Civil Cities and Urban Governance: Regulating Disorder in Vancouver

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This paper uses initiatives associated with the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games as an entrée to examine wider dynamics in urban governance. Olympic host cities are particularly instructive sites for such an analysis because the stakes of long-term urban revitalization are acutely high and rest on an intense seventeen-day window when the host city receives global exposure. One upshot is that the essence of regulatory dynamics are starkly displayed, making host cities valuable laboratories in which to discern developments in the domain of urban social regulation. Particularly notable are how the Games are routinely accompanied by intensive efforts to regulate poverty, homelessness, and other visible signifiers of inequality and disorder incongruent with the host city's intensive branding and place marketing campaigns.

One example of these efforts is *Project Civil City* (hereafter PCC), a major initiative of the City of Vancouver and empirical focus of this paper. Adopted in late 2006, PCC was an integral component of a wider campaign on the part of a complex of local actors to use the Olympics to showcase Vancouver's 'livability' to a global audience. The primary focus of this initiative was to regulate disorder, which translated into the aim of achieving 50% reductions in homelessness, the open-air trade and/or use of drugs, and aggressive panhandling by 2010, and non-specific reductions in 'street disorder' in general. This latter category is broadly defined as "any activity or circumstance that deters or prevents the public from the lawful use or enjoyment of the City" (COV 2008: 10).

While much of what PCC sought to accomplish was tied to the Olympics, the Games were not the singular driving force behind this initiative. Instead, PCC needs to be seen in continuity with the ongoing development of Vancouver "as an area both for

market-oriented economic growth and for elite consumption practices" (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 368) in which the Olympics provided an opportunity to accelerate a number of long-standing objectives for the city, including the regulation of disorder. The inaugural PCC report for example describes the Olympics not simply as a deadline for reducing disorder but a "tremendous opportunity" and "catalyst" (COV, 2006a: 5) to confront the city's social problems. Consequently, we situate our analysis of PCC in the context of the links between urban revitalization and the regulation of disorder (Beckett and Herbert 2008; Coleman 2004; Gibson 2004; Helms, Atkinson, and MacLeod 2007; Lippert 2007). This literature accentuates how efforts to revitalize city centers are now often accompanied by social ordering programs where "security, policing, the regulation of conduct, and moral ordering have become essential ingredients" (Helms, Atkinson, and MacLeod 2007: 267). Recognizing that these processes play out in context-specific ways, we also situate PCC within the contours of Vancouver's "actually existing" neoliberalism (Brenner and Theodore 2002) in which the notion of the 'livable city' is prominent. In this context, our primary concern in this article is to examine how the Olympics served to accentuate a series of concerns about Vancouver's livability and the knowledges and tactics brought forward to address these concerns, and to link these developments with ongoing assessments of the urban impacts of neoliberal development. Or, to put this as a question, what can Vancouver's preparations for the Games tell us about urban social regulation under regimes of neoliberal governance?

We argue that PCC is an instructive case in this regard because of how it aspired to fashion a wide-ranging apparatus to govern diverse manifestations of disorder. This entailed efforts to align previously unconnected municipal services such as engineering,

sanitation and hygiene, parking authorities, zoning and building codes, and the police along with private sector actors (notably business improvement districts) and citizens themselves so that opportunities for disorder would be minimized and civility would emanate as naturally as possibility from the urban milieu. As such, PCC is reminiscent of Osborne and Rose's conception of an urban diagram that seeks to "capture the forces immanent in the city, to identify them, order them, intensify some and weaken others, to retain the viability of the socializing forces immanent to urban agglomeration whilst civilizing their antagonisms" (Osborne and Rose 1999: 738). Many of the specific tactics PCC enlisted to do this will be familiar to analysts of urban social regulation. However, our focus here is not exclusively on unearthing what might have been entirely new but on how PCC helped introduce some new initiatives, expand others, and in some cases simply re-brand initiatives already underway. Toward that end, the latter sections of this article focuses on three signature initiatives of PCC: the Carrall Street Greenway project, the Downtown Ambassadors, and the Granville Entertainment District.

It should be noted at the outset that PCC was formally abandoned as city policy approximately one year before the Games, a development that can be attributed to a wholesale shift in the composition of city council in 2008. While we touch on the reasons for this in concluding this paper, our primary focus is on the 28-month period in which PCC was official policy in Vancouver, the issues and anxieties that lead to its formulation, and some of the major initiatives advanced under its remit, which we see as an expression of the "trial-and-error searching process in which neoliberal strategies are being mobilized in place-specific forms and combinations in order to confront some of the many regulatory problems that have afflicted advanced capitalist cities during the

post-1970s period" (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 375). As such, it deserves attention as a project that simultaneously reflected and advanced emergent dynamics in urban governance.

