights and assets dependent upon a privileged position in social and geographical space” (1997, 169).

levels of government (who some believed was selling citizenship), as part of their economic strategies (See Abu-Laban, 1997: 79). As one *Vancouver Sun* columnist wrote in 1989:

The province set out to attract wealthy Asians to come and live in B.C., the kind of people who would bring their wealth with them and invest it in their new country. The government succeeded in this policy and we now have the unintended consequence of people bitching to the government that Vancouver is filling up with Them, wealthy Asians who tear down lovely little houses and throw up big lot-line monster houses and who make Us feel lousy because they're driving those big Mercedes and BMWs and we're not . . . We said Vancouver is a great place to live; we seem shocked to discover there are consequences involved when immigrants agree with us and take us up on our offer to experience it for themselves. (Lamb, 1989).

Or as another noted: “Vancouver showed that its sometimes shaky tolerance level for poor and unskilled immigrants would drop even lower for immigrants who were rich, confident, and well-educated” (Bula, 1989). In this way, the representational conflict between SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee not only raised questions regarding the tolerance of white Canadians for new immigrants, and particularly new immigrants from Asia, it also raised questions about what it means to enter or be invited into both a country and a more localized community, as well as about the expectations of Vancouverites regarding who should have a voice in granting and denying entry.

SHPOA's framing of the “monster” house issue rested on the assertion that there was a right way for ‘newcomers’ to enter into their place or community. They suggested that ‘newcomers’ should be respectful of the character, values and ways of life of any place to which they choose to move. That is, they argued that it was both irresponsible and indeed unethical to settle in a new place and make changes that stood in sharp contrast to the existing community and which undermined that community's way of life. Yet, as David Ley points out, while SHPOA's representational strategies suggested that it should be a normative imperative for

newcomers to respect the integrity of existing communities, this framing was at odds with the history of the production of Shaughnessy as a place—particularly, its establishment through settler-colonialism (1995).²⁰³ As Ley put it:

[I]s there not a strange sense of *déjà vu* in the reception of change among Anglo-Canadians? . . . Was not the country appropriated, the trees felled, the animals killed or dispersed, a culture assaulted, by Anglo-Canadians just over a century ago in exactly this place? (1995, 203).

Shaughnessy, like all of Metro Vancouver, sits on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish First Nations. The ‘complex’ and ‘balanced’ ecosystem of Shaughnessy had been built on land appropriated from the Musqueam, and in claiming the land and preparing it for the subdivision drastic change had been wrought in an area that had been a traditional hunting ground for the band (Musqueam Band Council, 1984: 35-40). Neither government surveyors (Royal Engineers) who began the physical process of laying claim to the land, nor the CPR or the first residents of Shaughnessy entered the area in a way that acknowledged the character, values or way of life of the Musqueam. Rather, they excluded the “Indians” from the area and drastically transformed the landscape.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ In somewhat parallel fashion, residents of South Shaughnessy also worked to draw out the history of the neighborhood that goes missing in the representational politics of SHPOA:

The suggestion seems to hang in the air that any existing element of Canadian and British Columbian heritage in Shaughnessy has been injected mainly by our forebears of European extraction. This may be comforting to some but is, I suggest, historically both unfair and inaccurate. I happen to own a house built by the C.P.R. in the early thirties, a somewhat ancient but liveable box. If it hadn't been for the C.P.R., a good deal of Shaughnessy wouldn't exist. They built a rail line which unified our nation and we wouldn't be here but for that. Now the last thing you need is a history lesson, but I'll risk sixty seconds of your time to recall who built the rail line. The line was built by Chinese labourers, and the cost no less than the achievement is counted in the blood of many, possibly thousands, who died in the process. I ask the simple question: is this too not part of our national heritage? (Spencer, 1992)

²⁰⁴ While the representational politics of SHPOA occluded this colonial history, the Ad Hoc Committee employed it to help support their argument that the idea of “compatibility” with the existing neighborhood is highly problematic. In their position statement they state:

How does one define compatibility? Is Tudor incompatible with Georgian because they came from distinctly different periods and architectural styles? If the goal was preserving “heritage” then we should have preserved the Indian dwellings that were here first. All other architectural styles have been imported, have always changed and always will (Ad Hoc Committee, 1992a).

6.2 Economic Forces

Just as SHPOA's efforts to frame the issue of "monster" houses in terms of neighborhood protection obscured demographic change and issues of immigration in Shaughnessy, the group's positioning of the residents of South Shaughnessy and the South Shaughnessy landscape in opposition to economic forces also supported significant occlusions. Particularly, the sharp distinction SHPOA drew between the community of South Shaughnessy—a community of neighbourly residents invested in their neighbourhood and each other, nestled in a landscape which reflected these values—and economic forces—absentee speculators and developers, invested in the bottom-line—suppressed significant connections between the neighbourhood and its landscape and economic forces. Shaughnessy was an elite subdivision designed for, and inhabited by the wealthy; it was a neighbourhood where a lack of economic success posed a barrier to entry. Average household income in the neighbourhood was 2.7 times higher than average household income in the city as a whole in 1986; in 1991 and 1996, it was 2.4 and 2.9 times higher respectively.

Moreover, while SHPOA contrasted the "complex" and "sophisticated" landscape of the community of South Shaughnessy with the "crude" and economically motivated "monster" houses, this representational tactic placed the early history of the landscape of the neighbourhood under erasure. The representations of people and place that SHPOA deployed rested on a normative argument regarding the types of logics that should govern relations within a neighbourhood. Particularly, they emphasized Shaughnessy as a place of human relations—as a community—and as a place of intricate relationships between residents, nature, built form and landscape. Additionally, they stressed that protecting the integrity of these kinds of relations, and of Shaughnessy as this kind of place, should have priority over the demands of the market.

Shaughnessy, their frames implied—as a community, as a repository of heritage, as exhibiting a special relationship with nature—should not be ‘sacrificed’ so that developers (and their cronies) could make money. As one supporter of SHPOA put it, “we the neighbors should have more rights in this matter the casual investors” (Bertuzzi, 1992). Yet, as James Duncan aptly notes in his analysis of the landscape in Shaughnessy and the development of the “First Shaughnessy Plan”, Shaughnessy was created as a capitalist venture. The landscape SHPOA contrasted with the economic forces at work in the early 1990s had resulted from those same logics. As Duncan says, “when the first house was built by the CPR in what was clearly a development suburb, the cultural model of Anglophilia had been a marketing strategy designed to sell land . . . [it] had been pressed into service for economic motives” (1992, 46). That is, the efforts that the CPR had taken to create the aesthetic of the English pastoral—the feeling of English country houses and gardens—had been a strategy for adding value to the land and increasing the company’s profit margins.

The sharp contrast SHPOA drew between the neighbourhood and economic forces, then, depended on the occlusion of this history and of the relationship between economic forces and the degree of economic success required to live in the neighbourhood. In this way, while SHPOA’s framing strategies may be seen as working to expose connections between “monster” houses and their owners and economic forces and motives, they also suppress connections between the neighbourhood as a whole, and as a place, and these same forces.

The counter frames of the Ad Hoc Committee, on the other hand, given their focus on issues of individual freedom, property rights and racism—and, in particular their assertion that SHPOA’s critique of economic interests was simply a proxy for xenophobia—shifted focus away from the relationship between economic forces and changing patterns of development and

homeownership in South Shaughnessy and the city of Vancouver a whole.²⁰⁵ (One of the most interesting things about the “monster” houses is that while builders and developers suggested that they were building them to the taste of new immigrants—particularly Asian immigrants—it is not clear that this audience, or even a majority of it, actually liked the houses (Petit, 1993)). Through linking the critique of economic forces to xenophobia, the representational politics of the Ad Hoc Committee worked to silence critiques of the impact of these forces. Given the terms of the Ad Hoc Committee’s framing, questioning neighborhood change and the role of global capital in shaping that change, became tantamount to an expression of racism. Here it is worth noting that the Ad Hoc Committee had significant support from both builders and developers (prominent among them was Barry Hersh “a house-builder and president of the West Side Builders’ Association”) (Mitchell, 1997: 172).²⁰⁶

6.3 Visions of Community

Beyond the occlusion and exposure of issues concerning demographic change in Shaughnessy and Vancouver and of the role of economic forces in both the conflict around “monster” houses and Shaughnessy as a place, the contesting representational politics of SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee also highlighted issues of community composition and control. The conflict between the two groups raised the question of who should determine the character and development of a neighbourhood. SHPOA’s frames represented this question in terms of a battle between residents and economic forces (developers, builders, speculators and so on); they

²⁰⁵ Some supporters of the Ad Hoc Committee also took on SHPOA’s portrayal of developers directly as well. As one supporter of the Ad Hoc Committee stated, “For some reason, some people have the impression that builders are bad or evil. Aren’t they human beings too?” (Kwok, 1992).

