

Sex and the Revitalized City

Sex and the Revitalized City

Gender, Condominium Development, and Urban Citizenship

Leslie Kern



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Sex and the Revitalized City

Introduction

In 2002, a *Toronto Star* real estate reporter described a revelatory moment among condominium developers and industry analysts:

As industry insiders sat around marvelling at the seemingly limitless appetite for downtown condominiums in the last few years, it gradually dawned on them that the single woman, as purchaser, was a force to be reckoned with. Buried in the sales data they found evidence of a significant sociological shift. (Cordileone 2002, O1)

While this anecdote evokes an amusing image of smug condominium developers marvelling at their record profits, only to be struck by the deep insight that they may in fact be heralding the dawn of a new age of women's emancipation, the reporter is not completely misguided in attributing the discovery of this significant sociological shift to the condominium industry. This shift has not been reflected upon by urban scholars, despite the questions it raises about the social impacts of gentrification, property redevelopment, and urban revitalization, as well as concerns about women's place in the contemporary postindustrial city.

Even a casual observer of the urban environment could not help but notice the massive transformations in Toronto's physical and social landscapes over the past fifteen years, as vacant lots, brownfield sites, and rezoned lands have spawned hundreds of condominium projects of all forms, and drawn a variety of gentrifier groups into the downtown core, reshaping neighbourhoods old and new. The famous CN Tower is now flanked by dozens of

condominium towers along the waterfront; condominium advertisements can be found on billboards, in magazines, and even on television; and major newspapers devote weekly sections to the phenomenon of “condo living.” Toronto’s evolution into North America’s largest condominium market represents a shift in policy and development towards high-rise, high-density urban intensification. While the long-term effects of this boom are yet to be discerned, there are important current issues raised by this particular form of urban revitalization. These include questions about city building processes, about transformations in everyday urban life, and about the definitions of citizen and citizenship mobilized in pursuit of global city status.

These issues are nothing new. However, there is a fresh opportunity here to investigate how condominium development, ownership, and governance affect the daily lives of a distinct group of city dwellers, situated in the context of the broader themes of neoliberal city building and city politics, shifting forms of urban governance, and new constructions of urban citizenship. To do so, I attempt to trace the underlying political-economic rationality behind condominium development as an expression of neoliberal ideology, while simultaneously exploring the ways in which this ideology is filtered through condominium ownership and governance into the daily meanings and practices of urban living for women condominium dwellers. This, I argue, opens a conceptual space within which to understand how people’s relationships to the city are being redefined, how opportunities for social justice are shaped in neoliberal times, and what potential exists for democratic citizenship in the revitalized city.

Within the space that this project opens up, I offer some observations on and insights into city building, everyday life, and identity that expand and challenge the received wisdom about women in the city. One of the surprising, and perhaps troubling, aspects to come to light is that, despite the autonomy and freedom experienced by women in the revitalized city, many of the ideologies and discourses at work here reconstitute patriarchal relations and remarkably traditional roles for women, albeit in ways that are flexible enough to fit within the rubric of neoliberal urbanism. For example, condominium ownership seems to offer financial freedom for young women, but it simultaneously draws them into the social, political, and moral structure of private property ownership ahead of, or as a substitute for, marriage or long-term partnership. In a twist on women’s historical exclusion from the rights of private property ownership, the contemporary postindustrial city has become a place where private property ownership is positioned as a way of achieving gender equality. However, the financial freedoms offered do

not necessarily mean that patriarchal gender ideologies about home, work, family, and the life course are subverted.

Condominiums are often characterized positively as communities. My analysis illustrates how the notion of community may be used to mask or soften the capitalist logic of accumulation, how the logic of highest and best use becomes encoded in community, and how an implicit hierarchy of community posits gentrification as necessary for the creation of community. As self-styled community builders, private city building agents have a central role in shaping the image of the desired urban citizen and urban community. Condominiums, I suggest, create new geographies of inclusion and exclusion that help to define who is thought of as a community member or a fellow citizen. At the same time, the reshaping of public and private space through condominium development creates both constraints and opportunities for citizenship and community engagement, particularly for groups such as women.

Furthermore, the process of urban revitalization seems to promise greater freedom for women in the public realm. I challenge this notion by demonstrating how ideas about women's fear, vulnerability, and need for protection and containment shape the production of contemporary spaces of revitalization. At the same time, the specific contours of urban freedom and its expression are offered to women through a rearticulation of rather traditional feminine bourgeois roles, those of watcher and watched, consumer and consumed. In Figure 1, the advertising billboard invites the consumer to "live in liberty. It's a neighbourhood." Freedom is conflated with the condominium and the city: it is a place that is bought rather than a political concept. Throughout *Sex and the Revitalized City*, I work to unpack the troubling implications of consumer-oriented freedom for women.

Debate about condominium development is polarized in both scholarly literature and mainstream discourse. Condominiums are presented both as the postmodernist version of Jane Jacobs' notion of the "sacking" of the city and as the salvation of the deindustrialized city; as capitalist accumulation gone mad and the solution to the evils of urban sprawl; as the creator of social and economic polarization and the housing equalizer for marginalized groups; as the homogenization of city life and the rebirth of Toronto as a creative city. None of these dichotomous positions captures the complex political, economic, and ideological sources of condominium development, nor do they allow for attention to the ways that condominium ownership and lifestyles affect the daily lives and identities of condominium dwellers. My goal, then, is to present a theoretically informed, empirically grounded,



FIGURE 1 *Live in liberty*. Billboard for Liberty on the Park Condominiums, Liberty Village, Toronto.

and spatially situated analysis that both deconstructs these polarized views and advances an understanding of the context-specific effects of neoliberal urban policies and practices on the ground, tracing the complexities and contradictions, constraints and opportunities, that are produced in everyday life. In particular, this book emphasizes the issues of tenure and home ownership; the ways in which condominiums are constituted as communities and how these communities function to redefine or to shift the spaces and scales of urban governance; and the ways in which condominium living articulates with a specific vision of city life through the mobilization of particular identities and subject positions.

Focusing on the gendered dimensions of city building processes, and on the ways in which gender ideologies are embedded in and expressed through discourses that promote and shape new visions of urban citizens and urban citizenship, permits a critique of urban revitalization and a more nuanced reading of the neoliberal city. I argue that neoliberalism comprises sets of co-evolving discourses and practices that intersect to produce particular,

contextual, on-the-ground effects (Larner 2003). The economic rationality of neoliberalism structures the roll-out (Peck and Tickell 2002) of condominiums as a private, free-market solution to the crises facing postindustrial, globalizing cities. Despite the tendency of neoliberal strategies to subsume the social within the realm of the market and proceed as if blind to social differences, gendered ideas about urban space and urban life are shifted, mutated, redefined, and rearticulated in complex ways within neoliberal agendas. A feminist lens that uncovers the gendered social geographies of the revitalizing city allows us to view the ways in which neoliberalism is constituted through multiple discourses and practices.

One of the challenges in articulating an analysis of condominium development in and through both the frameworks of the neoliberal city and feminist urban theory is that the relevant literatures have not often engaged with one another in a substantive manner. The urban literature that draws on a critique of neoliberal urbanism tends to do so at a relatively high level of abstraction, where the effects of neoliberal political-economic policies and practices are not often traced through the everyday lives of the people they affect (see, for example, Brenner and Theodore's [2002b] edited collection). Feminist urban geography, on the other hand, has been concerned with developing a gendered analysis of social relations as inscribed in, and shaped by, the built environment. Many feminist scholars have maintained a focus on understanding women's everyday experiences around work, family, safety, community activism, and other issues (Bondi and Rose 2003; Darke 1996; Garber and Turner 1995; Miranne and Young 2000; Andrew and Moore-Milroy 1988). Although feminist work has taken on state neoliberalism at various scales (Bondi 2005; Bashevkin 2006; Katz 2005), there is still a need for systematic analyses of the gendered dimensions of city building processes, of the macro-economic forces shaping urban governance, and of issues of land, tenure, and property development in the city (exceptions are Fincher 2004; Kern and Wekerle 2008).

I do not intend simply to use the framework of neoliberal urbanism to understand how condominium development fits into broader city building processes and the framework of feminist urban theory to understand how women experience condominium ownership and condominium lifestyles; rather, I suggest that neoliberal urbanism can and should be traced through everyday life and the ways that people construct their identities in relation to the city. Feminist urban theory can contribute to debates on these city building processes and complicate the neoliberal urbanist story about the

capitalist city. Much as socialist feminist work on the city conceptualized the ways in which gendered spatial arrangements were integral to the development of the Fordist economy (Mackenzie and Rose 1983), it is now time for an integrated approach that draws on feminist theory and critiques of neoliberal urbanism in order to illuminate the new kinds of gendered policies and ideologies that are shaping the postindustrial city in ways that articulate with, or contradict, neoliberal rationality.

A central question for this project is: To what extent, and how, do condominiums filter, reflect, or reproduce neoliberalism in a particular urban context? Answering this question involves laying out a basic framework for understanding neoliberalism and the role that it plays in contemporary city building, its effects on everyday life, and its role in mobilizing particular identities and subject positions. Although specific manifestations of neoliberal strategies are always context-specific and show a high degree of variation, they draw on certain central ideological components. In his lectures on bio-politics at the Collège de France in 1978 and 1979, philosopher Michel Foucault (1991) described the development of neoliberal thought from German post-First World War Ordoliberalism through the Chicago School of neoliberalism in the United States. He noted that the American version of neoliberalism consistently expanded the economic domain to include the social sphere, viewing social issues as fundamentally economic problems (see Lemke [2001] for a further analysis of Foucault's thought on US neoliberalism). The scope of the economic order is expanded in such a way that all human action and behaviour fall within its realm. Although traditional liberal capitalism also subordinated society to the laws of the free market, a regulatory and protectionist response arose to mitigate the harsher inequities of the market system (Polanyi 2001). Neoliberalism seeks to dismantle these regulations and protections (what we know as the welfare state), and redefines the relationship between the state and the market such that the market becomes the organizational principle for the state and society, and the basis of government becomes the rational, entrepreneurial, economic individual. To operationalize this philosophy, the neoliberal state produces specialized apparatuses for controlling individuals; however, simultaneously, it evades becoming responsible for them.

Neoliberalism is, in large part, a language of property, one that reinvigorates traditional liberalism wherein private property functions as the foundation for individual self-interest (Blomley 2004; Harvey 2005). The focus on private property and rights exercised through the free market is particularly

intense in cities, where downtown areas have become sites of massive re-investment, including residential investment and repopulation. Urban housing markets are becoming key sites for neoliberalization as the welfare state withdraws and policies such as rent control and funding for social housing are increasingly abandoned.

