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# Who Produces Urban Space?: Gentrification and Contestations Over Urban 'Authenticity'

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Arts

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WHO PRODUCES URBAN SPACE?: GENTRIFICATION AND CONTESTATIONS  
OVER URBAN 'AUTHENTICITY'

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Daniel Kudla

Graduate Program in Sociology

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

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## **Abstract**

The main purpose of this work is to explain how urban authenticity has changed as a result of different social agents taking control of urban production. I will establish a framework of authenticity by combining the ideas of William Sewell's theory of structure, Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, Erich Fromm's theory of freedom, Henri Lefebvre's idea of the 'total man', and Herbert Marcuse's theory of an advanced capitalist form of production. This framework of authenticity will allow me to argue that urban authenticity has been recently co-opted by multinational developers, real estate commodity, private corporations, and entrepreneurial municipal governments. The starting point for this analysis will be the early stage of gentrification that took place during the 1960s and end with an interpretation of the recent role Business Improvement Areas have in the shaping of urban authenticity. This explanation of urban authenticity intends to shed some light on how citizens' representation of the city is imposed by external agents.

**Keywords:** business improvement areas, gentrification, urban sociology, urban production, urban space, urban authenticity, inner cities, representational space.

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## Introduction

**Walking around New York, I see people, streets, neighborhoods, and public spaces being upscaled, redeveloped, and homogenized to the point of losing their distinctive identity. Not all of them are historic places, for one of the city's main distinctions is that it nurtures a constant dialogue between the two faces of authenticity: between features that every generation views as "original" because they have been there throughout their lifetimes, and features that each new generation creates on their own (Zukin 2010, xi).**

People often note that certain areas of cities are authentic in nature, that they have some innate quality in them that makes it more 'real' than other places. For instance, some people consider a local independently owned shop as an authentic urban place because it offers genuine interactions with customers in contrast to the impersonality of department stores. Others may consider iconic architecture as an authentic representation of the city, such as the images we see on postcards like the Empire State Building in New York or the CN tower in Toronto, because it represents a particular brand of the city, while others may consider an area populated by a particular immigrant enclave as an authentic community because of the way the group identity shaped the urban environment, such as a group of Irish pubs, or Little Italy located around an Italian residential community.

These examples, among many others, are often used by people to indicate the authenticity of a particular place. The term 'authenticity' in relation to the urban, however, has been taken for granted and used frivolously. Many different authors have attempted to explain specific characteristics of urban authenticity to pinpoint what exactly people consider as authentic in downtown districts. Jane Jacobs (1961) was one of the first social urban thinkers to explain authentic characteristics as a requirement for solving social problems that were evident in inner cities, such as poverty, crime, and

congestion. Jacobs urged inner cities to be interconnected by short blocks, to be informally monitored by the proprietors of the street, and to preserve small businesses and old city buildings. She believed that liveliness, high activity, and multiple-use spaces would provide the solution to inner-city problems. Her ideas brought to awareness questions about how inner cities should be developed in order to function successfully, what characteristics are necessary for people to enjoy their urban experience, and what specific urban dynamics need to exist to effectively keep community members secure. In other words, Jacobs was indirectly indicating that the city needs to be authentic; mediated and preserved by the local.

A decade after Jacobs proposed her inner city criticisms and solutions, inner cities began to look and feel different. With the help of larger developers, real estate, and local municipal governments, inner cities were becoming more attractive, bringing in more ‘yuppie’ consumers than was the case before. Inner cities were becoming populated by more affluent groups who saw benefits for inner city living, such as low commute times, proximity to interesting cultures, and being close to many different social and cultural amenities. Scholars began to note that inner cities were no longer authentic because they accommodated conformist consumers who were punishing the lower classes by displacing them from their inner-city homes (see Smith 1996; Hae 2012). Inner cities were no longer filled with interesting groups of people, but rather a homogenized group of yuppies that handsomely paid for their urban experience.

More recently, scholars note that inner cities are increasingly developed by private corporations who ‘Disneyfy’ areas to make it devoid of unpleasant interactions and attractive façades to increase tourists and even more affluent consumers. These

scholars dismiss the presence of authenticity in inner cities because of the overwhelming influence of large corporations and minimal amount of local influence (see Hannigan 1998; Shearing and Stenning 1984). Instead of preserving the presence of the local community members who established the area's identity, cities now manipulate local signifiers through themes, brands, and offer mixed use areas to attract consumers.

Sharon Zukin (2010) has recently responded to the changing inner city dynamics of the 1990s and has emphasized the role of authenticity in downtown districts. She explains that authenticity is both an experience of the historically old and creatively new. She admits that the most recent understanding of urban authenticity has more to do with style than it does with origins. Authenticity no longer relates to a quality of people but rather a quality of things and experiences. For Zukin, authenticity is lost when its origins are broken, such as local stores being replaced by larger chain stores, when the people in the neighborhood become more affluent and less alternative, and when the street loses its gritty character. Essentially, Zukin paints a general picture of authenticity as anything that appears natural, warm, honest, organic, and unique. She gives many small-scale examples to identify authenticity in the city, pointing to community intimacy, original physical structures, and community belonging. It appears that urban authenticity has been divided into two time periods: the nostalgic period before the 1970s where the influence of large developers was minimal, and an entrepreneurial period after the 1970s where local cultures were exploited in the name of economic profits. However, there is no direct explanation of what exactly constitutes authenticity in the first place and how this understanding of authenticity has drastically changed after the 1970s.

The lack of a direct explanation of authenticity may be due to the term's elusiveness and challenging conceptualization. It is a term that has been philosophically debated by many intellectual thinkers and has produced many different schools of thought. With an abundance of sociological theory dedicated to the topic of authenticity, there have been surprisingly minimal attempts to connect these different schools of thought with what is taking place in inner cities. *This thesis attempts to pinpoint exactly what is meant by the term authenticity in relation to urban processes. More specifically, this thesis examines how larger social processes have changed our conception of urban authenticity since the 1960s.* My primary intention is to contribute not only to the literature in theoretical urban sociology, but to have a better understanding of how inner cities have transformed over the past fifty years and what this means for citizens who either reside, visit, or work in these areas. My arguments will be based on the background of various contemporary sociological theorists' writings on authenticity. My intention is to combine urban sociology with social theory in order to offer an alternative explanation of authenticity contrast to the prevalent cultural and economical explanations of urban space (such as Ley 1996, Caulfield 1994, Smith 1996, Zukin 1995).

This thesis is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, I synthesize various sociological thinkers such as William Sewell, Jean-Paul Sartre, Erich Fromm, Henri Lefebvre, and Herbert Marcuse in order to form a working framework of authenticity. Although these theorists differ in terms of their respective philosophical outlooks, their ideas nevertheless offer some clues as to how we can understand authenticity. In short, central to understanding authenticity is an examination of the structure versus agency debate that is so prominent in sociology. I argue that changing social structures by



mobilizing human agency brought on by subjective creativity is necessary in order for something to be considered authentic. Simply put, authenticity entails a self-directed agency to change a social structure. Furthermore, I argue that our conception of authenticity has changed as a result of an advanced form of capitalist production that became prevalent in North America post-World War II. This form of capitalist production has turned authenticity into a commodity that appears to allow people their individual agency, but in actuality it constitutes a new form of social control.

Once a general framework of authenticity is established, I will then chart how inner cities have transitioned and changed over time. In the second chapter, I consider some cultural, social, physical, and symbolic changes that have transpired in inner-city districts since the 1960s. To provide a more systematic explanation of these transitions, I will elaborate on the role of gentrification in urban cities. Gentrification, in short, refers to a process of renovating urban resources in order to increase the area's general appeal. Extending on the work of Hackworth and Smith (2001), I will categorize general characteristics of gentrification into three distinct waves. From the 1960s till the 1973 recession, the first wave of gentrification will be explained as a small-scale process initiated by small groups in random neighborhoods. The second wave of gentrification, from 1973 recession till the 1987 recession, will be explained as a systematically larger process initiated by larger developers, local governments, and real estate entrepreneurs interested in attracting a new middle-class consumer. The third-wave of gentrification, from 1987 till the present, will be explained as a more pervasive process occurring in large sections of inner cities initiated by private corporations, global investors, and local municipal governments.

After the three waves of gentrification are explained in detail, I will then explain how local governments have turned their attention to entrepreneurial interests by working together with inner city businesses to increase the marketability of a particular district. I will outline how these public-private partnerships, typically called Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in Canada, are organized, how they function, and how they measure success. Furthermore, I will argue that they are increasingly producing images of authenticity by investing in three types of infrastructures: physical, surveillance, and promotional. The combination of these three infrastructures is an attempt to tap into people's sense of inclusiveness and belonging.

It should be noted that my treatment of the terms 'gentrification', 'urban renewal', and 'urban revitalization' are roughly synonymous. Agents of gentrification often do not indicate that they are 'gentrifying' an area because it signifies a negative process of displacing people for the sake of profits. The language of these agents is often in line with positive buzzwords such as 'renewal' and 'revitalization' in order to avoid negative images of their influence. Hence, I treat the terms 'renewal' and 'revitalization' as characteristics of gentrification. Second, it should be noted that I am aware that gentrification is not a homogeneous process across different nations. Gentrification does not follow the same transitions, involve the same actors, or displace the same demographics in USA, Canada, or UK. I paint gentrification in broad strokes for the purpose of getting at the core concern of the thesis. Third, I am not interested in the specific mechanisms or actors that are involved in gentrification, or the ways in which particular national instantiations of these processes occurred, but rather in the ways in

which gentrification has an impact in the representations of space and creates a site of contestations between people and profit.

Lastly, chapter four brings the preceding chapters together into an analysis of how urban authenticity has changed over time as a result of different social agents producing the urban. The chapter is divided into two sections. First, I will explain how prior to the 1970s the production of urban schemas was in the hands of local social agents who were opposing modernist city influence. Second, I will explain that post-1970s urban production was no longer a process of transforming urban structures, but rather a process of commodifying urban schemas into a coherent packaged identity meant to sell to tourists and affluent city dwellers. I will then explain the role of BIAs and how they impose predetermined images so as to control the way people think and feel about the particular urban space. Lastly, I will conclude that authenticity has been co-opted, changed from its original form in order to fit with the motives of capitalist markets.

## Chapter 1: A Framework for Understanding Authenticity

Whether it is a large corporation, multinational real estate companies, politicians, local entrepreneurs, subcultures, or community members, particular groups often signify an image, an atmosphere, a certain ambiance and character in urban space based on some conception of authenticity. For instance, certain inner-city districts market themselves as an authentic Italian, bohemian, or industrial area. However, authenticity is an elusive term that can have different meanings. Many different schools of thought have attempted to provide a framework of what constitutes authenticity in order to define it adequately. The present chapter is not an attempt to resolve the debate of what is truly authentic, for this is beyond the scope of the present discussion. Rather, the intention is to synthesize a number of threads to provide a general framework for how the term authenticity can be understood for the purpose of the subsequent chapters.

The present discussion of authenticity is in the context of urban processes. Before getting into the discussion on how authenticity is signified by certain groups in urban space, it is imperative to define what authenticity is and how it will be used throughout the current discussion. By implementing ideas from a wide range of theories, including existentialism (Jean-Paul Sartre), the Frankfurt School (Herbert Marcuse and Erich Fromm), Marxist humanism (Henri Lefebvre), and structuration (William Sewell Jr.), this chapter will provide a detailed investigation of the concept of authenticity and the implications it has for understanding contemporary urban structuring. It should be noted that the goal of the current chapter is not to offer a comprehensive explanation of each theorist, but rather to extend on some of their specific arguments in order to develop a framework of authenticity. Although these theorists did not specifically state their views

on urban authenticity, their general ideas offer some clues. Synthesizing these various works will develop a working framework through which we can understand authentic spaces.

The current chapter argues that the relationship between structure and agency is central to the discussion of authenticity. Beginning with William Sewell's theory of structure, I argue that authenticity entails using human agency to transform structures. Central to this discussion is how agents need to mobilize and reinterpret resources and schemas in order to transform structures. I then extend on Sartre's early existentialism theory in order to elaborate on how authenticity relates to transcending structures by practicing individual agency. Next, Fromm's explanation of negative and positive freedom helps to explain how freedom from structures cannot constitute authenticity and that agency needs to be self-directed and put towards a spontaneous creativity independent from imposing structures. Lefebvre's critique of everyday life then helps to examine this aspect of positive freedom by explaining authentic action as an expression of creative subjectivity that unites all aspects of life that have been fragmented by rational capitalism. Lastly, Marcuse helps to explain the system of rational capitalism in more detail, defining it as a rational capitalist instrumental system that makes people mistakenly believe that they are acting authentically under mass consumerism. Marcuse then offers an explanation for how agents can oppose the status quo that is shaped by consumerism.

### *Authenticity as a Process of Change: Sewell's Theory of Structure*

I first begin with William Sewell's (1992) theory of structure and agency in order to explain authenticity not as an innate state but as a dual process between resources and schemas. Sewell recognizes that the term structure has become an elusive term that operates as a powerful metaphoric device. He therefore attempts to develop a theory of structure that "restores human agency to social actors" and "builds the possibility of change into the concept of structure" (ibid: 1). Extending Giddens's theory of structuration, Sewell explains how human agency and social structures do not develop in a vacuum but are shaped by a mutual process between the two. In other words, agency and structure are mutual processes where it is possible for agents to shape social structures, while simultaneously structures can shape agents. Authenticity, then, entails having some degree of control to transform social structures.

To explore the concept of authenticity through Sewell's perspective, it is necessary to explain how Sewell defines a structure. As he argues, structures are composed of resources and schemas. First, Sewell explains two types of resources: nonhuman and human. Nonhuman resources are "objects, animate or inanimate, naturally occurring or manufactured, that can be used to enhance or maintain power"; while human resources are "physical strength, dexterity, knowledge, and emotional commitments that can be used to enhance or maintain power, including knowledge of the means of gaining, retaining, controlling, and propagating either human or nonhuman resources" (ibid: 9). For instance, human resources can be actualized in people's minds, such as a priest's power to host confession, while nonhuman resources can refer to factories owned by

capitalists, land owned by peasants, or an armory of weapons controlled by kings. Second, Sewell explains schemas as an informal and not always conscious metaphor or assumption presupposed by the characteristic of a certain resource. Schemas are generalizable procedures applied in the enactment/reproduction of social life and can be applied and extended to a variety of contexts of interaction. Schemas are virtual because they cannot be reduced to their existence in any particular practice or location in space and time. It is simply a mental structure composed of preconceived ideas or a framework representing some aspect of a resource.

