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ABSTRACT

Mega-events that transform cities provide an instance of the ongoing contestation between social needs and neoliberal competition for global finance. My research examined the protests organized against the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games using a theoretical framework based on Henri Lefebvre’s theory of the right to the city, and the Marxist categories of use value and exchange value. I found that the protests largely embodied a positive enactment of the right to the city by putting forth a concerted effort to re-frame the Olympics not as a simple celebration of sport but as a political economic event driven by exchange values. News content analysis found that direct party and alternative media coverage represented the protests in such a way as to convey a sense of legitimacy upon the actions and the actors, thus portraying them as entitled to such participation; however, corporate media did not achieve this level of analysis.

Keywords: protest; public space; Olympics; news content analysis; right to the city; use value and exchange value
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1: INTRODUCTION

In 2003, a decision was made that would transform the landscape of Vancouver: hosting the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. It looked like a nationalism-saturated and dramatic sporting event when you watched it on TV, and then it seemed exciting that this TV extravaganza would take place in your very own downtown and surrounding region, and then it got intimidating and maybe even grotesque when you realized just how much it would cost, how much your city would change, and how different life in the city could become.

I first became aware of the upcoming Vancouver Olympics in early 2007, several months after moving to the city, with the installation of the “Olympic countdown clock” in downtown Vancouver. The news reported on a ceremony that was held to celebrate the installation of a large stone public clock outside the Vancouver Art Gallery, which would count down the days until the Olympics (Burrows Feb 22, 2007). In the same moment, I also learned about opposition to the Games when protesters disrupted the ceremony, which made the news reports that much more memorable. I soon learned that the Olympics were also controversial for driving the evictions of poor residents of the downtown-Eastside, through the squats and stunts of a group called the Anti-Poverty Committee (APC). They linked real estate booms caused by the impending Olympics to the evictions and accelerated gentrification of poor inner-city neighbourhoods. Around this time I saw a new documentary by Conrad Schmidt called “Five Ring Circus,” which
immersed me in the details of the problems created and exacerbated by the Olympics, as well as the opposition to the Games (Schmidt 2007).

I had never given the Olympics much notice, but suddenly I saw a glimpse of the powerful forces at play in the city I had just walked into and made my new home. Hundreds of millions of dollars of public money were at stake and not closely monitored (Shaw 2008, 92-93); there were controversial close and sometimes overlapping relationships between politicians, Olympics organizers, and development corporations that got very little media attention (Shaw 2008); there was growing positive media and advertisement hype about the Olympics. Partially in preparation to house visitors to the Olympics, low cost residential hotels evicted tenants in order to renovate and increase rents (Shaw 2008, Schmidt 2007); homelessness doubled from 1,100 to 2,200 between 2002 and 2005, and increased to 2,700 in 2008 (Graves et al 2008, 9); a special bylaw program (Project Civil City) was passed to target low income people by issuing tickets for activities associated with poverty and homelessness (Office of the Mayor, 2006). People fought back, for their homes and for the land: protesters squatted in residences and administrative buildings; they blockaded an Olympic-related highway project that would destroy a unique old-growth forest (on Eagleridge Bluffs); spoke out against the Olympics in media, in the streets, and in schools. Unconstitutional legislation having to do with the removal of homeless people (the Assistance to Shelter Act, see Hainsworth 2009) and the removal of anti-Olympic signage (“2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games By-law”) were protested by organizations, activists, and individuals. Security costs and police surveillance and harassment of activists rose, which the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) drew attention to and spoke out against. Security forces
were ambiguous about which weapons and techniques they would use against protesters
during the Games period, and accordingly the BCCLA created a “Legal Observer”
program to monitor and document police in their interactions with protesters. For these
reasons and more, I joined the resistance against the Olympics.

Organized opposition to the Games began during the bid process in 2002. The bid
officially began in 1999 with the creation of the Whistler-Vancouver 2010 Bid
Corporation, a body of developers, politicians, business people, a few First Nations
representatives, and some athletes with real estate projects (Shaw 2008, 287 note 6). The
Bid Corp received funding from municipal, provincial, and federal governments and
attempted to win the public’s approval. In response, in 2002, several anti-globalization
activists formed the group NO GAMES, and their spokesperson Chris Shaw spoke out in
the media against bidding for the Olympics. The city held a non-binding public vote on
the matter, with a yes-campaign by the Bid Corp, and a no-campaign by NO GAMES.
The yes side won with 63% of votes and the Bid Corp used the public and government
support to appeal to the Olympic International Organizing Committee (IOC, based in
Switzerland) to select Vancouver to host the 2010 Winter Games (Shaw 2008, 43). The
decision to select Vancouver as 2010 host was ultimately made by the IOC in July 2003.

With the Olympics now set to occur, opposition to the Olympics was fairly
minimal until 2007. Protesters blockaded Eagleridge Bluffs in order to protect the forest
from environmental destruction, and were arrested in May 2006. NO GAMES had
become 2010 Watch, and this group along with the Work Less Party and Pivot Legal
Society continued to monitor Olympic-related government and funding decisions and
continued to speak out against them. Further organization against the Olympics picked up
in 2007. Anti-poverty groups and indigenous groups and individuals were the main players. They attempted to assert their entitlement to housing and land already in their possession, to draw media attention through their actions, and to educate the public. The reported costs of the Olympics also increased continuously over the years, which received the attention of the public. A negative attitude towards the Games spread through Vancouver and BC (Constantineau 2009).

It was in these last three years before the Games that a collective opposition started to grow. Advocates organized protest actions and identified the Olympics as a partial cause of evictions, homelessness, and policing of the homeless. As official excitement about the games spread through the media, broader publics in Vancouver were also reminded of some of the negative consequences. Specifically anti-Olympics groups were created, and other existing groups affected by the Olympics-related changes began to shift the frame of their discussion, and to communicate with each other.

This opposition to the Olympics occurred from the ground up in the face of strong pro-Olympic boosterism. It arose from a refusal to trust governments or VANOC to keep their promises or to act in the best interests of the city. The Olympic hosts argued that the Games were about showcasing their city as well as their nation via that city; but when some residents realized that this was at the expense of their own ability to live there and of their civil liberties, they had to reassert what they believed the interests of the city should be. They participated in public debate over the Olympics through grassroots organizing that produced dialogue and action. Together, this upsurge in activism seemed to suggest a growing desire for democratic involvement through formal and informal structures. As noted, I was actively involved with a number of the protest efforts; and
while these actions were exciting and complicated, in this thesis I aim to understand this grassroots democratic activity, to contextualize it, and to lend weight to its importance. To do this I use “the right to the city” theory, first developed by Henri Lefebvre.

1.1 Chapter Outline

In chapter 1, I lay out a theoretical framework called “right to the city”. I first position the Olympics as a global mega event located on the city scale, and justify my focus on the city. I use the concept of exchange value as described by Marx and Lefebvre to interpret the political economy of cities in relation to the nation and globalization. I then lay out Lefebvre's right to the city theory and draw out the role of use value. This will be my framework for analyzing the anti-Olympics protests, and my argument throughout will be that the protests embody a positive if complicated enactment of the right to the city.

In chapter 2, I apply the theory from chapter 1 to the anti-Olympics street protests. I first provide a brief history of street protests in Vancouver and a further discussion of the organized opposition in the lead-up to the Olympics in order to contextualize my project. I then connect the protest issues to the right to the city theory using use value and exchange value as key conceptual frames. Finally, I empirically ground this construct in my experiences in participant observation of the protests, as well as in interviews with protest organizers. I identify several tensions between the theory and the protest actions, and turn to the media in chapter 3 to explore its role in exacerbating these tensions.

In chapter 3, I explore how the protesters’ right to the city was reflected and furthermore legitimized in print news media, since legitimation is a crucial component of
democratic enactment. I examine and compare representation of the protests in direct party media, alternative media, and conventional media, and answer how their positionality interfaces with various publics.

I conclude that almost all of the protest events exhibit the theoretical elements of the right to the city. There were some shortfalls, however, regarding the inclusiveness of protests, the extent of their participation in urban political life, and the discrepancy of the black block-led Heart Attack march. Direct party and alternative media coverage represented the protests in such a way as to convey a sense of legitimacy upon the actions and the actors, thus portraying them as entitled to such participation in the city; however, corporate media did not achieve this level of analysis. I conclude that the anti-Olympics protests did in fact embody a positive enactment of the right to the city.
2: CONTEXT AND THEORY

The inalienable right to the city rests upon the capacity to force open spaces of the city to protest and contention, to create unmediated public spaces, so that the cauldron of urban life can become a catalytic site from which new conceptions and configurations of urban living can be devised (Harvey and Potter, 2009, p. 49).

2.1 The global and local institutional structures of the Olympics

2.1.1 Understanding the Playing Field

The Olympics are a global mega event that takes place every two years, alternating between a Summer Games and a Winter Games, in a select city each time. Understanding how they work provides some insight into why they are protested. Host locations are selected, and the broad rules structuring the Olympics are managed, by the International Organizing Committee (IOC), which is a “not-for-profit” entity earning hundreds of millions of dollars per Olympics. Based out of Switzerland, the IOC pays no taxes anywhere in the world, and has no legal accountability (Shaw, 2008). Cities make a bid and pay a fee to the IOC to host a given years’ Olympics through a “Bid” corporate entity formed in that city. The Bid entity requires the agreement of all levels of government, funding from them, and public support. A national organizing committee (here the Canadian Olympic Committee, or COC) also assists with funding issues and in mediating between cities and the IOC. The IOC visits bidding cities, and indicates to them what they must be able to provide in terms of infrastructure in order to have a chance to host select games. It then votes on which city will win the bid and signs the Host City Agreement with various levels of government. In this agreement, promises are
made to the public, and organizing and financial responsibilities are laid out for all parties involved. A local organizing committee (the Vancouver Organizing Committee, or VANOC, for 2010) then forms in the host city, and does the majority of the organizing work to make the Games happen. In the case of VANOC, they were funded by all three levels of government, and by corporate sponsors. The governmental and financial elements introduced here will be important throughout this project.

2.1.2 Global and Local Scales

The Olympics are understood as a global event for good reason: they take place in cities around the world, the athletes that compete in them are from countries around the world, and they are broadcast by TV networks globally. However, they are also a local event because each Olympics takes place on the ground, in a specific localized city and region. The Olympics roam the globe but the competitions need to actually happen somewhere. The global construct does not reflect the context of what takes place in a host city; it does not let us see the preparation required to host the games, or the consequences of hosting on the people of that place. At the local level, there are differences and similarities across cities that host the Games.

Clearly, each location is unique: its financial means, culture, history, and existing infrastructure are specific to it. Each place has unique ambitions – Vancouver strove to become a world-class city (as seen in Lowes, 2002); Beijing worked to showcase a new, modern, friendly China for Summer 2008 (Price and Dayan, 2008); London continues to assert its reputation as a world-class city via Summer 2012. The host city’s uniqueness means that the needs and responses that occur will shape the Olympics, and the opposition to them, in a particular way. In British Columbia, for example, the problem of
unceded aboriginal land, never signed to the Canadian state by treaty, has left a legacy of injustice, including disproportionate aboriginal poverty, which was a key issue in the anti-Olympics protests. In addition to this, entitlement to and use of traditional Native land is still a current issue, as in the case of traditional untouched St’at’imc land in the Callaghan Valley, which was encroached upon by Olympic-related developments (Shaw, 2008, p. 22-25). We will see in chapter 2 how important the issue of Native land was in protests as well.

Beyond the specific issues that arise with each Olympics, the transformation of host cities and regions show some similarities in their negative consequences across all iterations of the event. In this sense, the local particular follows a global universal pattern. In *Five Ring Circus: Myths and Realities of the Olympic Games* (2008), for instance, Shaw’s central argument is that the drive behind hosting the Olympics is fuelled by real-estate land grabbing. He compares his own detailed research on Vancouver with Lenskyj’s thorough study of Sydney’s Summer 2000 Games (Lenskyj, 2002) to support this claim. In both cases, the bid organization had a number of developers on it who would benefit from their city hosting the Games. Both cities had an “Olympic corridor” transportation route through low-income areas that quickly came under heavy gentrification pressures and increased homelessness (Shaw, 2008, p. 197; Lenskyj, 2002).

Every place the Olympics lands sees at least some real estate growth, not least to provide the Games facilities and accommodations for athletes and other visitors and tourists. Other similarities across host cities include: chronic cost overruns, broken promises, environmental costs and destruction, extensive security, corporate sponsorship, direct or indirect displacement of people, and a “free” press that boosts the Olympics (Shaw, 2008;
Lenskyj, 2000 and 2002; COHRE, 2008). In Vancouver, all but the last of these issues are among the key challenges people fought against in the build-up to February 2010. Indeed, while there is a global Olympic frame that shapes the city, it is crucial to look at the city itself, because this is where power struggles are played out, where values are made tangible, and where consequences are felt.

Of course, it could be argued that the national frame overshadowed the city during the 2010 Games. However, when we examine the consequences on the ground for Vancouver, we see that this was not the case. Much of the advertising rhetoric was in the national frame (eg. “Go Canada!”), but this occurred only during the Games themselves, and had no bearing on deciding what would happen in Vancouver prior to winning the bid, or in preparation for the Games. The decision to try to host the Games in Vancouver was made by the individuals in the Vancouver Bid Corp and politicians at all three levels of government, and once the bid was decided, the decisions on how exactly the Games would take shape in Vancouver were made by the IOC and VANOC. Vancouver and nearby areas of BC – not the nation – had to prepare for the Olympics, most notably by preparing infrastructure. Capital took concrete shape on the ground in greater Vancouver. It also took shape in other parts of Canada along the Olympic Torch route, but to a much lesser degree and for a shorter period of time, with less impact on the locations. Tangibly, the Olympics had much more to do with the local frame than the global frame not only in terms of economics and built spaces, but also in terms of tourism. National and international visitors witnessed the scenery and participated in activities in the Vancouver region, but this does not reflect the overall diversity of environments, people, and cultures
to be found across all of Canada. Thus, the national frame did not overshadow the local frame for this project.

2.2 What Lefebvre means by exchange value and use value

With this in mind, a theory of the city motivated by political economics is required to understand the meanings of the transformations associated with the Olympics that occurred in Vancouver. The theory must also provide a basis for understanding what these transformations meant for the city's inhabitants, in order to prepare the ground for analyzing the protest responses of some of them. Lefebvre's concepts of use value and exchange value, which he takes from Marx and adapts to urban theory, provide a means towards gaining these understandings.

I take Lefebvre as the starting point of my argument because while transdisciplinary, he offers theoretical and utopian tools to conceptualize the city across time and space, making his work as relevant to Canada in the 21st century as it was when originally written in 1967 in France. In particular, I find his Marxist discussion of the city understood as use and exchange values helpful for explaining the current nature of public participation in oppositional politics happening in Vancouver. His system of value opposes dominant hegemonic political discourse and allows us to discuss social justice and equality from a political economic standpoint; it isolates capitalist economic processes of commodification and shows how they disrupt an urban way of life based on a culture of care, beauty, and community. With this in mind, it is helpful to clarify the meaning of use value and exchange value as developed by Marx, and reworked by Lefebvre, in order to clarify how they might be used to understand the nature of cities today.
2.2.1 The role of exchange value and use value

According to Marx, exchange value and use value are the two forms of value any commodity can take (Marx, 1976). Exchange value is financial and quantifiable; it is not the simple cost of something, but the value that thing has when it is converted into a universal equivalent – money. Use value, on the other hand, is qualitative and specific to the everyday uses of things – what they can do, what they are good for. It is the practical and aesthetic quality of the thing as used for and by others. Lefebvre uses these terms to understand the modern city. He writes: the “city and urban reality are related to use value. Exchange value and the generalization of commodities by industrialization tend to destroy [use value] by subordinating the city and urban reality which are refuges of use value” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 67-68; italics in original). But, Lefebvre argues that the city nonetheless holds and retains a richness of use values. Capitalism, however, privileges exchange values and its expansion through processes of commodification that occur without regard for the beauty, justice, and the specific need for commodities in cities.

Marx rightly pointed out that exchange value and use value are two sides of the same coin. Anything which has one also always has the other in a different context. How Lefebvre uses use value and how I use this concept here is meant to refer to the dominant purpose or intended value of the thing, seen from the perspective of a critique of capitalism. Something intended to draw profit is primarily an exchange value. Where exchange value is prioritized over use value, use can come to be incidental, while something experienced as use value can be capitalized upon and exchanged. This always-possible conversion to exchange value is the so-called “miracle of capitalism.” But the corollary to this “miracle” is that use value can never be extinguished. More, we might
argue that when exchange value is privileged over the use value of things, injustice, deprivation, and alienation often result.

2.2.2 Lefebvre’s use value in the city

We can look at the conflict between those who are promoting the Olympics and those opposing them as a conflict between exchange value and use value. This conflict in turn contains a class conflict, which will be discussed below. In order to understand this conflict, we need to understand what the use value of the city is. I then integrate this into the right to the city such that I utilize use values as a way to read the right to the city.

Looking at the city as the scale of democratic contestation provides a useful way to analyze contemporary political actions. In this sense, it is valuable to look at the city first, in a historical context, and second, as a site to foster the face-to-face interactions necessary for public engagement in democratic politics. Lefebvre (1996) selects the city for the focus of his discussion based on historical context. In pre-industrialized Europe, he argues, cities already housed wealth, crafts, culture, and places of business. Cities “[were] centres of social and political life where not only wealth [was] accumulated, but knowledge (connaissances), techniques, and œuvres (works of art, monuments)” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 66). Lefebvre is drawn to the creative practices of people associated with these elements, and sees the entire city itself as an œuvre (ibid). Lefebvre means by this something akin to thinking of the city in terms of notions of the public sphere (Habermas, 1989). Of course, the period of industrialization in Western Europe greatly expanded the size and activities of cities, and introduced a stronger economic – capitalist – element to them. This introduces a dialectical conflict between the creative “use value” and the economic “exchange value” of the city, which is central to Lefebvre’s work. He
contends, in fact, that “The oeuvre is use value and the product is exchange value” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 66), meaning the oeuvre exists for the pleasure and beauty of itself and in itself and cannot be converted into money or a commodity, while if something is a product it holds value only in being exchanged. But because these two concepts are inextricably linked, even the oeuvre, the city as a living work of art, is an exchange value that can be capitalized upon to draw finance, investment, and wealthy inhabitants when it is thought of as a cultural product. Conceived in this manner, this dialectical contestation still exists very strongly in contemporary cities which, long after the era of industrialism, are under the pressure of the economic shifts of neoliberalism that strongly challenge use values in the city.