Cities are key geographical sites for the implementation of neoliberal policies and practices. Political geographers Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore (2002a) note that the retrenchment of national welfare state regimes imposes tight fiscal constraints on cities that produce intense conflicts over how to sustain local economies. The “shock treatment of deregulation, privatization, liberalization, and enhanced fiscal austerity” (368) is administered through urban neoliberal policy experiments, including place marketing, tax incentive schemes, public-private coalitions, property redevelopment plans, and enterprise zones. The results of these practices at the urban level are the manifestations of what geographer and gentrification scholar Neil Smith (1996) calls the revanchist city. He suggests that, increasingly, cities are spaces where the poor and other marginalized populations are punished through criminalization, stigmatization, and displacement as white middle-class gentrifiers reclaim urban space from the demonized underclass. The results are an uneven valorization/devalorization of places and people and new geographies of centrality and marginality (Sassen 1998).

Under the rubric of a critique of neoliberal urbanism and the revanchist city, city building through condominium development can be understood as an economic strategy for increasing the spaces available for capital investment and accumulation, which subsumes the social functions of cities under an economic logic. Individual freedom and fulfillment will be achieved by providing opportunities for investment, entrepreneurialism, and wealth accumulation. While the specific contours of this process in Toronto are traced in much greater detail in the following chapters, I note here that the social aspects of this mode of city building (particularly those dealing with social exclusions) have been primarily examined in relation to class, while gender and race have largely been sidelined (but see Hubbard 2004; Fincher 2004; Freeman 2006; Z. Newman 2002).

Of particular interest to me are the ways in which neoliberal urban development processes also work to reconfigure everyday life by producing new living spaces and reshaping the meanings associated with the spaces of everyday life. In using the phrase “everyday life,” I recognize and invoke

urban philosopher Henri Lefebvre's (1991a, 1996) understanding of the phrase – inhabiting the city, working in the city, creating the city – as the basis for claiming a right to the city as well as his notion that everyday life forms spaces of representation (the lived in, appropriated spaces of the city). However, I am also drawing upon a specifically feminist understanding of how the seemingly mundane, routine daily tasks and processes that people (particularly subjugated people) engage in are tied to macro-political and economic forces (D. Smith 1988). Feminist urban scholars share with Lefebvre a belief that the spaces of the everyday are both the sites and the stakes of socio-political struggles. The mundane spaces of women's everyday lives are always relevant to the real world of social struggle, despite their exclusion from much social science research and theory (Little, Peake, and Richardson 1988; D. Smith 1988). In *Sex and the Revitalized City*, I explore how women's everyday lives – daily meanings and practices revolving around home, family, work, leisure, and other activities – are structured in and through condominium living in ways that express (and may, at times, reproduce or challenge) neoliberal ideas about the privatization and commodification of the social realm.

In attempting to link everyday life to neoliberal urban governance, I ask how condominium living, and its attendant discourses, articulate with neoliberal ideals around self-governance, autonomy, and entrepreneurialism. Can condominium development be understood as part of a broader shift away from state responsibility for social and economic well-being and towards community, household, or individual responsibility? Michel Foucault (1990, 1991) contextualized his observations about neoliberalism within his broader argument about the demise (or reformulation) of sovereign power and the need for and development of a new form of power, a new way of governing. The shift away from oppressive sovereign power (the power to take life and let die) is marked by the growth of technologies of power that do not rely on the threat of death; rather, they rely on the exercise of tactics and the construction of knowledge about, and managing of, individuals and populations (Rutherford 2007). Foucault (1990, 139) wrote: "The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed." Both are made the objects of knowledge for government and governed via the construction of dominant truths, normalizing powers, regulatory apparatuses, and disciplining tactics and discourses that involve not just the top-down power of the state but also the governance of the self as a social body.

Neoliberalism is a particular manifestation of this new modality of rule, one that operates on both the individual and the population. Under neoliberal urban governance, the techniques and focus of government have proliferated outwards from state-run institutions onto an array of self-governing entities that are expected to assume the role (or some of the roles) of the state. In this context, the political apparatus of the state is merely one partner in a web of governmental technologies that disperse power by engaging in governance at a variety of scales (Osborne and Rose 1999). Government is thus continuously reinvented through the policies of downsizing, privatizing, decentralizing, and downloading.

Neoliberalism also works upon the individual, invoking and mobilizing a particular vision of the self, or of the ideal citizen. Foucauldian scholar Nikolas Rose (1996) argues that the political and economic rationalities of neoliberalism have structured the rise and dominance of the regime of the free, autonomous self. Mobilizing specific identities is an integral part of the process of governance; in the context of neoliberalism and the wider shift away from sovereign power, the power to govern increasingly works through, rather than against, the subject (Foucault 1990).

In order to develop a framework that tries to connect the underlying political-economic rationality behind condominium development to the production of particular identities and their potential impact on the meanings and practices of urban citizenship, I draw upon Foucault's concept of governmentality. Rather than simply invoking neoliberalism as both the cause and endgame of all processes of political and economic restructuring (Larner 2003), governmentality, as an analytical tool, helps to illuminate the ways that neoliberalism is translated into specific modes of governance that shape the conduct of individuals and thus redefine contemporary democratic citizenship. Foucault (1991) defined government broadly as the conduct of conduct. Governmentality scholar Mitchell Dean (1999, 10) expands on this statement, describing government in the Foucauldian sense as "any attempt to shape with some degree of deliberation aspects of our behaviour according to particular sets of norms and for a variety of ends." This broad definition includes all acts of self-governance as well as the governance of others. Governmentality, or the thought and rationality behind modes of rule, draws attention to specific mentalities, arts, and regimes of governance, questioning both how we are governed and how we govern as well as the relationship between the governing of ourselves, of others, and of the state (Foucault 1991).

Particular forms of governance constitute and transform the subject in ways that effectively engage the contemporary political rationality at the heart of those forms of governance. However, regimes of government do not absolutely determine forms of subjectivity: "They elicit, promote, facilitate, foster and attribute various capacities, qualities and statuses to particular agents" (Dean 1999, 32). Foucault (1990) viewed this as the primary form of power in contemporary liberal democracies: power does not function to control individuals but, rather, to produce subjects that actively control themselves.

In the context of the neoliberalization of the city, I am interested in how this concept of the human subject is appropriated into urban revitalization policies and how this might shape a rearticulation of what it means to be a city dweller or an urban citizen. Who are the new subjects of the city and how are these subjects being mobilized? What are the sources of this re-invented notion of city life? Here, of course, I explore the gendered dimensions of the particular identities that are promoted through condominium advertisements, by developers, through condominium ownership and governance, and through the everyday lifestyles created at the nexus of condominium and downtown living. My objective is to investigate the reworking of gendered subject positions in contemporary spaces and discourses of revitalization. In identifying and critiquing the kinds of citizen subjectivities that arise from this process, I am also concerned to note the exclusion and silencing of other urban identities. Promoting the desirability of a specific type of city dweller certainly means that there are many city dwellers who will not be seen as essential or desirable in the revitalization project. This discursive exclusion has significant effects on vulnerable populations, who find themselves literally, as well as symbolically, marginalized by redevelopment and gentrification.

In the context of condominium development, a subject position that is frequently invoked through advertising and news media, and by developers, planners, and condominium purchasers, is that of the independent, self-sufficient, urban professional woman. This trope seems to draw upon a feminist understanding of the city as a space that is potentially liberatory, recognizing that the spaces of the metropolis have provided a degree of freedom from patriarchal norms that is essential to the development of autonomous female subjectivity (Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999; Wilson 1991). In *Sex and the Revitalized City*, however, I also read the development of autonomous subjectivity through the lens of neoliberal governmentality and the mobilization of entrepreneurial subjects. I draw on feminist literature on

women and the city to suggest that an extremely narrow and exclusionary vision of women's emancipation is invoked by this subjectivity, one that does not coincide with feminist struggles for improved quality of life and the right to participate in urban life.

In exploring the ways in which condominium development in Toronto expresses, filters, or translates neoliberal ideology, I hope to make a broader argument about the reshaping of urban citizenship in democratic societies under advanced liberalism. Political theorists James Holston and Arjun Appadurai (1996) argue that cities remain a strategic arena for the development of citizenship because they engage the tumult of citizenship through the concentration of difference and the availability of public space. They also suggest that cities are significant because place is still fundamental to the problems of membership in society. Until new formations beyond the nation-state gain more relevance, cities may still be the most important sites through which we rethink citizenship; indeed, the spaces of the city – such as the public street and the square – may still be necessary (if not sufficient) for the development of true democratic citizenship. Political theorist Susan Bickford (2000) also maintains that we need to expand the focus on the public sphere to include the built environment as a space that shapes our sense of what people, perspectives, and problems are present in the democratic public.

Cities, however, are contradictory spaces for democracy. The liberal conception of municipal government constituted the city as a space of both government and liberty (Isin 1999). Drawing on sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, urban scholar Engin Isin (1999, 167) argues that the “chaos, ambiguity and disorder of everyday life in the city were always subjected to the will to spatial order, the will to govern.” This repression of disorder through the will to govern can lead to intolerance, fear, and resentment of strangers, and thus cities become places of exclusion, segregation, and repression. Current city building practices increasingly work towards the privatization, surveillance, and control of so-called public spaces (Mitchell 2003; Flusty 2001). Bickford (2000, 358) argues that “the possibility of achieving a genuine public realm inhabited by multiple ‘we’s’ is blocked through these practices ... They produce the illusion of safety for some at the expense of actual danger and discomfort for others.”

Given the critical issues raised by the neoliberalization of cities, it is timely to investigate some crucial questions about the role of condominium development in the reconstitution of citizenship and citizenship subjectivities. Are condominiums inserted into an urban context that is already hollowed

out as a space of democracy? Do condominiums mobilize the consumer citizen, reflecting neoliberal ideals of the autonomous self-governing subject? Do they create a hostile built environment that limits the potential for democratic politics? Do condominiums challenge the gendered spatial arrangement of cities by redefining spaces of public and private life in ways that are potentially emancipatory for women? Are condominiums contradictory sites for citizenship, encouraging participatory democracy but within a framework based on rights, status, and entitlement?

These questions imply a concern with the potential for social justice in the city in neoliberal times. I cannot suggest that neoliberal urban agendas have created persistent social injustices such as homelessness, violence against women, and racial segregation in Toronto: these problems are unfortunately not new and pre-date even the flaws of the welfare state. However, neoliberal rationality structures a new set of responses to urban problems that serves not only to exacerbate these inequalities but also to rein in the potential for social justice-oriented remedies (Peck 2006; Mitchell 2003). I understand social justice in the urban context as centred on both a logic of representation and the direct struggle against injustice (Young 1990). I also agree with geographer Don Mitchell (2003) that there is an inherently geographical character to the normative notion of social justice, which is not only a concept but also a practice that requires a space of representation and struggle. Thus, social justice implies a “right to the city”; the crucial importance of public space, action, and connection; and a sense of order that is progressive and democratic rather than repressive and oppressive.