After defining resources and schemas, Sewell connects them together and explains how they relate to exercising agency. He establishes that schemas are effects of resources, just as resources are the effects of schemas. Schemas simultaneously shape and are shaped by both human and nonhuman resources. For instance, the physical characteristics of a factory (a nonhuman resource), such as the factory gate, the punching-in station, and the design of the assembly line validate the schema of the capitalist labor contract. Conversely, Sewell provides an example of how resources are also products of schemas by explaining how a factory's production of resources will differ depending on whether it is based from an individual capitalist's schema or by a workers' cooperative schema. Social structures, therefore, represent this dual relationship between resources and schemas. A social structure is not either a material production or an imagined conception, they are both of these two things combined.

If authenticity entails changing a social structure then agents need to have some control of resources and/or schemas in order to have the capacity to transform a structure.

This capacity, according to Sewell, is inherent in all humans. As Sewell puts it succinctly:

Agency arises from the actor's knowledge of schemas, which means the ability to apply them to new contexts. Or, to put the same thing the other way around, agency arises from the actor's control of resources, which means the capacity to reinterpret or mobilize an array of resources in terms of schemas other than those that constituted the array (ibid: 20).

Thus, reinterpreting schemas is central to authenticity. To be authentic means having the creative capacity to apply schemas to another situation, or to have control of resources in order to reinterpret them to produce a different schema. The former is done by transposing schemas to another context, while the latter is done by taking a resource from one situation, reinterpreting it, and producing a new schema where the resource is outside of its original context. Both of these methods causes a schema to change in form and content by causing it to pass into another domain. However, social actors need to have some control of resources in order to apply schemas to them, or in order to reinterpret the resource that they have control over. By accumulating resources and reinterpreting schemas, certain social agents can intensify their depth and power to such an extent that it becomes a prevailing social structure. A new social agent then accumulates resources and/or reinterprets schemas in order to transform the structure yet again. Thus, social structures are prone to continual change depending on the intensity and prevalence of social agents.

What we can take from Sewell's theory of structure is that authenticity is not an innate state, an engraved status in a resource, or a static idea. Rather, it is a process whereby agents creatively reinterpret schemas and/or find ways to control certain resources. If an agent has control over a resource then they have the ability to construct a schema. Conversely, agents have the ability to reinterpret schemas and apply them to



another context. In other words, agency entails having the creativity to manipulate, mold, and permeate resources and schemas to other contexts and transpose it into a different meaning. The following discussion on Sartre explores the relationship between human agency and structure in more detail. More specifically, Sartre's existentialist theory helps to explain authenticity as a process where individual agents put their creative subjectivity together to transcend deterministic social structures.

### ***Sartre's Existentialism: The Importance of the Individual***

The theme of authentic existence is very common in Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism theory. Broadly speaking, Sartre (1989) insists that exercising agency is central to authenticity. By placing the individual as the starting point for philosophical thinking, Sartre believes that exercising individuality is central to life. Since total responsibility is strictly attributed to the individual, deterministic structures become excuses for one's position in life. Sometimes criticized for its individualistic nature, Sartre's early existentialism requires individuals to take personal responsibility for choices and actions taken in life.<sup>1</sup> The heart of Sartre's existentialism is in the famous quote "*existence comes before essence*" (1989: 26), implying that human existence must be realized over and against deterministic structures. This individualistic perspective suggests that the individual decides his or her own fate and should be responsible for his or her actions and choices in life. To be an authentic person, then, means exercising one's own subjective creativity by transcending structural forces that try to define who the person is or should

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<sup>1</sup> Although Sartre, in his development of the progressive-regressive method, acknowledges that material conditions set definite limits on human agency, for the sake of space and time this examination of Sartre focuses on his earlier existentialist philosophy.

be. In order to act out these subjective experiences one must first realize that he or she has an individual existence, act out this existence, and define themselves in accordance with those actions. Following this principle will allow the individual to be determined in his or her own way, untouched by outside pressures.

In order to provide an example of his existentialist theory, Sartre draws a comparison between an existentialist and an artist painting a portrait (ibid: 49). The artist begins with a blank sheet and starts to draw whatever he or she desires in any way imaginable. There are no set rules or procedures that the artist must follow; the artist simply begins with nothing and ends with a portrait in which he or she chose to draw on his or her own. The same goes with living life; we begin with nothing and slowly define ourselves as we age. There is no general procedure we should abide by because we are left to our own destiny. In other words, to be authentic one must see life as a project that is to be created by the individual. This project must be unaffected by structural forces that attempt to define the individual. As Sartre explains, structural forces can be anything from human nature, divinity, humanity, science, or predetermined human essence. By rejecting these structures, an existentialist must make their own meaning in life and not subject themselves to any other predetermined meaning.

This distinction between the authentic self and imposing forces can be further explained by Sartre's comparison between being-for-itself and being-in-itself in his work *Being and Nothingness* (1956). As he explains, because humans are considered being-for-itself, we come from nothing, because there is no God or deterministic explanation for our existence, thus we have the freedom to decide to be or do whatever it is that we want. Nothing can define or limit us. Being-in-itself, on the other hand, relates to things that

obey physical laws and lack subjectivity, these objects simply exist and have no consciousness or potential for transcendence. This typically refers to inanimate objects that are subject to objective laws. The problem is that humans often treat others and ourselves as being-in-itself, what Sartre calls living in 'bad faith'. We pretend that structural forces, such as God, our family, or social forces, are responsible for our position in life. Authenticity, for Sartre, is an exercise of free will outside the control of imposing deterministic structures. To be authentic one must be a being-for-itself, creating oneself in accordance with one's own creative independence and establishing one's own meaning in life. It means transcending structures by becoming independent, creative, and spontaneous outside of structural forces that try to define us. However, individuals are often pulled towards reuniting with structures because it offers them a sense of security and belonging. The next section on Fromm explains a major tension that arises once people become individuals.

### ***Erich Fromm and Positive Freedom***

The ideas presented by Sewall and Sartre explain that transcending conventional structures, whether by mobilizing resources and schemas or becoming a being-for-itself, is a key to understanding authentic action. However, Erich Fromm (1941) shows us that simply having freedom from structures does not truly constitute authentic agency. He examines two types of freedom: negative freedom and positive freedom. Negative freedom refers to having the absence of something (barriers, constraints, obstacles), while positive freedom refers to the presence of something (self-direction, control, self-mastery). Negative freedom is freedom from a constraining structure, while positive

freedom is having the possibility of acting and being an instrument of one's own will. In short, Fromm explains how negative freedom causes people to feel insecure, alone, and anxious. As a result, most people fail to change conventional structures because they offer them meaning and security in life, and thus their capability for autonomy.

Therefore, people should not simply escape structures to achieve independence, they should become self-directed and capable of remaining secure and powerful with their independent creativity.

Fromm charts how humanity has shifted its relationship with freedom as a result of the expansion of industrial capitalism. He explains that the increased individuality and autonomy achieved as a result of industrial capitalism represents negative freedom because people fail to develop their own human capacities to act. Our capitalist state has given us more freedom to do things that constrained us in the past, such as being able to have social mobility, being able to move geographically, and being able to dress and eat however we like. Although we have fewer obstacles than in the past, people have lost their sense of security and belonging that restricted lives offered in the past. We have been disconnected from our 'primary bonds' (ibid:40): being rooted somewhere that gives us a sense of security and meaning. We no longer have a static identity that is imposed by social forces. Since we are left to construct our identities on our own we have become insecure, powerless, and anxious. Although our freedom was restricted pre-industrial capitalism, people at least felt secure and connected with their social situation because their lives were defined for them. Today, with increased freedom as a result of a breakdown of many social restrictions, our freedom is practiced in the negative sense where many people no longer have rootedness, connections, or bonds with any sorts of

social relations. This is problematic because humans have an innate desire to be apart of something that provides security and a sense of belonging.

Since we have broken through our primary bonds, we often try to consolidate this loss by attempting to bind to something that can give us a sense of security, belonging, and power because this helps us function successfully. Fromm notes how people often choose one of a couple of psychological mechanisms to cope with their insecurity and powerlessness. The relevant mechanisms for the purpose of the current framework of authenticity are the creation of secondary bonds and conformity. The creation of secondary bonds is a substitute for the primary bonds that have been lost as a result of individual freedom. The individual gives up the independence of one's own individual self and fuses with "something outside of oneself in order to acquire the strength that the individual self is lacking" (ibid: 163). The individual submits their freedom to a power that he or she feels to be overwhelmingly strong. Fromm calls this tendency a 'symbiosis' (ibid: 180), because it entails the union of one individual self with an external power and springs from the inability to bear isolation and weakness of oneself. Second, Fromm also explains the tendency for people to conform in order to overcome the feeling of insignificance. In this case, the individual ceases to be himself or herself and adopts a new personality offered by culture and therefore becomes exactly what others expect the individual to be. Hence, the individual's actions are inauthentic because they realign with a predetermined structure and fail to mobilize their own resources in order to redefine the structure themselves. In other words, negative freedom causes us to give up our freedom and reunite with conventional structures in order to regain a sense of belonging and security. This tendency to bind or conform, as Fromm notes, has become prevalent since

the rise of industrial capitalism where many social barriers have been eliminated and where people have the ability to become individuals.

Being an individual does not constitute authenticity on its own. Authenticity entails transcending the tendencies to reunite with structures and to become self-directed and in control of one's situation. In order to be considered authentic, individuals need to achieve 'positive freedom', a freedom where people can be "free yet not alone, critical and yet not filled with doubts, independent and yet an integral part of mankind" (ibid: 283). Positive freedom entails uniting oneself by relating spontaneously to the world in love and work, in the genuine expression of emotion, sensations, and intellectual capacities, becoming apart of man, nature, and himself, without giving up independence from the individual self. In other words, people need to exercise their creative agency in order to transcend conventional structures. Instead of searching for security and a sense of belonging from other groups or simply conforming to norms produced by culture, individuals need to establish a connection with others that goes beyond the superficial bonds of conventional social intercourse where the individual can establish a spontaneous realization of the self and gain a sense of meaning and belonging in life. Authenticity is a realization of the self that implies the affirmation of the uniqueness of the individual.

However, because Fromm focuses his arguments on negative freedom, he only minimally elaborates on positive freedom. It is imperative to explore the notion of positive freedom more specifically, for this will further help develop a framework for authenticity. The work of Henri Lefebvre offers some clues as to how we can make sense of authentic actions guided by positive freedom. More specifically, Lefebvre sheds some light on how the rational capitalism inhibits authentic actions.

### *Lefebvre's Humanist Marxism: Becoming a 'Total Man'*

Because Fromm mainly focused on explaining negative freedom and had more of a psychoanalytical outlook, the ideas presented by Henri Lefebvre, with his focus on art, love, and creativity, helps us to understand what is meant by positive freedom, thus helping to establish a conception of authenticity. By placing creative ability into the consciousness of people, Lefebvre's humanist Marxism offers an alternative to economic Marxism that became popular in the 1950s.<sup>2</sup> In relation to human authenticity, Lefebvre's central goal is to examine how we can leave the everyday world that is suffocated by the trivial routines of the production lines, and how to retrieve emotion, love, and art and liberate ourselves from the dullness of daily life. These questions are crucial in order to establish how one can exercise authentic positive freedom.

Focusing on the reduction of genuine intersubjectivity and the end of creative celebrations of life brought on by modernity, Lefebvre aims to establish a theory of positive freedom from the alienation brought to us by technological progress. His studies of everyday life (1991) allude to this point by explaining the trivial routines of life as a constraint on human creativity, spirit, and social life. He explains how in pre-modern times the 'everyday life' was fully integrated with all other aspects of life, such as productive labour, the natural world, the family, and leisure. In other words, there was no

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that I am aware that Lefebvre spoke about authenticity in relation to social space, but it will be more useful to present those arguments in chapter four where I connect authenticity with urban production. For now, it is useful to examine Lefebvre's idea of the significance of creativity in relation to rational capitalist production.

separate place or time for 'work' as distinct from everyday sociality. Today, however, we have divided our lives into separate activities and practices that are only applicable during certain times and places. Social activities have become differentiated and ceased to be consolidated into a unified whole. For instance, as Gardiner (2000) argues, family life and leisure are detached from work and represent separate realms where the individual needs to work in order to achieve leisure. This has isolated the individual and split consciousness into a public and private self. In other words, people's lives have become increasingly fragmented and their potential for achieving authenticity has been constrained.

More specifically, Lefebvre argues that little moments that bring a bit of pleasantry to people's little existence where people can feel human, such as an early morning stroll to pick up bread; the first cup of coffee; a sip of wine and a piece of cheese, have been colonized by rational capitalist production and have begun to exploit and alienate life in general, into nonworking life, into reproduction and leisure, free time, and vacation time. In other words, Lefebvre suggests that workers no longer feel comfortable and secure in their own homes even when they're not working; they're no longer themselves at home, given that work and home, production and reproduction, have been subsumed, colonized, and invaded by exchange value (Merrifield 2006). What is even more constraining is that workers give back their hard-earned cash as consumers where private life has become the domain where they're lured to spend. People have been alienated from their human capacities that allow them to be creative, spontaneous, and innovative. This alienation brought on by rational capitalist production represents an



inhibition of spontaneity and creativity and, therefore, inhibits the capacity for authentic action.

A key to being authentic, then, is to act out human desires that have been inhibited. Lefebvre's conception of the 'total man', therefore, is central to authenticity. As Shields (1999: 41) argues, Lefebvre explains the 'total man' as a complete person who transcends purely economic, spiritual, physical, physiological, psychological definitions of the self and integrates all of these aspects and more. It is a person who is free and smart, versatile and sensual, and who has peeled back the multiple layers of capitalist mystification and commodity reification, someone who knows not only his or her real self but also his or her real relations with fellow human beings (Merrifield, 2006). Thus, the total man is not someone who is ready-made or can be depicted by capitalist production. In order to be authentic, one must live life as a work of art and invest in both the body and the mind. It entails integrating everyday life into an undifferentiated totality of human practices. He or she must transcend the routines of everyday life that have become emotionless and functional.