Our analysis draws upon data collected as part of a broader project on the security, surveillance, and policing of the Olympic Games in the post-9/11 era (author references). Material presented here includes information from municipal reports and meeting minutes, and 29 interviews conducted with city officials, municipal, provincial, and federal law enforcement and public safety representatives, private-sector partners, and individuals associated with community-based organizations. These interviews were tape-recorded and focused on issues pertaining to Olympic initiatives relating to urban disorder. The interviews most germane to this paper were conducted during three trips to Vancouver (November 2007, June 2008, and July 2009), which also included ethnographic observations of downtown Vancouver—particularly the nighttime Entertainment District—field notes, photographs of downtown Vancouver, and attending community gatherings related to the Olympic Games hosted by organizations such as the Vancouver Public Space Network and 2010 GamesWatch. Except where indicated, most insights garnered through the interviews are expressed as background information rather than direct quotations. News reports from Canadian newspapers, notably *The Province*, *The Sun*, and *The Globe and Mail*, were also collected.

Urban Aspirations and Anxieties

In 1986 Vancouver hosted the World Exhibition, an event designed to "advertise the amenities and economic opportunities of Vancouver and British Columbia to an international audience" (Ley, Hiebert, and Pratt 1992: 255). It proved to be a key moment in the city's development and helped to solidify Vancouver's turn towards the Pacific Rim. The 2010 Olympic Games were expected to continue this pattern of urban growth by accelerating inward investment while consolidating Vancouver's international profile. At least three major infrastructural projects were timed to coincide with the 2010 Olympics; a rail link to the airport, a downtown convention center, and a multi-billion dollar upgrade to the highway to the town of Whistler, co-host of the 2010 Games. It is, however, in the 'soft' domain of branding and place promotion where the Games' success will ultimately be measured, particularly in consolidating it's brand as a livable city.

Livability is central to Vancouver's collective identity. That said, conceptions of livability are highly politicized and have assumed a host of different meanings since initially formulated in the 1960s to emphasize moderate, human-centered urban growth (Ley 1980: 239). Today, the enthusiasm for livability in Vancouver reflects the civic wisdom popularized by publications such as *City Journal* or Richard Florida (2005) in which cities only flourish in the post-industrial age if they can attract the young, highly educated, and mobile 'creative class' of the new knowledge-based economy. The Vancouver Economic Development Commission's guiding plan reflects this thinking when it states, "talent is increasingly mobile, drawn to cities that balance economic opportunity and quality of life. Quality of life is Vancouver's signature – the city consistency ranks in the top 3 cities in the world for quality of life. To attract and retain skilled workers and quality jobs, Vancouver will continue to make the city's quality of

life a top priority" (VEDC, 2006: 3). What this means in practice varies in each instance, but often amounts to gentrifying low-income areas and carving out cultural or professional districts that cater to the interests of the creative class, and predictably displacing the low income individuals and families residing in these areas (Peck 2005).

The Olympics were seen as an opportunity to showcase this livability. However, the Olympics also served to accentuate deep-seated concerns that the city would become known for quite a different set of qualities. Famous for its sweeping mountain vistas, waterfront cafés, Stanley Park, uber-hip shopping, and easy access to world-class outdoor pursuits, Vancouver also features the Downtown Eastside (DTES). Historically the core of the city, this neighborhood is now deeply affected by poverty. Here homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, street prostitution, street crime and the highest rate of HIV/AIDS infection of any North American urban center are the structuring conditions of daily life (Huey, Ericson, and Haggerty 2005; Mopas 2005). A complex of local business boosters were particularly concerned that these issues would dominate visitors' perceptions of the city over more selectively stylized representations. The Vancouver Board of Trade, for example, sent a letter to federal, provincial, and municipal leaders warning that the city was "in the grip of an urban malignancy manifested by an open drug market, rising property crime, aggressive panhandling and a visible, growing population of the homeless," all of which cumulated in "a street environment that is slowly but surely deteriorating." "These concerns," the letter continues, "are shared not only among the business community, but also by residents and even by many foreign tourists, so much so that families are increasingly avoiding our downtown area and international travel planners are beginning to recommend that Vancouver be avoided as a travel and

convention destination" (Vancouver Board of Trade, 2006).[1] A second letter from the Board of Trade on behalf of the same signatories cautions that Vancouver was a city "beset by beggars and thieves" that were "certain to be noted by the international media and will be one of the lasting legacies reflecting on Vancouver, British Columbia and Canada's reputation" after the Olympics (Vancouver Board of Trade, 2007).

Doing something about street-level manifestations of social inequality was thus a critical issue for those who saw these problems as a drag on Vancouver's development as a postindustrial metropolis. In this context, the Olympics were seen not only as a reason and deadline to address these issues but an opportunity to effect lasting changes that would buttress Vancouver's renowned livability into the future. These motivations were touched on during an interview with the Vancouver city councilor who spearheaded PCC:

> When we made the targets for 2010, what we said about the Olympics is that this isn't motivated by the Olympics, but the Olympics are a catalyst to get things happening because the world is coming, and so it's a really tangible and credible deadline to do so.