Lefebvre argues throughout “The Right to the City” (1996) that the city was, originally, the oeuvre, which is a use value. By this he means that through public festivals, street marketplaces, the creation of public art and sculpture, and the mundane yet nevertheless vibrant day-to-day activities of inhabitants, cities embodied a kind of fullness of life, interaction, and sometimes care that responded to the needs of the people. Where use value includes “pleasure, beauty, ornamentation of meeting places” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 102) for its own sake, and not for the purposes of commodification and exchange, he argues that capitalism shifts the city further towards processes of exchange. Nonetheless, he contends that the utopian city is based on use value. In Lefebvre's original formulation there is an apparent sense of romanticism and nostalgia for the pre-modern town, but Lefebvre stresses that “it is impossible to envisage the reconstitution of the old city, only the construction of a new one on new foundations, on another scale and in other conditions, in another society. The prescription is: there cannot be a going back
(towards the traditional city), nor a headlong flight towards a colossal and shapeless agglomeration” (ibid, 148). Given this, I suggest that Lefebvre helps us identify the conditions in urban life that speak to the fullness of experience captured under use value, and we can articulate these conditions without taking on the nostalgia apparent in Lefebvre's text. This is the case because Lefebvre helps us recall conditions of collective belonging that are vital to our lives today but are subsumed under the weight of exchange value. As such, I contend that the conditions for a rich urban life that can be drawn from Lefebvre's work include the experience of appropriation, participation, inclusivity, freedom, and justice.

When we begin to look at the embodied context of the use values of the city, the way it emerges in physical life is where we must turn in order to understand how in fact appropriation, participation, inclusivity, freedom, and justice are experienced. We want to look at use values particularly at the scale of the city because this scale allows for face-to-face interactions and the associated building of relationships, including a sense of city identity, which are important elements of engagement in the public sphere (Benhabib, 1996). Participation in public and political life, according to Nancy Fraser, “means being able to speak in one's own voice, and thereby simultaneously to construct and express one's cultural identity through idiom and style” (1992, p. 126). One such way that such participation can occur is in face-to-face interactions. Geographically localized in a city as opposed to a nation, people can physically pursue a number of avenues of democratic political expression, including visits to city hall, participation in neighbourhood associations, active membership in other advocacy or political groups, and street protest and demonstration. Through these and like actions, there are opportunities to build
relationships among individuals who hold similar concerns, as individuals are drawn to certain issues and events or meetings about them, where they are able to learn more and become further involved. On a smaller scale, the neighbourhood can provide a more stable avenue for political participation through neighbourhood councils, and stronger relationships with neighbours, although the issues of concern on this scale tend to be more localized (Berry et al., 1993). While this can reduce politics to an exclusionary “not in my backyard” interest (Harvey, 2001, chapter 10), it can also serve to highlight the specific needs of specific locales that might otherwise be generalized by policy makers, and thus create a healthy heterogeneous urban geography (Massey, 1994).

Reaching beyond the neighbourhood to the city opens politics up to a larger arena where democratic planning can support different locales with a sense of mutual understanding. The city scale also builds a more far-reaching sense of identity then what is possible through neighbourhood involvement because it includes a wide assortment of communities, people, ethnicities, and practices, all of which are continuously challenged to cooperatively co-exist. Fraser clarifies that “an egalitarian, multicultural society... must contain a multiplicity of publics” (1992, p. 26) who interact together in a broader public sphere. Within the public sphere of a city, too, these multiple publics are present and are all part of the identity of the city. The city thus provides the opportunities for diverse democratic political engagement, particularly on local or city-based political and economic shifts and decisions.

2.3 Neoliberalism and the neoliberal city

We can understand the use values of cities best in contrast to and in the context of the other form of value which they bear: exchange value. The conflict between these two
ways of valuing the city is manifest in many urban struggles, land use being perhaps the most visible. Lefebvre introduces but does not provide a thorough explanation of the exchange value of cities. To best understand what this looks like in our present moment, we must first examine the neoliberal context that has and continues to shape lived experience in Canadian cities.

As summarized by David Harvey, “Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (2005, p. 2). This is associated with a specific ethic which “holds that the social good will be maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions, and it seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market” (ibid, p. 3). The market is mediated exclusively by the universal equivalent of money, however, the market is concerned only with the exchange value of things. Consequently, when something is brought into the market, its use value is subsumed beneath the urge to maximize efficiency via exchange value. For classical market economists, this action is justified because the conversion of use value to a universal equivalent in the form of money is thought to extend the “social good” contained in any commodity to those who need or want such commodities. The problem is that the urge to maximize profit (exchange value) within capitalism produces contradictions. In particular, the urge for profit increasingly comes to outweigh the particular values that the uses of commodities hold; and as a result, in a market-saturated system, use value is negated.
Because of this, Harvey contests neoliberalism's claims based on contradictions between its theory and practice. He argues for an interpretation of neoliberalism as “a political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites” (Harvey, 2005, p. 19). This project has been carried out since the 1970s, driven by the power of specific political and economic axes. Neoliberal capital accumulation within a given state is largely a result of “accumulation by dispossession” (ibid, p. 159), that is, privatization of public or common lands and assets, intensive commodification of labour power, use of a credit system, speculative and predatory financialization, manipulation of debt crises, and state redistribution of resources through taxation and privatization. These processes create wealth within a state for an elite few in a way that is structurally unsuitable for broad and egalitarian distribution. Meanwhile, social inequality results for those deprived of access to land, alternative forms of consumption, and common property rights such as accessible education and health care (ibid). To justify his argument, Harvey notes that rising unemployment and decreased wages have coincided with the implementation of neoliberal policies in the US and Europe.

Harvey goes on to demonstrate that neoliberalism's emphasis on marketization and financialization has negative effects on “the social good” and on the lives of many not among the financial elite. Indeed, by reducing relationships to market exchanges, exchange values are prioritized over use values; but in doing so, the use has been compromised. Those unable to participate in exchange are permitted limited access to uses. Harvey contends that this dynamic produces systematic inequalities, largely because, under neoliberalism, exchange value is increasingly prioritized across our social,
cultural, and psychological lives, thereby becoming the sole measure of value. Harvey
also positions neoliberalism at the intersection of state and financial power thereby
casting the state in the role of creating and enabling sites of market exchange. Some of
these sites result from the privatization of state apparatuses and assets, resulting in
shrinking national powers; of course, these changes occur at the national level and also at
the city scale.

Indeed, under the influence of neoliberalism, cities have increasingly become
stand-alone entities only loosely tied to the nation state or the regional hinterland in
which they are located. This is the case because neoliberal restructuring through austerity
measures has systematically cut the amount of public funding spent on urban policy by
the federal and provincial governments in Canada (Heuton & Girard, 2010). This has
been a global trend that began around 1978 (Harvey, 2005), the consequences of which
have been that cities are now more independently responsible for acquiring funds for
necessary infrastructure, services, and programs (Harvey, 2005).

In *The Neoliberal City* (2007), Jason Hackworth explores how and why cities
have become “the sites of both the most acute articulation of neoliberalism and of its
most acute opposition” (p. xii). He details how this articulation takes the form of public-
private partnerships, revitalization projects in the urban core, gentrification, and mega-
projects, along lines of uneven development. Saskia Sassen associates these neoliberal
processes with a formation of the city that she terms the global city, “which operates as a
partly denationalized platform for global capital and, at the same time, is emerging as a
key site for the most astounding mix of people from all over the world” (Sassen, 2000, p.
48). As a result of neoliberal pressures and national austerity measures, local
governments welcome foreign/global capital to aid their financial situation. But in doing so, they engender capital with legal rights that serve to legitimate financial interests over the human rights and everyday life of people who live in that city. We can see this as the dominance of exchange value over use value. Sassen also argues that international migrants who are often marginalized and impoverished are a characteristic feature of the global city because “global cities concentrate a disproportionate share of global corporate power and are one of the key sites for its overvalorization. But they also concentrate a disproportionate share of the disadvantaged and are one of the key sites for their devalorization” (1999, p. 193). Cities will tend to over-value the power of capital and under-value impoverished populations then, by virtue of the fact that individually, workers contribute only minimally to capital accumulation. In this sense, we might say that poorer city residents are valued for their tax contributions, their labour, and their consumer purchasing power, but their need for use values is marginalized by the overwhelming drive toward profit. From their perspective however, they have a legitimate claim on the city which, at the extreme, they enact through uprisings and “urban political violence” as part of claiming their rights to the city (ibid, p. 192).

2.4 Political economy of Canadian cities

In Canada, cities acquire funding primarily through property taxes. Increasing municipal taxes is unpopular however, and higher earners have an economic incentive to move to another city with lower taxes if it will be more profitable in the long run. Thus we see competition between cities to maintain low taxes so as not to drive away the wealthy elite. One effect of this is that cities become an attractive site for speculative investment. Land and property are used to generate capital, while the use values of real
estate – for instance, proximity to downtown – serve only to boost its exchange value. Indeed, it is best for capital if the properties are not “used” by inhabitants at all, so as not to decrease the exchange value. The neoliberal practice of low taxation thus fosters real-estate speculation and a new formation of bourgeois land use.

Out-of-town or foreign investors are another alternative funding source for cities. To garner this investment, however, cities increasingly come to compete with each other. Low taxation rates are part of this, but that is only part of the larger process of branding the city. Cities strive to create a unique brand identity and in some cases to gain the status of a “world class city,” the aim of which is to draw initial investment, in the hopes that investment will draw further investment and growth through speculation. Through these processes, capital coagulates in cities, given the fact that popularity serves to increase popularity. The result is the creation of more wealth within the city limits in terms of built infrastructure, businesses and corporations, and a growing population of wealthy elites.

These two processes of acquiring funding sources – low tax real-estate incentives and competitive branding – privilege the wealthy elite. The city is designed to attract them, and attracting those with less wealth is incidental, though still necessary. But the provision of jobs in a city is secondary to the attraction of wealth. The problem here, however, is that those who rely on the city for use values such as jobs, food, and vibrant public space come to be subordinated to the needs of exchange value, because the neoliberal city comes to reflect the interests and visions of those in control of exchange value.
Many authors have commented on the decreasing role of federal governments and associated shifts of decision-making to either transnational and global bodies and processes or down to local and municipal ones, as well as to the private sector at all levels. Brodie (2000), for instance, observes the shift of political power to the local level and an associated shift from a national to a local conception of citizenship. She notes, however, that the concept of the “local” is undergoing rapid transformation, and argues for a strengthening of the local public sphere in order to retain democratic elements of citizenship at the level of the city. Thus as cities become more autonomous from nations in their decision making, and as the responsibility to be more self-sufficient shifts to urban settings, city dwellers gain greater opportunity and responsibility to exercise their democratic involvement in cities. I understand this as a form of justification for the right to the city.

2.5 The right to the city

To overcome the dominance of exchange values, use values must prevail. Right to the city theory provides the framework to understand these developments in relation to urban spaces. Having the right to the city means having the right to use the city and the right to transform it according to the needs and desires of inhabitants.

The right to the city exists at several levels. As Lefebvre describes it, it is largely a philosophical construct explored semiotically (Lefebvre, 1996). But for marginalized residents and for activists it functions as a rallying call and as their demand. The right to the city is a set of concrete rights that take place in occupied physical space, and at the level of discourse. The right to the city also exists within the normative sphere of rights and entails a concern for issues of appropriation, participation, inclusivity and difference,
freedom, and justice. Each of these is a use value of the city, and as such, each issue opens up space for further use values.

According to Lefebvre, “the right to the city manifests itself as a superior form of rights: [the] right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit. The right to the oeuvre, to participation and appropriation (clearly distinct from the right to property), are implied in the right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 173).

Appropriation occurs, for instance, when people use a public good and gain some control over its functioning and its meaning. This can be physical public space, or it can be public policy and laws, or city planning processes (which are appropriated sometimes very successfully through neighbourhood initiatives, see for example Lowes, 2002). Appropriation has spatial and temporal dimensions, and creative qualities. It is more about meaning creation and memory, about flexibility and use, than about ownership and property. Time and space are seen as flexible because they are repeatedly contested, taken up, and re-defined. Appropriation uses the imagination to re-create and re-define “time, space, physilocal life and desire” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 155). In this sense, the right to the city includes the right to collectively take and provide creative meanings to urban elements, bringing out their potential use values over their exchange values.

More than anything else, the right to the city is also the right to participate. For Harvey, participation takes the form of “greater democratic control over the production and utilization of... surplus [capital]” (2008, p. 9) absorbed by or invested in cities. Those who are affected by a decision have the right to participate in it, not merely those who, for example, have the financial means to propose a project. Purcell takes a similar stance
on participation and discusses it in greater detail and scope using the global city framework:

Global city inhabitants would have a central role in decisions about the geography of international capital flows, the investment decisions of transnational corporations, national and international policies on trade, and a variety of other processes, all of which contribute significantly to producing space in the global city. ... Because it would emphasize the use value of inhabitants in these decisions the right to the global city would decenter the profit motive as the core logic of investment decisions (2003, p. 582).

Participation in the right to the city thus means democratic participation in the economic and financial decisions involving both public and private funds when these in any way shape urban space or urban life.

Participation has a more everyday component as well. When Lefebvre celebrates the *oeuvre* he is extolling the everyday public life of inhabitants in the streets and other shared spaces. He talks about “urban society and the human as *oeuvre* in this society” (1996, p. 149). He means by this that even the everyday activities of life are public works of art when understood politically. Lefebvre's concern here is that human society not become overly rationalized and production-driven, but rather one that includes “complex and transparent relations with the world (the environment and [oneself])” (ibid). For instance, he asks, “What are and what would be the most successful places? How can they be discovered? According to which criteria? What are the times and rhythms of daily life which are inscribed and prescribed in these 'successful' spaces favourable to happiness?” (ibid, p. 151). In response he contends that “groups, social classes and class fractions” who have particular needs for use values – who are “segregated” as groups excluded from the totality of the city – can work to make “the renewed city... become the
oeuvre” (ibid, p. 154). Collective participation in the city, understood as “urban reform[,] questions the structures, the immediate (individual) and daily relations of existing society” (ibid), and can serve to reconstruct the city along lines of use values. Furthermore, the physical landscape that promotes such participation in urban life (eg. parks, sidewalks, neighbourhood or community centers, sites of entertainment, etc) must be constructed, and the planning required for this construction must also involve the inhabitants. Tovi Fenster (2005) takes up this understanding of participation in her discussion of the role of gender and race in the right to the city. Whether we discuss participation in terms of democratic decision-making or day-to-day activities, the identities of inhabitants will frame their participation, so special attention must be paid to inclusivity in the right to the city.

Everyone, regardless of their differences, should have access to participate in both of these ways. Fenster points out that while Lefebvre includes the right to difference in the right to the city, he does not “relate [difference] to the notion of power and control, which are identity related and gender related” (2005, p. 219). Her research shows that women, particularly women of colour, have different experiences of private life and public life than do men (Fenster, 2005). In order for women to achieve the right to the city then, she argues that “the right to participate in decision-making must begin at the home scale” (ibid, p. 220). Fenster also points out limitations in Lefebvre’s definition of public life and argues that race and gender identities can be a major limiting factor in the participation of minorities and women in some public spaces that prejudice and violence makes unsafe. If Lefebvre acknowledged these limitations, he would argue that through our participation we can identify problematic public areas and remove the barriers to
them. While the inclusion of difference needs to be addressed not only in terms of urban questions, the collective nature of the right to the city, discussed below, means that individuals of marginalized identities are not alone but are part of larger groups that together can assert their legitimacy in the city.

Very much bound up with the notion of equality is freedom. Lefebvre mentions but does not explain the element of freedom in detail when explaining the right to the city (1996, p. 173). However, Dikeç connects freedom to equality by using Étienne Balibar’s notion of “égaliberté,” where he defines “‘equality’ as non-discrimination, and ‘freedom’ as non-constraint (non-repression)” (Dikeç, 2009, p. 82). This allows Dikeç to define the right to the city as: “the right of all city habitants to participate in the political life of the city (fighting against discrimination), and their right to political struggle of resistance (fighting against repression). What is implied is not simply a political movement, but a transformation of the political itself” (ibid). This is an action-oriented approach to the right to the city that aligns right to the city theory with protests or other mass actions which seek to have more control over some element of the city. Looking at freedom as a struggle against repression also lets us differentiate between disenfranchised inhabitants struggling to have their participation recognized and those political and economic elites who are already over-expressing their right to the city through domination.

A driving element behind the right to the city is social justice. In “The right to the just city” (2009), Harvey and Potter argue that far from being a universal notion, justice must be contextualized in relation to social processes. Justice in urban life must be exercised in the face of the dominant logic of state power and capitalist power “through social mobilization and collective political/social struggle” (Harvey & Potter, 2009, p.
This is to challenge society’s “inalienable rights of individuals to private property and the profit rate” (ibid, p. 43), under which justice cannot be fully achieved. This is in part because injustice is embedded in urban space. Dikeç draws on Harvey (1973) to suggest that the right to the city, including a right to difference, provides “a better framework when articulated with a ‘spatial dialectics of injustice’” (Dikeç, 2009, p. 80). He brings in spatiality in two ways:

the spatiality of injustice and the injustice of spatiality; the former notion implies that justice has a spatial dimension to it, and therefore, that a spatial perspective might be used to discern injustice in space … The latter, on the other hand, implies existing structures in their capacities to produce and reproduce injustice through space. (ibid, p. 79).

The right to the city is thus driven by the need to alleviate injustices, some of which take on physical manifestations in the city.

2.6 Construction of the subject: rights based on inhabitance

2.6.1 Limitations of citizenship framing

One important question to answer in regards to the right to the city is “who has the right?” The term citizen is first used by Lefebvre, who also refers to the subjects of the right to the city as denizens, inhabitants, dwellers and citadins (citizen/urban dwellers) (1996). Purcell argues that “Lefebvre’s right to the city is an argument for profoundly reworking both the social relations of capitalism and the current structure of liberal-democratic citizenship” (2002, p. 101). By having the right to “all decisions that produce urban space”, citizenship now entails the right to directly influence private sector decisions in addition to government decisions (ibid, p. 102). Purcell continues that, “because throughout the twentieth century the term ‘citizenship’ has been hegemonically
associated with membership in a national political community, those who have a right to the city are perhaps better termed what Lefebvre calls *citadins* instead of citizens” (*ibid*).

I acknowledge also that in claims on the city by marginalized populations, citizenship can be a crucial component. This is the case, for example, for dwellers of large urban slums in the major cities of less privileged nations (see Khan, 2009). Here, people are fighting for basic citizenship rights, for legal acknowledgment that they exist, and for a very basic right to housing. This illustrates again the context-specificity of the right to the city and the associated needs of justice.