In summation, for Lefebvre, to be authentic one must unite all aspects of life into one whole. Today, many people's lives have become fragmented to the point where all meaning and emotion has been extracted. Lefebvre did not necessarily agree with Sartre that authenticity entails complete individual action and instead explained authenticity in relation to subjectivity. In other words, to become authentic, people must allow themselves to be creative, spontaneous, and innovative in order to transcend their identities that are shaped by rational capitalist production. Although they had their differences, Lefebvre acknowledged the Situationist alternative experience of life and

fulfillment of human desires. For the sake of space and time, I will not examine the significance of the Situationists in relation to authenticity. Instead, it is simply important to note that authenticity entails a subjective creativity outside of the structural capitalist production that inhibits genuine love, emotion, and human desire, something that the Situationists strived to accomplish. Therefore, transcending conventional imposing structures is a key component of authenticity. Agents must transcend rational capitalist productive lines and bring all aspects of life into a totality where agents can remain creative and spontaneous. They must avoid becoming dependent on this rational capitalist system that attempts to colonize their everyday lives. Hence, understanding the characteristics of rational capitalism will help define authenticity and will establish a dominant structural force that constrains human actions. To examine this system in more detail I will elaborate on the work of Herbert Marcuse who argues that there is a new instrumental capitalist line of production that has become prevalent in advanced capitalist countries during the 1960s.

### ***Co-opted Authenticity: Marcuse and the One-Dimensional Society***

Although Lefebvre offers an adequate interpretation of rational capitalist production, the work by Herbert Marcuse offers a more detailed explanation. Marcuse (1964, 1969) notes the dominant structure of mass consumerism as an intense constraining system in advanced capitalist countries. Furthermore, Marcuse helps us understand how our

perceived acts of agency are actually dependent on the structure of mass consumerism produced by rational capitalist production.<sup>3</sup>

In short, Marcuse argues that our advanced industrial society, by means of mass production and consumerism, constrains our authentic agency. Marcuse blames the repression of authentic actions to the increased rational technological instrumentality of capitalist markets. These capitalist markets shape human motives, behaviours, and desires to such an extent that what we think is authentic action are in actuality a manufactured form of agency acting under the structure of consumerism. This is because entertainment commodities that are produced by capitalist markets “carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain emotional reactions” that bind consumers with the producers, representing a false consciousness among consumers (ibid.:12). Although people may believe that they are acting out their spontaneity, creativity, and rebellion by buying into goods and services that are produced by mass consumer markets, they are actually enhancing the rational technological instrumentality of the capitalist system. This produced form of agency is what Marcuse calls ‘second nature’ (1969: 11), where people identify themselves and buy their existence from the immediate environment, products, advertisements, and images produced by rational capitalist markets. In other words, consumer markets are meant to inhibit authentic agency while making people believe they are acting out authentically in order to keep people consuming and spending money. This second nature is not a result of specific products or services, but by a new mode of rational technological organization that manufactures products, lifestyles, and images.

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that Marcuse’s psychoanalytical language is minimized in this thesis in order to focus on more sociological aspects of his conception of mass consumerism.

Although people may feel as if they have freedom by having the ability to choose between a bevy of goods and services offered by consumer markets, the products and services that are produced are meant to validate the ideology of the rational system and shape social norms.

This new form of technological control aims to absorb nature and human sensibilities to the point where reason itself has been dominated. Marcuse further states that this system of mass production and consumerism shapes our behaviours and ideas to such an extent that we are unable to think critically about this system and, therefore, our authentic agency is inhibited, and our ability to creatively criticize, refute, and protest the status quo has itself been progressively closed by the advancing technological society. The dimension where we are able to refute the status quo has been absorbed into the prevailing state of affairs. Works of alienation and protest have been used in commercials where they are meant to sell, comfort, and excite. Critical imagination has become functional and integrated into culture where these ideas can be further reproduced. Even opposition to the logic of consumerism is seen as illogical because it is seen as being in opposition to social norms, values, and beliefs. In other words, it is difficult to be authentic in a society controlled by mass consumerism. For instance, the styles of the punk subculture began as a symbolized protest against the lack of student labour opportunities in Great Britain where their outrageous anti-conformist dress, dance, music, and argot were meant to shock the mainstream public (Clarke et al 1976; Hebdige 1979). This anti-conformist style was later found in advertisements and clothing stores where rebellion and protest were sold as a commodity to mainstream consumers. It no longer represented a creative symbolic resistance against an oppressive capitalist system, but

instead became part of the rational production of capitalism. Thus, consumers buying into the image of a punk as presented by commercials and advertisements are inauthentic because they are consuming a predetermined image produced by rational capitalist production lines.

Marcuse, however, believed that people do have the capability to resist the rational production of consumerism. He places authentic freedom into a practice of what he calls the 'Great Refusal' (1964: 64): a mode of refuting, breaking, and recreating the logic of technological mass production. In other words, it is the ability to refuse being a product of technological forms of social control. To be authentic one must avoid being mediated by the market and be freed from repressive satisfactions produced by capitalist markets. In order to achieve individual freedom one must break free from the chains of consumerist repression and must oppose the global domination of capitalism. For instance, as Marcuse explains, the Surrealists accomplished this through their works of art that opposed the status quo by betraying reality and presenting idiosyncrasies. The Surrealists had their own distinct dimension of opposition that was contrasted with the social order of reality (1964: 70). The fact that their style was creative, spontaneous, and distinct from the rationality of mass production is what defined the Surrealists in relation to the instrumentality of our technological society. In order to follow in the footsteps of the Surrealists one must subvert psychological and socialized attachments to 'second nature' in order to be liberated from technological rationality. One must redefine standardized pleasure and symbols that reproduce the contemporary capitalist political-economic system. For Marcuse, authenticity entails the establishment of a critical dimension that has been repressed by technological rationality. This is done by

connecting with aesthetic sensibilities, human desires, and sensuous rationality that elicits the natural, beauty and serenity in nature. This needs no radical actions, but simply a call for change against the rationalization of the status quo. To repel the instrumentalist rationality of capitalism, people must connect with their human faculties of creativity and refuse as best they can to behave according to the dictates mass consumer markets.

### ***Establishing a Framework of Authenticity***

As stated earlier, the goal of this chapter was not to provide a comprehensive explanation of all the theorists presented. Instead the goal was to take select ideas from each theorist in order to provide a working framework for the current discussion of urban authenticity. However, synthesizing the ideas of five separate theorists from four different lines of thought suffers the vulnerability of having incompatible language, frameworks, and conceptions that results from each theorist's diverse philosophical outlook. Hence, I will now extend on some main ideas and arguments from each theorist in order to establish a working framework of urban authenticity.

Broadly speaking, understanding authenticity is central to the structure versus agency debate that is prominent in sociology. Authenticity entails having some degree of control to transform social structures that act in a determinate fashion. Authenticity, therefore, is not an innate state but rather a process of transformation, of changing conventional rules and social understandings in order to establish a new understanding. It requires an abundance of subjective creativity, self-direction, rootedness with others, so as to oppose the colonizing tendencies of capitalist markets that fragments peoples lives and reduces peoples capacity to think critically, be creative, and express emotion.

Individuals must become self-directed, uniting with the spontaneity of the world in love and work, in the genuine expression of emotion, sensations, and intellectual capacities without giving up independence from the individual self. Without spontaneity nothing changes or progresses. It implies a distinction from the homogenization of life and the activation of emotion, life, and creativity in order to transcend definitions of everyday life that are imposed on us by rational capitalist mass consumerism. Agents must act spontaneously and creatively in order to change social structures.

Having now established these arguments, it is now useful to apply them to general urban processes in order to understand how certain agents in urban space have exercised their human agency in order to change the prevailing atmosphere in their neighborhoods. An examination of the existing literature on gentrification and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) will provide us with the basis for understanding the ways in which the production of urban authenticity has changed.

## Chapter 2: Gentrification

Having now established a working conception of authenticity, it is imperative to see how it relates to the changing dynamics that occur in inner cities. Because inner cities are not static and stuck in time, it is important to consider how larger political, social, and cultural processes transform urban environments. This can be explained by the gentrification of inner cities that began to occur in the 1950s. By charting the three waves of gentrification presented by Hackworth and Smith (2001), the current chapter outlines the key literature on gentrification and will help set up our understanding of how authenticity relates to these changing urban dynamics. As will be made clear, the transition from first-wave gentrification to the third-wave is generally characterized as an intensification of capital, global markets, public-private partnerships, and larger entrepreneurialism. This chapter will examine the different actors, players, and groups that have influenced the shaping and reshaping of inner cities.

Although the following discussion of the three waves of gentrification presents them as discrete, in reality these characteristics occur on a continuum and do not flow as naturally as it may appear. For instance, some inner cities may not have witnessed a second wave of gentrification but progressed directly to the third wave. Also, there is no agreement in terms of the time period of each wave of gentrification. What is important, however, are the general trends and agents of gentrification over the past sixty years. Nevertheless, this literature review follows a schematic explanation of gentrification put forth by Hackworth and Smith (2001). Because they wrote their article in order to elaborate on the current third wave of gentrification, the following literature review offers related work that supplements each wave of gentrification. Although their framework was



an interpretation of New York City, their general ideas and trends are evident in other urban cities. I first start with a general explanation of gentrification and then explain how cities have transitioned from first-wave counter-cultures, to second-wave middle-class settlement, and lastly to third-wave state led gentrification.

### ***Gentrification Defined***

Referring to the increased middle class occupation of inner city London, England in the 1960s, Ruth Glass (1964) defined gentrification as wealthy people acquiring property in low-income and working-class communities in downtown areas. During this process, old buildings were often renovated and converted into upscale residences or shops that served to a new affluent community. Shabby homes were taken over and transformed into elegant, expensive residences. Consequently, most of the original working-class occupiers were displaced and the entire social character of the district was changed. This process of gentrification, however, is not simply caused by more affluent citizens individually deciding to reside in the inner city. In order for gentrification to take effect there must be a considerable 'rent gap' to decrease the risk of investment (Smith 1996). The rent gap is the disparity between the price of land in its present use, and the potential rent that might be collected when the land or building is renovated. Once this gap is wide enough, developers invest in the property and maximize on the profits. These developers then close the rent gap, which results in higher rents. Since Glass first coined the term in 1964, gentrification has evolved and become more pervasive over time, initiated by different types of gentrifiers, developers, and consumers. Whereas its earliest systematic occurrences during the 1950s in Boston, Washington, London, and New York (Lees et al.

2008), where local residents in specific neighborhoods initiated gentrification, large corporate developers now initiate and fuel the process. In order to explain the changing role of gentrification since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, it is useful to understand how larger political, cultural, and social changes have influenced the production of the inner city. One of the best recent attempts to model gentrification has been that of Hackworth and Smith (2001), who recognize the different roles gentrification has had in the inner city since its initial introduction in the 1950s. They examine the case of New York City and draw up a schematic history of gentrification, divided into three distinct waves of gentrification separated by two transitional periods brought on by recessions. Each wave is accompanied by the increasing involvement of real estate entrepreneurs, and demand-side consumer forces.

### ***First-Wave Gentrification: Marginal Gentrifiers and Cultural Capital***

The first wave of gentrification can be broadly attributed to the ideas presented by Jane Jacobs in her book titled *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* (1961). In one of the most influential urban study books, Jacobs argued that modernist design destroyed the spatial logic of historical urban fabric and organic capacities for social vitality. Modernist planning was characterized as an invasion of mass production on architectural discourse, as houses became, according to urban designers like Le Corbusier, a ‘machine for living in’ and the street ‘a factory for producing traffic’. Modernist planning was generally predicated on the ethos of Le Corbusier and his focus on building giant corporate office skyscrapers, representing the marriage of plain functionalism with efficient property management that segregated cities into different uses, such as commercial, recreational,

and residential.<sup>4</sup> In other words, since the 1920s, urban space represented a dedication to order, functional efficiency, and promoted a unified organization of life (Caulfield 1994; Ley 1996; Jacobs 1961).

In contrast to modernist planning, Jacobs offered her own vision of spatial play by appeal to a nostalgic conception of intimacy, diversity, sociability, and interaction. For Jacobs, the streets and the sidewalks constituted the vital organs of the city. She argued that four physical conditions were necessary in order to achieve a dynamic urban life: multifunctional neighborhoods activated at different times of the day; short blocks that connect street systems; preserving buildings of various ages; and a high concentration of people. Her vision was of a *gemeinschaft* type of community characterized by close bonds and a small village mentality within a large inner city. These conditions would allow a sustained diversity of people and provide a mass support for urban amenities and services. Seeing cities as organisms in which streets are the ‘lifeblood’, Jacobs believed in dense, street-oriented residential buildings mixed with small-scale local commercial shops in order to provide ‘eyes on the street’ that keep the city safe. That is, she highlighted casual interactions with others on everyday urban streets and deemed it as a necessary practice to achieve social cohesion and a sense of belonging. For example, she explained the significance of many little contacts in the neighborhood, such as stopping at the bar for a beer, getting advice from the grocer, comparing opinions with other customers at the bakery, nodding hello to the two boys drinking pop on the stoop, hearing about a job from the hardware man, and borrowing a dollar from the druggist (1961: 83).

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<sup>4</sup> For the sake of space and time the details of modernist city planning will not be extended on. Instead, it is relevant to begin the explanation of urban authenticity beginning from the first wave of gentrification. However, it is important to note that the efforts of marginal gentrifiers during the first wave of

Her vision was to have intimate communities so that everyone in the community knew one another, at least in a superficial manner, and so that there were no demarcations between communities. With large skyscrapers and inactive city streets after business hours, modernist design represented a meaningless city with no vibrant life. Jacobs, instead, argued for opening space to allow people to rub shoulders with one another. She fought against the characteristics of modernist urban planning which treated the city as an immense laboratory of trial and error. Her vision was to make urban planning a more negotiable process where, instead of professionally trained authorities claiming urban space, members of the community could negotiate and regulate their own physical and social characteristics in their neighborhoods. Her grassroots movement welcomed difference and otherness, seeing ‘perceived disorder’ as a complex form of order.

Whether her ideas were a cause or effect of gentrification, it became clear that there was a ‘back to the city’ movement in larger cities in the 1960s, such as New York, London, and Toronto (Lees et al. 2008). People left the suburbs in search for something new and exciting, different from the homogeneous suburbs (Ley 1996; Caulfield 1994). However, something needed to happen before people could accept the idea of a livable inner city life. There were a few counter-cultural groups who moved into the inner city to establish their own communities. Groups such as hippies, gays, and artists initiated the process of gentrification by offering an alternative way of living to the standardization and homogeneity of modernist planning. Because the private sector considered inner city investment risky, these ‘marginal gentrifiers’ (Rose 1984) relied on their own ability, with economic help from the public sector, in order to renovate disinvested homes for personal consumption (Hackworth and Smith 2001). They took the advice of Jacobs and

formed multifunctional communities, regenerated old urban homes, and created lively dense neighborhoods.