These objectives were first advanced in by the Non-Partisan Association (NPA), Vancouver's historically pro-growth and pro-business municipal party, which in 2006 held the Mayoral Roundtable Discussions on Public Disorder and Homelessness and a series of community consultations to publicize and politicize these issues. *Project Civil City* emerged from this process and was announced at a news conference in November 2006, where the Mayor proclaimed that the city has let "unacceptable behavior become

[1] Signatories include Tourism Vancouver, the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, the Vancouver Hotel Association, the Vancouver Taxi Association, Retail BC, the Downtown Vancouver Association, the Vancouver Hotel General Managers' Association, the Building Owners and Managers Association of BC, the Council of Tourism Associations, the BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association, and the BC and Yukon Hotel Association.

acceptable." PCC was presented as a way to "clean up" the city and ensure that "Vancouver remains one of the best cities in the world to live, work, visit, play and invest" (COV 2006a: 7).

Enhancing livability, governing disorder

Canadian cities are entities created by provincial law. As such, they cannot legislate criminal law and have a fairly narrow repertoire of powers available to them (Levi and Valverde 2006). In that context, PCC called for efforts to lobby higher levels of government to effect changes in areas beyond municipal authority, such as drug policy, criminal law, low-income housing, and public health. The core of *Project Civil City,* however, lies in attempts to govern from a distance "by arranging the activities and calculations of a proliferation of independent agents" (Rose and Miller 1992: 180). In the Vancouver context, this meant that the bulk of the work done by PCC entailed unifying, coordinating and realigning solutions immanent to existing city services, private sector organizations, and residents themselves.

Such governmental ambitions have culminated in the emergence of what Garland (1996: 455) characterizes as a 'strange new specialism' in coordinating the efforts of diverse agencies. In Vancouver this role was filled by the PCC Commissioner, Geoff Plant. Mr. Plant mimics in the Canadian context what Coleman has identified in the UK as the growth of "highly-paid anti-social behavior 'czars'" (Coleman 2005: 136). A former provincial Attorney General, Mr. Plant's role was to facilitate working relationships between city departments, other levels of government, and private sector

partners, identify problems and solutions, encourage others to undertake concrete action, and to monitor outputs. Plant described his role as “hard-wiring quality of life into the city’s mission and work” (Plant, 2009: 1).

Much of Mr. Plant’s focus was on using official statistics as a form of political rhetoric and governmental technology (Haggerty 2001; Rose 1999). At the inaugural press conference Vancouver’s Mayor emphasized this centrality of numbers to PCC, proclaiming “what gets measured gets done” (Sullivan 2006). The first PCC initiative was therefore to conduct a benchmark analysis of the levels of aggressive panhandling, open drug sales and use, and homelessness in Vancouver. Statistics also provided a way to monitor the progress of other organizations, which in this case included other government and private sector partners. To further this project the PCC Implementation Office was plugged into a range of statistical circuits including DTES monitoring reports, information collected under existing governmental agreements, municipal housing and building inspection reports, engineering and planning services databases, criminal justice statistics, health services, and EMS data (COV 2007d: 11-12). The PCC Implementation Office thus served as a centre of calculation and statistical surveillance, where numbers about levels of disorder were “transported from far and wide and accumulated in a central locale, where they [could] be aggregated, compared, compiled and the subject of calculation” (Rose 1999: 211).

In essence, PCC initiatives eschewed abstract or systematic thought about Vancouver’s social problems in favor of a form of pragmatics that worked by cataloguing a raft of heterogeneous problematic spaces, populations and activities, and advocating for a series of ‘common sense’ solutions. Beyond the mainstay issues of homelessness,

aggressive panhandling, and the open trade and/or use of drugs, more specific and recurrent issues were identified, including bedbugs in the DTES, garbage in alleyways from 'dumpster divers,' litter, graffiti, bike theft, theft from vehicles, stolen vehicles, off-leash dogs, late-night noise, fights, and public urination around the Granville Entertainment District, and the drug trade at particular downtown intersections. The recommendations for action involve an equally mixed set of tactics designed to promote civility and govern disorder; over 54 recommendations are set out in the inaugural PCC report and elaborated into 75 recommendations in the first progress report. Approximately one-third of the initial recommendations involve lobbying the provincial and federal governments for policy changes in areas that lie beyond municipal powers such as in national drug policy, mental health services, criminal law, and housing. This included calls to lobby for supervised safe injection sites for heroin users in the DTES, legal measures that would make it easier for police to return offenders to province where they have outstanding warrants, changes to provincial law that allowed police to approve criminal charges without review by the Crown, greater provincial funding for low-income housing, emergency shelters, and mental health and addiction services, more money for police and social workers, and affirming the commitments of all levels of government to the existing strategies designed to address the drug problems in Vancouver and the DTES.

