

**“Livability Is the Victim of Street Prostitution”:
The Politics of the Neighbourhood
and the Rightward Turn in Vancouver’s
West End, 1981-1985**

by

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Abstract

Vancouver in the 1980s was undergoing restructuring necessary to reorient the city towards a global economy in the midst of a national recession. In Vancouver's West End, the number of people selling sex on the streets had been steadily increasing since the mid-1970s. In 1981 some residents, in order to secure their "right to peace and quiet" and guarantee the "livability" of their neighbourhood, formed a group called CROWE (Concerned Residents of the West End) with the singular objective of driving sex workers from the residential streets of the West End. The legal changes that decriminalized the status of being a prostitute in 1972 had been fought for and won by feminists and civil libertarians in the context of a more progressive political climate and a degree of economic prosperity. In the shifting political and economic tides of the early 1980s, these feminist legal gains were fought against by CROWE's organizational offshoot Shame the Johns, the mayor, and the police force in a successful push for new laws to more heavily criminalize street prostitution. This thesis examines the new politics that emerged at the grassroots level in the fight against street prostitution and highlights the local role in federal policymaking. This local struggle culminated in the introduction into the Criminal Code of a new law criminalizing street prostitution in 1985. As some gay men, seniors, and straight West Enders joined forces in their successful fight for the streets, their new coalition redefined neighbourhood belonging, ideal urbanism, and community safety through an exclusionary and punitive lens.

Keywords: Vancouver 1980s; community organizing; homonormativity; prostitution; Canadian Conservatism; neoliberalism

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Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| Approval..... | ii |
| Partial Copyright Licence | iii |
| Abstract..... | iv |
| Acknowledgements..... | v |
| Table of Contents..... | vii |
| List of Acronyms..... | viii |
| | |
| Chapter 1. Introduction..... | 1 |
| | |
| Chapter 2. Concerned Residents of the West End, Shame the Johns, and the Sexual Re-Ordering of the West End | 17 |
| Defining Belonging in the West End: The Emergence of CROWE and the Return to “Common Sense” | 26 |
| Defining a New Sexual Politics: Shame the Johns and the Violence of Homonormative Safety | 33 |
| Conclusion | 43 |
| | |
| Chapter 3. The Local Push for Federal Policies and the Fight Against Feminism..... | 46 |
| Federal Power vs. Local Problem: The Legal Regulation of Prostitution and the Grassroots Push for Criminalization..... | 48 |
| “Hooker as Front Line Feminist”: Reframing the Social Analysis of Street Prostitution..... | 64 |
| Conclusion | 75 |
| | |
| Chapter 4. From Neighbourhood Activism to Community Policing: Imagining Community, Redefining the Urban Ideal | 77 |
| “WELDing” Community Consensus: The West End Livability Directions Project | 80 |
| Reorienting Community Activism: Spatial Regulation and Community Crime Prevention | 92 |
| Conclusion | 98 |
| | |
| Conclusion..... | 100 |
| | |
| References..... | 104 |

List of Acronyms

| | |
|--------|--|
| ACROSS | Alliance of Concerned Residents on Street Soliciting in Canada |
| ASP | Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes |
| COPE | Committee of Progressive Electors |
| CROWE | Concerned Residents of the West End |
| NDP | New Democratic Party |
| NPA | Non-Partisan Association |
| RCSW | Royal Commission on the Status of Women |
| SPOTA | Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association |
| STJ | Shame the Johns |
| TEAM | The Electors' Action Movement |
| VPD | Vancouver Police Department |
| VWMA | Vancouver Women's Multicultural Association |
| WECAC | West End Community Advisory Council |
| WELD | West End Livability Directions Project |

Chapter 1. Introduction

In the fall of 1985, a group of sex workers entered a House of Commons committee room and told the eight Members of Parliament (MPs) present that the new laws under discussion aimed at regulating street prostitution would kill them. One woman told the committee, “If this bill goes through, give us a year and we are going to have deaths in this business.” Another woman agreed: “Close the streets, close the bars and we’re going to start dying. ... It’s not theory, it’s not hypothesis. We are going to start getting killed.” Robert Nicholson, Progressive Conservative MP for Niagara Falls, responded that the bill would pass despite their concerns because urban neighbourhoods needed protection against the “obnoxious” behaviour of prostitutes on the streets.¹ During the House of Commons debates on Bill C-49, the controversial legislation in question, Progressive Conservative MP Pat Carney from the Vancouver Centre riding proudly stated that the bill was “a victory for citizens across Canada,” citing the pressure brought by citizens fighting to “preserve their neighbourhood” as the impetus for the bill. Carney credited resident organizations across the country, but specifically thanked a group called the Concerned Residents of the West End (CROWE) in Vancouver, since grassroots activity there had come to dominate the political spotlight.² The bill passed despite opposition and the “communications law” came into effect in 1985.

In the five years prior to the bill’s passing CROWE and its organizational offshoots – the Shame the Johns campaign (STJ) and the West End Livability Directions Project (WELD) – had formed a tight alliance with city officials and police. Collectively they sought new laws that would give greater local powers of regulation over activities

¹ “Prostitutes Don Disguises as They Ask MPs to Drop Planned Crackdown,” *Montreal (QC) Gazette*, Oct 23, 1985; Stephen Bindman, “Anti-soliciting Law Fatal: Hookers,” *Ottawa (ON) Citizen*, Oct 23, 1985.

² House of Commons Debates, “Official Report (Hansard),” Vol. 128, No. 135, 1st session, 33rd Parliament, Sep 9, 1985: 6410.

and behaviours on the streets. This anti-street prostitution coalition imagined the solution to the issue in a greater criminalization of the trade. They accomplished this by calling on the state to assist in establishing what these residents considered healthy and safe neighbourhoods. The understanding of safety advanced by these residents was an individualized and non-socially engaged vision. Although it was those working on the street who faced the immediate risk of being stabbed, beaten, sexually assaulted, or verbally assaulted, these residents of the West End considered their proximity to this violence as dangerous to their own personal safety. These residents saw the proliferation of street level sex work in the West End not as a consequence of a deepening recession, a dwindling welfare state, and state and social regulation of sex work in the city, but instead as a result of the excessive permissiveness of the previous decades and the slackening of collective standards of civility. They also understood the street scene as a problem not because of the danger and instability of the work and the perilous nature of the heavily stigmatized exchange, but instead because of the impact of street prostitution on the reputation of the neighbourhood and because of the noise and disruption that interrupted them in their homes and on the streets. The residents who organized against street prostitution in the neighbourhood had the social power and privilege to define who and what did not belong in the West End, whose presence made others unsafe, and what types of behaviours produced a dangerous environment. Instead of seeking greater safety for those who were in danger and who directly experienced the violence on the street, these residents sought to shore up their individual safety by calling for tougher laws so the police could remove those on the streets to produce a “safer” neighbourhood.

Up until 1984, federal policymakers in the Trudeau years were reluctant to amend the Criminal Code to introduce anti-street prostitution legislation, heeding cautions from civil libertarians, feminists, and those working as prostitutes that new laws would not solve the socially produced issue of street prostitution and would restrict the civil rights of people on the streets. From Confederation until 1972, street prostitution had been regulated under the vagrancy laws, specifically “Vag C” that deemed “any woman being a common prostitute or night walker” was in breach of the law when she was “found in a public place and [did] not, when required, give a good account of herself.” Trudeau’s government repealed almost all of the vagrancy laws, including Vag C, in response to shifted public attitudes on poverty, unemployment, and gender as well

as challenges to the constitutionality of many of the law's sweeping powers of regulation. Vag C was repealed due to the gender specificity of the language and the exclusive focus on women in its implementation. However, the liberal climate of the seventies that pushed through these legal reforms was waning in the mid-eighties, and by that time municipalities and police departments in most major cities in Canada were trying to recuperate the local powers of social regulation that the vagrancy laws had afforded them.

This thesis tells one story of a Canadian central city neighbourhood, the West End of Vancouver, in the 1980s. It focuses on the West End as a case study to understand the transition from the sixties and seventies, when cities in countries across the world hosted movements advancing social justice and calling for expanded rights, to the eighties and nineties, when cities experienced Thatcher, Reagan, and Mulroney, and the multiscale attack on the politics, organizations, and gains of the liberation movements of the decades previous. This thesis examines the grassroots resident activity of the Concerned Residents of the West End, the Shame the Johns campaign, and the West End Livability Directions project in the fight against street prostitution in the West End. These resident organizations provide one example of how the political transformation from the city as place of radicalism to the ascendance of neoliberal urban governance was worked out in the fight for control of residential streets.

One aspect of this transition that this thesis demonstrates is what type of politics and whose bodies came under fire most immediately in the West End in the eighties. CROWE's story demonstrates that the bodies of street level sex workers – many of whom were young, queer, indigenous, or trans people – were among the first targeted in the transition to a new type of urban politics. The story also shows that the politics and political gains of feminists and civil libertarians, who were continuing the fight to expand the spectrum of state citizenship, inclusion, and protection, were also attacked in the quest for greater local control of the streets.

The fight against the bodies of sexually marginalized people and the politics of feminists and civil libertarians was launched by a new coalition of forces that could only have coalesced in the aftermath of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The anti-street prostitution coalition that emerged in the West End reflected not only the demographic of the area, but also the changed social climate of the early eighties. The

abundant and affordable single room or one-bedroom apartments in the West End attracted seniors, young white-collar workers, and many gay men. Due to the efforts of the lesbian and gay liberation movement of the 1970s, homosexuals had achieved a tenuous public inclusion in many North American cities, and this was true of Vancouver. By the eighties, acceptance of homosexuality in Vancouver's West End was such that some gay men were able to work alongside socially conservative people in the fight against street prostitution.

Part of the story of CROWE, and the shifted urban politics of the 1980s, is the story of these gay men who organized against street prostitution. As some gay men joined forces with social conservatives to win the battle for the streets, the collaboration between the two previously hostile groups resulted in a new type of privatized and domesticated sexual politics. In this collaboration gayness was recognized but considered, like any matter of sexuality, a private and personal issue, appropriately relegated to the bedroom. Both groups understood their collaboration as a pragmatic and realistic compromise in order to advance the greater project of cleaning up the streets. Moreover, both groups considered it a marker of progressivism that they were able to transcend the issue of homosexuality to deal with the "real" problem: street prostitution. The gay men active in this campaign turned against the continuing projects of sexual liberation from which they had benefited, and ensured their inclusion in the city through the exclusion of another sexually marginalized group: street prostitutes. What emerged in CROWE and STJ was the uncommon fusion of an old style moral conservatism with a newly forming liberal cosmopolitanism.

Although this emergent coalition of residents presented a formidable force against the street life of the West End, they could not have so completely succeeded at securing their vision without active state backing at municipal, provincial, and federal levels. CROWE met frequently, was well-organized and politically astute, and crafted and supplied a community-generated ideological position against street prostitution to politicians and police that was carefully positioned not as a moral campaign, but a "common sense" return to stable, healthy, and tolerant "livable" downtown neighbourhoods. The coalition of residents together with the efforts of a left-leaning Mayor, the Vancouver Police Department, the Social Planning Department, and politicians at all levels of government, unified to push for new laws that would grant greater local powers of social regulation. Although the motivations of each political

player varied, they all agreed that a cleaned up West End was crucial for the future success of Vancouver.

Together this broad coalition of anti-street prostitution forces used familiar rhetoric and political tactics of the left from the previous decades but now informed by a very different and exclusionary social vision. A co-opted rights discourse now called for things like the “right” to peace and quiet and the “right” to a good night’s sleep, while the anti-street prostitution resident initiative received city funding to ensure the “livability” of the area. What was crafted in the fight against street prostitution was a narrowed and individualized definition of “citizen rights” enshrined in “the neighbourhood.” Also, by the early 1980s in Vancouver, community participation in urban governance had risen to an unprecedented degree and had become a prerequisite for political legitimacy. Newly created channels of public consultation in urban governance were reforms fought for and won in the seventies in an effort to democratize the city and were historically rooted in a liberal urban vision. Although the liberal political articulation of the ideal city in the seventies had its limitations, the social vision was one that hoped for greater inclusion and a more humane, socially just city. By the 1980s, the commitment to citizen participation in urban governance remained, but the vision of social justice that informed it had weakened. Instead, as the example of the West End shows, political commitment to neighbourhood consultation was used by resident groups, the police, and the City to advance a type of urban politics that was exclusionary and punitive in scope, but, being consultative, could be understood locally as community-focused and progressive.

The coalition of resident and city forces together secured a BC Supreme Court injunction that prohibited the public sale of sex in the West End. They also, as the opening anecdote suggests, helped to secure amendments to the Criminal Code that further criminalized street prostitution. The activity against street prostitution mounted by CROWE was a revealing example of the power of the local in determining federal policies. Although the outcome of CROWE’s efforts was a greater criminalization of sexually marginalized people and a greater degree of state power over social regulation, street prostitution was a delicate and politically charged issue not eagerly taken on by federal authorities far from city centres. CROWE’s success should be read as the outcome of a political climate of conservative ascendancy, but also as an indication that, had there been more forceful opposition at every step, the outcome could have easily

been different. There was, and remains, wide ranging consequences and a great deal of power in local struggles for public use of the streets and for inclusion in the city.

This thesis demonstrates how the urban politics that emerged in Vancouver in the 1980s were politically and socially conservative in scope but were able to be sold and understood by many as new and progressive. I argue that current reception to urban politics that champion “livability,” “safety,” and “healthy neighbourhoods” has some roots in the exclusion and banishment of marginalized people to the periphery of the urban core. Living in Vancouver today I see the persistent political salience of these terms to communicate an illusion of a progressive urbanism. It is my hope that the example of the expulsion of street prostitutes from the West End uncovers how, without a social vision that insists on an inclusive, non-market driven city in order to concretely define these terms, these concepts are reserved for the privileged.

Scholars have not ignored the expulsion of sex workers from the West End of Vancouver.³ Vancouver-based sociologist Becki Ross has written on, and continues the work of uncovering, the histories behind the expulsion of street level sex workers in the West End of Vancouver.⁴ Ross links the expulsion of sex workers to thinking on urban injustice, the regulation of sexuality, the space and place of sex work, and the colonial history of the City, while highlighting the systemic violence and corporeal danger in this citizen-state project of evacuation. She is also campaigning for a permanent monument to be placed in the West End as a testament to the history of sex work in the area. I would like to link the violence of this expulsion to the story of the city in the postwar era,

³ John Lowman, “Violence and the Outlaw Status of (Street) Prostitution in Canada,” *Violence Against Women* 6, no. 9 (2000): 987-1011; Lowman, “Prostitution in Vancouver: Some Notes on the Genesis of a Social Problem,” *Canadian Journal of Criminology* 28, no. 1 (1986); Mary Shearman, “Street Prostitution and Public Sex in Vancouver’s West End,” Shearman – wiki.sfu.ca; Daniel Francis, *Red Light Neon: A History of Vancouver’s Sex Trade* (Vancouver: Subway Books, 2006); Deborah R. Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble: The Social Regulation of Sexual Labour* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); E. Nick Larsen, “The Politics of Prostitution Control: Interest Group Politics in Four Canadian Cities,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 16, no. 2 (1992).

⁴ Becki Ross, “Sex and (Evacuation from) the City: The Moral and Legal Regulation of Sex Workers in Vancouver’s West End, 1975 – 1985,” *Sexualities* 13 (2010); Ross, *Burlesque West: Showgirls, Sex and Sin in Postwar Vancouver* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). Ross is also the principal investigator in the “West End Sex Work History Project, 1975-1985.”

and uncover the details of this planned exclusion in the making of the city of Vancouver. This thesis locates the story of CROWE as an example of a rightward turn in community activism in the postindustrial city, and traces the consequences of such a turn on federal policymaking and the social re-ordering of the city.

There was a distinct rise of a “neighbourhood” movement in the seventies in most North American cities. This was largely in response to high-modernist master planning that imposed a totalizing, universal model of development without attention to regional or local specificity. In the fifties, city officials focused on industrial civic boosterism directed at new large-scale infrastructure – like downtown freeways or bridges – in order to lure large-scale commercial redevelopment that, in turn, would create jobs and contribute to local tax revenues.⁵ In the sixties, cities erupted with urban-centred social movements advancing radical demands for social justice that dislodged these postwar modernist visions. Many of these movements also claimed spaces in the city and pushed for greater local control over determining policies that would affect their communities. By the seventies in Canada, the ethos of a “just society” dominated the liberal imagination, intertwined with a broader social movement that developed a political, economic, social, and cultural critique of postwar society.⁶ Some of this critique was rooted in a new urban vision, one espoused primarily by an educated and countercultural middle class that saw central-city living as a lived rejection of the homogeneity and conformity of the suburbs. This liberal urban ethos, articulated and influenced by urban thinkers like Jane Jacobs, imagined urban living as more authentic and emancipatory.⁷

As young middle-class professionals moved into central cities, their activity in neighbourhood organizations and continued promotion of their liberal urban vision changed city governance. Urban geographer David Ley and urban historian Suleiman

⁵ John Punter, *The Vancouver Achievement: Urban Planning and Design* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), xxiii; Stephen Shaw, “Ethnoscapes as Cultural Attractions in Canadian ‘World Cities,’” in *Tourism Culture and Regeneration*, ed. Melanie K. Smith (Cambridge, MA: CABI Pub.), 52-3; Katherine A. Graham, Susan D. Philips with Alan Maslove, *Urban Governance in Canada: Representation, Resources, and Restructuring* (Toronto: Harcourt, Brace & Company, Canada, 1997).

⁶ David Ley, *The New Middle Class and the Remaking of the Central City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 5.

⁷ Ley, *New Middle Class*, 24, and Chapter 5.

Osman both chronicle the movement, impact, and politics of this middle-class entry into the central city in the late sixties and seventies. David Ley focuses on the middle-class re-entry into Vancouver, and calls this group the “privileged cohort in the postindustrial city.”⁸ Ley traces the postindustrial urban liberalism that emerged from this re-entry that focused on creating socially just, “livable,” and locally controlled neighbourhoods in Vancouver. Osman also identifies this movement of white-collar professionals into the central city as a “new localist version of liberalism” that found its greatest expression in the neighbourhood movement. Osman’s “Brownstoners” (named after the “Brownstone” row housing they moved into and renovated in Brooklyn, NY) expressed a politics similar to those of Ley’s “new middle class.” Brownstoners’ foundational principles were “hostility to centralized bureaucracy, a faith in participatory democracy, and a belief in the sanctity of local neighbourhoods.”⁹ Ley concludes his study in the eighties, explaining how the liberal commitment to social justice cultivated by this urban middle class transformed into a depoliticized aesthetic that was quickly commodified by city promoters in the context of a conservative ascendancy. For Osman, the lionizing of “the neighbourhood” and “the local” championed by Brownstoners in the seventies “unintentionally dovetailed with a national conservative movement that was similarly hostile to government regulation and regional planning.”¹⁰ Thus, he argues the conservative anti-statist politics that emerged in the eighties had origins in both the right and in this countercultural localist liberalism of the left.

The liberal championing of the local and calls for political decentring of urban governance that emerged in the seventies had contradictory and at times ambiguous politics. As urban geographer Katharyne Mitchell summarizes, this was an “ideological brew of social liberalism – comprising some economic redistribution, a modicum of social mixing, and the right of all residents to enjoy a pleasant, harmonious and stable urban environment.”¹¹ Securing this ideal urban environment was, at times, politically rootless; although urban governance was decentralized and democratized, this did not

⁸ Ley, *New Middle Class*, 11.