²⁰⁶ Accordingly, it has been suggested that racial and ethnic divides and tensions in Vancouver were being exploited by developers in order to divert criticism from their own activities.

asserted it was the residents who should ultimately determine the character of the neighbourhood. Indeed, they suggested that it was an injustice that these outside economic forces were determining the shape of their place. The Ad Hoc Committee, and their allies who included builders and developers, reoriented this question in a way that attempted to undermine the legitimacy of SHPOA's representation of the issue. They suggested instead that this question hinged on a battle between special interests—SHPOA—and the residents of South Shaughnessy. Like SHPOA, they also asserted that it was the residents that should determine the shape of the neighbourhood, but they conceptualized the residents as an aggregate of individuals rather than as a single group (while representing SHPOA as unrepresentative of the will of the majority of residents). In this way, they suggested that residents would determine the shape of the neighbourhood not through one overarching vision, but rather through their individual choices regarding their own private property, or through embracing freedom and variety. As suggested above, when the debate was posed in this way, the role of market forces in determining who can live in which neighbourhood, and what properties in that neighbourhood are likely to look like, was occluded—the design and size of houses was represented as a matter of individual preferences.

The differing conceptions of community—one unitary and one aggregate—at work in the representational politics of SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee also exposed tension regarding the conceptualization of the separation of public and private space and the rights of government and community organizations to interfere in the latter. While SHPOA represented individual homes and the neighbourhood as deeply integrated unit, the Ad Hoc Committee asserted the separation between the two as a fundamental freedom. At the public hearings, the Ad Hoc Committee argued that each individual, each family, should have the right to determine the shape

of their private property and their home, while SHPOA responded: “Are we talking about each man living on an island? [...] We cannot develop without consideration of others” (Ley, 1995: 197). Taken together, the two positions raised questions regarding what counts as a shared space and when the desire to have a say in shaping shared space infringes on individual rights and freedoms, and on property rights.²⁰⁷

6.4 Heterogeneity in South Shaughnessy

Another aspect of the neighborhood obscured by the vision of community forwarded by SHPOA, and exposed by the counter frames of the Ad Hoc Committee, was existing heterogeneity among the residents of the neighborhood and within its landscape. The Ad Hoc Committee’s representational politics suggested that SHPOA was misrepresenting South Shaughnessy in two important ways. First, the group’s counter frames unsettled SHPOA’s claim that their organization represented the residents of South Shaughnessy and their views. As one resident asserted in a letter to council “what some people consider ‘incompatible’ with the character of the neighborhood may be considered by others as adding interest and variety to the neighborhood” (Tang 1992). The success of the Ad Hoc Committee and the support it received from many South Shaughnessy residents served to show that alternative perspectives existed in the area, and that some residents were willing to mobilize to assert those perspectives. In this way, the Ad Hoc Committee brought attention to a section of the population that had been

²⁰⁷ Barbara Petit argues that the way the debate around “monster” houses developed took the discussion of cultural differences and adjustment to the changing demographic composition of the city off the table. Any attempt to introduce cultural difference, she suggested, was labeled as racism. In this way, engaging with the possibility that different cultural groups might have different values regarding the character of place, landscape and housing types and that these preferences may not always be compatible was quickly shut down within the public discourse. (Petit, 1993)

rendered invisible by SHPOA's assertions that they spoke for the neighbourhood and by the lack of effective opposition to their previous interventions in the neighbourhood (perhaps 10 years early they had spoken for a majority of the neighbourhood).

Second, the Ad Hoc Committee also questioned SHPOA's assertions that the existing landscape and architecture of South Shaughnessy could be conceptualized as representing a specific single type. As they noted in their position statement, houses in the neighborhood were of a wide range of architectural styles (Ad Hoc Committee, 1992a). Moreover, the Ad Hoc Committee also worked to show that significant differences existed between South Shaughnessy properties regardless of when they were built. To this end, for instance, they submitted a photo series to council depicting newer houses featuring many of the features outlined in SHPOA's proposed design guidelines for the area as well as older houses exhibiting feature associated with the "monsters." The Ad Hoc Committee argued that SHPOA's representational politics occluded already existing heterogeneity in the built form and landscaping of the area and suggested that in recognition of existing diversity, and of the value of diversity, guidelines for building in the neighborhood should allow a greater range of architectural styles. Representatives of the group stated: "South Shaughnessy is not First Shaughnessy, and this kind of inclusion is more relevant for this area" (Keean and Chang, 1992). In this way, the representational politics of the Ad Hoc Committee worked to expose existing difference within the neighbourhood, and to use this exposure to dispute SHPOAs claim that they legitimately represented the neighbourhood as well as to question their depiction of South Shaughnessy as a place.

6.5 Occlusion of Privilege

If the competing representational politics of SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee contested the exposure and erasure of particular aspects of the “monster” house controversy, the framing tactics of *both* groups occluded some relationships and issues. Particularly, the representations of people and place deployed by SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee both occluded the special, or privileged, status of Shaughnessy and its residents within the city of Vancouver.

Where SHPOA did engage with the neighbourhood’s status as part of the wider city, it was to make claims regarding the positive contributions of Shaughnessy, and its unique heritage, character and landscape, to Vancouver. The organization and its supporters rarely acknowledged the special, ‘privileged’ relationship that the neighbourhood had with the city. Concerns regarding neighbourhood character, housing design and rate of change arose in neighbourhoods on both the west and east sides of the Vancouver, yet the complaints of eastiders generated significantly less concern at city hall and in the media (Mitchell, 1993: 45). The ability of Shaughnessy, in particular, to capture the ear and purse of the City was further reflected in the amount of time and resources that were devoted to reviewing the “First Shaughnessy Plan” and to attempting to address concerns in South Shaughnessy regarding “monster” houses. Other neighbourhoods, and especially east side neighbourhoods, received very different treatment, something that is noted by most academic commentators and touched on in some newspaper coverage. As Pete McMartin of the *Vancouver Sun* concisely put it “the east gets the concrete and the west gets left alone” (McMartin, 1990). Moreover, he went on to accuse west side neighbourhoods of NIMBYism and to connect it with spatial and social privilege:

NIMBYism - the Not In My Backyard syndrome - is something planners decry as urban parochialism, the blind self-interest in one's own neighbourhood over the good of the general populace. But it is too

often ignored by planners (and the media) that NIMBYism is inherent in the better-off neighbourhoods, that in their proximity to the power elite, they exercise a subtle control over local governments that less-well-off neighbourhoods don't (Ibid).

In this way, the “Mercedes Benz” of zoning, along with the time and money that went into its development and administration, was not offered to neighbourhoods where most residents drove a Civic or took the bus.

While the Ad Hoc Committee did draw attention to the special relationship between SHPOA and the city—they asserted that the problem of “monster” houses was caused by City officials pandering to the xenophobic desires of a few well-connected white residents of South Shaughnessy—they did not frame this as an issue of the privileged position of the neighbourhood within Vancouver as a whole. Rather, they represented it as a matter of democratic voice or representation—of SHPOA claiming to speak for the residents of Shaughnessy when they did not legitimately represent this constituency. In this way, their frames provided a perspective on the relationship between the residents of Shaughnessy and the City and a critique regarding which residents had the ear of the City officials and which were being left out. This critique, however, did not extend to the amount of access Shaughnessy had at the City in comparison to other city neighbourhoods.

Additionally, SHPOA's, and (to a slightly lesser degree) the Ad Hoc Committee's, framing of the “monster” house issue occluded the shortage of housing that existed in the city as a whole, and increasing concerns regarding its affordability. For SHPOA, “Neighbourhood protection” in Shaughnessy involved controlling density. Accordingly, given the growing population of Vancouver and the city's limited land base, this meant that when groups like SHPOA were effective in their attempts to prevent densification, other areas of the city would have to compensate for these measures. That is, they would be required to make space for more

people as the population of the city increased. Between 1986 and 1996 density (population per square kilometer) in the city of Vancouver increased by 19%.²⁰⁸ In Shaughnessy, during this same period, it declined by just under 1%.²⁰⁹ (Despite concessions in the “First Shaughnessy Plan” regarding infill housing). Moreover, while the compromise solution that was eventually enacted in South Shaughnessy did prevent downzoning, it still made adding density in Shaughnessy significantly more difficult than in almost every other neighbourhood in the city (and it was also quite effective at preventing low-income housing in the area.)

As noted above, average household income in the neighbourhood was 2.7 times higher than average household income in the city as a whole in 1986. In 1991 and 1996, respectively it was 2.4 and 2.9 times higher.²¹⁰ With this comparative wealth, then, came comparative privileges, about which both SHPOA and the Ad hoc Committee generally remained silent.

²⁰⁸ Between 1986 and 1991, density in Vancouver increased by 9% and between 1991 and 1996 it increased by 9%.

²⁰⁹ Between 1986 and 1991 density in Shaughnessy increased by 4% and between 1991 and 1996 it decreased by 5%.

²¹⁰ Average household income increased by 56% between 1986 and 1991 in Shaughnessy. It increased by 49% in city as a whole.

Table 6-4 Population, Density, Income

		CITY OF VANCOUVER	SHAUGHNESSY
POPULATION	YEAR		
	1986	431147	7553
	1991	471844	7670
	1996	514008	7446
DENSITY Pop. per sq. km	1986	3818	2041
	1991	4172	2131
	1996	4545	2023
AVERAGE INCOME Household in Canadian dollars	1986	32384	88707
	1991	45076	107128
	1996	48087	138150

Source: Adapted from Statistics Canada 1961-1996

6.6 Social Construction

How, then, do the actions of SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee, the representations of identity that they deployed, and the patterns of exposure and occlusion underwriting their contesting positions function as a process of social construction, particularly in light of the way the dispute over “monster” houses was eventually resolved? How do they enforce and contest associations between different sets of meanings, values and powers and different social groups and places?