Under neoliberal regimes, the cornerstones of social justice are chipped away through a rationality that reduces social problems to market-based, individual problems with, naturally, market-based and individual solutions. As geographer Jamie Peck (2006) argues in his critique of post-9/11, post-Katrina American urban policy agendas, neoliberal rationality attempts to tackle urban problems through the increased moral and penal regulation of marginalized groups and the reclaiming of the city for business, the market, and the middle class. Moments of crisis – 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, the current economic recession – precipitate the roll-out of fear-mongering discourses that call for regressive social, moral, and spatial ordering in cities. In this climate, the social justice call for redistribution, representation, and rights is trampled by what Peck calls a First World form of structural adjustment. The market governance of cities under neoliberal “shock treatment” (Brenner and Theodore 2002a) profoundly limits the potential for spaces of representation to develop. In Canadian cities like Toronto, the fear of failure

in the ostensibly crucial global inter-urban competition legitimates the purification of urban space in the name of capital investment.

In *Sex and the Revitalized City*, in an attempt to challenge the politics of neoliberal urban revitalization on a broader scale, I situate Toronto as an exemplary case study. More specifically, I offer an analysis of condominium development as a critical process through which the gendered power relations of the neoliberal city are made visible and, literally, built into the urban landscape. Toronto, as Canada's global city, is driven to compete for a place in the global urban hierarchy as a financial centre, cultural capital, and tourist destination. However, Toronto's history as a liveable, diverse, and progressive city has not been erased, meaning that the process of revitalization, and its injustices, do not proceed uncontested. The power to define and produce spaces do not solely rest with dominant forces and influential agents. Although this struggle is increasingly marginalized by city politics that place private, corporate interests above broad-based, inclusive democratic decision-making processes, I suggest that perhaps it is in the spaces, meanings, and practices of everyday life that cracks in the revitalization narrative will appear, opening sites for struggle and resistance.

Sex and the Revitalized City is organized into six parts. Chapter 1 uses the lens of neoliberal urbanism to interrogate the discourses that shape urban revitalization in Toronto, and it develops a framework for a gendered analysis of urban revitalization policies. Chapter 2 delves into the issue of tenure, arguing that the home ownership element of condominiums reflects a neoliberal expansion of the spaces of capital accumulation in the city and that discourses around condominium ownership are structured, in part, through a conflation of gendered freedom with financial security that reflects neoliberal ideals of autonomy and self-governance. Chapter 3 explores the construction of condominiums as communities, looking at the continuities and discontinuities between the high-rise building boom of the 1960s and 1970s and the condominium boom of today in terms of gender-related issues such as social networking, community formation, and governance. I suggest that, although many of the social concerns of earlier decades are re-invoked today, these concerns are subsumed within an inherently capitalistic logic that sees condominiums primarily as sites for capital accumulation. Chapter 4 continues a focus on the notion of community by unpacking condominium security as a site that reveals a gendered tension between ideals of community and the dynamics of freedom and fear. Chapter 5 seeks to deconstruct the gendered dimensions of the "myth of urbanity" as it is sold

through condominium development and to explore how everyday urban life for women is increasingly constituted through notions of the consumer citizen. The Conclusion draws out some of the key themes that emerge from these discussions, connecting my interpretations to a broader concern with the dimensions of urban citizenship for women in the contemporary postindustrial city.

1

Growing Up

Toronto's Condominium Boom and the Politics of Urban Revitalization

We have become a nation living in concrete boxes, thrust into the sky. More than 17,000 new condos sold in Greater Toronto last year – the most ever in the history of the area. And we don't take a back seat to any place else on the continent.

– Tony Wong, “Is the Sky the Limit for Condos?”
Toronto Star, 25 May 2006

In 2006, Toronto surpassed other major North American condominium markets such as Chicago and Miami in the construction and sales of new condominiums. But as the rather poetic comments from *Toronto Star* real estate reporter Tony Wong suggest, the scale and intensity of the condominium boom comprise just one of the significant dimensions of this story.

Wong hints at one of these dimensions with his use of the term “nation,” through which he implies that condominium dwellers constitute a community based on some shared identity or interests. This is a claim worth unpacking. Do Toronto's condominium owners share common interests or lead similar lives? Is this new nation within the city a political, social, or cultural force that will effect changes in policy, lifestyle, and demographics? The answers to these questions are highly relevant in terms of the potential role of condominium dwellers in producing urban space and influencing urban politics.

Wong's comments also suggest that the move towards a particular *form* of city living is significant. The “concrete boxes, thrust into the sky,” represent a

shift away from low-density, low-rise suburban homes in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) towards high-density, high-rise urban living. This is not the first time, though, that there has been a high-rise building boom in Toronto and in its suburbs. The 1960s and 1970s saw major construction of rental and some condominium buildings throughout the city (Wekerle et al. 1980). So what are the underlying reasons for the current wave of high-rise construction, and how do these differ from those shaping the first wave? Wong notes that condominium sales are at an all-time high, a trend that could be shaped by a number of factors, such as a widespread change in lifestyle preferences, a downturn in the economic fortunes of potential single-family homebuyers, the increased cost of suburban homes and suburban living, and, of course, low interest rates. The underlying political-economic forces that have structured the condominium boom have not been probed in detail, nor have the social and economic consequences of a rapid increase in high-density living been questioned by critical scholars.

Wong's brief narration also draws attention to the fact that condominiums are indeed *sold*. In the 1960s and 1970s, the goal of increasing density was met by high-rise construction; however, this wave consisted primarily of rental buildings and also included alternative tenures such as co-op. Various levels of government also subsidized this construction. Thus, the condominium boom is not simply the result of a resurgence of interest in apartment-style living; it is also representative of a culture of property that heavily values home ownership (Blomley 2004; Choko and Harris 1990). Condominium development is a rather efficient means of rapidly increasing the percentage of homeowners in the downtown area and drawing people into the social, economic, and political structures of private property ownership. However, there is a need to understand how these property relations affect the meanings and practices of urban life for city dwellers. By placing condominium development within the context of broader urban agendas, this chapter attempts to frame the themes through which, I argue, we can begin to advance an understanding of the ways in which contemporary city building processes shape the daily lives of particular city dwellers.

"R" Words

A successful city is one with a competitive advantage over others locally, nationally and internationally. It has a quality of life that will attract and retain people who have capital, skills, knowledge, ingenuity and creativity.

A successful city with an enviable quality of life is diverse, equitable and inclusive; it astonishes with its human-made and natural beauty; it thrives on making connections and it inspires great leadership and stewardship.

– *City of Toronto, Official Plan, 2002*

Like so many other postindustrial cities seeking an advantage in the competition for global capital, knowledge workers, and tourist dollars (Evans 2003; Short 1999), Toronto has embarked upon a plan for urban revitalization that is centred upon property redevelopment, aestheticization, and branding strategies designed to attract investment and new middle-class residents (Kipfer and Keil 2002). Urban revitalization policies (sometimes relying on other names, such as renaissance, regeneration, or reurbanization) have become commonplace with the decline of manufacturing sectors in the urban regions of Western nations and the rise of a multi-tiered global economy in which cities function as key nodes in a complex network of production, consumption, and exchange (Lees 2000). The so-called global cities concentrate these functions by serving as command centres for multinational corporations, homes for highly skilled knowledge workers, centres for financial markets, and hubs of specialized services (Sassen 1998). Toronto is Canada's global city in that it is deeply interconnected with other global cities through the stock market, multinational corporations, cultural exchanges, and, of course, its high immigrant population. Toronto, though, is feeling the pressure of inter-city competition, the crisis of fiscal constraints as the provincial and federal governments download costs and services to the municipality, the wear and tear of aging infrastructure, and the shame of crumbling, polluted industrial sites. In this context, the city has encouraged property redevelopment schemes, commissioned new place marketing campaigns, and declared its revitalization objectives in its new *Official Plan* (Lehrer and Laidley 2008; City of Toronto 2002).

The central motif of the *Official Plan* is successful competition at regional, national, and international levels. The overarching goal is to create a successful, competitive city that retains a high quality of life. Some of the specific objectives include the development of spectacular spaces and attractions, the revitalization of major mixed-used urban corridors, the redevelopment of the waterfront, and the creation of globally competitive employment districts. The answer to the question of how to successfully

compete is found under the label of reurbanization: "Toronto's future is one of growth, of rebuilding, of reurbanizing and of regenerating the City" (City of Toronto 2002, 9). "Reurbanization" is Toronto's current word of choice for promoting growth through intensification.

The city wants to encourage new commercial, retail, and leisure development along major avenues designated as high-density, mixed-use zones rather than expanding through continued suburban development. There is also a major focus on residential intensification. The *Plan* recognizes that the city will attract over half a million new residents through national and international migration within the next twenty-five years. Over the past fifteen years, high-density residential development has been the primary engine of growth through intensification, dubbed "smart growth" in planning and popular discourse. How has this been accomplished in a local culture that, since the 1950s, has valued single-family home ownership, low-density suburban sprawl, and suburban ways of life? In other words, how is reurbanization organized and rationalized in Toronto?

There are several co-evolving and interconnected discourses and policies that have shaped the logic and practice of reurbanization in the Toronto context. These comprise key themes that emerge within various discourses, including (1) the city's need to improve its financial circumstances by increasing its property tax base; (2) the desire to maintain employment levels in the central city; (3) the need to increase transit use and make use of other existing physical infrastructure; and (4) the desire to attract knowledge workers for the postindustrial economy. There are three major discursive formations within which these themes are situated: anti-sprawl/environmental, economic, and socio-cultural. Each of these discourses has found expression in provincial and municipal policies that pave the way for intensification to form the backbone of Toronto's revitalization strategy. Toronto is certainly not unique, however, in its pursuit of success through intensification, and critical geographers have challenged the discourses and policies of urban revitalization, linking them to a wider re-vanchist urban strategy and the neoliberalization of urban governance and urban life (MacLeod 2002; N. Smith 2002; Davidson and Lees 2005).

The Environmental Case for Residential Intensification

A co-ordinated approach to the redevelopment of land within the existing urban fabric to accommodate regional growth is known as reurbanization. By improving and

making better use of existing urban infrastructure and services before introducing new ones on the urban fringe, reurbanization helps to reduce our demands on nature and improve the liveability of the urban region.

– *City of Toronto, Official Plan, 2002*

The current provincial government in Ontario, under the leadership of Liberal premier Dalton McGuinty, was elected in 2003, in part, because of its promise to halt rapid development in ecologically sensitive areas north of Toronto (such as the Oak Ridges Moraine). Despite its unsuccessful attempt to literally stop the bulldozers in mid-dig, the provincial government passed the Greenbelt Act in 2005, legislation designed to limit exurban development and to encourage intensification in the core areas of the cities of the GTA. The Ontario Places to Grow Act complemented this legislation, defining zones for urban growth and intensification and limiting suburban sprawl. These policies give a regional justification to the city's reurbanization plan and serve as a legislative backbone for high-density development, which is often controversial in a region that has experienced most of its growth through suburbanization.