⁹ Suleiman Osman, *The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn: Gentrification and the Search for Authenticity in PostWar New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 249.

¹⁰ Osman, 14.

¹¹ Katharyne Mitchell, *Crossing the Neoliberal Line: Pacific Rim Migration and the Metropolis* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2004), 41.

necessarily mean all city dwellers were equally provided for or represented at City Hall. Lacking this ideological rootedness, the back-to-the-city movement could, as Ley and Osman show, unintentionally dovetail with larger conservative political and economic restructurings. While local control was understood as more empowered and/or human-centred, it was pushed for alongside the erosion of the welfare state. This broader political and economic context is crucial to understanding the context of neighbourhood organizations in the eighties.

During the 1980s there were significant economic and political restructurings in Vancouver and British Columbia that laid the foundation for the city's transformation to a model neoliberal city.¹² The province, hit hard by an international economic recession in the early eighties, shifted towards a service-based economy and away from a resource industry-based workforce in response to the new demands of globalized capital. Vancouver became the province's focus of international trade and business, as industries like tourism, leisure consumption, the service sector, and real estate superseded fishing, logging, and mining. The city's development in the seventies and eighties included industrial restructuring and processes of globalization that resulted in a new transnational urbanism. Vancouver hosted the World Exposition in 1986 (Expo '86), and through the world's fair the province embarked on an ambitious, publicly funded real estate venture that drastically transformed the downtown core of Vancouver while promoting the city as open for business internationally. At the same time, Vancouver Mayor Mike Harcourt began actively courting Pacific Rim investment in Vancouver real estate in the context of Britain's imminent withdrawal from Hong Kong and Vancouver's transforming economies. Also in 1983, the provincial Social Credit party launched their

¹² Vancouver has been both celebrated and critiqued by contemporary scholars as a model neoliberal city. Celebrators: Lance Berelowitz, *Dream City: Vancouver and the Global Imagination*; Punter, *The Vancouver Achievement*; Mike Harcourt and Ken Cameron, *City Making in Paradise: Nine Decisions That Saved Vancouver* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2007); Alan F.J. Artibise and John F. Meligrana, "Tourism Infrastructure of a Postindustrial City: A Case Study of Vancouver, British Columbia," in *Infrastructure of Play: Building the Tourist City* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2002). Criticizers: Kris Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change: Capital, Culture, and Pacific Rim Mega-Projects*; Mitchell, *Crossing the Neoliberal Line*; Jeff Sommers and Nick Blomley, "The Worst Block in Vancouver," in *Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2002); Neil Smith and Jeff Derksen, "Urban Regeneration: Gentrification as a Global Urban Strategy," in *Stan Douglas: Every Building on 100 West Hastings*; Nick Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

program of “restraint” – an expansive withdrawal of welfare state provisions as the province redirected public funds away from social programs and towards more profit-oriented projects.¹³ These changes produced greater numbers of both rich and poor people and a growing unemployment as neoliberal economic policies increasingly supplanted the Keynesian welfare state without continuing a commitment to social provision.¹⁴

The eighties was a critical period in foregrounding Vancouver’s future as a city, but the grassroots contribution to this political transformation remains underexplored. Neil Smith’s concept of the “revanchist” city is useful in understanding one aspect of the “on the ground” transition to neoliberal urban governance. Smith’s revanchism is a vengeful attack launched on the liberal orientation of the previous regime.¹⁵ Foregrounding the concept of revanchism provides a broader political and social context for West End resident anti-street prostitution activism in the 1980s. As Mitchell argues, the liberal urbanism of the seventies that espoused a “socially liberal perspective on the norms of urban life” was the first point of attack of the “neoliberal advance guard,” before the more overt “roll back” state policies that targeted the welfare state in the eighties. The resident push to control the activities on the streets of the West End fought against street prostitution but also had to fight to reorient socially liberal ideas about urban life that had been expanded in the previous decades. This thesis contributes to a broader understanding of the role of downtown middle-class city dwellers in the conservative political reorientation in the eighties and thus details one aspect of the grassroots dimension of how Smith’s “revanchism” was enacted upon the liberalism of the decades previous.

While the grassroots details of the political transformation in the eighties are not widely studied, a large and growing body of literature addresses neoliberalism and the

¹³ Thomas A. Hutton, *The New Economy of the Inner City: Restructuring, Regeneration and Dislocation in the Twenty-First-Century Metropolis* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008): see Chapter 8, “New Industry Formation and the Transformation of Vancouver’s Metropolitan Core”; Punter, *The Vancouver Achievement: Introduction, Chapter 2, Chapter 3*; Olds, *Globalization and Urban Change*; Ley, *New Middle Class*.

¹⁴ By 1984 the reported unemployment in BC was 15.6%. Bryan D. Palmer, *Solidarity: The Rise & Fall of an Opposition in British Columbia* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1987), 24.

¹⁵ Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996).

reorientation of urban governance. This literature focuses on how the “linchpins of neoliberal policy repertoire” – deregulation, liberalization, and state retrenchment – have translated into urban politics and policies, and social and spatial re-orderings.¹⁶ In the midst of the drastic withdrawal of federal and provincial funds and the erosion of the welfare state, city officials had few options to address the growing urban poverty – either contain and control the urban poor through greater criminalization or figure out ways to fund the social programs the province and the federal government had cut through austerity measures. Paralleling these developments was a rightward turn in the philosophies of many of these inner city middle-class residents alongside a growing market-driven focus in municipal politics. By the 1980s and 1990s what surfaced in the thinking of many policymakers, politicians, and middle-class city dwellers in North American cities were new and individualized ways of thinking about crime, criminality, and policing in response to the growing urban “disorder” in city spaces and on city streets. These new ways of thinking imagined the solution to urban poverty, understood as public “disorder,” in tougher policing and tighter state regulation of public space.¹⁷

Broken Windows theory, a concept that emerged in 1982, argued that people whose behaviours indicate minor instances of “disorder,” like panhandlers, street prostitutes, and vagrants, should be as aggressively policed as serious crimes to prevent

¹⁶ Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, “Preface: From the ‘New Localism’ to the Spaces of Neoliberalism,” *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 343; Jason Hackworth, *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); Jamie Peck, Nik Theodore, and Neil Brenner, “Neoliberal Urbanism: Models, Moments, Mutations” in *SAIS Review* 29, no. 1 (2009): 49; Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, “Neoliberalizing Space,” in *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (2002): 380-404.

¹⁷ Katherine Beckett and Steve Herbert, “Dealing With Disorder: Social Control in the Post-Industrial City,” *Theoretical Criminology* 12, no. 1 (2008); Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992); Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*; Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: Guildford Press, 2003); Todd Gordon, “Understanding the Role of Law-and-Order Policies in Canadian Cities,” in *Poverty, Regulation, & Social Justice: Readings on the Criminalization of Poverty*, ed. Diane Crocker and Val Marie Johnson (Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Pub, 2010), 33-42; Sally Engle Merry, “Spatial Governmentality and the New Urban Social Order,” *American Anthropologist* 103, no. 1 (2001): 16-29; Mario Berti and Jeff Sommers, “‘The Streets Belong to the People who Pay for Them’: The Spatial Regulations of Street Poverty in Vancouver,” in *Poverty, Regulation, & Social Justice: Readings on the Criminalization of Poverty*, ed. Diane Crocker and Val Marie Johnson (Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Pub, 2010), 60-74.

an entrenched criminality in an area.¹⁸ In this imagining, the people whose behaviours indicated urban “disorder” were seen as the largest threat to urban neighbourhoods. This theory informed the many “quality of life” laws that surfaced in places like New York City in the 1990s and other laws like the relatively recent Safe Streets Acts in Ontario and British Columbia.¹⁹ Proponents of these measures argue they are alternatives to arrest and jail. Opponents argue that these types of laws criminalize poverty.²⁰ Many municipal governments, especially in the United States, but in Canada as well, began using these types of laws in the 1980s and 1990s to regulate, criminalize, and/or contain urban poverty.²¹

What surfaced in the fight for control over the streets of Vancouver’s West End in the early 1980s demonstrates the emergence of this punitive urban policy in the thinking of resident organizations, the police, and the mayor and city planners. CROWE explicitly advocated for broken windows policing in 1982, and frequently distributed George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson’s foundational article to its membership and supporters.²²

¹⁸ George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson, “Broken Windows: The Police and Neighbourhood Safety,” *Atlantic Monthly*, Mar 1982; George L. Kelling, Catherine M. Coles, *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in our Communities* (New York: Martin Kessler Books, 1996), 20. Kelling and Coles defined disorder as “street prostitution, drunkenness and public drinking, menacing behaviour, harassment, obstruction of streets and public spaces, vandalism and graffiti, public urination and defecation, unlicensed vending and peddling, unsolicited window washing of cars (‘squeegeeing’), and other such acts.”

¹⁹ Andrea McArdle and Tanya Erzen, eds., *Zero Tolerance: Quality of Life and the New Police Brutality in New York* (New York: New York University Press, 2001); Todd Gordon, *Cops, Crime and Capitalism: The Law and Order Agenda in Canada* (Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood Pub., 2006); Todd Gordon, “The Return of Vagrancy Law and the Politics of Poverty in Canada,” *Canadian Review of Social Policy* 54 (2004): 34-54; Amber Marie Hitchen, “Safe Streets Act: Discourses Around Legislating Citizenship and Public Spaces in British Columbia and Beyond,” *Variations* 2 (2005).

²⁰ Kelling and Willson, 1982; Wilson and Coles, 1996; Mitchell, *The Right to the City*; Bernard E. Harcourt, *Illusion of Order: The False Promise of Broken Windows Policing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Steve Herbert, “Policing the Contemporary City: Fixing Broken Windows or Shoring up Neo-liberalism?” *Theoretical Criminology* 5, no. 4 (2001): 445-466.

²¹ Beckett and Herbert, “Dealing With Disorder,” 5; Davis, *City of Quartz*; Lisa E. Sanchez, “Enclosure Acts and Exclusionary Practices: Neighbourhood Associations, Community Police, and the Expulsion of the Sexual Outlaw,” in *Between Law and Culture: Relocating Legal Studies*, ed. David Theo Goldberg, Michael Musheno and Lisa C. Bower (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 122-40; Berti and Sommers, “The Streets Belong to the People that Pay for Them.”

²² George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson, “Broken Windows: The Police and Neighbourhood Safety,” *Atlantic Monthly*, Mar 1982.

The West End Livability Directions Project's safety committee drafted a Community Crime Prevention Strategy that was extremely well-received by the police, city planners, and the Mayor in 1984, and was considered by local authorities as a model for the future of city policing. The ideological success of the Crime Prevention Strategy shows that the introduction of this reoriented thinking about urban "disorder" and the solution imagined in a reformulated policing of public space occurred in the 1980s in Vancouver and was predicated on the expulsion of street prostitutes from the streets of the central city.²³

There was also a new sexual politics that emerged in the city of the 1980s. Feminists were fiercely divided over the issue of sex and pornography, gay liberationists butted heads with gay activists pursuing equal rights agendas, divisions persisted between gay men and lesbians about sexual liberation versus sexual libertarianism, and gay men and lesbians with disabilities and gays and lesbians of colour challenged the discrimination and racism within the movement. These issues proved at times to be divisive. As these marginalized sexualities came under increased attack from a rejuvenated right wing, the AIDS epidemic devastated already overburdened communities. Despite these divisions, resistance to homophobia and heteronormativity endured, the AIDS crisis expanded political activism, and a queer politics emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s with a renewed political militancy. The lesbian and gay movement in Canada in the 1980s was principally concerned with two central issues: pursuing a liberal rights oriented platform in the context of the new Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act, and continuing to pursue liberationist projects that sought to radicalize sexuality, fight against police violence and state regulation of sexuality, and assert pride and visibility.²⁴

As historian Tom Warner has observed, in the 1980s much of the lesbian and gay movement was locked in heated debates over "liberation or equality, revolution or integration" in the context of a climate of "bigotry and backlash," and this is largely true of the climate in Canada and in BC's conservative Social Credit reign from 1975-1991. But

²³ The details of this exchange are chronicled in Chapter 4.

²⁴ Tom Warner, *Never Going Back: A History of Queer Activism in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Lisa Duggan and Nan D. Hunter, *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Gary Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Homo and Hetero Sexualities* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1996); Miriam Smith, *Lesbian and Gay Rights in Canada: Social Movements and Equality-Seeking, 1971-1995* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

the 1981 election of Mayor Mike Harcourt, a politician who solicited gay votes by frequenting gay bathhouses for handshaking photo opportunities, and the existence of a gay police liaison in the Vancouver Police Department since 1979, demonstrates that the political climate towards homosexuality was different in Vancouver.²⁵ In this regard, and in the broader context of sexual politics in the 1980s, the activity in the West End is particularly interesting because the gay men active in the campaign against street prostitution were bracketing their sexualities into the private sphere while calling for the protection of neighbourhood rights in the context of a relatively tolerant local politics. Lisa Duggan's identification of the new sexual politics of neoliberalism, what she and others call homonormativity – a sexual politics that demobilizes gay politics to the contained private and domesticated sphere – helps explain the type of sexual politics that emerged in the fight against street prostitution in the West End. Homonormativity not only upholds heteronormative institutions while privatizing gayness, it also offers a “third way” rhetoric positioned between the conservative moral extremism of the religious right and the civil rights claims of the left.²⁶ Historian Christina B. Hanhardt adds to Duggan's insights by noting the emergence of “homonormative antiviolence politics” in the gay safe street patrols in New York's Greenwich Village between 1976-1981, where calls for gay safety translated into race and class profiling.²⁷ In my studies of gay men in the West End the very real threat of gay bashers, who were interchangeably hooker bashers, loomed large in the fight for the streets. Street prostitutes on the corners solicited clients, but some of

²⁵ “The liaison meetings were set up following pressure from the community to deal with increased street violence against gay people. Concern about street attacks came to a head in the summer of 1979 when more than 300 people crowded into the West End Community Centre to demand a solution to the problem.” However, working with the police was controversial in the gay community. Journalist Ed Jackson commented “the original impetus of the liaison committee - to bring the concerns of the community to the police - seems to have been forgotten...The single and dubious accomplishment of the Vancouver Gay/Police Dialogue could simply be the transformation of gay representatives into willing accomplices in the policing and social control of their own community.” Ed Jackson, “Gay/Cop Liaison: Vancouver's Lesson,” *Body Politic* no. 76, Sept 1981: 7.

²⁶ Defined as “a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption.” Duggan uses “gay” exclusively because “it is the operative term for the neoliberals.” Lisa Duggan, “The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism,” in *Materializing Democracy: Towards a Revitalized Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 179.

²⁷ Christina B. Hanhardt, “Butterflies, Whistles and Fists: Gay Safe Street Patrols and the New Gay Ghetto, 1976-1981,” *Radical History Review* 100, Winter 2008.

them were violently homophobic outsiders. Although their eastern Canada counterparts charged the gay men of the West End with lotus land apathy, the gay men active in anti-street prostitution campaigns were quite political. Their contribution to crafting and advancing a homonormative politics and a homonormative antiviolence politics very much presented as a political “third way” secured their safety in the city at the cost of increased danger for others and gives a more complex reading to the seeming progressivism of Vancouver’s sexual politics at the time.

Tracing the focus on the “local” in the liberal urbanism of the seventies to the role of the “local” in calls for community safety in the eighties can also tell the story of grassroots contributions in the process of hegemonic state formation. By the nineties the economies of Canadian cities had become central to the province’s and even the nation’s wealth as they became touch-down points for global capital. Within literature on neoliberal urban governance, there is a specific focus on the local as a place where the global flows of capital are most immediately mediated, where the local and the global meet. In this understanding, the local is a place where neoliberalism is most acutely expressed, but also a place from which it can be most forcefully resisted.²⁸ Urban historian Thomas J. Sugrue offers a significant intervention to the analysis of the local, arguing that localism has persisted as a crucial mediator *and* determinant of American federal policies throughout the twentieth century, even during the height of New Deal statism.²⁹ These understandings of the importance of the local link the fights in the West End over public space to the continued process of state settlement and hegemonic formation. The case study of resident organizations in the West End in the early eighties

²⁸ Erik Swyngedouw, “Neither Global nor Local: ‘Glocalization’ and the Politics of Scale,” in *Spaces of Globalization: Reasserting the Power of the Local*, ed. Kevin R. Cox (New York; London: Guildford Press, 1997), 137-166; Margit Mayer, “Contesting the Neoliberalization of Urban Governance,” in *Contesting Neoliberalism: Urban Frontiers*, ed. Helga Leitner, Jamie Peck, Eric S. Sheppard (New York: Guildford Press, 2007); William Sites, “Contesting the Neoliberal City?: Theories of Neoliberalism and Urban Strategies of Contention,” in *Contesting Neoliberalism: Urban Frontiers*, ed. Helga Leitner, Jamie Peck, Eric S. Sheppard (New York: Guildford Press, 2007); Brenner and Theodore, “Preface: From the ‘New Localism’ to the Spaces of Neoliberalism.”

²⁹ Thomas J. Sugrue, “All Politics is Local: The Persistence of Localism in Twentieth-Century America,” in *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History*, ed. Meg Jacobs, William J. Novak, Julian E. Zelizer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

is also a testimony to the power of the local in determining or mediating municipal, provincial and federal policies.

Chapter two tells the story of who was on the streets, at the beaches, in the apartments and houses of the West End. I position the West End as a place that was understood by many sexually marginalized people, particularly young people with non-conforming sexual identities, as a safer and more tolerant place to go in the city, the province, and even the Pacific Northwest. This chapter looks at how CROWE and the Shame the Johns patrols claimed the space of the West End. I highlight who was excluded from belonging in the neighbourhood as the sexual politics of homonormativity emerged alongside an assertion of a politics of “common sense.”

Chapter three concentrates on the new alliance of forces that came together in the shared project of securing new laws to regulate street prostitution in the eighties. CROWE, the mayor, the police, and their allies asserted their authority against the legal gains won by feminists in the sixties and seventies. As the anti-street prostitution forces were coming together in the shared project of restoring “law and order” to Vancouver’s West End, “citizens” and their “neighbourhood” were positioned as more deserving of having their rights protected over the cautions of feminists and civil libertarians. The alliance of anti-street prostitution forces re-oriented the social analysis of street prostitution to push for a solution in tougher laws in order to secure the “right to peace and quiet” in an urban neighbourhood.

Chapter four examines the dimensions of the “model” urban neighbourhood proposed by anti-street prostitution resident groups in the West End. As some West End residents and city officials joined forces more officially, proactive community activism was reoriented as community-policing strategies, and urban planning concepts of livability were reoriented to focus instead on crime prevention. The community that was created in the West End asserted a commanding grip over the public spaces of the area and drew sharp lines of exclusion to keep out those identified as dangerous intruders.

Chapter 2.

Concerned Residents of the West End, Shame the Johns, and the Sexual Re-Ordering of the West End

The West End is a jungle – a prolific one, full of exotic spices. It absorbs and tolerates a range of lifestyles that any city worthy of the name can generate and enjoy. It spawns dozens of communities of common interest: social, sexual, political and ethnic. As Jane Jacobs says: "The presence of great numbers of people gathered together in cities should not only be frankly accepted as a physical fact. It follows that they should also be enjoyed as an asset and their presence celebrated."¹ Gordon Price, founder of CROWE, 1982.