The literature on first-wave gentrification focuses mainly on three counter-cultural groups: hippies, artists, and homosexuals (Ley 1996, 2003; Zukin 1982; Castells 1983; Hae 2012). Hippies were influential in the early years of Canadian gentrification where their alternative lifestyles were evident in places such as Yorkville in Toronto and Kitsilano in Vancouver. They established communal homes and local craft and health shops that offered organic products contrast to the standardization and machine-produced products found in department stores (Ley 1996). Artist communities also began to transform communities by redeveloping old industrial factories into residential lofts where they paid relatively low rents, had proximity to local cultural and social amenities, and had large empty spaces for their artwork (Zukin 1982; Hae 2012). Musicians also began underground dance parties in these buildings that allowed minority groups a temporary escape from the economic and social distress confronted in their urban milieus which they were living (Hae 2012). Lastly, gay communities bought housing as a collective and renovated the houses themselves. Many in the gay community also took part in real estate or became skilled interior decorators who made a career out of renovating deteriorated homes and sold them at a profit (Castells 1983).

Relying on their own physical and creative abilities, these groups renovated many old buildings and made them functional places to live. Reflecting on the role of these counter cultures, first-wave gentrification consisted of marginal gentrifiers with minimal economic capital, but with enough cultural capital to carve out their cultural characteristics onto the urban environment. In addition to having affordable

accommodation and proximity to many different social and cultural amenities, living in the inner city allowed these marginal gentrifiers to establish their own distinct identity in a new urban space. By setting up their own retail shops, creating innovative lofts, establishing local cultural amenities, and renovating old deteriorated homes, these groups embraced Jane Jacobs' urban philosophy of creating sociable, intimate, and diverse communities. In addition, these groups were rejecting the perceived oppressive conformity of suburbia and mass-market principles. These marginal gentrifiers, however, may have thought that they were pushing themselves into niches here and there but were unintentionally activating the mechanism of gentrification as we know it. The personal work they put into renovating and decorating the exterior and interior of homes was the initial testing market prior to the arrival of larger investors. Entrepreneurs became more active once these marginal gentrifiers established a unique identity (Ley 1996). Only once these small innovative operations proved their success did larger property interests enter the district. The accurate picture of this first wave of gentrification was that of small entrepreneurs organically rising from below to initiate revalorization of depreciated landscapes. Post-recession 1973, however, brought on a new type of gentrifier.

### ***Second-Wave Gentrification: Middle Class Occupation***

The second wave of gentrification emerged from the 1973 recession until the 1987 stock market crash and is identified as the expansion and resistance of gentrification (Hackworth and Smith 2001). The geography of gentrification during this time became a systematically larger process, as larger developers began to move in from the outskirts, building a few strategically placed outposts of luxury (Smith 1996: 23). Builders,

developers, landlords, mortgage lenders, government agencies, and real estate played a much more significant role. This second wave is a consequence of the integration of gentrification with new 'cultural strategies' of economic redevelopment in order to attract a new middle-class consumer (Gotham 2005). Because counter-cultural groups made the inner city seem chic and attractive, middle-class consumers began to move into these neighborhoods.

Many authors (Caulfield 1994; Ley 1996; Smith 1996) identify the role of post-industrialism for the emergence of the middle-class gentrifier. With an increase in white-collar services, such as managers, professionals, and technical workers, specialized knowledge had become a key resource after the 1950s. As a result of increased white-collar jobs, businesses began to develop their headquarters in downtown districts. For example, in 1983, the head offices of more than 200 of the top 500 Canadian companies and of many major foreign-owned corporations active in Canada were housed in Toronto, and by 1985, 42% of the Metropolitan Toronto workforce was employed in downtown offices, with white-collar and service sectors as a whole accounting for almost three-quarters of all employment (Caulfield 1994: 82). Consequently, this new middle class began to reside close to their downtown offices in order to decrease their commute times.

This new middle class was generally characterized as 'yuppies' (young urban professionals) who were presumed to be single-minded, self-centered, and heavily oriented to the conspicuous consumption of high-status goods and services (Zukin 1998). Attracted to the subcultural richness of socially deprived neighborhoods, these groups represented what some scholars coin 'hipster gentrification' (Hae, 2012: 69), or 'the new urban order' (Short, 1989: 174). The post-industrial landscape attracted a new group of

city dwellers that were more corporate and consisted of wealthier professionals than the marginal gentrifiers and were represented overwhelmingly as managers in central city government, industry, and commerce (Caulfield 1994).

Although the presence of private sector managers and administrators was evident in Canadian inner cities, Ley (1996) shows that these were the last groups to enter the inner city after professionals in education and health and people in the natural sciences and financial services. He argues that private white-collar sector workers were not the only ones responsible for the second wave of gentrification. He looks beyond the stereotypical 'yuppie' as the main initiator of second-wave gentrification and instead identifies a more heterogeneous middle-class than first thought. Young middle-class professionals employed in the public or non-profit sector as teachers, professors, social workers, architects, and lawyers, Ley argues, played a distinctive and important part in the reshaping of the inner city. This is a result of the public sector becoming a major employer of university graduates, which accelerated into the 1980s where, for example, over half of the graduating class of 1982 found jobs in government departments, education, or health and social services located in and around inner city Toronto (Ley 1996: 134). Within this public sector there was a high proportion of women employees with their work location close to downtown. As some scholars argue, the increased participation of women in the public sector and the breakdown of the patriarchal household allowed professional women to carve out their own identity in inner cities (Rose 1984; Markusen 1980; Bondi 1991). These authors explain that the breakdown of the patriarchal household was the major contributor to the second wave of gentrification and see women and gays as benefiting from the emancipatory potential of the central city.



It became evident that gentrification during the second wave was characterized as a cluster of a heterogeneous new middle-class who chose to reside in the inner city for the convenience of job location and being close to trendy culture established by first-wave counter-cultures. However, although the new middle class was generally attracted to the inner city, the private and public sector respectively chose to reside in different types of housing. While those living in trendy condominiums were mainly well-educated white-collar workers working in the private sector as managers, professionals, or sales people, young professionals working in the public sector favoured older properties (Ley 1996; Caulfield 1994). Developers, therefore, not only built new condominiums but began to invest in old Victorian and Edwardian homes. These middle-class consumers were not interested in rubbing shoulders with marginal gentrifiers of the first wave, but rather they were more interested in physical aspects of the inner city to preserve an authentic look to the neighborhood.<sup>5</sup>

Although inner-city areas during the second wave of gentrification looked promising as an alternative site for capital investment, investors were hesitant to enter the inner city because they were afraid of risk factors, such as the presence of counter-cultures and growing resistance to gentrification (Hae 2012; Smith 1996; Betancur 2011; Powell and Spencer 2003; Freeman 2006). Due to the increase of property values brought on by the middle-class occupation of the inner city, many working-class and counter-cultural groups were displaced. Although the presence of subcultures raised the appeal of neighborhoods, local governments began regulating counter-cultural nightlife in order to appease the new-middle class. For example, in New York, cultural sites such as dance

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<sup>5</sup> See Brown-Saracino's (2009) explanation of homestead gentrifiers for a detailed explanation.

halls were targets of a municipal ‘zero-tolerance’ raid on nuisance crimes such as noise, vandalism, and drunken rowdiness (Hae 2012). Consequently, the small underground clubs that gave particular regions in New York their chic appeal could no longer afford to function, eliminating adequate channels of communication and work for young musicians and artists. Coining the process ‘gentrification with and against nightlife’ (Hae 2012), municipalities enjoyed the energy and creativity that recent subcultures were contributing to the community but were simultaneously regulating these subcultures out of the community. With a focus on ‘quality of life’ for the new middle-class residents, counter-cultural groups and their local nightlife were subject to punitive policing enacted to manage contradictory urban space. The only ‘legitimate’ forms of nightlife were clubs that had enough money to pay for the newly required safety equipment, commercial zoning permits, and security and police that could regulate nuisance crimes and behaviour, while smaller under-financed clubs who could not manage these extra costs were consequently out of business or lost their clientele to the mainstream nightlife that was increasingly becoming popular.

To offer another example of the increased middle class influence in downtown cores, demand for inner city lofts increased as artists made ‘loft living’ seem appealing to middle-class people who had no connection with the arts (Zukin 1982). The large, multiuse open space of inner city lofts allowed new middle-class consumers to fill up their lofts with trendy furniture, upgraded kitchens, and expensive dining rooms. Also, artists themselves were turning into middle-class consumers as government funding in the arts increased to a point where artists could earn a steady living at their work. The rate of growth of painters and craft artists in the United States, for example, was almost three

times faster than the rate of overall job creation. In Canada, the numbers of artists rose by 115 per cent from 1971-81, while all other jobs increased by 37 per cent (Ley 1996: 188). In New York, corporations such as Exxon, Ford, and government bodies such as the National Endowment began to fund and subsidize art galleries and showcases (Zukin 1982: 119). Also, other commodified forms of art were appearing in the 1980s, such as graffiti coming off the trains and into the galleries and punk subcultures moving from the streets to advertisements (Smith 1996; Hebdige 1979). It was becoming clear that artistic counter-cultural communities were converted into a packaged neighborhood personality dominated by real estate commodity. Aesthetics and style began to be used as tools to brand neighborhoods as chic, trendy, and hip. This process only intensified in the 1990s.

### ***Third-Wave Gentrification: Urban Entrepreneurialism***

Unlike previous recessions, the stock market crash of 1987 slowed the process of gentrification in most neighborhoods. Although the effects of the recession varied, critics speculated that the 1990s would witness a halt in inner city investment, coining it the 'degentrification' of inner cities (Bagli 1991). In retrospect, the recession appears to have been a transition to the third wave of gentrification rather than the advent of degentrification. Hackworth and Smith (2001) found that gentrification in the 1990s was distinct from earlier phases in four ways. First, gentrification was not only a process confined to inner city neighborhoods, but also stretched beyond the immediate core. Second, larger developers became involved in gentrifying neighborhoods. While such developers only entered the inner city once neighborhoods were 'tamed' (Zukin 1982; Ley 1996; Hae 2012), they became the first to orchestrate reinvestment. Third, resistance

to gentrification declined as working-class populations were displaced. Fourth, the public sector was more involved in the process than was the case during the second wave.

Hackworth and Smith (2001) explained this last characteristic, the involvement of the public sector, as the most central characteristic of third-wave gentrification.

Expansion of gentrification exhausted itself by the end of the 1980s and the most easily gentrified spaces had been fully gentrified. With the help of the government, however, gentrifiers and outside investors began to roam into economically risky neighborhoods. It became apparent that partnerships between private capital and local government became necessary for the process of gentrification, resulting in larger, more expensive, and more symbolic developments, from Baltimore's Inner Harbor (Harvey 2000) to Berlin's Potsdamer Platz (Allen 2006). In Canada, all three levels of government contributed to the growth witnessed in the third wave of gentrification. The federal government viewed city building as a vehicle for national economic recovery in the wake of the 1987 recession; the Ontario provincial government became committed to strengthening urban-industrial economic base and the supervision of infrastructural development; and municipal authorities identified continuing growth as the principal grounding for local prosperity (Caulfield 1994: 42).

The significant characteristic of the third wave of gentrification was the new efforts made by the public sector toward stimulating the private market instead of directly orchestrating gentrification. Together the public and private sectors overcame the seemingly insurmountable barriers erected by conservative mortgage lenders, shrinking subsidies, obsessive preservationists, and narrow-minded neighborhood opponents. In other words, gentrification was no longer a small-scale process initiated by marginal

gentrifiers or middle-class consumers. It now required large-scale developers, real estate, larger investors, and the government because “the most easily gentrified neighborhoods had already appreciated in value to the point where the smallest investors could no longer enter the market without sizable down payments and/or assistance from local government” (Hackworth 2002: 820). The remaining neighborhoods required a larger infusion of capital and organization to turn a profit. This resulted in large portions of deteriorated neighborhoods being gentrified. With the increase of global investors, not only were larger portions of inner cities being gentrified, gentrification turned into a global process connected into circuits of global capital and cultural circulation. As a result, gentrification stretched geographically to Tokyo, Mexico, and the Czech Republic (Smith 2002). Also, gentrification was no longer only evident in the largest cities but in more unlikely centers such as the previously industrial cities like Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Glasgow.

This general trend towards an increase in public and private partnerships, deregulation of markets, and globalization of gentrification is attributed to what Harvey (1989) calls ‘urban entrepreneurialism’. As he argues, the time period that consists of the third wave of gentrification is a result of a new consensus that took hold of national boundaries and even across political parties and ideologies. It was a shift from ‘urban managerialism’ to ‘urban entrepreneurialism’ where, instead of focusing “on the local provision of services, facilities, and benefits to urban populations”, urban governance increasingly became preoccupied with finding new ways in which to “foster and encourage local development and employment growth” (ibid: 3). Local powers had a greater emphasis to combat the recession ills by controlling multinational money flows.

As a result, investments took the form of a “negotiation between international finance capital and local powers” (ibid: 5). Instead of focusing on economic projects designed to improve conditions of living or working within a particular jurisdiction, there is now more focus on enhancing the image of the city and investing in speculative projects such as the Olympics, sports championships, sports stadiums, large convention centers, and malls. The integration of gentrification into a wider range of economic and cultural processes at the global and national scale allows cities, such as New York and London, to compete against one another in an attempt to market their city as the ‘cultural capital’ of the world. For instance, large public and private investments went into SoHo, TriBeCa, and the Lower East Side in order for New York to be internationally recognized as an ‘alternative art scene’ (Ley 1996; Hae 2012). In other words, urban governance was more oriented to the provision of a ‘good business climate’ and the construction of all sorts of lures in order to attract international capital (Harvey 1989: 11).