The balance of the recommendations in Project Civil City consists of pragmatic plans concordant with the limited powers available to municipalities. These tactics include encouraging business owners to lock or remove dumpsters (to prevent problems associated with binning), improving the enforceability of municipal tickets by linking

them to other municipal and provincial databases (such as vehicle and driver licensing), adopting ‘no sit/no lie’ municipal bylaws to complement those already dealing with camping and sidewalk vending, encouraging the police department to enforce the province’s existing *Safe Streets Act* and *Trespass Act* pertaining to aggressive panhandling and trespass, encouraging the speedy removal of graffiti, improving lighting in problem areas, redesigning problem corners and laneways, providing more public toilets downtown, reducing the risk of vehicle theft in downtown parking lots, expanding the use of ‘bait’ cars and bicycles, and exploring the possibility of using CCTV and rezoning back lanes to allow for patios and rear-facing storefronts “in a more European way” (COV 2006a: 11).

Though rarely stated explicitly, the majority of these practical tactics operationalize two related forms of criminological thought. The first is ‘broken windows’ theory, an approach that holds that small transgressions promise to proliferate in an upward-tending cycle, producing more opportunities for crime and disorder (Wilson and Kelling 1982). The second is a type of situational crime prevention which seeks to shape the immediate physical context such that committing crimes or acting disorderly becomes more difficult or impossible (Felson 2002). These approaches are little concerned with the root causes of such behaviors, but appeal to municipal governments because they can be translated into a host of tactics commensurate with the narrow repertoire of powers available to cities (Herbert and Brown 2006: 758). Furthermore, the considerable discretionary margin afforded by the broken windows thesis to regulate a wide range of behaviors that are not illegal *per se* but presumed to invite more serious crime dovetails with the ambiguous definition of disorder employed in PCC. Surveillance is central to

these criminological approaches, and also to PCC, as it serves as a means to identify small transgressions before they spiral into crimes and to ostensibly deter unwanted behavior and signal effective guardianship. PCC consequently seeks to foster a variety of different modalities of surveillance. The most noticeable recommendation of this sort involved advocating for the use of surveillance cameras in the Granville Entertainment District, something that the VPD have long been pressing for (Haggerty, Huey, and Ericson 2008). However, for PCC, interpersonal surveillance is as much if not more important than technologically aided monitoring.

And while statistics play a major part in the rhetorical politics of championing such initiatives, the appeal to pragmatism tends to eschew statistical validation in favor of impressionistic and testimonial confirmation of what works (Haggerty 2009). For example, a street cleaning pilot project in the immediate vicinity of Main and Hastings streets in the DTES concludes that while it is impossible to determine a statistical relationship between increased street cleaning and feelings of public safety (as the broken windows model would suggest), "qualitatively it was confirmed that there is a direct relationship" (COV 2006c: 8).

The following sections uses the examples of the Carrall Street Greenway, the Downtown Ambassadors the Granville Entertainment District as examples of how some of the pragmatic governmental ambitions of urban security outlined in the Olympics-inspired PCC initiative were concretized in localized urban initiatives.

Carrall Street Greenway

The Carrall Street Greenway initiative employs elements of broken windows approaches while incorporating different modalities of surveillance. The origins of the Carrall Street project predate PCC, but PCC contributed significantly to moving this project forward by identifying it as a key way to reduce disorder in the DTES. The Greenway project targets Carrall Street, which runs north to south in the transition zone between the growing affluence of Gastown and Victory Square to the west and the dire poverty of the DTES to the east. It entails a beautification scheme involving narrowing Carrall in favor of wider sidewalks and bicycle lanes, restoring the corridor's historic cobblestone paving, introducing more trees and shrubs, lighting improvements, public art, small-scale performance spaces and zoning allowances for street-facing patios. Beyond their aesthetic dimensions, these changes are intended to reduce criminogenic situations by enhancing "pedestrian presence and street vibrancy" in the revitalized area, which in turn is presumed to increase interpersonal surveillance that will "make the street safer" (COV 2007c: 11).

The project also involves redesigning two existing city parks: Maple Leaf Square and Pigeon Park. The changes to Pigeon Park were substantial and characterized as "pivotal" to the entire project (Vancouver Parks and Recreation 2009: 2). Occupying a triangular slice of land at the northwest corner of Hastings and Carrall, the park had long been identifiable by a large adjacent wall which local residents had painted with a large mural, memorials, graffiti, and other artwork. By certain standards, it is a criminogenic space and the media often lament that neighborhood denizens tend to chase away or intimidate other users and that the park is littered with refuse, used syringes, and shopping carts overflowing with scavenged goods. It is also a vital mixing ground for

local citizens, a popular location where neighborhood residents hang out, sell sundry small goods, and for some serves as a bedroom.