Although these policies respond to growing public concern over the ecological consequences of sprawl, this issue has gained solid political traction by emphasizing sprawl's troubling economic factors, such as the high costs of land, gasoline, highway infrastructure, and public transit beyond city limits. The *Official Plan* suggests that residential intensification will help to combat pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, mitigate the rising cost of electricity, lower the stress of commuting, and relieve the pressure to expand roads and transit. The theme of increasing our reliance on the existing infrastructure of central city areas emerges in this discourse. The city's election (in 2003 and again in 2006) of downtown-focused mayor David Miller, who has lobbied the provincial and federal governments for public transit funding and other money for cities (known as *The New Deal for Cities*), suggests that Torontonians are increasingly in support of municipal policies that favour intensification.

The extent to which Toronto's intensification policies are truly motivated by environmental concerns is questionable, however, in the context of an urban agenda focused on growth and competition. Environmental geographer Susannah Bunce's (2004, 180) analysis of the language of smart growth and reintensification in Toronto's *Official Plan* and other recent

planning documents suggests that “the environmental problems of regional sprawl serve as a public rationale for the primary municipal goal of increasing Toronto’s economic and land-use development through private-sector investment and the attraction of skilled, professional labour to the city.” Other local critics agree that ecological concerns are instrumentalized to the wider goal of opening up space, in the context of land scarcity, for increased capital investment (Bourne 2001; Desfor and Keil 2003; Bunce and Young 2003). In this way, a neoliberal rationality – one that subsumes all concerns, including environmental concerns, within an economic logic – emerges from an ostensibly environment-focused discourse.

In practice, the outcomes of this rationality are shaped by legislation and zoning. The province’s Greenbelt legislation limits the potential for developers to buy exurban land cheaply by imposing restrictions that make this land supply more scarce. The low-density zoning regulations in suburban areas also mean that developers must apply for rezoning to build high-density projects in single-family home neighbourhoods. While condominiums are popping up in many suburban cities, the existing zoning imposes an additional obstacle for developers seeking to maximize their profits through increased density. These difficulties have been mitigated by a developer-friendly municipal planning approval and appeals board (the Ontario Municipal Board [OMB]), the rezoning of industrial and commercial lands downtown, and negotiable height and density restrictions, making urban property development highly attractive. The mobilization of an environmentally based, anti-sprawl rhetoric in support of these policies means there is a broad-based consensus around intensification that is difficult to challenge without taking the politically untenable position of seeming to be in favour of suburban sprawl (Desfor, Keil, Kipfer, and Wekerle 2006). In this way, the economic logic shaping the anti-sprawl discourses remains invisible.

Toronto’s environmental discourse and policy can be read as part of the neoliberalization of governance, wherein the state enacts various policy prescriptions designed to open up particular markets to increased penetration by capital. In this case, the state has not fully withdrawn from the control of land supply and development, indeed the state appears to be taking an active role in conserving and protecting vulnerable land, but it has re-organized its interventions in ways that free up other spaces for massive redevelopment. The greenwashing of intensification means that critical questions about the process and outcomes of urban redevelopment are effectively evaded. Few are challenging the city’s reliance on the small group

of powerful decision makers who shape land-building markets to spearhead the capitalist restructuring of the city, meaning that both the resulting forms of redevelopment and the process itself will likely reflect the interests and ideals of a particular set of stakeholders, while excluding the needs of others (Fainstein 2001; MacLaran 2003). In Toronto, there has been very little attempt to move outside the parameters of the sprawl versus intensification debate in order to question the underlying rationality that shapes reurbanization or to critically examine the potential social impacts. This situation stands in contrast to public discourse in Toronto during the first major high-rise construction boom of the 1970s, when the potential social consequences of tall buildings were hotly debated in city politics, local newspapers, and academic sources (Wekerle et al. 1980; Conway 1977; “Battle in the Sky” 1971; Worthington 1973; Stoffman 1973).

Revitalization by Design

Great cities do not happen by accident – they are designed and orchestrated so that individual private and public developments work together to create cohesive blocks, neighbourhoods and districts ... good urban design is good business and good social policy.

– *City of Toronto, Official Plan, 2002*

These anti-sprawl and pro-intensification discourses and policies have emerged co-constitutively with a strategy designed to reuse or build anew upon spaces that have fallen into disuse as Toronto’s manufacturing economy has declined in importance. As Toronto seeks to position itself as an entrepreneurial, competitive, and attractive centre of global finance and international culture, the visible image of the city becomes central. The *Plan* (City of Toronto 2002, 20) states, “building a high-quality public realm ... is essential to attract businesses, workers, residents and shoppers.” The strategy includes waterfront revitalization plans; major renovation of old, and construction of new, cultural institutions; preservation and reuse of historical buildings; and construction of retail, sports, and leisure complexes. A common theme in the media is that Toronto has not lived up to its architectural potential (Kingwell 2004; Pooley 2005). As such, the city has formed private partnerships with investors and spent hundreds of millions of dollars on several high-profile redevelopment projects, including major

cultural institutions redesigned by celebrity architects, such as the Art Gallery of Ontario designed by Frank Gehry and the Royal Ontario Museum designed by Daniel Libeskind. These projects proceed through the belief that Toronto will create for itself a Bilbao effect, attracting investors, tourists, and new residents, and securing its place as a destination city (Lehrer 2006; Lehrer and Gamsby 2007; Evans 2003; Pooley 2005).

Although the spectacular and controversial projects noted above have garnered a great deal of attention, architectural critics have not ignored the most common form of infill and redevelopment in Toronto: the condominium. For example, the *Toronto Star* runs a weekly column critiquing new condominium developments on their architectural merits. As such, the lexicon of urban design has entered into the public consciousness to some extent and has led to popular debate on the form and future of the city. However, structuring this debate around a good design/bad design binary hides the underlying economic logic of revitalization, eliding issues such as the decision-making processes that shape development or the deep-rooted liberal assumptions about why and how property *should* be redeveloped. The logic behind residential redevelopment in particular remains unquestioned when condominium developments are judged and debated based on their height, style, and scale.

What is this logic? Critical urban scholars argue that revitalization through the redevelopment of urban property represents a new and powerful wave of gentrification (N. Smith 1996; Lees 2000; Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008). This wave differs from traditional modes of gentrification in that large-scale property redevelopment is led by capital rather than by individual homeowners and is often facilitated by state interventions (Hackworth and Smith 2001). Gentrification through redevelopment is a global urban strategy increasingly shaped by global capital (N. Smith, 2002). Neil Smith (1996) has argued that residential intensification is the leading edge of the class remake of the central urban landscape. Unlike previous rounds of gentrification, under the rubric of revitalization, the state actively removes the legislative and zoning barriers that were set up to limit the redevelopment of vulnerable neighbourhoods or to protect public space (Hackworth and Smith 2001). Revitalization through better design and new development functions, in effect, to revitalize urban capital accumulation strategies by opening new sites for investment despite a relative scarcity of land. The beneficiaries of revitalization are landowners, financiers, developers, investors and builders, and the middle class and elite to whom the redeveloped city caters (Lees 2000).

Critics of contemporary redevelopment plans tie these tactics to re-vanchist urban agendas that operate through an abstract view of property, seeing it solely in terms of its exchange value rather than its use value. Blomley (2004, 84) notes that the rise of contemporary urban neoliberalism “has increasingly embraced the principle of highest and best use as a metric for urban land use and planning decisions, abandoning a logic of community and neighbourhood.” He critiques the logic of the highest and best use of land, which, under advanced liberalism, means private ownership, private development, and the potential for profit. Discourses of urban renaissance and revitalization position gentrification as a necessary step based upon the assumption that middle-class interests constitute the highest and best use of urban space. These discourses also appear to take an interest in public space, while actually facilitating the growth of privatized spaces that are defined by exclusive boundaries or geared solely to consumption activities (Zukin 1998; Graham and Marvin 2001; Soja 2000). Revitalization through redevelopment and redesign facilitates capital’s return to the city (N. Smith 1979), resulting in the over-valorization of spaces of the middle class (Sassen 1998). While Toronto’s image makeover is more than purely aesthetic, the discourse of image and design shapes the contours of the debate over the form of the city in highly limiting ways.

If You Build It ...

Downtown will continue to evolve as a healthy and attractive place to live and work as new development that supports the reurbanization strategy ... is attracted to the area.

– *City of Toronto, Official Plan, 2002*

Today, the real competitive advantage for urban economies lies in the foundations that support growth [including] ... a well-educated, highly-skilled labour force.

– *City of Toronto, Official Plan, 2002*

Reurbanization is meant to create the kinds of neighbourhoods, social infrastructure, and lifestyle spaces that are believed to appeal to the professional, cultural, and knowledge workers who will fuel Toronto’s postindustrial

economy. In one sense, intensification is an attempt to capitalize on the demographic effects of urban restructuring, which has produced an increasingly polarized labour force based upon both low-wage, deskilled service-sector labour on the one hand and highly professionalized labour in the advanced tertiary and quaternary sectors on the other (Bourne and Rose 2001; Ley 1996). While the deskilled labour force and new immigrants are increasingly settling (sometimes by choice, sometimes by necessity) in peripheral areas (Siemiatycki and Isin 1997), the new middle class formed by these changes has stimulated demand for new housing and services in the city. Demands include inner-city housing options such as condominiums as well as consumer services, leisure activities, and recreational spaces. These demands are fulfilled through redevelopment agendas.

A background study for the *Official Plan* prepared by geographer Larry Bourne (2000a), entitled "Downtown Toronto as Living Space," lists the suspected advantages of downtown population growth: to improve the economic vitality of the core and the region, to improve the image of the city, to contribute to the local tax base, to support local businesses, to reduce inbound commuting, and to reduce crime levels through the principle of eyes on the street. But how will the city attract the new middle class? Recently, Toronto has begun to use the rhetoric of Richard Florida's (2002, 2008) creative class/creative cities theory to legitimize spending on entertainment, aesthetics, and redevelopment. This theory asserts that professionals in the new knowledge economy embody certain tastes and desires that must be catered to in order to draw in this highly mobile group. This group is believed to value the proximity of work, home, and leisure spaces; thus, intensification is a natural solution for a city that fears a brain drain or the loss of skilled professionals and creative people to other, more desirable, locations. Similarly, the construction of several "new urbanist" developments within the city seems to support the belief that people increasingly favour walkable neighbourhoods that are close to public transit, with homes on smaller lots in close proximity to neighbours. The anti-sprawl rhetoric is interconnected with this discourse in that part of the desire for integrated urban neighbourhoods is believed to stem from public distaste for the consumerist and environmental excesses of suburban life.

The bid to capture and retain the creative class is, in a sense, nothing new – geographer David Harvey (1989) noted this feature of interurban competition when addressing the rise of entrepreneurial urban governance during the 1980s. Harvey warned that such strategies may experience short-lived success and that their failure could trigger a cycle of rather expensive and

ultimately futile competitive behaviour. Nonetheless, contemporary revitalization politics centre on the need to attract people with capital, knowledge, skills, ingenuity, and creativity (Peck 2005). What is not often discussed in mainstream debate is the extent to which the state must intervene in coercive ways to facilitate this process.