First, the “battle for Shaughnessy” both enforced and challenged ongoing power dynamics within Vancouver. It enforced the representation of Shaughnessy as an elite and prestigious neighbourhood whose residents have significant financial, social and political capital and to whom City Council is responsive. That is, for whom city council is willing to devote

significant time and expense. Accordingly, this conflict reproduced the association of Shaughnessy and its residents with unquestioned (or rarely questioned) privilege and enforced the neighbourhood's top tier status within the spatial hierarchy of the city.

Yet, as Katharyne Mitchell argues, the neighbourhood dispute also challenged the terms in which Shaughnessy's residents, as part of the city's elite, were understood. Particularly, it challenged their representation as white and of Anglo-Saxon or European descent. It made visible the transformations that had been occurring within the city's upper class and it challenged associations between Anglo-Saxon values and landscape preferences, and elite status. In the words of Mitchell, the public hearings on the South Shaughnessy zoning dispute "represented the first time that a radically different interpretation of the community good for a west-side area was promulgated and won by a group not composed primarily of Anglo-Canadian residents" (1997: 172). In this way, the success and political competence of the Ad Hoc Committee made visible the demographic transformation of the city's upper class in terms of its ethnic make-up and made clear that these changes could not be ignored. As Mitchell notes:

The right to participate in the production of the landscape and its associated symbolic meanings is one that is held only by certain populations. These populations, who are themselves identified as "rooted", maintain and reflect the "correct" sensibilities that are appropriate to the land. Historically, the ability to participate in landscape production is one that has been predicated on highly racialized and gendered grounds (Mitchell, 1997b: 545).

The Ad Hoc Committee's ability to block the proposed zoning changes and to require the inclusion of their members on the working committee that then formulated the zoning schedule eventually applied in South Shaughnessy signaled a shift in the composition of the population participating in the production of landscape and its meaning in the neighbourhood. In this way, it

linked a new population associated with different meanings and values to elite status and the political privilege and powers associated with it.

Second, contestation in South Shaughnessy over “monster” houses also served to enforce and to undermine the utility of particular political scripts or representational strategies. Particularly, the mobilization and success of the Ad Hoc Committee served to undermine (to a degree) associations between Anglo-Saxon aesthetics and what was taken to be the ‘natural’ landscape of west side Vancouver. Contestation between SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee suggested that depending on the understanding that this landscape was inherently preferable and would be understood as such by any reasonable observer, no longer provided a secure position, which would guarantee favourable government action. Conversely, the representational politics of the Ad Hoc Committee, and their success in contesting SHPOA and gaining recognition from the municipal government, helped to enforce associations between respect for diversity, individuals rights and freedoms, fiscal responsibility and the ‘good Canadian.’ It also suggested that the mobilization of these scripts could be an effective way to establish a ‘legitimate’ claims making position in Canadian society. Furthermore, the “battle for Shaughnessy” suggested that if a political script could be successfully linked to racism and parochialism it would serve to undermine its legitimacy as a basis for government action.

Third, the Ad Hoc Committee’s quite successful occlusion of SHPOA’s critical representation of the role of economic forces in shaping neighbourhood change also helped to legitimate these forces in Vancouver by associating the their critique with racism and the violation of individual rights and freedoms.

6.7 Conclusion

The analysis of the contesting representational politics of the SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee, like the analysis of the representational politics of CROWE, demonstrates the complexity of social construction and its intersection with relations of proximity and urban contestation. While the framing strategies of CROWE, SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee each built associations between certain sets of meaning, values and power and particular people and places through both explicit statements and silences, the presence of two groups with comparable political capacity in South Shaughnessy made the exposure and debate of these occlusions a much more significant part of this process of construction in the cases of SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This dissertation is about politics and identity in place. It is about how collective actors deploy representations of identity or the meaning, values and powers associated with both places and social groups as a political tool in struggles over contentious proximities; and it is about how these deployments may be understood as a process of meaning making. Over the preceding six chapters I have worked to show that the collective actions animating the case of the Concerned Residents of the West End and the case of “monster” houses in South Shaughnessy exemplify a particular form of political contestation: the politics of contentious proximity. In Chapter 1, I developed this concept and suggested that it offers a new and enriching perspective on the political phenomenon of “identity” and an alternative approach for studying localized political contestation. In Chapter 2, I provided an overview of the neighbourhoods of the West End and Shaughnessy, and the changes they underwent in the period leading up to the instances of political contestation I explore. In Chapters 3 and 5, I drew out and analyzed the respective representational strategies of the Concerned Residents of the West End, the Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners’ Association and the Ad Hoc Committee for South Shaughnessy Property Rights Association and the relations of proximity that they evoke. In Chapters 4 and 6, I explored how the representational politics of CROWE, SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee constructs and contests associations between particular clusters of meanings, values and power and particular social groups and places. Further, I suggested that this representational politics constructs these associations through the representations deployed, the silences they support, the opposition they face, and their interaction with the contextual conditions from which they emerge and into which they settle.

In this concluding chapter I draw together the preceding analysis in two ways. First, I compare and contrast the two cases explored in detail in this dissertation. These cases, I show, have many significant features in common, especially those involving the politics of contentious proximity. Yet they also diverge in important ways, including how they function as processes of social construction and how either positive or negative values are ascribed to particular kinds of groups and places through these processes. The similarities and differences animating the two cases, I argue, suggest two things about how groups choose and employ representational strategies. The first is the simple point that groups with less social, economic and/or political power, or perhaps unproven power, have fewer choices regarding how they represent themselves if they hope (quickly) to obtain their desired ends, and to be recognized by government, media and the broader public as legitimate political actors. The second is that groups with greater, and established, social, economic and political power are more likely to employ representational strategies that differentiate them from the general population (think here of SHPOA's claims regarding the uniqueness of the "Shaughnessy Genre"), while groups with less power are more likely to draw on strategies that assert commonality (think here of CROWE's claims regarding family and property).

Second, I return to the broader theoretical contributions of these case studies in relation to the political theory of identity politics introduced in Chapter 1, namely how the politics of contentious proximity provides several significant theoretical contributions to the politics of identity in the broader political theory literature. It demonstrates how identities are constructed at an empirical level of urban contestation within neighbourhoods whereas most of the existing literature is either theoretically abstract and/or tends to focus on national or subnational/state politics. Additionally, it emphasizes that identity politics is something that can involve place as

well as persons (that is, neighbourhoods have identities in relation to groups of people, and these identities and relationships are as contested those associated with what is normally thought of as identity politics, namely human/social attributes such as race, gender class and so on). Furthermore, it illustrates that identity can be deployed as a political tool by both the powerful and the marginalized, and in ways that go beyond the attributes listed above. In these ways, this dissertation contributes to our understanding of the political phenomenon of “identity”, not conceived as some deep primordial aspect of one’s individual being, as it is commonly understood, but as something actors employ and deploy, for particular and, in the cases of the actions I take up, localized, political purposes within neighbourhoods.

Finally, as I also suggested in Chapter 1, this dissertation contributes to the exploration of how diverse populations negotiate the terms according to which they live together within the relatively limited confines of urban space; that is, within neighbourhoods and in response to new proximities emerging in the wake of demographic and physical changes. Ultimately, the politics of contentious proximity provides an interesting alternative to the two dominant lenses used to view and analyze urban contestation: NIMBY (not in my backyard) and ‘urban social movements’. In this chapter, I bring these contributions into sharper relief and draw out the perspective that can be provided, I argue, through a focus on actions such as those of CROWE, SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee.

7.1 Similarities and Differences between the Cases

The case of CROWE in the West End and the case of “monster” houses in South Shaughnessy have a number of things in common. First, both exemplify a particular type of political contestation: the politics of contentious proximity. They involve urban collective action

that centers on the purposive deployment of representations of the meanings, values and powers associated with different social groups or “types” of people, and with different “types” of places. These actions entail actors framing themselves, their political adversaries and the places of both in particular, strategic terms in order to assert their entitlement to particular material and symbolic resources; they employ these representations of identity *as a political tool* to help further their cause or agenda. As the preceding chapters show, the frames the groups mobilize are built through a series of relational or proximate claims regarding physical and social closeness to, and distance from, certain types of people, things and places and the proximities that do, and *should*, exist between different types of people and places.

Second, the political contestation in both my cases revolves around contentious proximities. Particularly, I have argued that both cases involve collective action that emerges in the wake of a period of neighbourhood change. In the West End, CROWE undertook its campaign to eject street-level sex-workers not only following an increase in the presence of street-level sex-work, but also in the wake of a period of rapid densification and highrise construction in the neighbourhood. Correspondingly, contention over “monster” houses emerged in South Shaughnessy not only in the wake of the construction of new, large and architecturally different houses, but also following a shift within the neighbourhood from a population composed primarily of residents of Anglo-Saxon and European descent to a population including a significant percentage of new residents of Asian descent. Further, both SHPOA and CROWE represented these changes as involving an “intrusion” of a new social group or physical form—of street-level sex-workers in the former case and of “monster” houses in the latter—that was incompatible with the neighbourhood as a place, and with its residents. Moreover, they suggested that if these “intrusions” were not stymied quickly, and ideally reversed, the West End and South

Shaughnessy would be transformed into different and, significantly worse, places, which catered to different, and significantly worse, kinds of people. Indeed the metaphors used in each case by the longer established group in relation to the ‘intrusion’ went so far as to describe these developments as something other than human: be it a ‘cancer’ or a ‘monster’ or some other threat to the well being of an otherwise orderly and natural world.