There were many different paths leading one to live in Vancouver's West End in the 1980s. Gordon Price, a young soon-to-be professional who left the University of Victoria and moved to the area in 1978, explained that he did so because "as a gay person coming out, that's where you went."² The following year, the apartment building he lived in was being converted to condominiums and he could "get in for a reasonably cheap price" but there was a catch: "there were hookers on the corner." For Price this meant the neighbourhood was "going down the tubes," so "what's the point in investing in this kind of place?" Price had to "answer the question for [his] own satisfaction as to whether there was really any hope."³ Another young man, Glen, who identified as bisexual, also moved to the area in 1978. He came to the area because he was kicked out of his home in Pembroke, Ontario, hitchhiked to Vancouver, and began working the

¹ Gordon Price, "The Real West End," *Urban Reader* 10, no. 5 (1982): 10. Gordon Price is the founder of CROWE.

² Mary Frances Hill, "Urban Legends: A Former City Councillor Defends his Favourite 'hood as the City's 'Urban Miracle'" *Westender*, Mar 13-19, 2003.

³ Sean Rossiter, "Mr. Price's Neighbourhoods," *Vancouver Sun*, Sep 14, 2002.

streets as a prostitute as “a question of survival.”⁴ He initially lived in the West End’s YMCA, then, much like Price, upgraded and moved into an apartment. Glen, who also liked the sexual climate of the West End, reported that he enjoyed the independence and exposure of his work and thought “the life [was] neat.” Although he did not think his work was a long-term solution to pay the bills, he saw it as a “good experience” that expanded his sexuality and gave him a broader life experience than he had in Pembroke.

The range of choices accessible to these two men differed greatly, but they both landed in the West End because of the sexual activity of the neighbourhood and what was happening on its streets. The victory over the area’s public spaces led by people who shared Price’s perspective was a culmination of shifting political currents, the economic restructuring of the city, and changing attitudes of some people in the gay community in the West End who were beginning to feel, as one member put it, “matured ... though as cosmopolitan as ever.”⁵ An example of this coming together of forces can be seen in the testimony of “Jeff,” an anonymous closeted gay man identified by the *Vancouver Sun* as someone who “typif[ied] the silent majority of the gay male population” in 1983: “With the change in the economy, and with politics moving further right of centre, people are slowing down ... They’re looking for more security, insuring themselves for the future. They’re not just interested in having a good time.”⁶

Gay men did not exclusively lead the fight against street prostitution in the West End, although many were active in it. It was, instead, a loose coalition of forces with different sexual, social, and political positions that reflected some aspects of the demographics of the area. However, the coming together of these forces in CROWE did produce a new type of sexual politics that reframed the boundaries of acceptable sexuality in the aftermath of the sexual revolution, and it was a message that was received popularly. The sexual reframing affected everyone in the neighbourhood, but it affected some of them more favourably than others. CROWE’s position was that the liberalism of the sixties and seventies that had produced a public tolerance or

⁴ Kayce White, “Life is Neat and the Money’s Great for the Young Virgin from Pembroke,” *Vancouver Sun*, Jul 9, 1979.

⁵ Tim Pawsey, “Shamer Defends Stance,” *Angles* 1, no. 6 (Jun 1984): 4.

⁶ Marke Andrews, “Getting the Lowdown on the Gay Community,” *Vancouver Sun*, Nov 19, 1983.

acceptance of activities like street prostitution had pushed too far past the limits of what a healthy residential community could endure. What the group's leadership strove to accomplish was a collective "return to common sense" as a corrective to this excess of sexual liberalism. For the leadership of CROWE, an organization founded by Gordon Price, reigning in the neighbourhood's collective standards of acceptable public sexuality would determine whether or not the community had "any hope." This hope was dependent on coalition building with non-homosexual allies if it were to be a true expression of the community. Men like Price made the decision about what was the most important battle to determine a hopeful future for the West End, and the answer was decidedly the removal of street prostitution.

The return to common sense was a complicated matter for many gay men in a climate where, as "Jeff" correctly noted, politics were "moving further right of centre."⁷ As a result CROWE's politics were firmly "centred" by its leadership between the liberalism of the seventies and the emergent backlash of moral conservatism. The political "centre" proposed by CROWE would guide the new common sense. Lisa Duggan's argument that homonormative politics crafted a "third way" rhetoric positioned between the moral conservatism of the religious right and the civil rights claims of the progressive left resonates here most sharply. For Duggan, this "third way" means a "centre-libertarian-conservative-classical liberal formation in gay politics" which aims to "contest and displace the expansively democratic vision" and to replace it "with a model of narrowly constructed public life."⁸ This "third way" is typical of neoliberal politics, often presented as "a kind of nonpolitics – a way of being reasonable." This chapter will trace the emergence and application of CROWE's push for a reasonable "return to common sense" and argue that this was a forceful articulation of homonormative politics that produced a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized domesticated sexuality. The result was the crafting of a "third way" politics where a cautious inclusion of a privatized homosexuality that did not challenge heteronormative institutions was sold as both new and reasonable. In the process, resident calls for neighbourhood safety excluded many sexually marginalized people from access to that safety.

⁷ Marke Andrews, "Getting the Lowdown on the Gay Community," *Vancouver Sun*, Nov 19, 1983.

⁸ Lisa Duggan, "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism," in *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*, ed. Russ Castronovo and Dana D. Nelson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 177.

West End Demographics: Situating the Fight for the Streets

The West End of Vancouver sits on the western peninsula of the downtown core surrounded by beaches and Vancouver's largest urban "oasis," Stanley Park. Its proximity to downtown and the beaches combined with its development history of high-density living transformed the area into a cosmopolitan downtown neighbourhood by the eighties. The area initially hosted Vancouver's wealthiest colonial elite – the owners of the Canadian Pacific Railway – but the CPR developed Shaughnessy in 1907 to relocate this group to higher, and statelier, grounds in the city. The mansions they left behind were converted into rooming houses for predominantly white Anglo-Saxon immigrants. In the fifties and sixties, the West End was drastically upzoned, resulting in rapid redevelopment of the area into high-rise concrete apartment towers and condominium buildings. The postwar boom of newly graduated white-collar professionals moved in to these high-rises and worked in the rapidly proliferating office buildings of the downtown core. The neighbourhood by the seventies was made up of long-time resident seniors, young and mostly single professionals, and an established and growing gay male population. Gay men had begun living in the area as early as the 1940s, when it was mostly single occupancy dwellings with relatively low rent, and had established cruising circuits in the bathhouses, bars, public washrooms at English Bay, and trails in Stanley Park. By the 1970s there were cafés, restaurants, bars, bookstores, massage parlours, and other businesses in the West End catering to gay consumers, and the area had become a "focus for gay migration across Canada."⁹

Also, by the late seventies, police raids had closed two Vancouver nightclubs, the Penthouse Cabaret and the Zanzibar, where hundreds of prostitutes worked. The

⁹ Anne-Marie Bouthillette, "Queer and Gendered Housing: A Tale of Two Neighbourhoods in Vancouver," in *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance*, ed. Gordon Brent Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette, and Yolanda Retter (Seattle: Bay Press, 1997), 54, 218, 224; Terence John Fairclough, "The Gay Community of Vancouver's West End: The Geography of a Modern Urban Phenomenon," MA Dept. of Geography, UBC (1985): 96; Becki Ross, "Sex and (Evacuation from) the City: The Moral and Legal Regulation of Sex Workers in Vancouver's West End, 1975-1985," *Sexualities* 13, no. 197 (2010): 201, 209; Donald Gutstein, *Vancouver Ltd.* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1975), 92-4; George Gray, Vincent Keddie, and Josephine Kwan, *Pattern of Neighbourhood Change—the West End of Vancouver* (Vancouver: Dept. of Anthropology and Sociology, University of British Columbia, 1976), 42-51; Richard Borbridge, "Sexuality and the City: Exploring Gaybourhoods and the Urban Village Form in Vancouver, BC," Master of City Planning thesis, Dept. of City Planning, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada (2007), 107.

closures pushed the workers onto the streets, and successive police crackdowns on the street level trade moved it further into the nearby residential areas of the West End.¹⁰ Later, in 1977, in response to a petition from agitated West End residents sent to the VPD and city council, Mayor Jack Volrich requested increased police attention on Davie Street. Unable to permanently or effectively regulate the trade, Volrich accused the federal government of failing to enact legislation that would assist municipal powers with regulating these kinds of behaviours. Prostitution had existed in the West End prior to the bar closures, but the activity dramatically increased following 1975.¹¹

Working alongside these relocated female prostitutes were a growing number of male prostitutes whose gay clients lived in the West End, or whose closeted gay clients knew they could come to the West End for homosexual sex.¹² There were also transgender and transvestite workers working openly in the area. A report done by the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) in 1977 reported a significant increase in the previous five years in male prostitution, with an estimated 200 male prostitutes working the area on the streets, in the clubs and the hotel bars, and the bathhouses and body rub parlours. The VPD estimated that roughly 75% of these male prostitutes were technically juveniles, too young to find other work, who when questioned “claimed to be heterosexual and just supplying a service to homosexual males for money.”¹³ Some of the younger male street prostitutes would try to find a “mark” or “sugar daddy” to move in with and exchange room and board for sex.¹⁴ Others told the press that their main clients were closeted gay men who usually “have a wife and kid in the suburbs” or “men

¹⁰ Larry Pynn, “Ladies of the Evening Forced to Work the Day Shift,” *Vancouver Sun*, Jul 9, 1979.

¹¹ Daniel Francis, *Red Light Neon: A History of Vancouver's Sex Trade* (Vancouver: Subway, 2006), 8; John Lowman and Laura Fraser, *Violence Against Persons Who Prostitute: The Experience in British Columbia* (Ottawa: Dept. of Justice Canada, Research, Statistics and Evaluation Directorate, 1995), 113; Deborah Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble: The Social Regulation of Sexual Labour* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 33-6; Bob Hendrickson, “Vancouver's Drive in Supermarket - For Sex,” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Apr 7, 1977; Pynn, “Ladies of the Evening Forced to Work the Day Shift.”

¹² Ros Oberlyn, “There's Blame All Around for Juvenile Prostitution,” *Vancouver Sun*, Jul 5, 1980: A1. Clientele not just “seedy, underworld characters” but “a cross-section of the community.”

¹³ G. A. Forbes, *Street Prostitution in Vancouver's West End*, prepared for Vancouver Police Board and Vancouver City Council (Vancouver: Vancouver Police Dept., 1977), 3-4. This is sort of coercively speculative; unsure these men would “out” themselves to the police. Another article claims, “Only a small minority of homosexuals use prostitutes.”; Oberlyn, “There's Blame All Around for Juvenile Prostitution,” *Vancouver Sun*, 1980.

¹⁴ Forbes, *Street Prostitution in Vancouver's West End*, 4.

who fear discovery of their homosexuality, making it difficult for them to socialize openly.”¹⁵ The *Vancouver Sun*, purportedly reading these closeted customers as “straight,” reported that “only a small minority of homosexuals use prostitutes,” and that according to “members of the gay community ... many teenagers end up on the street after they fail to gain acceptance as homosexuals at school, home and a larger community that refuses to tolerate the gay lifestyle.”¹⁶ A lot of the initial concern coming from city officials about the growing street prostitution in the city centred on these juveniles in the West End.

The West End was not only a focal point for gay male migration, it was also a destination point for young people all over Western Canada who were questioning their sexuality, who wanted the excitement of the city, or who were leaving troubled situations at home.¹⁷ As scholar Anne Marie Bouthillette has observed of the area, “the West End’s marginality made it accessible at one time to those who existed on the margins of society.”¹⁸ Steven Bourne, a worker at the Gordon Neighbourhood House in the West End during the eighties, explained this migration: “Young people who perhaps have a gay orientation at a fairly early age, and I’m talking 14 to 15, start to feel uncomfortable in their home communities - they could be from Princeton, Nelson, Prince George or they could be from Surrey.”¹⁹ As Bourne saw it the West End was “a safe place to be gay,” and these younger people knew “they [could] come to Vancouver and be gay.” According to Bourne, 70% of youth in the Lower Mainland came to the West End for “the

¹⁵ Jim Oakes, “Cruising with Pat Carney,” *Westender*, May 29, 1980; Oberlyn, “There’s Blame All Around for Juvenile Prostitution,” *Vancouver Sun*, Jul 5, 1980: A1.

¹⁶ Oberlyn, “There’s Blame All Around for Juvenile Prostitution,” *Vancouver Sun*, Jul 5, 1980.

¹⁷ David Myers, “Hustling,” *Angles*, Apr 1984. Most of those working the streets under 18 are middle class, 60% coming from Lower Mainland families that are “very average and middle class”: Steve Bourne, “Street Kids Target for Violence,” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Jun 9, 1981: A6; Steve Bourne’s CROWE conference presentation transcribed, Oct 17, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-3 file 19, CROWE - Chronology, Conference and Brief, City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁸ Bouthillette, “A Tale,” 229. Wiseman reports there are specific areas sex workers gather; transsexuals and transgender workers work together, women over 18 group together, as do men, then the “younger group, sometimes Native Indian” stick together; Les Wiseman, “The End,” *Vancouver Magazine*, Jul 1983.

¹⁹ Myers, “Hustling,” *Angles*, Apr 1984.

romance of the area, the excitement of being involved on Davie Street.”²⁰ A young man who was working the streets during the eighties shared that he knew he was gay before he came to Vancouver and came “to meet gay people and enjoy the sex that I’ve enjoyed before,” but that “eventually, if you come to Vancouver for gay sex, you more or less end up hustling – if you’re young enough.”²¹ The dynamic, as Bourne saw it, was that young people were coming downtown “searching for ... a healthy sexual development,” but since they were under legal age to work or attend clubs or bars, they worked and hung out on the streets. There were also many stories of young “hustlers” who were similar to Glen – the runaway from Pembroke who introduced this chapter. These people came to the West End under a degree of duress because it was known as a safer and tolerant area and ended up working the streets after being propositioned.

As for the many non-gay identified white-collar professionals living in the West End, many seemed to enjoy the atmosphere of cosmopolitan edginess that was cultivated, at least partially, by the sexual activity of the area. In 1983 a local magazine *Vancouver* wrote a feature article on the West End. It was a celebratory tour of the neighbourhood and the eclectic mix of people who lived there. Centred as the true representative of the area in the article were the “West End’s high white-collar population of young liberal thinkers” credited with “provid[ing] a tolerant milieu.” The tolerance of these professional young liberal thinkers was proven by their acceptance of the street prostitutes, gay men, “rock ‘n’ rollers,” senior citizens, and the occasional homeless person, all of whom orbited them in the cafés, on the beaches, and on the sidewalks of the area. Testimonies explained that the move to the West End required a six-month “transition period,” “an immersion course in diverse values.” Described by the author as “well-adjusted West Enders with many gay friends,” these professionals chose the West End because they wanted to be close to work and “in the heart of” the city. They avoided “prostitute aggravation by selective rerouting” but were nonetheless “amused ... by being propositioned while walking home.” The author also noted that “shocked West End residents gradually realized gays were not child molesters and guys who have to put on

²⁰ Steve Bourne’s CROWE conference presentation transcribed, Oct 17, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-3 file 19 CROWE - Chronology, Conference and Brief, City of Vancouver Archives.

²¹ Myers, “Hustling,” *Angles*, Apr 1984.

a dress to get their kicks.”²² The challenges of co-existing with prostitutes and gay men were overshadowed by the tolerant reputation of the area where “you can live the way you want” and “you always have the beautiful beach to go to regardless of your status, color, or lifestyle.” Many Westenders considered themselves, and the West End, at the cutting edge of hip urban living. To them this meant a neighbourhood that was tolerant and diverse, eclectic, dense, vibrant, and even a little edgy. This edginess was cultivated by the types of people who lived there, their public behaviours and visibility, as well as through the types of boutiques, bars, and restaurants that operated in the area.

Young urban professionals came to the West End to live in the seventies and eighties because it was close to their downtown offices, beaches, downtown shopping, boutiques, and bars and restaurants, and because the area affirmed and reflected their cosmopolitanism. Gay men from all class and racialized categories also came to the West End because of the excitement of its cosmopolitanism but also because it was a safer neighbourhood than anywhere else in the city, or even the province, to be openly gay.²³ People with non-heteronormative sexual identities or behaviours, or non-conforming gender identities, also gravitated to work and to live in the West End because of its reputation for tolerance. The people working the streets by the 1980s were of varying sexualities and ages, but most had been marginalized due to their sexualities. Also, broader economic forces like the continual federal and provincial repeal of welfare state provisions and the growing recession in BC contributed to more urban poverty and more people engaging in sex work on the streets of the West End.²⁴

For some West End residents who initially had a cautious acceptance or at least a begrudging tolerance of the street activity in the socially liberal climate of the seventies, the street activity was getting to be a little too excessive by the 1980s; the city was proving unable to control it and the number of people on the street were growing. Some people in the West End with the social and economic power to do so began to stake a firmer claim on the neighbourhood, articulated as a desire for a stable and rooted community. Some of the gay men who moved to the area in the seventies had grown a little older, were experiencing the tragedy of the AIDS crisis, and were worried

²² Wiseman, “The End,” 30, 35.

²³ Andrews, “Getting the Lowdown on the Gay Community,” *Vancouver Sun*, Nov 19, 1983.

²⁴ Larry Pynn, “Ladies of the Evening Forced to Work the Day Shift,” *Vancouver Sun*, Jul 9, 1979.

by the emergence of a new hostile conservatism. In a 1983 piece in the *Vancouver Sun* that focused on the changing nature of the gay scene, Tim Agg, the chairman of the Vancouver Gay Community Centre, shared that although “at one time, gays were a novelty, a visible aberration,” they were now, by 1983, “a mature, stable community.”²⁵ A gay man, who chose to remain anonymous, was identified by the *Sun* as “typify[ing] the silent majority of the gay male population.” This meant he was “quiet, middle class and clued in to community events” and was “not into cruising.” This man said that what gay men were lacking now was “a role model,” and that “the heterosexual has the model of the couple marrying and living together forever. But there’s nothing like that for gays,” and some were “really looking for that.” In an article in *Angles*, the city’s gay and lesbian newspaper, a gay man named Tim shared that the West End had “matured” and “its residents no longer accept[ed] labels like ‘transient’ and ‘single’ for the community.”²⁶ Some of the cosmopolitan white-collar professionals were also beginning to shift their cautious celebration of the edgy atmosphere provided by West End street life. A report done by a property appraiser solicited by CROWE concluded that “the image of the West End as a fragmented group of swingers, loners and non-conformists (has given way) gradually to a reputation of a neighborhood with a strong community spirit.”²⁷

Many people in the anti-street prostitution coalition that emerged in the West End had a personal stake in maintaining the cosmopolitan tolerance and social and sexual diversity of the area and considered themselves politically liberal. But they also had a growing disdain and intolerance for the burgeoning street level sex trade and the activities it brought into the neighbourhood, and they began to imagine the solutions to this growing urban disorder in exclusionary and punitive ways. What they crafted in response to the issue of street prostitution was a politics that carefully balanced these two competing positions – a politics that would accomplish the dirty work of excluding and relocating the street level trade while avoiding making moral claims against sexual behaviour or assert an overt conservative politics. What they needed and found was a “third way.”