Proposed changes included installing additional lighting, a self-cleaning toilet, new water fountain, benches and tree planters, repainting all surfaces, enhanced lighting and re-installing the streetcar tracks that first carved the triangular park out of the city's street grid (Vancouver Parks and Recreation 2009). Sitting surfaces such as benches and tree planters with rounded edges were to be maintained but long, flat surfaces (suitable for sleeping) were to be minimized. Specified bushes were also to be removed as they were deemed to provide shelter for drug transactions or were used as toilets. The wall of graffiti art was also painted over on the assumption that it conveyed signs of inappropriate use of urban space. A police spokesperson reports that painting this wall "has had a positive effect on not providing an environment that reflects lawlessness and discourages the criminal element from congregating" (quoted in Sifton 2009).

Officials also encouraged the police to aggressively enforce bylaws for minor offences. This strategy produced a dramatic increase in the number of tickets issues in the DTES for bylaw infractions such as jaywalking, loitering, camping, trespassing, and even spitting.[2] The VPD acknowledges that most individuals ticketed in the DTES cannot afford to pay these tickets and have stated that their ultimate ambition is not to collect on these fines. Instead, issuing tickets is understood to provide a teachable moment, where officers can communicate the limits of tolerable behavior (Howell 2009a, 2009b) while

[2] 247 tickets were issues for bylaw infractions in the DTES in 2007. In 2008 this jumped to 439 (Bellett, 2007; Howell, 2009a, 2009b).

also providing the pretext to search individuals for illegal items, inspect identification, and check for outstanding warrants.

Rebuilding Vancouver block-by-block and brick-by-brick along the lines of the Carrall Street Greenway is beyond of the scope of any single governmental office, but it exemplifies how the Olympic-inspired PCC envisioned coordinating different city services to effect maximum reductions in disorder to the micro-scale of urban governance. These include sanitation, zoning, policing, planning and parks and recreation.

Downtown Ambassadors

Vancouver has 18 business improvement associations (BIAs) that provide local members with supplementary services such as street beautification, garbage removal, place promotion, and, for the larger associations, security patrols. PCC seeks to strengthen some of these services by advocating on behalf of BIAs to secure additional funding, assisting in modeling services on the innovations of other cities, or facilitating cooperation amongst the BIAs. Some of the programs that the PCC Commissioner promoted include efforts to lock or limit access to dumpsters, the *Keep Vancouver Spectacular* initiative, a combined effort between BIAs, the city and community groups to conduct monthly neighborhood clean-up campaigns, and *Adopt-a-Block*, a neighborhood crime prevention program.

The most prominent and contentious public-private partnership championed by PCC is the Downtown Ambassadors, the joint hospitality and security initiative of the

Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA). As Vancouver's largest BIA, the DVBIA has a territory that includes much of Vancouver's central business district, many of the city's top tourist attractions, theaters, major shopping centers, the cruise ship terminal, and the Granville Entertainment District. The Downtown Ambassadors program is paid for by the DVBIA at a cost of approximately $700,000 CAN per year and consists of uniformed security guards – 'Ambassadors' – patrolling public streets. Often working in pairs, these individuals have the twin mandate of providing 'street concierge' services to visitors and acting as extended 'eyes and ears' for the police. Up to ten Ambassadors can be found on the streets of the DVBIA during peak hours. According to the DVBIA Security Director, a retired VPD constable, the Ambassadors are supposed to maintain a 50-40-10 split between security, hospitality, and administrative functions respectively. Informal discussions with individual Ambassadors suggests that security functions make up two-thirds or more of their daily routines. This includes monitoring and moving along panhandlers and homeless people, keeping track of known offenders or problem spaces (i.e., high-theft car lots), notifying business owners of graffiti, garbage, or other site-specific concerns, and liaising with police (Huey, Ericson, and Haggerty 2005; Sleiman and Lippert, 2010).

In other words, much of the daily routine of the Ambassadors consists of monitoring and indexing different forms of potentially actionable disorder. This function has recently and deliberately been made more apparent through changes to the Ambassador's uniforms. Previously outfitted in red golf shirts, black slacks, and porter-style caps with the 'Downtown Ambassadors' trademark emblazoned on their caps, they are now uniformed in more para-police gear including heavier boots, flashlights and

radios attached to thick belts, utility vests, cargo pants, and a large ‘Genesis Security’ patch on the shoulder. This uniform was designed to tip the Ambassador’s profile away from the friendlier image of the street concierge towards a tougher appearance of security official. The Security Director of the DVBIA touched on this during an interview, saying,

> We like the edge that it gives. Some people thought that [the old uniforms] were just too soft, walking around with colorful umbrellas and stuff like that. And the hats. So that works for most people, but there’s a small group of people that that doesn’t work for.