What I want to suggest is that the contentious proximities at the heart of the cases of CROWE and the “monster” houses represent an encounter, or perhaps the construction of an encounter, between “antagonistic principles” at the scale of the neighbourhood. Each case suggests multiple interrelated, but not reducible, antagonisms. In South Shaughnessy, SHPOA posited antagonism between “monster” houses and “traditional” architecture and landscaping, while the Ad Hoc Committee suggested that the real antagonism was between racist residents of Anglo-Saxon and European descent and those of Asian descent. In the West End, CROWE asserted a fundamental dissonance between residents and the street-level sex-workers. At work in the background, one might also note two other antagonisms in the neighborhood—that between its emerging Gay Village and a generally homophobic Vancouver, and between the West End as a residential neighbourhood marked by highrise development and other residential neighbourhoods of the city, which were dominated by single-family homes. New physical forms and new forms of social behavior in the West End and in South Shaughnessy, then, led to a degree of dissonance that prompted the collective action of CROWE and SHPOA.

Moreover, this dissonance led to discussion and contention—though certainly not unproblematic discussion and contention—regarding the norms, values and understandings shaping life within these neighbourhoods, and shaping them as places. In this way, regardless of the specific focal points of each neighbourhood groups’ campaign (in one case the exclusion of

sex-workers from the West End and the exclusion of “monster” houses in the other) both campaigns and the conflicts which gave rise to them made questions of neighbourhood change, and some of the elements driving these changes, more visible. Moreover, they also raised the issue of who should be entitled to decide and determine the kind of place each neighbourhood was to be, and what kind of people that are taken to be ‘legitimate’—that is the people that are able to require a response from government and to claim a voice in shaping the neighbourhood.

Yet, the politics of contentious proximity prompted by this dissonance also provided mechanisms for maintaining or enforcing marginalization and exclusion. Both SHPOA and CROWE explicitly worked to achieve exclusion—of a certain physical form in the former case and a particular social group in the latter—in order to represent and protect their neighbourhoods as specific kinds of places for particular types of people. They sought exclusion to build and maintain particular conceptions of the identities and statuses of the people living in these neighborhoods. Here, it is worth drawing out two logics at work in the representational politics of both groups that helped to support their calls for exclusion. First, making claims about the people “here”, in a particular locale, provides a pathway for asserting the need for the exclusion of particular groups and the promotion of particular norms, sensibilities, and physical forms without making explicit claims and generalizations about the overall worth of particular “types” of people or their tastes. As CROWE asserted, their issue was not with street-level sex-work per se, but rather its presence in the West End. Similarly, not only did SHPOA assert that their issue was not with people but with architecture and landscaping, but while many supporters of SHPOA disliked “monster” houses in general, they also only sought to prevent their construction in a particular area. In this way, perhaps, making claims about a particular localized place or neighbourhood provides a degree of “plausible deniability” against changes of racism, sexism,

homophobia, ageism, and ableism, which may help groups to build support for the exclusion they seek. Second, I suggest, localized collective action seeking and promoting the social and physical exclusion of a particular group of people or physical form is further enabled by building on the widely held moral intuition that people living in a particular place, and especially people invested in that place, should have the right to a degree of collective self-determination regarding “their” place. This intuition, then, not only draws on notions of self-determination but also the sense that people should be rewarded (in this context with greater political voice) based on their contributions, or alternatively, that they should not be alienated from the products of their labor. In this way, the exclusions sought by groups like SHPOA and CROWE may be held by some to be necessary, not because certain types of people have less value (are worth less) than others, but because the exclusions are by-products of treating those people invested in place-making in an ethical way.

The cases of the “monster” houses and CROWE, however, also diverge in a number of significant ways. First, while they occurred in the same city and involved the deployment of representations of the identities of people and places, the cases involved very different neighbourhoods. Among the most notable differences between the two areas were their built form and demographics. The West End was Vancouver’s most densely populated area, with a population of close to 40 000 in 1980, and the city’s first residential neighbourhood to incorporate a significant number of highrises. Shaughnessy, alternatively, was the least densely populated neighbourhood in the city, with a population of 7670 in 1991, and was dominated by single-family housing. Additionally, the West End had a significant proportion of renters and high turnover rates, while in Shaughnessy most people owned their homes and many had lived in

the area for a few generations. The latter was also one of the wealthiest neighbourhoods in city while average income in the West End was lower than the citywide average.

Furthermore, while the actions in both the West End and Shaughnessy took place against a backdrop of change in terms of both demographics and the built environment, the form and scope of the change was different. The population in the West End grew significantly in the 1960s and 1970s and the development of highrise towers signalled a major and dramatic transformation of the built form of the neighbourhood, as well as the city's downtown peninsula. In Shaughnessy during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the size of the neighbourhood's population remained quite steady but it underwent change in terms of the ethnicity of its residents. In this neighbourhood, new, somewhat larger homes in different architectural styles and materials were equated with dramatic change.

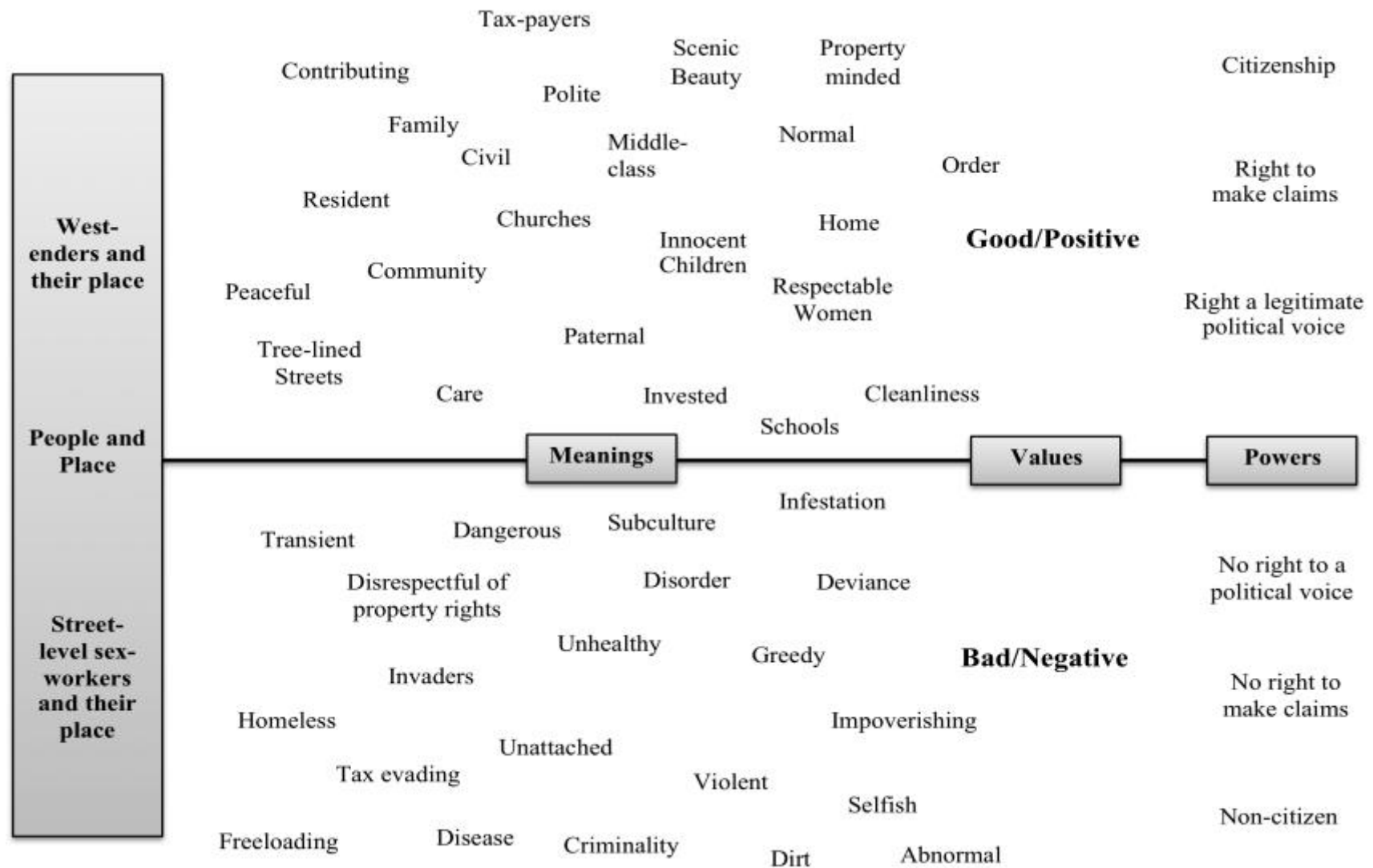
Likewise, the history of CROWE and SHPOA varied considerably, as did the capacity of the opposition they faced. Whereas SHPOA had existed for over half a century and had a long history of working with different levels of government in order to protect what they saw as the interests of the neighborhood, CROWE was only formed in the 1980s, specifically to address the presence of street-level sex-work in the West End. Regarding opposition, street-level sex-workers in the West End made some attempts to organize in opposition to CROWE and Shame the Johns, most notably the efforts of the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes, but these attempts gained little traction in the media or with the general public. While the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes was able to attract some media attention, it was not able to establish itself as having the right to a say in the shape of the West End as a place, and street-level sex-workers were unable to overcome the representation of being 'out-of-place' in the West End. In Shaughnessy, however, SHPOA faced a much more challenging oppositional organization in the Ad Hoc

Committee. The Ad Hoc Committee was able to organize and mobilize a constituency quickly and to significant effect. They were able to gain media coverage of their position and to garner attention and support from public figures. In this way, they succeeded in effectively asserting that they had a right to a voice in determining the future form of South Shaughnessy.