²⁵ Andrews, “Getting the Lowdown on the Gay Community,” *Vancouver Sun*, Nov 19, 1983.

²⁶ Tim Pawsey, “Shamer Defends Stance,” *Angles* 1, no. 6, Jun 1984.

²⁷ “Angry Vancouver Mayor Calls Pornography Committee a Sham,” *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), Jan 10, 1984: 9.

Defining Belonging in the West End: The Emergence of CROWE and the Return to “Common Sense”

In the summer of 1981, Gordon Price sat down at his desk and excitedly penned an inspired letter to the steering committee of a community organization he had founded just two weeks prior called Concerned Residents of the West End (CROWE). He wrote that the problems the group was facing had become for him “something of an obsession ... something to think about late at night, on runs in Stanley Park, even while hiking in the bush.”²⁸ He wanted to channel this obsession into a collective expression, working with the others to build “membership as a grass roots citizen’s organization.” It was work that he maintained would require “unity, dedication, patience and courage,” but was worthwhile since “there are very few times in life when you get the opportunity to contribute to society in such a positive way - when true selflessness can lead to apparent public good.”²⁹ Days later he read the letter aloud to his fellow, primarily male, organizers during the group’s second meeting. The passionate sentiment made its way into the group’s first pamphlet titled “What is CROWE? Why should *YOU* join?” The pamphlet was the first attempt at building membership and it reflected the drive and excitement of the group eager to build “a grass roots citizen’s organization.” It stressed “the first step ... is to unite, to organize, to speak with one voice and to insist on action.” They intended to fight to regain “the basic right” to the West End, a place the group praised as being “one of the most tolerant neighbourhoods in the country where people of all classes and customs may live together.” It concluded with an inspired urgency: “The time to take action is now ... so join us ... the West End can be Vancouver’s best neighbourhood – if we care enough.”³⁰ One member proclaimed, “We must take back the streets,” insisting, “There is power in numbers.”³¹

²⁸ Gordon Price, “Address to the Steering Committee,” Aug 20, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-3, file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives: 6.

²⁹ Gordon Price, “Address to the Steering Committee,” Aug 20, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-3 file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives: 6, 3.

³⁰ “What is CROWE? Why Should *You* Join?” Aug 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-3 file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives.

³¹ “CROWE Minutes – 1981,” Aug 25, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 1, CROWE Meeting Minutes, City of Vancouver Archives.

While CROWE's objectives may sound broad-based, collective in spirit, and oriented towards preserving the "tolerant" inclusivity of the neighbourhood, the group's singular focus was to "actively work for the immediate removal" of street prostitution from residential streets of the West End.³² The initial strategy of the group was to maintain a centrally organized core group of members through a well-organized and unified steering committee, then "build membership as a grass roots citizen's organization," in order to encourage "broad-based citizen action ... through smaller neighbourhood and building groups, with unity and communications emphasized between CROWE and citizens."³³ The group's strategy from the onset was both short- and long-term. In the short term they would agitate for greater police presence and control of the streets, resorting to vigilante tactics if necessary, while working with sympathetic municipal politicians to use whatever laws available to them to regulate street solicitation. In the long term, they would aggressively lobby parliament for changes in the Criminal Code to more effectively criminalize street soliciting, embark on smear campaigns of Liberal or NDP party politicians, and delegitimize the positions of feminists and civil libertarians who were putting forward a more socially based analysis of street prostitution.³⁴ Ultimately the focus was to gain and build popular support in the West End while pressuring and lobbying "the key politicians who could make the needed changes in the law."³⁵

Price's letter and CROWE's first pamphlet reflected a genuine belief held by the organization's leadership that they were accurate representatives of two seemingly politically disparate orientations. On one hand, CROWE's membership considered themselves committed grassroots community activists, interested in the greater public good, primarily articulated as community "health." Those in the group celebrated,

³² "What is CROWE? Why Should *You* Join?" Aug 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-3 file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives.

³³ Gordon Price, "Address to the Steering Committee," Aug 20, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-3 file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives; "CROWE Minutes – 1981," Sept 10, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, Meeting Minutes, MSS 1449 973-B-6 file 1, City of Vancouver Archives.

³⁴ Gordon Price, "Address to the Steering Committee," Aug 20, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-3 file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives: 3.

³⁵ "CROWE Newsletter 1," Feb 1982, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, add mss 973-B-1 file 5, CROWE Newsletters 1-4, 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

participated, and thrived in the diversity, tolerance, and eclecticism of high-density urban living the West End offered. They considered themselves continuing a tradition of community activism from the sixties and seventies and criticized leaving the neighbourhood as “sell[ing] out literally and morally.” On the other hand, the group launched a campaign to push for a “change in societal attitudes – a re-education of the whole community.” Price argued the central problem the group was facing was the “public tolerance of street prostitution” which was “rooted in the social changes of the last several decades.” For Price the social movements of the previous decades had gone too far and the “moral fabric” of society now needed to be repaired. One of Price’s initial outreach tactics, as part of the “re-education of the whole community,” was a call for the return to “common sense” from the “excesses” or “liberalism of the sixties and seventies” which had “resulted in ramifications that have literally been dumped on our doorsteps.”³⁶ The ramifications he referred to were the presence of street prostitutes and the activities they brought with them – more traffic, the “screeching of tires and revving of cars,” as well as “vulgar and abusive” language, increased crime, “notably drug dealing, with potential danger to all neighbourhood residents,” and property violence.³⁷ These activities were “incompatible with social peace” and had no place in a “healthy residential community.”³⁸

CROWE formed to lead this re-education campaign and “save” the West End. Notwithstanding the organization’s claim of political neutrality, its leadership had some careful sexual politics to maneuver. Despite the intensity of the single-issue focus, CROWE was careful to emphasize that they were not “moral majoritarians,” and that they did not oppose prostitution per se, but rather noise, safety, and the irrefutable fact that “prostitution has brought with it activities that are incompatible with social peace.” An anonymous CROWE spokesperson reassured a reporter that “the West End has always been a tolerant neighbourhood, with a large gay population. We’re not making moral

³⁶ “CROWE – Address to Steering Committee,” Aug 20, 1981. Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-3, file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives.

³⁷ Jim Oakes, “Anti-hooker Group Launches Campaign,” *Westender*, Sep 3, 1981: 9.

³⁸ “What is CROWE? Why Should *You* Join?” Aug 1981. Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-3, file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives; Gordon Price, “Street Prostitution in Canada: Problems and Positions,” Jul 1983. Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-1 file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives.

arguments, but want the problems associated with street prostitution dealt with." What the group wanted was to keep this tolerance but to remove "the problems associated with street prostitution."³⁹ Price repeatedly told the press that CROWE was not condemning the nature of the sexual exchange involved with prostitution, but that the activity was simply and fundamentally incompatible with residential areas. Responding to charges in the Vancouver Gay and Lesbian Community Centre's Newsletter that CROWE was on a moral crusade, Price wrote there was "no way those pushing for changes to the soliciting law" could be considered part "of the same right wing movement that [was] threatening Canada's gay community." Price maintained, "Those of us who belong to Concerned Residents of the West End have made a deliberate attempt to stay away from such groups" and that the question was "not the morality of prostitution" but "whether society will have some control over how and where it operates." He explained those in CROWE wanted it "off residential streets" and were not focused on "eliminating it or trying to regulate other people's lives."⁴⁰

The group was not fighting *against* street prostitution; it was fighting *for* their neighbourhood. This neighbourhood, as Price saw it, "was one of the few neighbourhoods in Canada in which gay men [could] live openly in the public life of the community," and he did not believe "it [was] the desire of the gay community to see it turned into a drive-in brothel."⁴¹ In Price's words, "We are definitely not making any judgments about sexual proprieties ... what we want is the right to a peaceful night's sleep without the shouting and the traffic noise. We want the use of our streets and we want to restore the quality of life that brought us to the West End in the first place."⁴² The "positive contribution to society" and the "public good" that informed the founding principles of CROWE translated into the push for a return to common sense, a fight to

³⁹ Mark Budgen, "Vancouver Group Fighting Prostitutes," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), Sep 29, 1981: 10.

⁴⁰ Gordon Price, "CROWE Responds," *VGCC News*, Jun 1983.

⁴¹ Gordon Price, "CROWE Responds," *VGCC News*, Jun 1983.

⁴² Michael T. Kaufman, "Selling of Sex in the Streets," *New York Times*, Jul 30, 1983.

“convince others of the need for action and warn the complacent of the danger of allowing the infection [prostitution] to spread.”⁴³

By September of 1981, the group had somewhere between 50 and 100 members. True to their founding vision, they began to direct their attention to launching a public education campaign. They decided to hold a conference at the West End Community Centre to serve as an “education seminar” for the residents of the area.⁴⁴ CROWE’s Steering Committee was bold in building the conference agenda for a group that had been in existence for a little less than three months. Clearly aware of the political alliance that had been forming the past few years against street prostitution, CROWE invited representatives from the Vancouver Police Department, multiple city officials including the mayor, provincial officials, lawyers and law officials, and a handful of local social work agencies. A CROWE spokesperson told a reporter that the group would consider any “serious requests” from prostitutes to speak, with the caveat that they “speak on our terms” and “respect the rules of conduct of the meeting.”⁴⁵ No people working as prostitutes in the area took them up on their offer.

The sentiment of grassroots activism and community-reclaiming that was integral to the founding meetings made its way into the flyers for the conference, which announced: “The West End is something to CROWE about, Let’s keep it that way ... Help take back the streets.”⁴⁶ The conference was held on October 17th. It was free to members and seniors, but all others were to pay five dollars or become members of CROWE, and, as the flyer noted, CROWE retained “the right to refuse admission.” CROWE decided to charge the public to attend the conference in order “to assure the conference [was] not disrupted by persons of divergent viewpoints who insist on

⁴³ “CROWE - Address to Steering Committee,” Aug 20, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-3 file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives: 4.

⁴⁴ Steering Committee Minutes, Aug 20, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-3 file 7, CROWE steering committee originals – 1981, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴⁵ Jim Oakes, "Conference on Prostitution: Hookers Invited to Speak," *Westender*, Sep 24, 1981: 5.

⁴⁶ Poster for Conference, Oct 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-3, file 7, "CROWE Steering Committee originals – 1981," City of Vancouver Archives.

dominating for the sake of effect.”⁴⁷ The conference presented the position that street prostitution was responsible for the increase in crime and traffic in the area, and assessed what city officials could do to solve this issue. The presentations also spent time focusing on legislation as both the “problem and the solution” to street prostitution. What emerged from the conference was a sharpening of who was not considered a true citizen of the city and who simply did not belong in the neighbourhood.⁴⁸

After the conference, the fight intensified for control over the public spaces of the West End. CROWE’s second newsletter, released in April, announced the group’s plan to intensify its tactics with a march and rally through the neighbourhood scheduled for April 22, as a “visible and dramatic show of concern over the deteriorating situation in our neighbourhood” as well as a “display of courage and determination” against street level prostitution.⁴⁹ The *Vancouver Sun* gave favourable coverage to the event, reporting CROWE would “take to the streets in a peaceful effort to discourage prostitutes from working” in the West End.⁵⁰ Unlike feminist anti-rape “take back the night” marches that were historically associated with street-reclaiming, CROWE’s march was specifically scheduled for daylight hours to ensure the attendance of city officials and to appease the membership wary of safety. CROWE’s newsletter reassured its readers, “There will be political representatives from all levels of government in attendance ... The police will be with us, and no confrontation is expected.” The intention of the march was to publicize CROWE’s position, “demand action,” and “make Ottawa sit up and take notice,” showing federal politicians that CROWE “mean[t] business.” Although focused on garnering federal attention bolstered by the support of local politicians and police, CROWE also sought to “boost the sagging morale of West End residents.”⁵¹

The march took place on April 22, 1982 and lasted an hour, starting with a rally at Gordon Neighbourhood House. Marchers held up placards that read “Stop Hooking Our

⁴⁷ Minutes from Steering Committee Meeting, Aug 26, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, “CROWE minutes – 1981,” add.mss 1449 973-B-6 file 1, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴⁸ Ed Cosgrove, “Media Blamed: A West End 'Carnival',” *Westender*, Oct 22, 1981.

⁴⁹ CROWE, “Newsletter No. 2,” Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-1, file 5, CROWE Newsletters 1-4, 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁵⁰ “West End Residents Out to Move Hookers,” Mar 3, 1982.

⁵¹ CROWE, “Newsletter No. 2,” Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-1, file 5, CROWE Newsletters 1-4 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

Kids are Looking,” “We’re Not Hookers, We Live Here,” “This Is Our Neighbourhood, Please Stop Hooking,” and “Chrétien S.O.S. Save Our Streets.”⁵² Roughly 80 people participated and were met with “some faint cheers and applause from apartment residents.”⁵³ The Mayor, Vancouver Centre MP Pat Carney, and city Alderman Warnett Kennedy all gave opening speeches at the rally. The *Vancouver Sun* reported, “Council wanted to ensure that residents of the city were able to enjoy a safe, peaceful neighbourhood and be able to walk the street without being harassed.” The police instructed street prostitutes working the area to stay away from the demonstration and march.⁵⁴

A CROWE pamphlet distributed during the demonstration showed the articulation of a “third way” politics that positioned the group between the spirit of community activism of the sixties and the social conservatism of the right wing. The pamphlet stated the march would show “the streets still belong to the people who live in this neighbourhood,” but stressed again that this was not “a moral crusade to stamp out prostitution.” CROWE’s membership claimed the group was simply “concerned about the survival of the neighbourhood and [their] right to a peaceful, quiet and safe environment.” Arguing that women in the West End were being harassed by johns and that seniors were intimidated, CROWE’s leadership positioned the group as defending these “vulnerable” citizens of the West End, as well as a level-headed reaction to a climate of escalating “violence” and “fear and hostility” between residents and the activity on the street. Carney and Harcourt’s supportive speeches that kicked off the march shared this political positioning. Carney enthusiastically explained that she and others were there “to reclaim [the] neighbourhood for the people who live here.”⁵⁵ Harcourt stressed, “We want to stop the harassment of the many by a few ... You people are entitled to a quiet, peaceful neighbourhood.”⁵⁶ For CROWE, the vulnerable citizens who were in need of the most protection were not the sexually marginalized people that

⁵² Ann Goad, “‘Hooking’ Protested,” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Apr 23, 1982; Peter Trask, “Hookers Avoid Marchers,” *Vancouver Sun*, Apr 23, 1982; “CROWE Fights Back,” *Westender*, Apr 29, 1982.

⁵³ Trask, “Hookers Avoid Marchers,” *Vancouver Sun*; “CROWE Fights Back,” *Westender*.

⁵⁴ Trask, “Hookers Avoid Marchers,” *Vancouver Sun*.

⁵⁵ Ann Goad, “‘Hooking’ Protested,” *Province*, Apr 23, 1982.

⁵⁶ “CROWE fights back,” *Westender*, Apr 29, 1982.

worked the street, nor the younger people in the neighbourhood who lacked economic security and secure housing, nor the clients whose fear of their own sexuality led them to secretly buy sex on the streets. Instead, CROWE saw those residents who were outside of these frequently perilous exchanges as the most vulnerable, robbed of a good night's sleep and threatened by those on the streets who were unable to access safer working conditions. Although CROWE did not overtly present its campaign as a moral crusade, the group was drawing clear lines of inclusion and exclusion around neighbourhood belonging and legitimate urban citizenship based on sexual behaviour. As the campaign progressed, and sex workers as well as members of the gay community in Vancouver contested the fight against street prostitution in the West End, the parameters of these new sexual politics positioned by CROWE as a common sense return would surface more clearly.

Defining a New Sexual Politics: Shame the Johns and the Violence of Homonormative Safety

Since the inception of CROWE, one of their initial "options for action" was to "adopt vigilante tactics," and this came to fruition in 1984 in the Shame the Johns (STJ) campaign.⁵⁷ Portrayed by its organizers and supporters as a desperate "last resort," STJ had a shared leadership and membership base with CROWE. The group's leadership and membership continued on in the trajectory of CROWE, imagining themselves as neighbourhood activists in the tradition of the sixties and seventies and positioning their cause in the spirit of visibility, self-defence, and street reclaiming. The group's first pamphlet stated that Shame the Johns was "a grass-roots movement, made up of people like you" to "stop the sex trade on our streets." It said STJ members would be "quietly occupying the corners and discouraging the customers from stopping" in the hopes the trade would move to another area.⁵⁸ John Harrison, a member of STJ and later president of CROWE, wrote to BC Attorney General to inform him of the "rapid growth of a grass-roots movement to 'Shame the Johns' ... an example of residents of

⁵⁷ In CROWE's core strategy paper, they have three drafts of this, but point 5 under the section "Options for Action" was from the beginning of the group to "resort to vigilante tactics if necessary." "Strategy Paper: Evaluation and Assessment of Options," third draft, July 4, 1983, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-3, file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁵⁸ STJ pamphlet, undated, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

all political stripes, ages, allegiances and lifestyles joining forces to deal with an overriding [sic] threat to the community.”⁵⁹ One former member of the group described its membership base as “a good helping of gay men, young to middle-aged; many middle-aged women [and] various other West Enders.”⁶⁰ The membership at its most generous approximation reached 250 people. The patrols would see about 100 residents gather in a local mini-park or another meeting spot in the neighbourhood, then split off into groups of two or three to patrol the neighbourhood. They would sometimes carry signs with slogans like “Johns Be Gone” or “No More Quickies For You Sickies.” The members would record the driver’s licences of those who came to the neighbourhood to purchase sex, and then track down the customers and call them at home, asking them to take their business elsewhere.⁶¹ Other STJ members would watch from their apartments and fill out a form supplied by the organization that asked for the date, time, address, licence number, description of car, driver, prostitute, and any unusual circumstances that they noticed in the exchange. They also successfully set up a billboard on Davie St that read, “Dear John, we’ve got your number.”⁶²

Shame the Johns was, like CROWE, a mixture of seemingly politically disparate traditions. It carried on in the tradition of the feminist anti-rape movement and the gay safe street patrols that gathered licence plate numbers of gay bashers to report to the police, but for STJ the victim that needed protection in this case was “peace and quiet.” The police were not the violent or neglectful enemy, but their strongest ally. The organization sparked considerable controversy locally and nationally, and was frequently characterized as vigilantes by the press. Don Odegaard, one of the founding members of STJ and a member of CROWE, assured a reporter that charges of vigilantism were mislaid. He insisted the group took “the Gandhi approach,” and was focused on targeting

⁵⁹ John Harrison, “Letter to Attorney General Brian Smith,” Apr 4, 1984, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 16, WECAC and CROWE correspondence 1984-85, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶⁰ Ed Stringer, “Why I Quit Shame the Johns,” *Angles* 1, no. 7, Jul 1984: 13.

⁶¹ *Vancouver Courier* reports on a Shame the Johns walk; article says it is “a daring display of street democracy.” “Anti-Hooker Patrol: Evidence the Tactic Working,” *Vancouver Courier*, Apr 11, 1984; Mark Leiren-Young, “Vigilantes ... on Davie: Residents Reclaim Streets,” *Ubysey* 3, no. 1, Jun 27-Jul 4, 1984.

