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Transgressive actions and the production of public space : policy, people and urban space in Winnipeg's downtown

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**TRANSGRESSIVE ACTIONS AND THE PRODUCTION OF PUBLIC SPACE:
POLICY, PEOPLE AND URBAN SPACE IN WINNIPEG'S DOWNTOWN.**

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Bachelor of Arts, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 1993

A thesis presented to Ryerson University – York University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in the Joint Graduate Program in Communication & Culture

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2003

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Abstract

Transgressive Actions and the Production of Public Space: Policy, People and Urban Space in Winnipeg's Downtown.

Master's of Arts, 2004.

By Etoile Catherine Stewart
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Public space is planned space. The discourse that takes place among federal, municipal and local governments, as well as the interaction that takes place on the street between people, informs the agenda and values inherent in policy and social norms. Urban revitalization strategies and city bylaws produce public and private spaces, thereby informing the cityscape within which everyone interacts. This study examines the contribution, circulation and regulation of transgressive actions in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, in order to consider what these actions reveal about power relations in the urban environment and the production of public space. This research uses both a policy case study and urban theory to investigate the means by which public and private spaces are produced and imbued with the ideologies that shape and maintain these spaces in Winnipeg's downtown area.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the memory of Jai Pereira, who demonstrated years ago that skateboarding was much more than a sport and while doing so helped to create a community that manages to continue without him; and to the memory of Linda Graham, whose never-failing enthusiasm for life is a reminder to me always, of what can be done.

Table of Contents

Chapter One	
Introduction: Starting Points and Observations	07
Chapter Two	
The Policy Story	25
Chapter Three	
Analysis	80
Chapter Four	
Practice + Theory	115
Bibliography	151
Appendix	159

Chapter One

Introduction: Starting Points and Observations

In the last ten years, there has been renewed attention directed towards issues of city planning and urban spaces.¹ In Canada, cities have been identified as the economic engines that propel the development and regulation of all jurisdictions; subsequently, municipal and provincial governments have looked for ways to increase their economic strength.² For example, larger cities such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal compete for international recognition (and financial investment) with Olympic bids and new opera houses, while smaller cities such as Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax and Winnipeg implement new policies to foster cultural tourism. All of these kinds of initiatives require new buildings and spaces, as well as the policies to support them. Furthermore, the change in immigration patterns, the decline in rural economies, issues around safety, emphasis on partnerships between public and private sectors, and the increase in disparity between rich and poor all

¹ Some recent examples of writing and discussions about the economic, cultural and social importance of cities can be found in the work of Richard Florida, Sharon Zukin and David Harvey, and through the work of various institutes such as the Culture of Cities Project at York University in Toronto and the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

² Mary Janigan, 'Saving Our Cities,' *Maclean's Magazine* 3 June 2002: 22-27.

contribute to passionate debates centered on the use and role of public space.³ As a result of these changes in the urban landscape, there has been increasing recognition of and demand for public consultation on the part of certain regulatory bodies and publics, in order to inform the processes that impact on urban spaces and infrastructure.

Public space is planned space. The discourse that takes place among federal, municipal and local governments, as well as the interaction that takes place on the street between people, inform the agenda and values inherent in policy and social norms. Regulation produces public and private space which in turn informs the urban eco-system within which everyone interacts, for the streets are the sites upon which social life takes place. The term “urban eco-system” alludes to the density and far-reaching roots of not only the buildings and sidewalks in the built environment, but also the policies and planning decisions, as well as the people that circulate within the system represented by these spaces. Circulating in public space is at once an anonymous and an intimate experience. A certain autonomy is possible as one interacts with strangers, and at the same time an intimacy comes from sharing a space occupied by these

³ Organizations such as the Toronto Public Space Committee, The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and publications such as *Adbusters* and *Canadian Dimension* have all recently provided alternative and

same people. This sharing is not harmonious, even though public space is generally represented as a unified ideal. A sidewalk is for walking, not for biking or skating, walls are part of buildings, not canvases for graffiti and so on. What transpires in public – acknowledged or not by policy makers and citizens – is often full of conflict.

Cities indicate both materially and psychically that individuals are, collectively, part of larger communities. Circulating amongst people, be it at school, on the way to work or in the neighbourhood, fosters a sense of community and membership through sharing the same street, bus, or coffee shop. Community has taken on renewed value within Western industrial economies (varied though they are). Emphasis on global trade and even citizenship has created a heightened awareness of the importance of local environs such as the city and city neighbourhoods, especially as a source of comfort. This sense of the local is relevant to my research because the city embodies not only a political framework, but also the spaces that constitute the built environment – both of which contribute to the kinds of communication that take place within it. At the local (as well as the global) level, the foundation of human experience is informed by the communication that takes place between

individuals, as well the material environment's influence on the spaces in which these relationships take place.

Street signage, meridians, boulevards and traffic lights are but some of the means by which spaces are delineated; their use is directed. The regulation of space via policy, and the activities that take place in these spaces, all contribute to a larger discursive process about cities, transgression and human experience. My thesis research is a part of such a discursive process and an attempt to contribute to the on-going politicization of the use (read: privatization) of public space. I look at the relationship between structure and action, or policy and use in the context of the city. I do this in order to uncover some of the means by which bylaws enhance, deter or facilitate the uses of public spaces, specifically city streets and sidewalks and to point to the ways that regulation and design contribute to both the intended and unintended uses of public spaces.

The study of the contribution and circulation of transgressive practices in the city is important in order to provide a perspective left out of mainstream or traditional conceptions of the meaning and uses of public space. Public activities that are rendered transgressive through regulation appeal to me as means to look at the broader issues concerning public space, its regulation and its

production. I believe that any practice considered transgressive and regulated as such – be it skateboarding, panhandling, or loitering – offers an alternative and exciting context through which another interpretation of public space can be realized. These practices offer a different filter through which to look at and therefore utilize space, providing an opportunity to reinvent those spaces via the human experiences that occur within them. Transgression potentially frees space from an assigned role (a park is for sitting, it is quiet and peaceful) and offers up a new one (a park is the place to earn enough to eat, it is full of the disruption of kids skateboarding, it is messy).

Diverse interpretations of space indicate that the actions that take place in both private and public spaces are informed by more than just the regulated or physical intent of the built environment. For example, just because a sign is posted indicating that loitering is forbidden does not mean that loitering will not occur in that space. Similarly, if no sign is posted that does not mean that loitering will not be discouraged. The possibility of space is demonstrated by who does what where, and this contingency is precisely why this investigation into power relations, regulation and the production of space in the urban eco-system is such a fertile terrain to explore.

I think it is important to point out that not all transgressive activities are equal in terms of legality or disruption to others. A distinction could be made between “hard” and “soft” transgressive activities. For example loitering (soft) is not the same as drug dealing (hard), neither in terms of legal consequence nor the systemic network of events that have lead up to the production of a particular transgressive activity. This broader complexity, the systemic events, prejudice and morality that is caught up in any attempt to define the broader idea of transgression is exactly why I have limited my definition of transgression in such a narrow way. Lingering over coffee in the mall food court is not the same as panhandling but for my purposes the ways in which these action get treated blurs the differences and is therefore less important to my overall project than looking at transgressive actions in general. Furthermore, as I am about to demonstrate, the distinctions between these actions often get lost in the regulatory process which serves commercial interests first. This loss results in the conflation of all activities that do not facilitate commerce as transgressive in the broader context of the privatization of public space.

In the context of my project, public space refers to that space which is open to all and funded in some part with government money, such as a city park

or sidewalk. Private space refers to buildings and areas that are owned and operated by private interests while still being open to the public, such as a mall or skywalk. Privatizing public space refers to the increasing reliance on the private sector to invest in “public” amenities such as cultural events, parks, concerts and education programs.

The impact that the use of space has on the production of alternative public spaces (for example, the city square as skateboard park, or lamp posts as bulletin boards) is revealed by the attempts made to abolish and control such sites through bylaws, policies and law enforcement. An examination of the genesis and adoption of specific bylaws by the City of Winnipeg illuminates some of the ways in which such regulation potentially impacts upon these alternative uses of public space. The denial of “difference” and the increasing privatization of urban space speak volumes about the construction of space and power relations in the urban environment, as I demonstrate in the following chapters.

Research Question and Thesis Statement:

What do attempts to regulate “transgressive behaviour” reveal about the state of power relations in the urban environment and the production of public space?

Mainstream or traditional conceptions of the meaning and uses of public space often fail to acknowledge or take into account how the production of public space is informed by the contribution of transgressive public activities. My work challenges the idea that public space is static and unified. Transgressive activities are the actions that are regulated off of the streets or, in some cases, permitted only in a limited context. In-line skating, skateboarding, loitering and panhandling, for example, are all activities that are made potentially transgressive when regulated by city bylaws. The use of the term “transgressive” shifts the focus from a particular activity to the larger issue of why certain behaviour and the space in which transgressive actions take place elicit regulation.

My study aims to acknowledge the ways in which transgressive behaviour influences the production of public space. This is important because the acknowledgement of transgressive activities informs a different telling and history

of what happens in public spaces; disorder and “unruly-ness” are as much a part of public space as are unity and order. It is also important because the consideration of transgression brings to light the means by which the “general public” has been inculcated into a belief system that posits that being in public is necessarily safe or orderly. The story of regulation and policy in the political and built environment has the potential to open up current debates about what happens in public from both a policy and theoretical perspective.

Private and public spaces are distinct, and their status is determined by who “owns” the space, it’s hours of operation, and whether or not the space is open to the public. Yet the boundaries between public and private are becoming blurred with the growing privatization of urban space. Consideration of private and public space in the city and the actions that occur in these spaces is a means to understanding how structure and the political framework impact upon the social and cultural life of the city. In other words, it is important to consider the broader implications of how the political framework of local decision processes influences the regulation of space and, conversely, how this content then influences and shapes the political framework. The realization that

regulation and space are part of each other makes it possible to better understand the consequences of this process, or infrastructure.

There is constant tension between policy and development versus the experiences of those who circulate in public and private space. Various forms and uses of public space are afforded different status depending on how and by whom they are used and regulated. Spaces that are used by poor people and youth are often the targets of “revitalization,” as is the case in sections of Winnipeg’s downtown. As privatization of all space increases, who does what where, according to whom, become more volatile issues. In the scope of my project, I am not interested in attempting to figure out what to do about this tension between structure and action but wish to simply acknowledge that it exists. This tension between human action and the intent of policy is constantly recreated by the everyday life experiences that occur in public and private space and the representations of these experiences in policy, the media and the built environment. Recognizing this process makes it possible to see how the ideology of space informs subjectivity, representation and human experience.

The practical and ideological tensions that arise out of the relationship between regulation and action, transgression and policy, highlight the conflict that

exists not only within discourses that focus on urban public spaces, but also amongst the actual users and producers of these spaces. The shifting social relations that take place within these spaces can be considered symbolic in their representations of power. I investigate this idea by looking at the relationship between the material environment and the activities that take place within them. Theory must derive from the practical and practice must derive from theory in order for the dynamic between the two to become fully revealed and explored.

Theory and Practice Relating to Public Space

Urban theory, public spaces and contemporary communication theory all benefit from analysis that is rooted in both theory and practice, or what Katarina Nylund describes as the analysis of the relationships between structure and action. She makes the case that empirically oriented urban or “locality studies” often lack thorough theoretical analysis.⁴ A danger also exists for theoretical arguments whose scope is limited when not rooted some way in human experience. My project is located at the intersection between theory and practice in an attempt to investigate the relationship between regulation and action,

⁴ Katarina Nylund, Cultural Analyses in Urban Theory of the 1990s, *Acta Sociologica* 4.4 (2001): 5

transgression and policy, and to look at the relationship between a specific policy and the spaces and people that are an essential part of this policy environment. Approaching the production of public space from the standpoint of doing communication and cultural studies research affords the work a broader perspective with which to consider the impact that action and space have upon one another.

I draw primarily upon the work of Henri Lefebvre, Rosalyn Deutsche and Katarina Nylund. All three writers address the diversity of meaning inherent in public space. Lefebvre provides a philosophy of mental and physical space that is grounded in the belief that political ideology shapes the production of all space. He argues that capitalism is seen as an “aggregate of separate activities in an already constituted and closed system,” but that in reality it is a system that has many facets and conflicts that are inevitable.⁵ This argument is useful for examining plans aimed at revitalizing Winnipeg’s downtown, both past and present, that have been premised upon private, commercial development. At this juncture, I will acknowledge that the very definition of the term “public” is contested territory. I draw upon Lefebvre’s notion of public as an abstract and

⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Public Space*, 1974, trans. D. Nicolson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991) 10.

comprehensive idea, one that includes all actions that occur outside of private property. Trying to narrow down the term much more than that proved to be overly cumbersome (and unnecessary) in the scope of my research for there is public money in most private development and private interest influence over many public spaces making a uniform definition of public impossible.

Katarina Nylund has written a detailed survey of urban theory published throughout the 1990s. Her analysis includes discussion about the relation between structure and action and physical and social space. She introduces the theory of Norwegian sociologist Dag Osterberg and his concept of “socio-materia.”⁶ This concept has been useful in terms of helping me frame my research on the relationship between the policy and built environment and the actions that take place within this environment.

Rosalyn Deutsche addresses the meanings and uses of public space by explaining the debates, politics and policies around public art. Her work has been particularly illuminating, as she combines feminist critical thinking about the meanings of both public and space, in a way that mirrors and informs my own feminist perspective. Her questioning of the nature of subjectivity in representation relates to the image public space creates and the public identities

it influences. She asks how these images create a “we” as in “public,” and who we imagine ourselves and others to be when occupying these sites. This is relevant to my research in that as the policy story unfolds, it becomes apparent that the positions occupied by those who make decisions about the downtown and those that occupy the downtown are often very different.

Deutsche states that when public space is represented as an organic unity, subversion of this unity seems to “disrupt from the outside,” effectively denying the possibility that there is “an obstacle to coherence at the very core of social life.”⁷ Deutsche’s need for coherence is similar to Habermas’ exaltation of the unified bourgeois cooperation, which results in the creation of an ideal public sphere as the perfect model of public participation. Difference is denied membership in both cases, in order to maintain control over the meanings and identities that are able to circulate within the realms of public space and the public sphere. The increased privatization of “public space” (such as the ubiquitous corporate sponsorship of “public” events, facilities and spaces) goes hand in hand with the disenfranchisement of those denied access to participation in the discourses of the public sphere. Deutsche’s idea that there is an “obstacle

⁶ Nylund 5.

⁷ Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT P, 1996) 278.

to coherence” reveals a connection between what takes place in our day-to-day circulation, and what the expression of the discourse of the public sphere (as represented by mass media and policy making) reflects, and then imposes, upon this circulation. Order is defined in contrast to dis-order. The more public space is taken up by private interests, the more the backlash against corporatization of public space grows, the more forcefully this resistance must be denied and controlled.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter Two, I chronicle specific policies in a specific jurisdiction in order to consider the effect, intent and realization of regulation on the circulation of diverse uses of public space. I focus on the regulation of public spaces and the regulation of transgressive activities in Winnipeg. I begin with an introduction to the jurisdiction and the general policy environment in downtown Winnipeg, Manitoba. This includes an overview of the creation of the City’s downtown development corporation, CentreVenture, as well as the primary downtown business associations in the context of a chronology of key developments and regulatory decisions made on behalf of the downtown in the last 15 years. I also

provide a chronology of the evolution of three specific bylaws created to regulate skateboarding, loitering and panhandling, and in-line skating. I have selected these three bylaws for study because they regulate activities that take place in public, on downtown city streets and sidewalks. I have focused on the downtown, because it represents the most interesting platform for policy evaluation given the contemporary stress on revitalization and regeneration of the urban centre as means to strengthen not only the core area but also the city community at large. It is this policy story that grounds my further analytical and theoretical investigation into the regulation and production of public space in Winnipeg's urban environment in the subsequent chapters.

In Chapter Three, I analyze and question how the built and regulated urban environment impacts upon the production of culture and space (and vice versa), and look at whose interests motivate and enforce these policies. I use existing City of Winnipeg bylaws as well as the overall policy environment articulated in the policy case study in Chapter Two to frame and construct policy analysis and to examine contemporary urban theory. I focus on how these policies and actions have manifested in Winnipeg's downtown core area, specifically on the north side of Portage Avenue. The privatization and economic

development of city spaces, and resulting attempts to regulate behaviour in these spaces in order to facilitate commercial development are re-occurring themes in this chapter. I will attempt to show how public spaces and behaviour that falls into the category “transgressive” are produced amongst these regulations and the environments that support and necessitate them. This analysis is intended to assess the political framework at work in the city in order to set the stage for the deeper theoretical examination that follows.

Finally, in Chapter Four, I relate the analysis of the policy environment and the activities that take place within it to selected urban theory introduced in the Chapter One. I ground these theories with concrete examples of what does/does not/can/cannot take place in specific public spaces in downtown Winnipeg and why this may be. I use urban theory as a lens through which to contemplate practical examples of policy implementation in Winnipeg in order to illuminate how the use and the intended use of public space can be radically different and challenging, depending on who is doing the using and why. The attempts made to abolish and control such sites through bylaws, policies and law enforcement reveals what happens to the status of public space when its use conflicts with what was intended for it on behalf of powerful downtown interest groups. The

impact that regulatory language has upon the creation of the category “transgressive” is examined, as well as what the denial of difference and the increasing privatization of urban space indicate about the construction of power relations in the urban environment.

A final word about why I have chosen to format my thesis with the policy case study at the start of the document and the theory application appearing mostly throughout last two chapters. This is a deliberate attempt on my part use the theory to aid my exploration of the policy environment in Winnipeg, as opposed to using the policy to support or dispute the theory. I have found this approach to be methodologically challenging at times, however I believe that is a most thorough approach for investigating the relationship between structure and action and the spaces that are produced as a result of this dynamic.

Chapter Two

The Policy Story: Introduction

The analysis of culture and place strive to increase the knowledge of how the structural changes have affected the built environment and the social and cultural life of the city.⁸

The following chronology focuses on a particular jurisdiction within the City of Winnipeg. This portrait of the policy environment is limited to Winnipeg's downtown, also called the core area. I have focussed primarily on the development and revitalization strategies that were and are directed at the areas on and around the north side of Portage Avenue between Colony Street and Main Street. This section, also known as "North Portage," is home to most of Winnipeg's financial and retail buildings located in the downtown. It is, along with Main Street, the city's primary thoroughfare, for both cars and pedestrians. A significant residential population lives in the downtown, although there are not many residences on Portage Avenue itself.