There are some recent scholars who emphasize and embrace this shift to urban entrepreneurialism and even offer guides to mayors and city officials as to how to create attractive inner cities (Scott 1998, 2006; Landry 2000; Florida 2002, 2005). For example, Florida offers a ‘creative index’ based on the presence of cultural environments, mix of lifestyle options, and diversity to evaluate the competitiveness of different cities. He also argues that, in order to attract a ‘creative class’ (similar to Ley’s cultural middle class) who directly contribute to the local economy, cities are to be pushed to improve their cultural liveliness, social inclusion, tolerance, and ‘quality of life’. In other words, Florida’s vision is to purposely stimulate characteristics that were prominent during the first wave of gentrification, except on a larger scale and produced by public-private

partnerships. Ponzini and Rossi (2010) criticize Florida's 'pro-gentrification' mentality, considering it as a weak attempt to brand inner cities. They argue that the institutional implementation of Florida's vision has given rise to a mode of urban governance that has resulted in the building and re-ordering of local cultural organization and individual artists under the banner of the creative class initiative. This creates a situation where only political elites and entrepreneurial mayors benefit from the creative class policy because it attracts tourists and consumers to cultural hotspots, thus promoting the image of the city.

Nonetheless, inner cities continue to be shaped as a creative space where consumers can fulfill their desires and impulses. More recent authors argue that urban entrepreneurialism and its focus on stimulating a creative class has intensified to such an extent that middle-class neighborhoods have begun to be turned into more affluent and exclusive enclaves marked by a proliferation of corporate entertainment and tourism venues (Gotham 2005; Lees 2003). Coining the process 'tourism gentrification' (2005: 1100), Gotham believes that multinational corporations are increasingly influencing urban governance. By highlighting the twin processes of globalization and localization, tourism gentrification allows large hotel chains, tour operators, car rental agencies, and financial services companies to invade and brand local areas. Hannigan (1998) also alludes to this point by explaining the role of entertainment-based companies dominating urban redevelopment in order to create 'fantasy cities' filled with shopertainment, eatertainment, and edutainment. That is, instead of simply providing gentrified housing, gentrification now involves the transformation of whole areas into new landscape complexes that integrate housing, with shopping, restaurants, cultural facilities, open

space, and employment opportunities. In addition, urban centers now have seductive technology; new sources of cultural capital; experiences that satisfy desires of riskless risk; and representations of 'affective ambience'. These developments can be seen in the Potsdamer Platz in Germany where Sony has created a seductive landscape where strollers can take part in an array of different consumer spectacles, such as IMAX 3D, an eight-screen cinema block, trendy stores, and the Berlin Filmhaus, while being amazed at the innovative glass structures that surround the area (Allen 2006). As Hannigan (1998: 67) argues, these postmodern developments are ready-made for postmodern consumers who live in "the thrill of the spectacle without feeling the necessity to relate such fragmented moments to a large direction of progress". In other words, third-wave gentrification is characterized by a focus on more than just location, structure, and leases. It is a focus on meaning and feeling where developers create façades and simulations of identity and character. What will be discussed in the next chapter are Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) who privatize and brand certain areas of inner cities in order to increase consumption and tourism.

Lastly, many critics attribute the increased role of 'urban entrepreneurialism', 'tourism gentrification', and creation of 'fantasy cities' as the 'end of public space' due to the increase in privatized, enclosed, and regulated space (Davis 1990; Boddy 1992). They explain that public space has transformed into an array of fortified, controlled, and guarded spaces with an obsession with security systems, surveillance, and policing social boundaries through urban design. Smith (1996) also argues that the increasing commitment to urban entrepreneurialism has turned cities 'revanchist', where public policies are enforced to exclude undesirable groups in order to increase the marketability



of the city in a competitive global industrial climate. It is the reclaiming of the downtown for and by the middle classes at the expense of such groups as homeless people, panhandlers, addicts, sex workers, porno shops, squeegee kids, loiterers, the mentally disturbed, graffiti artists, vandals, unlicensed street vendors, drunks, gangs of teenagers playing loud music, people of colour, and immigrants, all of whom are subject to 'zero tolerance' policing, leaving these marginalized groups displaced and unwanted from gentrified neighborhoods (Hae 2012). Mike Davis (1990), for example, paints an apocalyptic profile of contemporary Los Angeles where the city turned to militarization techniques in order to control undesirable citizens to the point where, through physical structures, their movements are being monitored, coordinated, and dictated by local public and private officials. Furthermore, as Boddy (1992) notes, local governments invest in an array of urban projects in order to protect affluent individuals from lower-class minorities. For example, pedestrian bridges are raised and connected to towers in a linked system; mazes of tunnels lead from public transit to workplace without stepping onto conventional streets; transit systems glide above city streets. Boddy argues that these structures protect people not only from environmental factors of extreme heat or cold but protect 'desirable' individuals from the increasing crime, poverty, and discomfort of seeing 'undesirable' groups. Similarly, some authors argue that downtown condominiums represent a type of gated community sealed off from the realities of the rest of downtown. As Kern (2010) explains, for instance, with a focus on security, including services such as 24-hour concierge service, security guards, key card entry, and video surveillance, downtown condominiums in Toronto have become gated communities designed to give professional young females a sense of protection from the urban 'other'. These features

have become key factors in women's decisions to be condominium owners. In any case, it is clear that many scholars agree that the inner city has become a sort of 'bourgeois playground' (Smith 1996) where only the affluent are welcome and undesirable groups are physically excluded from entering.

In general, the third wave of gentrification can be explained as the intensification of many second-wave characteristics. First, the government now constitutes the initial agent of gentrification and willingly aids and stimulates the private sector in the process of redevelopment. Second, urban entrepreneurialism eliminates the realities of poverty, crime, and local issues by simply excluding undesirable minorities for the sake of consumer happiness. Third, thanks to ideas offered by scholars such as Richard Florida, stimulating the 'creative class' has become a main goal for local governments so they can maximize on profits gained from tourism, consumerism, and outrageous condo prices.

### ***The Agents of Gentrification***

From counter-cultural groups to local municipal governments, gentrification has been fueled and intensified by many different agents over the past fifty years. Starting with the first wave of gentrification that began in the 1960s until the 1973 recession, the pioneers of gentrification were represented by counter-cultural marginal gentrifiers such as hippies, artists, and homosexuals. These groups brought a different type of inner-city identity that offered an alternative lifestyle in contrast to the modernist planning that was prevalent during that time period. These groups used their own creativity and imagination in order to remold and carve out a new identity in their respective communities.

Gentrification was a local process where these counter-cultural groups renovated homes and businesses for personal consumption.

By carving out an alternative diverse identity in their communities, these marginal gentrifiers during the first wave of gentrification unintentionally enabled the second wave of gentrification where a new type of gentrifier emerged. Builders, developers, landlords, mortgage lenders, government agencies, and real estate began to enter into inner-city districts between 1973 and 1987. These entities welcomed the alternative lifestyle that was portrayed by counter-cultural groups and slowly began to advertise the idea to middle-class consumers. Thus, the second-wave gentrifier was represented by different entities that were interested in maximizing their profits from the new middle-class represented by white-collar and public-service workers. Even municipal governments became active agents in transforming the inner city by enacting new zero tolerance regulations in order to appease the new middle-class consumers. It became clear that gentrification was becoming a larger endeavor initiated by groups who were interested in making a profit at the expense of counter-cultural groups.

Gentrification escalated to a larger geographical process and the role of the local government intensified during the third wave of gentrification in the 1990s. Governments began to see city development as a way to strengthen the economy after the 1987 recession. By allowing private sectors to overcome barriers to redevelopment, gentrification was no longer confined to residential areas, but shopping areas, restaurants, cultural facilities, and open space. These redevelopments represented local government attempts to enhance the marketability of the city in order to attract more tourism, entertainment corporations, multinational developers, and large sporting events, all in

order to increase global capital. Local governments also intensified their security efforts in order to keep tourists away from ‘undesirable’ locations in the inner city.

It is overwhelmingly clear that the agents of inner-city development have become larger and more influential than was the case in the 1960s. With more global capital and political power, third-wave gentrifiers today have the power to shape symbolic representations of space by manipulating urban resources to fit their capitalist motives. We now turn to an examination of the latest agents of gentrification – Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) – where we will find the clearest site of the contestation of urban authenticity.

## Chapter 3: Business Improvement Areas

Before the introduction of Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in the 1970s, there were many grand schemes of gentrification that governments took in order to improve inner cities, many of which continue to this day (Mitchell 2008: 39). For instance, local governments attempted to construct expressways through the middle of town in order to offer efficient transportation from the central city to the suburbs; older buildings were torn down and replaced with new construction projects such as malls and department stores; skyscrapers were constructed in order to house white-collar employees; and governments began to focus on social welfare where billions of funds went towards social programs and public housing projects. These well-intentioned modernist solutions to the problems confronting inner cities, such as crime, dilapidated buildings, and abandoned streets, did not work as well as expected. Inner cities often became unattractive and deserted, though to a lesser extent in Canada.

Instead, as we saw in the previous chapter, inner cities began to build and invest in gentrified neighborhoods where the focus was on attracting more affluent residents and consumers. There was an emerging recognition that central business districts were important to civic life, commercially viable, and socially engaging. Many city mayors began placing the downtown at the center of economic development programs.

Downtowns slowly turned into what Harvey (2000) termed ‘developers’ utopias’ where the city was designed in such a way to look ‘cool’ and ‘creative’. In other words, cities have become centres for conspicuous consumption and cultural innovation. Local municipalities are no longer focused on the provision of services, facilities, and benefits to urban populations because urban governance has increasingly become preoccupied

with encouraging local development and employment growth (Harvey 1989: 3). Now that multinational money flows are abundant and easy to access by local municipalities, the downtown has become a platform for local governments to facilitate a good business climate in order to attract more international capital. This is not only done through the rejuvenation of housing, but also shopping, restaurants, cultural facilities, open space, and employment opportunities. These projects are an attempt to attract consumers who are willing to spend their money on expensive condominiums and/or cultural amenities.

As I argue, local governments today focus their attention on constructing a sense of authenticity within confined spaces in downtown districts. In contrast to larger grand schemes that governments undertook prior to the intensification of gentrification, governments have begun to facilitate a small-scale municipal strategy where businesses in the inner city collaborate in order to enhance the image of a specific area. Typically called Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in Canada<sup>6</sup>, this third-wave gentrification strategy has played a significant role in the structuring of contemporary cities. Once described as one of the most intriguing recent developments in urban governance (Briffault 1999), BIAs have become key tools used by municipalities in order to attract desirable consumers within a specific inner city area. With over 300 BIAs in Canada and over 1000 BIAs in the U.S (Lippert & Sleiman 2012), BIAs have become increasingly evident throughout inner cities across North America. First developed in Toronto during the 1970s in order to increase consumption activity in Bloor Village, BIAs have even

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<sup>6</sup> Commonly referred to as Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in Canada, other countries have given them different names, such as ‘business improvement districts’, ‘business improvement associations’, ‘special improvement districts’, ‘public improvement districts’, ‘neighborhood improvement districts’, ‘municipal improvement districts’, ‘downtown improvement districts’, and ‘city improvement districts’ (Ward, 2007a). For the sake of consistency I will refer to them as Business Improvement Areas (BIAs).

become central to many different urban cities in countries such as Japan, Germany, Albania, Jamaica, New Zealand, South Africa, Sweden, Australia, and the UK (Ward 2007a; Hoyt 2006).

It has become increasingly apparent that there is no conventional BIA because they are often rooted to their local situation. Nevertheless, BIAs do share some similarities. As I argue, they all attempt to mold the inner city into an authentic landscape in order to enhance the marketability of business districts, consequently increasing the global reputation of their respective city. In order to establish this argument, it is imperative to explain some basic functions that these associations share. This chapter attempts to explain how the functions of BIAs contribute to the production of urban authenticity. More specifically, the chapter is divided into three sections. The first section offers a basic explanation of how BIAs are organized in order to outline the specific actors in BIAs. The second section explains the basic philosophy of BIAs by elaborating on three different types of service deliveries that they invest their resources towards. This section outlines how BIAs mold authenticity through their specific investments. The third section explains how these three types of service deliveries attempt to hide the instrumental business interests of the BIA stakeholders. BIAs accomplish this by promoting an ambiance of inclusiveness wherein the BIA purposely manipulates private space in order to tap into consumers' sense of authenticity.

### ***The Organization of BIAs***

The organization of BIAs is consistent with the intensification of public-private partnerships that has been witnessed during third-wave gentrification. In short, BIAs are

“publicly authorized, legally sanctioned, privately administered institutions that provide services designed to enhance the local business environment” (Gross 2005: 174). They have been explained as a response to the failure of local government to adequately maintain and manage spaces of the post-industrial city (Mallett 1994). Whether one considers BIAs as public-private partnerships, tools of government policies, quasi-governments, private governments, or actors in urban government networks (Morçöl and Wolf 2010), it is clear that BIAs have taken on responsibilities to complete tasks that the local government cannot accomplish alone (see Garland 1996).

The mutual reliance of local government and private businesses is evident in the formation of these associations. BIA property owners, in combination with the local government, define the agenda of the organization and services within the BIA’s geographic area. The majority of BIAs follow a two step process through which their proponents must show local support (Hochleutner 2003). First, district property or business owners must vote for the formation of a business association. Second, local elected officials must enact an ordinance that formally creates the BIA and determines its powers and boundaries. BIAs typically require the approval of a local municipal council and support of at least two-thirds of the member businesses. Once BIAs are formed, BIA officials, composed of the businesses involved, are held accountable to owners through the corporate governance mechanisms of the BIA, under which owners vote in periodic elections to select members of the BIA board. These boards also include public officials such as citywide officials and district-specific representatives. The board often appoints a BIA manager to oversee day-to-day operations. However, most day-to-day decision-making power is exercised by BIA staff in general. Once a BIA is established, the board



becomes insulated from public accountability because they cannot be voted out of the office.

The role of the local government is to collect the assessments and transfer the funds over to the BIA to use as it sees fit. The funding typically comes from the annual levy that is imposed on the businesses within the BIA. This levy is calculated in many different ways, some municipalities calculate the proportion of property tax valuation, the appraised values of properties, square footage, or separately calculated by the proportion of commercial, residential, and industrial area covered. In some cases, local governments have separate programs to assist existing BIA activities through grants (Morçöl and Zimmermann 2008).