⁶² Leiren-Young, “Vigilantes,” 1-2.

customers, not prostitutes.⁶³ Although Odegaard, like most people in STJ, claimed the organization focused on the clients, he told another reporter that he organized the patrols because he was “tired and disgusted of seeing friends of his grade seven students prostituting themselves.”⁶⁴ When asked what he thought of the charges of vigilantism, Price as a member of STJ commented that it was a situation where “the community [had] to take action to get action.”⁶⁵ The STJ organizers maintained that the groups’ limited “success” was “growing evidence that a daring display of street democracy [was] working.” Odegaard said STJ was the “final stand” with “a tremendous growth of support in the community,” and that the group’s victory would signal “a lot of community strength and pride.” He noted it was “extremely frustrating to have to take the risk, because these are quite violent people but [it was] a territorial battle and [they were] trying to win back [their] streets.”⁶⁶ In the thinking of the STJ leadership and members, STJ was a bold, democratic expression of community-led, non-violent self-defence. It was the last resort of a neglected and frustrated citizenry. For STJ, the issue of violence and safety loomed large, but vulnerability was understood as the vulnerability of the crime victim, and safety was defined as the absence of people whose very presence was understood to create danger on the street.

Those working on the streets were very aware that working in the West End meant a greater degree of personal safety and also determined the prices they could charge for sex. A reporter who followed STJ during one of their “walkabouts” caught an exchange between John Harrison and another member of STJ in her fifties with some women who were working the streets. The fifty-year-old STJ member asked them both to leave; the woman working, identified by the reporter as a “a black girl,” responded that she did not like STJ or CROWE and that she would not relocate to another area where she would have to do “twenty dollar lays” and be forced to work with a pimp. The “young blonde” next to her agreed, adding, “I’m not a piece of dirt, I don’t like being pushed around.”⁶⁷ Street prostitutes told reporters of the strolls in the city; the “high-class

⁶³ Leiren-Young, “Vigilantes,” 2.

⁶⁴ Richard Banner and Fred Gilbertson, “Hooker-free West End Thunders On,” *Angles* 1 no. 7, Jul 1984.

⁶⁵ Leiren-Young, “Vigilantes,” 2.

⁶⁶ “Anti-Hooker Patrol,” *Vancouver Courier*, Apr 11, 1984.

⁶⁷ Leiren-Young, “Vigilantes,” Dec 1, 1984.

hookers” were at the intersection of Georgia and Hornby downtown; the “juveniles and transvestites” were on Davie Street, which was the centre of West End commerce; the male prostitutes were at Davie and Broughton Streets, closer to residential areas; and the real “down and outers” were on Granville Street, the eastern part of downtown.⁶⁸ There was also the “skid road” stroll on Gore Avenue and Keefer Street in the city’s Downtown Eastside, which was the cheapest and most destitute stroll of the city.⁶⁹ The West End was a place to work that was for the most part absent of pimps and safer for marginalized sexualities. Since the prestige of the area determined the amount a worker could charge, relocating to other parts of the city could result in significant reduction of income and potential increased danger.⁷⁰

The various strolls in the city also showed that male prostitutes, young “hustlers,” transvestites, and transgendered people were working in the West End and servicing a largely homosexual or non-heteronormative clientele. The West End’s tolerance for non-heteronormative sexual activity created a safer place to work. There were also many gay men in STJ. One STJer in her fifties told an inquiring policeman, gesturing to her fellow STJers, “If we could only get some of these boys to start liking girls...everything would be perfect.”⁷¹ That there were many gay men in the group elicited criticism from those in the gay community who saw gay men’s patrolling of sexual activity with the intent to “shame” both hypocritical and shortsighted. The debate raged in the local gay and lesbian newspaper *Angles*. One gay West Ender pointed to the moralizing of the members of STJ who called themselves “victims” who “don’t just want to make people ashamed of invading their neighbourhood. They want to shame them for needing and having sex.”⁷² A former STJ member and gay man wrote into *Angles* to share his experience and explain why he quit. He had joined through the suggestion of a friend and observed he was “vaguely uncomfortable about being a gay man trying to force another sexual minority to change its habits and locale,” but that he thought “the walk would be a good way to meet people” and he “felt a desire for a sense of community in

⁶⁸ Jim Oakes, “Davie Street Prostitution: Cruising with Pat Carney,” *Westender*, May 29, 1980.

⁶⁹ “About a City’s Hustlers and Their Hangouts,” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Jan 1978.

⁷⁰ Oakes, “Davie Street Prostitution: Cruising with Pat Carney,” *Westender*, May 29, 1980.

⁷¹ Leiren-Young, “Vigilantes,” Dec 1, 1984.

⁷² Hody Allan, “Shamers at Corners are Victims and Victimizers in Prostitution Dispute,” *Angles*, May 1984.

the West End.” He did feel that the marchers, although gay, were different from him, “older, some property owners,” and more sure of their position. He stopped participating because of “a discomfort of harassing people who were already victimized,” concluding he “couldn’t help feel some of the marchers were carrying out a personal and/or moral battle.”⁷³

Other gay critics took a more political stance against the gay marchers. Brent McTavish wrote a letter in *Angles* addressed “to those gay men who feel compelled, by understandable frustration, to parade about the West End ‘shaming the johns.’” He argued the “so-called ‘direct action’ is aimed more at the prostitutes than the johns” and wanted to broaden the discussion to one of human rights. Gesturing to the rising conservatism in the province, he cautioned that they were in the midst of “a rather terrifying and reactionary swing” and that “what is more frightening to me as a brother in the gay/lesbian community is the fact that some of my brothers are participating in this kind of blind and narrow-minded action.” McTavish sent out a heated call to the gay STJers that located their actions in a broader social and economic context:

Gay and lesbian people have been victimized and stripped of our basic human rights for centuries ... So what the hell are you men parading around for, demanding further victimization and criminalization of a group of people who include some of your own kind? Where is your sense of social justice and human compassion? ... Do we need another holocaust to re-awaken the fact that we as gays and lesbians walk an extremely thin line when it comes to human rights? Maybe you feel this kind of action will reveal to the ruling classes of society that we really are OK, that we can be as ignorant, reactionary and politically dormant as many of them are.⁷⁴

The members of Shame the Johns wrote letters in response claiming STJ was “a grass-roots organization whose membership transcends political and sexual affiliation.” One letter written by STJer Tim Pawsey called McTavish’s analysis of the roots of sex work a “cliché,” and argued that the male sex workers on the street were abusive and noisy, asking, “Where is McTavish’ sense of social justice in condoning the activities of a

⁷³ Ed Stringer, “Why I Quit Shame the Johns,” *Angles* 1 no. 7, Jul 1984: 13.

⁷⁴ Brent McTavish, “Resident Urges Shamers to Re-examine Position,” *Angles*, May 1984: 4.

group of people that have had a considerable impact on what was a pleasant residential neighbourhood?" For Pawsey the West End had "matured" and people voicing opposition to the campaign in the West End needed to "cut out the paranoid rhetoric and take positive, practical steps to solve the problem."⁷⁵ Pawsey's individualist understanding of social justice is worth pause. Much like CROWE's inverted claim that it was the residents of the West End, not prostitutes, who were being oppressed, social justice was defined as securing pleasant residential neighbourhoods comprised of atomized, well-behaved individuals.

There was another and very significant factor for gay men involved in STJ and CROWE who wanted a safer neighbourhood: gay bashers. When pointing out the dangerous outsiders that came into the West End, Steve Bourne, a community worker at the Gordon Neighbourhood House, said a major concern was "people who come from Surrey who don't like gay people and mistake them for being prostitutes, or who don't like prostitutes and mistake them for being gay" who were "coming into [the] community and hurting people."⁷⁶ One gay man who testified at a federal committee advocating tougher laws for street prostitution argued that he was "awakened at night all the time by shouting or car noises, traffic stopping and starting, frequent obstruction of sidewalks, loitering (which sometimes leads to rowdiness), sometimes arguing and fights." He argued that women and seniors were negatively affected because they were ashamed of their neighborhood and had to explain prostitution to their children. Avoiding describing himself as gay, he shared that "having been the victim of physical abuse a few years ago, [he was] uncomfortable by the presence of the type that is predisposed to bash people around." He continued that he was "often times frightened by slow cruising vans, trucks and vehicles in general driven by young men with other male passengers" and was "irritated by gawkers and tourist types in slow-driving vehicles. It bother[ed] [him] that they might assume [he] was part of the street element."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Tim Pawsey, "Shamer Defends Stance," *Angles* 1 no. 6, Jun 1984: 4.

⁷⁶ Conference Transcriptions, Oct 17, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 973-B-2, File 3, CROWE – Chronology, Conference and Brief, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁷⁷ West End Community Advisory Council, "Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution," Jan 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series 571 717-B-3 file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

Often the defence of “the neighbourhood,” and the defence of those positioned as more vulnerable – women, seniors, and children – would be placed by STJers alongside gay men’s fears of gay bashers who came into the neighbourhood either looking for someone to sleep with or someone to beat up. Placing these concerns alongside each other made the issue of gay bashing not an issue of homosexual rights, nor a discussion of the shared attacks homosexuals and street prostitutes were facing, but an issue of general neighbourhood safety. The target of gay bashers, however, was primarily trans workers or male hustlers. An article in *Angles* cautioned, “Life on the street is precarious for hustlers, just as it is for other gay men. Carloads of queer bashers come in from Surrey and Delta to beat up drag queens and hustlers who are clearly visible. Usually these beatings and attacks go unnoticed, but sometimes they erupt into violent confrontations.”⁷⁸ A *Globe and Mail* article commented that “carloads of “hooker lookers” from other areas of Greater Vancouver” would patrol the area, and sometimes these visitors would also be “gay bashers ... groups of young males who roam the side streets in cars or trucks searching for transvestites and male prostitutes.”⁷⁹ In response to these bashers, some people selling sex on the streets organized themselves into self-defence groups.⁸⁰ During a presentation to a federal committee, two people from CROWE showed a slide of a member of CROWE who had been hit with a baseball bat by one of these self-defence patrols while they were talking to a prostitute.⁸¹ Price reported them as “gangs of enforcers” who patrolled the neighbourhood to protect prostitutes from gay bashers.⁸² The calls for neighbourhood safety coming from STJ were most overtly vocalized as calls to protect the seniors and women in the area, but there was also the very real threat of gay bashing that these men sought protection from. Some gay rights activists saw the shared bashings of street prostitutes and gay men as a reason to fight together, arguing “from the confusion and anxiety of our mothers to

⁷⁸ Fred Gilbertson and Richard Banner, “Hustling: Two Sides of the Coin,” *Angles*, Dec 1983: 16-17.

⁷⁹ Mark Budgen, “Vancouver Group Fighting Prostitutes,” *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), Sep 29, 1981.

⁸⁰ Fred Gilbertson and Richard Banner, “Hustling: Two Sides of the Coin,” *Angles*, Dec 1983: 16-17.

⁸¹ It is interesting to note that here CROWE members were understood as “hooker bashers” by this self-defence group.

⁸² Gerard McNeil, “Vancouver Violence Feared Over Vice,” *Times Colonist* (Victoria, BC), May 12, 1982: 8.

bashings on the street ... we share a lot of common ground.”⁸³ Through the expulsion of these street level sex workers, the gay men in STJ may have felt safer in the West End, but this was accomplished at the expense of the safety of others whose banishment from the neighbourhood put them at greater risk of violence.

STJ was instrumental in getting BC Attorney General (AG) Brian Smith to apply to the Supreme Court for an injunction to prohibit the sale of sex in the West End. CROWE and STJ did the legwork of gathering witnesses for the affidavit and received 30 names for the writ. A front-page article in the *Vancouver Sun* published the names of the people cited, and the residents posted the article on lampposts in the West End, a gesture lawyer Raymond Chouinard, who represented 12 of the people listed, called “witch-hunt nonsense.”⁸⁴ AG Smith credited STJ as the catalyst for the injunction and thanked the group publicly for its hard work.⁸⁵ The Supreme Court granted the injunction and it was entered into the Vancouver registry on Wednesday, July 4th, 1984.⁸⁶ With the granting of the injunction, the Shame the Johns movement and CROWE were able to claim at least a partial victory. A main organizer of STJ, Raimo Heitakangas, said that the group would disband and celebrate with a party. Price was cautiously optimistic, still focused on securing permanent change in the Criminal Code.⁸⁷ A West End resident wrote an article in the *Westender*, titled “Once again it’s a joy to be a West Ender,” that stated: “The whole area has calmed down and you can almost hear the property values going up. Now that the surface ugliness has been removed, the West End is showing its best, and it is a wonderful place to live ... Bravo to Shame the Johns and CROWE - without them much of this would not be possible.”⁸⁸ Leigh Cusak, the general manager of the Hotel Georgia, was reported as being “delighted” along with other businesses in the area, and said the hotel had been losing up to \$400,000 a year in sales from

⁸³ Sonja Mills, Review of Hookers on Davie, *Body Politic*, 103, May 1984.

⁸⁴ Larry Hannant, “Civil Libertarians Oppose Injunction Against B.C. Prostitutes,” *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), Jun 22, 1984: 9.

⁸⁵ Leiren-Young, “Vigilantes ... on Davie,” 1.

⁸⁶ June 25, 1984, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, “Civil Injunction,” MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 20, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁸⁷ “Shame the Johns to Disband? ‘We’re Going to Have a Party!’,” *Westender*, Jul 5, 1984.

⁸⁸ Mike Castling, “Once Again It’s a Joy To Be a Westender,” Jul 4, 1984, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 16, WECAC and CROWE Correspondence 1984-85, City of Vancouver Archives.

cancelled visitors and conventions due to prostitution in the area.⁸⁹ Price wrote a letter to Smith thanking him for his “courage,” and to express his gratitude for the Supreme Court “Chief Justice’s common sense.”⁹⁰

For those who opposed the drastic measure, over 300 people took to the streets of the West End to support those named in the writ. Many residents of the area cheered from windows or honked in support from their cars. The organizers of the march claimed it was time for “the non-prostitute residents of the West End to actively show support against the harassment of groups like CROWE and Shame the Johns,” saying “[t]here’s more support for the prostitutes and the poor in the West End than CROWE wants us to believe.”⁹¹ Members of the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes (ASP) took sanctuary in a local Anglican church joined by supporters and other feminist organizations. The Archbishop welcomed ASP and invited them to address the congregation so that their position could be heard. They remained in the church for three days.⁹²

The sweeping powers of sexual regulation granted by the injunction far exceeded the sale of public sex. Chouinard specifically cautioned gay men who he said “should consider themselves as next on the list, because gay people also engage in the same kind of activity which is sought to be enjoined.”⁹³ Similarly, an *Angles* article cautioned gay men of the breadth of the court order: “Because it applied to the beaches and Stanley Park, users of such popular areas as the ‘Fruit Loop’ and Lee’s trail could find police ready to serve them with a copy of the injunction.” A policeman in the same article cautioned that if a police officer made “any observation of soliciting for companionship, they’ll be charged. It doesn’t have to be for money.”⁹⁴ Although these cautions went out to gay men who were not actively working as street prostitutes, many of those male and trans prostitutes that were affected by the injunction were engaging in non-

⁸⁹ Jane O’Hara, “Cooling the Street Scene,” *Maclean’s*, Jul 23, 1984.

⁹⁰ Gordon Price, Letter to Hon. Brian Smith, Jul 10, 1984, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 16, WECAC and CROWE Correspondence 1984-85, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁹¹ Hody Allan, “Anti-Shamers Parade on Davie,” *Angles* 1 no. 7, Jul 1984: 13.

⁹² It was Anglican Christ Church Cathedral. Don Larventz, “Prostitutes Seek Sanctuary, Dialogue,” *Angles* 1, no. 8, Aug 1984: 8.

⁹³ Larry Hannant, “Civil Libertarians Oppose Injunction Against B.C. Prostitutes,” *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), Jun 22, 1984.

⁹⁴ Richard Banner, “Hooker Injunction Creates Concern,” *Angles* 1, no. 8, Aug 1984: 8.

heteronormative sex, and some were gay. Many of their clients were also gay, openly or closeted. The injunction not only banished female sex workers and their clients from working the area, it also banished a great deal of gay sex and non-heteronormative sex from the safer public spaces of the city's gay neighbourhood. Any sexual transgression could now only be safely performed by those who could secure the privacy and trust to do so.

A rearticulated sexual politic emerged in the West End as some gay men forged alliances alongside liberals and homophobic social conservatives to secure the removal of street level sex workers. It was a politics that advanced a sexual domestication of the public sphere. Safe urban communities were predicated on the banishment of street prostitutes, but also the banishment of non-heteronormative sexualities and behaviours. What emerged was a specific kind of gay identity that reflected the class, race, and sexual stratification of Vancouver, where sexual minorities who could not or would not conform were excluded from safety and belonging in the West End. Urban scholar Martin F. Manalansan argues that homonormativity creates violent struggles around city spaces that are "characterized by their structural character." The structural aspect of this violence is experienced through "practices that seek to demarcate and police racial, ethnic, class and sexual spaces and boundaries, while creating physical, emotional, and symbolic boundaries and cruelties toward marginalized peoples."⁹⁵ CROWE and STJ's removal of street prostitution from the West End was presented as a reasonable and non-violent act, and one that was nonpolitical. But the securing of the injunction deployed the violence of the state to secure the safety of the more privileged through the exclusion of others. The injunction banished sexually marginalized people from the neighbourhood but also sexually regulated those within the neighbourhood by pushing many types of public sexual displays into the private sphere.

The articulation of homonormative sexual politics persisted past the injunction. Gordon Price was elected in 1986 as a Non-Partisan Association (NPA) alderman and remained on council for six terms until 2002. One reporter commented that if Price's electoral "success made a remarkable statement about Vancouver, it is that he won

⁹⁵ Martin F. Manalansan, "Race, Violence, and Neoliberal Spatial Politics in the Global City," *Social Text* 23, no. 3-4 (Fall-Winter 2005): 143.

despite his homosexuality, not because of it.”⁹⁶ Price agreed, insisting during his electoral campaign he was a “community activist who happens to be gay,” then once elected, “an alderman who happens to be gay.”⁹⁷ As Price himself noted, it was not the gay vote that ushered him into electoral victory, he “got the little old lady vote, too.”⁹⁸ A reporter noted the tensions in this merger during one of Price’s public question and answer periods following his election: “Many of Price’s gay backers who were in attendance encouraged the alderman to move away from gay questions. It seems that for them the specter of public debate on homosexuality was not only distasteful but tested their allegiance to the large anti-hooker lobby, also present. Just two years ago many of these same men had patrolled the West End streets with the Shame-the-Johns crusade against prostitutes.” David Carrell, a gay member of BC Federation of Labour who was in the audience, said, “It’s a very short step from Shame the Johns to Shame the Gays” and predicted Price will “do nothing for gay rights on council. He’s merely the token faggot which is the last thing we need in the late 80s. We haven’t come this far to go backwards.” At the same public gathering, Renee Jensen of the West End Seniors Network praised Price, saying, “Until Gordon came along, we all said ‘live and let live.’ It took him three years to awaken people like myself to the livability of the West End.” She made sure to note that she did not “think of Gordon as gay. And [she] certainly [didn’t] expect he will be throwing it in people’s faces.”⁹⁹

Conclusion

In 1981, Leo Casey wrote an article for *The Body Politic*, the national gay and lesbian newspaper, titled “Facing Up to the New Right.” In it, he outlined the challenges that lay ahead facing his gay and lesbian audience: “In the final analysis, that is the real danger in these victories of the ultra-conservative Right: it is attempting to realign radically the political consensus to the right, and with some success. The ultimate goal of the New Right is to construct a new dominant ideology, a new Right-Wing common

⁹⁶ Pete McMartin, “An Alderman Who Happens to be Gay,” *Vancouver Sun*, Jan 12, 1987.