Despite this value, I reject the subject positioning of citizen as an appropriate concept for the right to the city in my work for two major reasons. First, citizenship has certain connotations of subservience to government bodies that cannot be entirely removed. Even in “its broadest sense, [where] citizenship involves rights, duties and membership in a political community of some kind” (Brown, 1994, cited in Purcell, 2003, p. 565), there is a relationship between a pre-structured political community and actors it judges as legitimate or not. Some element of the political community is already legitimate and holds authority, and remains more legitimate than its citizens. When the right to the city is claimed by people through action or acts, often against the established entitlements of other more powerful individuals, groups, or organizations, I contend it is already legitimate whether or not it is recognized by the state or governing authority. Citizenship ties individuals to institutions, in other words, but this membership relationship is not necessary when the right to the city provides the power to change those institutions. Purcell (2002) is correct to argue that Lefebvre’s formulation radically challenges relations of capitalism and liberal-democratic citizenship, but he stops short of
arguing that it has the utopic potential to transcend both. Any enactment of the right to
the city today exists within the dominant capitalist and statist paradigm, but the limits of
imagination which lead to an urban revolution operate in a paradigm of direct participant
control over all urban matters. The potential for this exists within Lefebvre’s, Harvey’s
and even Purcell’s right to the city theorizations, thus the discourse we use should allow
for that. In a radical expression of the right to the city, the people of the city fully
constitute it directly; what is now a relationship to the city becomes a creation of the city,
which is a relationship among the people, the physically- and socially- produced space,
and the wealth used to create it.

My second reason for rejecting the concept of citizenship is due to its uniform
application across all individuals within the citizen grouping. Peter Marcuse (2009a)
argues that the right to the city needs to be recognized most urgently among marginalized
and alienated groups of people, and is thus not equally available to all members of
society. The “demand” for and “cry” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 158, cited in Marcuse, 2009a, p.
189) for the right to the city in practice arises through social movements, protest, and
dissent from what Marcuse terms the materially “excluded” and from the culturally
“directly-oppressed” and culturally “alienated” (Marcuse, 2009a, p. 190-191. Discussed
further below). He points out that “the financial powers, the real estate owners and
speculators, the key political hierarchy of state power, [and] the owners of the media”
already have the right to the city because they are the ones running the city (ibid). I agree
with Marcuse’s categorization and argument, which does not coincide with a
universalizing citizenship right. Because the right to the city is not now evenly
distributed, those who have the least power are the most entitled to begin to take fuller
part in shaping their urban world. Full implementation of the right to the city would have all urban inhabitants regardless of their status play a major role in determining questions of urban expenditures that impact them, meaning that the financial elite would not have total control over their capital, and would mean a transcendence over the capitalist system as we know it.

An associated problem with the universal application of citizenship at present is its explicit rejection by groups of people in this study who hold other allegiances. Citizenship creates a levelling off of other group memberships by placing everyone within the same category by providing equal rights and entitlements, based on a false assumption of equivalent starting places. But this ignores identities (see, for instance, Fraser's (1992) critique of the bourgeois public sphere's expectation that interlocutors bracket status differentials to communicate as if they were equals), which is a problem for indigenous people (among others), some of whom primarily identify with their aboriginal first nation and reject colonization of their stolen land in British Columbia (Hill, 2010). First nations have a right to the city as well, but in a complex relationship with land claims that other inhabitants do not have. Marcuse’s categories of the excluded, directly oppressed, and alienated therefore hold more traction than a flattening notion of citizenship especially in Canada, where indigenous peoples are disproportionately impoverished, incarcerated, and discriminated against (White et al., 2003). Finally, some of those actively involved in anti-capitalist anti-globalization social movements and actions are also anti-state and self-identified anarchists and thus reject a citizenship framework (see Chapters 2 and 3 below).
2.6.2 Rights based on inhabitance

While Lefebvre refers to citizens or citadens, he also discusses the right to the city extensively as based on inhabitance (1996). It is this positioning that I am using in this study. The right to the city is thus based on living in a given city. Residence leads directly to participation in the life of the city; a city without people is no city at all, but a ruin. We participate immediately by residing in a home (even if that home is an alleyway), by working a job, by purchasing or selling goods or services, by conversing with others, by moving along sidewalks and streets, by attending artistic or cultural events – in short, by our amalgamated contribution to the construction of a place. All of these public or semi-public activities help shape the city to some small degree. Lefebvre terms this active participation “the notion of inhabit, that is, the plasticity of space, its modelling and the appropriation by groups and individuals of the conditions of their existence. It is also a complete way of living (functions, prescriptions, daily routine)” (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 79).

But to inhabit freely, we must be free to alter the terms of our participation: to decide where to build the streets that we will walk down, what news from what perspectives is reported to us through the media we consume, the allotment of funding for services we need and desire, and the mood of the monuments, architecture, and parks we view. The right to the city can be seen as a call for a broader, more participatory form of city governance that includes that which municipalities currently control, but also includes increased control over economic functions, particularly those of urban development. Its full manifestation requires a return of lands and assets to public hands, under democratic control (Harvey, 2008), which entails a class dimension.
2.6.3 Class in the right to the city

Far from being an anachronism, class is still prevalent in our world. Harvey (2005) argues that neoliberal restructuring is responsible for a growing wealth gap between the capitalist super-elite and everyone else. While these two extreme classes certainly exist, it serves our purposes here to have a more detailed understanding of those in-between the extremes. Marcuse identifies six class categories using traditional terms of material interest:

- the excluded (not in fact an accurate term, for they are in fact a part of the system, without the protections won by the working class for labour, but they operate at its margins);
- the working class, the materially exploited (including what is euphemistically called the middle class, i.e. white as well as blue collar workers … but underpaid and producing profit for others) – together with the excluded, we may speak of these two groups as the deprived; the small business people; … the gentry (including the more successful small business persons, professionals …); the capitalists (owners and decision-making managers of large business enterprises);…
- the establishment intelligentsia (including much of the media, academics, artists…);
- the politically powerful (including most of those in or aspiring to high public office). (2009a, p. 190).

Marcuse also provides categories of cultural class which operate in parallel with the above. They are:

- the directly oppressed (oppressed along lines of race, ethnicity, gender, lifestyle, often called the excluded, but excluded only in this ‘cultural’ sense, often included in an economic sense); the alienated (of any economic class, many youth, artists, a significant part of the intelligentsia, in resistance to the dominant system as preventing adequate satisfaction of their human needs); the insecure (… including much of the working class); the hapless lackeys of power …; the underwriters and beneficiaries of the established cultural and ideological hegemonic attitudes and beliefs (ibid, p. 191).

It is crucial to use both sets of categories to account for identity differences and power differentials. He argues that since some categories already have the right to the city and
are running it, and some do not, we must prioritize focus on the latter to bring them up to an equal level. This study adopts Marcuse’s perspective that the right to the city does not apply equally, but it tries to achieve equality.

2.7 The right to the city as a social right

In discussing the right to the city, we must briefly explain our understanding of rights in a cultural context. Rights discourse has been shifting away from the modernist liberal understanding of rights of the individual citizen in relation to society and the state, and towards the human rights required for just conditions of daily living in countries around the world. Richard Falk (2009) stresses the need for a broadening democratization of government in order for human rights to be upheld. Democratization places responsibility on all individuals to become involved through their practice, in this case, in upholding the value of rights. He argues “for personalizing the practice and protection of human rights by locating freedom and responsibility in the countless daily decisions each of us makes about the treatment of others” (Falk, 2009, p. 8). This emphasizes a grassroots approach to rights, and encourages a just lifestyle not at the behest of authorities, but of our own choice, and within our own control.

Falk’s argument places human rights in the social sphere, as well as in the traditional sphere of government. Similarly, the right to the city is expressed in the social sphere; it is first and foremost a right that arises from the grassroots, and can be asserted through the “countless daily decisions each of us makes” about our interactions with our public urban environment. The right to the city itself is nowhere specifically institutionally legitimized, but it is associated with the UN-declared human rights of freedom of opinion and expression, and of peaceful assembly and association. But
beyond this, it is a social right to the workings of the city, and fundamentally, to shape the world in which we live. Harvey quotes Robert Park to illustrate the tight relationship between people and their city:

> the city is ‘man’s most successful attempt to remake the world he lives in more after his heart’s desire. But, if the city is the world which man created, it is the world in which he is henceforth condemned to live. Thus, indirectly, and without any clear sense of the nature of his task, in making the city man has remade himself.’ (Park cited in Harvey, 2008, p. 1).

Harvey thus argues that “The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is ... one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights” (ibid). Additionally, this is a collective and not an individual right, because the city is shaped by all of its inhabitants – though still to grossly disparate degrees – and the city also shapes its inhabitants collectively, helping to create a collective identity.

### 2.8 Right to the city in practice

The way to assert the right to the city, practically, is through social movements. Being a right that is not yet officially recognized, people must claim it by enacting it, to whatever extent possible. The various urban social movements studied by Castells in *The City and the Grassroots* (1983) can be understood as practical assertions of the right to the city. Housing squats around the world, the establishment of the gay neighbourhood in San Francisco, and the 1970’s citizen movement in Madrid are all examples of large-scale movements of inhabitants exercising their right to the city by actively taking part in shaping it, and forcing government to respond to the will of the people. While Castells does not use Lefebvre’s terms, these movements can be theorized as movements around use values of elements of the city: affordable housing, an inclusive neighbourhood for a
minority group of people, and neighbourhood control of local assets such as schools and entertainment venues, respectively. While exchange value would have these cities filled with high-priced living units, branded neighbourhoods that attract tourists (which the Gay District has become), and private profitable ventures only, use values prevailed in these spaces, for a time, as a result of city inhabitants acting as though these spaces were in fact under their own control. These movements did not attempt to generate profitable enterprises, but to create affordable inclusive spaces for those who already lived there. Their aims were specific to their local problems and they were not actively interested in combating the predominance of exchange value, however, the theoretical framework described in this paper could be used to draw out the economic components of these movements.

A number of examples are explored in detail by Don Mitchell in *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (2003). He looks at the People’s Park in Berkeley, an urban space contested for free speech and homelessness, as an example of the fight for public space. Using a historical approach, he argues that the right to the city is tenuous and is dependent upon public space. He documents conflicts between zoning, municipal laws, police, rights, protests, homeless people, students, homeowners, and other city inhabitants, around the access to, entitlement to, and use of public space. He argues that the fight for the right to the city in public spaces is an attempt to democratize space.

There are many struggles that have been theorized in terms of right to the city, but there have also been public movements that specifically adopt and apply right to the city to focus their work. Marcuse (2009b) identifies charters for the Right to the City
discussed at several World Forums. He also points to: the US “The Right to the City Alliance,” a nation-wide coalition of many grassroots groups and organizations; the right to the city campaign of Habitat International Coalition; and the European Urban Charter. He distils eight common principles (which I will not present here) from the goals and statements of these organizations to illustrate the strength and usefulness of the right to the city as it is used in practice throughout the globe.

Returning now to the case of Vancouver in February 2010, a large-scale movement of inhabitants rallied around the Olympics in order to assert a different set of values than those offered by Olympics organizers. While the dissent against the Olympics did not explicitly adopt right to the city discourse, a number of features of the movement and of the specific protests against the Olympics situate this expression of dissent alongside the other movements mentioned here in terms of their democratic impulses and the role of public spaces. In the next chapter, I will use the right to the city theory on the anti-Olympics protests in Vancouver, both theoretically and practically, in order to understand the protest events.
3: READING THE PROTESTS

3.1 Vancouver history of street protests

The anti-Olympics protests are part of a long history of street protest in Vancouver. Such protests are not unique to Vancouver and are part of the histories of many cities. However, by looking at a history of protest and alternative media politics in Vancouver, I give the particular context for this city, to help situate the present study.

Michael Barnholden gives a detailed introduction to this history in *Reading the Riot Act: A Brief History of Riots in Vancouver* (2005). The early 1900s saw free speech riots, racist anti-Asian riots, and unemployment riots filling Vancouver streets, which were quelled by police. The so-called August 1971 “Gastown riot” was a large festive gathering of hippies and marijuana advocates in a radical area of Vancouver’s downtown. The gathering represented the “peace- and freedom-loving anti-authoritarian uprising in the middle of a highly developed capitalist state” (Barnholden, 2005, p. 88) characteristic of the 60s flower-power movement. *The Georgia Straight*, then an underground newspaper founded by poets and artists and now an alternative weekly (see below), covered the protest events as part of their ongoing alternative reporting (*ibid*, p. 88). The paper focused on police and municipal persecution of hippies, censorship, gentrification, displacement of people, critiques of monopoly capital, reports of police brutality, drug laws, and environmental issues, none of which received significant coverage in the mainstream press (*ibid*).
More recently, in August 1997, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum was held in Vancouver at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Committed to trade liberalization, and the participation of Asian dictators at the summit, APEC attracted protest through a march of 4500 people, some of whom were also concerned about the way security measures at the forum limited free speech and protest. A very large group that tried to climb the fence to approach the venue were pepper-sprayed, as were nearby media, and a group of students that was sitting blocking a road was told to disperse and then pepper-sprayed within seconds (Barnholden, 2005, p. 116). High security costs and the threat of protest zones were also part of the Olympics. Indeed, one of the RCMP officers who pepper-sprayed the APEC protesters, Bud Mercer, was appointed as head of the Vancouver Integrated Security Unit (VISU), the Olympic security force.

In December 2008, anti-APEC groups and others, totalling approximately 700 people, protested against the visit of Prime Minister Chretien (ibid, p. 118). At this “Riot at the Hyatt” Hotel, roughly 20 protesters broke a police line and were clubbed by riot police (ibid).

Many anti-Olympic protesters and organizers were aware of this history. The spaces of Vancouver in which they protested – UBC, downtown – were thus not blank slates of pavement, but rather, streets that already had a political history of dissent and contestation, for both protesters and police. This history also brings to the fore the excessive and repressive policing that has been tolerated by city officials, the repeat of which was a valid concern for Olympic protesters. This begins to set the context for the anti-Olympic protests, but a look at the history of protest specifically related to the
Olympics is required to provide a fuller picture of the scenario that would unfold in the months leading up to February 2010.

3.2 Street history of the anti-Olympics protests

Street protests, actions, and disruptions against the Olympics have taken place in Vancouver on a regular basis since 2006. The overview I provide here is drawn largely from groups' websites, conventional news coverage, and Vancouver Media Coop's Anti-Olympics Archive (http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca/olympics). Organized by a large number of grassroots groups, these protests reveal the plurality of the democratic impulse in the city to address public issues brought to the foreground by the Olympics. This history also introduces some of the important actors in the anti-Olympic protests, which are the focus of this study and are explored in detail below.

One anti-Olympic-related action took place from September to December 2002; known as the Woodwards Squat, the action occupied the empty Downtown East-side (DTES) Woodwards building to demand it be redeveloped into social housing. A banner reading “Campbell’s Olympic Shame” hung from the top of the building (Lowry & Zaslove, 2004, p. 9). This action was led by the APC (Anti-Poverty Committee, a radical direct action group), as well as a broad coalition of community groups and individuals.

From April to May 2006, Eagleridge Bluffs was blockaded by environmental, indigenous, and community groups to prevent the expansion of the Sea-to-Sky highway to Whistler. At the time, blockaders argued that while they were not necessarily against the Olympics, they disagreed with the way this associated highway development was being carried out (Shaw, 2008). Throughout the fall 2006, the APC organized several
housing squats to demand social housing in response to increases in homelessness, which was seen to be exacerbated by the coming Olympics (see Burrows, 2006).

Beginning early in 2007, protesters were also present at and disrupted every official Olympic event – public or private. On February 12, 2007, for instance, the Native Youth Movement and the DTES Residents Association (DERA) disrupted the opening ceremony for the Olympic Clock. On March 6, 2007, the Olympic flag was stolen from City Hall grounds by the Native Warriors Society. This action was motivated by indigenous opposition to the Olympics, and the death of Native elder Harriet Nahanee, who was arrested and released for protesting at Eagleridge Bluffs but contracted a fatal infection while in jail (Zig-Zag, 2007). On March 12, 2007, another protest disrupted the Olympic flag ceremony at city hall (Lee, 2007). Official Olympic luncheons were also disrupted in February 2008 and March 2009.

Official Olympic organizers and corporate sponsors also faced resistance. On May 22, 2007, for instance, Premier Gordon Campbell and Ken Dobell, a key political player with a seat on VANOC’s Board of Directors, were symbolically “evicted” from their offices by the APC in response to unjust Olympic-related evictions of DTES residents (Keating, 2007). Throughout 2007 and 2008, individual anarchists and associated small groups smashed the windows of Olympic sponsors, including the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) and McDonalds, and vandalized the Olympic Clock, VANOC vehicles and military vehicles.

Beginning on February 3, 2008, three annual Poverty Olympics were organized and hosted by a number of groups, including: the Carnegie Community Action Project (CCAP), a group organized through a community center in the DTES that researches
homelessness, income, and land use, and lobbies city hall; Power of Women (POW), an Indigenous community group organized through the DTES Women's Shelter; Streams of Justice, a group focused on housing that is organized through the First United Church and Homeless Shelter in the DTES; Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), a DTES-based peer support and education group; Four Sisters Housing Co-op; Raise the Rates (of BC's welfare allowance); BC Persons with AIDS Society; and, the Downtown Eastside Neighborhood House. These mock-Olympics involved hundreds of people and connected poverty in the DTES with public spending on the Olympics. This was done via mock events that highlighted increasing homelessness (from 1,100 homeless in 2003 to 2,700 in 2008; Graves et al., 2008, p. 9), Olympic-related evictions (for example, approximately 163 units were evicted in 2007 in order to renovate timed to the Olympics; Challenging Mayor Sullivan’s numbers, 2008), and the contradiction of spending billions on a spectacle in Vancouver while that same city has so much poverty and homelessness – problems which are unnecessary if the money were to be more responsibly spent. The Poverty Olympics included speeches, parades, mascots such as Creepy the Cockroach, and satirical events like Skating Around Poverty.

Housing advocacy campaigns were linked with the Olympics since at least October 2007, when groups protested the sell-off of social housing. These included CALM (Community Advocates for Little Mountain), a social housing project in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood, and the grassroots-organized City-wide Housing Coalition (CHC), which included neighbourhoods across the city except the DTES, local progressive politicians, and the official Olympic watchdog group, Impact on Communities Coalition, IOCC. Protests occurred weekly at Little Mountain, and spread
to other locations throughout city during the first half of 2008, taking place weekly. These protests were in part a call for the government to keep its Olympic promise to build 3200 new units of social housing prior to the Games (ICI, 2007).

The Olympic Resistance Network (ORN) formed in summer 2008 and began outreach to other groups and to indigenous activists outside Vancouver. It organized anti-Olympic public education, and disrupted the September 2008 launch of the Olympic “Spirit Train,” but did not hold many street protests until the Olympics themselves.