Although BIAs may appear to be autonomous entities, the existence of a BIA depends on legal authorization by a local government and relies on the local government to coerce free riders within the BIA boundary<sup>7</sup> (Lippert 2010). Therefore, BIAs are simultaneously autonomous from and interdependent with governments. For example, BIAs can hire private companies such as security or maintenance crews in order to work for the local BIA, establish their own goals and initiatives, invest in physical improvements, and market their area as they see fit. However, the existence of BIAs solely depends on the local government to legitimate the BIA by enforcing the levy on local businesses. In addition, BIAs need to appease the local city officials that constitute part of the BIA board. This mutual reliance of the local government and the BIA is what Harvey (2000: 180) explains as the ultimate contradiction of neoliberal political

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<sup>7</sup> Free riders refer to businesses that benefit from the activities of BIAs but do not pay into the BIA levy. Thus, the local government ensures that all businesspersons pay the levy that is imposed on the property or they must leave the district.

economies. The contradiction is that local municipalities are increasingly relying on BIAs to shape and regulate urban space, while the local government depends on the functioning of BIAs. BIAs cannot simply undermine the state's power because it is vital to the BIA's existence. If the state's power is vital to the functioning of BIAs, then the preservation of that power requires the preservation of the BIA. In other words, BIAs and local municipal governments are involved in a cyclical relationship where they depend on one another in order to enhance the image of the downtown. Thus, not surprisingly, the actors in BIAs consist mainly of businesspersons with instrumental business goals to enhance the marketability of their respective business district. In addition, local city officials who authorize BIAs are open to the concept because it is in line with the local governments third-wave gentrification vision of enhancing the cities' global image. Thus, BIAs represent textbook urban entrepreneurs because they attempt to facilitate a good business climate in order to attract international capital.

This cyclical relationship between local municipalities and BIAs has five major benefits for BIAs (Mitchell 2008). First, it gives associations a source of revenue without having to worry about 'free riders'. Instead, the local government coerces every business in the district to pay into the BIA fund. Second, it ensures that businesses stay involved with revitalization efforts in order to provide consumer friendly spaces. Third, the associations can join quasi-government entities, parking authorities, or redevelopment agencies, and develop more coordinated efforts towards fixing problems in business districts. Fourth, it allows associations to deliver services without depending on fiscally stressed city governments. Fifth, it allows development of the city to be in the hands of those that are most interested – downtown businesses and their supporters.

### *The Functions of BIAs*

Although no two BIAs are the same, they do share some similarities in terms of their basic philosophy towards inner-city redevelopment. By investing in a wide range of services, BIAs enhance the image of their respective area through beautification schemes in order to increase the marketability of their district. This is accomplished by investing in physical, surveillance, and promotional infrastructure. I argue that BIAs mold their own vision of authenticity by beautifying their landscape through investments in these three infrastructures.

Although BIAs may state that their investments go towards aiding the public, only 34% of 264 BIAs surveyed in USA were involved in social services such as aiding the homeless, providing job training, and supplying youth services (Mitchell 2001). The three highest service delivery activities were investment in capital improvements, consumer marketing, policy advocacy, and maintenance (ibid). Because BIA interests stem from the businesses that constitute the BIA, instrumental business goals are initiated above all else. Their general goals often include increasing consumption activity and pedestrian traffic in order to make the area more attractive and popular.

In order to facilitate consumption activity, BIAs have become infatuated with the visual attractiveness and superficial details of city places. This attention to aesthetics revisits the City Beautiful effort initiated in the 1800s (Mitchell 2008; Degen 2008). It was a social movement that involved the use of neoclassical architecture, civil engineering, social planning, and civic-minded volunteerism to herald the arrival of

America's cities in world history. The supposition was that aesthetics could awaken a healthy sense of community and a harmonious social order among city dwellers.

The spirit of the City Beautiful movement is clear in BIAs. BIAs know that perception matters, that the way things look will affect their use and will form an overall impression among citizens. Thus, BIAs carefully orchestrate attractive sensory encounters in order to form a positive overall impression. This attractive landscape is established by investing in physical infrastructure such as capital improvements, maintenance, and economic development (Ward 2007a). In fact, 85% of 264 BIAs surveyed in the USA reported that they were involved in maintenance, 86% reported that they were involved in capital improvements, while 58% reported that they were involved in economic developments (Mitchell 2001). This includes activities such as garbage collection, removing litter and graffiti, washing sidewalks, shoveling snow, trimming trees, enhancing lighting, installing street furniture and shrubbery, and lobbying government on behalf of business interests. These and many other activities are promoted in order to enhance the image of the BIA so residents and visitors can enjoy a clean and sanitized environment free from unpleasantness. The basic premise is that taking care of small problems within their confined space adds up to big results. For instance, BIAs hire workers to eliminate gum on sidewalks, discourage loitering, and to install pleasant façades on buildings, all in order to project an attractive landscape. BIAs often document their control of these small problems by enumerating odd activities, such as the amount of cigarette butts picked up, how much gum was cleaned off, or how many tones of garbage was collected (Mitchell 2008). By following these beautification schemes, BIAs shape a positive image of their area so people will be lured back to the area in the future.

Another aspect of the City Beautiful focus is the investment in surveillance infrastructure such as public space regulation and security. This includes the regulation of traffic flow, discouraging on-sidewalk selling, hiring of tourism and hospitality ambassadors, security guards, and installation of CCTV cameras. These activities are meant to exclude undesirable groups and behaviours to increase the regions marketability. These surveillance strategies follow the 'broken windows' policing where the policing of minor criminal offenses takes center stage (Wilson and Kelling 1982). This strategy suggests that environmental cues that signal neglect and deterioration advertise to would-be criminals that this is an area with few social controls. By addressing these cues, crime in an area can be reduced. For example, private security guards are hired and given limited policing powers so they can reduce low-level crime and disorder in order to enhance the perception of the downtown (Cook 2010; Johnston 2007; Huey et al 2005). CCTV cameras, and signs indicating their use, are also used as a deterrence mechanism by monitoring citizen's disorderly behaviour. BIAs also take part in more proactive strategies by 'designing out' the socially excluded by making city furniture purposely uncomfortable to prevent homeless from laying down, making light-posts vandal-proof and climb-proof, and enhancing lighting in order to discourage theft. Statistical evidence even suggests that this type of regulation and security presence decreases criminal activity in and around the BIA (Hoyt 2004; Cook and MacDonald 2011). By removing undesirable and unattractive behaviours, BIA investment in surveillance is meant to eliminate unpleasantness within the area so consumers can enjoy attractive sensory encounters that the BIA produced through its physical infrastructure.

Lastly, once BIAs establish a sanitized area through investment in physical infrastructure and surveillance infrastructure, they often follow by investing in promotional infrastructure such as consumer marketing (Gopal-Agge and Hoyt 2008). This includes producing festivals and events, coordinating sales promotions, producing maps and newsletters, and organizing and advertising events. In fact, 94% of the 264 BIAs surveyed stated that they were involved in consumer marketing services (Mitchell 2001). The manipulation of local images through advertising, festivals, and production of maps and newsletters represents an effort to create a micro space that can be packaged into a cohesive local identity. Since BIAs typically consist of a wide range of stakeholders such as banks, restaurants, commercial shops, variety stores, law offices, government offices, community parks, museums, residences, and farmers markets, BIAs take this heterogeneous landscape and transform it into a homogeneous brand so residents and visitors can comprehend and manage their way around the BIA.

BIAs have recently begun to hire tourism and hospitality ambassadors, to have a brand image, and to create internet websites and apps to make their area understandable and recognizable. Tourism and hospitality service workers distribute promotional materials such as pamphlets, maps, and businesses directories, assist the public with directions, and provide safety walks. By taking part in these activities, tourism and hospitality ambassadors condense the heterogeneous landscapes within a BIA into an understandable and safe landscape so people can navigate the area with ease, feel secure with their surroundings, and be directed to what the BIA considers to be the appealing and entertaining. In order to further create a cohesive BIA identity, BIAs invest in branding their area so residents and visitors can easily comprehend what the specific area

has to offer. For instance, Philadelphia produced an ad campaign highlighting its after-hours allure, noting that you can “find romance virtually anywhere in Center City”, while Bainbridge Island BIA’s motto stresses the importance of their diversity by stating that they are “building a community through a vibrant downtown” (Mitchell 2008: 76). Many BIAs also package their local identity through websites where they can advertise their brand and offer tourists access to virtual maps, restaurant ratings, historical facts, businesses directories, and local blogs. In other words, BIAs tap into people’s conception of space through a combination of images, maps, and narratives in order to integrate different aspects together into a cohesive personality for the area. It represents a packaged consumable identity of the heterogeneity of downtown.

The investment in physical, surveillance, and promotional infrastructure, moreover, is an attempt to make the area distinctive, trendy, and creative. More specifically, the aim is to attract middle-class consumers by producing attractive-looking downtowns where these consumers can work, live, and play. Large investments go toward the development of entertainment in the local BIA in order to change the way residents and visitors feel about downtown by making the area different than what one may expect in other cities. For example, beginning in the early 1990s, the Canadian border town of Windsor, Ontario created a downtown BIA to market the downtown core to young adults by expanding their retail alcohol economy and opening Ontario’s first Las Vegas style casino in an attempt to attract visitors from Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana (Lippert 2007). In Toronto, Italian, Indian, and Greek BIAs began to market to affluent consumers by developing \$650,000 condos in these ethnic districts where affluent consumers could indulge in the newly gentrified neighborhood’s fine restaurants,

specialty shops, and chain stores that the ethnic districts began to offer (Hackworth and Rekers 2005). In another area of Toronto, the Eaton Centre BIA attempted to increase pedestrian traffic in Dundas Square by hiring more security, installing high-end façades, and extensively branding their image (Hernandez and Jones 2008). Milwaukee witnessed a joint effort by BIAs to develop boutique retail centers, gentrified warehouses, new condominiums, convention centers, refurbished downtown hotels, revitalized walkways, and parking lots in an attempt to revamp the downtown's image so upper middle-class consumers would be attracted to the previously unappealing district (Ward 2007b). These examples, among many others, demonstrate how BIAs package a cohesive identity to the area to attract more affluent consumers while increasing pedestrian traffic flow.

However, since BIAs have a local orientation, no two BIAs provide identical services because each is focused on particular issues in its own area. Some BIAs have a five-member governing board while another may have fifteen-member board; one BIA may cover twenty blocks and another one hundred twenty; they can have fifty members to two-thousand; and one BIA may have a budget of a few thousand dollars while another may have millions of dollars to spend (Mitchell 2008). The type of service BIAs focus on depends on the size of these factors (Gross 2005). For instance, smaller BIAs often attend to the physical maintenance of an area, midsized BIAs concentrate on marketing and promotional activities, while larger BIAs, in addition to maintenance and promotion, engage in capital improvement activities. In addition, there is a relationship between BIA concerns and the city size (Mitchell 2001). For instance, BIAs located in larger cities are more likely to focus on maintenance, public space regulation, and security. However, the service that was significantly consistent regardless of the city population was consumer



marketing and capital improvements. Thus, larger BIAs in larger cities may be more helpful in understanding how BIAs contribute to the production of authenticity in urban districts because they are more likely to be involved in the three beautification strategies of physical, surveillance, and promotional infrastructure.

It is evident that BIAs are mostly concerned with beautification strategies in order to enhance the marketability of their respective area through investments in physical, surveillance, and promotional infrastructure. Understanding the functions behind these three infrastructures is central to comprehending how authenticity is constructed in these micro spaces. By following in the footsteps of the City Beautiful movement, BIAs integrate all three infrastructures into their respective micro space. Hence all three infrastructures are central to tapping into peoples' sense of authenticity because they each bring their own elements to the table. Investments in physical infrastructure are meant to improve the visual attractiveness of the area, investments in surveillance infrastructure are meant to eliminate unpleasant stimuli from the area, while promotional infrastructure attempts to package a particular brand so consumers can recall easily recall and navigate the area. These are the ways that BIAs construct a notion of authenticity through their representation of the area.

### ***The Production of Inclusiveness***

By investing in these three infrastructures, BIAs create a privately regulated space that is sanitized for consumption activity. However, through these infrastructures, BIAs maintain an image of authenticity by practicing a soft but significant form of control. The key for BIAs is to hide the fact that business interests regulate the space. This is done by

establishing a feeling of public inclusiveness through their cohesive investments in symbols and images. Instead of being directly coercive and evident, businesses create an ambiance where individuals feel a sense of inclusion while simultaneously being controlled by seductive forces through the produced landscape. Therefore, the core element for understanding how authenticity works within BIAs is the role of inclusion produced by seductive forms of power.

In short, the combination of physical, surveillance, and promotional investments create an autonomous space with its own demarcated inclusiveness. Although BIAs have private security, CCTV cameras, and work closely with the police, BIAs avoid appearing directly coercive in order to make the environment seem open and public in nature. By renovating storefronts, updating street furniture, advertising a brand, and directing people to desirable locations, BIAs create an environment that is heavily managed by the BIA stakeholders. However, BIAs attempt to hide the fact that business stakeholders have privatized urban space because people generally enjoy being apart of an inclusive public space. BIAs, therefore, strategically mimic the nostalgic look and feel of public marketplaces where people can hang out, loiter, partake in community activities, debate, and protest. In reality, BIA stakeholders have the right to legitimately exclude any behaviours that they deem as undesirable for the particular area. This involves subtle codes of conduct, floor designs, and micro-managing consumers through the infrastructures discussed above. Nevertheless, BIAs hide the intrusion of capital by making people believe that the BIA is a public forum where people can gather in a civil manner.

This simulated publicness represents a seductive form of power that makes people believe that they are part of an inclusive public area. Instead of making their power and presence obvious by marking out their disciplinary power over their space, BIAs exercise their power through the seductive forces of consumer marketing where power is meant to be less obtrusive, impersonal, and concealed in nature (Thörn 2011). Through a mixture of physical and promotional infrastructure, BIAs create a sense of inclusion where objects within the BIA are meant to direct consumers away from or towards specific locations. High amounts of control are masked through attractive physical barriers, signs that control access to areas, and BIA workers who guide visitors, correcting their behaviour to follow the BIA rules. There are no walls or fences to physically control people; BIA control is less obvious than it may seemingly appear. By expanding the growth of cultural consumptions of art, food, fashion, music, and tourism, BIAs penetrate the symbolic economy. These collective images of the BIA have the ability to construct a social identity that determines who belongs in the particular space. The experience of the BIA itself represents a form of power on its own. BIAs are designed in such a way to project a certain image of public where “people can mingle, circulate and loiter in a way that is possible to encounter others who are not like you” within a safe environment (Allen 2006: 450). Thus, BIAs reduce the risk of social difference by promoting virtues of familiarity in public space. In other words, private space is being staged as public in order to make the space seem open and accessible for consumers who are looking to experience a sanitized publicness. Although the BIA may feel as if it is a public space, there is a high degree of control by private groups and corporate property owners. Thus,

BIAs are manicured spaces for affluent consumers who have internalized norms of proper behaviour. The ambiance has become more important than the physical location itself.