Moreover, while I argue that the representational politics involved in both cases links particular kinds of identities to both people and places, the ways this politics built and enforced these links also differed.

In the case of the West End, CROWE deployed oppositional clusters of meanings in an effort to legitimize and empower “West Enders” and, conversely, to delegitimize and disempower street-level sex-workers (See Figure 7-1). This is to say, CROWE claimed power and legitimacy for “West Enders” and the West End by building associations and linkages between them and mentalities that are typically accepted as conveying the following: middle class sensibilities, concern for property rights and values, and a paternal concern for respectable women, family and children, to name a few. Moreover, they occluded aspects of the area and its residents that were not typically associated with power and legitimacy: the discomfort of men living in the area generated by the street scene, linkages between residents and the street scene, the high proportion of singles living in the area, and the small proportion of children, for example. Conversely, the group linked street-level sex-work to a cluster of meanings typically associated with a lack of legitimacy—criminality, selfishness, dirt, violence and a lack of self-rule to name a few—and occluded others that might render sex-workers sympathetic or worthy of a voice in determining the kind of place the West End was to be.

Figure 7-1 CROWE's Deployments of Identities



In time, CROWE was successful in its campaign. Street-level sex-workers in the West End were unable to contest effectively the terms in which they were being represented by CROWE (despite the efforts of ASP). CROWE found allies and champions within the city's media and among local politicians, who echoed their representational strategies and endorsed the legitimacy of their claims; that is, who endorsed their efforts to enforce the lack of legitimacy of sex-workers and to exclude them from the West End. Attorney General Brian Smith requested, and the courts granted, a civil injunction barring street-level sex-workers from the West End, and as a result, CROWE obtained its desired objective.

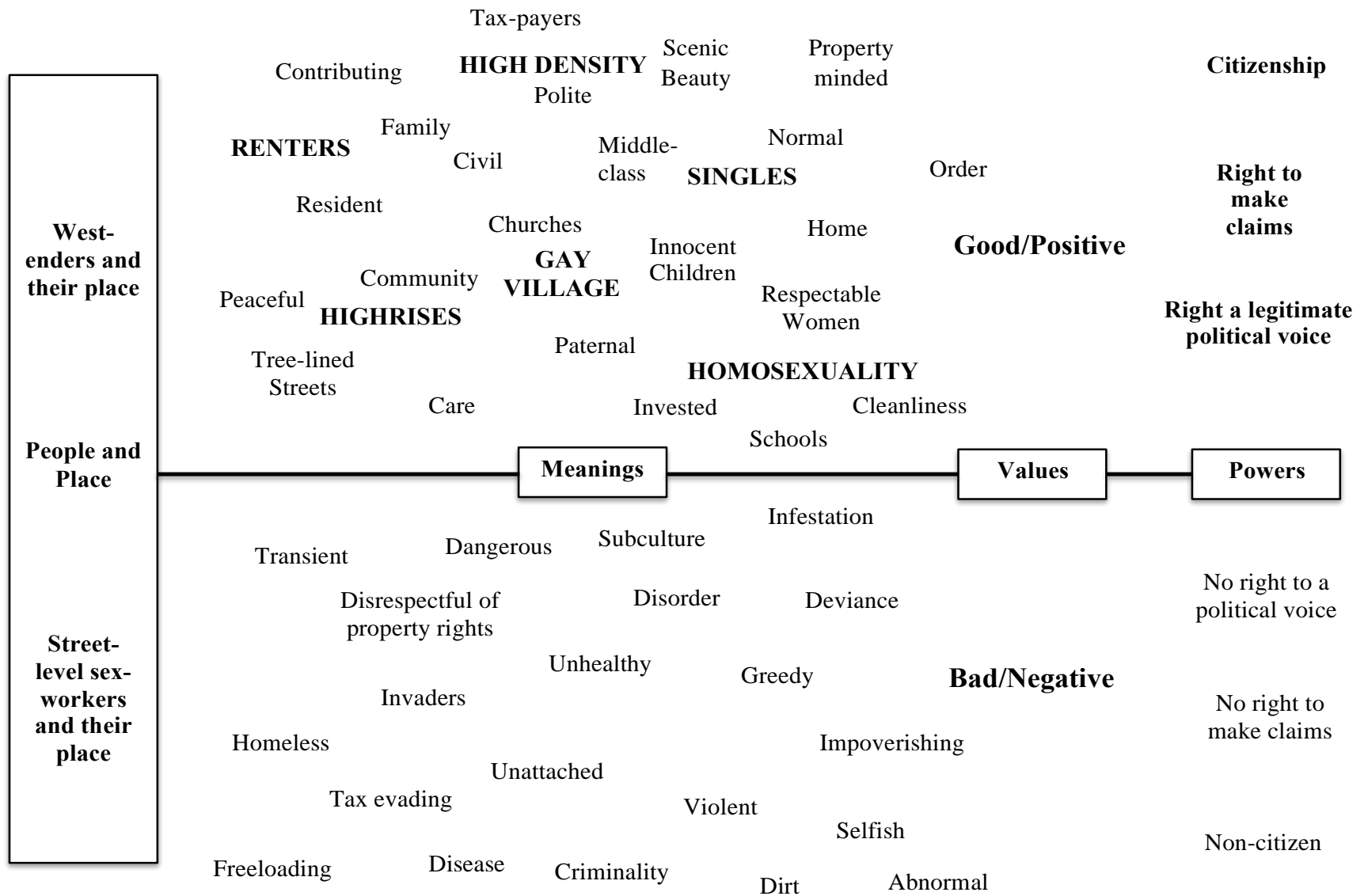
The endorsement that CROWE received from politicians and the media and through the civil injunction—from the actions taken by the province and the courts on behalf of and at the behest of “West Enders”—may be seen as doing two things. First, the state-sanctioned and administered expulsion of street-level sex-workers from the West End enforced the association of street-level sex-workers with “justified” social marginalization and exclusion, lack of legitimacy and political voice. Moreover, it served to mark out certain city spaces as compatible or incompatible with marginalized social groups. Second, it enforced the linkage conjured by CROWE between West Enders, political power and the right to a voice in the determining the shape of “their” place. In this way, West Enders were linked with legitimacy, voice and political power not simply because CROWE depicted them as good middle-class taxpayers, concerned with family and property, and opposed to deviant sexuality and the disruption of the norms of “normal society”, but also because they had demanded action from government and received it.

The deployment and success of CROWE's representational strategies, I suggest, built associations between certain groups of people and places and particular sets of meanings, values and powers in a number of different ways. It enforced linkages between the cluster of meanings

CROWE associated with West Enders, positive valuation and legitimate political voice, and it emphasized commonalities between West Enders and the general public. Moreover, it suggested that the oppositional cluster of meanings deployed by CROWE, or a similar one, could offer an effective identity strategy for other groups in the future. It suggested that groups could gain political legitimacy and voice through positioning themselves in opposition to a traditionally marginalized group and forcibly reiterating this group's exclusion from "normal" society. In this way, CROWE's success may be seen as creating incentives for groups to use representational strategies that depict street-level sex-workers (or other particularly marginalized groups) as justifiably excluded from having a political voice or a place in "normal" neighbourhoods, not merely because some may believe these claims, but also because this can be a successful strategy claiming political voice and for linking one's place with a positive valuation. In this way, it can be a strategy for helping groups "pass" as legitimate political actors.

Finally, I suggest, CROWE's representational politics also functioned as a process of social construction through the interplay, or exchange, of links between particular clusters of meanings, values and power and "West Enders." With the success of CROWE's campaign, the value and political power of West Enders was signaled in a new way; as a result, the connection between West Enders and political voice and power no longer depended as much on the associations CROWE had asserted between West Enders and the types of identities outlined above. In addition, having achieved their objective, CROWE stopped publically representing West Enders in these terms. This, I suggest, created space for alternative representations of identities of West Enders and the West End to begin to supplant the original associations mobilized by CROWE. Particularly, as I argued in Chapter 4, it resulted in the production of links between the "gay community", "high- rises", "singles", "renters" and positive valuation

Figure 7-2 CROWE 2



and political power (see Figure 7-2). Accordingly, CROWE's representational politics, and the spatial exclusion of sex-workers that they obtained, did not simply reiterate and reinforce traditional conceptions of the types of groups and places associated with positive valuations and political power. They served to construct links between these things and new types of people and places as well.