This is less the story of the street than of the efforts that have been made to shape its content and expression. I have concentrated on what happened when (more than who was involved and why), in an effort to illustrate the

⁸ Nylund 1.

evolution of both the policy and built environment since the opening of Portage Place Mall in 1987. This information will serve to inform the analysis of these policies and strategies in the following chapters and will become a foundation from which to consider some contemporary urban theory. Constructing a view of the overall downtown policy environment is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of policy and regulation on public spaces.

Commercial interests are more densely represented in the downtown area, making the contrast between public and private spaces seem more evident; this density, however, contributes to the blurring of the distinction between public and private overall, as public space is increasingly developed through public-private partnerships.⁹

The story over the last fifteen years has included a myriad of strategies, changes to the built environment and increased regulation, all of which has contributed to the shaping and realization of the spaces found along North Portage Avenue in Winnipeg's downtown. All of the initiatives, as well as understanding the motivation and impetus behind these decisions and changes, are part of the contemporary urban ecology. I have taken care to present the

information in this story in a neutral manner in order to allow the policies and decisions to speak for themselves as much as possible. I will begin with an overview of the City of Winnipeg. I examine the consequences of the increased privatization of public space at length in the chapter that follows this policy story.

A Brief Introduction to Winnipeg

The City of Winnipeg is known as the “Gateway to the West.” Founded on the banks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, it is located just west of the geographical centre of North America. It is the eighth largest city in Canada, with a population of around 620,000 people.¹⁰ It boasts the most diverse economy in the country, as well as an ethnically diverse population. Winnipeg is home to the largest urban Aboriginal population in Canada, in addition to the largest Filipino community outside of Manila, large Ukrainian and German communities and a large Francophone population. It is estimated that in the next twenty years, 1 in 4 newborns and 1 in 5 people entering the workforce will be Aboriginal.¹¹ Incorporated as a city in 1873 (it had been a trading post since the late 1700s), it

⁹ Also known as the P3s there is increasing reliance on corporations to sponsor public events and spaces. In Winnipeg, corporate partnerships have enabled events such as the city’s street party Get Together Downtown and the Scotia Bank stage in the middle of the Forks public development.

¹⁰ City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg’s Neighborhood Profiles: Statistics Canada Census Data, 1996, May 23, 2003, <<http://www.city.winnipeg.mb.ca>>.

has always dominated the Manitoba economy; two-thirds of the population of the province live in the city. Winnipeg is geographically isolated. The closest cities are Brandon (two hours west) or Minneapolis (eight hours southeast).

According to the 2001 Public Opinion survey conducted by the City of Winnipeg, 88% of the population indicated that quality of life in the city is good or very good.¹² The average family income is \$53,174. The average rent is \$555 per month; the average mortgage is \$723 per month.¹³ The average temperatures in January are between -13 and -24°C. In July the average temperatures are between +26 and minimum +13°C.¹⁴ The North Portage area of the downtown is home to 4100 residents, over half of whom rent, not own, their homes. The average income per resident is \$22,128, and according to Statistics Canada's low income indicators, 63% of the population of North Portage is considered low income.¹⁵

The City of Winnipeg amalgamated its various constituencies in 1971. In 1977, the original Traffic and Streets bylaws were both passed, original bylaws

¹¹ City of Winnipeg, *Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision* (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg, 2001) 3.

¹² City of Winnipeg, Message from the C.A.O., *The City of Winnipeg Report on Performance: 2001* (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg, 2001) 1.

¹³ City of Winnipeg, *Winnipeg's Neighborhood Profiles: Statistics Canada Census Data, 1996*.

¹⁴ City of Winnipeg, *Weather, All About Winnipeg*, May 15, 2002 <<http://www.city.winnipeg.mb.ca>>.

¹⁵ Statistics Canada, *Community Profiles, Census 1996*, May 12, 2003, <www.statcan.ca>.

that continue to be amended to this day. Both of these bylaws contain sections that address skateboarding, loitering, solicitation of funds/panhandling and, later, in-line skating. I focus on the bylaws that are intended to regulate these particular activities, as well as the organizations that are positioned as the community economic development leaders in the downtown, in order to tease out the relationship between regulation and the production of urban public spaces. Eventually, all of the aforementioned activities warranted individual bylaws and the process by which these policies evolved follows.

At this juncture, I am primarily concerned with what has happened, and not so much why (this will be explored in the following chapters); I employ an inductive approach in Chapter Two to allow the policies room to speak for themselves. There will be no shortage of my own opinions and findings in the following chapters. However, in the interest of clarity (especially considering the density of a policy case study) I think it is best to lay this out as neutrally as possible. I believe that unpacking policies from the ground up makes for a more thorough investigation of the evolution of the policy environment. This approach to research illuminates what kinds of decisions and influences have currency in the urban eco-system and facilitates understanding how public spaces are

constructed. In other words, “the how leads to the why.”¹⁶ Looking at how the policies came to be bylaws has enabled me to consider the broader network of agents involved in the making of regulations and the production of public spaces.

City of Winnipeg Act

To look at the larger policy environment in which decisions get made and then executed, it is necessary to first consider the role of the Province of Manitoba. The majority of people in the province live and work in Winnipeg: 680,000 out of a provincial population of 1,147,900 total. The political process of the City is subject to the jurisdiction of the Province’s bylaw, the City of Winnipeg Act.¹⁷ This act is 700+ pages long and outlines just about every service and structure necessary in the operation of the city. The City of Winnipeg Act defines the role of City Council and the Mayor’s office. It defines the geographic boundaries of the city, as well as land-use stipulations. Everything from wastewater to the running of city elections is outlined in the act.

The impact of the City of Winnipeg Act trickles down and affects city bylaws such as Plan Winnipeg (which is the actual bylaw governing the City of

¹⁶ Liora Salter, Class Lecture, York University, 23 February 2003.

Winnipeg created by the city) in that everything contained within the Plan must be consistent with the Province's City of Winnipeg Act. If a policy outlined in Plan Winnipeg calls for the construction of hog barns on the city's perimeter, in fact it is the Province that has the actual power to approve the policy. The City of Winnipeg Act states in Section 583: "The passing of a Plan Winnipeg bylaw does not require council or any other person, association, organization of department or agency of the Crown to undertake a proposal contained in the bylaw, but no public work, undertaking or development shall be inconsistent with a Plan Winnipeg bylaw."¹⁸ In other words, neither City Council, the Mayor, nor anyone else associated with the government, is obligated to implement the policies outlined in the Plan. All public work, however, must be consistent with the Plan, and is subject to the Province's City of Winnipeg Act. Plan Winnipeg articulates a vision for the City of Winnipeg both as a guide for the present and as a view towards the future. It is in accordance with this vision that all new and emerging policies are measured, to ensure a cohesive approach to city planning.¹⁹

It is worth noting before launching into this story, that over the course of different city, provincial and federal administrations, the names of committees

¹⁷ Province of Manitoba, Population statistics from *Manitoba Fast Facts_2000*. May 23, 2003 <<http://www.mb.ca/fastfacts>>.

and departments, as well as their mandates, have changed. For example, what may have been the jurisdiction of the city's Department of Works and Operations in the early 80s, may now be overseen by the Department of Parks and Recreation, and so on. I have taken care to name the specific actors and actions in the policy story in order to make the following chronology as clear as possible. The role of CentreVenture and the Downtown BIZ associations play a primary role and the make-up and mandates of these organizations has for the most part remained consistent throughout their relatively recent existence.

I have organized this chapter into three sections. The first section lays the foundation wherein the Core Area Initiative and the opening of Portage Place Mall are chronicled, starting with the opening of the Portage Place Mall. The second section charts the ever-changing urban eco-system with a renewed focus on issues relating to loitering and panhandling. The third section brings the policy story into the 21st century, beginning with the establishment of CentreVenture, a public development corporation focused on downtown revitalization, the announcement of the development of the True North Entertainment Complex, and the criminalization of skateboarding in designated areas. This information is

¹⁹ City of Winnipeg, Introduction, *Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision 4*.

organized chronologically, but from the outset I would like to signal certain themes:

1. How commercial development is presented as a remedy to economic depression and social ills – private development as the cure for public problems.
2. How the information concerning loitering, panhandling, loitering and skateboarding is debated and enacted through policy.
3. How the absence of criticism and/or resistance to the decisions and policies have impacted on the overall urban eco-system in downtown Winnipeg.

Section One:

In 1980, the Mayor of the City of Winnipeg, Bill Norrie, along with the federal Employment and Immigration Minister Lloyd Axworthy and Urban Affairs Minister Gerry Mercier of the Province of Manitoba, announced the commitment of \$180 million over five years to a rejuvenation strategy for Winnipeg's downtown. The program was called the Core Area Initiative and was underway by April 1, 1981, with a mandate that included housing, commercial and industrial development, employment and a revitalized Indian Affairs program in Winnipeg's core area. Soon to follow in 1983, as part of the Core Area Initiative, was the

creation of the North Portage Development Corporation. This was another tripartite body that included a government-appointed chairman and nine-member board of directors and a publicly funded allocation of \$76 million for development. The mandate of this corporation was to attract a private developer to build a mall or similar attraction on the north side of Portage Avenue in the downtown area.

In 1984, the Core Area Initiative partnered with the Downtown Winnipeg Association (an organization established in the 1960s), and launched the Destination Downtown program. This was a three-week multi-media campaign aimed at bringing together downtown merchants and creating a common marketing message in an effort to foster a new image for downtown Winnipeg. Following the Destination Downtown program came the announcement in 1985 that Cadillac Fairview Development Corporation would build a large retail mall on North Portage Avenue. Coupled with the on-going efforts of the Core Area Initiative, these all suggest that urban renewal strategies and a focus on Winnipeg's downtown infrastructure (both social and economic) was a serious priority for both the private and public sectors. The landscape of Winnipeg's downtown public spaces and approaches taken in evaluating, developing and

regulating these urban public and private spaces today, are informed by the legacies of this earlier era.

Plan Winnipeg is the bylaw of the City of Winnipeg created by City Council, and is referred to by the mayor's office as the "most important document prepared by the City."²⁰ It is a long-term planning document that was originally a discussion paper created in 1981, and was adopted as bylaw in 1986. This document was created in an effort to articulate a vision pertaining to the economic development of Winnipeg and land-use issues and contains a section that deals with the downtown specifically.

In 1987, Mayor Susan Thompson established a review process in an effort to make Plan Winnipeg an evolving policy for the City. In 1992, after an extensive review was undertaken by the City administration of the 1986 Plan Winnipeg, a new version of Plan Winnipeg was created that addressed social and political issues in addition to economic concerns. The outcome of that process was the policy document "Plan Winnipeg...Towards 2010," adopted in 1993.

Portage Place Mall opened in the fall of 1987. Anchoring the north west corner of the downtown area. The building itself is a dominant structure with

²⁰ City of Winnipeg, Dedication, *Plan Winnipeg: Towards 2010* (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg, 1993) 6

bright red and blue accents and is a prime example of how policy transforms public and private space. The development of the mall and the attached Place Promenade apartment complex required the expropriation of two full city blocks on the north side of Portage Avenue. Small storefront businesses, offices and residences that occupied this space had to be relocated, and their buildings demolished, to make way for the development of the mall complex. The mall development also spearheaded the construction of three more skywalks in the downtown, connecting the mall with the Hudson's Bay building on the south side of Portage Avenue at one end and two connecting with the site of the former Eaton's building on the other. The construction of these elevated indoor sidewalks made it possible to walk the entire length of North Portage Avenue all the way to Main Street without having to go outdoors. The sidewalks on these two blocks that had formerly led pedestrians to the shops, restaurants, apartments and homes were transformed into vacant walkways that paralleled the mall, as all the reasons for pedestrian activity on these two blocks had been relocated indoors.

The merchants located on the south side of Portage Avenue felt the effects of this change in landscape. The South Side Portage Association worked

to bring attention the growing plight of the south side merchants and the changes taking place in this section of the downtown. Eventually, \$1.2 million was committed to the South Side Merchants Association by the North Portage Development Association in order to facilitate and upgrade the transition of the south side of Portage Avenue in the early days of the Portage Place Mall, and to combat the growing perception that the downtown was vacant and unsafe.²¹ Movement on the sidewalks on both sides of Portage Avenue had decreased dramatically since the opening of the mall. Issie Coop, the general manager of the NPDA (and an architect), had maintained during the development of Portage Place that the mall would be a “magnet for people to come downtown.”²² Within one year of the opening of the Portage Place Mall, half the merchants located in the blocks directly across the street from the mall had closed or moved.²³

The Core Area Initiative suggested that the establishment of the downtown as a Business Improvement District, as had been done in other cities facing increased economic decline, might help to unify the merchants in the downtown and bring consumers back to the core area. In order for one of these districts to be established, changes had to first be made to the City of Winnipeg

²¹ Murray McNeill, Progress Made on Mall Links, *Winnipeg Free Press* 16 Nov. 1998: 41.

²² *Winnipeg Free Press* 8 Dec. 1985: A3

Act in order to increase the decision-making powers afforded to the City by the Province. In 1988, a new City of Winnipeg Downtown Zoning bylaw was created (#4800/88) in order to allow for the creation of Business Improvement Zones (BIZ). In 1989, the Downtown and Exchange BIZ were established in order to foster business improvement in the downtown area.

The concept behind these “zones” is to facilitate access to a larger market for the businesses in each jurisdiction. Each BIZ organization functions as an association of business people within a defined commercial area working towards “positive change” in their respective zones.²⁴ As formally designated Business Improvement Zones, each BIZ can take “direct control over the appearance and image of their area.”²⁵ BIZ organizations are funded by a zoning levy collected by the City and then returned to the respective organization and used according to the directives of their memberships and boards of directors. The Downtown BIZ’s priorities are to improve the “public right of way” to businesses in the downtown and to market this “BIZ Zone.”²⁶

²³ Lucy Haines, “South Side Story,” *Uptown Magazine* 20 Oct. 1988: 12.

²⁴ City of Winnipeg, Department of Planning, Property and Development, *An Overview of B.I.Z* (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg, 1989) 1.

²⁵ City of Winnipeg, Department of Planning, Property and Development, *An Overview of B.I.Z* 2

²⁶ Doug Clark, personal interview, 8 Aug. 2003.

Section Two:

Within the first year of operation, loitering became an issue inside the Portage Place Mall. The food court of the mall was often the location where people from the neighbourhood met and spent time during the day. Newspaper reports about people loitering and street kids hanging out in the mall began appearing in local papers in May of 1988.²⁷ In 1989, the mall was described as a “warm refuge” for local youth and local adults who were “otherwise down on their luck.”²⁸ On several occasions, the city loitering bylaw was used as grounds for the removal or discouragement of people loitering in the building by the mall security staff. The manager of the mall made it clear that he was able to remove and ban any individual from the space because any one could be evicted from private property. This solicited a comment from the city’s police department who acknowledged that enforcing a bylaw that regulates private property in an area that is considered public access is a “grey area.”²⁹

Winnipeg Free Press columnist Val Werier, in an article published just months after the mall opened, commented that Portage Place had become a

²⁷ Wendy Stephenson, Bum s Rush Angers Customers, *Winnipeg Sun* 26 May 1988.

²⁸ Allison Bray, Portage Place Warm Haven for Street Kids, *Winnipeg Free Press* 22 Jan. 1989: 2

²⁹ Ibid, 2

public thoroughfare.³⁰ While it was a handy refuge in the cold winter months, the price was being paid in terms of the lack of vitality on the street. He makes the case that the increase in loitering in the mall is one of the indicators of the “fundamental contradiction of the modern mall, one that is developed as a revitalization of an area, but turns its back on the street.” He added that loitering could in fact be a “redeeming experience” in a frenetic society, but that the street (now un-engaging and unnecessary to pedestrians) was no longer the place where this could occur. Now loitering took place within the mall much to the consternation of Cadillac Fairview, the developer of the complex, which posted a “No loitering is permitted” sign at the Carlton Street entrance of the mall.

In 1988, it was announced that a new park would be opened across the street from the mall on the north side of Portage Avenue. This park, named Window Park, is situated in front of the newly developed Air Canada office building whose entrance is set back from the street. Window Park was initiated and primarily funded by the Core Area Initiative (C.A.I.). The \$537,000 park was paid for through funds from the C.A.I., with “assistance [unspecified amounts] from Air Canada and the City of Winnipeg.”³¹ The land on which the park is

³⁰ Val Werier, World Needs a Bit of Loitering, *Winnipeg Free Press* 2 Dec. 1987: 6 .

³¹ Unbylined, Core Thinks Pink at Park Opening, *Winnipeg Free Press* 7 June 1988: 3.

situated is wholly owned by the City of Winnipeg, and is regulated by the City's Parks and Recreation bylaw (#3219/82).³² During this time the North Portage Development Corporation also announced that more pedestrian links, such as escalators and stairways, would be added onto the south side of Portage Avenue in order to facilitate pedestrian traffic between the mall and the merchants on the south side of the avenue. This initiative was funded with money from the North Portage Development Corporation.

In 1989, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that the population in the core area had increased and that demolition of buildings in the downtown had decreased since the early 80s.³³ Government programs such as the Core Area Initiative and new motivation for the preservation of heritage buildings via tax credits are credited with the decline in demolition. During the early 80s, two-thirds of the buildings that had been torn down in Winnipeg were located downtown – literally creating holes in the urban landscape and adding to an increasingly barren atmosphere.

In 1990, Cadillac Fairview Corporation renegotiated the mortgage at a 5% interest rate and secured an additional loan of \$27 million from all three levels of

³² Doug Clark, personal interview.

³³ Allison Bray, Portage Place Warm Haven for Street Kids, 2.

government. The North Portage Development Corporation defended this loan as means to guarantee that Cadillac Fairview would build certain features in the mall such as an Imax theatre and facilities for the local theatre group Prairie Theatre Exchange – features that had been negotiated as part of the initial development agreement. In addition, controversy was brewing over the Place Promenade apartment complex attached to the Mall. The building had a high vacancy rate and the NPDC had to take over management of the complex from the private developer (not Cadillac Fairview) who was on the verge of bankruptcy. Critics wary of the amount of public monies invested in the mall and its attached developments demanded to know how funds were being allocated and deals were being negotiated.³⁴ Arnold Naimark, the chairman of North Portage Development Corporation stated that in fact he could not clarify how much private sector money had gone into the development of Place Promenade and that it was probable that the majority of funding for this private development had come from public monies. He defended the work of the North Portage Development Corporation and the organization's secrecy as being necessary – indicating that private business deals could not be negotiated publicly.³⁵

³⁴ Ruth Teichroeb, *Agency's Secrecy Defended*, *Winnipeg Free Press* 1 Feb. 1990: 3.