### ***Relevance to Authenticity***

The organization and function of BIAs offer some clues as to how these associations contribute to the production of urban authenticity. Consistent with the third-wave of gentrification's focus on public-private partnerships, BIAs are composed of public municipal members, BIA board members, property owners, and hired service workers. These groups, in combination with one another, manipulate their respective urban space so as to create an appearance of authenticity in order to increase the marketability of the downtown. Although BIAs appear to be democratic in nature, they only voice the concerns of municipal city workers and businesspersons responsible for the BIA. There is rarely a public forum where citizens can voice their opinion or have the ability to change urban planning. Thus, urban spaces within BIAs are molded by groups with instrumental business goals in mind.

The goal of BIAs to enhance the marketability of the inner city is accomplished by investments in physical, surveillance, and promotional infrastructure. A combination of these three investments allows the BIA to mold an authentic ambiance. The cohesive effort of these three investments follow the City Beautiful movement in the 1800s whereby local citizens cleaned up the image of American cities. However, BIA investments and actions are not produced from local citizens, but rather by local businesses that attempt to sanitize micro spaces and make their space distinctive in order to target a specific demographic of consumers. Hence, BIA service deliveries such as

maintenance, security, and consumer marketing are intended to sanitize areas so as to make the micro space seem inclusive.

Central to BIAs are their efforts to maintain a sense of inclusiveness within the BIA. Manipulating a sense of belonging and safety among unfamiliar citizens within the confines of the BIA has become a main objective for BIAs. However, this sense of public inclusion is purposely shaped by private businesses in order to mask the fact that business interests control the area. Although consumers realize that the place they are visiting is surrounded by businesses, consumers are meant to feel as if the BIA is untouched by larger corporate forces. Thus, producing a sense of urban authenticity masks this realization by making consumers believe that autonomous local interests produce the BIA. BIAs know that consumers are attracted to authentic experiences where they can stroll around a historic neighborhood, purchase local specialty goods, and dine in restaurants where the food is produced locally and the owners take time to chat with the customers. As a result, BIAs simulate these experiences for customers.

## Chapter 4: A New Type of Urban Authenticity

The way people understand urban authenticity has changed significantly since the first wave of gentrification. Both the physical resources and the representation of inner cities have changed drastically over the span of sixty years. Central to this is the way agents have mobilized resources in order to change urban schemas. I first begin by explaining how first-wave gentrifiers subjectively transformed modernist cities into their own representation of space. Authenticity during this time was considered a process whereby groups creatively reinterpreted deteriorated resources left by modernism and industrialization. Second, I argue that beginning in the 1970s during the second wave of gentrification, authenticity became less an agentic process of transforming deterministic structures and more of a process whereby urban schemas are transformed into a consumable product. Simply put, authenticity has become a packaged identity that is meant to be sold as a commodity in urban space. The commodification of authenticity has become even more pervasive in recent years as third-wave gentrifiers have begun to produce representations of space in more complex ways. BIAs, which now constitute a major component of urban redevelopment, serve as a textbook example of the commodification of authenticity in urban space.

### *Authenticity as Transforming Structures: The Role of First-Wave Gentrifiers*

During the 1960s there was a transformation of people's conception of the inner city that many did not anticipate. Central to this transformation was the reinterpretation of modernist planning by marginal gentrifiers. Since about the 1920s, as discussed earlier,

governments took part in many grand schemes in order to improve the appeal of inner cities. These modernist grand schemes attempted to eliminate disorder, congestion, and small-scale communities by replacing them with freeways, large skyscrapers, and scattered green parks. It was an attempt by governments to control the environment in the name of urban progress and efficiency. Modernist city planning had a relentless demand for order, classification, design, and control over space. It was a drive to eradicate urban chaos, ambiguity, difference, and uncertainty that were created by an increase of many different immigrant populations and social disorganization in central cities, as was most famously noted by the Chicago School.

Around the 1950s, however, many counter-cultural groups and local residents began to transform modernist inner cities into more vibrant and lively areas. At the heart of this transformation was the vision of a more close-knit inner city as explained by the work of Jane Jacobs (1961). Although Jacobs did not directly explain the role of authenticity in inner cities, she nevertheless hinted that authenticity was important in order to revamp inner cities from modernist influence. For example: she emphasized the need for human contacts made possible by creative city layouts; she praised the spontaneity of crowded sidewalks in order to keep people safe; she promoted the preservation of shabby old buildings with low rents in order to incubate small independent businesses; and she emphasized the mixing of housing with stores, offices, and manufacturing. She wanted to see city neighborhoods have individual expression based on small businesses, sociable interactions, and dense multifunctional areas where citizens could informally monitor their streets. In other words, Jacobs promoted an inner city that depended on local individual agents acting creatively against the dullness,

orderliness, and efficiency that were so palpable in the homogenous corporate office districts, public housing projects, and residential suburbs produced by modernist city planners. Jacobs wanted to see cities created and defined by individual community members with creative expression.

Responding to Jacobs' call for more authentic inner cities, counter-cultural groups began to transform urban resources and consequently changed the mental representation of the inner city. In Canada, for example, the hippy subculture was responsible for the pioneer gentrification in Toronto's Yorkville neighborhood and Vancouver's Kitsilano neighborhood (Ley 1996). With their anti-Protestant work ethic and anti-Eurocentric orientation, hippies exercised their individualism by creatively rejecting the standardization of machine-produced products found in department stores. Instead, hippies took control of their own resources by creating their own products and establishing their own local craft and health shops that offered organic products. They then took their individually created products and sold them in their independently owned shops where they personalized the transaction between buyers contrast to the retailing of impersonal corporate marketing. Artists, on the other hand, began to recreate old industrial buildings that became empty as a result of the shift from an industrial economy to service economy (Zukin 1982). Low-income artists found the relatively low rents, large empty space, and proximity to local cultural and social amenities as a benefit to their alternative lifestyle. They began to transform abandoned machine shops, printing plants, dress factories, and die-cutting operations into large sixteen-foot ceiling and forty-five foot residential lofts. These large empty spaces gave artists enough room to make a space for living and a space for their artistic work. With no specialized rooms, these lofts



were divided only according to general uses. There was no division between upstairs and downstairs, there was no seclusion in the kitchen, and there was no private separate bedroom. All of these functions were spread around a large open area. Along similar lines, musicians created underground dance parties in abandoned factories that eventually drew gays, blacks, jazz musicians, and poor artists (Hae 2012). This underground dance party allowed these minority groups a temporary escape from the economic and social distress confronted in their urban milieus which they were living. It changed the meaning of dancing by making it more interactive and collective rather than individual or partnered. In addition, they created a condition where established norms were turned upside down, bodily liberty was celebrated, and stigmas against sexual, racial, gender, and class identities were cancelled out. In other words, these counter-cultural groups transformed conventions of shopping, living, nightlife into an alternative representation of the city where the groups were connected on the basis of a spontaneous realization of the self, avoiding conformism with predetermined structures of meaning.

Although this transformation of urban resources by these various groups represented a creative individual expression contrast to modernist urban planning, these actions were only found in larger cities around the world. Nevertheless, these acts of transformation were significant because the schema of inner city living changed to a more intimate, diverse, and meaningful representation opposed to the determinism of modernist urban planning. Instead of seeing downtowns as ordered, categorized, and emotionless, people began to realize that the downtown could be exciting and unique as long as small communities put their individual efforts together to renovate deteriorated

resources left by industrialization. Thus, community members began to gentrify their local communities in isolated areas within the inner city.

The real lesson from first-wave gentrifiers was that representations of space did not have to be imposed by external agents, but instead could be defined by the people who live in the community. By mobilizing resources produced by modernist planning and industrialization, marginal gentrifiers reinterpreted these resources and gave urban living a new meaning, one of creative expression, sociability, and spontaneity. The urban was seen as potential grounds for the process of authenticity to take place where people could criticize and transform urban resources into another representation contrast to the deterministic tendency of modernist urban planning. Urban space had a potential for having multiple uses opposed to being segregated into certain functions. These characteristics became an important foundation for re-kindling depressed property markets in inner-city districts.

### ***Packaged Authenticity: Gentrification After the 1970s***

Although the literature on gentrification suggests that there is a distinctive difference between second and third-wave gentrification, I argue that authenticity remained similar between the second and third wave. The literature on gentrification should be understood as two separate developments: authenticity as a grassroots process of transformation prior to 1970s and authenticity as a packaged identity post-1970s. From the second wave of gentrification and on, urban authenticity was turned into a commodity where it was no longer understood as a process of transforming urban structures into a different representation, but rather an innate state produced by larger gentrifiers. Whereas

authenticity during the first wave of gentrification was understood as a creative transformation of urban resources against the deterministic nature of modernist city planning, authenticity post-1970s has been understood as process of commodification that appears as an intrinsic identity that can be bought from contemporary gentrifiers who purposely produce authentic experiences. In other words, this period marks the commodification of urban authenticity.

The role of second-wave gentrifiers must be examined to understand how authenticity has changed from an agentic process to a consumable identity. The process of authentic creativity that was prevalent during the first wave of gentrification began to grab the attention of real estate entrepreneurs, developers, landlords, mortgage lenders, and government agencies who turned authentic recreation into a consumable identity. These second-wave gentrifiers began to realize that spaces that indicated a locally produced, autonomous, creative, diverse, sociable, and intimate *gemeinschaft* type of community had the potential for attracting a wide range of consumers. As a result, these gentrifiers began to develop urban resources that indicated the presence of this type of lifestyle. Rather than attracting more counter-cultures, these gentrifiers wanted to mold marginal gentrifiers' creative abilities into an identity that could be easily marketed to middle-class consumers in the suburbs who were becoming bored of their homogenized lifestyle. Thus, these gentrifiers established a sanitized schema of urban authenticity in order to attract these middle-class groups. For example, the popular dance club 'Studio 54' was developed in a previously counter-cultural area of New York (Hae 2012). This club offered a clean image of a discotheque contrast to the prevailing underground lofts that were increasingly deregulated out of the area. In Chicago, developers began to build

more mainstream jazz clubs that featured Caucasian musicians opposed to the prevailing gritty African-American clubs (Grazian 2003). In cities across North America, local governments began to increase building regulations which subsequently displaced artist groups from their lofts (Zukin 1982; Smith 1996; Hae 2012). As rent prices increased, middle-class consumers began to occupy these trendy lofts. Local municipalities overall began to clean up the image of downtown through zero-tolerance policing in order to eliminate the presence of undesirable looking groups (Hae 2012). In other words, second-wave gentrifiers began to control and develop their own resources while simultaneously manipulating the schema that these resources projected onto the environment. By doing so, middle-class consumers began to realize that inner-city living could indeed be a viable option.

Second-wave gentrifiers turned authenticity into a packaged commodity by sanitizing urban schemas through taking control of urban resources. Promoting indicators of authenticity became the main task for these developers as second-wave gentrifiers began to mediate the urban structure in select neighborhoods that were made attractive by marginal gentrifiers. Real estate entrepreneurs, developers, and local governments now had the ability to strategically manipulate schemas by appropriating urban resources to fit their desired representation. Authenticity was no longer a process where local residents creatively transcended pre-existing representations of space. Rather, larger gentrifiers offered this image through advertisements and images to attract middle-class consumers. Instead of having spontaneous diversity where local members of the community shaped the urban environment, second-wave gentrifiers offered a controlled image of diversity where middle-class consumers could feel secure in downtown districts while consuming

produced images of distinctiveness. Downtowns now represented an area with distinctive sign values, unique niche markets, and a possibility of autonomy and individuality. In actuality, these characteristics were simply manufactured in order to increase consumption activity in downtown districts.

As demand for inner city experiences increased, middle-class populations composed of private and public service workers began to occupy the downtown (Ley 1996; Caulfield 1994). The downtown was becoming less a diverse space composed of alternative cultures, but a space filled with a heterogeneous new middle-class composed of public and private service workers. Rather than taking control of their own urban space, these middle-class consumers simply conformed to the urban city life that was produced by second-wave gentrifiers. Although these consumers still took part in small-scale gentrification practices, such as interior renovations and exterior improvements to homes (see Jager 1986), these consumers were not rooted together in the name of transforming imposing urban structures, but rather were products of consumer markets that were increasingly entering inner city districts. These groups were simply conforming to a predetermined way of living produced by second-wave gentrifiers who were increasingly becoming more powerful and influential in inner city districts. In other words, these new middle-class consumers were experiencing negative freedom where they were free from the constraints of homogenized suburbs, conformist nuclear family lifestyles, and dull identities, but they failed to achieve a positive freedom based on a deeper connection where they could exercise their individual spontaneity and be critical of imposing structures. Simply put, instead of achieving a unique identity in the inner city, middle-class consumers remained dependent on an imposed identity. They moved

from a homogenized suburban identity to what appeared as a unique identity that was cleverly marketed by real estate markets.

This process further intensified during the third wave of gentrification where large multinational developers, private corporations, and local governments began to realize that investment in the downtown could bring in mass profits. Knowing that second-wave gentrifiers successfully used authenticity as a commodity to attract middle-class consumers to the downtown, third-wave gentrifiers began to use commodified authenticity in more pervasive ways. Most recently, the ideas of Richard Florida (2002, 2005) represent an attempt to use authenticity as a consumable idea that could be sold to attract tourists and visitors. Florida promotes the idea that inner cities should mobilize their urban resources in order to be in line with a general conception of diversity, distinctive cultural environments, and a mix of lifestyle options. This is accomplished by offering rudimentary themes, name identification, central zones of activity, compatible signs and symbols, and diversity among affluent inner city residents. These depictions, however, are simple one-dimensional definitions of authenticity and do not represent any criticism of a prevailing urban structure.