Grassroots groups continued to have street protests throughout 2009 and up until the Olympics. On January 25, 2009, Power of Women marched in protest of increased police street sweeps and more aggressive policing strategies in the DTES, which were experienced as an attempt to socially cleanse the neighbourhood for the coming Olympics. This was followed by a press conference on the issue on March 15, 2009, by POW, VANDU, CCAP, Pivot Legal Society (a progressive not-for-profit law firm), and the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA, a non-partisan charitable society). A very large housing march was organized by City-wide Housing Coalition on April 4, 2009, to continue the campaign they had begun with weekly small protests. ORN organized a protest against Olympic greenwashing on March 30, 2009. The Olympic Torch Relay was protested, disrupted, and blocked persistently across the country, beginning with its launch in Victoria BC on October 30, 2009, and ending with the blockades and protests in Vancouver on the day of the Opening Ceremonies, February 12, 2010. The “Assistance to Shelter Act,” which would give police the power to move outdoor homeless people to unspecified shelters when the provincial housing minister declared it to be a “weather emergency” was re-named the “Olympic Kidnapping Act” by VanAct! (Vancouver
Action!, a grassroots activist group comprised largely of those with post-secondary education) at a protest and press conference on October 30, 2009. A 200-person march called “Solidarity against police repression” took place January 22, 2010. Finally, the government's “Downtown East-side Connect” official media pavilion for the Olympics was protested by anti-poverty groups at its launch, February 2, 2010.

This history of events implicates the Olympics in a number of social issues in Vancouver, most notably: homelessness, social housing needs, poverty, expenditure of public money, environmental destruction, police and policing of the poor, and corporate sponsorship. One or more of these issues were the focus of each of the various groups who came together to work on shared issues, united by the Olympics as both the source of their problems and as a point of resistance. They began to organize together via the City-wide Housing Coalition, the Poverty Olympics, ORN, and against new government or legal measures that many of them saw as unjust and impermissible. With the groundwork of Vancouver's grassroots involvement in issues of public concern laid out, I turn now to my research on protest during the Olympic period.

3.3 Methods

I conducted participant observation of the Olympic period protests, and supplemented this with ethnographic interviews. Participant observation was most applicable to my project because I was already an “insider” to my subject: I was against the Olympics and I intended to protest them. I was a member of a small, grassroots activist group called VanAct! that was organizing on Olympics-related issues, and I was somewhat familiar with the landscape of groups that had organized previous protests and actions in Vancouver. Participant observation allowed me to remain true to my own
subject position as a person deeply troubled and moved by the political landscape of the Olympics in Vancouver. It also put me in a knowledgeable position to accurately research and provide a study of organized dissent against the Olympics in Vancouver.

I was a participant observer at nine of the 11 protests I was aware of during the Olympic period, including: the torch blockade at UBC on February 11 organized by the UBC Social Justice Center and VanAct!; the Commercial Drive torch blockade on Feb 12; the Take Back Our City march organized by the Welcoming Committee (an autonomous offshoot of ORN), starting at the Vancouver Art Gallery and ending near BC Place during the Olympic opening ceremonies on Feb 12; the Heart Attack march taking place throughout downtown streets on Feb 13; the annual Feb 14 Annual Women's Memorial March at Main and Hastings and throughout the DTES, organized by POW; the Feb 15 Rally for housing and Olympic Tent Village (organized in large part by POW, Streams of Justice, VanAct! and Food not Bombs, as well as other groups) that took place at an empty lot at 52 West Hastings between February 15 and approximately March 1; the Feb 20 Rally for Housing at the Art Gallery, part of the Pivot Legal Society's Red Tent campaign; the Feb 27 Wrap-Up of the Canada Pavilion at Beatty St, also part of the Red Tent campaign; and the Feb 28 Olympics Over Resistance Lives march, during the Olympic closing ceremonies, organized by ORN. I did not attend the Feb 12 torch blockade in the DTES because I was at the Commercial Drive torch protest at the time, and I did not attend the Feb 15 Stop War protest at the Art Gallery because I was at the Tent Village at the time. All 11 protests are, however, included in this study.

Participant observation of rallies and marches consisted of locating myself among and marching with the other protestors, carrying a protest sign, chanting and singing, and
listening to speakers. My observations consisted of digital still photography, audio recording, and taking limited notes on paper. As a member of VanAct!, I helped to organize the Tent Village squat, and participated in the Village by camping at the squat for several nights, preparing several meals, taking an overnight security shift, attending Village meetings, and simply hanging out with others at the site.

Ethnographic interviews were chosen as an additional research method to achieve two goals. First, to provide further insight into protest organizing timelines, the connections between organizations, and the details of the events (beyond what I observed); and second, to provide the organizers’ ethnographic perspectives about the events. One-on-one, face-to-face, semi-structured ethnographic interviews were chosen because they allow for a more in-depth discussion than other survey methods. Interviewees were selected based on their active participation in one or more group that organized one of the 11 protest events. I conducted six audio-recorded, two-hour interviews with protesters from five groups: APC, ORN, POW, VanAct!, and Welcoming Committee.

I often found the participant observer subject position to be a difficult one to navigate. In particular, the actions associated with research came to feel somewhat detached from participation in the events themselves. More specifically, as a participant, I felt uneasy taking notes on things that appeared so obvious to me. Furthermore, I felt disingenuous conducting research on events without revealing my observer position, even though the events were public, and even though I would not be identifying any individuals or their actions in my work. As an observer, particularly as an interviewer, I felt as if I was artificially role playing. Adequate applied training in these research
methods could have made the process run more smoothly, however, this was not possible given the time constraints of my project, and the novelty of the personal challenges presented when doing research while also participating in protest actions.

Still, working from a participant position allowed me to bring my personal understanding of the protest issues to bear on the right to the city framework. I was in fact able to reflect on my observations and experiences and use them to ground my theoretical framework. I analyzed the protests, through my own position, as a felt expression of the right to the city.

3.4 Protest issues and their abstract connection to the right to the city

Protests during the Games period were motivated by a number of issues, as noted above. The range of concerns articulated the plurality of the city, the many elements of urban life of political concern to inhabitants, and while diverse, they were interconnected. The most prevalent issues, based on my research, can be summarized in the following nine categories: housing and homelessness; Indigenous rights; missing and murdered women; poverty; cost of the Olympics; broken Olympic promises; corporate Olympic sponsors; free speech; and security and surveillance. Different protest events stressed different issues. In this section I will summarize each set of issues, and connect these theoretically to the right to the city through the use values of the right to the city elements – appropriation, participation, inclusivity and difference, freedom, and justice – outlined in chapter 1.

Issues related to social housing and affordable housing were perhaps the most obvious and prevalent use value that arose throughout the Olympic protests. Housing is a
particularly important issue in Vancouver because has a large homeless population, estimated at 2,700 in 2008 (Graves et al 2008, 9), has the highest housing rental rates in Canada (CMHC, 2010), and has a large percentage of low-income people (21% of all housed adults, after tax; compare with 19% in Toronto, 25% in Montreal, and approximately 14% in most other large Canadian cities; Statistics Canada Community Profiles, 2007). There is an ongoing and severe shortage of low income housing in Vancouver (Swanson & Pederson 2008; 2009; 2010), and most new developments are market-priced condos. These challenges to acquiring affordable housing are linked to the Olympics because the public and private money spent on the Games would serve greater use values for inhabitants if it were spent on public housing. Also, as governments spent more money on the Games, less was available for social services including public housing and the welfare allowance for rent, which carry tangible use values for the urban poor. Furthermore, the Olympic spectacle appeared to help drive investment in the form of real estate development, which intensified the gentrification of affordable housing in areas of Vancouver like the DTES, driving current residents out of the city into surrounding suburban areas or into homelessness. Indicative of this process, homelessness in Vancouver doubled from 1,100 to 2,200 between 2003 and 2005, and increased to 2,700 in 2008 (Graves et al., 2008, p. 9).

The right to housing is part of the right to the city (Marcuse, 2009a). This is not a right to property ownership, but a right to affordable housing within one’s means. If the city is comprised of inhabitants and the city is theirs to shape to suit their needs and desires (as outlined in chapter 1), they must all be entitled to the material conditions – that is, homes – that would allow them to be politically participating inhabitants. Without
first having a home, one cannot easily be part of the city, cannot be fully included, and therefore having the right to sufficient, legitimate, stable housing that can become a home is an important part of the right to the city.

The second major issue, regarding indigenous land claims and exemplified by the slogan “No Olympics on stolen Native land” condenses a complex configuration of political issues. Much of the land in BC was not legally acquired through the treaty process that was part of the colonization of Canada (O’Bonsawin, 2010). It therefore remains unceded, unsurrendered, or simply put, stolen. There is ongoing dialogue and legal procedures between First Nations and the Canadian government on land claims issues, but in many cases land has been developed and cannot be claimed, or where there are claims, agreements have not yet been reached. While the land is disputed, it lies in the hands of the Crown, to be distributed under the Crown’s authority. Pertaining to the Olympics, “no Olympics on stolen Native land” refers largely to the Callaghan Valley near Whistler, where the Olympic Nordic events took place (O’Bonsawin, 2010). The Whistler Olympic Park was constructed there, and there was considerable pressure by developers to take advantage of the economic situation and build ski resorts.

The protest slogan aimed to raise awareness about the issue of unceded indigenous land in general, and the land being used for Olympics events in particular. It was also an assertion that despite Crown authority, the land of the Callaghan Valley is not for sale, and may be defended by indigenous protesters. Such was the case at Sutikalh (Melvin Creek), where indigenous people set up a long-term road blockade in 2000 to prevent the development of a ski resort on their traditional territory (Shaw, 2008, p. 24). Not all Natives are in agreement, of course, over how to go forward with land issues,
including claims and treaties, and private development projects on their unceded lands. A number of First Nations governments and individuals took advantage of the opportunities afforded by the Olympics to bring their culture to the forefront on the world stage as an important part of Canadian culture. Indigenous anti-Olympics protesters represented only some of those who did not want to collaborate with Olympics initiatives in such ways, preferring alternative modes of self-representation.

The indigenous resistance to the Olympics had a particular urban character because of indigenous poverty. A disproportionately large population of impoverished people in Canada is indigenous, and this is true also in Vancouver where over one third of homeless people are indigenous (Kraus et al., 2010). Part of the meaning of “No Olympics on stolen Native land” can be read that Natives did not want the Olympics to occur in a time and place where their issues and needs had not yet been addressed. Addressing poverty, homelessness and inadequate housing, disproportionate incarceration of indigenous people, missing and murdered Native women, systemic racism, and cultural misunderstanding and prejudice are some important topics not at all included in the Olympic frame. These are not urban issues only, but they are all issues for urban Natives. It could be argued that the inclusion of First Nations in the Olympics, especially the opening ceremonies, provided awareness and acknowledgement of the importance of Native people in Canada’s history and present, and could then be leveraged to pressure governments to address these issues. It is beyond the scope of this study to see whether this is occurring. Given the biases of corporate media, the interests of governments, and the structure of Indian and Canadian government relations, it seems unlikely, but would be worthwhile to research.
The right of women, including ethnic minorities such as indigenous women, to have safe inclusive access to participate in and appropriate the city is vital for the right to the city. The annual February 14 Women’s Memorial March for missing and murdered women highlights the lack of safety that marginalized women experience in Vancouver and elsewhere. For reasons that are often bound up in complex urban themes, women sometimes undertake sex work for income, where they are concentrated in urban centres indoors and outdoors on the streets. If city streets are not safe for some women, some of whom are engaged in sex work, fighting for the right to the city can be part of the path to alleviating the conditions that perpetuate injustice and criminal violence against women. Drawing attention to these problems and striving for women's inclusion and participation in decision-making over this issue is a key first step. Achieving justice in the cases that have occurred would demonstrate a public concern over these disappearances and over these women, and could deter future violent acts.

This issue has been raised by women in Vancouver for decades and was not specific to the Olympics. The annual March only happened to fall during the Games period, and for this reason the march itself is not included when I refer to “anti-Olympic protests.” However, a separate campaign called “Buying sex is not a sport” directly linked the Olympics with increased trafficking of sex workers and sex tourism. This allowed for a critique of the Olympics along the lines of exploitation of women, and of expanding the amount of urban sex work. Because the issue of women's rights intersects with the Olympics and the city, and because it was a protest issue, I mention it here; however, the issue goes much further and it may well be better understood through other
theoretical interpretations more specific to gender, value of women, equality, or justice. More work on this subject is required.

Urban poverty was a major focus of the anti-Olympics protests because of its relationship to a city of plenty. Vancouver is one of the most unaffordable cities in the world, with housing prices now among the highest in the world (Yu & Donville, 2011). There is incredible wealth in this city but it is deeply stratified. This is most visible downtown where some of the nation’s poorest live in the DTES, a few blocks away from some of the nation’s wealthiest neighbourhoods. Poverty is also relative; even a worker with a part time job or on minimum wage has difficulty living in Vancouver although she or he could afford to live elsewhere. Therefore anything that drives up the costs of living, such as intensified condo construction and gentrification, both of which were stimulated by the Olympics, worsens the situation of those in poverty. More directly, the Olympics also cost approximately $6 billion (this includes associated costs such as security, the Sea-to-Sky highway expansion, the Canada Line skytrain, the Vancouver convention center, and contributions from governmental official sponsors; Bramham, 2009). Public moral outrage resulted from seeing such expenditures used to host a sporting event while there were so many more pressing human needs that should first have been met, one of which is poverty.

Poverty is important in the context of the right to the city because it is most challenging for the very poor to live in an expensive city, and yet they have as much right to be included here as wealthy property owners or anyone else. Our current social order is structured around urban inhabitance – the majority of the global population is concentrated in cities – therefore systemically excluding a group based on income, class,
or any other factor goes against all contemporary ideals of democracy, freedom, and justice. Inclusivity of diversity is one of the right to the city elements outlined above, and here it intersects directly with class. As theorized above, the right to the city includes the use of public space, as well as control in decision-making. Mitchell (2004) argues that the homeless have a right to the city through public space, and that this is contested by heavy policing of park spaces where they sleep. The 2006 Project Civil City program in Vancouver acted in a similar way to criminalize poverty and attempted to remove the homeless from public view by the Olympics. It included many initiatives, one of which was to ticket activities often carried out by street homeless: sleeping in parks, sitting on sidewalks, vending goods without a permit, public urination, panhandling, etc. These tickets were part of a struggle over the right to use space and to be visible in space in the city. Despite the struggles to meet their own most basic human needs, financially impoverished Vancouver residents still attempt to stand up for their rights and affect decision-making through the formation of and involvement in groups that do political advocacy work, such as those already mentioned. The use of space and efforts towards decision-making came together powerfully in the Tent Village protest squat.

Related to the issues of homelessness and poverty were the cost overruns, cuts to public funding, and broken bid promises as a motivation to protest. Projected costs during the bid phase, when Vancouverites voted on whether to host the Olympics in 2002, were $1.2 billion (Bid Book 2002, section 5.5). By January 2009, however, the costs for hosting the games rose to $6 billion (Bramham, 2009). The final cost is estimated to be as high as $9.2 billion (Rezaee, 2010). Less than $1 billion of the total came from corporate sponsorships (Shaw, 2008, p. 183), and the remainder was public money that Vancouver
residents did not know about or agree to spend during the 2002 vote. The right to the city entails inhabitant control over the finances that shape the city, and yet this gross overspending was out of our hands. Concurrent with Olympic costs were large-scale BC government cuts to funding for arts and culture, the Environment Ministry, and public service jobs (Johal, 2010).

Aside from costs, there were also broken promises to build social housing, to prevent displacements, to avoid environmental destruction and to be “green” and “sustainable” (Bid Book, 2002, section 4). These commitments were made by all levels of government in conjunction with VANOC. The Athlete’s Village was promised to be one third low-income and one third “affordable” housing after the Games (ICI, 2007), but by February 2010 this had dropped to 10% low-income and 10% “affordable” housing. In the years between the bid promises and the Games, low income rents in the DTES continued to rise above the low-income welfare allowance, pricing people out of their neighbourhood and increasing homelessness (Swanson & Pederson, 2007; 2008; 2009). The doubling of homelessness between 2003 and 2005 was argued by many to be the result of the Olympic-related real estate boom (Schmidt, 2007). Environmental destruction occurred at Eagleridge Bluffs to expand the Sea-to-sky highway, at Callaghan Valley to build the Nordic Centre, and in greenhouse gas emissions to build new sporting venues. Therefore, when the City broke its promises to its residents, they had every right to react in protest, to assert their democratic legitimacy over that of the city officials. This can even be seen as more of a duty than a right to hold their government accountable to promises made, particularly when those promises served as justification for hosting the Olympic spectacle in the city.
Another issue of concern was the corporate sponsorship of the Olympics, on the basis of where the money came from and what it was used for. This also speaks to a larger concern about the predominance of corporate capital in our society. Official sponsors included GE, Coca-Cola, TD Canada Trust, RBC, VISA, The Hudson’s Bay Company, and GM. RBC and TD finance the environmental disaster of Alberta tar sands oil extraction (Banks Ranked, 2010). Coca-Cola has many alleged human rights abuses (Blanding, 2010). The Hudson’s Bay Company played a role in Canadian colonization (Newman, 1998). With the right to the city, inhabitants have a right to be involved in the finances that shape their city. If they disagree with what they see as unethical sources of revenue, they have a right to share that view and attempt to influence financial decisions, such as whether or not to accept these sponsors. Additionally, inhabitants have the right to shape the spaces of the city including the images they are confronted with. Olympic sponsorship allowed these corporations to advertise extensively in public spaces, and to use their logos on Olympic sites and materials.

Free speech is a recognized basic human right, and it is a necessary part of the right to the city. To engage democratically, people must be free to publicly discuss issues. Involvement in decision making is impossible without freedom of speech, and this includes the freedom to voice a strong dissenting view in any arena. Many such arenas exist at the level of the city, for example municipal governments, neighbourhood associations, downtown streets, public spaces, and signs on residential lawns. Some of these sites of expression were repressed and free speech was curtailed by the “2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games By-law” (Henderson, 2009) which prohibited the display of any unofficial material about or against the Olympics near Olympic events, in
the downtown area, or on people’s windows, homes or yards along major traffic routes. The by-law permitted police to enter private premises and remove the material after 24 hours. The stated motivation for the law was to prevent unapproved advertising using Olympics branding. This law was passed in the summer of 2009 but because of negative public opinion, and a lawsuit by two Vancouver activists, the law was re-written to explicitly be applied only to commercial signage (Vancouver rewrites, 2009). Numerous Olympic documents also stipulated that no political messages should be present in or around Olympic venues or along the torch route (see Olympic Torch Run Manual, n.d.; Olympic Clean Venue Agreement; Olympic Host City Agreement, 2003; Olympic Charter, 2007, rule 51). The governmental and administrative attempts to limit free speech and dissent were troubling indications of the undemocratic nature of the Olympics and provided impetus for people to exercise their free speech against them.