³⁵ Ruth Teichroeb, *Agency's Secrecy Defended*, 3.

In 1991, the new YM-YWCA opened. Housed in a heritage building that was incorporated into the west side of the Portage Place Mall, the facility was made accessible both from the street and inside the mall. The YM-YWCA not only serves the downtown residential community, but also members from all over the city. It is a very popular facility. Similarly, the Centennial Library at the other end of downtown is well used by people not only in immediate community, but from throughout the city as well. The library complex includes a small public square adjacent to the building. Both the YW-YMCA and the Centennial Library are open to all members of the public and are not-for-profit corporations. Both are funded by public and private funds and are governed by a board of directors. The YM-YWCA at the northwestern end of the downtown and the Centennial Library at the southeast corner of the downtown, consistently bring large numbers of people to the core area while at the same time serving those already there.

Out on the streets and sidewalks, the growing popularity of rollerblading, or in-line skating as it is now called, attracted enough attention to warrant legislation. On July 30, 1991, City Council referred to the Committee on Works and Operations concerning a proposal brought forth to allow in-line skating where

it may be “considered safe to do so.”³⁶ The in-line skating regulation evolved simply and it is an uncomplicated example of the role of language in regulation. On November 12, 1991, the Committee of Works and Operations referred back to the Streets and Transportation Departments in its report with the instruction to involve the Department of Parks and Recreation to assist in preparing a proposal to accommodate in-line skating. On July 30, 1991, the Traffic bylaw (#1573/77) was amended to include the addition of section 6.1 to permit the use of in-line skates. Finally, in July of 1992, bylaw #5991/92 was passed. The bylaw regulating in-line skating on sidewalks and streets states:

The use of roller blades commonly referred to as in-line skates is permitted: on designated roadways (designated by resolution of the Committee on Works and Operations of the City of Winnipeg and Bicycle routes during the period when vehicular traffic is restricted to local access (on Sundays and holidays during from May until October, the streets that follow the rivers are closed to vehicles and made into bicycle paths) on said roadways, and on roadways in City of Winnipeg parks, except where such use is expressly prohibited by traffic control devices (5991/92).

This made in-line skating officially legal on streets and sidewalks except where prohibited by the posting of a sign indicating otherwise.

³⁶ City of Winnipeg, *Council Minutes*, May 6, 1992: 1268.

Meanwhile, back inside the Portage Place Mall, the controversy over loitering continued. A woman breast-feeding her Metis child was approached by mall security and threatened with indecent exposure charges if she did not stop. Around the same time, mall security allegedly beat up a Native youth resulting in their suspension from the job for two weeks. Two other Native people accused of loitering were also banned from inside the mall in the winter of 1991.³⁷ Harold McQueen, the co-chair of the Social Assistance Coalition of Manitoba, alleged in an interview in January of 1991 that Portage Place Mall security was targeting Native peoples in their enforcement of the no loitering policy. Mall management and security denied racism.

In 1992, in an effort to deter loitering, smoking was banned inside the mall. This smoking ban preceded the citywide smoking ban that came into effect in January 2002 by ten years and was declared a successful strategy by Don Knight, the mall manager.³⁸

In March of 1992, Winnipeg 2000, a report prepared by the Economic Development Winnipeg Task Force was published. The City of Winnipeg and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce funded this task force and the new economic

³⁷ Doug Thomas, Welfare Group Says Natives Harassed Planned Sit-In at Mall, *Winnipeg Free Press* 11 Jan. 1991: 3.

development strategy. Winnipeg 2000 was allocated a start-up budget of \$1.4 million from the city to pursue the luring of new jobs to the city to strengthen its economy.³⁹ This task force, while not concentrating on development strategies in the same way as say the North Portage Development Corporation (NPDC), that is to say changing the built environment, is worth mentioning simply because it represented yet another strategy for economic development funded publicly and intended for the betterment of Winnipeg's economy. Winnipeg 2000, like the NPDC, was a tripartite agreement among all levels of government, and was made up of a 13-member task force. Task force members were public employees and members of the business community. At the time the report was published, Martin Cash, the business columnist from the *Winnipeg Free Press*, expressed concern that Winnipeg 2000 was yet another task force working in a vacuum, and that despite receiving funding from the City, there was little co-ordination between the task force and relevant City departments, nor the Province, which at this time had a Department of Urban Affairs.⁴⁰

The issue of loitering continued to gather steam beyond the borders of the Portage Place Mall, out onto the sidewalks and into Window Park. The debate

³⁸ Linda Quattrin, Kiosk Owners Fume Over Smoking Ban, *Winnipeg Free Press* 13 Dec. 1992: B1.

³⁹ City of Winnipeg, *Winnipeg 2000: Summary Report*, 1992.

now included the issue of panhandling. In 1992, City Councillor George Fraser (St. Charles ward) suggested that because panhandlers were often under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, they often prevented people from using the sidewalk.⁴⁰ These comments stemmed from a debate about the city's panhandling bylaw (which had not been altered since 1947) after a lawyer representing four panhandlers challenged the law under the Charter of Rights and Freedom. The Public Convenience and Welfare bylaw (#16227) regulated begging, drunkenness, vagrancy and disorderly conduct, idling and loitering (and a few other things, such as the prohibition of the selling of newspapers by girls).

Specifically, section number 6. "Loitering and Idling" states:

No person shall stand in groups or sit or lounge on chairs, benches and other things, in front of a beer parlour, boarding house, hotel or place of public entertainment, or in a street, so as to cause any obstruction to the free use of said street or by any manner of conduct commit any public nuisance by collecting, loitering or standing as idler on any of the streets, sidewalks of the City, or on the step of or the approach to a house or other premises open to a street whereby the public are liable to be subjected to disturbance or annoyance. Provided that nothing contained in this section shall be construed to extend to any person taking part in any religious procession not contrary to law.⁴²

⁴⁰ Martin Cash, Winnipeg 2000 Movers and Shakers Looking Wobbly, *Winnipeg Free Press* 10 Mar. 1992: B18.

⁴¹ Nick Martin, Armed With Charter; Panhandlers Tackle Medieval Bylaw, *Winnipeg Free Press* 3 May 1992: B14

This bylaw was repealed on December 16, 1992, by bylaw #6086/92 after a provincial court ruled that governments cannot prohibit acts that “have no social impropriety.”⁴³ The Downtown BIZ responded to the loitering and panhandling situation downtown by creating and launching a program called “Change for the Better.” The program was set up to encourage people to donate change in designated donation boxes located inside local businesses. The funds collected were then donated to social agencies in the downtown area. This method of donation was meant to discourage panhandlers in the area. Downtown BIZ, which had just had its budget of \$724,466 approved by City Council also announced the launch of the BIZ patrol. The BIZ patrol was a street team dedicated to picking up litter in the downtown.

Mayor Susan Thompson was elected in the fall of 1992, replacing Bill Norrie who had held office for 13 years. “Plan Winnipeg...Towards 2010” was adopted by City Council in 1993. The majority of policies in “Plan Winnipeg...Towards 2010” were concerned with economic development and the crisis of the downtown core. The vital role of downtown garnered its own policy section in the Urban Development Management chapter. Number one in this

⁴² City of Winnipeg by-law 1627, The Public Convenience and Welfare bylaw.

⁴³ Nick Martin B14

section is a recommendation (5B-01) to encourage people to live downtown. (5B-18) calls for the preparation of a formal Downtown Plan that will be periodically reviewed by the business community along with the City.⁴⁴ The introduction to the Urban Development Management policy chapter states that by clearly defining the role of downtown, everyone will benefit from a “predictable investment culture.”⁴⁵

In 1993, the Core Area Initiative, the North Portage Development Corporation, Downtown and Exchange BIZ, Economic Development Winnipeg, the City of Winnipeg’s Department of Planning, Property and Development and the South Side Merchants Association, were all focused in some way on the production of downtown revitalization and therefore the uses of downtown spaces. In early 1993, the CentrePlan task force was created to coordinate planning, development and implementation strategies directed at revitalizing the downtown. CentrePlan was created in response to the recommendations made by the City of Winnipeg Economic Development Task Force that there was a need for a central organizing principle where downtown development was

⁴⁴ City of Winnipeg, *Plan Winnipeg: Towards 2010* 89.

⁴⁵ City of Winnipeg, *Plan Winnipeg: Towards 2010* 86.

concerned, because “planning and coordination are essential” in order to strengthen the downtown and therefore the larger community.⁴⁶

CentrePlan was made up of committees with members from both the private and public sector. In 1994, CentrePlan’s Vision and Strategy Report was endorsed by City Council. The CentrePlan framework was (and continues to be) applied throughout all of the departments that make up the city administration. Each department must cross-reference its own policy initiatives with the CentrePlan framework. This process is mandated and has been articulated in each subsequent Plan Winnipeg bylaw. Eventually, CentrePlan would evolve into a much larger and more permanent development corporation and I will return to this later in this policy story.

In the meantime, as the various organizations and interests in the downtown continued to work at “change for the better,” the panhandling issue continued to grow and evolve. In August of 1994, a proposed bylaw that made the distinction between aggressive and passive panhandling was introduced to City Council. The proposal was presented by Councillor Glen Murray (Fort Rouge ward) and his ward’s BIZ association, Osborne BIZ.⁴⁷ The bylaw called for the

⁴⁶ *Economic Development Winnipeg Report* (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg, 1990) 4.

⁴⁷ Karen Hiebert-Pauls, Beggar Law Eyed, *Winnipeg Sun* 14 Aug. 1994: 5.

prohibition of panhandling after dark or near bank machines and bus shelters. During this time the Downtown BIZ claimed that their “Change for the Better” program had contributed to a decrease in aggressive panhandling downtown (although they do not state how exactly).⁴⁸

Several newspaper articles appeared about panhandling around this time in both the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Winnipeg Sun*.⁴⁹ It appears that as people got used to the mall being a part of the daily downtown landscape, the issues of what could happen in and around it grew in scope and importance. The attention paid by the press and Downtown interest groups was unprecedented. Around the same time, the *Free Press* also sponsored the “Free Press Downtown Project” which called for downtown rejuvenation proposals that were then explored and debated in a special series in the *Free Press*. Not surprisingly, one of the two themes most commonly cited in the proposals submitted was the question of safety downtown as loitering and panhandling were both seen as obstructive and dangerous. The other theme was the need for the creation of new housing in the downtown area.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Downtown BIZ, *Downtown Buzz Annual Report* (Winnipeg: Downtown Winnipeg BIZ Improvement Zone, 1994).

⁴⁹ See Karen Hiebert-Pauls; “Beggar Law Eyed,” *Winnipeg Sun* 14 Aug 1994: 5; and Gerald Flood, Living Well in City’s Core, *Winnipeg Free Press* 29 June 1994: B3.

⁵⁰ Flood B3.

In January of 1995, a new panhandling bylaw was passed that restricted the time of day and location in which panhandling could occur: not after sunset, within 10 metres of a bank machine, bus stop or bus shelter, inside a city bus, elevator, or pedestrian walkway or from an occupant of a parked or stopped vehicle.⁵¹ This bylaw repealed the 1992 bylaw and was supported by the Downtown BIZ association, and the City's Department of Protection, Parks and Culture.

In June of 1995, the National Association of Poverty Organization (NAPO) filed a court challenge over the bylaw, which, it claimed, violated freedom of expression and equality provisions under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As a result, City Council's Standing Committee on Protection and Community Services recommended that the bylaw be amended in order to regulate the behaviour of panhandlers rather than the location and time of panhandling. Obstruction of pedestrian traffic, verbal threats, or inconveniencing pedestrians would be prohibited under the new bylaw.

The Downtown BIZ association also launched the "Downtown Watch Ambassador" program in 1995. The goal of the program was to act as the eyes

⁵¹ City of Winnipeg, City Clerks Office, vol 53, file GF-2 (City of Winnipeg: Winnipeg, 1995).

and ears of the streets and establish a link between the action on the streets and the police. These Ambassadors were put on the street by the Downtown BIZ to improve safety and the perception of safety on the streets. The Downtown Watch Ambassadors advise all violators of any bylaw – whether skateboarding, loitering or panhandling. For example, where signs are posted "No Skateboarding," they will attend to the area and advise people that they are in violation of the bylaw and may be charged. If the problem continues, the Ambassadors will work with the community police officer of the Winnipeg Police Service in identifying the offender and can have them charged. Also, the Ambassadors will identify the areas that have been tagged by graffiti and inform the BIZ Maintenance Coordinator who will have the graffiti removed. The Ambassadors patrol all public areas within BIZ boundaries in the downtown and inform the public of the different bylaws and work with the Winnipeg Police Service to help identify repeat offenders.

At the end of 1995, the Core Area Initiative was replaced by a broader plan focused on job creation. The Winnipeg Development Agreement, also a tripartite agreement funded by all three levels of government (until 2001), was not restricted to any one jurisdiction, such as the core area, in Winnipeg. The North

Portage Development Corporation and the Forks Renewal Corporation (established in 1987) merged in 1994, creating The Forks North Portage Partnership as means to consolidate development efforts all the way to the most northeasterly point of the downtown at the fork of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers. This partnership was governed by a 10-person Board of Directors. Each level of government selected three members of the board and the chairman was selected unanimously. Around the same time, the Downtown BIZ launched a new program of “Safety Ambassadors.” This 12-person team was set up to patrol the downtown between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m., 7 days a week, in an effort to make the downtown appear safer. This four-year \$1 million project was funded through the Downtown BIZ and the Winnipeg Development Agreement Urban Safety Initiative and in accordance with the framework laid out by CentrePlan for the overall vision of the downtown.

On February 5, 1996, the Committee on Protection, Parks and Culture considered a proposed bylaw amendment to clarify the regulation of skateboarding on residential sidewalks. Initially, the practice of skateboarding was regulated under both the Streets and Traffic bylaws of the City of Winnipeg. The Traffic bylaw consolidated on April 6, 1977, was created post-amalgamation

in 1971. Section 6, “Coasters, Skateboards, etc., Prohibited on Roadways,” states: “No person shall ride upon or use any coaster, skateboard, sleigh, skis, skates, toy vehicles, or similar devices on a roadway.” The Streets bylaw (#1491/77) states: “No person shall slide, coast, toboggan or use or ride any skateboard or similar device upon, on to, or over a street.” Skateboarding on sidewalks is not mentioned, nor prohibited, in either of the original Streets or Traffic bylaws. The eventual criminalization of skateboarding on certain city sidewalks is one of the most contemporary example of regulation and control of public space in this chronology.

City administration provided a report to council on March 4, 1996, that reviewed the feasibility, liability and enforcement aspects surrounding skateboarding within Winnipeg. This report included an “interpretation” from the department of legal services that stated that there were no “legal impediments or liability issues” relating to the aforementioned amendment. The Committee of Works and Operations did not concur with the proposed amendment, and (citing correspondence with the Access Advisory Committee of March 8, 1996 and February 7, 1997), advised the administration that skateboarding should not be permitted on city sidewalks. On September 18, 1997, a report submitted by the

Commissioner of Protection, Parks and Culture put forth two motions. They recommended that the Traffic bylaw (#1573//77) should be amended to permit the use of skateboards on residential sidewalks and that the Department should solicit private sponsorship to produce a pamphlet about the safe and courteous use of skateboards. Finally on October 6, 1997, the report was considered by the Standing Committee on Protection, Parks and Culture. Separate motions were put forth on the above two recommendations and there was a tie vote on each, hence the motions were declared lost.⁵²

An article in the April 13, 1997 issue of the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported on the growing conflict between various public and private development and business groups in terms of a vision for improving downtown Winnipeg. The article suggested that some individuals felt that Portage Place Mall was to blame for the disappearance of street life from downtown sidewalks.⁵³ Municipal zoning laws were also cited as part of the problem as the value of vacant land was considered contingent on development potential, many sites were made into parking lots while owners waited for property values to increase as a result of

⁵² City of Winnipeg, City Clerks Office, *Skateboarding within the City of Winnipeg*, vol. 14, file ST-7.2 (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg, compiled Fall 1997).

⁵³ Unbylined, *Winnipeg Free Press* 13 Apr. 1997.

future downtown development. It was (and to some extent still is) a “chicken and egg” situation, whereby land sits (almost) empty while owners wait for someone else to develop adjacent property.⁵⁴

In response to the growing commercial vacancy rate on Portage Avenue, the Portage Avenue Property Owners Association (PAPOA) was established in 1997. Jay Wollenberg, a consultant to CentrePlan, advocated for the creation of the association as means to rectify street life. John Hodgert, president of Bannatyne Financial (the company that then managed Portage Place along with Harvey Pfeffier of Black and Armstrong Realty and Hart Mallin, a private consultant), created a redevelopment plan for the downtown on behalf of the PAPOA association. Mayor Susan Thompson then appointed CentrePlan to approach the City Council for \$4 million to fund the PAPOA. By late August of 1997, the PAPOA had made a call for proposals from the business community and CentrePlan for downtown redevelopment ideas.⁵⁵

In 1998, the Streets bylaw was amended to address the “squeegeeing” issue. “squeegeeing” refers to the act of washing car windows and soliciting change from passengers while the car is stopped at a red light. In response to

⁵⁴ Peter Diamant, New Zoning Can Help Repopulate Downtown, *Winnipeg Sun* 13 May 1997: 8.

⁵⁵ Kim Guttormson, Wanted: Portage Avenue Ideas, *Winnipeg Free Press* 23 Aug. 1997: A1.

the increase in “squeegeeing”, clause 2.18 was added re: soliciting business in a roadway:

No person shall enter a roadway or occupy a roadway for the purpose of offering the occupant or occupants of the vehicle any goods or service, nor shall a person provide any goods or service in a roadway to the occupant or occupants of vehicles in the roadway.⁵⁶

These changes came after the submission of a discussion paper to the Executive Policy Committee (EPC) prepared by Councillor Murray (Ft.Rouge) entitled “Shared Public Spaces: Maintaining Public Order and Safety: A Discussion Paper” in January of 1998. In this paper, Councillor Murray argued that panhandling should be outlawed at certain times of day in order to maintain safe public spaces.⁵⁷ The discussion paper included the suggestion that panhandling and “squeegeeing” be licensed activities. In this sense, panhandling and “squeegeeing” could be conceived of in the same light as other street vendors who occupy certain public spaces to earn money.⁵⁸ Inherent to this proposal is the position that the best approach to the reality of “squeegeeing” is to regulate it. (This is in contrast to many of the other proposed approaches that

⁵⁶ City of Winnipeg, Streets/Traffic bylaw #1477, 1995: 10.