Urban political theorists Stefan Kipfer and Roger Keil (2002) assert that Neil Smith's (1996) description of the revanchist city, wherein large-scale redevelopment projects reclaim the city for the middle class and lead to the eviction or marginalization of poor, racialized, and vulnerable groups, can now be applied to Toronto. They note several features of urban revanchism in Toronto, including workfare implementation, a law-and-order agenda, target policing, harassment of street people, raids of gay bars, and the criminalization of youth of colour. While there are few studies documenting the effects of revitalization policies on Toronto's vulnerable populations, recent research suggests that the benefits of reurbanization are limited to a select group of city dwellers who are part of the overall economic vision of competition and growth (Slater 2004a; Khosla 2003; Gordon 2005).

The organization and rationale of reurbanization in Toronto suggest that revitalization can be read as a strategy to facilitate the takeover of the city by capital and the middle class. In Toronto, co-evolving discourses and policies structured around the issues of sprawl, urban design, and the role of the new middle class position reurbanization as the city's best strategy when faced with the disciplining and coercive force of interurban competition (Peck 2005). A neoliberal rationality runs through the heart of these policies, which are designed to open the city to flows of capital investment with little state regulation, to encourage new heights of consumption, and, above all, to create a widespread consensus that urban revitalization through intensification is a natural, beneficial, and effective solution for Toronto's current challenges.

As geographer Alan Latham (2003) points out, urban political economists have effectively deconstructed the underlying rationalities behind urban revitalization policies but have been less successful in understanding everyday relationships and practices or in rethinking the relationship between the economic and the cultural in daily urban life. Moreover, gender is often a sidelined category in studies of urban revitalization. This resonates with feminist analyses that have begun to address the gender dimensions of contemporary urban transformations (Bashevkin 2006). But despite the growth of a very large and complex body of work on the neoliberalization of the city, and a substantial amount of feminist urban research over

the past three decades, there is relatively little feminist or gender-focused work directly interrogating the discourses, policies, and outcomes of revitalization politics or the gendered implications of specific processes such as intensification.

Sex and the Revitalized City?

Feminist and critical urban scholars have addressed gender in the context of entrepreneurial urban restructuring across themes such as the reshaping of urban governance and urban citizenship, gentrification, sexuality and urban space, and property development. Popular sources such as the news media have also identified gender as a salient dimension of recent urban trends. In her early review of feminist analyses of urban restructuring, geographer Geraldine Pratt (1990) suggested that geographers had tended to ignore and under-theorize the links between urban restructuring and the gendered division of labour; moreover, feminists argued that geographers often subsumed cultural processes into economic ones, marginalizing theoretical and epistemological issues around the ways in which gender, as a social construct, is produced in and through urban restructuring and the ways that it is co-constituted with other systems of privilege and oppression, such as class, sexuality, and race (Mackenzie 1988). These issues continue to be significant ones for feminist analyses of urban restructuring under more entrepreneurial forms of governance. Feminist urban scholar Sue Brownill's (2000) analysis of regeneration policies in Britain makes a strong argument about gender-blindness and blatant sexism (i.e., blaming single mothers for urban problems) in regeneration discourses. However, there are still few projects addressing either the construction of gender (in relation to other socially produced differences) through contemporary neoliberal urbanism or the ways in which neoliberal urbanism is itself shaped by gender. I propose here several key steps towards developing a feminist approach to entrepreneurial urban restructuring.

Power and Policy Making

Critical urban scholars question the rise of public-private partnerships, the courting of private investment, the narrowing of the definition of stakeholder in this process, and the resurgence of business and trade organizations that seek to influence policy making (Kipfer and Keil 2002; Tickell and Peck 1996). These concerns have been taken up by feminists who have examined the regendering of local governance that occurs as decision-making power

is increasingly transferred from the local state to various other decision-making structures and agents (i.e., Abrar, Lovenduski, and Margetts 1998; Kern and Wekerle 2008; Chouinard 1996). Political scientist Sylvia Bashevkin's (2006) study contrasting local state restructuring and its gendered consequences in Toronto and London attempts to place changes in policy and planning within the context of neoliberal ideologies. Her work shows that the specific, contextual manifestations of neoliberalization can lead to particular gendered outcomes – for example, the total dismissal of gender issues from city planning in Toronto. Massive redevelopment projects such as London's Docklands/Canary Wharf site have been characterized by Brownill (2000) as a man-made world, where the "thrusting" towers of Canary Wharf link male corporate power to their domination of the landscape. Similarly, urban scholar Susan Fainstein (2001) has pointed out that the privatization of urban space through massive redevelopment projects effectively reinforces the power and vision of the white men who control such projects, resulting in a city that symbolizes masculine power (see also Dolores Hayden's notion of "skyscraper rape" [1977]).

These studies point to the need to question the underlying process through which a particular vision of revitalization is imagined and implemented. Within entrepreneurial urban regimes, male-dominated boards centred on growth and business agendas can work to ghettoize women into the "soft" areas of social policy and community building (Tickell and Peck 1996). A feminist perspective must, therefore, challenge both the exclusion of women from decision-making bodies and the feminization of social issues as a way of removing those issues from the revitalization agenda. Feminist analyses of neoliberal urbanism can examine the (re)organization of masculinity, as an ideology justifying and naturalizing male power, in and through narratives and policies of revitalization.

Gendering Highest and Best Use

In the on-the-ground process of redevelopment and reurbanization, there are specific decisions made about what kinds of spaces will be redeveloped, preserved, reused, or renovated. Feminists must continue to challenge the masculinist vision of how, where, and why the city should be redeveloped or revitalized. For example, the preservation, adaptive reuse, or wholesale imitation and reconstruction of industrial buildings for commercial, cultural, or residential use implies a desire to venerate a male-centred history of the city as a place of work and industry. In Toronto, the institutions of high art

and culture, such as the ballet, opera house, museum, and art gallery, have received massive funding for redesign by (male) celebrity architects (Kingwell 2004); the fact that these institutions preserve and honour male-dominated (also Eurocentric and elite) canons of cultural expression is not questioned.

Moreover, revitalization's focus on the central city, designed by men and enshrining sexist assumptions about work, family, and leisure (Matrix 1984; Hayden 2002), ignores the spaces where many women's lives are focused – parks and playgrounds, schoolyards, suburban landscapes – and other social infrastructure where women's paid and unpaid work often occurs. While feminists cannot assume that social structures and values are somehow made literal and concrete by physical spaces (Boys 1989), I maintain that the choices made about where and how to redevelop reflect an agenda that reproduces gendered hierarchies of space. Brownill (2000, 123) notes that, in London's Docklands redevelopment, it was the "male, macho stuff in the docks that grabbed the attention," while women's concerns around public space and community were trivialized. Although I would not suggest that the masculinist valorization of particular sites and spaces means that women are automatically excluded or marginalized in these spaces, I do argue that a feminist perspective on revitalization must include an examination of the ways that gender ideologies influence notions of the highest and best use of property, and the ways that women's urban histories and experiences may be elided by the choices made about redevelopment.

Gendered Urban Lives

Embedded in such decision-making processes, and the policy outcomes themselves, are gendered assumptions about family, work, home, and lifestyle. The significance of gendered household and labour market trends, the complex relationships between reproduction, production and consumption, and women's experiences of urban processes such as gentrification, are key feminist concerns with respect to redevelopment (D. Rose 1989, 1996; Karsten 2003; Bondi 1999; Warde 1991). Geographer Ruth Fincher's (2004) research on high-rise developers in Melbourne, Australia, specifically unpacks the gendered assumptions that lie behind development decisions. She notes that the views of the male-dominated property development industry about women's housing choices at different stages of the life course have serious effects on the kinds of projects produced and the accompanying social infrastructure. For example, the belief that high-rise living is only

appropriate for childless adults or empty nesters leads to a lack of infrastructure geared to social reproduction.

Similarly, there are gendered assumptions buried within the anti-sprawl, smart growth agenda that promotes intensification. The vision of a walkable, transit-oriented city of small, efficient living spaces seems to offer women a way to ease the strain of multiple roles; however, as planner Sherilyn MacGregor (2002, 83) points out, no one asks who will “perform the extra work required to live sustainably in everyday life.” As the challenge of living in an eco-friendly manner is passed on to households, it is women who will likely bear the burden of managing the day-to-day processes. If the social infrastructure necessary to make women’s everyday lives less complex is not put into place, then the intensified eco-city may end up embodying a new set of gendered assumptions about city lives and city dwellers. Reurbanization projects may reorganize or reproduce a gendered division of labour, producing qualitatively different experiences of the revitalized city for men and women. Therefore, feminist analyses of the types of redevelopment (e.g., residential intensification) and the kinds of lifestyles that are imagined in the entrepreneurial city must deconstruct the underlying notions of how work and family life are organized.

Intersecting Oppressions

All of these concerns are deeply intertwined with issues of class, race, sexuality, ability, and other forms of exclusion and privilege (Kobayashi and Peake 1994). Feminist research on the gentrification of inner-city neighbourhoods points out that the attraction of affluent professional women to central residential locations can result in the gentrification of working-class neighbourhoods or the conversion of live-work spaces into lofts and condominiums (D. Rose 1989; Bondi 1994). Accordingly, the ability of some women to participate in gentrification rests on the disadvantage and displacement of other women and other marginalized groups. Geographers Phil Hubbard (2004) and Marilyn Papayanis (2000) illustrate that crack-downs on prostitution, pornography, and other sex trades in the city are part of the revanchist agenda of cleansing and aestheticizing the city. Papayanis notes that disorder and deviance are emblemized not only by homeless people and criminal activity but also by the visibility of sex trades and sex shops on the streets of New York City. Hubbard specifically suggests that the criminalization of prostitution in London reflects a masculinist urban agenda that favours more institutionalized and better-capitalized sex

trades. These studies indicate that a feminist analysis of entrepreneurial urban restructuring is necessary to identify groups that are actively excluded or marginalized through this process and to understand how multiple systems of oppression operate together to structure the neoliberal urban agenda.

Selling Revitalization as Emancipation

Interestingly, gendered narratives are increasingly used to sell revitalization as good social policy. Toronto's *Official Plan*, while declining to specifically mention women at all, suggests that reurbanization will help to create a more accessible and equitable environment for the city's diverse population. More explicitly, the news media have picked up on several themes, particularly with respect to condominium development, that seem to support the notion that intensification and a return to the city are important sources of emancipation for women (Delap 2006; Southworth 1999). These sources have co-opted a watered-down feminist version of the notion that city life can be beneficial for women. In early feminist research on women and cities, sociologist Gerda Wekerle (1984) and others (i.e., D. Rose 1984) argued that "women's place is in the city" due to the service needs of mothers, particularly low-income single mothers who would have greater access to publicly funded infrastructures such as transit, affordable housing, and childcare. Social theorist Elizabeth Wilson (1991) challenged an implicit anti-urban stance within much feminist research by noting that urban environments permit a degree of autonomy, anonymity, and freedom from traditional gender roles that women are not likely to experience in suburbs or small towns. These themes have been recirculated in contemporary popular discourse around women and city life; however, they are emptied of any redistributive or equity concerns in favour of an individualized, consumption-oriented vision of freedom and gender equality. Feminists must ask: What fundamental equality issues are ignored or hidden by this theme?