Connected to limitations on free speech, Olympic security apparatuses engaged in increased surveillance of Olympic dissent and of individual dissenters. By targeting individuals at their homes and places of work, this surveillance seemed designed to intimidate people organizing against the Olympics. It was carried out by a new entity: the Vancouver Integrated Security Unit (VISU), which was an alliance of private security, and Canadian law and military agencies, and was designed to provide security for the Olympics. Olympic security was problematic because it harassed dissenters and militarized public space. A crystallizing example of this was the arrest of a protest organizer, Ed Durgan, who was targeted when he witnessed the harassment of a DTES man on a park bench by a group of police including a border services officer. One officer recognized him as an activist, stopped him on his bike, and instead of issuing a ticket for
biking on the sidewalk, charged him with obstructing a peace officer and stated that he, an international student, would be deported (Oommen, 2010). A visible police presence and specially-installed surveillance cameras hindered people’s ability to use public space without intimidation. While Olympic tourists and people celebrating the Games often found police to be friendly and helpful, protesters were acknowledged by officials as the largest security threat to the Olympics (Dembicki, 2010b; Cernetig, 2010). Thus, those engaged in dissent were a priori targeted – privately and in public – by security, and implicitly and sometimes explicitly suffered infringements on their rights to free speech, free assembly, protest, and the right to be free from terrorism by the hands of the state.

The right to the city entails the right to use spaces in the city without intimidation and harassment from authorities. Massive police presence in the city confirmed protesters as a threat, and thus threw into question their right to use the spaces of the city to be politically engaged in protest.

Having made the theoretical connections between the use values of the right to the city and the issues raised by protests groups, in the next section I ground this abstraction in my empirical research on the protests. I use my participant observations and interview data to locate the abstract meaning of the right to the city in the practices of the anti-Olympic protests. I begin with a brief first-person narration sketch of the Commercial Drive torch blockade based on my experience at that event, in order to provide a sense of the lived experience, and to present the protest issues as they were situated in the protest itself. I follow this with an empirical analysis based on the right to the city. I close the chapter with a discussion of tensions in the protests that fall short of the ideals of the right to the city.
3.5 Sketch of the Commercial Drive torch protest

The Olympics had arrived, and I'd made it through the first protest, Thursday night at UBC, without any incident. The fear and uncertainty I had about what the policing would be like had been lifted by that, and while I was still a bit nervous, I was excited for a long day with two protests.

At 9am on Friday Feb 12, 2010, I biked the short ride from my house to Grandview Park on Commercial Drive to protest against the Olympic torch going through my neighbourhood. The Drive, as the street is known locally, has a strong grassroots community character and is traditionally an Italian and Portuguese immigrant community. It is known for being culturally and politically alternative, and it was this tradition that I wanted to uphold in protesting to keep the torch off the Drive. I wanted to stand with my community to symbolically reject the Olympics.

It was a mild sunny day, refreshing if not for the helicopters that gratingly cut across the sky – utterly foreign to this part of the city. Police on bikes and pairs of legal observers hung around the periphery. A young guy meandered around playing gypsy tunes on a clarinet as families with babies, a couple of groups of high school kids, some young women with bandanas covering their faces, old hippies, and adults of all ages gathered at the corner of the park. I hung a bright Bristol board sign on my back that read “Olympics decimate host cities”. Other signs read “IOC: International Organized Crime”, “$6,000,000,000 and zero sense”, “Better transit not freeways” with an image of tar sands and corporate sponsors in the Olympic rings, “Ignite the flame of justice”, “Down with the corporate Olympiad”, “Olympics hurts the poor and the earth”, “Free speech zone”, “With glowing hearts we seethe and writhe”, and other signs about Olympic security,
costs, corporate sponsors, the environment, and demands for social services. A number of indie media were present as well. An impromptu gathering near the edge of the park attracted 30 people discussing whether and when to move into the street. After a moment consensus to move was reached but before we left one woman said, “Everybody look down look down. The land you are standing on is unceded, occupied Coast Salish territories.”

We walked off the curb chanting a rousing call and response of “Whose streets? Our streets!” and about 200 of us followed a banner reading “Communities not Olympics”. Shortly after we reached the north end of the Drive, a black block of about 50 arrived from where they had just halted the torch on Hastings St and started running barbed wire across the street on the north side of the intersection. We waited for a while, chanting and chatting with those around us. People waiting to see the torch, including elementary school kids, were intermingled with protesters in the street. The Carnival Band, an East Van marching band that frequents protests, arrived with loud and lively tunes of support. It was a festive social atmosphere, though the line of police along the western edge of the intersection (a direction in which no one was trying to move) added some tension, as did the busy-at-work black block. Then someone shouted “They’re diverting it [the torch] up Clark [St]!” (a parallel street west of us) so we all began to quickly walk up the Drive to head it off. The street was filled with Olympic supporters of all ages, protesters, police on foot and on bike, and media. I was concerned that the protest was getting spread out and split up. Those at the front started to run forward and I saw we were heading towards a row of police on horses blocking the street. I ran along with the black block through a parallel alleyway to get past the police line, and went
through a line of police on bikes two blocks further on (my first time crossing a police line). It felt exhilarating to run along with this group who did not hesitate to move past the police – to feel like the street was ours more than it was theirs.

I walked more slowly then, as the black block either slowed down or hurried ahead out of my vision and the marching band and other protesters caught up. Among thick mixed crowds in the street, including many looking for the torch, protest chants overlapped: “Whose streets? Our streets!”, “No Olympics on stolen Native land!”, “2010 homes not 2010 Games!” I overheard a young man in a jersey jovially ask a woman with a protest sign, “What - can I buy coffee on stolen Native land? Are you the real estate broker? It’s so ridiculous; was the world given to YOU to divide up? Stop being so racist!” The woman just burst out laughing. I too felt incredulous, but found it very interesting that he seemed to take “stolen Native land” at face value and not deny it, but not knowing where to go with it, dismissed it.

When we reached the north end of the drive, a speaker on a megaphone announced “The torch did not go on the Drive! We did it!” I felt exuberant that we did what we had set out collectively to do, and that unlike at the previous night’s protest of the torch at UBC, which did not attempt to block the road, there were enough protesters, adequate tactics, enough witnesses, and enough sunlight and energetic support to make this blockade a success.

3.6 Empirical analysis of the protests

I now take this sketch and translate some of the occurrences and issues raised by it into elements of the right to the city discourse. I also translate from my experiences of
and interviews with the other protest events and the protest groups. Having discussed the
issues abstractly in terms of right to the city theory above, I here analyze what they meant
for protesters as they were enacted at the protests, and show how the expressions of
protesters and protest groups are the legitimate voice of the right to the city. Occurrences
and experiences are organized according to the use value elements of right to the city
theory: appropriation, participation, inclusivity, freedom, and justice.

3.6.1 Appropriation

Appropriation occurred in the taking of, using, and re-defining physical spaces,
Olympic spaces, and spaces of media discourse. In this sketch, protesters appropriated the
designated Olympic space of the torch route along Commercial Drive from the
grassroots. We used it not as a space to celebrate the arrival of the Olympics, but to reject
their presence, driven by our social and political criticisms. Using bodies and barbed
wire, protest signs and slogans, we re-defined the Drive as an anti-Olympic site hostile to
the torch. It was no longer the torch route, and the torch had to take a different route. The
same appropriation and re-routing occurred along Hastings St at Cambie St earlier that
morning, when protesters blocked the torch and forced its re-routing.

Streets in general were successfully appropriated by all the protest marches during
the Olympics. Designated for Olympic traffic downtown, or blocked off by police for
crowds of Olympic supporters, protest marches claimed the streets as anti-Olympic
spaces. This was done in the spirit of the chant, “Whose streets? Our streets!”
Appropriation was visible via banners at the head of the marches, protest signs, and
voices shouting in unison or over the megaphone. In some instances, streets were blocked
by police and had to be more aggressively contested, or remained zones inaccessible to and “protected” from protesters.

Appropriation of Olympic space also occurred on the lawn of the Vancouver Art Gallery. This site holds the permanent Olympic clock fixture, and during the Olympics it also held a temporary Olympic Visitor Kiosk and faced an enormous Canadian flag wrapping a building across the street. According to Megan, a student activist, “Everywhere you went in the city there was so much pro-Olympics propaganda. Like I felt like I couldn’t fucking breathe, so for me it was so refreshing to get together with 2 or 3 thousand [people] to show the rest of the world Vancouver isn’t OK with the Olympics.” As an Olympic space, this site was challenged by protest groups that traditionally use the Art Gallery lawn as a rally site (for everything from the Critical Mass bike rides to protesting Israel apartheid), and its reputation as a protest space was reinforced at the Take Back Our City rally. Here, protesters and Olympic supporters mixed, and this central and well-known location was known to the media as well, facilitating some appropriation of media space that was predominantly dedicated to celebrating all things Olympic. Media coverage is discussed further in chapter 3.

Another Olympic space briefly appropriated by an advocacy group, Pivot Legal Society, was the Canada Pavilion at Beatty St. This site was wrapped in a giant red tarp printed with messages about housing. This event was planned with the permission of city authorities and permitted to last only several hours, but it nevertheless physically and discursively re-packaged a site of nationalism and Olympic propaganda as a site advocating national housing for the poor.
These examples of appropriation occurred temporarily in space, and after the protests passed those spaces again became Olympic spaces, except to some extent in peoples’ memories and in the media memory. But the appropriation by Tent Village of an empty lot at 52 West Hastings St was more lasting. Physical appropriation of this space lasted for over two weeks and its memory lingers there still in the shape of an extra layer of fence and a layer of plywood, which were erected around the lot after the squat ended. Owned by a developer and leased to VANOC as a parking lot (which was never used) during the Olympics, this site is located where very low income housing is needed most urgently. This became the home of upwards of 100 people during the Games and was squatted with tents, banners, campfires, and performances. The empty Olympic lot was re-defined as a collective living space intended to draw media attention to poverty and homelessness, to be a temporary home for whoever needed it, and to demand social housing from the government. This demand, however, is in tension with the idea of appropriation because unless it is resident-controlled, inhabitants lose some of the power to define the space. Kyle, an anarchist, says, “I think seizing ground and holding it is pretty much the only way to house people without having to do this weird paradox interaction with the state where you’re asking for handouts. It’s the better alternative in my opinion if you can pull it off.”

Throughout the planning of the squat and during the first 24 hours there was a strong concern that the police would shut down the action and re-appropriate the site, but their lack of interference with the site, the number of campers, and the presence of legal observers and media quickly alleviated that concern. One community organizer, Cathy, recalls, “I talked to my boys everyday on the phone and they said the cops are just
waiting for the OK from VANOC and they’re going to come with a dump-truck and arrest everybody. But they can’t do that because it’s only going to make them look bad on the news, if they kick us off their property.”

In spite of the extensive and well-funded reconfiguration of Vancouver as an Olympic Host City, protesters successfully appropriated some public spaces and gave them different meanings. Some of these spaces, such as the Art Gallery, Commercial Drive, and Hastings St in the DTES, already held meaning as locations of resistance to dominant ideologies and were re-affirmed as such.

3.6.2 Participation

The decision to host the Games and decisions to spend public funds on various aspects associated with them were already made throughout the previous decade; however, inhabitants participated by expressing strong dissent against those decisions and voiced alternatives to them in the only way that remained open to them: through protest. Most simply, people engaged in physical participation in political issues by attending protests, using the located presence of their bodies to make a statement: they wanted to be there. According to Fay, a student activist, “I think it’s a success anytime people get together and march because it’s voicing your opposition… Anytime that a big mass of people get together and rise up against what the government is doing, it’s a bit of a reality check for them; it scares them a bit. And also it showed the rest of the world that Vancouver’s not a world class city. No matter what they say, no matter how beautiful our mountains are, we have a lot of problems and the government’s turning a blind eye to it.” This speaks to not only physical participation, but also participation in framing the identity of the city.
Physical participation at the DTES and Commercial Drive torch blockades more directly communicated that people were willing to put their bodies between the Olympics and their neighbourhoods in a decision to keep the torch out. Kyle recalls of the former, “We locked down the intersection; they had to re-route the torch. And then we actually chased the torch out of the downtown east-side. Literally, I ran three blocks to catch them, and then they gave up trying to continue up Hastings and just bundled the torch bearer into a van and drove off.” At the Commercial blockade, the decision-making element of participation also took the form of enough people putting up a strong enough resistance that the torch would be forced to take another route. At the UBC torch protest, those present, numbering roughly 50, did not want to move out of the road, but after some brief discussion decided to be moved without opposition because as one protester said, “it’s not worth it to get arrested; it’s only the first protest.” Thus the torch was permitted to pass through campus, but not without some visible and audible dissent.

The physical presence showed a will to participate, and concurrent verbal expressions, including home-made placards, were an attempt to participate in determining what use values Olympic money should have been spent on instead. The chants and signs present at all of the protests spoke to this, for example, “2010 Homes not 2010 Games!” or, “We need gold medal education,” or, “UBC STUDENTS do NOT approve: environmental destruction; civil liberties eroded; exploitation; broken promises; increased homelessness; increased poverty (1 in 5 kids!); senseless public DEBT.” Protesters also brought up certain other policy issues not related to the Olympics or to Vancouver specifically, but which would benefit from media attention, such as the war in Afghanistan, Canada’s seal hunting, and the Alberta tar sands (profit from which did
support the Olympics through sponsors GM, Petro-Canada, and RBC). While simply pointing to issues is yet nowhere near the level of participation called for by right to the city theory, in that protesters have no direct effect on government budgets or policies, it is an attempt by protesters to have a greater influence, and demonstrates the democratic impulse that would take them in that direction.

Political influence occurs also through participation in media discourses. For Megan, the protests were “about educating people and about creating social change in this city during this time when there’s so much international media here.” For Cathy as well, getting the issues into the media was important: “I’m out there speaking. This is where the people down here [in the DTES] were really really proud to participate in the Olympic Tent Village and glad to be worldwide on the news, speaking about homelessness and poor people when the Olympics were here… We met a lot of people: the LA Times, Wall Street Journal, Russians, Germans, Japan, Toronto, all those media.”

Through the Women's Memorial March, supporters participated in the call for a public enquiry to achieve justice, and to deter further abductions from happening. Organizers also strove to direct public values towards marginalized women, and by attracting some 3000 supporters, were fairly successful in doing so.

Most protests attempted to participate in the discussion of homelessness and housing availability in Vancouver. Chants and placards spoke to this repeatedly, but the Red Tent campaign and Tent Village focused specifically on this issue. One-person red tents were distributed to homeless people at Tent Village and in the DTES to both challenge the city's legislation against camping in parks and to call for a national housing strategy. Tents were printed with the messages, “Housing is a right. 'Denial of the right to
adequate housing to marginalized, disadvantaged groups in Canada clearly assaults fundamental rights in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms' UN Rapporteur March 2009” or, “End Homelessness Now! 'Canada must commit to a comprehensive national housing strategy with stable and long-term funding.' UN Rapporteur March 2009.” The red banner wrap of the Canada Pavilion also invited the participation of protesters or passers-by to use provided paints to write their own messages about the issue.

The Tent Village protest attempted to effect housing policy and public housing spending through demands written on a 5-storey banner reading “Tent to end: homelessness, gentrification, criminalization of poverty.” It showed a will to participate in creating solutions to Vancouver’s homelessness problem, but did not, over the two weeks, achieve those three goals, which remain long-term political projects of housing and homelessness activists and advocates. The action did result in the housing of approximately 60 homeless Tent Village residents (Nielsen, 2010). Furthermore, there was a strong participatory element to the event itself; there, people worked together with common values and common goals. According to Megan, “Yeah there were organizers, but once the community formed there, the village formed, people just took it on. It occurred to you to take it on as your own and to make their own rules, and enforce those rules. And that’s what made it such a great community is that it wasn’t being run by a group of people, it was being run by the people who were living there.” There was a community agreement posted at the front gate, daily village meetings, and volunteer-based tasks such as food preparation and watching the gate. The site was slowly transformed as it was appropriated through people’s participation in things such as
constructing rain shelters, creating art, and having skill shares. A dream held there was that the participation in the Tent Village might eventually be part of a movement to build resident-controlled social housing on the lot.

The tireless actions and involvement of thousands of protesters throughout the Olympics showed a strong will to participate in the political life of the city. They used protest as the means available to them, but also put energy into continuing their involvement beyond the Games, by such things as lobbying government and building broader public concern over issues.

3.6.3 Inclusivity

Protest events were inclusive to some extent, in terms of the different identities who were present and their equal opportunity to participate. The protests strongly included those Natives who did not support the Olympics. This was done actively by organizers, some of whom were Native, who decided to unite behind an anti-colonial resistance under the slogan “No Olympics on stolen Native land!” The Power of Women group, Native Youth Alliance, Native Warriors, no2010.com, and Friendship Centre were all Native-led groups and they played major roles in organizing the DTES torch blockade, Take Back Our City, Women’s Memorial March, and Tent Village. Youth were actively included in the protests through ORN’s high school outreach program during the lead-up to the Games, which aimed to educate students on the problems associated with the Olympics to counterbalance the pro-Olympic and corporate-sponsored teaching materials distributed to schools through VANOC. The Women’s Memorial March was very well attended by females of all ages and was a safe and supportive space because there were large numbers, it was held in the daytime, it was organized as a community event not a
specifically anti-Olympic event, it takes place annually so people knew exactly what to expect of it, and there was only light policing. Children were present at the Commercial Drive protest, the Take Back our City March (which was promoted as “family friendly” and provided child care), and the Women's Memorial march.

The Women’s Memorial and the Take Back Our City marches were very large and accessible to people with more moderate political views. In the case of the former, they may not have been critical of the Olympics. Nonetheless, the size of these two marches suggests that likely even those who had not been to a protest or march before were in attendance. Both events were also accessible to Olympic tourists, particularly the latter march which began at the Art Gallery, where many tourists were present.

Tent Village was very inclusive of marginalized populations, including Natives, homeless people, sex workers, people who were drunk or high (but not using on site), people with mental illness, as well as tourists, media, students, and supporters. Visitors or campers were often actively welcomed by people watching the gate. I experienced this as I was recognized and welcomed – often by name – by the acquaintances and friends I was making there, which helped to very quickly and strongly create a feeling of comfort and belonging at the Village that was felt by all as a strong community bond. This feeling led Tandy, an aboriginal organizer, to say, “Tent Village was the best medicine I ever had. It's a good medicine and a good remedy for people that are stressed out of their lives – suffering. To me, it was paradise.” Kyle noted, “I was meeting interesting people the whole time... everybody that was there was there for the right reasons” that is, to support the goals of the actions, and to support the growing community there.
As a whole, the protests were inclusive because they brought together a number of previously separate groups during the organizing phase and also at the protests. Multiple groups organized together in the case of the Welcoming Committee, which included members from several grassroots groups and organized the Take Back Our City march, which was attended by over a dozen groups. Tent Village was also organized by several groups, some of whom had not worked together before. Not only did organizing groups work together, protesters attended multiple protest events. When asked why he attended the Stop War rally, Kyle said, “I thought, yeah, Stop War, sure. I support these guys. They're coming from a good place. I thought we were all working together. I thought the convergence was about all these different activist groups working together for the first time, and interacting, and so I figured I'd go to their march – see what it was all about.” At all the protests I recognized the faces of many people who were already politically active with different groups in Vancouver. It was unique that they all came together and supported each others' initiatives in this large-scale, two-week series of protests. Megan also noted that like the Olympics themselves, “it was this same opportunity for a bunch of different groups who normally wouldn't organize to get together. And I think we built a lot of really strong connections – I know I did: built a lot of really strong connections through anti-Olympic organizing. I met a lot of people who I wouldn't meet just in the anti-poverty world or the feminist community that I'm involved in.” Tandy said of the groups that supported the Tent Village, “It's really really amazing, the support the Power of Women had, with the other groups... A lot of people helped.”