⁹⁷ Rob Joyce, “Gordon Price: Will NPA’s Rookie Politician Vote Gay?” *Angles* 4, no. 1, Jan 1987: 8; McMartin, “An Alderman Who Happens to be Gay.”

⁹⁸ McMartin, “An Alderman Who Happens to be Gay,” *Vancouver Sun*, Jan 12, 1987.

⁹⁹ “When asked by the floor if he was a gay liberationist, Price paused as the room tensed for his reply. “No, I am not,” he declared to more applause.” Rob Joyce, “Gordon Price: Will NPA’s Rookie Politician Vote Gay?” *Angles* 4, no. 1, Jan 1987: 8.

sense, and its electoral conquests demonstrate that this is a real possibility."¹⁰⁰ Casey cautioned against the emergent New Right, but perhaps his political enemies were closer than he anticipated. Rather than the "ultra-conservative Right" realigning the political consensus, there was also CROWE, STJ, and their allies who lead an on-the-ground re-education campaign of West End residents as a corrective to the "excesses" of the sixties and seventies. Some gay men and younger, reputedly liberal urban professionals supported and advanced CROWE's fight, but so too did conservative women's groups in Vancouver and the West End, the police, and local Progressive Conservative politicians. This alliance understood the fight against street prostitution not as a "moral crusade," but instead as a defence of the "right to peace and quiet" for the safety of West End residents.¹⁰¹ Although these groups were all joined by a shared desire to "return" to pre-sixties and seventies ordering of Canadian society, each group had their own agenda to advance. For the gay men involved, they were not pushing for a return to the homophobia of the sixties, but rather a reimagining of acceptable sexualities where seniors, gay men, and straight urban professionals saw past homosexuality and unified on these ostensibly apolitical neighbourhood issues.

Their activities contributed to realigning the political and social "common ground" to the right. This newly established common ground would agree that a movement to expel street prostitution was an act of "true selflessness" that lead to greater "public good" and supported the inverted claim that "[i]t is not prostitutes who are being oppressed; it is we, the residents of the West End."¹⁰² That some gay men were feeling more at ease amongst those whose homophobia had previously kept them apart was, perhaps, a sentiment shared by many men in the area. In an newspaper article on the area, a male member of the Gay Athletic Association shared that he was pleased that many West Enders had realized that the "real problems" in the area were street

¹⁰⁰ Leo Casey, "Facing Up to the New Right," *Body Politic* no. 69, Dec 1981.

¹⁰¹ "Street solicitation in a residential neighbourhood is **not** compatible. The problem is not primarily one of nuisance or even moral offence. It is far more subtle. The social fabric of a community cannot withstand the pressure of street prostitution. The process of decay is inevitable." Gordon Price, "Street Prostitution in Canada: Problems and Positions," Jul 1983, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-1, file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives: his emphasis, 18.

¹⁰² CROWE, "Newsletter No. 3," Sep 1982, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-1, file 5, CROWE Newsletters 1-4, 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

prostitution and traffic, and that “the presence of gays” had become, in contrast, “not that big an issue.” Speaking of the camaraderie he now felt with these previously hostile groups, Richard commented: “When you get the West End senior citizens and gays and other groups at meetings saying the same things about the same issues - traffic, more recreational facilities - you tend to overlook differences ... When you see the same people on the seawall, on the elevators, sooner or later you say: ‘These are my neighbours.’”¹⁰³

But those on the streets of the West End in the early 1980s were there because with its visible gay population, lack of pimp scene, and comparatively more tolerant and accepting attitude of non-heteronormative displays of sexuality, the area was the safest place for them in the city. Those working the streets of the West End were sexually marginalized people – many of them further marginalized by race, gender orientation, a low-income class position, or age. These people, placed by CROWE’s rhetoric as outside of citizen rights, safety, and the boundaries of a truly representative healthy residential community, were asked by more privileged gay men and their heterosexual allies to relocate to less bothersome, and more dangerous, areas of the city. In the process of this expulsion, some gay men, seniors, conservative women, and straight urban professionals felt a closer affinity, more like “neighbours.”

¹⁰³ Marke Andrews, “Getting the Lowdown on the Gay Community,” *Vancouver Sun*, Nov 19, 1983.

Chapter 3.

The Local Push for Federal Policies and the Fight Against Feminism

As early as 1982, a little less than a year after CROWE formed, the group began to grow impatient with the slow pace of legislative change. CROWE's first newsletter expressed the leadership's exasperation: "We've done everything a responsible citizens group is supposed to do. We've presented briefs, signed petitions, written letters, held meetings, lobbied and phoned and received support from just about everyone who counts... Both the city and the Province have made it clear that this is a federal issue and there is little they can do ... So what does this mean? It means we're on our own." The newsletter ended with an appeal for the membership to intensify their tactics because "fundamentally, this is your neighbourhood. You're the one who is going to have to make the difference."¹ Vancouver Centre MP Pat Carney, a steady supporter of CROWE, amplified the consequence of federal inaction in responding to resident demands: "Community groups [in the West End] are saying if you politicians can't solve it, we will... next step may be vigilante groups and active violence." Carney blamed Federal Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Judy Erola and her allies at the federal level for stalling legal reforms. In Carney's view, "They seem to feel that altering the Criminal Code will open the door to harassment of women. But women who are residents of the West End are being continually accosted by potential customers."²

Changing the law was the central focus of the anti-street prostitution coalition. In 1981 the law regarding street prostitution was under the jurisdiction of the federal government in the Criminal Code. The 1972 legal reform that decriminalized the status

¹ CROWE, "Newsletter No. 1," Feb 1982, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 149, 973-B-1, file 5, CROWE Newsletters 1-4 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

² Ann Goad, "Carney Set for Hooker Committee," *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Mar 22, 1982.

of being a prostitute and criminalized instead the acts associated with prostitution was a significant victory of feminist movement organizing, but this reform did not fully dislodge prostitution from the Criminal Code. By the early 1980s, there was enough of a feminist presence at the federal level that the demands coming from cities to introduce new laws criminalizing street prostitution were met with hesitation. Federal and provincial officials insisted that prostitution was an issue that should be regulated locally and cities agreed, yet the jurisdictional powers to do so remained in Ottawa. As a result, the political response to CROWE's anti-street prostitution campaign in Vancouver had to be within the jurisdictional powers of the city in ways that would avoid contravening federal law.

During the span of CROWE's campaign the group argued the existing legislation was insufficient in effectively regulating street prostitution. This position would receive the support of the mayor, many politicians, and the police, but would be met with opposition at all levels by some feminists, prostitute rights activists, and civil libertarians. As CROWE's grassroots agitation in the streets of the West End threatened "violence," local level officials and provincial politicians pressed the federal government more urgently to amend the Criminal Code. The late 1960s and early 1970s had witnessed a period of relative economic prosperity and an expansion of civil rights and welfare state provisions. Social movements had secured some legal and social gains that were coming under attack in the deepening recession and conservative ascendancy of the 1980s. The previous chapter showed how CROWE's homonormative sexual politics contributed to this rightward shift by calling for a return to "common sense" that pushed back against a more socially liberal vision on the norms of urban life and redefined inclusion in Vancouver's gay neighbourhood. This chapter will trace how CROWE built and advanced a climate of heightening conflict in the streets in order to apply greater political pressure on municipal and federal officials. CROWE's demands – defined as pragmatic and non-political resident demands – were responded to favourably by city officials who tried to appease rather than suppress the organization. As local attempts at regulation failed, municipal and provincial officials allied with CROWE to press for changes in federal policy. Since CROWE understood the solution to street prostitution in tougher laws, the organization and its allies would have to push back against feminists and their political allies who opposed the call for tougher laws at all levels of government. The protection of citizen rights and neighbourhood survival were advanced by CROWE against feminist opposition in order to win the fight for the streets. In the

process, some of the legal gains of the feminist movement secured in the 1970s were curtailed as street prostitution was more heavily criminalized.

Federal Power vs. Local Problem: The Legal Regulation of Prostitution and the Grassroots Push for Criminalization

Until 1972, prostitution in Canada was federally regulated under the Vagrancy Act that made being a prostitute, defined specifically as a woman, illegal. Prior to Confederation, municipalities and provinces had the power to address vagrancy with laws closely modeled on Britain's 1824 Vagrancy Act. After 1867, federal lawmakers sought to consolidate criminal law, and as part of this endeavour An Act Respecting Vagrants was written in 1869. Nineteenth-century Canadian thinking positioned vagrants as morally depraved habitual criminals, an attitude that was especially directed at prostitutes. The inherent criminality of vagrants made them direct or indirect threats to the social and moral order and thus governed by Criminal Law.³ By the 1950s, in the context of relative economic prosperity and a growing welfare state, this thinking had significantly shifted. The unemployed were no longer popularly viewed as inherently criminal or threatening and social provisions were popularly understood as a basic right. The vagrancy offences were reformed with a mind to "modernize" and simplify the law. Half of the vagrancy offences were reclassified and relocated in the Criminal Code and the language of the remaining offences was simplified.⁴

A significant aspect of the reformed laws was that, in line with new understandings of poverty, a vagrancy offence shifted from being a status offence to being a criminal act. The wording changed from "Everyone is a loose, idle or disorderly persons or vagrant who..." to "Everyone commits vagrancy who..."⁵ The shift to a criminal act was true of all vagrancy laws except the law that regulated prostitution; those working as prostitutes remained illegal by their status. The nineteenth-century mindset that understood prostitutes as threats to the social and moral order of the nation

³ Prashan Ranasinghe, "Reconceptualizing Vagrancy and Reconstructing the Vagrant: A Socio-Legal Analysis of Criminal Law Reform in Canada, 1953-1972," *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 48 (2010): 61.

⁴ Ranasinghe, "Reconceptualizing Vagrancy," 61; Todd Gordon, "The Return of Vagrancy Law and the Politics of Poverty in Canada," *Canadian Review of Social Policy* 54 (2004): 39-40.

⁵ While these reforms reconceptualized vagrancy from a status offence to an offence of behaviour, the simplified language actually expanded the scope of the law.

thus persisted through the 1950s legal reforms, and prostitution remained in the Criminal Code as a status offence. As a consequence, anyone working as a prostitute was denied the due process that was now extended to others charged with committing vagrancy.⁶

By 1972 there were again significant shifts in popular thinking regarding the appropriate use of criminal law. Britain's late-1950s Wolfenden Report, concerned with the regulation of homosexuality and prostitution, argued for a separation between the sphere of "private morality" and the scope of criminal law. The report suggested decriminalizing homosexuality but did not extend the logic that decoupled the law from morality to the purchase of sex, and argued prostitution should continue to be regulated by the state as opposed to being decriminalized. The Wolfenden report and its philosophy that separated crime and morality dominated the debates around legal reforms in Canada in the late 1960s and early 1970s as lawmakers grappled with the appropriate role of criminal law. It was this logic that led Trudeau as Minister of Justice in 1967 to decriminalize homosexuality and abortion and introduce the Divorce Reform Bill, and informed his now famous line, "The state has no place in the bedrooms of the nation."⁷

Also in 1967, in response to pressures from the women's liberation movement, the federal government appointed the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) in Canada to investigate the impact of federal laws on women. The RCSW focused on Vag C, and argued what the lawmakers in the 1950s had overlooked – that the law criminalized a status rather than the acts associated with prostitution. The RCSW also argued that the language was inherently gendered and was deployed exclusively and unjustly towards women.⁸

The 1972 reforms of the Vagrancy Laws under Trudeau were informed by the impetus to separate morality from the law and in accordance with the findings of the RCSW. Five offences had remained in the Vagrancy Act since the 1950s; three were decriminalized, namely: wandering in public without any apparent means of support, begging, and being a common prostitute or nightwalker. These offences were not

⁶ Ranasinghe, "Reconceptualizing Vagrancy," 73.

⁷ Ranasinghe, "Reconceptualizing Vagrancy," 66.

⁸ Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble*, 28-33; Ranasinghe, "Reconceptualizing Vagrancy," 66.

considered unproblematic; the issue for lawmakers was whether or not these offences were the appropriate domain of criminal law. Begging and wandering in public without employment were decriminalized federally, and responsibility for their regulation was granted to either municipal bylaws or provincial legislation. These offences were recast as a local problem, no longer understood as a threat to national interests and therefore removed from the criminal code.⁹

Prostitution was again considered the exception by lawmakers. The same bill that decriminalized being a prostitute added a new criminal offence in the solicitation law that made it so anyone “who solicits any person in a public place for the purpose of prostitution is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.”¹⁰ The new law caught up with the reforms of the 1950s by changing the status offence of being a prostitute into the criminal act of soliciting. It also removed the gender specificity of the law and separated, at least ostensibly, morality from the legal regulation of prostitution. The logic of the lawmakers was that it was not the law itself that was problematic, but the way it was deployed. The prostitute in 1972 was instead recast as a “social nuisance” within the domain of Criminal Law and federal regulation.¹¹ A Supreme Court decision in the 1977 Hutt ruling further narrowed the definition of soliciting, requiring it to be “pressing and persistent” in order to be considered an offence. In BC, a Provincial Supreme Court further defined the law so that only the prostitute and not the client could be charged with soliciting (*R. v. Dudak* [1978]), and then again narrowed the law in a decision that ruled pressing and persistent behaviour must be directed at one customer as opposed to many passersby. That prostitution was partially decriminalized during the 1970s legal reforms was a significant success of feminist organizing and should not be overlooked. Successive court rulings that further defined, and limited, the legislation regulating solicitation made the law increasingly difficult to enforce, an issue that would prove to be a concern for municipalities. But the resulting problems of legislation after

⁹ Ranasinghe, “Reconceptualizing Vagrancy,” 88.

¹⁰ Section 195.1 of the Criminal Code of Canada; Ranasinghe, “Reconceptualizing Vagrancy,” 88.

¹¹ Ranasinghe, “Reconceptualizing Vagrancy,” 88.

the removal of Vag C should not detract from the success of the feminist movement in partially removing the sexist law from the Criminal Code.¹²

Prior to CROWE's formation in 1981, Vancouver police struggled with regulating prostitution without the powers of Vag C and with the increasingly narrowed legal definition of soliciting. The police raids on the Penthouse and Zanzibar clubs in 1975 had evicted much of the trade onto the streets. Police officer Grant MacDonald recalled after the Penthouse closure: "The hookers poured out into the streets all over the city, and it became like quicksilver to manage [the trade] again."¹³ In 1977 Mayor Jack Volrich launched what the newspapers called an "anti-hooker campaign" focused on Davie Street in response to growing resident complaints.¹⁴ Police responded with bemusement, saying they had already been focusing on the area but enforcement had only temporarily relocated the trade to other downtown areas.¹⁵ A 1977 police report to City Council argued the force was "severely hampered" by the removal of Vag C and requested the city grant them the powers to "be able to effectively remove beggars, loiterers and prostitutes from the streets."¹⁶ In 1978, as the numbers of people on downtown streets increased, the VPD reported the "situation in the West End was becoming intolerable." They launched a seven-month crackdown on the West End the year following, modeled on the tactics used by Toronto's police force.¹⁷ The effect of the increased police attention moved the trade deeper into the residential areas of the West End and temporarily shifted the trade into the afternoon hours. The VPD's frustration in

¹² Other laws that regulated and continue to regulate prostitution are the procuring and bawdyhouse provisions, also drafted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These laws persisted but are currently, in 2013, undergoing Supreme Court challenges. Manager's Report, "Prostitution," Feb 29, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 3, Community and environmental protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

¹³ Quoted in Aaron Chapman, *Liquor, Lust, and the Law: The Story of Vancouver's Legendary Penthouse Nightclub* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2012), 103-104.

¹⁴ Malcolm Gray, "Prostitution is Flourishing in Vancouver," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), Mar 23 1978.

¹⁵ Bob Hendrickson, "Vancouver's Drive In Supermarket for Sex," *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Apr 7, 1977. "We pushed them out of Gastown, they go to Davie. If we push them out of there, then it will be Denman, then Robson and back to Gastown. Its round and round again."

¹⁶ G.A. Forbes, *Street Prostitution in Vancouver's West End*, Prepared for Vancouver Police Board and Vancouver City Council (Vancouver: Vancouver Police Dept., 1977), 13.

¹⁷ Manager's Report, "Prostitution," Feb 29, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 3, Community and environmental protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

dealing with street prostitution was shared by other police forces across the country. At the 1979 Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police meeting held in Vancouver, the first point on the agenda was how to tackle the federal government's refusal to toughen the law against soliciting.¹⁸

After strategizing with Toronto's mayor, Vancouver Mayor Volrich met with the Federal Minister of Justice Jean Chrétien to request new federal laws that would allow more effective local regulation of street prostitution. Chrétien promised Criminal Code amendments by the fall in order to allow "law enforcement officers of every province to clean the streets."¹⁹ The Liberals defeated the Progressive Conservatives in the 1980 federal elections, but neither government showed signs of introducing new laws. In June of 1980, the Conservative MP for Vancouver Centre Pat Carney told the press that prostitution had reached a crisis in the area.²⁰ An ad hoc Committee of Vancouver Citizens Concerned About Prostitution formed in late 1980, comprised of Carney and a coalition of West End citizens' groups, businessmen, police, and aldermen, to address the growing concern with street prostitution in the West End, but the group did not last.²¹

The fight against street prostitution in the West End would increase in organizational focus and activity in 1981 with the formation of CROWE and the election of Mike Harcourt as Mayor. Volrich, in his efforts to "clean up" downtown, had called for police attention to "morally questionable establishments" on Davie Street that "encourag[ed] homosexuals and prostitutes."²² Harcourt did not share the moral assessment of homosexuality and had actively campaigned for the gay vote in his election, but he did share his predecessor's desire to move street prostitution from the West End streets. Harcourt repositioned the regulation of street prostitution not as a moral issue, but as the responsibility of a civic government responsive to citizen needs. Coming of political age in the late sixties and seventies, Harcourt had roots in community organizing as the *pro bono* lawyer for the Vancouver neighbourhood organization that stopped a proposed freeway through Strathcona in the late sixties. He was also a

¹⁸ Neale Adams, "Police Focus Again on Prostitution," *Vancouver Sun*, Aug 15, 1979.

¹⁹ "Chretien Promises New Prostitution Law," *Vancouver Sun*, Jul 23, 1980.

²⁰ "MPs Won't Act On Hooker Crisis," *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Jun 12, 1980.

²¹ "Chretien Promises New Prostitution Law," *Vancouver Sun*, Jul 23, 1980.