One significant issue is that of safety in urban space. There is an implicit assumption that revitalization leads to safer streets for women. However, this claim is questionable when the desired eyes on the street are in high-rise towers, and those towers are surrounded by concrete plazas with little foot traffic. Moreover, as geographer Alec Brownlow (2006) found in a study of crime statistics in Philadelphia, cities may downplay or hide violence against women in an effort to attract young, middle-class female gentrifiers to the central city. Similarly, narratives of revitalization-as-freedom

ignore issues of workplace equality in the creative economy, which are of particular importance in a polarized labour market in which women increasingly work in precarious employment situations (Sassen 1998; Parker 2008). It seems that, in order to question whose vision of freedom is being promoted and what this vision lacks, there is an urgent need for critical scholarship that challenges the implicit association between revitalization and emancipation.

In selling revitalization, images of women and women's bodies are used in ways that seem to signal both women's place in the city and a mapping of the city (and its spaces of revitalization) onto the female body. Condominium advertisements are a key site for such imagery. Women's bodies and body parts are often used to symbolize the spaces of redevelopment. In Figure 2, the billboard's placement superimposes a woman's head onto two new condominium towers, while the symbols of the Fly Condominium brand (i.e., paper cranes) are imprinted upon her exposed neck. Her open mouth and poised fingertips suggest anticipation and curiosity. The city becomes both feminized and eroticized through these images. The use of women's bodies in this way raises significant questions about the place of women in revitalization projects, about the process of taking or claiming the city through revitalization, and about the pervasive gendered imaginings of the city that resonate through contemporary city building processes.

Constructing Gender and Gendered Identities

A concern with how a particular vision of urban life for women is becoming dominant raises a more complex set of questions around the ways in which gender itself, as a social construct and as an aspect of identity, is produced and reproduced by the co-evolving discourses and practices that constitute neoliberal urbanism. This requires a look at how the category "women" is actively produced and mobilized in ways that articulate with (or perhaps contradict) a neoliberal objective. Geographer Wendy Larner (2003, 511) notes that the notion of the neoliberal subject, constituted in a top-down manner as an entrepreneurial, self-reliant individual, needs to be complicated by "thinking about neoliberalism as involving processes that *produce* spaces, states and subjects in complex and multiple forms." In *Sex and the Revitalized City*, I draw upon the notion of governmentality to analyze the ways in which neoliberal rationality functions to mobilize particular (gendered) identities through specific governance strategies, one of which, I argue, is condominium ownership and governance.



FIGURE 2 *Fly*. Billboard for Fly Condominiums, Spadina Avenue, Toronto.

Toronto's Condominium Boom: The Sound of Privatization

Why have condominiums, as a particular *type* of high-density redevelopment project, come to form the foundation of Toronto's intensification strategy? Toronto's condominium boom articulates with an entrepreneurial revitalization plan for three central reasons: (1) condominiums satisfy

housing demand through private development; (2) condominiums work to shift the scale of urban governance onto private communities and individuals; and (3) condominiums transform the tenure structure of the central city in favour of private home ownership. These different ways of understanding condominium development as a wave of privatization come together to illustrate how, at a structural level, condominium development reproduces a neoliberal city building strategy.

The Privatization of Residential Development

Condominium living in Toronto is not a new phenomenon. Since apartment ownership was made possible through the Ontario Condominium Act, 1967, condominiums have formed part of Toronto's highly diversified housing stock, serving as both owner-occupied and rental dwellings across the city. A condominium boom in the mid-1980s was brought to an abrupt halt when the high proportion of speculator-driven sales caused a crash in the market. Through the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was little condominium construction in Toronto as most new housing came in the form of low-rise, single-family homes located in the steadily sprawling suburbs. Since the late 1990s, however, new condominium construction and sales have climbed to record-breaking figures almost every year. At the end of 2006, ten years into this boom and beyond the point where many analysts had predicted a downturn in the market, the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association (GTHBA) reported that new high-rise condominium sales in the GTA made up 44 percent of the housing market over the course of the year (GTHBA 2007); in 2007, 23,000 sales of new high-rise units were registered (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2008). The difference between this boom and the 1980s boom is that current growth is not primarily driven by investors hoping to sell quickly and make a profit; rather, the majority of condominium units are owner-occupied, and many are rented out as long-term investments. Interest rates at historic lows have shaped the high level of owner-occupation and lowered investor-driven sales in this current wave. While suburban development has not been halted in the GTA, rising land costs, combined with the availability of cheaper downtown housing in the form of condominiums, have slowed low-rise single-family home construction and reversed inner-city population decline (Bourne 2000b; Meligrana and Skaburskis 2005).

Clearly, the physical form of most condominium developments (high-rise towers or high-density townhouse or loft-style construction) fulfills the spatial goals of residential intensification. But the reliance on private-sector

financing, building, and management of residential projects (almost all of which are in the form of condominiums) is representative of a major shift in urban housing strategy. The 2002 *Official Plan* is not the first planning document to value intensification and an increase in urban population. The 1994 plan, *The Liveable Metropolis*, and the 1983 plan, *The Official Plan for the Urban Structure* (Metropolitan Toronto Council 1983, 1994), also sought population growth in the core of the metropolitan region. However, previous rounds of intensification involved strong public-sector participation. Throughout the 1980s, for example, the public-sector model of residential development sought to encourage a mix of classes and land uses in the core, and numerous mixed-use social housing projects were funded (Wekerle 1988b, 1993). The federal and provincial governments, as well as the city's housing department, supported non-profit housing projects initiated and controlled by groups with particular and pressing housing needs, including single parents, seniors, women of colour, lesbians, and new immigrants. As neoliberal political regimes at the federal and provincial levels came to power in the mid-1990s, funding for social housing was withdrawn. This process started around 1990, with the federal Conservatives under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, and was intensified by the provincial regime of Conservative premier Mike Harris in 1995. The city, faced with the down-loading of fiscal responsibilities, was forced to scale back its own role in social housing (City of Toronto 2003).

Toronto's new *Official Plan* proclaims the city's intention to encourage a full range of housing opportunities through intensification and infill. This encouragement comes in the form of rezoning industrial lands for commercial and residential use, thereby opening up new areas for developers to colonize. It has not come in the form of new support for social, non-profit, co-op, or rental housing. This privatized housing strategy falls within a neoliberal governance model that reduces the role of the state and that courts private-sector leadership in policy making and urban development. Not surprisingly, then, the resulting forms of redevelopment, such as the condominium, reflect the interests and ideals of this particular set of stakeholders.

In particular, condominium development removes the need for the state to directly subsidize high-rise construction. The financial risks associated with high-rise, concrete construction are mitigated by the fact that lending institutions and private investors finance construction when 60 percent to 70 percent of the building's units are sold. Furthermore, once the building is occupied and the condominium is registered as a corporation, the developer is paid the full price of each unit by the homeowners (or their mortgage

companies). The developer then repays her or his financiers and walks away from the project without being responsible for any long-term maintenance. In this scenario, the developer's investment is turned into profit within a few years, in contrast to the decades it may take to recoup the cost of land, construction, and ongoing maintenance for rental apartment buildings. Thus, the state does not need to provide financial incentives for developers to build high-density towers, as it would if those towers were non-profit, social, or even private rental housing. This allows the state to fulfill the city's housing needs without the massive expenditure required to build alternative forms of tenure; unfortunately, it also means that there is less public control over the form, location, style, and cost of the housing. Moreover, the reliance on private-sector financing and building limits the number of groups that will be seen as stakeholders in the process.

This process also allows the city to decrease its role in providing public spaces and public services to the new residents it so desires. The *Official Plan* notes that private developers are expected to include community services within their projects. Condominiums typically include some combination of amenities, including private security, private fitness facilities, social spaces, playgrounds, and private outdoor space. If the community needs of new urban residents are met through privatized development, the city has a decreased need to fund or expand the public realm or public services. Thus, private development of condominium communities is an effective way of managing the public and social infrastructure costs associated with residential intensification. While the city, through its planning approval process, has some input into the kinds of spaces and services that developers will include, there is limited input from the wider neighbourhood as to what constitutes a community service or community need. Community, therefore, is defined narrowly and exclusively by the boundaries of the condominium project. Moreover, the private and often highly secure nature of the facilities in such projects means they are not typically accessible to non-residents (Townshend 2006; Grant, Greene, and Maxwell 2004).

This reliance on the private sector for virtually all of the new housing built in Toronto over the past fifteen years has significant implications in terms of the potential for democratic participation in city building processes, the outcomes with respect to the location and target consumers for housing projects, and the amount and quality of public space and public services. There is very little analysis of or discussion about the impact of the city's withdrawal from housing development with regard to the decision-making processes. How do different stakeholders get a seat at the table, and

how are various claims privileged, marginalized, or denied? When the goals of growth and competition go unquestioned, the agenda is stacked to favour those whose interests (development, profit) fit within this agenda. Other voices (community groups, advocates for low-income housing, residents concerned about schools and other social infrastructure) have less influence over the terms of the debate. Community working groups or advisory bodies may be set up when there are conflicts over rezoning or major redevelopment plans, but these are managed by private consultant firms. The lack of state input or funding to mitigate the effects of inequality in the housing sector means that such inequalities (across gender, class, ethnicity, and so on) will be reproduced or exacerbated (Wekerle 1997). As Fincher (2004) notes, condominiums and the convenience services they spawn are targeted primarily at young childless professionals, ignoring the needs of other city dwellers. Moreover, the lack of open, democratic participation in development decisions suggests that the assumptions of developers about housing needs (with assumptions about work and family embedded therein) will be manifest in the built environment (Fincher 2004; MacLaran 2003; Fainstein 2001).

Shifting the Scale of Urban Governance

Condominiums are clearly both profitable for developers and less financially painful for the city to approve and absorb than are other types of housing. But there are also key social and political reasons why condominium development may be so effectively positioned as a revitalization strategy in the context of neoliberal urbanization. These revolve around the fact that condominiums are private social and political entities that constitute somewhat independent communities within the municipal framework. Condominiums can be understood as one of an array of non-state governance arrangements that proliferate under neoliberal policy regimes (Swyngedouw 2005) and that function to control citizens without any direct involvement or responsibility of the state – a shift from government to governance. Not only does this allow the local state to reorganize the ways it will either control or take responsibility for its citizens, but it may also shift the scale at which city dwellers choose to engage as citizens or the sites at which they experience attachment and a sense of belonging (Townshend 2006; Lazerwitz and Ginsberg 1994; Mitrany 2005).