⁵⁷ Glen Murray, discussion paper, Shared Public Spaces: Maintaining Public Order and Safety, A Discussion Paper, Winnipeg City Council, January 1998.

⁵⁸ Glen Murray, personal interview, 6 Aug. 2003.

have eradication of the behaviour in question as their primary focus, such as the prohibition of loitering in the mall or Window Park.) The paper also referred to SKY (Street Kids and Youth), an outreach program that successfully offered street kids who “squeegeed” for money a place to go for food and resources. He indicated that when SKY closed its doors, these kids all returned to the streets. Murray advocated the establishment of other outreach programs to pick up where SKY had left off, although no such program was established again.⁵⁹

In the spring of 1998, the Executive Policy Committee of the Winnipeg City Council recommended for approval \$2.5 million in funding for the PortageScape renewal plan. The idea for PortageScape came from a \$500,000 feasibility study commissioned by the Forks North Portage Development Corporation. The PortageScape plan called for the widening of sidewalks, installation of planters on the sidewalks and boulevards and the narrowing of traffic lanes, in an effort to increase pedestrian activity and create a “facelift” for the downtown in preparation for the international Pan American Summer games in 1999. At this time, the city also allocated more money than ever before for a graffiti clean-up initiative and all the graffiti in the downtown area was subsequently removed.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Glen Murray, personal interview.

⁶⁰ Doug Clark, personal interview.

CentrePlan also held a consultation with selected downtown stakeholders called “Building Blocks Housing Forum” and published a report on the need for more housing for people with middle and higher incomes in the downtown.⁶¹ In addition, the report suggested that a grocery store was needed downtown (there is still no centrally located grocery store downtown), along with changes to building codes and zoning laws in order to facilitate development and encourage more people to live downtown. The report called for the establishment of a private/public partnership corporation to oversee the implementation and accomplishment of the recommendations. Similarly, Economic Development Winnipeg (with an approved allocation of \$95,000 from the City) was asked to set up a 10-person task force to evaluate the role of existing downtown advocacy groups such as the Downtown BIZ, CentrePlan and the Portage Place Property Association.⁶² This task force, which produced the report *Winnipeg 2000*, advocated for the establishment of a singular arm’s length agency to be in charge of downtown development with an “entrepreneurial spirit” and the “authority and freedom from City Hall” in order to do this.⁶³

⁶¹ CentrePlan, Building Blocks Housing Forum, 5 May 1998, <www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/planning/centreplan/housingforum/summary>.

⁶² Kim Gutterson, New Authority for Downtown Plans in Sight *Winnipeg Free Press* 9 July 1998: 8.

⁶³ Economic development Winnipeg, *Winnipeg 2000: An Economic Development Strategy Report* (Winnipeg, City of Winnipeg).

Section Three:

CentreVenture Development Corporation was created on May 13, 1999 by City Council with a start-up budget of \$250,000 as a response to the Downtown Development Task Force Report that was tabled in December 1998.⁶⁴ The Task Force recommended that economic development of the downtown core was necessary in order to strengthen the “larger community” and that “planning and coordination are essential” in order to do this efficiently.⁶⁵ The CentrePlan framework which was originally included in the document Plan Winnipeg, was the basis upon which CentreVenture was created. CentrePlan became the umbrella policy document for CentreVenture, in that it would be the corporation’s role to implement and facilitate the goals and responsibilities outlined in CentrePlan⁶⁶ This includes the primary recommendation to “plan, develop, operate and manage the downtown as a single and special entity.”⁶⁷ According to the City, the creation of CentreVenture helped to define the roles of City Council, the City Administration, other levels of government (such as the Province), the private sector and the larger community by working pro-actively with both the private and

⁶⁴ City of Winnipeg, City Council Minutes, 13 May 1999: 630

⁶⁵ CentreVenture, May 5, 1999: 3

public sectors to “support private sector investment and partnerships to spur the revitalization of downtown.”⁶⁶ CentreVenture’s support for development is primarily by means of helping to amend zoning bylaws to facilitate development, tax breaks and administrative assistance.

CentreVenture became the “entrepreneurial authority that provides leadership in sustaining and creating business opportunities downtown.” It is the constituted leader in fostering private and public partnerships on behalf of downtown development and the Board of Directors reports directly to the Executive Policy Committee of the Winnipeg City Council. CentreVenture is particularly influential because its primary tenet is to court private developers and to lobby for the suitable policies necessary to regulate public and private spaces in the downtown to attract these developers. CentreVenture is mandated to impact directly upon the production of downtown spaces via influence over regulation, policy and image.

By September of 1999, CentreVenture had secured three years of operational funding based on the approval by City Council of its business plan. The arm’s length corporation had secured \$250,000 per year for three years from

⁶⁶ The Vision, *CentreVenture Development Corporation* 17 Feb. 2003 <www.centreventure.com>.

⁶⁷ The Vision, *CentreVenture Development Corporation*.

the City, in addition to \$3 million towards an urban development bank. CentreVenture also received a \$250,000 contribution towards the Urban Development Bank from the Province and support from the private sector in the form of time and direct investment in development projects.⁶⁹ The City's Executive Policy Committee reported to Council on May 12, 1999, that the Mayor would be C.E.O. of this development corporation that would include a board of directors appointed by council from the business community.⁷⁰ The first board of directors was appointed by the Mayor from a list of people recommended by members of City Council. The selected members were culled from a list of candidates who were investors and business owners in the downtown area.⁷¹

The creation of CentreVenture was lauded as a positive step towards re-establishing the downtown core area by Councillor Garth Steek (River Heights).⁷² Public hearings were held on the permit process for developers and changes to the building code, and in May 1999, a civic committee drafted a set of amendments to the Downtown Zoning bylaw to be considered. These included

⁶⁸ CentreVenture, May 5, 1999: 5

⁶⁹ CentreVenture, *Report to the City of Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg 2002) 3.

⁷⁰ City of Winnipeg, *Report of the Executive Policy Committee*, Council Minutes, 12 May 1999: 630.

⁷¹ Glen Murray, personal interview.

⁷² Garth Steek, letter, City Does Promote Historic Development *Winnipeg Free Press* 2 Nov. 1999.

suggestions as to how to streamline the permit process and how to eliminate duplication of the bureaucratic process amongst City departments.

In November 22, 1999, the Chairperson of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services requested that the issue of skateboarding within the City of Winnipeg be reviewed. This review resulted in the report prepared for the Chief Administrative Officer “to amend or delete the City of Winnipeg bylaws pertaining to skateboard usage.”⁷³ This report was initiated due to increased community interest in skateboarding opportunities and policies. For example, around this time the Skateboarding Association of Winnipeg was established in order to lobby more effectively for a permanent skate park. Skateboarding was also growing in terms of mainstream acceptance (at least from a marketing point of view) with the establishment of the American X-Games which televised competitive skateboarding and popularity of skate clothing lines like Vision Street Wear and Stussy. Furthermore, the profile of one of the city’s first skate shops SK8* increased as the shop kept moving into more visible and larger premises throughout the early 90s, and the proliferation of skaters in the city grew right along with it.

⁷³ City of Winnipeg, *Skateboarding within the City of Winnipeg*.

The report clarified that there were two conflicting bylaws regulating skateboard usage.⁷⁴ The Traffic bylaw (#1573/77) and the Streets bylaw (#1481/77) were inconsistent in their interpretation of the terms “highway,” “street” and “roadway,” and therefore also the application of skateboards within this inconsistently terminology. Several departments of the City (the Corporate Services Department – Legal Services Division, Winnipeg Policy Services, Access Advisory Committee, Public Works Department – Street Maintenance Division, Corporate Finance Department – Claims Branch and Downtown Winnipeg Biz) were consulted for their views on the issue of skateboarding in the city, and summaries of each are provided in this report. Three of the organizations stated their opposition to allowing skateboarding on city sidewalks; two did not oppose skateboarding on city sidewalks. The Report released on March 20, 2000, summarized other approaches to the “skateboard issue” as found in other cities and concludes with three options:

- Option 1: City bylaws #1481/77 and #1573/77 be amended and/or deleted to allow Skateboarding on sidewalks except on regional street sidewalks, or adjacent to or in front of businesses. Skateboards may be used as transportation only (no tricks) and skateboarders must be courteous and dismount when approaching pedestrians. A public information program would be necessary to

⁷⁴ City of Winnipeg, *Skateboarding within the City of Winnipeg*.

educate the public about the “safe and respectful use of city sidewalks.” This campaign would cost around \$3,750 and it was suggested that funding be pursued through a corporate sponsorship initiative.

- Option 2: Allow the status quo to remain – skateboarding will continue to be prohibited on city sidewalks.

- Option 3: Allow the status quo to remain – skateboarding will continue to be prohibited on city sidewalks and that the two bylaws be reviewed in order to clarify the contradictions between the two.

Option 3 was recommended by the Executive Policy Committee and adopted by Council including the amendment to the Traffic and Streets bylaws.

The Panhandling bylaw (#6555/95) was originally enacted by council on January 26, 1995. This bylaw was challenged by the National Anti-Poverty Organization on the basis that it violated the freedom of speech and equality provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as it restricted the time of day and the locations in which panhandling could occur. It was then proposed by the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services that the City repeal this bylaw and replace it with one that regulates the conduct of panhandlers, specifically prohibiting soliciting that “causes an obstruction.” The inclusion of this language meant that the National Anti-Poverty Organization would then consent to terminating their challenge to the bylaw.

This new draft bylaw that was prepared in consultation with the National Anti-Poverty Organization, prohibits soliciting in a manner that “causes an obstruction.” The term “causes an obstruction” is defined as behaviour that:

- Obstructs or impedes the convenient passage of pedestrian traffic in a street.
- Continue to solicit from or follow a pedestrian after that pedestrian has made a negative initial response.
- Verbally threaten or insult a pedestrian.
- Physically approach a pedestrian as part of a group of three or more persons.

This clause was adopted and bylaw #6555/95 was repealed. The “Obstructive Solicitation bylaw” as outlined in 6555/95 was replaced with the following:

“Whereas people need a safe and civil environment in public places within the city of Winnipeg where residents and visitors may freely engage in the usual activities and enjoyments of the urban milieu;”

and

“Whereas residents and visitors in the City are entitled not to be obstructed while enjoying public places.” (983, July 19, 2000)

Adopted by council July 14, 2000, it was passed into law on the September 20, 2000. Bylaw #7700/2000 of the City of Winnipeg to control obstructive solicitation for donations includes the following definitions:

“Solicit” means to ask, whether by spoken, written or printed word, for donations of money or other things of value for one’s self or for any other person, and “solicitation” has a corresponding meaning.

“Street” means any roadway, sidewalk, boulevard, place or way, which the public is ordinarily entitled or permitted to use for the passage of vehicles or pedestrians and includes a structure located in any of those areas.

Panhandlers are not allowed to obstruct pedestrian traffic under this reworked bylaw. Violators of this bylaw are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months.⁷⁵

Issues around safety increased over the years leading up to the 2001 version of Plan Winnipeg. This is in part a result of increases in certain kinds of crime, plus the on-going overall perception that downtown Winnipeg was unsafe. Between 1995 and 1998, incidences of assault increased from 2,148 to 6,170 overall and incidences of reported robbery doubled. Incidences of homicide have been relatively consistent, hovering around 13 per year. Public perception of who commits these crimes and where, did not help the image of downtown Winnipeg, and this problem is addressed from a multitude of directions in the revised Plan Winnipeg, “Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision.” Policy 1A-03 Promote a Safe Downtown outlines four approaches, including: “encouraging more pedestrian activity on downtown streets through support for mixed land use developments and

pedestrian-focused transportation planning.” “Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision” was adopted by City Council as the City of Winnipeg bylaw in December 2001. The Plan Winnipeg committee had submitted its first draft of “Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision” to City Council in May 2000, and then a public hearing was held in June 2000. Changes were then made to the Plan and resubmitted to Council in October 2000. The Plan was reviewed, further public consultation took place, and finally “Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision” was adopted by City Council as the City of Winnipeg bylaw in December 2001

In May 2001, the Executive Policy Committee approved \$125 million in funding (both capital and in-kind) for the development of the True North Entertainment Complex on the site of the former Eaton’s building located on the south side of Portage Avenue. Contributions from the city include property, business and amusement tax exemptions. True North will not pay property taxes for 25 years, and as a result will not be eligible to pay levies to the Downtown Biz organization necessitating the negotiations of an agreement between the two. Red River College is also slated to move into the core area and the City and Province’s heritage tax incentive program has been used to encourage the development of the new facility. This same year, City Council also approved the

⁷⁵ David O Brien, Panhandlers to Get New Bylaw, *Winnipeg Free Press* 18 July 2000: A2.

CanWest Global Communication Corporation Expansion Economic Incentive Agreement, a \$3.11 million deal to assist in the development of office space and facilities for CanWest Global Communication Corporation in downtown Winnipeg. An editorial that appeared the *Free Press* on December 30, 2001 declared that the real estate boom in central Winnipeg was due, in part, to the establishment of CentreVenture and the development of the downtown Red River Community College Campus.⁷⁶

The year 2001 also saw the creation of the Downtown Initiatives Committee by the Mayor. The committee meets every two months. It is not a decision making, nor voting body, but a planning group made up of the CEO of CentreVenture, the Mayor, the head of the Department of Planning, Property and Public Works and the chair of the Standing Committee of Planning, Property and Public Works. The meetings are closed. The head of the Downtown BIZ expressed concern that this group had shut out the BIZ association from planning decisions that impact upon their jurisdiction.⁷⁷ The group meets in the Mayor's office to discuss how to best facilitate the development process in the downtown

⁷⁶ Tracey Bryksa, Winnipeg Real Estate Sales Near \$1 Billion Mark, *Winnipeg Free Press* 30 Dec. 2001.

⁷⁷ Doug Clark, personal interview.

area. The group functions as a sort traffic control department for development downtown.⁷⁸

Drug dealing became an issue in Window Park along with loitering, so the Downtown BIZ, in an effort to curb these activities, started piping classical music through loudspeakers installed in the park. BIZ continues to use this method when there are complaints from its members and it claims that it does effectively reduce loitering and drug dealing in the Park.

On July 18, 2001, the amendment to Traffic bylaw (#1573/77) and Streets bylaw (#1481/7) and the creation of bylaw #7883/2001 took place: "Prohibition of Skateboards on Designated Sidewalks." This bylaw "will permit skateboarding on all sidewalks except in the Downtown Zone and in neighbourhood commercial areas zoned C1-5 where high pedestrian traffic is expected. Examples of such areas are Osborne Village, Osborne Street South, Broadway Avenue West, Sherbrook Street South and Main Street North."⁷⁹ This updated bylaw included the provision to post 200 "No skateboarding" signs on the designated sidewalks.

In early 2002, the Report of the Standing Committee of Property and Development recommended a proposed text amendment to the Downtown

⁷⁸ Glen Murray, personal interview.

⁷⁹ City of Winnipeg, City Council Minutes, 19 July 2000.

Winnipeg Zoning bylaw.⁸⁰ The amendment would add “sports, entertainment and cultural facility” in order to clarify the intention of the bylaw and encourage the building/development of such amenities in the downtown. This additional text came about as a response to a request for clarification of the text of the original bylaw by the “Save the Eaton’s Building Coalition,” a citizen-based coalition organized around saving the former Eaton’s building from demolition to make way for the True North Entertainment Complex.

Portage Place acquired Staples as a major tenant and the Globe Cinemas opened in the defunct Paramount Cinema space in the mall. These additions are welcomed by the CEO of CentreVenture as means to help the “troubled mall.”⁸¹ Changes were also made to the BIZ bylaw in order to change the levies for each zone and increase budgets accordingly. The Civic Committee of City Council also heard renewed concerns from Exchange business owners about enhancing the Panhandling bylaw. During this time, Councillor Harvey Smith suggested the creation of a task force to look at the endemic issues around poverty and panhandling.⁸²

⁸⁰ City of Winnipeg, Bylaw #4800/88, file DAZ 225/2001.

⁸¹ David O Brien, Big Box Boosts Core *Winnipeg Free Press* 12 Mar. 2002: A1.

⁸² Harvey Smith, personal interview. 7 Aug. 2003.

Economic Development Winnipeg and Tourism Winnipeg merged to become Destination Winnipeg. The formation of this organization was done to streamline the process of attracting people to Winnipeg. The mandate and objectives of the new organization are consistent with those of CentreVenture. In the early summer of 2002, the Executive Policy Committee passed the motion to approve the 2002 CentreVenture Heritage tax credit bylaw (#8058). The Downtown Development Review Process adopted the report *Toward an Integrated Planning Model* and discussed two options: the establishment of a Downtown Standing Committee of Council or the establishment of a Downtown Planning Commission. Council cited a need for more public consultation and some way of ensuring the gains in the transparency of the process.⁸³ The creation of the Downtown Initiatives Committee by the mayor and CentreVenture in 2002 was done to aid in the streamlining of the downtown development process and to maintain communications between relevant city departments.⁸⁴

In the fall of 2002, Downtown Biz also announced the development of a new program that would empower street workers to arrest and remove

⁸³ City of Winnipeg, *Council Hansard*, EP-1, vol.21.

⁸⁴ Glen Murray, personal interview.

aggressive panhandlers.⁸⁵ A draft of the new Downtown Zoning bylaw was submitted to the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development at the end of August. The Downtown BIZ is now comprised of five committees: Safety, Communications and Marketing; Image; Transportation and Parking; and Finance. The Board of Directors is nominated by the membership each year. Five different studies are underway in Winnipeg's downtown that include the participation of the Downtown BIZ. A connector study looks at transit linkages between the Forks and the downtown area; another to determine the impact of converting one-way streets into two-way streets; a "way-finding" study to look at issues around signage in the downtown; the walkway study to work on consolidating the various agreements made by each property owner that owns a building attached to a skywalk; and, finally, Downtown BIZ along with the City and CentreVenture hired the engineering firm ND Lea to prepare a Portage Avenue Vision and Context Strategy.⁸⁶

In 2003, the new City of Winnipeg Charter was adopted. This charter, which is the bylaw of the Province of Manitoba, concerns the allocation of power to the City which is often cited as a barrier to development in the city, by the

⁸⁵ David O'Brien, Panhandlers Terrorize Downtown *Winnipeg Free Press* 12 Sept. 2002: A1.