²² Bob Hendrickson, "Vancouver's Drive In Supermarket for Sex," *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Apr 7, 1977.

member of the reform-oriented political party The Electors Action Movement (TEAM) that introduced community consultation in Vancouver planning and ran on a platform of making city hall more transparent and accountable to the public. Carrying on in this tradition of citizen “empowerment,” one of Harcourt’s election promises was to make city hall more responsive to citizen issues, something he considered a crucial part of a democratic city.²³

Upon becoming mayor, Harcourt had received numerous complaints about street prostitution in the West End from residents, a situation the Mayor took to mean these residents were unable “to enjoy the peace which they should have when they are at home or in the streets of the city.” In response to the complaints coming from the West End, Harcourt delegated the Social Planning Department to work with the VPD, community groups, and higher levels of government to “alleviate the situation for West Enders.”²⁴ CROWE formed that summer, was well organized, articulated a non-moralizing “common sense” argument that street prostitution was simply incompatible with a residential neighbourhood, and shared much of the Mayor’s city vision of promoting a diverse, tolerant, and vibrant city. The group quickly became the community group that would garner the greatest attention and support from the Mayor.

In the alliance that formed between CROWE, the mayor, and other politicians, the language of citizen rights helped shape a pragmatic “common sense” aspect to the campaign as opposed to articulating overtly moral claims. For Harcourt, street prostitution was “taking away the civil liberties of thousands of people” in the West End, which was “one of the most serious issues in [the] city: the right of people to enjoy their streets in safe, quiet neighbourhoods.”²⁵ Harcourt argued the presence of street prostitutes made it so that the “38,000 people” living in the West End were “subjected to

²³ Mike Harcourt, *A Measure of Defiance* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1996), 36.

²⁴ Mike Harcourt, letter in response to petition, Aug 10, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 1, CROWE minutes – 1981, City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁵ “CROWE Conference Transcriptions,” Oct 17, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, “CROWE - Chronology, Conference and Brief,” MSS 1449, 973-B-3, File 19, City of Vancouver Archives.

terrorization” and had “lost the right to use their own neighbourhood.”²⁶ Alderman Marguerite Ford and MP Pat Carney both, on separate occasions, argued the rights of West End residents were “eroded;” for Ford this was because the “streets were being taken over,” and for Carney it was the erosion of the “rights of West End citizens to live in peace.”²⁷ Similarly, CROWE argued, “The people in the West End [were] losing a basic right - the right to the peace, quiet and enjoyment of their neighbourhood.”²⁸ The rights that CROWE most often said were being violated were the right to walk the streets without fear; the right to have an undisturbed sleep; the right to experience peace and security in their homes and on the streets; and the right to have the tolerant and diverse character of the neighbourhood protected.²⁹ The inability to access these “rights” amounted to the West End being “a community under siege.”³⁰

In order to protect these citizen “rights” articulated by the anti-street prostitution coalition, council decided that “moving the attraction” of street prostitution “to another area, preferably industrial or commercial, would be the most effective solution.”³¹ Where that location would be was undetermined, but the movement had to be out of the West End. Harcourt, his assistant Shirley Chan, and Gordon Price strategized moving the trade into the “Seymour-Richards-Homer area south of Davie” with the assistance of yet

²⁶ Chris J. Garside, “Letter regarding the ‘West End Police Task Force,’” Feb 26, 1984, Community and environmental protection - prostitution and delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, File 6, City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁷ “CROWE Conference Transcriptions,” Oct 17, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-3, File 19, CROWE - Chronology, Conference and Brief, City of Vancouver Archives; Gordon Price, “Memo,” Jul 4, 1983, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-3, file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers – 1983, City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁸ “What is CROWE? Why Should *You* Join?,” Aug 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-3, file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers, City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁹ See also Blomely’s discussion of the consequences of the “centrality of the private home as a model for structuring thinking,” 2004, 6.

³⁰ Gordon Price, “Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution,” Jan 1982, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 16, WEACAC and CROWE Correspondence (vol. 2), City of Vancouver Archives.

³¹ City Council Meeting Minutes, Dec 8, 1981, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 3, Community and environmental protection - prostitution and delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

another police campaign.³² City Manager Fritz Bowers would later suggest the trade leave the streets and re-enter bars and clubs, stating, “Where [the street prostitutes] go is up to them. The city has made it clear that it has no desire to pursue them into the clubs and bars if that is where they choose to go to resume their activities.”³³

Vancouver’s other central city area, the low-income neighbourhood of the Downtown Eastside, also had street prostitution, but this was not made problematic by resident organizing like in the West End. Alderman Harry Rankin, critical of the city’s relocation tactic, “objected to creating a special district for prostitution,” arguing that one already existed in the Downtown Eastside but that residents of that area “do not know whom to complain to.”³⁴ Sally deQuadros, co-founder of the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes, pointed to the inconsistencies in city regulation of street prostitution, arguing “There are as many prostitutes in the Downtown Eastside area as there are in the West End ... but they don’t have the same confrontation [sic] ... there is a different community spirit in the Eastside.”³⁵ Response to citizen action played a significant role in determining local regulation by city officials; as police officer Roberts explained, the focus of regulation was on the West End because “that’s where there [was] the greatest nuisance factor and ... because of the complaints about prostitution in the residential area.”³⁶ This dynamic clarified the strategic component of the City’s understanding of the more middle-class West End as a place worth “saving” to the success of Vancouver’s downtown core more broadly.

Although most aldermen on council thought relocating the trade to an industrial or commercial location in the city would be ideal, they also knew it was “not practical at that time.” Based on their limited jurisdictional powers, council decided to adopt a tri-level approach to managing the issue. Locally, they would use the existing laws that regulated nuisance, noise, loitering, and traffic. Provincially, they would press for

³² Gordon Price, “Memo RE: Street Prostitution and Funding of Community Organizer in the West End,” Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-3, file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers – 1983, City of Vancouver Archives.

³³ Andrew Ross, “Johns Get a ‘Period of Grace,’” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), May 9, 1982.

³⁴ Fred Gilbertson, “Prostitution Committee Holds Hearing,” *Angles*, Feb 1984.

³⁵ Richard Banner and Fred Gilbertson, “Hooker-free West End Thunders On,” *Angles* 1, no. 7, Jul 1984.

³⁶ Andrew Ross, “Johns Get a ‘Period of Grace,’” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), May 9, 1982.

amendments to the Vancouver Charter that would allow them to enact bylaws that would regulate the activities and behaviours of people on the street and have the power to penalize these infractions. Federally, they would continue to pressure the government for changes in the Criminal Code that would make the selling of sexual services in public illegal.³⁷ During CROWE's conference on street prostitution Harcourt assured the room, "All three levels of government are going to have to work for one purpose: to get the Criminal Code amended so you can get some peace and quiet and protection." He told them he would try to set up a better system so that citizen complaints could be better heard by the city and he would then demand more public accountability from police, higher level officials, and the courts. Harcourt also promised to rally other mayors of big cities to support changes to the Criminal Code.³⁸ Not only acting as an advocate of citizen concerns, Harcourt also urged citizens themselves to press charges for loitering and trespass, saying that anyone who refused to leave doorways and private property could be charged with assault.³⁹

In 1981 the city began strategizing with traffic engineers to "try and develop some creative solutions" to restrict and discourage street prostitution in the West End.⁴⁰ In November, Council approved the social planning department's plan to set up seven traffic diverters in the West End while simultaneously embarking on a traffic enforcement strategy where police would increase ticketing of minor infractions in an effort to deter clients. Those working as prostitutes in the West End reported that the diverters helped to slow down or delay vehicle traffic and actually boosted their business. One worker sitting atop a concrete diverter told a reporter, "This is my spot, my storefront." Another commented, "A guy goes through the intersection, sees the barricade, he waits and waits – and we grab him."⁴¹ Months later, a traffic report on the area concluded that

³⁷ City Council Meeting Minutes, Dec 8, 1981, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, File 4, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

³⁸ "CROWE Conference Transcriptions," Oct 17, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-3, File 19, CROWE - Chronology, Conference and Brief, City of Vancouver Archives.

³⁹ Ed Cosgrove, "Media Blamed: A West End 'Carnival,'" *Westender*, Oct 22, 1981.

⁴⁰ Mike Harcourt, Aug 10, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, File 1, CROWE minutes – 1981, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴¹ Jon Ferry, "Prostitute Laughs at Experiment," *Vancouver Sun*, Nov 18, 1981; Glen Schaefer, "Hookers Laugh at Diverters," *Vancouver Sun*, Nov 23, 1981.

solutions to the traffic problem could not be solved until street level prostitution was eliminated in the area.⁴² The city decided to refocus its attentions on securing the bylaw.⁴³ Alderman Nathan Divinsky revealed the thinking behind the new law when he told the public he was confident the city could draft a “sophisticated bylaw” that would “give the honest citizens more rights and the unpleasant citizens fewer rights.”⁴⁴

Council passed the bylaw to “Prohibit Certain Activities on the Streets” unanimously in early April 1982 and it went into effect mid-month. During the discussion before the approval vote, Harcourt shared a letter from CROWE that urged a “speedy approval” of the bylaw in order to provide some relief to the neighbourhood. No other city statute carried as high a penalty for a single offence. Police Chief Bob Steward, happy with the decision, called the bylaw an early “Easter present.”⁴⁵ Plainclothes police did a sweep of the Davie St. and Georgia and Hornby areas.⁴⁶ Staff Sergeant Terry Roberts said enforcing the bylaw was as simple as “shooting fish in a barrel,” and assured the public, wary of the powers the bylaw gave the police, that the police crackdown was concentrated on the West End.⁴⁷ Roberts argued the bylaw was directed at customers who did not want to risk the public humiliation of a trial to avoid the substantially high fines; yet the arrests of prostitutes consistently outnumbered customers.⁴⁸ Between the

⁴² Joy Bradbury, “West End Traffic: Hookers Blamed,” *Vancouver Courier*, Nov 19, 1981.

⁴³ Terry Bland, “Manager’s Report – Street Nuisance Powers,” Oct 29, 1982, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 4, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984 -1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴⁴ “CROWE Conference Transcriptions,” Oct 17, 1981, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-3, File 19, CROWE - Chronology, Conference and Brief, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴⁵ Karenn Krangle, “Harcourt Tells Prostitutes: Be Discreet, Don’t Use Street,” *Vancouver Sun*, Apr 7, 1982; Andrew Ross, “Johns Get a ‘Period of Grace,’” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), May 9, 1982.

⁴⁶ Ann Goad and Bob Hendrickson, “Prostitutes Shun the Bright Lights,” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Apr 14, 1982.

⁴⁷ Andrew Ross, “Johns Get a ‘Period of Grace,’” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), May 9, 1982.

⁴⁸ Andrew Ross, “Johns Get a ‘Period of Grace,’” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), May 9, 1982; Ann Goad, “Undercover Cop Tells of Life in Hooker Role,” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), May 13, 1982.

passing of the bylaw in April 1982 and January 1983, six hundred charges were laid.⁴⁹ The initial effect of the bylaw worked to reduce the number of people selling sex in the West End by shifting the trade to the Downtown Eastside. But as the charges were appealed in Vancouver based on the bylaw's dubious constitutionality and a similar bylaw in Calgary underwent trial at the Supreme Court, street prostitution again returned to the West End. Harcourt responded by saying it was now clear Criminal Code amendments were needed.⁵⁰

Other cities in Canada were proving more successful at making arrests for soliciting based on provincial courts' legal precedents and police ability to use the loitering bylaws. Mayors in Calgary, Montreal, Halifax, Toronto, and Edmonton had written bylaws that had so far proved to stand up in Provincial Courts. Toronto had the highest arrests in 1980, with 749 Criminal Code arrests for soliciting, but other cities fell far short of that number. Montreal ranked second with 25 arrests. One reporter gave credit to the number of arrests in Ontario to the provincial judges at trial level who were "tougher" than any other province.⁵¹ Despite Toronto's numerous arrests, Mayor Arthur Eggleton shared Vancouver's fear of a downtown "takeover," saying some "parts of the city [were] being turned into de facto red light districts." For Eggleton the issue was that "people who have refurbished old houses in what was once a seedy part of Toronto say they are living in fear, continually harassed by the scores of prostitutes and their clients who take over the neighbourhood at night." Mayors of other cities were frustrated with the issue of street prostitution but were not struggling as much with regulation as Vancouver. Halifax mayor Ron Wallace shared Eggleton's view, saying a similar conflict was happening on a smaller scale in the south end of the city. Calgary's mayor Ralph Klein said that street prostitution was now mostly confined to the "downtown hotel district," but had been more problematic a few years previous when the city's economy was booming. Montreal Mayor Jean Drapeau was growing more concerned because

⁴⁹ R. Henry, Extract from the Minutes of City Council Meeting, Mar 13, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, File 3, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁵⁰ Ann Goad, "Hookers Returning to West End," *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Jun 21, 1982; "Soliciting Bylaw Not Deterring Prostitutes," *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Jun 21, 1982.

⁵¹ "Harcourt Told to Solve Prostitution With New Bylaw," *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Mar 21, 1982.

street prostitutes were beginning to move into downtown residential areas. Ottawa's Mayor Marion Dewar was a prominent exception to mayors in other big cities, calling instead for decriminalization of prostitution as a way to reduce the numbers of people on the street.⁵² By 1982 many mayors across Canada, prompted by downtown resident concerns, were forming a common front to press for federal amendments.⁵³

The anti-street prostitution activity and resident-mayor-police alliance that formed in Vancouver was not isolated to the city, but the strong organizing and well placed pressure applied by CROWE made it a focus of media attention nationally as the representative resident organization for the cause.⁵⁴ The leadership of the group stepped up organizing efforts in concert with local authorities. While numerous city mayors from across the nation were unifying around the issue of regulating street prostitution, CROWE also began to outreach nationally. In the summer of 1983 Gordon Price launched Alliance for the Concerned Residents on Street Soliciting in Canada (ACROSS) in an effort to unify CROWE's cause on the national level. ACROSS had branches in Halifax, Toronto, Niagara Falls, Edmonton, and Vancouver. The organization had federal and local strategies to address the issue of street prostitution, but the central argument was that the "easiest and most effective solution" was to change the Criminal Code. According to ACROSS, "all other options [were] too long-term, too contentious, too broad, too ineffective, too theoretical, socially unacceptable, and probably unconstitutional."⁵⁵ ACROSS lasted long enough to submit a brief to the federal Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution, and then organizational interest waned. But the relative success of establishing a national anti-street prostitution resident organization paralleled the efforts of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and the efforts of mayors in big cities across the country.

CROWE's initial response to the anti-street prostitution bylaw was cautious support, but the group ultimately determined police needed greater powers in order to protect the neighbourhood. CROWE's position was that it was not bylaws but Criminal

⁵² Denys Horgan, "Prostitution the Street Scene," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), Dec 1, 1983.

⁵³ Dave Greber, "A Tricky Proposition for the Mayors," *Maclean's*, May 24, 1982.

⁵⁴ Deborah Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble: The Social Regulation of Sexual Labour* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 50.

⁵⁵ ACROSS, Aug 28, 1983, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 7, Brief Points, City of Vancouver Archives.

Code amendments that were needed to regulate street prostitution, otherwise “municipalities [were] expected to manage a social problem capable of destroying the liveability of entire residential districts in Canadian cities with what amount to parking tickets.”⁵⁶ According to CROWE, the problem with the bylaw was that it did not “criminalize just to hang around” nor did it provide “effective imprisonment.” CROWE wrote to Justice Minister Mark MacGuigan, complaining the bylaw had “no stigma to discourage either the customer or the prostitute from engaging in public trade,” it “carried too weak a penalty,” and it “did not grant the power of arrest.” It also backed up the courts and relied too heavily on the Vice Squad, which was “restricted in its tactical ability to deal with male prostitutes.” The letter stated the “greatest concern” of those in the group was that “the state will not endeavour to control the impacts of prostitution” until the “disastrous consequence” of the “loss of the West End as a reasonable neighbourhood in which to live.”⁵⁷ While city council may have been satisfied with federal amendments that would grant the city the power to relocate the trade, CROWE was pushing more fundamentally for street prostitution to be more heavily regulated as a criminal offence given the power of arrest and imprisonment. Ultimately the street activities bylaw was repealed after the Supreme Court’s Westendorp decision in 1983 that determined a Calgary bylaw similar to Vancouver’s was a “direct attack” on prostitution and thus contravened federal law.⁵⁸

The issue of whether or not street prostitution was better left to local legislation or federal Criminal Code provisions was the central issue that emerged among public officials regarding street prostitution in the early 1980s.⁵⁹ Early on the province had denied Vancouver’s request for amendments to the Vancouver Charter that would give the city the powers to control “the use of and behaviour on” city streets combined with the power of arrest on the basis that this was a federal jurisdiction. Provincial officials

⁵⁶ Gordon Price, Letter to Mark MacGuigan, Oct 20, 1982, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 3, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁵⁷ CROWE Newsletter No. 4, Aug 1983, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 973-B-1, file 5, CROWE Newsletters 1-4 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁵⁸ City Manager, Manager’s Report to Council “Conduct of Business on City Streets,” Mar 7, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1 file 3, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁵⁹ Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble*, 49-50.

advised instead that the city continue pursuing a bylaw.⁶⁰ Federal Justice Minister Jean Chrétien said regulation of street prostitution had “nothing to do with the Criminal Code” and it was the responsibility of the provinces to grant municipalities the power of arrest for infractions so that “the streets could be cleaned up.”⁶¹ Chrétien also advised Harcourt to continue working on constructing a well-written bylaw backed by provincial legislation in order to deal with street solicitation.⁶² A *Vancouver Sun* editorialist responded, calling Chrétien “cynical and cowardly” in his decision to “foist the problem on to the municipalities in the full knowledge that they don’t have the power to solve it.”⁶³ Harcourt wrote to council, police, and provincial level politicians to report the federal government had “decided to dodge the issue of dealing with prostitution through an amendment to the Criminal Code, in preference to our exploration of provincial legislation.”⁶⁴ CROWE argued in response that federal refusal to amend the Criminal Code “effectively sanction[ed] street prostitution.”⁶⁵ By 1984 an increasingly frustrated Justice Minister Mark MacGuigan told the press he knew the problem of street prostitution “exist[ed] in Vancouver because the city drove the prostitutes out of the indoors [and] put them on the streets... Why doesn’t the province do what it should do? Why doesn’t the city do what it should do?” MacGuigan argued it was not about eliminating prostitution but “how to control it,” which was decidedly a local issue.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ City Manager, “Manager’s Report,” Oct 29, 1981, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, File 4, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives; William N. Vander Zalm, “Letter to Mayor Harcourt,” Aug 3, 1982, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 3, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶¹ Mike Beamish, “Harcourt Challenged on Hooker Woes,” *Vancouver Sun*, May 13, 1982.

⁶² “Harcourt Told to Solve Prostitution With New Bylaw,” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Mar 21, 1982.

⁶³ “A Cowardly Trick,” *Vancouver Sun*, Mar 18, 1982.

⁶⁴ Mike Harcourt, “Memo: Street Prostitution in the Residential Areas of Vancouver’s West End,” Feb 2, 1982, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 3, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶⁵ Gordon Price, Letter to Mark MacGuigan, Minister of Justice, Oct 20, 1982, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, File 3, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶⁶ Ian Mulgrew, “City Put Prostitutes on Street: MacGuigan,” *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), Jan 13, 1984.