Arguably, it is this ‘small group of people’ that the Ambassadors wish to impress with the image of authority. As part of the publicly funded expansion of the Ambassadors (discussed below) at night the Ambassadors also patrol the Granville Entertainment District. Here, all signs of the hospitality function are abandoned in favor of noticeably more intimidating security guards, black jackets, gloves, and cargo pants, and orange safety vests with ‘Genesis Security’ inscribed across the back which the Security Director said was designed to project “a more visceral presence” than the daytime Ambassadors.

Project Civil City recommended that the Ambassador be expanded to other parts of the city on that basis that it “has proven to be a successful model of providing uniformed staff on Vancouver’s downtown streets during the busy tourist season” (COV 2006a: 9). In early 2007, just months after PCC was adopted, several BIAs entered into service agreements with the DVBIA that resulted in the Ambassadors covering most of the downtown peninsula. In mid-2007 the DVBIA proposed a cost-sharing arrangement to City Council that now sees the city pay close to $750,000 to expand the Ambassador program even further on the logic that “an investment in visible security, including in the business areas frequented by visitors to the city, is not just an investment in security, it is an investment in the economy of the city” (COV 2007b: 9), an assessment that succinctly

captures how fostering security-related initiatives has become an integral part of the entrepreneurial turn in urban governance.

The Granville Entertainment District

PCC also singled out the Granville Entertainment District for focused police attention. This three-block stretch of Granville Street south of Robson was once a thriving commercial corridor, but the area experienced such a precipitous decline in the 1970s and 1980s that one local journalist referred to it as Vancouver's "heart of darkness" (Cox 1987) as it became the epicenter of a thriving drug economy populated by gritty hotels, pawnshops and homeless people. In an effort to revitalize the area and compete with nearby indoor malls, Granville Street south of Robson was rezoned in the 1980s as a pedestrian mall and in 1997 designated the 'Theater Row Entertainment District' and zoned for more liquor-licensed seats (Garr 2007; Lees 1998). The number of drinking establishments swiftly increased: prior to 1997 the strip had 1,175 licensed seats, and one decade later this number was estimated to be near 6,700 (COV 2007a: 3).

As the Entertainment District became a popular nighttime destination for individuals living throughout the Lower Mainland it also became a prominent problem for the VPD as assaults, gang activity, perpetually high levels of noise, drinking, vandalism, and alcohol-fueled mayhem became nightly occurrences. A key aim of the PCC was to manage what the media has called this "ticking time bomb" (Eustace 2007).

Regulating the Granville Entertainment District primarily revolves around tactics to manage time and space to minimize opportunities for disorder (cf. Berkley and Thayer

2000). These are most apparent in a number of architectural modifications. For example, the flat, closely grouped benches that once afforded a convenient place to congregate and lie down (or pass out) have been spaced further apart and replaced by benches with protruding armrests, making them only useable for seating fewer numbers of people. The lower blocks of the Granville strip which are open to car traffic are now lined with permanent metal bollards designed to prevent vehicles from pulling onto the sidewalk. Efforts to more efficiently clear the area after closing time include changes to public transit and establishing a dedicated and well-publicized taxi stand near one of the major cross-streets.

These efforts to manage flows of humanity have been accompanied by the creation of a new police squad (the LIMA squad) to deal specifically with the Entertainment District. Over two long weekends in the summer of 2007 the VPD experimented with closing the three-block strip to vehicle traffic and deployed 16 regular foot patrol officers and 7 traffic enforcement officers on bicycles to patrol the pedestrian access intersections. This squad represents an attempt to shift the regulation of the Entertainment District from reactive law enforcement to a proactive public safety orientation. These officers can ticket or make arrests as needed, but the emphasis is on preempting problems before they occur by maintaining a highly visible and interactive presence; LIMA units "by nature are supposed to be proactive and not call-driven," says a 2008 city council report (COV, 2007a). This orientation was reiterated in an interview with the officer in charge of the VPD's Emergency and Operational Planning Unit, which oversees the LIMA squad. This officer explained,

> We encourage our members to engage the crowds as well, to do what we call the meet-and-greet, so say hi, how are you tonight, that sort of thing, because that

> verbalization increases the visibility. Sometime the fluorescent vests will wash over but if they engage in even a short one-sentence conversation then it imprints it in them that ya, the police are there and things should be OK. Deterrence is a portion of it but the majority of it is public reassurance.