The common ownership and governance structure of condominiums makes them a unique form of housing. In Ontario, condominiums are mixed-tenure, limited liability properties, meaning that owners own only

the interior spaces and structures of their particular apartment, loft, or townhouse. After most of the units in a development are occupied, a condominium corporation is formed to take over the management and maintenance of the community from the developer/builder. The corporation comprises all the owners and is run by an elected board of directors (also owners). The corporation owns the exterior spaces and structures, typically referred to as common elements. The board of directors is responsible for providing maintenance for the common elements; ensuring the provision of services like landscaping, lighting, security, and garbage disposal; collecting maintenance fees from owners; setting and enforcing the rules of the condominium corporation (on pets, noise, exterior decorating, etc.); and overseeing the operating budget of the corporation. Thus, condominiums have an element of common property ownership and their own private governance structure.

Research on so-called common-interest developments (CIDs) has looked at the conflicts that arise as a result of private governance, the potential for democratic participation within the community, the links that people feel to the condominium community and the wider neighbourhood, and the ways that privately governed communities may attempt to separate themselves from, or circumvent, the local state (Taggart 1995; Yip and Forrest 2002; McKenzie 2003; Chien-Yuan and Webster 2006; Strahilevitz 2006; Wekerle et al. 1980). For example, the common ownership structure means that the amenities are owned and maintained collectively by residents through monthly fees. Residents therefore have a vested interest in their own amenities and fewer requirements for open and accessible public space, public recreation or entertainment, or public provision of family programs (Townshend 2006; Foldvary 1992). The inclusion of private services within condominiums means that condominium owners have little incentive to support public funding for such spaces and services and more incentive to turn inwards towards their own, pre-paid amenities.

Many authors conceptualize condominiums as gated communities, which function not only to “systematically exclude those adjudged to be unsuitable and even threatening” (Flusty 2001, 659) but also to discipline residents in a way congruent with neoliberal ideals of consumerist citizenship, through both spatial and political arrangements (MacLeod 2002). Others have suggested that condominium communities provide opportunities for people to become involved in democratic forms of citizenship or to form new networks and new types of communities (McKenzie 2003; Wekerle et al. 1980). For women in particular, the integrated public/private spaces of a

condominium project could foster connections that are beneficial to them in both their work and family lives (Mitrany 2005). In this way, the patriarchal separation of work and home has the potential to be subverted.

These social/political aspects of intensification have not received a great deal of public attention, although the news media occasionally run stories that draw attention to both the social challenges of intensified living and the ways that condominium communities form and interact. For example, residents may attempt to translate the common ownership structure into a common social structure by setting up activities and events within their condominium community (Cotroneo 2006). These examples of network and community formation allow the progressive rhetoric of local democracy to be used to legitimate the privatization of governance in some contexts (Bevir 2006).

However, the impacts of this privatized form of community in terms of the effects on broader engagements with the city require further examination. Does intensification through private redevelopment facilitate the formation of healthy urban communities, or are these communities so narrow and exclusive that the scale of local citizenship practices is reduced from the city or neighbourhood to the private condominium project? Furthermore, if condominiums are understood as embodying technologies of governance that translate or filter neoliberal rationality into everyday life, fostering the creation of autonomous, self-governing, rational subjects, we may be able to argue that the scale of urban governance is shifted increasingly onto the individual. What responsibilities does the local state evade in this scenario? Public safety, for example, is one particularly pressing feminist issue that may fall off the public agenda as private communities and the individuals within are expected to pay for and manage their own personal safety.

Shifting Tenure

The explosion of multi-family, high-density urban living spaces in the form of condominiums is quite a phenomenal shift in residential form for a city that has experienced major sprawl and the growth of massive edge cities since the postwar period (Harris 2004). But perhaps more significant than this, and much less remarked upon, is the shifting tenure structure of the city. Due, in large part, to the condominium boom, in 2001 the percentage of owner-occupied dwellings in the city of Toronto shifted higher than that of rented dwellings – 51 percent owner-occupied versus 49 percent rented (Statistics Canada 2003) – for the first time since the major postwar housing boom of the 1950s and 1960s (Choko and Harris 1990).¹ In 2006, this

ratio increased to 54 percent owner-occupied, 46 percent rented (Statistics Canada 2008a). Over 75 percent of condominiums are owner-occupied (City of Toronto 2003), although the very small amount of new, purpose-built rental housing in recent years means that condominiums are expected to fulfill the city's rental needs as well (City of Toronto 2003). Over 20 percent of rental units in Toronto were condominiums in 2003 (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2004).

Condominiums are providing home ownership opportunities for a variety of housing consumers who may have had difficulty gaining access to home ownership in Toronto's expensive single-family dwelling market. Across Canada, the 2001 census data showed that female one-person households comprised the largest group of condominium owners, with 10.7 percent of these households owning a condominium, almost double the condominium ownership rate for Canadian households in general (5.8 percent) (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2001). In Toronto, single women are estimated to make up approximately 40 percent of new and resale condominium purchasers in the city (Cordileone 2002). Media reports also suggest that immigrant families, young people, and working-class families are gaining access to the ownership market through condominiums in and around the GTA (Laporte 2003a; Shim 2004).

In order to understand why the private ownership dimension of condominium development is significant, it is necessary to note the national and local culture of property. Canadian housing policy has always favoured private home ownership, supporting citizens' attempts to attain this tenure through a variety of financial incentives and entitlements (Hulchanski and Shapcott 2005; Wekerle 1997; Wekerle et al. 1980). More important, though, owner-occupation has been positioned as a social norm to the extent that the culture of home ownership is integral to the North American way of life (Choko and Harris 1990). This culture of property presumes that private home ownership constitutes the highest and best use of urban space. In the context of entrepreneurial governance strategies, this culture shapes the housing options in the city through the widespread assumption that the middle class will be drawn anywhere that home ownership opportunities are presented.²

Housing, while always viewed as a commodity in the capitalist economy, is increasingly seen as a vehicle for wealth accumulation under neoliberal economic regimes. Condominiums are well suited to rapid exchange on the housing market. Many are purchased as either shorter-term living spaces for their owners, who expect to make a profit, or as investment units to be

rented out. Urban sociologist Jon Caulfield (2005) describes condominiums as a predominant feature of corporatized urban space, defined by geographer Edward Relph (1987, 188) as “a potential commodity to be exploited, managed or manipulated in whatever ways will ensure ... profitability.” The massive number of condominium units opens a network for the increased (and more rapid) circulation of capital through the housing market. Lefebvre (2003) termed this the second circuit of capital, which increases the potential for capital accumulation both by large-scale global investors and individual homeowners. The significance of this tenure shift, and its articulation with neoliberalization, are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

A Feminist Approach to Researching City Life in Neoliberal Times

The frameworks for understanding condominium development presented in this chapter represent complex discursive and political formations that shape both a common-sense understanding of urban revitalization and its actual formation. Disrupting, unpacking, contextualizing, and reframing these narratives and practices are the goals of *Sex and the Revitalized City*. In order to tackle this task, I designed a multilayered project employing qualitative methods such as interviewing, visual analysis, and discourse analysis. Like most feminist scholarship, feminist urban research has often employed qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviewing, to understand the relationships between gender and urban environments (Bondi and Rose 2003). In part, the objective has been to understand women’s affective experiences of urban places. As well, feminists often seek out the voices and stories of those who have typically been marginalized or silenced in accounts of the social, cultural, and political world of the city in order to correct the skewed understanding of the city and social relations that comes from androcentric, positivist urban social sciences (Booth, Darke, and Yeandle 1996; Garber and Turner 1995; Little, Peake, and Richardson 1988). Other feminist scholars have attempted to gain access to the perspectives of privileged groups and powerful actors in the urban context (McDowell 1998; England 2002). Feminists have also had to challenge the ethnocentricity and elitism of geography to include the perspectives of different groups of women across race, class, ethnicity, age, sexuality, and so on and to explicate how these intersect and interlock to structure women’s and men’s urban lives (McDowell 1993).

A central organizing principle for much feminist research is the notion of starting from women’s everyday lives and experiences. Sociologist Dorothy

Smith's (1988) "sociology of the everyday" provides the methodological entry point for investigations that start with lives and experiences that have often been made invisible in mainstream social research. Wekerle (1999, 105) argues that, in critical urban research, "the interstitial spaces between the private and the public ... receive scant attention within the dominant economic frame." These spaces, such as the home and the neighbourhood, are often spaces where women's everyday lives articulate with structural forces and changes in political economy. Therefore, starting with women's lives and experiences is a way of identifying and theorizing women's concerns within a broader context.

In this book, I attempt to connect these concerns to the issue of urban citizenship – how people speak to and enact everyday claims on the city and their sense of belonging and attachment to it (Isin 2000; Vaiou and Lykogianni 2006; Fenster 2005). It is difficult, however, to find a vocabulary for the everyday world of citizenship. Geographic work on citizenship employs qualitative research methodologies, such as interviews and content analysis, which have been somewhat marginal in citizenship studies. These contrast with the more normative aims (around notions of ideal citizenship and democratic practices) of the philosophical tradition in citizenship studies. Geographers seek to understand citizenship as it unfolds on the ground, in everyday life, in a variety of contexts – what could be termed actually existing citizenship (Desforges, Jones, and Woods 2005).

This is also an important starting point for feminist inquiries into the relationship between gender and citizenship in specific spatial contexts. Feminist studies of women's urban citizenship claims acknowledge the proliferation of rights claims based on lived experience or the right to inhabit (Wekerle 2000; Fenster 2005; Peters 1998; Naples and Desai 2002). This opens up new ways of understanding citizenship beyond formal actions and legal standings (Lefebvre 1996; Purcell 2003; Isin 2000). Studying enactments of citizenship, understood as an everyday process of engagement at various scales, allows us to connect the material realities of everyday life with political-economic structures. Citizenship is an effective concept for balancing structural analysis (i.e., how cities are shaped by economic and political restructuring) with human agency (i.e., how urban dwellers enhance or defend their rights within a particular political-economic context).

Critiques from the Organic Café: Situating Myself

Feminist and postmodern scholars have struggled to demystify the mode of seeing everything from nowhere (Haraway 1991). We realize that neutrality

is a fiction that disguises power, privilege, and politics. Every researcher has a subject position that affects her or his research at every stage from conception to final analysis. Self-reflexivity is the practice of being explicit about the shaping of the text by recognizing that we “*inscribe* rather than just *describe* reality” (Jones 1992, 25). By acknowledging the personal investments, value judgments, and biases that covertly inform all research, we can attempt to make certain that the invisibility of the author can no longer function as a mechanism of power that ensures the domination of certain accounts.