In South Shaughnessy, however, this process was somewhat different. Like CROWE, SHPOA deployed oppositional clusters of meanings in order to assert their demands (downzoning and design guidelines), and to delegitimize the large, new houses and the political voice of people associated with the "monsters" (See Figure 7-3). For instance, they suggested that the residents of Shaughnessy and their neighbourhood were "sophisticated", "abundant", "neighborly" and "natural" while "monster" houses and their people were "concrete", "aggressive", "tacky" and "unneighbourly". In this way, SHPOA, like CROWE, purported to speak on behalf of the residents of South Shaughnessy. However, while Vancouver city council was prepared to address SHPOA's demands and had already taken steps to do so, opposition to the group arose from within South Shaughnessy itself: unlike in the case of CROWE, SHPOA's claim to speak on behalf of the residents of the neighbourhood was challenged. In response to the identity strategies of SHPOA, the Ad Hoc Committee deployed its own oppositional clusters, through which it hoped to undermine and invert the claims of SHPOA (See Figure 7-4). Whereas SHPOA linked "monster" houses and their people to a cluster of meanings conveying negative value and delegitimizing their voices and claims, the Ad Hoc Committee linked them instead to meanings conveying legitimacy and a positive valuation. According to the Ad Hoc Committee, they were "good Canadians", "respectful of difference", "fiscally responsible", "progressive" and "concerned with protecting individual freedoms." Conversely, the Ad Hoc Committee linked

SHPOA and its supporters to meanings conveying negative valuations and undermining the legitimacy of their political voice and the claims they forwarded—they were “racist”, “autocratic”, “parochial” and “homogenizing.”

In response to the representational tactics of the Ad Hoc Committee, and to their ability to assert their presence and perspective to the City and in the media, Council halted the measures they had been planning to implement in South Shaughnessy (downzoning and design guidelines) in their efforts to assuage SHPOA. Moreover, they convened a panel including both members of SHPOA (something typical in planning processes in Shaughnessy) and also members of the Ad Hoc Committee (which represented a change in the structure of community input into the planning process in the neighbourhood) to develop an alternative solution for the neighbourhood’s zoning concerns. The solution eventually devised and enacted by the city was endorsed by both groups and represented a compromise between their positions.

The contention between SHPOA and the Ad Hoc committee, along with the compromise solution eventually implemented, also built associations between certain sets of meanings, values and powers and particular social groups and places in a number of ways. First, it enforced the privileged status of South Shaughnessy within the city. The amount of attention and time the city spent addressing the concerns of South Shaughnessy residents, including members of both SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee, and the compromise solution—the “Mercedes Benz” of zoning—reinforced links between the neighbourhood, political capital and social status. It reinforced the neighbourhood’s position as an area that the city was particularly responsive to. Second, it challenged links between Anglo-Saxon landscape preferences—or to put it the terms of the Ad Hoc Committee, the parochial and racist views of some white Canadians—and the residents of South Shaughnessy as a whole, linking the neighbourhood, and its privilege, with

Figure 7-3 SHPOA's Deployments of Identity

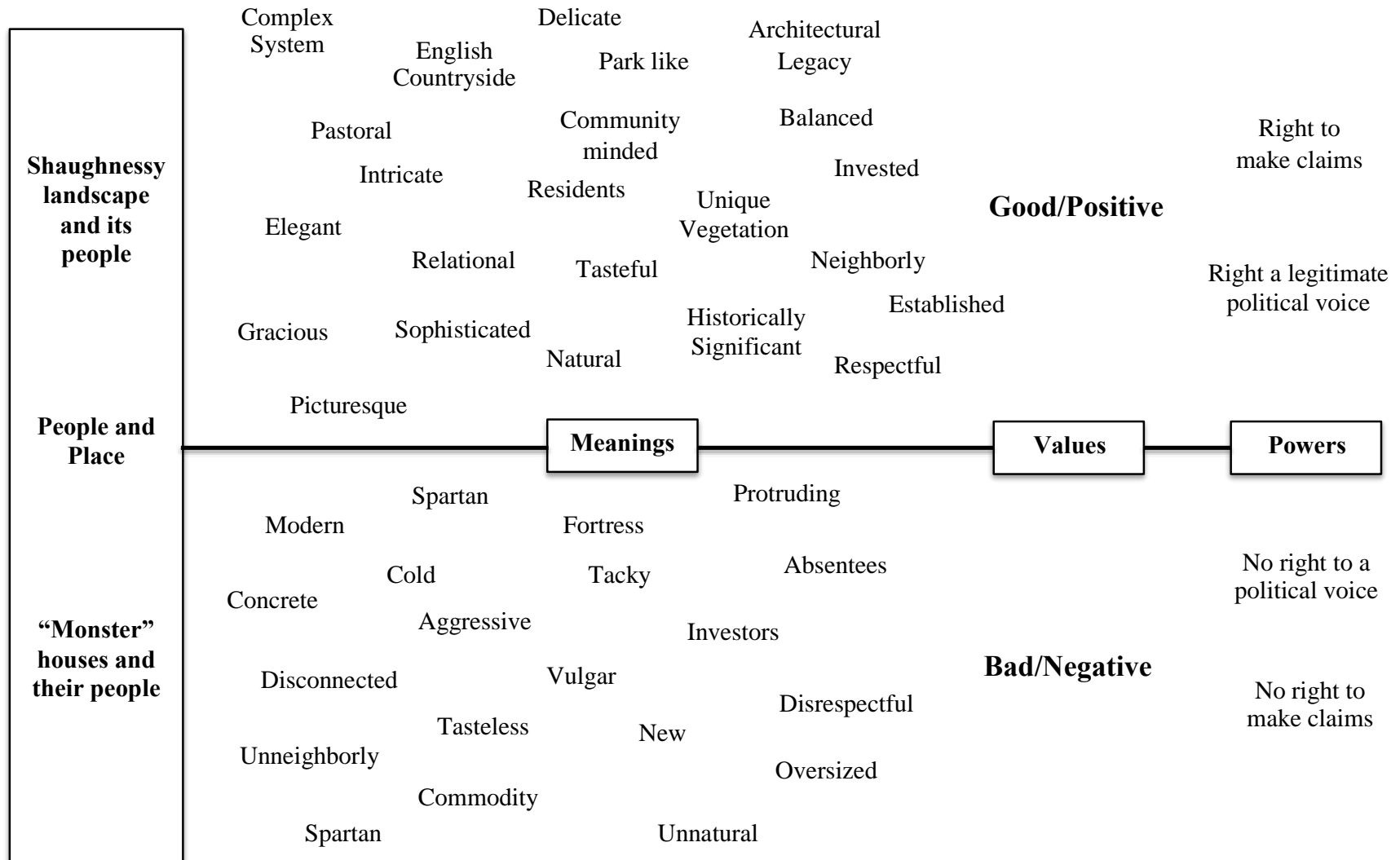
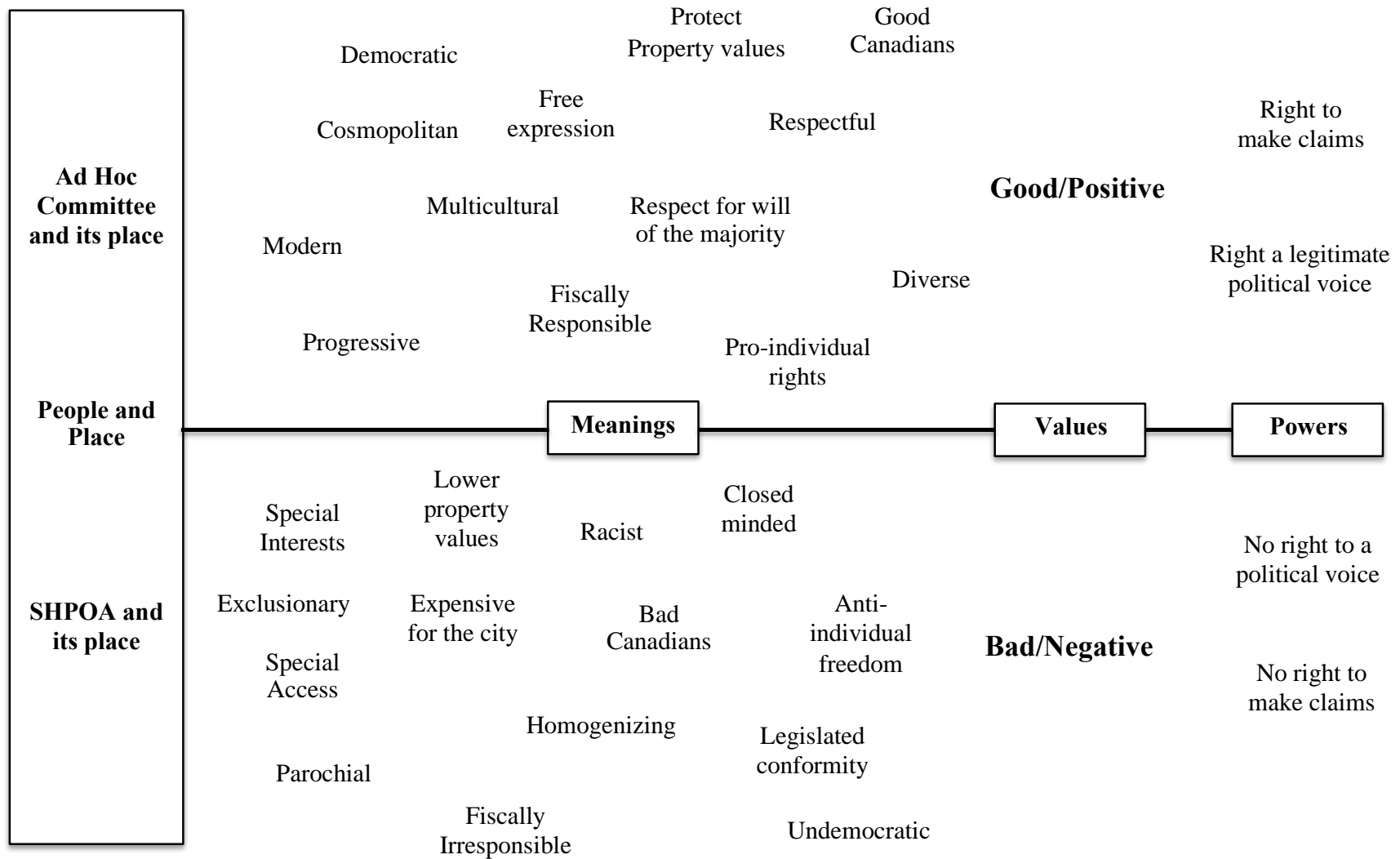


Figure 7-4 Ad Hoc Committee's Deployments of Identity



other landscape preferences, conceptions of South Shaughnessy as a place, and types of people. In this way, whereas CROWE's actions and success enforced the marginalization of street-level sex-workers, the success of the Ad Hoc Committee in challenging the representational strategies of SHPOA required the reconceptualization of who was included within the category of "residents", and the reconceptualization of the type of place South Shaughnessy was, and should aspire to be. Finally, it also suggested that associating political opponents with racism, fiscal irresponsibility and a lack of respect for freedom of expression can be an effective political strategy for undermining their legitimacy and that of the positions for which they advocate.