Instead, third-wave gentrifiers hide the fact that they are influencing urban space by making spaces appear locally produced in four different ways. First, third-wave gentrifiers design spaces to be multifunctional not to promote cultural diversity but to increase consumption activity among consumers. Multifunctional spaces are not meant to bring together different groups of people so as to enable strong community ties, but to maintain high activity to make people feel secure enough to walk in downtown districts. Second, cities preserve old urban fabric not to preserve small-commercial businesses but

in order to offer a sanitized representation of a nostalgic past for tourists. For example, city markets that catered to immigrant and low-income families, such as the Quincy market in Boston, now mimic representations of a civic market but in actuality have turned into commercialized spaces with large chain stores that are conveniently camouflaged in the surrounding historic architecture. Third, urban streets are not informally monitored by the local citizens but by formal surveillance technologies and private security meant to exclude 'undesirable' groups. Fourth, they use stereotypical representations that no longer have any connection to the urban area. For example, although a majority of Italians have left to different areas of the city, Little Italy in Toronto markets itself as an authentic Italian space that is mediated by local members of the Italian community (Hackworth and Rekers 2005). Nevertheless, affluent restaurants, Starbucks, and chain commercial stores represent a majority of the space. Although Little Italy is heavily mediated by global capital, it is still marketed as a close-knit Italian community. In other words, third-wave gentrifiers have suppressed the individual agency of local community members and instead offer their own predetermined schema of urban authenticity.

The current understanding of urban authenticity, therefore, is one where third-wave gentrifiers mask their presence to avoid criticisms of their influence. Third-wave gentrifiers have learned from the mistakes of second-wave gentrifiers who, during the 1970s, acted as coercive agents who displaced many minority populations (Smith 1996). In order to reduce animosity against themselves, third-wave gentrifiers have begun to mask their influence by producing local images, making it appear as if the local community members have shaped the space. Although urban production has not returned

to a state of modernism where order and structure is imposed, there still lies a deterministic structure of urban production that depends on promoting images that contrast previous modernist goals. In other words, spaces with symbolic resistance against imposing urban producers and previously autonomous spaces untouched by global influence have been commodified into a consumable space. For example, New York's Harlem district has been marketed as a gritty African-American neighborhood where "race is packaged as culture and art, using frontier motifs to tame the neighborhood while keeping it exotic enough to attract consumers" (Freeman 2006: 67; see also Powell and Spencer 2003; Zukin 2010). To put it in the words of Henri Lefebvre, representational spaces are meant to appear as if they are spaces of representation. That is, third-wave gentrifiers who now control the production of urban resources have absorbed spaces where everyday life was once a creation by local citizens capable of transforming a city into meaning. There is no longer a problem of inner cities not having enough emotion or meaning. Instead, the contemporary problem in inner cities is that different urban meanings are clashing against one another, fighting to take control of urban space. Not only are groups fighting with other groups over urban representations, but groups are now fighting the influence of third-wave gentrifiers who are interested in economic gains. Spaces have become political instruments where they are designed in such a way to appear as if they are locally created by individual gentrifiers, but in actuality are designed by profit-seeking corporations, developers, and local governments that make these spaces homogeneous and segregated. This new city vision has resulted in cities that appear local, quaint, and unique, but in actuality are heavily influenced by profit-seeking corporations. For example, it is common to see hipster districts with luxury



housing, chain coffee shops resembling mom-and-pop shops, and department stores located in previously small-commercial districts. Inner cities are meant to appear local while simultaneously hiding the intrusion of multinational capital.

### ***Businesses Imposing Areas: How BIAs Recreate the Urban Structure***

With the increase of BIAs in recent years the influence of third-wave gentrifiers is clear. BIAs effectively manage to control and reinterpret urban resources into a desired urban schema that fits with their entrepreneurial interests. Not only do BIAs impose representations of space but they also subtly guide the interactions and behaviours of tourists and visitors.

Composed of public municipal workers, BIA board members, property owners, and hired service workers, BIAs represent an individual entity that reinterprets resources and transposes urban schematics by controlling and upgrading urban resources. Although there are many different stakeholders involved in BIAs, the majority of the power is held by the local municipal government who have their own entrepreneurial interests to market the city image. The city makes the ultimate decision to accept the formation of a BIA, designate its jurisdiction, and, to some extent, dictate what needs to be done in the particular area. However, the businesses themselves also benefit from association because it gives them an opportunity to increase consumer activity and profits. Hence, business owners within the BIA invest in physical infrastructure to mold resources to fit a particular urban schematic that is deemed marketable by the BIA; they simultaneously protect their resources and produced schemas by investing in surveillance infrastructure;

and they enhance the produced schematic by packaging these generalizable images through investments in promotional infrastructure.

The first step BIAs take once they are formed is beautifying their space by making improvements in the physical environment through investments in physical infrastructure. BIAs easily take control of urban resources by simply forming a boundary that is legitimized by the local municipal government. Once the boundary is set, BIAs have legal rights over the resources within the confines of the BIA. Although this boundary is meant to make public and private space distinctive from one another, the boundary between public and private space is often blurred thanks to increased use of surveillance technologies. Nonetheless, BIAs then have the ability to act out their agency by changing the resources in their environment in order to produce a positive schema for the local area. This is done by recreating and upgrading nonhuman resources such as buildings, signs, street furniture, lighting, trees, shrubbery, sidewalks, storefronts, streets, and parks (Ward 2007a; Mitchell 2001, 2008). These resources are recreated to fit a particular schema that the area is trying to produce. For example, larger BIAs in central business areas often develop exciting storefronts and larger sidewalks so as to increase consumption activity such as the Eaton Centre in downtown Toronto or Times Square in New York City (Hernandez and Jones 2008; Zukin 1995). The manipulation of physical resources allows the BIA to produce a schema that fits with the goals of BIA stakeholders.

Once BIAs manipulate their physical resources, they then invest heavily in surveillance infrastructure to protect both the physical resources and the schemas that they project. There is no doubt that surveillance is used to protect the physical resources

that the BIA owns, from the products that businesses sell to buildings and street furniture that are built. While security is hired to protect these resources, they simultaneously are used to directly mold and preserve a positive schematic for the particular area. BIAs want consumers to feel secure and free from undesirable experiences so as to produce a positive representation of the space for tourists and visitors. Broken windows-style policing accomplishes this by deterring undesirable behaviours such as loitering, skateboarding, and panhandling. There are even signs that indicate that these behaviours are banned from the local area. Hence, security serves the dual role of protecting resources and enhancing the image that these resources attempt to project.

After physical resources are enhanced to produce a positive schema and once security is successfully established to protect resources and the schema it projects, BIAs then begin to package the schema into a commodity. Through advertising, logos, brand names, festivals, web sites, maps, brochures, newsletters, and tourism and hospitality employees, BIAs attempt to create a distinctive identity within the confines of a larger city. Investments in promotional infrastructure allows the BIA to strategically control the schema in order to fit with the physical resources that have been developed in the area.

Through a combination of these three investments, BIAs effectively control and guide behaviours that they deem appropriate for their particular area. BIAs create an environment that is unobtrusive, devoid of coercive elements such as walls, fences, and other enclosures that make it appear as if the space is controlled. Instead, they create an environment where consumers can sit around on steps while they eat their lunch, ask tourism and hospitality ambassadors for directions to local hotspots, and stroll around and observe the cultural amenities on offer. In other words, the space is meant to appear as if

it is uncontrolled so visitors believe that their actions, behaviours, and decisions are chosen at their own will. However, the BIA packages a preconceived schema that visitors buy into. BIA brand names, logos, and slogans give people a generalized idea of what they can expect to experience in the area. BIA web sites give tourists quick information about the types of businesses that exist within the area and allow them to look at culturally significant photos of the area. BIA festivals attempt to package a local identity where tourists can take in and feel apart of the local culture. Tourism and hospitality ambassadors direct people to local hotspots and appropriate consumer area where they influence people's decision where to go and tour. In other words, through these promotional infrastructures, people are discretely directed to pre-determined spaces that the BIA deems appropriate for consumption. Not only do BIAs create a schema for people to interpret, but they strategically impose the schema onto people by manipulating the physical environment, desirable behaviours and stimuli, and a convenient packaged identity that can be easily remembered and recognized. People are not self-directed but intentionally directed to particular areas that the BIA deems appropriate for consumers. BIAs don't allow the resources to speak for themselves; they purposely control the way resources project a particular schema so as to enhance the marketability of the area. They have the ability to control where consumers should go, how to think, and how to feel about a particular area. While consumers believe that they have the ability to choose where to go and how to think about the area, these beliefs are strategically internalized and imposed by the BIA. Unknowingly, consumers have given up their freedom and aligned themselves with a produced image of an area instead of thinking about the area on their own. Thus, people's ability to think and reason have been inhibited and instead

have bought into a produced schema through images, advertisements, ambiance, and products.

## Conclusion

By synthesizing various sociological theorists take on authenticity, I have explained how the authenticity in inner-city districts has changed in its producers and representation since the 1960s. I have shown how this change in authenticity is a result of three distinct waves of gentrification. Authenticity during the first wave of gentrification between the 1960s and 1973 was produced by marginal gentrifiers with more cultural capital than economic capital. Through their efforts, inner city spaces were reinterpreted into an urban village where people felt more connected than was the case during the modernist city era. Customers knew the shopkeeper's name; city streets were informally monitored by the proprietors of the street; and independent businesses were preserved by the activity of the local community. As these characteristics became evident in the central city, real estate entrepreneurs, developers, and local governments began to slowly regulate space in such a way to preserve the urban village schema that was created by marginal gentrifiers, while simultaneously displacing them. The production of urban authenticity was more in the hands of larger social agents than was the case before. As a result, authenticity became one-dimensional, commodified, and represented by exchange value. This resulted in more affluent middle-class consumers entering inner-city districts. By the 1990s, the presence of developers and real estate became more pervasive as city officials became more entrepreneurial, private corporations began to produce urban space, and global developers became active agents of gentrification. Their combined efforts created a sanitized and controlled spontaneity and creativity that was meant to attract homogeneous consumers. The case of BIAs demonstrates how businesses take instrumental steps to create an appearance of a cohesive space while simultaneously controlling the way

people think and image the space. In other words, the ability to be creative no longer exists in local community members but rather in larger social actors who colonize social space by mapping into the efforts of marginal gentrifiers. People no longer create spaces but rather spaces are predetermined for people by third-wave gentrifiers. In short, authenticity has been co-opted by third-wave gentrifiers.

This explanation of urban authenticity has many implications for the way we think about urban space. First, this thesis offers an updated version of Henri Lefebvre's (1991) ideas in his work *The Production of Space*. Although I agree with Lefebvre's idea that the state controls the production of territory in which capitalist social relations unfold, along with the production of political meaning, and symbolic representations of state power, it appears that the state is not no longer the sole agent in urban production. It has increasingly been in the hands of a combination of private corporations, global developers, and entrepreneurial city officials. This combination of urban producers do not simply eliminate meaning and emotion from urban space as Lefebvre suggested, but rather they promote indicators that suggest the presence of such qualities in order to attract tourism and affluent city dwellers. As stated in the previous chapter, spaces of representation have become representations of space that are produced by third-wave gentrifiers to mask the influence of capital.

Second, this thesis offers a similar but different take on the recent popular work by Brown-Saracino (2009) entitled *A Neighborhood That Never Changes: Gentrification, Social Preservation, and the Search for Authenticity*. Breaking with the conventional understanding of gentrifiers as economically motivated consumers, Brown-Saracino identifies three distinct types of gentrifiers. However, her interpretation of these

gentrifiers focuses on the individual level and fails to explain characteristics of larger agents of gentrification. Rather than having a single identity, the current third-wave agents of gentrification are a combination of her three typologies. Gentrifiers today act as preservationists, homesteaders, and pioneers by simultaneously preserving indicators of local social ecology, promoting physical aspects of urban space, and are interested in increasing their economic capital by welcoming renovations and upgrades. Simply put, inner cities aim to preserve the 'social' in communities in order to make it appear as an authentic community, represented by shared values, culture, identities, and traditions, while encouraging developers to act as homesteaders by renovating the surrounding environment to make it look attractive to mainstream consumers. This then opens up the gate for large real estate corporations who seek large profits.

Third, this thesis offers a more detailed explanation of authenticity compared to the recent well-known work of Sharon Zukin (2010). Zukin fails to implement sociological theory into the discussion of authenticity and instead provides general examples of what is considered urban authenticity. She seems to define authenticity in a nostalgic fashion by favouring small-scale interactions, independent shops, and community oriented actions. She fails to acknowledge that authenticity entails not simply small-scale interactions, but a process of creative subjectivity meant to change conventional structures. I also disagree with Zukin's conclusion that gentrified areas have no soul, that inner cities have become inauthentic because they fail to be gritty and diverse. Cities have not lost their soul because they lack an urban village feel. Rather, cities' souls have been colonized and fragmented by instrumental capitalist interests who manipulate representations of an urban village.



This development of urban authenticity leads to an important question that cannot be easily answered; how can people regain urban authenticity from imposing third-wave gentrifiers? I believe that a combination of Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey's ideas can shed some light on this question. Simply put, Lefebvre's concept of *autogestion* needs to be exercised in contemporary cities. There needs to be a direct democracy, a grassroots political practice that is born spontaneously out of the void in social life that is created by the gentrifiers (Lefebvre 2009). Creative spontaneity needs to come from the weak points of existing society where they need to take control of urban resources and reinterpret urban schematics in order to change the new imposing urban structure that disguises its influence. People need to reveal the true power of third-wave gentrifiers by demonstrating its abrasive nature, such as revealing the widespread forced evictions and demolition of favelas in Brazil in preparation for one of the most symbolically influential event in the world, the FIFA World Cup. Taken from Harvey's (2012) ideas, the producers of third-wave gentrifiers, such as construction workers, engineers, garbage collectors, security guards, truck drivers, among many others, need to refuse to work for the motives of a capitalist-minded municipal government whose interest is only to increase global investments and decrease the rights of its hard workers. These workers must be the leading force in the retaking of urban authenticity.

I would like to finish with a comment on how theory could do a more effective job explaining the production of urban space. Although I did not explicitly discuss the ideas of Zygmunt Bauman (1987) in relation to urban space, I believe that some of his ideas on postmodernity may be helpful in understanding the way our cities are produced. Urban space is increasingly shaped for ambivalent postmodern consumers who lack an

urge for rootedness. Citizens no longer produce their own communities because they are constantly on the go, moving from one experience to another so they never miss a pleasurable experience. That is, people would rather buy temporary rootedness from consumer markets rather than dedicate their time to develop a rooted urban space. Hence, urban space is created in such a fashion to meet the needs of these hurried consumers, resulting in communities signifying rootedness through consumer market needs. Theories on urban production should take note of Bauman's theory of seduction as a form of control. It should explore how citizens are socially integrated and their institutional loyalty secured through the power of the market, how they are seduced into social conformity by lifestyle dreams that commodities are designed to evoke.

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