⁸⁶ City of Winnipeg, *2002 Annual Report* (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg) 14.

city.⁸⁷ The changes to the charter are negligible according to Mayor Murray, however, they are seen as a positive step towards the creation of a whole new charter. Major changes to the charter are necessary if the division between authorities is to change and become more equitable.⁸⁸ Currently the Province of Manitoba has the authority to make change at the level of regulation and policy, whereas the responsibility for these changes belongs to the City. Murray suggested that a whole new charter is needed and that there is growing support for this idea. Further changes to the Charter are to be adopted in 2004.⁸⁹ \$1 million in extra funding from the City was announced to rescue the True North Development project. Downtown BIZ is set to launch a revamped “Change for the Better” program and is also waiting for funds from the federal government to begin the special constable program.

In the fall of 2003, the Standing Committee of Planning, Property and Development will consider the draft of the New Downtown Winnipeg Zoning bylaw. This draft, created by the Department of Planning, Property and Development in consultation with downtown stakeholders, is intended to simplify the development process. In addition, CentreVenture has hired a consultant to

⁸⁷ Glen Murray, personal interview.

help them understand and contribute to the shape of the bylaw. It is unclear whether any residents or residential associations were approached in the consultation process by the department.

Urban regeneration in Winnipeg often revolves around reviving designated heritage sites and buildings. Heritage designation is defined not only at the municipal level by City's Historical Buildings Committee, but also at the Provincial (Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism) and Federal (Heritage Canada) levels as well. For example, the site at the fork of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers is a federally designated Heritage site (known as "The Forks," the first settlement in western Canada) and when it was redeveloped as a public market, park and tourist attraction, funding came from all three levels of government. At the Municipal level, a variety of downtown buildings have been designated Heritage buildings. Often these are in dire need of repair and upgrading as was the recent case of three buildings in the downtown core that were sold by the City to private developers for \$1 a piece.⁹⁰ The redevelopment of these buildings was undertaken by private owners according to the regulations laid out by the

⁸⁸ Vancouver is a city that is an example where excellence in planning is facilitated by the autonomy the city has from the Province. See Lisa Rochon, *Globe and Mail* 24 Sept. 2003: R1.

⁸⁹ Glen Murray, personal interview.

Historical Buildings Committee in accordance with the Historical Buildings bylaw of The City of Winnipeg.⁹¹ Heritage designation in effect creates a resource for the City (Province or Federal government), for the City offers nearly free ownership/use of these buildings provided certain criteria are met, and then is considered a contributor to development, even if private interests undertake the actual work.

In the fall of 2004, an international design competition will be held to design a new park/city square in the core area. Mayor Murray sees city squares and parks as a necessary and positive part of the downtown development scheme and favours changes in the tax laws (which will require the Province's cooperation) in order to make land more expensive than property. In other words, parking lots would be less valuable than buildings. If expropriation is the only means by which the city can reclaim the land needed for city square development, the Mayor indicated that this would be option that he would endorse.⁹²

⁹⁰ The three buildings discussed are the Newmac building on Main Street, the former Imperial Bank on Main Street and the Ma s Garage building on Bannatyne, a former livery. These buildings have all been renovated and now function as nightclubs; all are privately owned and operated.

⁹¹ City of Winnipeg, Heritage Conservation, May 23, 2003, <<http://www.city.winnipeg.mb.ca>>.

⁹² Glen Murray, personal interview.

Conclusion: Another Story Emerges

This chronology, or overview, of the events and characters in this policy environment is intended to function as the foundation upon which to discuss, analyze and eventually theorize about the content of Winnipeg's downtown environment and the production of the space within this urban eco-system. As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, constructing a view of the overall downtown policy environment is important in order to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of policy and regulation on public spaces. The information included in this chapter is relevant because it documents not only the policies executed in downtown Winnipeg, but also frames all of the actions – from panhandling to skywalk construction – that have taken place within in it. This framing is necessary in order for me to be able to analyze what decisions have been made downtown and why, in a comprehensive and informed manner.

As stated earlier, I have intentionally presented the information in this chapter as neutrally as possible in order to let the decisions made in terms of policies and strategies to revitalize and regulate Winnipeg's downtown stand unclouded by my judgement. The policy story includes dense and complex material, and I wanted to chronicle this information as clearly as possible before

dissecting, analyzing and theorizing as to the impact that these decisions have had in terms of the regulation and production of downtown public space. Having done this, I will now take a deeper look at the subtext found in the story by exploring the relationship between structure and action, as well as the existing political framework that has facilitated or hindered this relationship.

Chapter Three

Introduction: Analysis

The creation of the policy story in the last chapter is an effort to chronicle the regulatory and physical environment that has impacted upon Winnipeg's downtown over the last 15 years. I want to know how and why these decisions have been orchestrated as they have, and what attempts to regulate "transgressive behaviour" reveal about the contemporary state of power relations in Winnipeg's downtown and the production of public space. What are the actions that actually happen in this context, or are produced by it? Who are the main characters, and who are the minor characters in this story? Finally, how does the relationship between structure and action reveal itself through the production of public spaces? I explore how public space is produced through regulation and transgression by citing and responding to specific developments, policies and bylaws found in the policy story, and what these policies reveal about the power relations that manifest in the spaces they represent and create. My assessment of the ideologies and framework at work in downtown Winnipeg helps to expose the dynamics and relationships that inform urban spaces and the human experiences that occur within them.

I uncover the answers to these questions by looking at how skateboarding, panhandling and loitering are regulated and what impact these regulations have upon structured public spaces such as sidewalks. I explore a range of positions, especially those of the Downtown BIZ and CentreVenture in an attempt to flush out the dynamic between various interest groups in Winnipeg's downtown. I also consider what the intent and language as articulated in Plan Winnipeg reveals about the planning and production of public and private spaces. Is public space redefined by those activities that are considered disruptive, which challenge what is considered appropriate public behaviour? I identify the major and minor characters in the policy story by analyzing the process by which decisions were made and by identifying the individuals and organizations that made (and continue to make) these decisions. Finally, I consider the relationship between structure and action as articulated via public and private spaces in the downtown area and whether the experience of public spaces is transformed by actions that are framed and regulated as transgressive.

The Dominant Thread: The Development Solution

There has been no shortage of initiatives, strategies and intentions directed at transforming Winnipeg's downtown, from the original effort to "bring new life to the North Portage area" via the Core Area Initiative starting in the mid-80s to the attempt to "bring new life to Winnipeg's main thoroughfare" via the development of the True North Entertainment Complex.⁹³ Development is consistently recommended as the means to revitalize downtown's North Portage Avenue area. Starting with the Core Area Initiative, certainly the richest and most ambitious of the revitalization strategies documented, through to the more recent CentrePlan recommendation to "Plan, Develop, Operate & Manage the Downtown as a Single & Special Entity," the primary point that emerged over and over again is that the downtown needs changing and development is the means to do this, that downtown is important to the city as a whole, and that as a jurisdiction it requires management.⁹⁴ Yet, at the very heart of the idea of using development as a remedy to "fix" the downtown, is a conflict over what to do with the existing people and activities that take place there. Under various guises, the

⁹³ Eric Johnson, New Boss in North, *Winnipeg Sun* 17 Oct. 1984: 15, and Leah Hendry, City Gearing Up for Portage Avenue Makeover, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 15 Nov. 2002: A1.

⁹⁴ CentreVenture Development Framework, accessed February 17, 2003
www.centreventure.com/vision.html.

most consistent theme I found running throughout my research into regulation and public space is that certain people and certain activities in the North Portage Avenue area of downtown disrupt the goal of making streets and sidewalks available primarily as pathways to goods and services. A goal that is never questioned.

Consider the case of the planning and construction of Portage Place Mall that not only altered the original physical environment, but also the very ideology or content of the space. What had previously been a series of storefronts, apartments and sidewalks and part of a broader city schematic was now located indoors, policed by its own security and open and closed to the outside world each day and night. The Portage Place Mall is a monument to the hope that private enterprise will remedy public problems such as the demise of downtown urban space. The complex is also an example of how revitalization and regulation engage with the concrete and social environment. The large edifice that is the mall dominates the landscape, and in doing so influences the kinds of regulation and construction and activities that take place around it. This physical and ideological domination perpetuates more of the same kinds of commercial

development, furthering the transformation of not only the material environment, but the ideological one as well.

The mall structure changed the “urban text” of North Portage Avenue starting in the late 80s. As well as being a concrete manifestation of a revitalization strategy, the mall is also symbolic of a Western industrial economic strategy that privileges private enterprise, and in the case of urban spaces specifically, the vision and bank accounts of developers and property owners.⁹⁵

The mall and the attendant philosophy that the commodification of space will serve to enhance and empower the surrounding community blur the distinction between public and private. Street life that used to take place outside on the sidewalk, now occurs indoors. The dynamic of public interaction within a private development makes it harder and harder to tell where public ends and private begins. The distinction between the two is primarily made obvious through the regulatory environment maintained by private interests.

An example of how the ideology of space influences and shapes human interaction can be found by looking at the design of the Portage Place Mall. The mall was designed so that the north sides of both Edmonton Street and Kennedy

⁹⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003) 77.

Street is now enclosed inside of the mall. As a result, walking through the mall is the only means to get from one side of the “street” to the other without having to walk around the entire 2-block building. The “street(s)” are now under the jurisdiction of the mall. What was a public thoroughfare has become a meeting area inside the mall. These parts of Edmonton and Kennedy streets are now regulated by the terms of private ownership in accordance with the operation of the mall. I think this increases the importance of public spaces such as Window Park and the sovereignty of the sidewalks as avenues for public interchange, because these spaces serve as conservation areas for public interaction amongst the increasingly privately developed environment. As much as any shopping centre may be framed as a gathering place or a “magnet” that attracts people from far and wide, the fact is that malls are for buying things, not for meeting and visiting.⁹⁶ It is not surprising that the issue of loitering grew as the mall became a naturalized part of the downtown environment, because as acceptance of the mall increased, so did the terms of what was and is considered “appropriate” behaviour. The ideology of the mall increasingly has permeated and dictated the production of the space in and around it. What may have been

⁹⁶ *Winnipeg Free Press* 8 Dec. 1985: A3

considered “hanging out” when it took place upon city sidewalks, was now constructed differently according to the owners of the space within which it took place.

The development of the True North Entertainment Complex is frequently cited as a reflection of the city’s commitment to using art and culture as means to revitalize downtown. The motive behind this public strategy of support for cultural institutions seems to be to responding to indicators defined, ultimately, for areas other than art and culture, such as safety and tourism. Unfortunately, this kind of strategy risks overlooking what Julia Gonzalez calls “the social dimension” of the local quality of life.⁹⁷ In the case of True North, I think this has happened. The city has forfeited 25 years of property taxes to be used as leverage for the development of the complex, in order to facilitate the construction of another enormous edifice to attract people inside. Events held at the True North Complex are promoted as contributing to the downtown environment by bringing people and their money downtown and as means of attracting cultural tourists. While enhancing the city profile and creating events for its citizenry may be exciting,

⁹⁷ Franco Bianchini and Michael Parkinson, eds., *Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993) 82.

perhaps the risk of laying so many eggs in such an expensive basket is shortsighted.

The city's downtown will now be anchored on either end by very large commercial buildings intended to lure people indoors, entertain and service them, expel them and then have them return to their neighbourhoods outside of downtown. It is unlikely that either of these facilities is aimed at attracting the residents of the downtown, over a third of whom live below the poverty line. In addition, there has been a plethora of contemporary urban planning documents published that caution against the construction of large single-use structures such as arenas, precisely because they are counter-productive to the establishment of a sustainable community: instead, people come for a given event, then leave.⁹⁸

It is unclear how the City evaluated the development of the True North Complex. There was no public input into the planning process around what to do with the vacant Eaton's building until the announcement of the True North deal, at which point a coalition to save the Eaton's building was formed. The "Save The Eaton's Building Coalition" lobbied to have the building designated a

heritage structure as well; they came up with the design for an alternative mixed-use facility that would incorporate the original building. The Coalition presented their design and opposition to the demolition of the building to City Council. The group lobbied hard to have the True North deal reconsidered; the fact was, however, that all the decisions for this development had already been made with no input from anyone other than developers, CentreVenture and the City.

In contrast to the top-down approach to revitalization (build anything and they will come) that is represented by private developments such as the Portage Place Mall and True North, are the YM-YWCA and the Centennial Library which both serve the downtown in a myriad of ways. Neither of these institutions is regularly mentioned in the downtown policy documents I examined. This absence is worth noting, for in terms of best practices, these two public institutions are by far the most successful at getting people to come downtown while simultaneously servicing the downtown community. Perhaps because there is not a profit-oriented motive, or because the exchange of goods is not overt (literacy, community access, health, childcare, education), these examples are not lauded for the contribution they make to the overall strength of the core area. This is

⁹⁸ Franco Bianchini and Jane Jacobs are just two contemporary urban theorists who make this point. See also the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Manitoba, for further reading

unfortunate, for the success of these two institutions makes them both models for other enterprises, both public and private, precisely because they offer mixed-use services and amenities.

Policy and Urban Ecology: Plan Winnipeg

My analysis of the ideas and language used to shape development strategies over the last 15 years in Winnipeg reveals an emphasis on the “bottom line.” The 1993 version of the city bylaw, “Plan Winnipeg...Towards 2010,” is one of these strategies. The terms “quality client service” or “customer service” appear 11 times. The City of Winnipeg is referred to as the “civic corporation” and that Plan Winnipeg is the corporate plan of the City. The equation of citizen with customer or client is unsettling as it suggests that in order to access civic discourse and programs, one must be buying something. It would follow from this equation, then, that the economically disenfranchised, as well as those less focused on business interests, have less input into what kinds of policies are shaped and implemented.

The majority of policies in “Plan Winnipeg...Towards 2010” are concerned with economic development and the crisis of the downtown core. The vital role of

the downtown garners its own policy section in the Urban Development Management chapter. Number one on the list is policy 5B-01, which encourages people to live downtown. Another policy, 5B-18, calls for the preparation of a formal Downtown Plan that will be periodically reviewed by the business community as well as the City.⁹⁹ The introduction to this policy states that by clearly defining the role of downtown, everyone benefits from a “predictable investment culture.”¹⁰⁰ The concept of “everyone” introduces conflict into this strategy. According to Plan Winnipeg, the city has identified the need to attract people to live downtown, but only the business community is consulted about strategies to achieve this goal and not the residents and communities that already live in the area. In order to define the downtown in such a way that it becomes a “predictable investment culture,” meaning one full of business opportunities unfettered by panhandling, poverty, or say actual people, the downtown residential community is rendered invisible.

The focus on getting people downtown spawned a variety of policy initiatives in the following version of the plan, “Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision,” which was adopted by council in 2001. Sections 1A-04 (Promote the Excitement

⁹⁹ City of Winnipeg, *Plan Winnipeg: Towards 2010* 89.

¹⁰⁰ City of Winnipeg, *Plan Winnipeg: Towards 2010* 86

of Downtown) and 1A-05 (Celebrate the Downtown's Special Features and Heritage) both outline means by which increased use will be achieved through policy.¹⁰¹ Examples include the creation of outdoor festivals at the corner of Portage and Main, and the commitment on the part of the City to move operations located in suburban areas back downtown and into unused Heritage buildings. Community consultation 4A-01 and preventative measures to ensure heritage conservation are addressed in 4A-04. Additionally, three policies chart how and why safety can be promoted through design of both buildings and streetscapes.¹⁰²

Policy 1A-01, Promote Downtown Development, the very first policy statement in the document, outlines the five approaches for promoting development in order to “stimulate revitalization and capitalize on existing infrastructure.”¹⁰³ City Council's support for the True North Entertainment Complex is an example of this stimulation and capitalization.

Unfortunately for the City, the True North project contravenes at least two and possibly all five of the approaches outlined in policy 1A-01. For example, the fourth approach listed states the importance of “ensuring its zoning and building

¹⁰¹ City of Winnipeg, *Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision* 12-13.

¹⁰² City of Winnipeg, *Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision* 42-44.

bylaws and its administrative procedures support the concepts of mixed land use and compact urban form in the downtown.” The site in question was not originally zoned in such a way that would allow for the construction of an arena. A text amendment to the bylaw was made after the fact, much to the consternation of those who did not support the development, such as the Save the Eaton’s Building Coalition. In addition, compact development refers to developing land that is vacant, which the site is not; in fact, the Eaton’s structure was designated a Heritage building shortly after it was slated for demolition. This is all especially discouraging given the number of vacant or underused sites in the downtown core. The next approach included in the Plan states that the City shall “[consider] the effects on downtown in the evaluation of new developments, commercial/retail policies, staff and budget resource allocations, and transportation policies.”¹⁰⁴ The process of approval and support given to the True North development by the City’s public officials glaringly suggests that the road to private development will not be hampered by many roadblocks. Conversely, it would be difficult at best, given the current dependence on public-private partnerships to foster any development, to imagine that the same scale of

¹⁰³ City of Winnipeg, Downtown and Neighborhoods, *Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision* 16.

¹⁰⁴ City of Winnipeg, Downtown and Neighborhoods, *Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision* 12.

support could be made available for the development of a co-operative housing complex or a city park, for example, both of which have the potential not only to bring people to the downtown core, but also keep them there.

Regulation and Transgression:

In my examination of the evolution of specific bylaws, what has become clear is that the process of determining the need for a particular regulation and the language finally used to create that regulation contribute to the overall environment in which the policy is implemented. The intentions of a certain policy or bylaw are communicated via selected language, symbols and transmission, such as a posted notice or sign. The act of skateboarding and the issues around skateboarding, for example, provide interesting fodder for rhetorical consideration because of the spatial and temporal nature of the act. Skateboarders are always moving, and their interaction with the built environment is transformative of the environment, but only for a moment. (This does not mean that loitering and panhandling are not also transformative actions; I have already argued that they are, but the complexity of these actions in terms of adjunct issues such as race and class makes rhetorical consideration more complicated and less obvious.)