Given this, what do these cases suggest about the ways groups deploy representations of identity as a means of pursuing other material and symbolic goals, particularly at the level of neighbourhood struggles?²¹¹ I suggest that the less social, economic and political resources groups have, the more restricted they are in terms of choosing identity strategies that will help them obtain their goals. Groups that have few established associations with legitimacy and political power are more dependent on the links that can be built through establishing associations with clusters of meaning that convey legitimacy and power.

In comparing the representational politics of SHPOA and CROWE, what stands out in my reading is that while both drew on narratives of community and the right of residents to have a voice in determining the shape of "their" place, CROWE actively sought to occlude features of the West End that suggested it was a different type of place than other residential neighbourhoods in the city whereas SHPOA's representational strategies asserted the uniqueness

²¹¹ Additionally, when a "problem" is perceived as pressing or as requiring immediate action, this translates into pressure to "put on" identities with clearly, and widely acknowledged, links to positive values, political legitimacy and voice; and to seek to link one's opponents with identities conveying negative value and justifying a lack of legitimacy and voice. There is pressure to pursue strategies of political engagement that have a proven track record and can work quickly. In this way, when deploying identities in goal-oriented action, there are incentives to deploy "conservative" representational strategies.

of Shaughnessy. This difference, I suggest, reflected the different social, economic and political statuses of the two neighborhoods and their residents—SHPOA could afford to assert the distinctiveness of Shaughnessy while CROWE was unwilling to risk drawing attention to difference in the West End. Alternatively, in comparing the representational politics of the Ad Hoc Committee and the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes, it is notable that the former succeeded in effectively contesting the terms in which they were represented by SHPOA while the latter could not shake off the representations of CROWE. In this way, these two cases suggest that the lower, or less established, the social, economic and political status of groups, the greater the incentive to employ “traditional” identity strategies and the harder it is to reject identity labels imposed by more dominant groups.

7.2 Identity Politics and Localized Political Contestation

The first half of this concluding chapter focused on comparing and contrasting the cases explored in this dissertation, and on drawing out how the representation politics of CROWE, SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee functioned as a process of social construction. The second half moves away from the specifics of the cases and focuses instead on the way the conceptual approach I draw on in this dissertation contributes to study of the political phenomenon of “identity” and localized political contestation.

7.2.1 Identity Politics

One of the most important contributions the conceptualization of the politics of contentious proximity makes, I suggest, is that it helps to expand the conception of “identity politics”: it suggests that the ways identities are at work in the world, the ways they become

attached to us and give shape to our opportunities and life chances, are not wholly captured through a focus on identity as a primordial aspect of individual or collective being, or on identity as a subjective orientation to, and experience of, the world, as it is often understood (Consider theories of multiculturalism, recognition and subjectivity, for example). Representations of identities, as I have worked to show through the analysis of the cases of CROWE and “monster” houses, are also something that groups (and individuals, though this is not something this dissertation addresses) deliberately employ as a political tool. They are something that groups put on for a time, and attempt to put on other people, as a strategy in their pursuit of other material and symbolic goals; and something that groups use to establish and assert their legitimacy along with that of their demands. Yet, I suggest, this aspect of the political phenomenon of “identity” remains understudied within political theory and, further scholarship focusing on “identity” as a political tool can offer new perspectives on how associations between particular sets of means, values and power and certain social groups are produced, maintained and, sometimes, contested. Or to express it slightly differently, it offers a new perspective on one way that the identity labels that structure our different, and often unequal, opportunities and experiences in the world are produced.

Here, it is necessary to address an important point of objection to the argument I am forwarding: that “identity politics” literature fails to concern itself with the use of representations of identity as a political strategy. Does this position, one may object, not fail to account for a wide range of literature, particularly social movement literature and political theory engaging with the experiences and transformations of identity movements since the 1960s? Does this literature, for instance, not deal extensively with the attempts of the women’s movement, the LGBT movement, the Black Power movement and many more to come to terms with difference

within the movement? To come to terms with how to speak on behalf of, and fight for the empowerment of, a particular identity group when that group is not a homogeneous category? Think here, for instance, of Gayatri Spivak's suggestion that essentialism has it uses as a short-term strategy for marginalized groups seeking to affirm political identities; or of Judith Butler's assertion that there is a need to "speak as and for women" but that "any effort to give universal or specific content to the category of women, presuming that that guarantee of solidarity is required in advance, will necessarily produce fractionalization" (Spivak, 1987; Butler, 1992: 15). Are there not already arguments in the scholarly literature about the strategic deployment of particular identity categories and labels?

My response to this objection is not to deny the extent or significance of this work within political theory, but rather to suggest that it primarily addresses a certain type of collective action and political engagement. Specifically, it focuses on the efforts and strategies of groups that seek to overcome systematic marginalization or exclusion based on some sort of shared group identity—particularly identities connected to race, class and gender (Hayes, 2012). Yet, I ask, what of other modes of political action beyond the scope of what is typically taken to be "identity politics", which both constitute identity and are shaped by impositions of identity? What of the types of actions on which this dissertation centers? While the actions of CROWE, SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee are certainly shaped by underlying concerns of identity, and anxieties about identity, none of these groups primarily based their political engagements on a group identity in the sense suggested above. None of the groups claimed to represent women, a particular nationality, ethnic group, or class interest. While in the case of "monster" houses, for instance, there was a clear ethnic/racial dimension to the conflict, neither SHPOA nor the Ad Hoc Committee represented themselves primarily in terms of this dimension. Similarly, conflict

in the West End was significantly impacted by dynamics of sex and gender, yet CROWE predominantly represented the conflict and the “residents” of the West End in other ways. Both SHPOA and CROWE claimed to represent the concerns of people in a localized and particular place: they claimed to represent the collection of people “here”. What is more, these groups did not link the identities they deployed to a history of marginalization and exclusion. What I want to suggest, and hope to have shown, through the preceding chapters, is that different kinds of groups, with a range of different goals and objectives, also draw on representations of identity as a political tool. In this way, the shortfall within political theory literature exploring the political phenomenon of “identity” that I emphasize regarding the employment of representations of identity as a political tool concerns these other types of struggles that do not fit neatly within what political activists and theorists understand as “identity politics” and have hence has been overlooked in most of the literature.

Further, I argue, engaging with how these groups employ representations of identity and the fallout of these deployments, is an important line of inquiry because it offers insight into the actions of these groups and the ways they produce meaning, but also because at a more theoretical level, these actions play a significant role in determining what kinds of representational strategies are effective—that is, the kinds of strategies that help groups to achieve legitimacy as political actors and to obtain their objectives (particularly within a short timeframe). What we see in looking at the actions of CROWE, SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee is that the oppositional clusters of identity they deploy, and the relations of proximity they imply, in concert with their degree of success in achieving their goals, enforce and contest associations between certain sets of meanings, values and power and particular social groups or “types” of people. Yet the successes and failures of their representational politics also build

associations between political success and legitimacy and particular identity strategies and deployments. In this way, they both play a role in constructing the terms in which other groups are understood and in conditioning the tools available to other groups engaging in other types of struggles—including those that focus on overcoming marginalization or exclusion based on a shared group identity. What I want to suggest, then, is that engaging with these other types of actions, including those involving the politics of contentious proximity, can provide insight into the seeming intransigence of patterns of social and spatial hierarchies despite legal and institutional commitments to the equal treatment of individuals and groups regardless of their identities.

A second basic yet significant contribution of my analysis of the politics of contentious proximity to thinking about identity politics is that it underlines an important aspect of the ways that collective actors may employ identity strategies. Particularly, it underlines that in making identity claims, groups deploy interactive representations of the meanings, values and powers associated with “types” of places and things, as well as “types” of people. What we can observe in the political strategies of CROWE, SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee is that they all used representations of place identity to convey information about the “type” of people that resided there, and used representations of the identities of particular groups of people to build claims about place. In this way, place and, more particularly, quite localized conceptions of place, play a part in the social construction of identities. In addition, CROWE, SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee all suggested that place was deeply affected by the type of people that lived within it and their norms and practices; that, in its turn, place played a role in constructing the identities of the people within it. In this way, I argue, thinking seriously about the ways that groups deploy representations of identity as a political tool, and particularly as a tool that is being used to

negotiated the terms according to which groups live together within the confines of urban space, not only implies looking beyond the actions of groups that fit into typical conceptions of “identity politics.” It also implies thinking about “identity” in an expanded way. It implies thinking seriously about how groups build and deploy associations between particular sets of meanings, values and powers and certain places and things (particular at a micro level)—asking which place identities, neighbourhoods, things, buildings and relations of proximity typically convey value, power and political legitimacy, which convey the inverse and what groups do to generate shifts in their connotations.