Each protest was inclusive to some extent but different protests were still more accessible to different types of protesters because they took different stylistic approaches,
focused on different issues, and took place in different locations. Thus even if members of a group or unaffiliated individuals attended only select protests, the total scope of protests planned allowed for a broad range of involvement against the Olympics in the city.

3.6.4 Freedom

Freedom is here understood as freedom from repression. Anti-Olympic protest fought against repression of free speech, protest and dissent, and against media repression of the realities of poverty and associated issues in the DTES.

Free speech was threatened by the Vancouver “2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games By-law” (Henderson, 2009) and by Olympic policy documents, mentioned above. Similarly, the Vancouver Integrated Security Unit (VISU, which included RCMP, multiple police forces, CSIS, the Canadian military, Canadian Border Services Agency, and others) responsible for the security of the Games discussed the creation of “safe assembly zones” in the year leading up to the Games, but never gave firm answers to protest organizers about the geographical boundaries of those zones. This proposed measure also received much public outcry regarding freedom of speech and expression, and was criticized by the BCCLA. By February 2010, VISU had dropped the idea.

While most of the work decrying these proposed measures took place during the lead-up to the Olympics, the protests also contested these attempts at repression by merely taking place. The protests themselves asserted the right to protest, in the spirit of freedom, and against the spirit of unconstitutional legislation. Placards reading “Free Speech Zone” attested to this. People also freely used the copyrighted Olympic logo and
name on their signs and banners, and distorted them in art pieces and in the case of the
corporate logos in the rings on GatewaySucks.org banners, which attempted to link
Olympics with tar sands through certain sponsors.

In the months leading up to the Olympics, police tried to intimidate those
planning to protest by using several fear and intimidation tactics. Roughly 15 or more
anti-Olympic activists were targeted and harassed by police under VISU at their homes
and workplaces, and police also questioned their friends and neighbours about them
(Olympic Resistance Network, 2009; Mickleburgh, 2009). This indicated that organizers
were under some level of surveillance. At a public forum (November 26, 2009, SFU
Harbour Centre, Vancouver) with presenters from VISU, BCCLA and others, designed to
provide open discussion about what to expect of Olympic security, police admitted they
had purchased an LRAD sonic weapon, but did not admit what other weapons they might
have or might use. That month police also admitted to inserting an undercover police
agent as the driver of a private bus hired by Vancouver ORN members to drive protesters
to the Torch in Victoria, BC. These actions together created an atmosphere of fear and
uncertainty that some protesters experienced as terrorism. According to Fay, “I really
didn't know what to expect. All these threats of surveillance and infiltration. Was I under
surveillance? Were they reading my emails? I felt constantly terrorized, because I wasn't
doing anything wrong, but that didn't matter. Olympics were an excuse to suppress our
right to a different opinion. I didn't only feel threatened, I was threatened - not directly,
but because people like me were, and [the police] could have been watching me too
without me knowing it.” In light of these fears and uncertainties, and in some part as a
response to them, the anti-Olympic protests then expressed a will for free expression, and a refusal to be silenced.

The protests were very much a fight against a dominant narrative that was backed up by the spirit of discriminatory laws and a well-backed security force. This can be illustrated with a moment at the UBC torch protest where, according to Megan, “people were pushing up against the curb and I'd stepped off the curb and two cops came running up and just tossed me... and that's when I was like holy fuck, like the cops are ... willing to defend trucks and flames, and hurt people in the process.” This small instance demonstrates the principle that the smooth hosting of the Olympics trumped all else, including the integrity of a person who stepped out of line, who in this case was not a free agent told to get back on the curb, but an object to be removed. Further to this example, official agreements signed by Olympic and government partners contained extensive regulations on what would be permitted in public space – both in terms of policing measures and limitations on individual activities, dress, and other forms of expression – in order to ensure “enjoyment of the games” (see Olympic Host City Agreement, 2003; Olympic Torch Run Manual, n.d.; and IOC Olympic Clean Venue Agreement, n.d.).

Another small attempt was made to contain disruption to the Olympic narrative outside the Tent Village shortly after it began. A city worker placed a row of pylons and a length of caution tape along Hastings St in front of the already-fenced Tent Village lot to “protect the Olympic route.” Not wanting to be contained in this way, Village residents threw the pylons back in the truck and a choir supporting the Village sang “We shall not be moved...” Protesters expressed a will to determine what the Village looked like to
passers-by (protest signs on a fence but not behind official “safety” materials), as opposed to a small attempt at containment by the City.

The repression of dissent and alternative viewpoints around the Olympics could certainly have been much worse. A large and broad opposition to the Olympics, public support for the right to protest, broad public condemnation of at least the costs of the Olympics, the presence of local and international media, and the legal observation work and the Legal Observer program of the BCCLA all contributed to the minimal repression of free speech, free association, and free protest. Protesters and protest groups were largely able to express their concerns about issues through various means: rallies, marches, and direct actions. However, given the trend towards increased securitization in Canada, as evidenced by the $0.9 billion budget for each of Olympic security and Toronto's July 2010 G8/G20 Summit security, freedom will continue to be a challenging element of the right to the city for inhabitants to achieve.

3.6.5 Justice

Using a spatial understanding of justice, the protests highlighted colonial as well as economic injustices. Groups united behind an anti-colonial analysis expressed by the leading slogan at most anti-Olympic protests: “No Olympics on stolen Native land.” This was a phrase also found on stickers, and on the anti-Olympic news websites no2010.com and Vancouver Media Coop. Protests brought the issue of Native land theft and continued injustices to the foreground of discourse. This went deeper than mere rhetoric however, because indigenous groups and/or individuals were present at nearly all protest events with indigenous sovereignty flags and gave speeches and led some of the marches. According to Kyle, the DTES torch blockade “was primarily an indigenous sovereignty
demo, although everybody was there. We had all the different organizations from ORN there, or members from [it]. It was very very powerful for me, because we took the intersection. There was an indigenous woman from the Power of Women group... she was front row centre.” Indigenous sovereignty and the spatial injustice of land issues are not specific to the Olympics. However, it connects to them through the fact of continuous lack of regard for traditional Native land in the Callaghan Valley. Protesters also sought to draw wider public and international attention to this issue. Protest organizers and their groups were very aware of the issue and actively tried not to perpetuate the injustice by taking leadership from indigenous persons and groups. This occurred symbolically when they led the marches, and also substantively at the Tent Village where the Power of Women and other indigenous people were in a respected but not hierarchical position. The Power of Women helped write the “spirit of the site” community agreement, and indigenous individuals ritually blessed the fires each night when they were lit. The “sacred fire” was then respected by all Village residents, who were taught not to desecrate it by throwing in cigarette butts or garbage. The Olympics were also used as a media spotlight on indigenous justice.

The Women’s Memorial March sought to use the media as well to draw greater attention to their 19-year fight for justice for missing and murdered women from the DTES and elsewhere in Canada, many of whom were and are Native. As discussed by speakers at the March, there was a greater sense of injustice when governments could bring together materials and support to host the Olympics, but had not yet even held a public enquiry into these missing persons. Tandy relates: “Justice hasn't been served. Why's it taking so long? It's going to be 20 years eh. No closure, nothing... and there's
still women going missing – and men.” The March visited those spaces where women were last seen; it took ownership of the streets and brought thousands of marchers to bear witness to the sites of disappearance. In doing so it asserted a right to safe public spaces, which these women, driven by principles of justice, desired to create.

The issues of poverty and homelessness are deeply connected with spatial injustice. The DTES is the most visible physical manifestation of injustice in Vancouver, where buildings are in disrepair and have bedbug and rodent infestations yet are still rented at above the welfare housing allowance. Attempts to integrate the Olympic spectacle into the DTES can be seen as an attempt to include this community in the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, yet it becomes problematic when this is done against the wishes of residents. People were fairly aware of it as a superficial gesture, when real problems were not being adequately addressed. Kyle said of the DTES torch blockade:

the idea of the Olympics torch being run through skid row as a – you know, they found a recovering addict to carry the torch through Hastings, and just, this whole idea of it is so disgusting to me. I mean, everything about the Olympics was, you know, completely wasting money for all the wrong reasons, when they could be helping people, housing people. And to run it through the downtown eastside... the symbolism just got so thick it was palpable.

Blocking the torch was thus an act of social justice. The protest action expressed that the DTES did not need Olympics, did not support them, and did not want to be included in their waste of misspent tax money. For Megan, a housing advocate, the major reason she joined the anti-Olympic movement was “child poverty and poverty in general; the lack of social services, the constant cuts. And knowing that there was going to be a huge allocation of public money to a corporate party, I knew it was going to have an impact on
the [marginalized] youth in Vancouver, and just homeless people in general.” There was a general feeling that gentrification of the DTES and of Vancouver generally was being accelerated by the Olympics-related real estate boom. The anti-Olympic slogan “Homes not Games” summarized protesters’ values on this point.

The 2010 configuration of spatial injustice in the city certainly existed prior to the Olympic bid, however, the winning of the bid exacerbated the problems of affordable housing availability in Vancouver. By focusing on this, protesters showed dismay and sometimes outrage at the unjust allocation of public funds to hold an international tourism and media spectacle. By loudly voicing these concerns they attempted to begin to bring justice to homeless and precariously housed people, and to alleviate the spatial injustices of the city.

3.7 Tensions with theory and within protests

The previous section has shown how the anti-Olympic protests fit with right to the city framework. But of course, any such fit is never perfect. I mean by this that protests fell short of theoretical ideals most notably in inclusiveness and participation. As but one example, the Heart Attack march had significant differences from other protest events and is discussed here.

One central failing of the protests was the minimal involvement of ethnic minorities, aside from First Nations people. This was a failure as regards the inclusion of different communities in greater Vancouver, as well as a failure to achieve the aims of the right to the city. Inclusion is the starting point for achieving the right to the city, for without it, sufficient participation and appropriation cannot occur. I did not observe
noticeable numbers of Chinese, South Asians, or other groups prevalent in the city either at protests or within organizing groups; the absence of people of Punjabi decent was also noted in the press (Singh, 2010). This was likely the result of complex and extensive circumstances beyond the scope of this project. Furthermore, protests were only advertised in certain areas and in certain outlets, potentially making it difficult for people in the suburbs or those who are not fluent English language speakers to find out about them, or to learn about the Olympics resistance in general; however, the extent of outreach undertaken by protest organizers was also not a part of this research project. This project also did not explore ethnic media, or language barriers. By not doing so, and by not using a theoretical framework that integrates ethnicity, this project also fails at sufficient inclusiveness. The under-inclusion of ethnic minorities in the Olympics resistance speaks to the complexity of the city and the difficulty of inclusion in the right to the city, given ethnic and language differences, and geographical differences within the city and attached suburban municipalities.

The protests also failed to generate the level of and types of participation necessary for full enactment of the right to the city. Protesters lacked control over public decision-making, which was still firmly in the hands of policy makers, governments, and corporate bodies (such as the IOC). Full enactment of the right to the city requires more than just protest, however, crucially, protest can “force open spaces” (Harvey & Potter, 2009, p. 49) to alternative, diverse, and contentious ideas – they can activate public life. Protests did have sufficient participation to achieve this opening, through their successful appropriations and redefinitions. Chapter 3 explores the extent of these openings within
Vancouver news media, and their reach to members of the local publics who experienced the protests only through the media.

Before moving to this analysis, however, it is of note that the February 13 Heart Attack march was the most contentious part of the entire anti-Olympic resistance because protesters carried out violent actions, including smashing windows. On the flier promoting the march, the by-line was “clog the arteries of capitalism”; the march was meant to disrupt and prevent traffic leaving the city for the Whistler Olympic events on the first day of the Games. Of approximately 300 protesters, half were dressed entirely in black and many of these had their faces covered, and half were in street clothes. On the march, those dressed in black – the black block – pulled newsstands and dumpsters into the street and knocked over traffic pylons. This was intended to block the streets and disrupt people leaving the city via downtown to attend the first day of Olympic events at Whistler. The black block also painted anarchy symbols, and broke windows at The Bay and TD bank, but did not loot. The bank was targeted for financing the Alberta tar sands, although it was not an Olympic sponsor. The Bay was targeted because of its history of Canadian colonialism (see for example Newman, 1998), and because it supported the Olympics as its official merchandise source.

The traffic disruption and the smashing action can be read as symbolic rejection to proclaim that the Olympics were not a welcome part of this city. For Megan, the messaging was “anti-capitalist, anti-colonialism, anti-Olympics.” There were different ideas, however, about who the symbolism was trying to reach. Kyle interpreted the actions as indicating that “people were starting to wake up” and saw them as communicating “to other kids coming up that have the same itching nagging feeling that
there's something seriously wrong” and that more militancy is needed. For Henry, an anarchist, the protest was meant to “clog the arteries of capitalism. It was like attack capitalism. And it was pretty clear…. It didn’t [attempt to] communicate to the population in general; its communication was clearly to the police forces, the government, and the Olympics sponsors. We don’t want Olympics.” Although the Heart Attack march was not designed to reach out to the broader public, they were witness to the march both in person and in media representations, and the significance of the disagreement between Heart Attack protesters and the broader public needs to be examined.

What differentiated the Heart Attack march most from the other protests was the damage to property and the prominence of the masked black block, which made it a largely uninclusive event. The march was organized on a principle of “diversity of tactics”, meaning that no protesters should police each other or interfere with other protesters’ tactics. This understanding exists among those who knowingly attend a diversity of tactics event, however, such an agreement excludes from the event those who are against violent protest tactics or who are against wearing masks, although they may support the motivations for the protest. In the case of the Heart Attack march, this approach also caused anger among on-lookers, who were not privy to or bound by any such understanding of diversity of tactics, and who held a different, ideologically dominant understanding of legitimate protest as peaceful. Although the black block was also present and masked at the DTES and Commercial Drive torch blockades and the Take Back our City march, they did not engage in property damage, and correspondingly caused no observable disagreement between themselves and other protesters or
bystanders. To the extent that the Heart Attack march was not inclusive, it did not fit with right to the city theory, which requires a robust potential for inclusiveness of city inhabitants; a different theoretical framework is therefore required to analyze and better understand this march.

I now turn to an analysis of news media coverage of the protests to understand the broader public comprehension of and debate around each of the anti-Olympic protest events, and to explore whether and how the right to the city resonated in the media.
4: REPRESENTING THE PROTESTS: NEWSPAPER CONTENT ANALYSIS

Thus far, I have shown how the anti-Olympic protests enacted the right to the city from an insider positioning. I have argued that the right to the city is in itself a legitimate right, however, any democratic enactment requires some amount and degree of legitimation. I therefore turn to news media as a location in the public sphere in which such legitimation can be sought. Benhabib argues that “legitimacy in complex democratic societies must be thought to result from the free and unconstrained public deliberation of all about matters of common concern” (1996, p. 68). While the media is only one location for such deliberation, it is perhaps the most widely available.

In looking to the media, I seek to answer: Did the right to the city resonate in the media? What can different media sources tell us about the interface between the right to the city and various news-reading publics, particularly as regards legitimacy? To what extent was the opening of spaces of alternate values by the protests present in the media?

4.1 Methods

I conducted a newspaper content analysis of protest coverage in Vancouver media during the 2010 Winter Games between February 28 and March 3. This time frame covered the range of protests observed by participant observation, plus several additional days afterwards to allow for coverage and further rumination on the protests to resonate in various publications. I selected print or online news sources from three areas: direct party media (VMC and rabble.ca); 2) alternative media (tyee.com and The Georgia
Straight); and 3) corporate media (The Vancouver Sun, The Globe and Mail, The Province, Metro, and 24Hours). Triangulating these three areas and highlighting the differences between them revealed the texture of public discourse on the legitimacy of protests and protest issues. User-generated media served as a baseline by which to judge coverage in alternative and conventional media. Direct party media means that media produced by those directly involved in organizing or protesting. Sources were selected if they were dedicated to alternative news coverage, specifically coverage of dissent around the 2010 Olympics. Alternative and corporate media were selected to examine different representations of the protests, to address what the readers of different widely-available text-based news sources encountered of the anti-Olympics protests. These three categories of sources were chosen because they reach readers across the political spectrum. No specifically ethnic media were chosen because of their narrower readership, and because of this author’s monolingualism. These source selections provided comparable numbers of articles in each area: 55 direct party, 49 alternative, and 69 corporate media articles.

For all sources, only articles mentioning any protest event were analyzed; op-ed pieces or letters to the editor that criticize the Olympics without mention of protests were not included. Articles were located by browsing headlines and searching for specific words within my selected date range in online archives provided by the source itself, in the LexisNexus online database, or in the Canadian Newsstand Pacific –Proquest online database.

Research questions were: for direct party sources: What was the protesters’ main frame? How did descriptions of events correspond with my participant observation and
interviews I conducted? For all sources: Who covered which protests? Which protest claims were reported on? How was the subject identity constructed? Were protesters as a group of actors recognized as a group of actors and legitimized or discredited? I used the answers to these questions to attempt to read the right to the city in media coverage of the protest events.

For each story, I recorded the source name, date, author, story type (news, letter, photo journal, commentary/blog/editorial, news brief), protest(s) covered, story subject focus (past or upcoming event notification/description, violence/arrests, personal narrative/human interest, discuss claims/issues/demands, assessment of protest event, discrediting dissent via pride), protester identity, and who was seen as legitimate. If claims/issues/demands were discussed, I coded which of these were included: Olympics expenditures, Security and surveillance, Housing and homelessness, Corporate sponsors and capitalism, Social funding cuts, Free speech, Poverty, Other issues not directly related to Olympics (immigration, war, Insite clinic), Aboriginal issues including missing and murdered women, Democracy/rights/entitlement, or Broken Olympic promises.