In addition to this highly visible presence, the road closures have been credited with reducing late-night disorder in the district by reducing sidewalk congestion, increasing positive police and patron interaction, minimizing the potential for people being struck by vehicles, and increasing the feeling of safety and well-being amongst female patrons, all of which is afforded by opening up nightly crowds to the gaze of the police. A report to city council requesting the extension of the LIMA squad summarizes this, saying,

> Behavioral issues associated with contagion, invincibility, and anonymity are reduced when people know they can be seen by, and cannot readily hide or escape from, police. The open street allowed this to occur. This deterred and reduced violent and crowd mentality behavior (COV, 2007a: 10).

Based on these ostensibly successful outcomes, the LIMA squad became a semi-permanent presence in the Granville District in 2008. A business tax, proportional to the number of liquor seats that establishments are licensed to accommodate, funds officers on this squad working on the weekends between May and September and non-routine weekends during the rest of the year (i.e., during New Year's Eve or a high-profile hockey game).

The bar industry is also positioned as being integral to the more direct management of disorder in the area. In addition to adopting practices such as not allowing line-ups past 2am and hiring extra doormen, proprietors are charged with having to know and manage risks within their establishments. The per-seat levy that funds the LIMA squad also funds more random inspections to ensure that licensees observe all

liquor regulations. An increasing number of establishments are also employing *BarWatch*, an industry-specific effort to collect and pool information on patrons (author reference). Clubs that are members of *BarWatch* electronically scan the government identification of patrons as they enter and use this information to track customers and ban troublesome clients from all establishments networked on the system. Although Provincial Privacy Commissioners have raised concerns about such practices, these devices have also been touted as having reduced gang-related shootings and drug trafficking within Vancouver's popular nightspots and are being actively encouraged by industry regulators.

Project Civil City also helped reintroduce the prospect of installing open-street surveillance cameras in the Granville Entertainment District. This follows an unsuccessful 1999 initiative that sought to monitor the drug and sex trade in the DTES (Haggerty, Huey, and Ericson 2008). This time, instead of playing up metaphors of urban decay and victimization, the cameras were justified with reference to extensive nighttime foot traffic, large numbers of liquor seats, high police call loads, officer safety, their utility during the heightened security environment of the 2010 Olympic Games, and their potential applications in instances of civil unrest and counter-terrorism (VPB 2006: 3).

The VPD plan was to have surveillance cameras working in the Entertainment District sometime in 2008, but no further discussion of the idea appeared before the police board after the 2006 reports. The use of open-street CCTV in Vancouver did, however, become a reality in 2008, although this system was not controlled by the VPD. In October of that year the provincial government announced $1 million CAN to fund surveillance pilot projects in Kelowna, Surrey, and Vancouver. This included over

$400,000 CAD provided to Vancouver's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to establish a mobile surveillance camera system "capable of providing rapidly deployable temporary monitoring capabilities at large public events or in response to hazards, emergencies and other unforeseen eventualities" (COV 2009: 2). The OEM also received $2 million CAN from the federal government for several 'urban domain' sites outside of the operational sphere of the Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit but which posed public safety challenges during the Games due to the crowds expected to gather at these sites. These funds were used to purchase nearly 90 temporary cameras and a permanent CCTV control room in the city's E-Comm centre. The Granville Entertainment District was one site for these cameras, and there remains ongoing official interest in establishing permanent open-street surveillance in this area.

In short, PCC sought to advance and intensify the multiple forms of surveillance that overlap in the Granville Entertainment District including interpersonal surveillance of crowds and patrons by police, monitoring and barring of problem patrons based on the collection and sharing of customer information, and technologically-aided surveillance, much of which was justified in relation to a host of 'high' security issues but which are expected to contribute on a night-to-night basis to maintaining order in the Entertainment District.

Conclusion

Project Civil City came to an end shortly after a slate of center-left candidates swept all but one of the 12 incumbent NPA councilors from office in December 2008. This local

landslide was precipitated in large part by the seismic shifts in the global credit market in late 2008. One consequence of these shifts was the bankruptcy of the New York investment firm financing the construction of the 2010 athlete's village. Bound by contractual obligation to Olympic organizers to ensure the project's completion by November 01 2009, the City of Vancouver requested permission from the province to borrow and lend beyond existing statutory powers. The request was approved, and city council secretly extended $500 million CAD in cash and guarantees to the developers to complete the project. When news of this loan was made public through leaked council documents just weeks prior to the election date, widespread outrage was registered at the voting booth with the removal of the cadre of NPA elected officials that had dominated city council. The campaign platform of Vancouver's new mayor included the promise to discontinue PCC on the basis that the program's annual budget could be better spent elsewhere, and soon after taking office in January 2009 the new council announced it would not renew the city's contract with the PCC Commissioner upon its expiration one month later. The mayor also cancelled the grant to expand the Ambassador program upon taking office as part of a campaign promise – influenced in large part by a grievance filed by the VPD against the city – that public money should not be spent on privacy security services. The long-standing goal of regulating disorder remains a priority for the VPD, which gained momentum under PCC with the initiatives associated with the Granville Entertainment District and a study of policing practices in New York (Lemcke, 2008).