The decision to post 200 large signs displaying skateboards with red lines through them on the designated sidewalks where skateboarding is forbidden, makes the prohibition of skateboarding a more overt part of the public environment, as well as making the bylaw easier to enforce. These “No skateboarding” signs are posted up high on city lamp posts which makes it impossible to deface or cover the signs with skate stickers, a common tactic employed by skaters to indicate their presence and mark their territory. Placing the signs out of reach is another means to effectively deny skaters the opportunity to make their presence known. In this case, both the sign and the placement are factors that shape the urban environment, one that is made openly hostile to skaters and skateboarding in general. When I walk down the street and see one of the “No skateboarding” signs it says to me a lot more than “Do not skateboard.” It says that the cultural and social practices and the values that inform my interpretation and circulation in public are forbidden, unimportant and misunderstood. Ideologically then, the signs operate to not only deter skateboarding, but to separate one community (anti-skateboarding) from another (pro-skateboarding).

Another example of how the intentions of the regulators are conveyed is found in the wording used in the panhandling bylaw. The language used in this bylaw is an example of what language implies but does not spell out. The attempt to outlaw panhandling during specific hours (as attempted in an earlier version of the bylaw) reveals the peak uses of these spaces and the need to control these spaces during this time. The fact that these hours coincide with business hours reveals a connection between commerce and control. Outlawing certain uses of space during a designated timeframe implies that what happens in the spaces after a certain time each day does not require the same kind of regulation. According to the way this law is written then, panhandlers are free to circulate as soon as businesses are closed, making their use of sidewalks contingent on the control of these spaces by business and business interests.

It is the process of reading these policies in the context of where and how they were created that allows for the consideration of questions as to how the regulated environment impacts upon the production of space and how what takes place in these spaces then impacts upon their regulation. David Harvey suggests that things once constituted affect the very processes by which they are

constituted.¹⁰⁵ The content of the skateboarding, loitering and panhandling, and in-line skating bylaws all suggest, as interpreted within the context of my research, that public spaces must be rid of any deterrent to the paths of commerce. Public space must be controlled because the uses of public space are in fact informed and defined by the needs of private commercial interests in order to expand their market share and have influence over the environment. The next question then, is does this dynamic stimulate relationships between the people within these environments and their use of public and private space?¹⁰⁶

The detailed and time-consuming concern with loitering, panhandling and skateboarding on the part of Winnipeg's City Council and BIZ organizations points towards larger debates concerning the nature and jurisdiction of urban public spaces. As we have seen, there has been concerted effort on the part of local and provincial governments to implement strategies to revitalize downtown Winnipeg since the mid-80s, including the creation of Downtown and Exchange district Business Improvement Zones.¹⁰⁷ The creation of these zones and CentreVenture to assist in the revitalization (a concept which is seemingly

¹⁰⁵ David Harvey, *Contested Cities: Social process and Spatial Form*, *Transforming Cities*, ed. Nick Jewson and Susanne Macgregor (London: Routledge, 1997) 21.

¹⁰⁶ Herman Hertzberger, *The Public Realm in Architecture and Urbanism*, *City Cultures Reader*, ed. Malcolm Miles, Tim Hall, and Iain Borden. (London: Routledge, 2000) 254.

¹⁰⁷ City of Winnipeg, Bylaws #8114, 8115.

synonymous with economic development) of Winnipeg's downtown, has resulted in attempts to brand the downtown as a "destination," and attract certain kinds of residents to the core area. These are the kinds of residents who are financially able to support the by-products of these revitalization initiatives, such as the events that will take place in the new arena, or purchase condominiums in newly revitalized Heritage buildings. One result of all of this renewed attention upon the city's core, is increased vigilance about what sorts of activities can take place in its public spaces.

The bylaws that attempt to regulate these actions as chronicled in the policy story have all been significantly altered in the last 15 years. The bylaw regulating panhandling has been the most challenging for the City to define. The growing need to control panhandling, loitering and skateboarding (as made evident through the changes to these bylaws) corresponds with the growth in the privatization of Winnipeg's downtown spaces. This vigilance has manifested in the creation of the anti-skateboarding, panhandling and loitering bylaws, an attempt to outlaw graffiti, and the creation of street patrols (outfitted in "Downtown Biz – Change for the Better" emblazoned polo shirts), who collect garbage and police skateboarding activity, panhandling, loitering, and a host of

other transgressive activities, in order to keep the “order.”¹⁰⁸ Since the establishment of the Downtown BIZ particularly, there appears to be parallel growth with the evolution of the organization, in the restrictions placed upon activities in public space.

The streets as defined by policy and revitalization strategies are often conceived merely as pathways meant to facilitate commerce and service. Street life, as in that which actually takes place on the streets, is policed and discouraged. This vision and the attendant regulations that are organized around economic development encourage the on-going homogenization of the downtown area and attitudes about what sort of behaviour is appropriate in public spaces. Skateboarding, loitering and panhandling are made out to be transgressive and unruly activities in this context, which impede access to commerce, and therefore must be banished in order to make the streets safer, ordered and uncluttered.

Arguably, the bylaws regulating loitering, panhandling and skateboarding assist in the creation of disorderly conduct through attempts to regulate and, therefore, define the actions that seem to warrant regulation. Why, for example,

¹⁰⁸ Dallas Hansen, Boarders Treated Like Criminals, Simple Way to Clean Up Downtown Is to Allow Skateboarding, *Winnipeg Free Press* 20 Aug. 2002.

is there so much policy discussion and revision aimed at skateboarding of all things – an activity that has not claimed any lives in Winnipeg, occupies youth, functions as a healthy mode of transportation and does not pollute – and not at cars which are far more dangerous, in a host of ways? Loitering, panhandling and skating are all treated as liabilities, activities that pose a risk to others. All three are examples of the tension inherent to sharing space. I am not suggesting that aggressive panhandling or having a skater whiz by one's ankles are not both disconcerting to pedestrians and potentially dangerous. That said, the same arguments are not made concerning the vacancy rate on the sidewalks perpetuated by the creation of skywalks, or the desolation of the acres of parking lots and parkades located downtown. The lopsided attention paid to behaviour that is deemed inappropriate by certain interest groups versus real, tangible safety issues like uninhabited spaces and unused sidewalks, indicates just how narrow the field of vision is in terms of city planning, policies and interests.

The language used in the loitering bylaw “whereby the public are liable to be subjected to disturbance or annoyance” is one example of how regulatory language is based on the premise that interacting in public is meant to be non-confrontational and never annoying. Lefebvre makes the case, which is

exemplified by the bylaws and regulations that aim to control skateboarding, loitering and panhandling, that disorder is what gets punished by planners, policy makers and business interests in order to validate the commodification and commerce-oriented scope of the city.¹⁰⁹ The very act of being in public, (especially) downtown, makes one subject to all sorts of annoyances – that is part of what makes public different than private. Attempts to eradicate certain annoyances through regulation and not others (say, the corporate signage in a public park), reveals something about who considers what annoying.

Political Framework: The Character(s) of Influence

It is necessary to consider the broader implications of how the political framework of the local decision process impacts upon the regulation of space, the content of the space and how this content then influences and shapes this same political framework. The Mayor, along with CentreVenture, the Downtown BIZ, the Province of Manitoba and private developers are the most powerful characters in the policy story. These organizations make up the most influential

¹⁰⁹ Lefebvre in Iain Borden, *Skateboarding, Space and the City: Architecture and the Body* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001) 257.

players in the political framework in Winnipeg and all of them play a considerable role in the production of urban public spaces.

The Downtown Biz association is a powerful force in Winnipeg's downtown. With an annual budget of over a million dollars, the organization is able to implement strategies and support for its membership effectively.¹¹⁰ Change for the Better and Downtown Watch Ambassadors are but two of the programs implemented by Downtown BIZ to influence and deter certain kinds of behaviour taking place on the streets, in parks and in the mall. Creating eyes and ears on the street and the perception of safety is the purpose of Downtown Ambassadors, as well as providing a tangible service to its membership.¹¹¹ One of these tangible services included a short-lived initiative undertaken by the Downtown BIZ association in November 1997 to install surveillance cameras throughout the core area for public safety.¹¹² Downtown BIZ speaks for a membership that includes every retail, commercial and professional business that are all surveyed every two years on issues such as safety, and the marketing of the BIZ zone. It undertakes high profile marketing and advertising

¹¹⁰ Downtown BIZ, *Downtown BUZZ 2002 Annual Report* (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Downtown BIZ Improvement Zone, 2003) 3.

¹¹¹ Doug Clark, personal interview.

¹¹² Unbylined, New Eyes to Spy on Downtown, *Winnipeg Free Press* 10 Nov. 1997.

campaigns targeted at eliminating panhandling and encouraging people to get downtown. It is not part of the new Downtown Initiative Committee and in this respect has been denied access to these discussions and decisions made amongst the closed and powerful committee that has the direct access to the Mayor and the City's administration. It is unlikely that this will truly hinder BIZ's influence however, for the membership is large and can influence the Council directly through their ward.

As illustrated in the story of the downtown policy environment, CentreVenture is mandated by the City of Winnipeg to provide leadership in creating and sustaining economic growth in downtown Winnipeg as defined by the Downtown Zoning bylaw. It is an "entrepreneurial authority" that acts as an "implementation body" for public/private social, physical and economic revitalization/development strategies. Although CentreVenture is an "arm's length" organization of the City of Winnipeg, it functions as an interest group for private developers, as it is mandated to clearly facilitate property development strategies that will aid in the vision of the economic revitalization of the downtown. CentreVenture is organized primarily around the ideology that economic development is the foundation of any revitalization strategy; the

interest group represented by the organization is primarily private developers. The needs of developers and the political power afforded CentreVenture make this combination very powerful and influential in the downtown political framework.

CentreVenture exists to enhance and develop the downtown “in order to make a difference in the quality of life for all of our citizens.”¹¹³ Revitalization purportedly is for everyone, especially those on the side of certain kinds of economic development – for example, retail and private housing strategies. Funding comes from the City of Winnipeg annually. The Board of Directors is made up of business owners, investors and Winnipeg City Councillors. The Board of CentreVenture (both current and past) is a serious resource base as it includes some of Winnipeg’s most successful business owners and developers, City Council members who have access to and knowledge of bylaw and zoning processes, and the Mayor of the City. The political clout represented on CentreVenture’s Board of Directors helps to facilitate access to regulatory and financial resources needed for the implementation of CentreVenture’s mandate.

The original mandate of CentreVenture includes the commitment to initiate improvements to public spaces as means to “attract or stimulate private sector

development.”¹¹⁴ This is not unlike the idea that arts and cultural attractions are valuable when used to attract investment in development and tourism as is the case made for the True North Entertainment Complex, meaning that the motivation is not to support activities or places in and of themselves, but as a way to attract separate and privately realized development to the area. Public spaces and street level activity are important in CentreVenture’s vision as part of the strategy to bring people downtown.¹¹⁵ Here is another example, however, where the people who are already downtown are nowhere to be found in the language or vision of CentreVenture documents.

The role of the Province’s City of Winnipeg Act is extremely influential in determining how things play out in the downtown, for all policies made at the municipal level must be reconciled with the Act. Minor changes have been made to the Act and more are on the way in 2004 to give the city more power and resources. The fragmented nature of the policy and/or revitalization environment in Winnipeg made it difficult to get a sense of the potential conflict/collaboration these groups may have with one another or controversies they may represent publicly. It proved nearly impossible to uncover where downtown residents or

¹¹³ CentreVenture, May 5, 1999: 18.

¹¹⁴ CentreVenture May 5, 1999: 7.

participants in downtown activities other than shopping and property ownership might be represented. They are not part of Downtown BIZ, nor the Downtown Initiatives Committee, nor the Board of CentreVenture. Together, these organizations have commissioned the new ND LEA Vision study for Portage Avenue in order to define/brand the downtown. This “branding” will serve as yet another effort to attract new residents, specifically “empty-nesters and young professionals,” in time for the opening of the True North Entertainment Complex in 2004, providing another glaring example of who is the priority in the vision for the downtown and what actions must be privileged in order to attract them.¹¹⁶

The minor characters in the policy story are members of the public at large: the people. The Social Assistance Council who advocated on behalf of the native people barred from Portage Place Mall for loitering did not return to the story. Save the Eaton’s Building Coalition made a well-organized effort to fight and change the development of the Eaton’s site, but was ultimately defeated by a process that was already well underway before the fight even began. The absence of dissent or alternative visions and actions from the downtown policy environment serve to demonstrate how the ideology of space is informed. The

¹¹⁵ CentreVenture May 5, 1999:12.

¹¹⁶ Leah Hendry, City Gearing Up for Portage Avenue Makeover, *Winnipeg Free Press* 15 Nov. 2002:A1

power dynamic between commercial and public interests is disguised when a private development is framed as being to everyone's benefit. This dynamic contributes to further obfuscation, as the lived experiences of people in relation to their environment are made invisible unless they are transgressive and deemed unacceptable.

The process of constructing the chronology of changes, policies and development strategies focused on the revitalization of North Portage Avenue facilitated identifying the common narratives found within the downtown urban eco-system, also allowing for a closer look at some of the experiences of those who interact in this environment.

Structure and Action: Public/ Private Conflict

In researching this chronology, I learned that all of the many different strategies for Winnipeg's downtown were organized around commercial growth. Business and property ownership is the criteria for having input into what takes place on the streets, sidewalks and parks that line North Portage Avenue. The residents of this neighbourhood lack a voice in the processes that impact on the environment in which they live. Perhaps this lack of visibility (and therefore input)

is due to the fact that the majority of residents rent, rather than own their dwellings.¹¹⁷

There is serious attention directed towards getting people downtown as reflected in Plan Winnipeg and the recent completion of three new apartment and condo developments in the core area, yet there is little or no attention directed at the people who already are downtown. The relationship between the structure of the physical environment and the actions taken to regulate loitering, panhandling and skateboarding is essentially exclusionary. The sheer size of Portage Place and the True North Entertainment Complex infuses the environment with their ideological and architectural dominance. This is interesting to consider in relation to architect and scholar Iain Borden's idea that architecture contributes to the formation of the human subject.¹¹⁸ How do we, as individuals, get constructed in these environments? Does it impact on how we are able to relate to each other?

Shopping and condo ownership are the provenance of a select market, one that, generally speaking, does not include the downtown skater, loiterer or panhandler. The sensibility of commerce as a revitalizing perspective has the tenet of private ownership and privacy at its very core. Those who live and hang

¹¹⁷ Statistics Canada, Census 1996, *Community Profiles*, accessed May 23, 2003 <www.statscan.ca>.

¹¹⁸ Borden 2001, 108.

out on the streets and sidewalks downtown (and by this I do not mean the homeless), those who utilize the sidewalks and parks of the downtown as the grounds upon which their community takes place, are literally in public. How to reconcile private development with public activities?

The cases of Window Park and loitering in the Portage Place Mall both offer good examples from which to analyze the relationship between structure and action. In the early 90s, after complaints from its membership about open drug dealing in the park, Downtown BIZ started to broadcast classical music in the park to deter loiterers. This concept had been used successfully by 7-11s starting in the 80s to discourage kids from congregating and loitering outside their stores. Music and casual surveillance by the TV cameras in the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network studio located next door to the park, have worked to inhibit people from loitering and presumably from dealing drugs in Window Park.¹¹⁹ In this environment, Window Park (although a public space owned and operated by the city) is regulated not only by city bylaws, but by the interests of Downtown BIZ as well.

Inside Portage Place, loitering was an issue confronted by mall security soon after the opening of the mall. The food court was used by many members of

the downtown community as a place to meet and visit, especially in the winter months. The food court and centre court of the mall having in effect replaced the sidewalks and community of stores and restaurants originally located in its place, it now functioned as a sort of town square for the neighbourhood. Articles published in both the Winnipeg Free Press and the Winnipeg Sun both chronicled the crackdown on loitering by mall security, and the eventual ban on smoking to deter lingering in the food court. The act of hanging out in the food court could not be reconciled with the priority of the mall which was to facilitate shopping in the high-end retail environment, so it had to be eliminated. More recently, a CBC radio reporter was asked to leave the mall and forbidden from asking people circulating inside the mall for interviews.¹²⁰ In this context, the corridors and common spaces of the mall are most certainly not the same as the sidewalks and streets it replaced. The public spaces and the circulation within them that had formerly taken place on the two city blocks appropriated for the mall complex, disappeared along with the former built environment.

These examples illustrate how certain actions attract regulation and control when business interests are threatened. Harvey Smith, the City Councillor

¹¹⁹ Doug Clark, personal interview.

¹²⁰ Elizabeth Hobart, personal interview, 10 May 2002.

for the Daniel MacIntryre ward in which North Portage is located, indicated the constituents in his ward have rarely called to complain about panhandlers in their neighbourhood.¹²¹ This is an interesting contrast to Downtown BIZ where panhandling has been identified as the number one issue of concern to their members. Considering the amount of attention and money directed at anti-panhandling programs in the downtown by the BIZ association, someone must be complaining about the act. Hence, it stands to reason that it is those who use the downtown (be they business owners or consumers), but do not inhabit the downtown, who are troubled by panhandling.

In the revamped Downtown BIZ “Change for the Better” program, plastic keys can be purchased for a dollar at kiosks in participating businesses. These keys can be given to panhandlers instead of money and exchanged for services (meals, laundry etc.) at participating social agencies. The paradox is that the services provided in exchange for keys are services that exist for the impoverished regardless of whether they have a key. This program is structured in such a way as to appease the person who purchases the key, not the person panhandling on downtown streets since they would be able to access services

¹²¹ Harvey Smith, personal interview, 8 Aug. 2003.

without it. It is a way to give “help” without giving money.¹²² The advertising slogan for the revamped campaign is “Give without Guilt: Tragically, 7 out of 10 panhandlers will use your change to buy drugs, alcohol or cigarettes.” In August 2003, graffiti appeared on one of the bus shelters downtown displaying the campaign ad: it stated “Fight Poverty, Not the Poor.”

Another issue that is illuminated is how different activities get conflated under the banner “transgressive” based on their mutual status as undesirable to commercial interests. What occurs in the spaces shared by the public is regulated in a very specific way that favours the consumer over the inhabitant. Dealing drugs in Window park is not the same as lingering over coffee in the mall food court, but in the pro-business environment they get treated much the same.

The act of loitering, panhandling and skateboarding, each require engagement with the concrete and social environment to produce themselves and in the process, the very spaces in which these actions take place are transformed. There is no commodity production, exchange or consumption involved in skating or hanging out. In other words, by virtue of the pleasure and passivity bound up in the act of loitering, or desire where skateboarding is concerned (there is no product created or consumed), these activities defy the

¹²² Doug Clark, personal interview.

regulations that are created to encourage the proliferation of exchange-value oriented activities.¹²³ This is in contrast to activities such as shopping, being that which the streets and sidewalks are meant to facilitate in the private interest plan for the city. Loitering, panhandling and skateboarding are active experiences that fly in the face of the passive consumer-oriented diegesis that is maintained through policies, regulation and necessary enforcement in order to define orderly conduct and the jurisdiction of public spaces.