4.2 Direct party media

Vancouver Media Co-op (VMC) and Rabble.ca were the most notable anti-Olympic direct party media. VMC is an open-publishing, user-run online news cooperative in Vancouver. The website (vancouver.mediacoop.ca) hosts text-based, audio and video news coverage. It focuses on local and provincial news, and is part of the Canada-wide Media Co-op network and Dominion News network. It was created in the lead-up to the Olympics partly in order to cover the organized dissent. During the Olympics, the VMC media center operated out of the W2 media center in the heart of
Vancouver’s downtown eastside (DTES), and offered space and equipment to unaccredited and independent journalists visiting Vancouver. Rabble.ca is another online news source, whose anti-Olympic coverage was extensive and was generated largely by people involved in the protests. Rabble.ca is a not-for-profit news website that produces text, audio, and video news, and hosts news blogs and discussion forums. It is based in Toronto, ON, and covers Canadian and international news. Other sources considered for this research project were no2010.com and mostlywater.org, linked from resist.ca. These websites were promoted on anti-Olympics material distributed by protesters. However, they provided more information on preparation for protest and reasons to protest than news coverage of the protests, and what coverage there did exist was largely syndicated from VMC and other sources.

VMC positioned itself as news for anti-Olympics protesters and aimed to be the news wing for the Olympics resistance (about VMC, n.d). As such, it anticipated an anti-Olympic readership and assumed some knowledge of the reasons for protesting. However, roughly half of the 33 contributions analyzed were written from an anarchist perspective and these assumed at least anarchist sympathies from readers who were therefore presumably protesters. The readership for this study period expanded far beyond this population, however, since the site received over 1 million website hits during the first weekend of the Olympics (http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca/about/vancouver).

Rabble.ca positions itself as “news for the rest of us,” which includes activists. Its blog section, for instance, includes writing by campus activists, academics, and NGOs. It positions itself among a readership of politically active progressive or radical publics in
Canada that deal with a variety of social, political, environmental and economic struggles. However, its readership is potentially broader than this as the site received over 100,000 unique visitors per month in 2010, 80% of whom come from across Canada from one of over 2000 cities (rabble.ca, 2011, p. 55). Furthermore, approximately 85,000 other websites link to rabble.ca (About rabble.ca, n.d.). Most of the rabble.ca articles analyzed were written by members of NGOs, individual protesters, and independent journalists who came to protest and cover the protests from out of province. Their perspectives were intellectual activists with an anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, pro-community frame, without a specifically anarchist perspective.

It must be noted that there was considerable dialogue among protesters along the lines of their affiliations. After the vandalism of the Heart Attack march, self-identified anarchists and ORN organizers were in debate with other anti-Olympics organizers and critics associated with other activist groups. Debates took place formally at two public panel discussions which were covered by VMC, Rabble.ca, and the Georgia Straight. Individuals on all sides of the issue were long-time activists.

VMC and rabble.ca coverage of window-smashing at the Heart Attack march was sympathetic, and attempted to provide an accurate account of events, which was discussed in the context of what motivated the property destruction. VMC's five commentary and analysis articles were written from insider positions and debated the value of and portrayal of black block tactics within the media environment, as well as the challenges it raised for movement solidarity. Actions were not denounced, rather, their merits were critiqued and debated. Rabble.ca's three commentary and analysis articles were written by activists both in support of and denouncing the window-smashing. They
debated the nature of violence as well as choice and consequences of tactics. An additional three rabble.ca articles reported on the protest itself while raising some of the issues about violence, strategy, and values.

Disagreements among activists and protesters showed that the value of the window-smashing was under question, and was unresolved. The fact that even some protesters who were aware of the issues could not make a definite connection with the protest actions revealed that the value of those actions, strategies, and tactics was under question, and was debated in person and in direct party media. The actions were also seen by some to be divisive and not inclusive of other anti-Olympics protesters, let alone other Vancouver inhabitants. However, the Heart Attack did open up ample space for inclusive and robust debate within direct party media, and stimulated discussion of values, movement strategies, and conceptions of violence. The six rabble.ca articles and five VMC articles focusing on the Heart Attack march expressed these debates, as did the comments posted following the articles. To take some examples from the range of debate within articles: Judy Rebick (2010) wrote in rabble.ca:

> if diversity of tactics means that people who aim to commit vandalism and sometimes violence can come into the middle of a demonstration with black face masks and break up whatever takes their fancy when the vast majority of people involved don't want them to, then I draw a line. It's true that violent action gets more publicity, but it's the wrong publicity that is about the violence itself, not about the issue.

In his article in response, Alex Hundert (2010) wrote:

> Diversity of tactics means that one day we smash the system and the next we build alternatives. The Black Block is a wrecking ball tactic that makes space for more mainstream or creative tactics. The anarchists who participate in the Bloc are for the most part solid community organizers and people who are at the forefront of making space for creative alternatives to capitalism and colonialism. A diversity of tactics is meant
to be complimentary -- different tactics demonstrate different values and objectives, and all must be viewed in sum.

As a more direct response to the actions undertaken on the march, Andrew Loewen (2010) wrote in his VMC article:

As I read [In defense of the black bloc: A communique from Olympic resisters, in VMC February 16], I can't discern an explicit strategic justification for the actions taken by the black bloc on Saturday morning, much less of how such action is likely to be represented and recuperated within the dominant (media) discourse… in terms of *direct* harm to the corporations, smashing (insured) windows and knocking over newspaper boxes is of absolutely no consequence whatsoever. If there is any value in such "direct action" it is at the level of the symbolic, of the images and contexts in which representations of the actions circulate, not in their immediate material effects.

These discussions, by activists and organizers, illustrate the intelligent and open debate among those against the Olympics but holding different views of the occurrences at the Heart Attack march. To the extent that this protest did not fit with right to the city theory, direct party media accurately reflected the tensions in a productive manner of open conversation.

The majority of 33 VMC and 22 rabble.ca articles provided descriptions of protests and protest issues (Figure 3). For articles that mentioned arrests or violence, this was not sensationalized and was part of a larger discussion.

The identity of protesters in VMC coverage varied with the protest event. The terms activist, protester, indigenous/aboriginal and anarchist were used most often, and always with positive connotations. What was generally missing from VMC articles were the perspectives of the large mass of protesters at the Take Back our City march, at the Commercial Drive Torch blockade, and in the Tent Village. The identity of actor subjects was noticeably different in rabble.ca versus VMC. The general signifiers “activist” and
“protester” were used almost exclusively – almost all protester identities were subsumed under these terms – and there was only one mention of anarchists and no specific reference to indigenous or aboriginal protesters. However, there was a relatively similar number of references to aboriginal issues (Figure 1) in rabble.ca as in VMC, as both sources highlighted these as key protest concerns. Thus the general framing of protester identity in rabble.ca did not detract from the source’s extensive coverage of protest issues.

Legitimacy in all VMC and rabble.ca articles was given to protesters, advocates or NGOs. VMC tended to legitimize the more radical protesters, and legitimacy was sometimes given directly to indigenous people. Furthermore, in rabble.ca, the “residents” in articles on housing actions were legitimated. Not surprisingly, given that these are direct party sources, legitimacy was often actively denied to police, governments, corporate sponsors, and VANOC/IOC.

Direct party media coverage closely reflected the empirical results of chapter 2. Authors presented coverage based on their experience; individuals appeared to write from their unique subject positions, without drastic reframing, for others presumed to share or be familiar with a similar ideology. The main discursive frame of direct party coverage was an anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, pro-community critique of the Olympic industry. Coverage reflected the claims, demands, and criticisms of the protesters at various events (Figure 1). Stories that directly covered protest events repeated and sometimes expanded upon issues raised by protesters. The actions taken by protesters at the many demonstrations, marches, and squat were apparent to readers of this media, as were the issues that motivated them.
The right to the city is read in this coverage in two ways. First, the media reported on the defiant physical occupation of public city space in the face of police and in the face of those who were out to support the Olympics. The significance of this, which came across in the direct party news coverage, is that the participants had a right to use space in this way; the news sources legitimated them and thus also legitimated their public presence. This satisfies one major element of the right to the city: the appropriation of space. Second, the media reported extensively and positively on protesters’ demands to have a say in how money is spent in the city, as well as demands for indigenous peoples to be significant contributors to decisions. This validated their attempts to participate.

The extensive coverage of all protests as well as the clear legitimization of protesters (though not always all of their tactics) signified an adherence to the right of these actors to participate in re-shaping the city along these two major lines. In conclusion, anyone reading direct party media would have had a good idea why people were protesting, what they wanted instead, and why this was legitimate. We can conclude that these sources expressed the spirit of the right to the city to readers.

4.3 Alternative media

The Georgia Straight (straight.com) and TheTyee.com are two widely-read Vancouver-based alternative papers. The hardcopy Georgia Straight is a free weekly paper distributed throughout Vancouver, but this study used the online straight.com version of the paper, which updates constantly and contains more news articles than the hard copy. The Straight is primarily an arts and entertainment paper that focuses on local events, unlike celebrity tabloids, and provides a comprehensive listing of all entertainment and public events. This aspect, and its availability in Vancouver, gave it the
wide readership of over 800,000 readers in 2009 (About the Georgia Straight, n.d.). Established in 1967, it has a long history of providing politically alternative news coverage, in addition to entertainment news, and this stance is still noticeable in its print and online news sections.

The straight.com published 42 articles (on the protesters during the Feb 28-Mar 3 research period), which was more than either of the direct party media (Table 1). The majority of these were produced by the same four male authors. The pieces were mostly news stories, news briefs, or photo-journals. Only 5 articles were letters, which were all statements written by involved parties (police or protesters). Almost half of all pieces included mention or description of protest claims/demands/issues. Among all pieces, 9 (less than one quarter) described events, and a similar number focused on violence/arrests, and/or personal narratives/human interest, and/or assessment of the protests (Figure 3). This was more than either of the direct party media devoted to these last three areas. This seemed to represent both the greater total of straight.com articles as well as more even coverage.

Similar to rabble.ca, straight.com identified protesters as such or as activists most of the time, with advocate being another common identity. There was some mention of indigenous activists and anarchists (4 articles each), as well as the other categories to a lesser degree. Protesters were legitimized in most pieces, though not as completely as in VMC or rabble.ca. Those celebrating the Olympics were also legitimized in articles where protesters were legitimized, and only one article legitimized only Olympic celebrators. As an example of these legitimations, Matthew Burrows’ (2010) news report focuses on Olympic boosters while at the same time validating protesters:
Why protest the protesters? "It's already here, so you may as well have some fun," [John] Maclean told the *Straight* ahead of the rally, to huge roars from his friends. "Protesting doesn't seem to be in the spirit of the event." [Vicki] Farrell agreed, adding that she did not want to comment on a question the *Straight* posed, regarding feelings the protesters may have—and how they, in some cases, feel abused, and that boosters may be abusing people feeling victimized.

Police were legitimized in approximately one quarter of pieces, which was more than in direct party media. Of these articles, only two were negatively slanted against protesters, three reported arrests, and the remainder legitimized protesters as well as the police. The great majority of pieces put the protests in a positive light, or took a neutral stance while thoroughly covering protest events. For instance, Steven Hui (2010) wrote:

> While the Vancouver Olympic Village houses international athletes in pricey condominium units overlooking False Creek, a very different kind of Olympic village has taken shape in the poverty-stricken Downtown Eastside. The Olympic Tent Village—established on February 15 by Streams of Justice, the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre Power of Women Group, and others—offers shelter in the form of tents and tarps thrown up on a Vanoc parking lot.

> Only a couple articles differentiated between “peaceful” and “violent” protesters regarding the Heart Attack march. In two articles this protest was recognized but not sensationalized as an extreme response to the Olympics, and connections with protesters' issues were made. For instance, in a longer piece on the attack of the Olympic brand, Charlie Smith (2010) wrote:

> Protesters targeted a source of the corporate money by attacking the Bay store in downtown Vancouver today. The Bay's parent, the Hudson's Bay Company, is a major Vanoc sponsor. The media will focus on the most radical protesters. But this is just the most extreme manifestation of a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the way the Olympic industry operates in host cities.
One article provided commentary, including a positive academic interpretation of anarchism and the use of disruptive protests, and a negative response from a free speech advocate. There was little focus on disagreements among those opposing the Olympics. The fairly accurate description and interpretation of the protest offered the possibility of legitimation or denunciation to readers. One article published a full police statement on the protest, which was acknowledged as such, thus distancing the paper from the statement. Together, coverage of the Heart Attack march provided a thorough and accurate account of events, which allowed for open discussion.

Overall, coverage in the Straight.com resembled direct party coverage in scope, and in thoroughly telling the story of all of the protests. There was a greater effort, however, to appear neutral and avoid being overly positive or negative about protesters or the protests. Like direct party media, there was extensive coverage of the reasons for protest, and each of the issues/claims/demands were brought up at least a few times (see Figure 1). Readers of the online straight.com would have received a fairly accurate (from the perspective of someone at the protest events) perspective on what occurred. Furthermore, there was a sense of legitimacy of protesters and protest events. This mirrored the legitimacy found in direct party media; protests legitimately appropriated public space, and protestor participation in political issues via claims and demands was also accepted and validated.

Coverage in TheTyee.ca was markedly different. Began in 2003, TheTyee.ca is a daily online news source that claims to “swim upstream against the media trends of our day” (Beers, n.d.), providing “news, culture, and solutions” to readers across the
province. It was selected for being a well-promoted, well-known site, as well as for its self-positioning as distinct from corporate media.

Tyee protest coverage was the most minimal of all sources examined, producing seven articles that covered, analyzed, or mentioned protests. Over half were authored or co-authored by the same journalist (Geoff Dembicki). The focus was on the Take Back our City and Heart Attack marches (see Table 1). Protest claims were mentioned but in such a way as to enforce a disconnection between most of them and the Olympics, which served to question the validity of the protests. For example, the extent of coverage of protest issues in the article on the Take Back our City march was as follows:

[Protest signs] ranged from the angry -- "Homes not Games" -- to the esoteric -- "Bring back Crystal Pepsi." … Andrew Ryder, who decided to check out the demonstration while waiting for his girlfriend [said,] "I find a lot of this movement isn't really about the Olympics, it's about other stuff." Protesters have long used the Games as a platform to criticize everything from corporate sponsors' involvement in the Tar Sands to restrictive measures taken by police… When the march began, even more diversity showed. One sign read "Athletes + Community, not corporations" on one side, and called for eco-socialism on the other. (Dembicki & Carletti, 2010)

Here, the “from... to” wording, in association with Ryder’s comment, suggested that the Olympics provided merely an opportunity to protest, and not a reason to protest. Only one piece discussed issues thoroughly; it was on housing and homelessness and legitimized civil society housing advocates and condemned the state of poverty in Vancouver and BC.

In every article in which protester identity was included, The Tyee enforced a distinction between peaceful and violent protesters. Discourse valorized “peacefulness” and actively legitimated “peaceful” protesters, as well as festive protesters, while
“violence” was criticized and discredited in both news and opinion pieces. Paulsen & Dembicki (2010a) refer to “The peaceful activists organizing this week's tent city…” with “peaceful activists” linked to a story on a previous housing squat carried out by Streams of Justice. This article failed to enquire into the values of any tent village inhabitants or organizers, many of whom were supportive of or present at the Heart Attack protest. The sense of outrage expressed via the window-smashing, which was captured in direct party media and in the Straight to a lesser degree, was not examined, while the march’s goals of disrupting Olympic traffic and targeting sponsors were not mentioned. A staff editorial (The People’s Podium, 2010) judging Olympics-related occurrences awarded a:

FACEPLANT for the 'Black Bloc' anarchist protesters whose stated goal was to show people we have too much police repression in Vancouver. When a bunch of people in all black wearing balaclava's sweep down the street and begin bashing windows, most people in the vicinity can't help but feel glad there are police about. We're criticizing not the outrage against injustice here, but rather the way it was expressed. If you were trying to win people over to your clearly expressed outrage, sorry, you're headfirst in the snow.

Disagreements over the window-smashing between the two protester categories were highlighted in one article, as was the notion that violence “alienated the public” (Dembicki, 2010b). Much of the article focused on “the events of Saturday as a ‘disaster’ for any future social movement building,” however, one section linked to and discussed an anonymous communiqué issued shortly after Saturday’s protest. An insufficient welfare state leaves people ‘suffering and dying from preventable causes,’ it read. ‘This economic violence has gotten worse as we lose housing and social services because of the Olympic Games.’ The statement defended the actions of the more militant Saturday resisters. It portrayed them as angry agitators without formal leaders -- as socially outraged radicals who employ radical black bloc techniques to shake political and corporate power structures (ibid).
Police were praised or validated in each article in which they were mentioned. Steve Burgess wrote, “If they accomplished nothing else, the masked Bay bandits reminded Vancouverites what a good police force is there for” (2010). Thematically then, The Tyee weakly resembled direct party media coverage in giving some attention to and legitimation of protester motivations, and also weakly resembled conventional media coverage in its valorization of peacefulness, praise of police, and minimal explanation of protest issues. This was somewhat surprising, given its claim to “swim against” the mainstream. This may be the result of very limited coverage produced largely by one individual. One notable point of difference from conventional media, however, was the absence of “pride” or nationalism discourse as a means to discredit protesters; this was done solely through discourses of peaceful protest.

4.4 Corporate media

Five of Vancouver's most widely-available print daily news sources with online components were selected to gauge what news the majority of the public had access to. Three of these, The Vancouver Sun (Sun), The Globe and Mail (Globe), and The Province are thick papers available for purchase, and the remaining two, Metro and 24 Hours, are thinner, tabloid style, freely available, and ubiquitous in the city.

The three for-purchase papers provided mentioned of most of the protest events. The Sun and Globe each produced approximately a dozen pieces that mentioned or discussed protests, while The Province ran twice as many. The Heart Attack march received the most coverage, followed by the Take Back Our City march, while most other protests got at least one mention. Notably, the Globe barely mentioned Tent Village or housing initiatives, compared with all other sources (except Metro; see Table 1 and
Figure 1). The Sun provided the most articles with discussion on protest issues themselves, and was secondarily concerned with the assessment and discrediting of protesters, which was the main focus of most Globe and Province stories. In the following quotation, Globe writer Robert Matas provides that paper’s most comprehensive reporting on protester’s purposes at the Heart Attack march, and then sets up a clear dichotomy between legitimate protesters and criminals:

Protesters deliberately targeted the Hudson's Bay, [Alissa Westergard-Thorpe] said, because the store, which supplied outfits for Canadian Olympic athletes, "has a long history of violent colonialism." … Police were aware another protest was to be held yesterday morning. But they did not know who would control the demonstration - the people who wanted to exercise their democratic right to protest against the Olympics or the criminal element. (2010)

The Globe made no attempt to analyze protest issues or describe them thoroughly in their coverage of the protests. The Province produced several more descriptive and balanced pieces, particularly on the Tent Village squat, as well as several aggressively anti-protest pieces, such as one found in Mychael Smyth’s column, in which he wrote of the Heart Attack protesters: “They were just hateful morons who wanted a confrontation with the cops. Period.” (2010). Articles in all three papers provided a briefer, less thorough explanation of protest issues than direct party media or the Straight. For example, Mark Hume wrote in the Globe:

The torch was supposed to stop with [a group of WWII veterans] for three minutes, as they stood at attention, but a small group of about 150 protesters blocked the intersection and forced the relay to make a quick detour. Similar maneuvers were needed to dodge protesters in Vancouver’s East End. "Clearly the majority of Canadians are behind the Games," said George Ing, a Second World War veteran. "The protesters seem out of place to me." (2010)
This provided readers with a superficial understanding of the reasons for protest, which made it easier to judge and discriminate against protesters.