7.2.2 An Alternative to NIMBY

As well as contributing to the study of the political phenomenon of “identity”, this dissertation also contributes to the study of localized political contestation. While it overlaps in significant ways with both concepts, I argue that the politics of contentious proximity provides an alternative to two other dominant lenses used to view and analyze urban contestation: “urban social movement” and NIMBY frameworks. In many ways this analysis is complementary to these other ways of examining such case studies, but I also argue that seeing both cases through the lens of proximate identities provides important new insights into the politics of each that goes beyond more common ways of understanding urban conflict.

The cases of CROWE and of “monster” houses, I suggest, are not easily categorized as “urban social movement” as conceptualized by Manuel Castells and other scholars working in this tradition. Just as the actions of CROWE, SHPOA and the Ad Hoc Committee do not fit easily within traditional conceptions of “identity politics”—they do not claim to represent a particular class, race or gender or seek to overcome a history of marginalization and exclusion

based on a shared identity—neither are they easily conceptualized as “transformative” politics, as it is defined by Castells. This is to say, these actions are difficult to conceptualize as capable of radically transforming urban living or of producing an alternative to “the city emerging from the interests and values of the dominant class” (Castells, 1983: 320). Yet if they are not urban social movements conceptualized in this specific type of way, the actions of the various parties might be seen as a subcategory of “urban social movement” in a more general sense: as “social movements through which citizens attempt to achieve some control over their urban environment” (Pruijt 2007, 5115). This more general conception is so broad, however, that it tells us very little about these actions. The framing I have used of the politics of contentious proximity, alternatively, provides a complementary analytical lens for deepening our understanding of the representational tactics employed in local political contestation and, the impacts of these tactics.

Exploring other cases of urban collective action as manifestations of the politics of contentious proximity in addition to urban social movements creates a space for scholars of urban politics to explore local opposition that neither seeks radical change nor to transform urban living, but which nonetheless plays a role in shaping the terms according to which we live together in cities, who we allow to have a voice in shaping those terms and the representational strategies we use in contesting them. Moreover, as I have shown in the preceding chapters, employing the concept of the politics of contentious proximity helps to draw out the centrality of relations of proximity—of social and physical nearness and distance—and their representation that animate many instances of urban contestation. It offers a different lens that is focused on these relations and their negotiation.

Yet why the politics of contentious proximity and not NIMBY? With both the cases this dissertation explores it is understandable why both scholars and journalists might view them through a NIMBY lens and as I suggested in Chapter 1, this framework offers an important framework for studying urban contestation that does not suggest or require radical politics. It offers a lens that instead focuses on localized opposition and issues of contentious proximity; that is, the objections of longer-term residents to the siting of ‘new’ kinds of activities, facilities or people in their community. Can the efforts of CROWE and SHPOA to expel street-level sex-work and “monster” houses, respectively, from their neighbourhoods not be understood in these terms? What I want to suggest is that while both cases involve a certain degree of NIMBY sentiment, interpreting them through the frame of the politics of contentious proximity provides a deeper analysis of exactly how specific representations of identity are deployed as political tools in the specific context of localized conflict.

Much of the current scholarly work drawing on the concept of NIMBY has tended to focus on environmental rather than social issues (DeVerteuil 2013; Wolsink 2006). In this way, NIMBY, as a concept, has come to evoke the contentious siting of wind farms, nuclear power plants and waste facilities. The proximities at issue in most of this literature are quite different from the ones animating the cases explored in this dissertation and similar forms of social contestation. A focus on the politics of contentious proximity rather than NIMBY helps to signal a move beyond an environmental focus to social conflicts, and it creates space for exploration of contextually rooted, identity based contentious proximities.

Beyond the focus on environmental versus social issues, NIMBY interpretations have also been criticized in the broader literature in a number of other ways. First, many critiques have centered on their negative representation of local opposition (Burningham, Barnett and Walker,

2015; Devine-Wright, 2011; Bell, Gray and Haggert, 2005; Hunter and Leyden, 1995; McAvoy, 1998; Young, 2012; Lidskog and Elander, 1992). Particularly, numerous authors have questioned the characterization of this opposition as irrational and motivated by self-interest. Conceptualizing local opposition in terms of the politics of contentious proximity does not result in an automatic characterization of actors' motives. Other critiques have taken aim at the suggestion that the facilities provoking local opposition are a "common good", as well as at the paternalistic and technocratic undertones of the NIMBY paradigm. Some argue that conceptualizing them this way undermines potentially valid objections and concerns on the part of local opposition (For example, consider NIMBY campaigns that are able to transition into NIABY—"not in anyone's backyard"—campaigns). Moreover, many relations of proximity that spark local opposition are not widely acknowledged "common goods". Certainly, both street-level sex-work and contentious development, such as "monster" houses, are rarely presented as such. Interpreting local political contention that centers on relations of proximity through the lens of the politics of contentious proximity does not suggest a set answer to the question of whether the presence of a certain group, activity or physical form in a particular space is a "good". Rather, it allows for the treatment of this question as a potential terrain of investigation.

In this way, I want to suggest the primary limitation of the NIMBY paradigm is that rather than facilitating the exploration of local struggles, it closes down such analysis. Under this framework, local opposition consists of residents who oppose the siting of something—most often some kind of facility and often something deemed to promote the common good—in their neighbourhood because they are self-interested. It is something that must be overcome for the greater good. As Pillar puts it, for example, "The NIMBY syndrome is a public health problem of the first order" (1991: 4). Accordingly, NIMBY as concept offers a pre-packaged abstract

answer to the question of what is at issue in instances of local opposition and what should be done about it. The problem, it suggests, is selfish and irrational residents and community groups; and the obvious treatment, therefore, is public education, or other sets of practices that help residents overcome their closed-mindedness (and listen to the experts). In this way, I suggest, rather than providing a framework that promotes innovative explorations of the relations of proximity involved in urban collective actions, the conceptualization of local opposition as NIMBY provides a normative judgment of these actions and a conclusive determination of what they are and the stakes they involve.

The lens of the politics of contentious proximity, alternatively, opens rather than closes space for different kinds of engagements with, and evaluations of, localized urban collective action centering on contentious proximities. While employing this lens may certainly involve normative evaluation and judgment regarding the strategies and actions of urban collective actors, and particularly, regarding the ways these strategies and actions can build and enforce patterns of social and spatial exclusion, this evaluation is not inherent in the concept of the politics of contentious proximity itself. Such a lens, for instance, allows for the acknowledgment of implicit elements of racism in the representational politics of SHPOA and also the acknowledgement that the representational politics of the Ad Hoc Committee worked to occlude the role of economic forces in the construction of “monster” houses. It also allows for the admission that the success of the Ad Hoc Committee signaled greater inclusion for immigrants of Asian descent within Vancouver’s elite, but also that the conflict over “monster” houses served to reiterate the privileged place of South Shaughnessy within the City of Vancouver.

Thus, I suggest, the concept of NIMBY can be overly reductive and serve to mask significant aspects of local conflict. The work undertaken in this dissertation, and the concept of

the politics of contentious proximity, provides a new lens with which to examine localized social and spatial contestation. It contributes to the body of literature seeking an alternative to NIMBY by offering a more complex perspective on local opposition, the representational tools and tactics such opposition employs and the ways conflict centering on contentious proximity may shape the identities of people and places.

7.3 Conclusion

In this dissertation, I explored two instances in urban contestation in the Vancouver neighborhoods of the West End and Shaughnessy, and I argued that this contestation is usefully conceptualized as the politics of contentious proximity. Moreover, I argued that the conceptualization and analysis of this politics has both practical and theoretical significance. On a theoretical level, as I outlined in the preceding sections of this chapter, the politics of contentious proximity helps to expose blind spots within political theory literature on “identity politics” and it provides an alternative conceptual framework for exploring urban contestation to “urban social movement” and “NIMBY”.

However, it is with the reiteration of the practical significance of the politics of contentious proximity that I will bring this dissertation to a close. In a contemporary era marked by globalization, urbanization, shifting populations and development pressures, the way diverse populations negotiate the terms under which they live together within the limited confines of urban space has become a critically important challenge. The conceptualization and analysis of the politics of contentious proximity provides key insights into the tensions that can arise as urban residents experience the diversity of their cities in new ways and as they seek to assert some control of over the places in which they reside. Moreover, it provides a framework

centering on the tactics groups employ and the politics in which they engage. As I have shown in the preceding chapters, exploring urban contestation through the lens of the politics of contentious proximity helps to provide a deeper understanding of the seeming intransigence of many of the social and spatial hierarchies underlying city living, as well as ways that these hierarchies may shift. It draws out the tensions that exist between seeking inclusion, establishing a voice, and enforcing exclusion, reiterating patterns of dominance.

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