It is interesting to note that in all of the research I conducted, including interviews, everyone claimed to be against the anti-skateboarding bylaw. The Mayor, the head of Downtown BIZ and Harvey Smith, the City Councillor whose ward includes downtown, all indicated that the city should spend money on a skate park. They all agreed that outlawing skateboarding had sent the message that the City was not progressive or open towards the pursuits of the City's youth.

Conclusion: From Practice to Theory

The attempt to regulate behaviour illuminates, in part, the state of power relations in the urban environment as they relate to the production of public

¹²³ Iain Borden, drawing heavily upon Lefebvre, points out that in Marxist terms, skateboarding can be seen as an example of the triumph of use-value over exchange-value, 236.

space. The on-going panhandling saga in Winnipeg is an illustration of this power dynamic. Poor people asking for money in public places goes against every tenet that lies at the heart of urban revitalization strategies; it is challenging and problematic behaviour for a whole host of reasons. Similarly, it is not surprising that the outlawing of skateboarding is on the increase in many municipalities, for all these activities (including loitering) pose a threat to the passive consumer order by virtue of the affirmation of “dis-order” and action they embody and express in public.

Using examples from the policy story and by identifying the main characters in the political framework affecting the production of public and private spaces in the downtown, I have illustrated that the actual process of development and/or revitalization, as well as the ideology it implies, is increasingly dictated by private interests. These private interests have at their foundation values based on what kinds of actions are appropriate and may take place in public spaces. There is considerable theory as to what the legacy and contemporary impact these values, and the processes that support them, have on the production of public space. Having demonstrated how public spaces and behaviour that falls into the category “transgressive” are produced amongst these regulations and

the environments that support and necessitate them, I will now introduce contemporary urban theory in order to make sense of it all.

Chapter Four

Introduction: Practical + Theory

I now return to the question posed at the outset of my research: What do attempts to regulate “transgressive behaviour” reveal about the state of power relations in the urban environment and the production of public space? My research has been means for me to explore the status afforded particular uses and forms of public space. By investigating the issues around urban public space (the big picture) through the creation of bylaws and regulation (the smaller picture), it is possible to assess the ideologies and political framework at work in the city with respect to the North Portage Avenue area of downtown Winnipeg. I have assumed throughout this project that urban public space is important to both the political and personal life of individuals and communities in the city. In this chapter, I now explore contemporary urban theory in an effort to weave together practical examples of policy and planning judgement as manifest in Winnipeg’s downtown, and theoretical perspectives regarding cities and the production of public space.

As I stated in Chapter Three, I think that in order for research on urban eco-systems and public space to be rigorous and comprehensive, it must marry

the practical with the theoretical. Looking at the intended use of urban spaces as articulated via policy and the built environment, as well as theoretical perspectives about urban spaces, creates a more inclusive awareness of the content and power relations that exist in these spaces. This awareness, in turn, leads to a greater understanding of the how these spaces are produced. The practical decisions chronicled in the policy story featured in Chapter Two included the strategies, policies and bylaws and the impact these regulations have on the downtown urban environment – specifically, the north side of Portage Avenue in Winnipeg. By using urban theory as the lens through which to look at the urban eco-system, I am able to extend this research beyond dates and initiatives, opening up my intellectual project to include inquiry into the relationships between the people actually sharing urban public spaces. Furthermore, filtering the practical information (as chronicled in the policy story) through theory offers more possibilities to consider how the intention of policies, strategies and the political framework at work in Winnipeg have contributed to a particular outcome. Again, the possibilities of space are demonstrated by who does what where, and this contingency is why my investigation into power

relations, transgression, and regulation contributes to the discourse about the politics and production of public space.

The Theorists

In this chapter I return to the theoretical works introduced in the Chapter One. I extend the analysis of the policy environment found in Chapter Three using theoretical perspectives as articulated by Katarina Nylund, Rosalyn Deutsche, Henri Lefebvre and Iain Borden, all of whom investigate in various ways the relationship between politics, interaction and the production of public space.

Katarina Nylund is an Associate Professor of Architecture in Norway, and wrote her dissertation on issues relating to urban planning. Her research, as demonstrated in *Cultural Analyses in Urban Theory* of the 1990s published in 2001, has been very influential on my own approach to research because of her position on the importance of looking at both theory and practice when considering urban theory and urban environments. She provides a survey of the main ideas along with analysis of reoccurring themes of selected urban theory. Nylund emphasizes the importance of looking at the relationship between

structure and action in order to appreciate the dynamics and processes that exist in urban environments. Her understanding of the relationship between structure and action helps to clarify the impact that the political framework at work within the urban eco-system has upon public and private space: both how it is planned, and the human interaction that takes place within it.

Rosalyn Deutsche is an American art historian and critic who has written extensively on issues relating to art and the politics of public space. She is an Adjunct Professor at Barnard College in New York. In her book, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, Deutsche explores the struggles that take place in diverse public spaces, from individual identity formation to the regulation of public parks. She examines the dominant narratives found not only in urban planning and design, but also in writing and theory about cities, art and architecture. Deutsche explores the connection between the increased privatization of downtown spaces and those individuals and organizations denied access to these spaces; she suggests that it is the less visible and therefore more pressing struggles (such as poverty and privatization) that produce and maintain all spaces.¹²⁴ Deutsche's work is especially attractive to me because of the position she takes against the growing exclusion of marginalized people from public spaces and the

suppression of alternative opinions about the use and potential function of public space. Her feminist critical thinking makes her engagement in theory and practice a model for my intellectual project.

Iain Borden is an architect, a professor of architecture in the UK and a skater. He has written extensively on the performative aspect of skateboarding and the relationship between skateboarding, architecture and public space. His work is critical of attempts to control space through regulations that serve private interests. Borden (following Lefebvre and Marx) makes the case that the very act of skateboarding defies the logic of the marketplace because it does not facilitate commercial interests in any way, but instead derives its use value from the pleasure bound up in skateboarding. His work has challenged and validated my own reading of space and approach to the efforts to control and produce public space according to the agenda of economic development.

The writing of French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre has influenced the work of Deutsche, Nylund and Borden, as well as the work of many others writing in the fields of communications, philosophy and urban theory. Lefebvre characterizes space as a set of relationships. He considers how space can produce, impose and reinforce social homogeneity, and the

¹²⁴ Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT P, 1996) xi.

relationship between this process and the production of public space. Lefebvre's position allows for the content and ideology of space to be considered not as an abstraction to the activities that take place in any space, but as part of the process of how space is produced. Lefebvre both unpacks and politicizes the production of public space in all of his writing on cities and space. His attention to deconstructing space has helped my own effort to uncover and reveal the values inherent in any urban regulation or revitalization strategy.

Data + Theory = Content

The idea that theory and practice benefit from one another is the foundation upon which my engagement in this research is based. Katarina Nylund makes the case that often empirically oriented research about urban spaces and places lacks theoretical analysis.¹²⁵ I concur, and I argue that any consideration of the content of urban space, be it policy, human behaviour or access, benefits from both practical and theoretical consideration. Mapping the history of development in the case of the North Portage Avenue section of downtown Winnipeg has provided ample evidence to consider the relationship

¹²⁵ Nylund 5.

between structure and action, and apply theory to the practical and the practical to the theory.

Nylund introduces the Norwegian sociologist Dag Osterberg's concept of "socio-materia" as it applies to the material structure of the urban environment. Osterberg makes the claim that the material structures found in physical urban space mirror the power relations at work within these spaces, and that individual actions are restricted according to these relations. The term "socio-materia" refers to the relationship between the material structures (such as the built environment or the policy climate) and human beings. He argues that because material structures are a result of human actions, individuals, then, also have the chance to alter the existing material structure.¹²⁶

The process that Osterberg (and subsequently Nylund) identifies, suggests that there is the potential to transcend the built environment based upon the experience and actions of the individual. Skateboarding is an example of a practice that transcends the intention of material structures in the city, where meanings become unfixed.¹²⁷ The benches in Window Park or the curbs or railings along Portage Avenue sidewalks are re-programmed according to the will

¹²⁶ Nylund 5.

¹²⁷ Borden, *Skateboarding* 191.

and desires of the skater. A railing in this context is not intended to assist a pedestrian down the stairs, but to jump onto and ride across for the pleasure and challenge of doing so. Iain Borden cites several examples of how physical environments are altered in order to “fix” a certain meaning and use of space. For example, benches in urban areas are now often made with railing dividing the sitting space into sections. This is to discourage lying down or skating across it and explicitly designate the bench for sitting on only. However, in the context of skateboarding, the rail simply gets incorporated into a new approach to “skating” the bench. Skateboarders appropriate space and make it their own, regardless of how planners and designers try to dictate the character of space.¹²⁸ Borden argues that despite attempts to “fix” meaning to objects and space, their appropriation by skaters (or any other transgressive interpretation of the space or object) renders the meaning “unfixed.”

A similar argument can be made on behalf of the panhandler or the squeegee kid who use the streets and public spaces carved out of the planned network of the downtown to solicit donations. Panhandling or “squeegeeing” on the sidewalk, streets or in the park transform these areas into spaces for

¹²⁸ Iain Borden, *An Affirmation of Urban Public Life*, *Archis Magazine* May 1998: 3-4 <www.archis.org>.

exchange, contingent on the actions and needs of the panhandler or squeegee kid. This transformation or “unfixing” of these spaces flies in the face of the pre-conceived notion of the park as resting place or the sidewalk as a thoroughfare. Responses to the occurrence of these transgressive actions in public spaces by the City and downtown businesses include the installation of surveillance cameras, piping classical music into the park, building benches and seating areas with curves and handrails to make lying down or sleeping or loitering in these spaces impossible. The implementation of these designs and strategies onto the physical urban environment are meant to discourage activities that are not considered appropriate in a particular space, as decided by the controlling interests of that space: business organizations and property owners.

Where Osterberg’s concept of “socio-materia” may be limited, however, is looking at whose experiences are ultimately considered in the process of creating material structures. As revealed in the policy story, the individuals and organizations who participate in the political framework that reproduces the buildings and policies that shape the actions that take place within the city, are invested in a vision that revolves primarily around commerce. In this context, the experience of the skater or the panhandler cannot be considered without

reference to how these behaviours are regulated; these transgressive actions are at odds with the purpose of the spaces as defined by renewal strategies dependent on economic growth. In the same vein, the voice of the skater or the panhandler rarely has access to the same forums that mainstream participants in the political framework do. The vision for the city that is propagated on behalf of commercial interests is only one possible vision, but it is the vision that has the most currency in a network made up of its authors. In this equation, then, it is not only transgressive actions that are denied, but the voices of the transgressors as well.

The Portage Place Mall provides an example of a building that is clearly representative of an ideology and, as such, the concept of “socio-materia.” The mall replaced the contents of two city blocks, altered pedestrian traffic with the extension of the skywalk system linking the mall to other parts of the downtown, and altered vehicular traffic as the north sides of Edmonton Street and Kennedy Street were then incorporated into the mall. The structure represents not only the home of the mall and all the stores in it, but also directs how human interaction takes place within the mall’s spaces. How people meet and communicate with one another is influenced by the rules and regulations enforced by mall security.

The ability to loiter amongst friends is practically impossible and there are fewer and fewer spaces to do this. The trickle down effect is that the factors that contribute to human identity formation are increasingly influenced by the rules and regulations (the mores, if you will) of private enterprise. There was a time not so long ago when “hanging out at the mall” was the providence of teenagers everywhere. In downtown Winnipeg, until the late 80s this meant going to hang out at the Eaton’s Place or Unicity Mall food court amongst the rockers and the mods, carefully arranged in their respective cliques. The fostering of subcultures, friendships, fashion and the independent music scene took place in some part in these food courts on Saturday afternoons. I do not know where the kids hang out now, given the increase in security and the focus on the eradication of loitering: it certainly is not in the food court of Portage Place Mall.

The spatial design of the mall edifice occupies a large section of the downtown and clearly represents the privatization of downtown space. The virtual elimination of pedestrian traffic outside the mall contributes to the essence of privatization by literally drawing people in off the streets into a privately owned and operated milieu, thereby populating the private (inside of the mall) and deserting the public (the streets and sidewalks). The communication and

circulation that takes place in this space is restricted by the conventions that service the mall and facilitate the mall's purpose: shopping. It is much easier to eradicate conflict in private spaces that have full-time security and the defence of private property on their side. Democratic access apparently does not have to be a consideration inside a privately-owned shopping centre, even when the complex includes the enclosure of part of a city street.

The two city blocks handed over to the developers to build the mall are two more city blocks that contribute to the overall segregation of public and private space and the people that circulate within them in the downtown. It is ironic that when Portage Place first opened, it was full of high end retail stores like Holt Renfrew and Escada and an upscale restaurant in a neighbourhood where a third of the residents live below the poverty line; this is but one indication that this mall was not meant to service the actual environment where it was located. (It is not surprising that not one of the upscale stores continues to operate in the mall.) The distinction between private and public space and the content of these spaces influences the distinction made between the classes of people that circulate in these different places. As Nylund suggests, the relative positions of power diverse groups of people possess determines which part of

the urban eco-system they can appropriate. Understanding who can appropriate what makes questions about power and powerlessness key to understanding urban public life.¹²⁹ The strength of the position of developers, city planners and officials and retail store owners contrasts greatly with the relatively weak position afforded those who, say, loiter, because the very nature of loitering defies the hustle and bustle of shopping and consumer transactions. Loitering is identified as that which hinders the perpetuation of the values represented by the commercial scope of the mall and, as a result, is made transgressive in contrast to the actions of the consumer or storeowner – limiting the loiterer’s access to power within this political framework.

Rosalyn Deutsche argues that the uncertainty and disorder represented by acts such as loitering and panhandling are the antithesis of the staid or absolute representations of public and private space. She states that the use of public space is portrayed as self-evident and predicated upon absolute foundations such as “eternal human needs,” “technological progress,” or “objective moral values” and that these rationales serve to authorize the control of public space.¹³⁰ The appropriation of public space by organizations like

¹²⁹ Nylund 10.

¹³⁰ Deutsche 275.

Downtown BIZ or other private interests promotes the assumption that the regulation of conflicts (such as those embodied by the panhandler) is necessary to enforce the “self-evident” (and self-serving) uses of space.

The growing concern with loitering outside of the mall throughout the 90s as well as now, is more than just a coincidence; it is the result of increasing pre-occupation about the content of all spaces in this environment and their contribution to the facilitation of commerce. As loitering was forced out of the mall, the issue that became more of a concern was Window Park, located on the block across the street from the mall. The fact that Downtown BIZ is able to “police” this park with its Downtown Watch Ambassadors and the use of classical music to deter loitering, demonstrates that public spaces are controlled by business interests. Borden criticizes the vision for public space as the site of the “adult space of consumption” which produces the creation of normative public space. This sort of vision pre-empts the possibility of the city as the site of rebellion and denies urban public space as the place where disorder and pleasure can be located in the same space.

Nylund points out that urban renewal strategies often attempt to eradicate the confrontation between different classes, which is an essential characteristic

of urban public life.¹³¹ Perhaps the lack of a grocery store is one of the ways this eradication is carried out. The need for such an amenity has been cited as far back as the CentrePlan consultation in the mid-90s, yet it has never been developed.¹³² The fact that CentreVenture favours developments like the True North Entertainment Complex instead of a grocery retailer, suggests the vision is that large private economic return will do more for downtown than servicing the community already there.

The homogenization of spaces taking place on North Portage Avenue in Winnipeg exacerbates the uneven distribution of power amongst citizens, and therefore the communication that can take place between individuals. When people are deterred from congregating because it is not in the best interest of commerce, this reveals how the state of power relations in the urban environment heavily favours the consumer in private, and increasingly, in public space as well. Returning to Osterberg's concept of "socio-materia," it is evident that the relationships celebrated within this jurisdiction are those that support the ideology behind economic revitalization strategies. As a result, more and more buildings are built and occupied, and policies made and implemented that

¹³¹ Nylund 10.

encourage more of the same – as is the case in the recent decision to build a major arts and entertainment complex downtown.

Conversely, transgressive actions embody an entirely different approach to space and social interaction than those of private interests invested in the economic growth of the downtown. How individuals interact with each other is mitigated not only by the layout of the built environment, but also the influence this environment has on the development of individual subjectivity. In our youth, my friends and I roamed through the alleys and warehouse buildings downtown. Climbing fire escapes and walking across the roofs of abandoned buildings provided a new perspective of the city. Exploration and discovery was possible because neither the laws regulating trespassing, nor the conventions of adulthood, were meaningful in our quest for discovery. Iain Borden makes the case that the city is the site of rebellion, redefinition and assertion, and therefore the location where different social groups are able to constitute themselves as subjects through production of space.¹³² Space, like human identity, is always changing, and the relationship between the two embodies a reflexive tension. The space found and appropriated in those reconnaissance missions provided

¹³² CentrePlan, Building Blocks Housing Forum, May 5, 1998
<www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/planning/centreplan/housingforum/summary>.

places for my friends and me to be anonymous, unsupervised and renegade, and to explore all these aspects as keys to our own identity formation.

The control over public space by private interests amounts to the (attempted) control of one group over another. I have demonstrated repeatedly that the interests represented by the Downtown BIZ organization, CentreVenture and various departments and officials in municipal and provincial governments, seek to enforce a vision that equates public space and the behaviour appropriate to these spaces with those that facilitate order and consumerism. Regulation and the attendant concepts of control and criminalization refute the possibility that going out in public might mean running into conflict, as opposed to an organic risk of what it means to circulate in public. I am not suggesting that safety concerns should not be ignored rather I am arguing that the acknowledgement of transgressive activities (from public sex to graffiti) is a starting point from which to consider that not everyone has the same values or experiences of what it means to be in public. When people ask me what I think would help Winnipeg's downtown, I argue for the return of the hookers to the Exchange district. I do not do this facetiously or without an awareness that the political economy of the sex trade is rarely empowering for those who work in it; I make this argument

¹³³ Borden, *Skateboarding* 171.

because it is true that since the pre-Pan Am games “clean sweep” of the area, it is deserted at night. This was a neighbourhood that during my youth was bustling in the evening because there were people everywhere, all kinds of people doing all kinds of things, and it was much safer then than it is now. “Cleaning up” the neighbourhood meant that in order for Winnipeg to be presentable to the rest of the world, the “un-clean” segments and activities must be eliminated, or at least invisible (meanwhile the prostitutes just moved into another neighbourhood).