All three sources established a dichotomy of “law-abiding”, “legitimate”, or “peaceful” protesters, and “violent” (or “criminal” in the Globe) protesters. The Globe also used the rhetoric of “rioters” (see Figure 2). In the Sun, the city and city officials were legitimized most often, and in one article were used to discredit protest issues. In both of the Sun’s stories on the Tent Village, the protest action was legitimated only in association with officials and official organizations, suggesting that the action may not have been given positive coverage without this support. For instance, Larry Pynn wrote:

Hundreds of homeless and poverty protesters -- using the Olympic spotlight to their advantage -- flooded into a vacant lot in the 100-block of West Hastings Street on Monday and erected a tent city… Libby Davies, NDP MP for Vancouver East, said she supported the tent city as a way to raise awareness for greater government support, especially by a federal government in need of a national housing strategy to help the poor and homeless (2010).

Management by police was presented as an uncontested requirement of protest, suggesting that protests cannot be permitted to occur on their own because it is the police who are needed to regulate and control the situation. For instance, “Vancouver police spokeswoman Const. Jana McGuinness said police will monitor the situation [at tent village], but are not overly concerned” (Bermingham, 2010). This sentiment excludes the fact that the Tent Village comprised an active community that regulated its own space through a written “community agreement” and 24-hour gate-watchers, and very adamantly rejected police involvement. The Province tended to legitimize Olympic celebrators, the Olympics (using the rhetoric of Olympic values), the police, and advocacy groups over protesters. It published seven letters, one that legitimated the
outrage of protesters and linked this to protest issues, and six that called on pride, nationalism, and the legitimacy of Olympic celebrators and police to suggest protests should not have occurred. Letters in the Sun were “balanced”, with two legitimating protesters and their issues, and two politely stressing the need to forgo protest and be good hosts and celebrate. The Globe especially portrayed protests as a threat and a nuisance to a rightful enjoyment of the Games, listing them among the poor weather and other “problems” experienced while hosting the Games (Mason, 2010). “Peaceful” protesters were given sympathetic coverage in all three sources and this allowed for a somewhat reluctant overall acknowledgement of the right to protest.

The Metro and 24 Hours yielded similar results. Their coverage was more minimal, with 8 and 10 short articles, respectively. 24 Hours mentioned the more prevalent protest issues, whereas Metro only mentioned one protest issue – indigenous rights – once in the entire sample (Figure 1) and did not report on the Tent Village or the torch protests (Table 1). 24 Hours and Metro each differentiated and legitimized “peaceful” protesters in one article each on the Heart Attack march, but did not focus on splitting or analyzing the protest movement. Instead, both sources gave equal legitimacy to protesters, acknowledging a right to protest, and to Olympic celebrators. In the latter instances, shaming and civic pride were used to discredit protesters, which also valorized the city and the nation. This is exemplified in a letter by Samantha Daigneault, who wrote, “Olympics Resistance Network, you should be ashamed of what you have done. Being Canadian means we have honour, spirit, and most importantly, we treat each other with respect. You are giving Canadians a bad name and you are only humiliating yourselves” (2010).
The overall sense was that corporate media focused on a balance between the dominant view that Vancouver must forget its problems, be good hosts and enjoy the party, versus a reluctantly acknowledged right to protest and reason to protest. What exactly this reason was was not thoroughly discussed; the protest claims that were mentioned were rarely contextualized in relation to the Olympics, thereby providing little basis by which to analyze the protests beyond a flattened acceptance or rejection of protest as a practice. Seemingly distanced from the Olympics except in criticism of the costs, the protests stood separate from the Olympics they attempted to criticize. The use values of the protests as understood by the right to the city failed to break through the dominant Olympic frame in these sources. No articles criticized or interrogated the validity of Olympic sponsors, police, or city officials. The stories also failed to convey a sense of protester appropriation of public space; instead, they were an inevitability to be tolerated and managed. Protest was rarely seen as making a positive democratic contribution, because only in these few instances were the reasons motivating the protests analyzed. There was thus a poor comprehension of the participatory role of the protests as contributing to democratic politics.

These results fail to read the right to the city values in corporate media news coverage. There were some differences in the coverage by different papers that reflect their positioning along the political spectrum, nevertheless, their articles failed to convey a legitimacy of the appropriation and participation associated with the protests that was represented in direct party media and the Georgia Straight. The scope of their coverage was much too coarse to capture the elements of inclusivity and difference among acting
inhabitants, and reinforced only the simple peaceful/violent dichotomy. This is clear in The Province’s reporting on the Take Back Our City march, which was described as:

a rambunctious anti-Olympic protest at B.C. Place Stadium [that began] shortly before the start of the 2010 Olympics Opening Ceremonies. That protest began at 3 p.m. at the Vancouver Art Gallery, with a crowd of about 2,000 people. "I don't think we should be spending money on the Olympics. It's a two-week party for the rich," said Elizabeth Godley, 65, of Vancouver, noting that the provincial government plans to cut $10 million in programming for vulnerable children and families. The protest remained peaceful until about 30 minutes before the Opening Ceremonies. Some protesters began throwing large traffic pylons, eggs, broken flagpoles, bags of vinegar and potatoes at officers. There was also pushing within the crowd. (Sin & Colebourn, 2010).

The presence and actions of police and security were always legitimized, so there was no sense that protesters either had or should have had freedom to fully express themselves on their own terms, without the perennial threat of repression. Indeed, the news coverage itself produced ideological repression of protesters’ messages, which served to prevent them from reaching broader publics through this channel, and thus repressed protest efforts. A sense of justice from the perspective of protest was completely absent from corporate news coverage.

The Heart Attack march received the greatest amount of coverage in all corporate media sources, and as noted in chapter 2, was in tension with right to the city theory and thus warrants its own discussion here. While the black block was present at the DTES and Commercial Drive torch blockades and the Take Back Our City march, they only engaged in property damage at the Heart Attack, and this was the focus of corporate media discussion. The media used these actions to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable protest. This distinction was simultaneously created by BCCLA rights advocate and Olympic critic, David Eby, when he denounced the Heart Attack actions in
the media (Mertl, 2010). This served to supplement the media differentiation, and became a prevalent news story; the Sun and the Globe especially highlighted the disagreements within the protest movement as a new split. The Sun argued that “the black-shrouded thugs who are trying to hijack the Games under the guise of exercising their right to protest need to be reined in, not just by police but by law-abiding activists who are allowing their own causes to be trampled under the feet of the self-styled anarchists” (Some Flaws, 2010). Doug Ward later wrote, “The shambolic and small group of black-clad anarchists who threw a newspaper box at the downtown Hudson's Bay Co. store on the first day of the Olympics -- shocking Olympic revellers queuing for fuzzy red mittens -- did more than crack a store window. They splintered the unity of the far-left anti-Olympic protest against the ‘Olympic industry’” (2010). Debate within protest circles was framed by analyzing the action in the context of its interactions with the corporate media. Indeed, the media analysis conducted here shows that most corporate media articles on the Heart Attack focused on protest tactics at best, and criminality at worst, rather than on protest issues. Few of the articles on the Heart Attack march contained discussion of other, previous protests; however, the large number of pieces on the Heart Attack meant that protests against the Olympics were an ongoing news item. In this way the Heart Attack did open space for discourse, however this discourse, in Vancouver corporate media at least, was limited to differentiating between acceptable and unacceptable protest as such, and not their motivations or political meanings.

The news media played a very large role in the framing and interpretation of the Heart Attack action, both for people involved in the protests and for other publics. The protest successfully carried out the first part of appropriation, seizing media space in this
case, but did not coherently re-define it, which is also required for appropriation. The intended meaning of the aggressive anti-capitalist message expressed through the window-smashing was not coherent enough to provide an unambiguous message to the media, even among protesters who supported the action as evidenced by the different interpretations quoted in chapter 2. Furthermore, corporate media tend to put forth a sensationalized interpretation of violence, rather than working to provide a more complete interpretation of what the event might mean. The Canadian corporate media and public in general have a culturally-poor understanding of anarchism, which is more common in present-day France and Greece, and reduce it to what is visible: black blocks and militant actions. This failing results in part from the failure of anarchism in Canada to represent itself in other modes, more comprehensively and visibly. Canadian media also helps valorize “peacefulness” and reflects and reinforces the national myth of Canada as being supposedly “peaceful” and a “land of peacekeepers.” It is not surprising then that appropriation of space in corporate media was incomplete; because this was the public's site of access to the action itself, the intended redefinition of The Bay as an unwelcome corporation was made all the more challenging as a result.

4.5 Conclusion: right to the city in the media

There were essential differences between direct party and corporate news coverage of protests against the Olympics.

Coverage in the direct party media reflected protester perspectives and experiences that were found in my participant observation and interview research findings. A range of pieces offered strong connections between anti-Olympic issues and the protests themselves. The various needs and demands of inhabitants that were
expressed through protest were also expressed in direct party news reports, and interpretations of the events included a range of opinions and values, expressed in open and active debates. The legitimization of the various protest actors and their concerns was congruent with aspects of right to the city theory, notably, there was the sense that these actions contributed to participation in setting the agenda of inhabitant needs in the city. Articles written from the perspective of protesters expressed a redefinition of the public spaces that they mentioned, appropriating them from the dominant understanding of Olympic host city, and temporarily re-casting them as spaces of dissent and alternative values.

Coverage in alternative media sources had similar characteristics to direct party media. The Straight and Tyee presented similar information on protest issues as that found in rabble.ca, and discussed these issues generously. The Tyee, however, did not present a range of protester perspectives. It was thematically similar to the corporate media in its simplistic categorization and valorization of “peaceful” protesters, and did not sufficiently capture the diversity of protester subject positions.

Alternative and direct party media reached not only activist communities, but other communities as well. The Straight and rabble.ca each reach approximately 100,000 readers a month, and possibly more, given the number of websites that link to them. On the first weekend of the Olympics, the VMC website received over 1 million hits. These numbers are significant because it means the information reached outsiders as well as insiders, providing them with a robust alternative understanding of protester positioning than that found in corporate media. Broader news-reading publics who accessed these
sources would be in a better position to understand the protests as playing an important participatory role in the city than those accessing corporate media only.

The corporate media, by virtue of its size and popularity, reached the largest number of readers but provided the most simplistic analysis of all media studied. While it did contain small fragments of several protester perspectives amid a dominant flattening understanding of protesters, this, as well as the poor discussion of protest issues and motivations as they related to the needs and demands of city inhabitants, was insufficient to convey any sense of the right to the city. Instead, corporate media remained focused on the right to protest per se as an acceptable part of democratic society. Any issues that were discussed were distanced from the Olympics, which remained protected as an untainted brand, clearly meant only to be celebrated. Furthermore, grassroots participation in urban protests is something that was presented as requiring management by police forces and officials, and support and legitimization from politicians and civil society actors.

Legitimation of the protests as enacting a right to the city first requires an understanding of those protests that is based on awareness of the stories behind them. By failing to provide the informational and discursive resources required for such an awareness, corporate media precluded enabling their readers’ legitimization of inhabitant participation in shaping the city. However, those who read the direct party or alternative media would have had a deeper understanding of the motivations that drove people to protest against the Olympics, and would have been exposed to views that saw these actions as legitimate, and at times even as a correct and just role for a city’s inhabitants to take.
5: CONCLUSION

The Olympics were a unique event in Vancouver, as were the protests against them. The anti-Olympic protests were distinct from previous protests in that they united a number of separate issues, traditionally addressed by separate organizing groups. This convergence of issues, groups, and segments of the left was noted by several of my interviewees. In “The anti-Olympics,” Jules Boykoff describes the anti-Olympic movement as a “convergence of movements” around the “Olympic moment” in the years leading up to the Olympics, during the Games period itself, and in subsequent Olympic housing-related protests and actions in Vancouver (2011). The continued collaboration of various groups over high profile housing issues, the Gateway highway project (protested during the Olympics), the G8/G20 protests in Toronto and other smaller instances in Vancouver suggests that the disagreements had over the black block actions and the diversity of tactics has not completely undermined this convergence.

Such convergence and collaboration speaks to the inclusivity of the protests as an expression of the right to the city. The grassroots-built opposition to the Olympics that attempted to re-focus public and political attention on the use value needs of city inhabitants was inclusive of many issues. It did not, however, include all segments of the urban population, and by virtue of this, other concerns connected with the Olympics that such groups may have had were not a part of the protests. Most of the protest issues were extensively discussed in direct party and alternative media sources, and some were discussed extensively or mentioned very briefly in the corporate media. All media,
however, in their own way, focused sharply on differences between protesters and did not pick up on the convergence of groups noted here. Nevertheless, the various protest actors were identified in direct party and alternative news, and their value as participants in urban political life was legitimated through the acceptance and approval of their demands and their protests.

The protests embodied a will to participate in urban life that is fundamental to right to the city theory. Physical presence in public space was read as an attempt to participate in the life of the city given over to the Olympics. Instead of staying home or leaving town because they disagreed with the Olympic spectacle taking place, dissenters publicly expressed their values by positioning their bodies in view at rallies, marches, and direct actions, and by blocking streets in order to cause disruption and be heard by the media. Pointing to certain issues and attempting to influence them, for example building the Tent Village to highlight the need for housing and to concretely house people, also reveals the will to participate in the city. Direct party media, and alternative media to some extent, positively represented these attempts at participation, and legitimated such attempts by linking them to the protesters’ concerns. Corporate media coverage of the protests did acknowledge participation in democratic life via a certain understanding of protest, but did not capture the specificity of this to the Olympic moment. Readers of corporate media, if they did not access other types of news sources, were thus left with an insufficient understanding of the entitlement of inhabitants to be directly involved in the workings of the city.

That participation which did occur, at the level of the protests and of their media representations, was a limited participation in urban life. In itself, it did nothing to alter
the power structures of society and protest demands were not met; however, the participation via protests did appropriate some space in which alternative ideas and values could be explored. Such spaces were physical and ideological. The types and levels of participation were sufficient to force open these spaces to some degree in public discourse, though this was quite limited within the corporate media. There was a concerted effort to re-frame the Olympics not as a simple celebration of sport but as a political economic event driven by exchange values and at odds with the use value needs of inhabitants. These needs are based on principles of social justice for the natural environment, for colonized indigenous peoples, and for other marginalized, impoverished, and systemically disadvantaged members of the city. The linkages forged between the protest issues under the ideology of social justice and the Olympic brand went some small way towards appropriating the messaging of the Olympics. While the police forces played a significant role in intimidating Olympic opponents, protesters were largely free to speak, and to act, to express their positions. Given the corporate media’s reluctance to represent protesters’ perspectives or acknowledge the frame they were trying to put forth, it may be more accurate to say that protesters were free to compete for the framing of Olympic discourse.

5.1 **The ongoing conflict between exchange value and use value**

The Olympics remains a globally dominant brand with strong control over its brand image. Attempts were made in Vancouver to disrupt this image and its framework and reveal the contradictions behind hosting the Games. The financial costs associated with hosting the Olympics are deeply at odds with the needs and desires of many of the inhabitants of the host city and host country. The political and economic drive to become
a host city is embedded within the global neoliberal context of individual competition and
the use of cities as vehicles for capital accumulation. Because the quality of urban life
within the capitalist system is tied to a city’s economic success and stability, the city’s
inhabitants have the right to partake in the decisions that make up such economic
determinations. But they are in a unique position to balance these with the needs of daily
life – with the use values that also contribute to the quality of urban life.

Exchange value and use value are deeply intertwined and neither is ever lost. A
balance must be found between them such that necessary uses are not eclipsed by
unnecessary exchanges. Such a balance can only be created by the active participation of
all those inhabitants who make the city their home, and who have different
understandings of what is necessary. This is bound to be fraught with perennial conflict
and disagreement, but such is life if it is to be inclusive of multiple identities, and if it is
to operate on principles of social justice. The right to the city is about having – or
demanding for the time being – the freedom and opportunity to engage with urban issues
and decisions, and to meaningfully determine which use values and exchange values are
prioritized at any given time.

Lefebvre presents a utopic vision of the city as an oeuvre: a collective, living
work of art. This requires the involvement of all a city’s inhabitants, rather than their
exclusion. Protests are one such expression of involvement by those who feel excluded.
The anti-Olympics protests were at the same time a rejection of decisions made on
everyone’s behalf to host the Olympics and all that that entailed, as well as an attempt to
provide political contributions based on alternative values that would make for a more
inclusive, compassionate, and just society. To the extent that the protests’ involvement in
democratic life attempted to express such utopic principles, the democratic impulse of the anti-Olympic protests might better be understood as representative of a “nowtopia” (Carlsson, 2008) that attempted to bring use values to the foreground in order to live, in the present moment, by the principles that underlie the right to the city.
Table 1. Number of stories on each protest in nine text-based news sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protest</th>
<th>Corporate news</th>
<th>Alternative news</th>
<th>Direct party news</th>
<th>Total # stories referencing event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Van Sun</td>
<td>Globe</td>
<td>Province</td>
<td>Metro</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protests in general</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torch blockades</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take back our city</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart attack</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's memorial march</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tent village</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red tent wrap</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red tent rally</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games over resistance lives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smudge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>previous protests</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other current protests</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of stories per source.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1. Number of stories mentioning a given protest claim per news source.
Figure 2. Number of stories that mention a given protester identity per news source.
Figure 3. Number of stories that have a given focus, per news source.
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Protest events in study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protest Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participant Observation of event?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UBC torch blockade</td>
<td>February 11, 2010</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTES torch blockade</td>
<td>February 12, 2010</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Drive torch blockade</td>
<td>February 12, 2010</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Back Our City march</td>
<td>February 12, 2010</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart Attack march</td>
<td>February 13, 2010</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Memorial march</td>
<td>February 14, 2010</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StopWar rally</td>
<td>February 15, 2010</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympic Tent village</td>
<td>February 15 – March 1, 2010</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally for Housing</td>
<td>February 12, 2010</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Pavilion Wrap-up</td>
<td>February 14, 2010</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympics Over, Resistance Lives march</td>
<td>February 14, 2010</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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## Appendix 2: Interviewee list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Ethics approval Received?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kyle</td>
<td>Anti-Poverty Committee</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Olympic Resistance Network</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>Power of Women</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tandy</td>
<td>Power of Women</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fay</td>
<td>VanAct!</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan</td>
<td>Welcoming Committee</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WORKS CITED


Some flaws, yes, but the Games are a success so far. (2010, February 16). *The Vancouver Sun*, p. A18.