On a fairly regular basis throughout my work on this topic, participants and colleagues have asked me if I was indeed a condominium owner myself. During the course of this project, I went through the process of looking for a condominium, purchasing one, waiting through its construction, and finally moving into a condominium townhouse where I lived with my family for just over three years before selling the unit and returning to renting. I have therefore experienced a process similar to that experienced by the women condominium owners whom I interview here (except, of course, in returning to renting), and I am both a subject and critical observer of the processes and ideas put forth by the planners and developers with whom I spoke. More broadly speaking, I am a city dweller, a life-long Torontonionian, and a woman; as such, I have attachments to the city and various neighbourhoods within it as well as my own set of everyday, gendered experiences that shape my relationship to the city. I also embody many salient privileges that mark me as belonging in this city and as having an unquestioned right to articulate claims for space – for comfort, for fun, for work, for whatever – within it. Furthermore, as a worker in the knowledge economy, I am, in many ways, one of the desired subjects of the revitalized city.

So what are my investments here? How do I problematize the spaces of redevelopment and new-build gentrification from my seat in the new organic café in a neighbourhood on the cusp of gentrification? There are no easy answers, no pat justifications or adequate apologies. As a critical feminist academic, my body and my everyday life contain and express the contradictions of these positions. It is pointless to deny the allure of the spectacle, the spaces of consumption, the shiny new living quarters, the theatre of difference and conflict that combine to make up everyday life in the postindustrial city. To do so would be to position myself as somehow outside of, or above, the very conditions and experiences that my participants describe. Instead, I acknowledge that I am very much inside these conditions (and contradictions) and that this works, in fact, as an entry

point into my attempt to think critically about city building, everyday life, and identity formation in the context of revitalization. Like most feminist urban scholars, I seek to open up opportunities for claims to multiple, alternative urban ways of life, choice beyond consumerism, and space to challenge hegemonic gender identities. I also seek to renew collective projects for social justice.

Research Design

In order to make connections between revitalization agendas, condominium development, women's everyday urban lives, and gendered identities in the contemporary city, I attempted to design a project that would allow me to examine a variety of agents, subjects, and discourses. The primary methods are personal interviews, key informant interviews, and visual and discourse analysis. This approach gave me access to the voices and documents of city building agents, to women's own perspectives on condominium and city living, and to representations and visions of the revitalized city.

The central focus of *Sex and the Revitalized City* is based on interviews, conducted from July 2005 to May 2006, with twenty-one women condominium owners, recruited through a snowball process that began with acquaintances and contacts in the real estate industry. I ended the interview process when I felt that an appropriate level of data saturation had been reached (Berg 1998), although I was concerned with finding illustrative, rather than representative, cases. The participants themselves ranged in age from twenty-one to forty-six, and they were from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. I did not ask respondents to identify themselves based on race, ethnicity, sexuality, or other social locations; the background details that I collected simply included their educational history and current employment as well as recent tenure situations (see Appendix A). All had at least some postsecondary education. Two participants were full-time graduate students, and the remainder were employed full-time either as professionals in their chosen fields or as clerical and administrative workers. The majority (seventeen) lived alone, two were married, two had roommates, and only one had a child. Nineteen were first-time homeowners, and two had previously owned other condominiums. Their condominiums were located within the City of Toronto. Most lived in mid- to high-rise condominium towers; one owned a condominium townhouse.

In the interviews, I explored the meanings of condominium ownership and city living by asking respondents about the decision to buy a condominium, their experiences living there, their everyday routines, their decision to

live in the city, and their intentions regarding how long they would like to reside in their condominiums and in the city (see Appendix B). The interviews lasted from thirty to seventy minutes, although on average they were around forty-five minutes long. Most of the interviews took place in public places such as coffee shops and diners; a small number occurred at the respondents' places of work or in their homes, in accordance with their preferences. I would characterize the interviews as semi-structured in that, although I had prepared an interview schedule, I was content to let the respondents explore tangents, gloss over certain questions, and ask me questions. And, at times, I changed the order of the questions to suit the natural flow of the conversation (Reinharz 1992; DeVault 1999). Nonetheless, all of the interviews covered the major themes, and, this being the case, I found it possible to read them in relation to one another.³

Overall, this group resembles the target market for many condominiums, a typical condominium consumer, according to the news media and condominium industry. However, this group is not designed to be representative, in a statistical sense, of all condominium owners who share these traits (themselves only one particular subset of all condominium owners). It is not my goal to base my interpretations upon the assertion that this group is a representative subset of a larger group; rather, it is to seek an illustrative sample and, thus, to analyze the narratives presented in relation to one another and in relation to the accounts of city building agents and representations of condominium and city living in order to seek out nuances, contradictions, and continuities. Moreover, I wanted to examine the complexity of individual experiences, an approach that is only permitted with a smaller cohort.

I have noted that I think that feminist analyses of urban revitalization and new-build gentrification are critical interventions into the story of the development of the neoliberal city. This perspective assumes, of course, that gender is a salient category of analysis. Feminist theory, however, also grapples with the intersections among gender, race, class, sexuality, and other dimensions of socially constructed difference. The analysis that I present in this book draws out the intersections between gender and class and complicates these observations with attention to age and relationship status. I am less able here to substantively articulate the ways that race and sexuality intersect with class and gender. This results, in part, from my methodological approach, which did not include asking participants to self-identify on the basis of race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The sample size is also insufficient to get a broad enough picture of all of these social differences.

Thus, I am reluctant to directly ascribe various aspects of their experiences to racism/race privilege or homophobia/heterosexual privilege. However, throughout the analysis, I do attempt to flag moments where the data suggest that these systems are explicitly working to shape the gendered and classed experiences of everyday life in the city.

It is also important to note that, in interviewing women who had specifically chosen to become condominium owners, I have collected narratives that are more likely to support the ideals of condominium living and to justify the choices of these condominium buyers than would have been the case had I also interviewed women who had made other housing choices. This process also filters out women who might be virulent critics of condominium living. However, this choice reflects an interest in disrupting the seamless narrative of condominium living as empowerment by examining some of the everyday meanings and experiences of the women who inhabit condominiums. So, while focusing on one (relatively privileged) group of women in the city has narrowed the range of potential responses to condominium development, it was also empirically necessary to gather and analyze the stories of such women in order to counter the sound-byte characterizations of condominium living as emancipatory. Nonetheless, I acknowledge that the story told here is necessarily partial and contingent on the methodological choices made.

For background information on the role of the city in facilitating or managing condominium development, I interviewed two City of Toronto planners, one in urban design and one a senior planner for the Waterfront Area. I asked for their perspectives on Toronto's reurbanization and residential intensification strategies, about condominium development in particular, about the social and economic impacts, and for their thoughts about future directions for growth in Toronto (see Appendix B). I also conducted seven interviews with representatives of condominium development firms active in Toronto. The representatives included one owner/president, three vice-presidents, one marketing specialist, and two market analysts. During these interviews, we spoke about their specific firms' developments and development decisions, about the condominium boom in Toronto, about consumers and the market, and about women in particular as potential buyers (see Appendix B).

While both the planner and developer interviews provided a great deal of contextual information, I was also interested in the ways that these individuals understood their roles in the city building process, the beliefs they held about city dwellers and condominium residents, and their perspectives on

city life in general. Therefore, I take their accounts not as objective representations of city planning and condominium development but, rather, as stories told about city building, identity, and city life.

All of the interviews (condominium owners, planners, developers) were digitally recorded with the respondents' permission and transcribed by me on an ongoing basis throughout the data collection process. The transcripts were coded manually, using both a predetermined set of codes that was based on the questions asked and codes derived from themes that arose in the interviews themselves (Hay 2000; Jackson 2001; Charmaz 2004; Letherby 2003; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). I approached my analysis from the point of view that all narratives are socially constructed and that they both represent and produce the social world.

In analyzing the interviews as narratives, then, I looked to identify the central themes that emerged; attempted to denaturalize that which was presented as normal, inevitable, and unquestioned; traced elements that were related to gender ideologies and gender relations; questioned the moral undertones; and investigated sites where power relations were sustained or subverted. This involved the process of first decontextualizing the data (breaking the transcripts up by themes) and then recontextualizing the material (by reading each theme across all of the interviews, including across different groups of interview subjects). In this way, the narratives and my analysis of them are interpreted and assigned meaning in relation to one another (DeVault 1999; Reinharz 1992). My presentation of quotations from respondents represents this process of recontextualization. While I have been faithful to their exact words and speech habits, the quotes are positioned in relation to the words of other respondents. This analytic and representational strategy is a deliberate tactic designed to illustrate the continuities and contradictions across multiple voices. In the following chapters, the accounts of women condominium owners are presented after other aspects of the analysis. This is also a deliberate strategy wherein historical data, the narratives of planners and developers, and examples of public discourse form a complex story upon which the views of women condominium owners are layered. Through this method of textual representation, I hope to allow women condominium owners to speak back to this story.

Urban geographers are increasingly interested in issues of representation and interpretive strategies. My research indeed originated from my interest in media reports and condominium advertising. The materials that I analyze come from newspaper accounts collected from major local and national

newspapers and news magazines since 2003 (in total about 350) and examples of condominium advertising since 2003 (approximately four hundred ads). I also analyze state documents such as the City of Toronto *Official Plan* (2002) and its background documents, place marketing campaigns, and other relevant legislation such as the Ontario Greenbelt Act and the Ontario Places to Grow Act.

While these texts and images are produced by different actors with different interests, they are important to analyze as part of the process by which the story of revitalization and the process of condominium development are made to seem commonsensical. They construct a discursive field that produces what Foucault (1980) called regimes of truth. Thus, my analysis of these artefacts follows a Foucauldian strand of discourse analysis, wherein discourses are not simply reflections or (mis)representations of reality; rather, they have their own truth effects that construct the range of acceptable interpretations of a problem and its solutions: "Discourse is constituted by the difference between what one could say correctly at one period ... and what is actually said" (Foucault 1991, 63). Foucault (1991) argues that language, knowledge, and power are all interconnected through discourse and that the power to construct discourse lies not just with the elite or the powerful. Actors construct discourse, and discourse constructs actors (Modan 2007).

As I did with the interview transcripts, I coded the texts and images according to both pre-set codes and codes that arose from my analysis of the materials. Viewing the materials through a feminist lens, I was particularly interested in the ways in which the category of gender was embedded within representations of condominium living and city living. I was therefore concerned to note how various gendered identities and subject positions were being promoted or fostered in relation to the idea of the entrepreneurial or revitalized city. In addition, I looked at the discourses produced by these materials as articulating with dominant ideologies about urban growth, competition, enterprise, and culture. Thus, I was interested, in the Foucauldian sense, in investigating the conditions of existence of discourse and in relating it to the practical field in which it is deployed. For this reason, I take examples from my content analysis and read them relationally, with and against one another as well as the accounts of planners, developers, and women condominium owners.

I subscribe to the position that feminist research is a process, one that fluctuates between action, reflection, and practice. It represents a struggle to do ethical research, to destabilize the researcher's authority, and to

represent the multiple voices involved both faithfully and in ways that illuminate the concepts, critiques, and contexts in which the work is positioned. I assert that the interpretations and conclusions presented in this book are not stable or absolute. There are many ways that the accounts could be analyzed; there is also much missing that could not be included. I urge readers to engage with the voices presented here from diverse perspectives and to resist a closed and static reading of my analysis.