Downtown space offered a sense of freedom and potential, as well as the opportunity to relate to others using and living in these spaces. Deutsche connects how the definition, use and regulation of public space intersect “with ideas about what it means to be human, the nature of society and the kind of political community we want.”¹³⁴ Understanding that the physical environment and social interaction are so interdependent, necessitates looking at the impact regulation has on the production of public space, in order to deter the increasing privatization of public space.

What are the stakes of an inquiry into the production of public space? In a landscape shadowed with a growing concentration of private interests, this inquiry must be made in order to understand who gets to do what, or who does

what where. Personally, my own grasp of the importance of public-ness is informed by looking at how people circulate. How are folks divided along class, race and gender lines? What are the ideas about productivity and value supporting and how are they operating in the urban eco-system's political framework? What is the system of representation bound up in the material and social structures at work? These are all questions that have framed my investigation; the answers are found in these pages. Frankly, these are the same questions that frame my experience of living in the world. This form of inquiry is crucial in an urban eco-system that is increasingly developed at the expense of human experience, interaction and dependence.

Invisible: The Production of Transgression

The political framework that supports and influences the “socio-materia” of downtown spaces is one of the sites of struggle between public and private, and must be problematized as such in light of the fact that it is rendered invisible by the mechanisms of western economic ideology. Exclusion from the political process (as well as from actual space) is hidden by the representation of social spaces as unified and in need of protection from conflict. As has been

¹³⁴ Deutsche 269.

demonstrated in Winnipeg by the campaign to rid the streets of panhandlers, loiterers and skateboarders, the actions of the poor and those who stand in opposition to the economic development of downtown places are rendered transgressive in order to de-legitimize them.

The representation of the panhandler as an addict is one example of how transgression is created. The new advertising campaign for the revamped Downtown BIZ program “Change for the Better” uses a picture of a supposed panhandler holding up a sign that reads, “Please feed my addiction.”¹³⁵ This representation conceals the social and political conditions that create poverty and the reasons for panhandling, instead focussing attention on the behaviour of the panhandler. This transgressive status, designated via addiction and poverty onto panhandlers, then impacts on the production of the space they circulate within by making these individuals the target of regulation and policing. Sidewalks and parks in the downtown are created as unsafe and unsavoury when frequented by these actors, in need of “cleaning up” through regulation and enforcement of the bylaws made to control their actions.

Images and language such as the example found in the BIZ campaign make panhandlers appear to introduce conflict into public space, as they are

(made out to be) obstacles to vibrant and unified public space. Ultimately, this approach serves to separate panhandling from the growing phenomenon of revitalization strategies that exacerbate the conditions of poverty through the privatization of space. In this context, the conditions for economic growth are made synonymous with a healthy downtown. Winnipeg is sick and only commerce will cure it. The increased preoccupation with panhandling or “squeegeeing” in Winnipeg’s downtown parallels the growth of private enterprise as a downtown redevelopment strategy. It is not a coincidence that the climate that made the creation of Portage Place Mall, the Downtown BIZ Association and now the development of the True North Entertainment Complex, has also made the conditions of downtown urban life such that panhandling is more obtrusive an activity than ever. The policies and organizations that serve private interests contribute to an atmosphere in the city whereby “public spaces are too dangerous for public culture,” instead of allowing for the reality that diverse individual identity and action do not all fit into one model for the city.¹³⁵ It is dangerous and challenging to be in public: alive and difficult and beautiful. There

¹³⁵ Downtown BIZ, advertisement, Aug. 2003.

¹³⁶ Sharon Zukin, *Whose Culture? Whose City?* *The Culture of Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995) 331.

are risks inherent to being in public that no amount of regulation will eradicate, for these risks and conflict represent the only true foundation of public space.

Deutsche explores what disruption “from the outside” reveals about the state of power relations in the urban environment. Using the homeless in New York City as an example of this kind of disruption, she states: “the vision of the homeless person as the source of conflict in public space denies that there is an obstacle to coherence at the very core of social life.”¹³⁷ While Winnipeg and New York City are very different cities, the concept of an “obstacle” is applicable in any Western industrial economy that regulates and enforces space in the interest of economic exchange. Deutsche’s example can be applied in the context of my research, for all transgressive behaviour poses an “obstacle to coherence.” The fact that certain actions or conditions of being are seen as counter-productive to the creation and maintenance of the status (mythically unified) quo, is the process that renders these actions transgressive in the first place.

Deutsche’s ability to articulate the importance of conflict in the creation of public space politicizes the urban eco-system and reveals it to be much more than a neutral set of relationships. She states:

¹³⁷ Zukin 278.

Conflict, division, and instability, then, do not ruin the democratic public sphere; they are the conditions of its existence. The threat arises with efforts to supersede conflict, for the public sphere remains democratic only insofar as its exclusions are taken into account and open to contestation. When the exclusions governing the constitution of political public space are naturalized and contests erased by declaring particular forms of space inherently, eternally, or self-evidently public, public space is appropriated.¹³⁸

Public space in downtown Winnipeg is appropriated and produced by the erasure of exclusion, the creation of transgression in the interest of promoting a “safer shopping and business community.”¹³⁹ When public space is appropriated to facilitate private development (often under the guise of being for the public good), the ideology that informs these spaces is absolute. Whatever activities do not fit into this ideology get defined by virtue of their omission and subsequently problematized when they are revealed. Conflict and contingency cannot exist in these spaces.¹⁴⁰ There is no room for panhandling, loitering or skateboarding in the ideological vision and regulation of these spaces, yet these actions all occur; the continuous paradox is that they will continue to occur no matter how much they are denied.

¹³⁸ Zukin 289.

¹³⁹ Downtown BIZ, *Downtown Winnipeg Profile* (Winnipeg, Winnipeg Downtown BIZ Improvement Zone) 5.

¹⁴⁰ Deutsche 290.

The denial of certain behaviour and the promotion of others is not an accident or coincidence, but a reflection of the power dynamic found in the urban eco-system. The rationale at the heart of transgression is the polar opposite to that of commerce and economic productivity. Borden points out that the regulation of space legitimizes the “conventionalized operations of the city” and that by rendering acts such as skateboarding criminal, actually diverts attention from real problems in order to create room for new strategies of enforcement.¹⁴¹ It does seem that the money and time invested in the creation and enforcement of the skateboarding bylaw completely out of scale with the actual “problem” of skateboarding. The power to enforce the bylaw is a primary means by which the character of downtown space gets dictated.

The production and maintenance of these public spaces is easily threatened when they are represented as static and unified. In the summer of 2002, the Winnipeg Jazz Festival received its first ever noise complaint after an outdoor summer evening concert. The concert area and beer garden are set up in the same spot every year, in Old Market Square in the heart of the Exchange district on the north side of downtown. The fact that two new condominium

¹⁴¹ Borden, *An Affirmation* 5.

developments have sprouted in this area in the last two years (two more condominium developments and one upscale apartment building are currently underway) might have something to do with this complaint. Even though art and culture are used to market the downtown as a destination, the practices of art and culture represented are often at odds with the commercialization they are co-opted to promote. (An identical argument can be made about skateboarding. The images, music and codes of skateboarding sub-culture have all been co-opted to sell Sprite and school supplies, but the minute the actual act of skateboarding takes place on the sidewalks outside the stores where these products are sold, up goes the “No skateboarding sign” to eliminate any impedance to shopping).

“Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision” states in section 1A-04 (“Promote the Excitement of Downtown”) that the city will support the downtown as the location of choice for arts, culture and entertainment amenities.¹⁴² However, in the case of the Jazz Festival noise complaint, it could be argued that while people want the cache of living and circulating in public space that includes these cultural amenities, they are unable to accept the conflict that attracts these practices and events in the first place. This results in the homogenizing of this space in order to cater to the consumers whose patronage these events are used to draw in, while

simultaneously marginalizing the low-income artists and neighbourhood population that made it exciting and possible in the first place.¹⁴³

There is no question that a concert area and beer garden would not be set up for 10 days in the middle of a suburban neighbourhood. Jungle gyms, car culture and dog walkers do not a creative environment make. The reason festivals like the Jazz Festival take place downtown is because noise and people on the streets are elements that are organic to the character of that space. There is a link between pleasure and disorder. There is a real danger when the commercial version of the downtown is pitted against an organic community, for there is a risk of obstructing the means by which people have survived, flourished and circulated, pre-contact with more mainstream or private interests. Returning to the issue of the noise complaint, the experiences that inform and produce public space cannot be considered healthy if they are constructed in such a way as to obstruct interaction amongst the many groups that circulate within public space.

As I stated in the introductory chapter, the increased privatization of public space relates directly to the marginalization of those denied access to

¹⁴² City of Winnipeg, *Plan Winnipeg: 2020 Vision* 13.

participation in the discourses of the public sphere. The more public space is taken up by private interests, the more the backlash against corporatization of public space grows and the more forcefully this resistance must be rejected and monitored. Simply put, the economic development of private enterprise is the dominant principle organizing the discourse of the public sphere. It is the discourse of the free market rationale, which says that the “freedom” to create profit-oriented enterprise is paramount and should not be subject to regulation that might in some fashion limit this potential for profitability. This is a seemingly non-coercive system of domination that holds up and celebrates a unified model of participation in, and acquiescence to, the status quo.

The Production of Public Space

I started skateboarding in the mid-70s and a lot of people thought, “Oh it’s a sport.” But it’s not just a sport. Skateboarding is about re-definition. It was like putting on a pair of filtered glasses - every curb, every sidewalk, every street, every wall had a new definition. I saw the world differently than other people. Everything had completely changed because I was a skateboarder. It really helped me understand the idea of redefining what’s has been given to you. I’ve always been interested in saying “here’s what’s been presented, now how does it work and how can it work?”¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Jack Beyers, The Privatization of Downtown Public Space, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 17 (1998): 107.

¹⁴⁴ Ian MacKaye, interview, Partners in Crime, *We Owe You Nothing: Punk Planet, the Collected Interviews* (New York: Akashic Books, 2001) 24.

This quote summarizes the potential relationship between structure, action and production. The act of skateboarding involves more than just a thrill in this context (although that is also a big part of what makes skating attractive); it also informs the way space is interpreted, made use of, and therefore produced. It is also embodies a refusal to accept the “price of admission” set by the regulations and policies that support the privatization of public space.¹⁴⁵ Accepting that what takes place in public space often strays from what is intended for that space allows for what Henri Lefebvre identifies as “the truth of space” to be considered.¹⁴⁶ Lefebvre has made a significant contribution to urban theory in his exploration and arguments pertaining to the means by which public space is produced in urban environments, including the concept of the “science of space.” According to Lefebvre, the science of space embodies the political use of knowledge, an ideology designed to conceal that use, as well as some sort of technical utopia that operates within the framework of the material.¹⁴⁷ This technical utopia is a common feature of all kinds of public space-based projects, like architecture and urban planning. In the case of the North Portage section of

¹⁴⁵ Robyne S. Turner, The Politics of Design and Downtown Development in the Postmodern Downtown, *Journal of Urban Affairs* 24.5 (2002): 546.

¹⁴⁶ Lefebvre, *Public Space* 9.

¹⁴⁷ Lefebvre, *Public Space* 8.

Winnipeg's downtown, this technical utopia is manifest through revitalization via redevelopment. What is not allowed to take place or get developed in this space (be it pedestrian activity or small independent ownership of stores along the avenue) are the very elements that made this space attractive in the first place.¹⁴⁸

Lefebvre's science of space idea takes the investigation into the production of public space and blows it wide open, for it makes it impossible to consider space as static or neutral; instead, it is programmed by the same process that produces social products such as money and capital.¹⁴⁹ In this sense, it seems possible that if space is a product, then those who circulate within it will be expected to reproduce the ideology it is imbued with, without necessarily knowing that they are doing so. Hence, the effectiveness of programs like the Downtown BIZ's "Change for the Better" actually works to conceal the reality and systemic nature of poverty, while claiming to be a solution to these very problems. Space, as it is represented by the BIZ campaign, is fraught with judgement, or as Lefebvre puts it, is "shot through with knowledge."¹⁵⁰ The knowledge represented mixed with downtown space presents the ideology of the

¹⁴⁸ Florida, Jacobs, Borden. Lefebvre, Lippard, Deutsche all refer to this phenomenon in their writings on cities.

¹⁴⁹ Lefebvre, *Public Space* 26.

¹⁵⁰ Lefebvre, 2003, 41.

BIZ and an assumption as to what the content of downtown public space is supposed to be.

Lefebvre, while critical of the domination of the western economic system, is not proscriptive in his vision for the city. Instead, the importance of the tenet of difference to Lefebvre's ideas about the city and the production of public space clarifies the ideological function of space and the portrayal and reproduction of the relationships that take place in public and private space. Appreciating space as an ideological construct makes it possible to not only politicize, but also problematize what takes place in the name of public space. As privatization encroaches upon all urban space, including inside schools, the ability to dissect the ideological stakes at work in the production and reproduction of public space becomes radically important in order to stem the (private) tide of ideas and mores that are embedded into these spaces. Deutsche argues that when the ideology of space is invisible, it conceals the "system of purposes" by suggesting that the origins of public space are based on some essential natural foundation, and therefore impervious to change.¹⁵¹ A little critical thinking reveals that the only "essential" characteristic of public space is the desire on behalf of private

¹⁵¹ Deutsche 290.

enterprise and public resources (such as the government that supports them), to maintain the status quo through order and regulation.

As stated previously in this section, both public and private space are imbued with the ideologies that produce them. The codes and signs of these ideologies contribute not only to the way we interpret space, but how we actually live in it. Human subjectivity, representation and everyday living are all part of the process of the production of any space, which in turn contribute to any production of the self. Lefebvre points out that for those who do not have access to, or actively resist systems of domination (power), their ability to challenge the deployment of these signs is restricted. This leads to the domination of one class over another, and the creation of the margin and the centre as an organizing principle for urban spaces. It also hinders the production of values outside of a commercial model and, as a result, actions that undermine or contradict these values are made transgressive and the target of elimination.

Given that CentreVenture Development Corporation, Plan Winnipeg and Downtown BIZ are all invested (literally) in the future of downtown Winnipeg, understanding their interests as private developers and business owners starts to make the whole process of producing space in the city seem a little lopsided. If

spaces are limited to supporting private development, what are the possibilities for differences to exist in these spaces? How does the decrease in diverse interpretation of these spaces impact on the broader social network that is urban society?

Conclusion

My city's still breathing
But barely it's true
Through buildings gone missing like teeth.
The sidewalks are watching me think about you,
Sparkled with broken glass.
I'm back with scars to show
Back to the streets I know will never take me anywhere but here.¹⁵²

Attempts to regulate transgressive behaviour in Winnipeg's downtown reveal that the political framework in place serves the interests of private development. Regulations such as those that seek to control, banish and punish the actions of panhandlers, loiterers and skateboarding conflate the idea of a common good with the need to control actions that disrupt commerce.

I undertook this research because of my interest in the interaction and communication that take place between people in public. I chose Winnipeg's

¹⁵² The Weakerthans, *Left and Leaving*, *Left and Leaving*, G7 Welcoming Committee (audio cd), 2001.

downtown because I have watched endless attempts made to revitalize and redefine the area. My engagement is further influenced by my overall investment in the importance of truly public space and the potential for diverse human experiences to occur in this space. In an environment that is increasingly controlled by the interests of corporations and developers, the need for space to explore avenues and options other than those intended to facilitate the exchange of goods gets lost, or (worse) purposely excluded from the urban landscape. This increases not only the homogenization of human experience, but the homogenization of human expectations as well. This does not bode well for the future of the human imagination, to say nothing of the cities these imaginations inhabit.

What I have learned is that public space, often the site of transgressive activities, must be controlled in order to further the dominant agenda that private investment will lead to public good. Via Lefebvre and Deutsche, the means by which ideology is concealed within revitalization and development strategies became clear. Charting the strategies and policies that have influenced the shape and atmosphere of North Portage Avenue, has illustrated that the city is organized around commerce first and people second. This hierarchy and the

mechanisms that support it contribute to the inculcation of individuals into a system that posits that urban public spaces are supposed to be safe, free of conflict and never menacing or aggressive. Winnipeg is no different from other North American cities in this respect, as the philosophy of western industrial economies privileges the development of private enterprise and control over all else. I think that there is a place for business to operate within a social and economic enterprise such as urban revitalization; first, however, this requires a shift away from thinking of business *as* a social enterprise, which is often the case within the scope of redevelopment strategies.

Lefebvre makes the case that space is occupied. I wanted to know by what. The implications about thinking about space this way is that it becomes necessary to unpack all that goes into space, from the material environment and the people who do or do not occupy it. The experience I related earlier in this chapter about my friends and I hanging out downtown inspired this line of inquiry. At the time, I knew we were in spaces we were not supposed to be, and yet there we were, occupying those spaces. It got me thinking about what else takes place in public space, and how these spaces are sometimes created in a temporal way, based upon whose experiences are produced.

I know that public space is not static, nor unified, despite various attempts through policy and regulation to represent it as such. A shift from looking at what actually takes place as opposed to arguing about what should take place seemed like a good place to start. The fact that certain actions are seen as counter-productive to the creation and maintenance of the status (unified) quo is what renders certain actions transgressive in the first place. This process requires a close look – such as that which I have provided here – not only in order to create alternative approaches to revitalization, but more importantly, opportunities to interact with each other.

Transgressive actions provide alternative perspectives and experiences that are not always easy to understand or accept, but these challenges are bound up in dominant notions of what is appropriate in public. Potentially, transgression frees space, along with subjective experience, from an assigned or pre-programmed role. This potential is crucial at a time in history where there is a growing desire to conflate and control all activities and people that do not facilitate economic development.

Returning to Lefebvre to conclude, he argues that in order to understand how space embodies social relationships, new ideas must be introduced.

Incorporating the idea of diversity (or as I have done, the idea of transgressive action) into the investigation, makes it possible to see that social space can be understood in the same light as mental or physical space, because these ideas are able to shed new light on what otherwise appears static or staid.¹⁵³ The original work I have presented in this thesis articulates my quest to uncover what Lefebvre refers to as “the truth of space” versus “true space,” in order to understand the power dynamics and interactions that are bound up in the production of public space in Winnipeg’s downtown.

¹⁵³ Lefebvre 2003, 27.

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