Though short lived, Project Civil City accentuates how the regulation of broadly defined and heterogeneous imaginings of urban disorder has become an integral component of postindustrial development. Part of an evolving trial and error proess that

capitalizes on the sets of resources and institutions available to operate at this level. In Vancouver, a series of financial, organizational and pragmatic agendas compounded by a sense of urgency added by the Olympics coalesced the regulatory abilities of private and public actors in such a way as to fixate on the minutia of urban design, human comportment, and police practice. All of this in an attempt to craft an urban regulatory apparatus that coheres with the preferred meanings of 'livability' and 'quality of life' promoted by city officials and business boosters. Such initiatives can be seen as efforts to manage the crisis of escalating social polarization produced within a neoliberal framework (Brenner and Theodore 2002; Brenner and Theodore 2005; Peck and Tickell 2002). In a time of small government and fiscal austerity this polarization is often felt most acutely at the level of cities. As political entities, cities can also be the least equipped to deal with the root causes of such issues. Consequently, "cities have become strategically crucial geographical arenas in which a variety of neoliberal initiatives – along with closely intertwined strategies of crisis displacement and crisis management – have been articulated" (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 351). Project Civil City is one such articulation, an experiment in urban regulation designed to confront the polarization inherited from previous rounds of entrepreneurial development in the city. That this experiment was abandoned reminds us that "actually existing" neoliberalism is neither linear nor deterministic. As much as Vancouver is a laboratory for postindustrial development, it is also an instructive case in stalled development as well (Ley and Dobson 2008). Nevertheless, the novelty of this experiment lies in how PCC operated as a much more comprehensive and far-reaching apparatus for governing disorder than the singular adoption of CCTV or the development of new legal tools to manage

panhandling, for example. PCC includes these and many, many more elements, and attempts to weave these disparate regulatory endeavors into a loose networks of disorder-governing technologies designed to stave off an ostensibly coming urban decline in the name of enhancing the city's livability for a preferred segment of the population. In this context PCC can be understood as set of socio-spatial ordering mechanisms to manage the spatial distribution of inequality in Vancouver by keeping, for example, the homeless away from the city's tourism and consumption clusters with the 'soft hand' of the Ambassadors while maintaining the de facto policy of containment through 'hard' policing in the DTES (Mopas 2005). In this sense PCC could be seen as a flanking mechanism or buffer "through which to insulate powerful economic actors from the manifold failures of the market, the state, and governance that are persistently generated within a neoliberal political framework" (Brenner and Theodore 2002: 374), something that is abundantly clear in the case of the Carrall Street revitalization project that now distinctly demarcates affluence from poverty and marks the furthest point of encroaching gentrification into the DTES.

Project Civil City also provides an instructive example of some of the more predictable implications of hosting mega events. The detailed efforts to regulate urban spaces and populations outline above seem far removed from Olympics organizers' grandiose mission to use the Olympics to build "A peaceful and better world." Instead, the Olympics in Vancouver became an opportunity for local authorities to justify such banal governmental initiatives as ticketing the poor for trivialities, locking garbage cans, redesigning park benches, and removing posters from lampposts as yet another legacy to be leveraged from an opportune moment to accelerate postindustrial city-building

alongside investments in transportation improvements and hospitality infrastructure. Such dynamics are particularly important to foreground given how various incarnations of mega events have become central to urban revitalization aspirations at a global level. Indeed, in the aftermath of the Vancouver Olympics, advocates such as Mr. Plant have are already embedded in the global circuits of mega-event expertise (author reference), where they are promoting the merits of the PCC approach to other urban planners.

For critical analysts all of this presents something of a political dilemma. On the one hand, such initiatives put on the political agenda classic instances of the 'pains of poverty,' including bedbugs and a lack of public toilets. In a neoliberal political climate it is unlikely that such issues would receive serious attention without initiatives such as PCC which aim to connect them to the types of urban revitalization agendas that are attractive to commercial and governmental actors. As such, such initiatives amount to a form of 'governing through disorder,' as a multitude of social ills that deserve public attention in their own right only become actionable when they are re-framed as problem of crime and disorder that threaten preferred urban imaginings (Simon 1997) or the interests of those sponsoring spectacular mega-events.

One the other hand, how such urban problems are framed in PCC involves a maddening refusal to connect such issues to the dynamics of urban poverty, policy neglect, marginalization, and social exclusion. A complex of local actors saw the Olympics as an opportunity to address disorder in the city not because the problems it sought to address reduce life expectancy, limit human potential, and cause untold levels of human suffering. Instead, these issues were understood to be problems primarily

because they risked undermining the preferred significations of the city that would be broadcast to a global audience of potential visitors, workers and investors.

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