The confusion between federal and local powers of regulation was one of the local effects of the 1970s legal reforms to the Criminal Code. Federal jurisdiction over governing some behaviours on the streets or public spaces of the city was largely granted to provincial legislation and municipal bylaws in the 1970s, with the notable exception of prostitution. Lawmakers in the 1970s continued to view prostitution as a social nuisance worthy of Criminal sanction but, in response to feminist pressure, the legal reform reduced the scope of the law. As street prostitution became an issue for some cities and in some central city neighbourhoods across Canada, municipalities argued that the inability to regulate or manage the trade locally was a result of the remaining vestiges of federal control over this issue of local governance. While municipal officials may have been satisfied with being granted these local powers of regulation, resident groups like CROWE, as well as city police departments, wanted street prostitution to remain governed by the Criminal Code, accompanied with the power of arrest and imprisonment. Federal officials were reluctant to amend the Criminal Code in respects to prostitution because, as MacGuigan said, it was not about eliminating prostitution but controlling it locally through existing provincial and municipal laws. Federal policymakers were also faced with a strong feminist presence at all levels of policymaking since the late 1960s and 1970s, who had pushed for the amendments to Vag C and continued to strongly oppose adding tougher laws to the Criminal Code that would disproportionately affect women.

The grassroots mobilization launched by CROWE to challenge federal laws was an example of the role of local actors in influencing and shaping federal policy. Much like grassroots feminist organizing that succeeded in reforming federal law in the 1970s, CROWE, in the 1980s, represented a dimension of conservative grassroots mobilization to curtail the legal gains of the previous decade. In anticipation of the Westendorp decision that overturned bylaws in cities across the country, and the mounting pressures coming from resident organizations and city officials, MacGuigan referred the issue of regulation of street prostitution to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs in an attempt to reach a compromise between all levels of government. The mandate of the Standing Committee was exclusively the issue of street prostitution rather than prostitution more generally.⁶⁷ CROWE's leadership interpreted

⁶⁷ Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble*, 49.

this action alongside the eventual overturning of the bylaws as continued federal delay and inaction and began to escalate their tactics. The leadership sent out the message to its members that “it’s obvious that we are going to need other tactics to deal with disturbances in the street ... the most important - to come up with workable, legal ideas that we can use on our own to deal directly with our problems. This may mean protests in the street, monitoring customers, laying charges under city bylaws and other available laws. That means dedication. It means risk.”⁶⁸ CROWE, having already liaised with the police and received their support, was going to shift to more “direct action” and begin “picketing prostitutes and their customers to try to force the trade out of the area.”⁶⁹ The intensification of tactics would apply a mounting grassroots political pressure on authorities at all political levels, who were increasingly forced to respond to the demands of the anti-street prostitution coalition growing in Vancouver and some other cities in Canada.

Harcourt told council one month later that street prostitution in the West End had created so much tension that residents were mobilizing, and that it was “no longer a matter of people being harassed, annoyed or upset[; it has] now reached the situation where citizens are talking about direct action.”⁷⁰ The City’s legal counsel echoed Harcourt’s concerns, reporting to council “that tension in the West End between those involved in, and attracted to street prostitution, and the residents is growing and that demonstrations and confrontations are a distinct possibility.”⁷¹ Alderman Bruce Yorke agreed that prostitution had reached “semi-crisis proportions.”⁷² CROWE sent out a sensationalist report to the City that included newspaper clippings detailing confrontations in West End streets that argued “hookers have shown that they will kill

⁶⁸ CROWE Newsletter No. 1, Feb 1982, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-1, file 5, CROWE Newsletters 1-4 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶⁹ Karenn Krangle, “Harcourt Tells Prostitutes: Be Discreet, Don’t Use Street,” *Vancouver Sun*, Apr 7, 1982; Ed Cosgrove, “CROWE to Picket Prostitutes,” *Westender* 3, no. 33, Feb 25, 1982.

⁷⁰ Krangle, “Harcourt Tells Prostitutes.”

⁷¹ Terry Bland, “Recommendation from the Corporation Counsel,” Apr 2, 1982, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 4, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁷² Karenn Krangle, “Harcourt Tells Prostitutes.”

given any provocation or complaint ... For residents of the West End, it is apparent that any complaint directed against a hooker could mean death.”⁷³ The report reiterated, “Until the law is changed, an entire community will effectively be held hostage.”

As federal officials struck the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs and then later the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution in an attempt to reach consensus amongst all three levels of government on the issue of street prostitution, CROWE and municipal officials had to push against a confident and established feminist movement and their allies to secure the “right” to regulate the streets.

“Hooker as Front Line Feminist”: Reframing the Social Analysis of Street Prostitution

The Justice Committee began touring the country conducting public hearings in 1982. The hearings revealed, generally, two main positions in regards to street prostitution. Resident groups like CROWE, alongside mayors and chiefs of police, argued a pro-criminalization position that called for tougher laws to regain control of the streets. CROWE’s submission outlined the spiral of neighbourhood decline that street prostitution caused in a residential neighbourhood and argued that prostitution was destroying the quality of life in the West End. The submission stated that residents were being “held hostage” by “700 prostitutes, half of them male,” and that violence would likely occur unless federal action was taken soon.⁷⁴ Given that the Committee was struck by MacGuigan in anticipation of the unconstitutionality of bylaws, a West End businessman told the Committee that should the bylaw be ruled invalid, it would be “a matter of time before there [was] violence,” saying he had “laid awake at night seething, wondering if [he] should buy a baseball bat.”⁷⁵

Opposing the pro-criminalization stance were some feminist organizations, prostitute rights activists, and civil libertarians who argued primarily for the partial decriminalization of prostitution through repealing the soliciting law and amending the

⁷³ CROWE, “Report no. 3,” Mar 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 5, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁷⁴ Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble*, 50.

⁷⁵ Gerard McNeil, “Vancouver Violence Feared Over Vice,” *Times Colonist* (Victoria, BC), May 12, 1982.

bawdyhouse legislation so that street level sex workers could work indoors. These groups also made the legal argument that prostitution itself was not a crime and so street solicitation should not be a criminal activity. This position argued that existing criminal laws that regulate disturbance, loitering, intimidation, indecent exhibition, or indecent acts were sufficient to regulate the street level trade as well as other municipal bylaws.⁷⁶

The Justice Committee itself was very divided. Member Richard Mosely told the press the members were polarized, with “one side calling for an amendment [and] the other side saying you should repeal what you’ve already got in there.”⁷⁷ Nonetheless, the Committee released its final report in May 1982, and put forward five recommendations to deal with street soliciting. These recommendations introduced new laws against street solicitation, granted police more powers of arrest, and clarified some of the ambiguous legal language that was preventing arrests previously. The Committee concluded that street solicitation was a problem in many Canadian cities and “innocent residents” were being “accosted and harassed by prostitutes and their potential clients” and “violence [was] incipient.”⁷⁸ It was a conclusion that mirrored CROWE’s position, and a victory for the pro-criminalization position, but the Justice Committee recommendations remained recommendations, awaiting the approval of MacGuigan and debate in the House of Commons.

At a Vancouver City Council meeting in May 1983, Alderman May Brown put forward a motion to send Council’s support of the Justice Committee’s five recommendations to MacGuigan. MacGuigan was to put forward his proposal to amend the Criminal Code the following month. Brown put forward the motion in the context of MacGuigan’s proposal and also to support CROWE and Harcourt’s “strong representations” to the Committee. She also put forward a motion to add a maximum

⁷⁶ National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the National Association of Women and the Law, the Elizabeth Fry Society, the Vancouver Coalition for a Non-Sexist Criminal Code, the Status of Women Action Group (BC), the Women’s Caucus of the British Columbia Law Union, the British Columbia, New Democratic Party Women’s Rights Committee, as well as Ottawa Mayor Marion Dewar. Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble*, 51.

⁷⁷ Denys Horgan, “Prostitution the Street Scene.”

⁷⁸ The Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, “Solicitation for the Purpose of Prostitution,” Apr 1983, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 15, Street Prostitution - Legislation Development, City of Vancouver Archives.

\$500 fine or 15 days in jail to one of the recommendations. Brown's motion included the statement that council must "make every effort possible to make the streets of Vancouver safe and enjoyable for all citizens" through imposing these "stiffer penalties." Letters of support and opposition to the motion flooded into city hall and the meeting itself was well attended.⁷⁹

Mirroring the Justice Committee hearings, those who opposed the motion were feminist organizations, prostitute rights activists, civil libertarians, and lesbian and gay rights groups.⁸⁰ This coalition of forces opposed the call for new laws. They argued that the proposed legislation would further victimize already vulnerable people who were working in street solicitation – specifically young gay men, young people in general, First Nations people, and women not only engaged in sex work but women's rights broadly. Some of those present at the meeting called for the full decriminalization of prostitution, and argued the city should focus on increased welfare rates, affordable housing, a higher minimum wage, affordable daycare, and job training for those living in poverty. Barb Janes, a West End resident and representative of First United Church, singled out CROWE in her testimony, saying she was "also a concerned resident of the West End." She argued CROWE and MP Carney were trying "to use the law as a moral agent." In Janes' view, "City Council would do better to spend its time challenging the false morality of our unjust economic system" and charged that the proposed law "jails women supposedly for the crime of prostitution, but in reality jails them for the crime of being poor."⁸¹

Those in the pro-criminalization camp who spoke in favour of the motion included at least seven different CROWE members, hoteliers from the West End,

⁷⁹ City Clerk, "Extract from the Minutes of the Vancouver City Council meeting May 17, 1983," May 17, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 3, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁸⁰ Those who spoke against the motion were the Gay Rights Union, Vancouver Rape Relief, the BC Federation of Women, the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes, Vancouver Women's Health Collective, the Carnegie Centre, Vancouver Status of Women, First United Church, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and the Lesbian Conference Committee.

⁸¹ Barb Janes, "Address to City Council Re: Proposed Support of Pat Carney's Motion Re: Prostitution," May 17, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 4, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives: 2.

conservative women's groups, and some local politicians.⁸² Their position was that the West End was being inconvenienced too greatly by the presence of street prostitution, mortgages were becoming difficult to obtain, residents were being continually harassed, and that the government had a responsibility to provide a safe environment for its citizens. Criminal Code amendments were the only available option to address the issue of street prostitution.⁸³ A representative of the Hyatt Regency urged speedy passage of the motion so that council could "return the streets of our downtown core to all citizens to enjoy free from harassment and fear." Nancy Tillson, who identified herself as a community worker in the West End, spoke against the feminists in the room, arguing the federal government was allowing "the freedom, the safety and the livability of the West End to be destroyed by a minority group and their customers because of the lobbying of women's groups to prevent changes to the Criminal Code."⁸⁴ The message delivered by the pro-criminalization forces was that West End residents, and the neighbourhood they claimed as theirs, needed and deserved protection from prostitutes and it was the clear responsibility of the state to provide this. Dismissing arguments about why prostitutes were on the streets and warnings of the social consequences of tougher laws, these residents and their allies argued the "citizens" who comprised the majority of people in the area deserved to have their "right" to safety upheld.

Council voted unanimously to adopt all five recommendations with the exception of Brown's motion that added a fine or imprisonment, which was opposed by the more left-leaning Committee of Progressive Electors (COPE) members on council, but carried nonetheless. Council also requested those present who supported the recommendations

⁸² Specifically a representative of Pat Carney the MP for Vancouver Centre, the Progressive Conservative Party of BC, the President of Vancouver Archdiocese, the Civic Affairs Committee of Vancouver Council of Women, members of the BC Liberal Women's Commission, Hoteliers in the West End, and the Chairman of Community Service – a rep from the NPA. There were also teachers, members of the Vancouver School Board and the BC Teachers Federation.

⁸³ City Clerk, "Extract from the Minutes of the Vancouver City Council meeting May 17, 1983," May 17, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 3, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁸⁴ Nancy Tillson, "Re: Changes to Criminal Code," May 17, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 4, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

to write to MacGuigan and other Members of Cabinet expressing support.⁸⁵ Ten days after the divisive City Council meeting, Mayor Harcourt penned a letter to the Minister of Justice Mark MacGuigan to report that council “unanimously and enthusiastically” supported the recommendations and stressed the need to expeditiously resolve this issue. He wrote that he was aware of feminist and civil libertarian opposition to the use of the Criminal Law to address street prostitution and, although he was “a strong supporter” of these groups, he felt they were “tragically misguided on this issue.” In Harcourt’s eyes their position overlooked “the civil liberties of the thousands of women who [were] being pestered and harassed by the street solicitors” and “fail[ed] to grasp the devastating effect of street solicitation on the larger community.” Harcourt stressed the issue was “thrust upon [him] by our citizens,” and urged MacGuigan to “not buckle to the well-placed pressure that highly-skilled lobby groups are able to apply to key members of your Cabinet and caucus” or Vancouver would lose “one neighbourhood and possibly two” if the amendments were not approved.⁸⁶

The following month MacGuigan put forward only two of the Justice Committee’s recommendations – that the client would now also be liable for prosecution and that a motor vehicle would be considered a public place – in his proposed amendments to the Criminal Code. He did not amend the legal requirements of proof of pressing and persistent solicitation, thus leaving the component that made the law difficult to enforce intact. At the same time he tabled the bill, MacGuigan said he could not grant the request of police, mayors, and some resident groups, because there lacked a consensus in Canada on the issue, and announced the appointment of the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (the Fraser Committee) to more deeply investigate the issue.⁸⁷ Harcourt responded with incredulousness that Parliament was not acceding to their request and again pointed the finger at feminists and civil libertarians: “We’re

⁸⁵ City Clerk, “Extract from the Minutes of the Vancouver City Council meeting May 17, 1983,” May 17, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 4, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁸⁶ Mayor Mike Harcourt, “Letter to Mark MacGuigan, Minister of Justice,” May 27, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 3, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁸⁷ Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble*, 53.

asking for a simple amendment to the Criminal Code. It amazes me that there is such a powerful lobby fighting against it.”⁸⁸

On the streets of Vancouver, this “powerful lobby” stepped up their opposition to CROWE, Harcourt, and the VPD’s combined efforts to secure new laws. In the same month that MacGuigan announced the appointment of the Fraser Committee, 50 male and female prostitutes marched on City Hall to protest the push for new laws. Carrying signs that read “Harcourt Is Our Pimp,” the prostitutes charged that greater laws would mean greater state regulation of the trade. The demonstration was organized by the Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes (ASP) who had formed the year prior. Referencing the feminist fight to remove Vag C, co-founder of ASP Sally de Quadros told the crowd that the proposed Criminal Code amendments would “put women’s rights back ten years by making it possible for any woman to be arrested on suspicion of being a prostitute.”⁸⁹ The march demanded that all levels of government focus instead on creating alternatives to prostitution through providing adequate day care and job training. De Quadros commented that “more and more women [are] turning to prostitution out of economic necessity.” This was a position shared by many local feminist organizations in Vancouver. Women Against the Budget, a group that formed in opposition to the provincial Social Credit Party’s restraint package that drastically cut social spending, urged City Council to lobby “the provincial government for more services to young people in need” instead of “introducing additional penalties for street activity.”⁹⁰ The Vancouver Coalition for a Non-Sexist Criminal Code argued new laws would discriminate against women and police female sexuality.⁹¹ ASP suggested decriminalization of prostitution would allow prostitutes “protection under the law instead of prosecution” and cautioned that introducing new measures of control would “assume and forecast women’s poverty.” The organization’s position was that street prostitution

⁸⁸ Denys Horgan, “Prostitution the Street Scene.”

⁸⁹ Vancouver Writers Group, “Pointing a Finger at the Biggest Pimps of All,” *Body Politic* no. 94, Jun 1983: 17.

⁹⁰ Faune Johnson for Women Against the Budget, Letter, Oct 4, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 5, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁹¹ “Vancouver Police Chief Criticizes Hooker Bylaw,” *Vancouver Sun*, May 28, 1982.

was “not an identity” but “a way to make money and survive.”⁹² Those doing street level sex work were “the women who have the least access to resources, to education, the least political clout, the last hired and the first fired, and the least access to the justice system.” ASP estimated that 50 percent of women working on the streets were non-white, and pointed to the disproportionate number of non-white men and women in jail.⁹³

The position that more laws would translate into a greater attack upon women and poor people was shared by local organizations like the Vancouver Status of Women and national umbrella organizations like the Elizabeth Fry Society. Eleanor McDonald, the director of community education with the Elizabeth Fry Society in Toronto, spoke out against the proposed criminal amendments, saying “We always fall back on more police powers, more jails, more punitive powers, and all you get is more jails, more people with criminal records.”⁹⁴ In Toronto, 400 women marched through the streets to “take back the night” through the prostitute stroll to “demand the decriminalization of prostitution as well as an end to violence against hookers.”⁹⁵

In response to the battle mounted against the introduction of tougher laws by feminists and their allies, CROWE and Harcourt concentrated much of their efforts countering the positions of these feminists and civil libertarians in the courts, the media, and in government forums. CROWE wrote to the *Westender* to report on the recent conference of the Vancouver Association of Women and the Law and to warn West End residents against “complacency,” urging them to more actively fight for laws because “women's groups and the civil libertarians represent the dominant feeling in Ottawa.” CROWE claimed that feminist organizations like the Vancouver Association of Women “have the ear of the Minister of Justice” and “are fighting hard against any change at the federal level that would resolve our problems and save our neighbourhood.”⁹⁶ CROWE hesitated to use the feminist language of criminalization versus decriminalization,

⁹² Rick Ouston, “Rape Relief, Hookers Stage Protest to Urge Legalized Prostitution,” *Vancouver Sun*, Sep 27, 1982.

⁹³ Marie Arrington and Sally deQuadros, “City Council Re: Prostitution,” May 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, file 4, Community and Environmental Protection - Prostitution and Delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁹⁴ Denys Horgan, “Prostitution the Street Scene.”

⁹⁵ Chris Bearchell, “A Cold Shoulder for a Hot Issue,” *Body Politic* no. 108, Nov 1984: 14.

⁹⁶ Gordon Price, “Rejects CROWE,” Letters to the Editor, *Westender*, Nov 18, 1982.

preferring to frame the debate as one of “control” versus “decontrol.”⁹⁷ In this logic, feminist groups were positioned as “chief opponents of change,” who were “willing to sacrifice healthy residential neighbourhoods to street prostitution rather than amend the Criminal Code.”⁹⁸

In one of CROWE’s core documents, “Street Prostitution in Canada, Problems and Positions,” the group most forcefully took on “the Feminist Lobby.” CROWE argued against feminist calls for decriminalization, stating that without federal laws, municipalities would still have to regulate prostitution as they would any other business. For CROWE this meant that prostitution would be effectively legalized, “through probably not controlled,” leaving municipalities with the problem of constructing a bylaw, shown to be both unconstitutional and ineffective. It was on this basis that CROWE concluded there was “no overwhelming evidence of the likelihood of success” in decriminalizing prostitution. The focus of CROWE was on the most effective way to secure tighter local control of the issue through greater laws.

In a section titled “Hooker as Front Line Feminist” in the same document, the group charged, “Feminists and prostitutes have created a de facto alliance.” According to CROWE, the feminist-prostitute alliance was one where the street prostitute, universalized as a woman by misguided feminists, was a “front-line fighter against sexism. Her battle [was] all women’s battle.” CROWE demonstrated a close familiarity with feminist critique of street prostitution and the position of feminists against further criminalizing the activity – that is, the position that more laws would affect the public movement of women broadly, and that prostitutes are generally poor, non-white, multiply-oppressed people who should not be further controlled by the state. Admitting that inequality of enforcement is a “fair criticism,” the document argued against other feminist claims by stating that the issue of male prostitution remained, and most significantly for CROWE, the potential abuse of the law should not overshadow the existing abuse that was happening to affected residents, many of whom were women. From CROWE’s perspective, “the destructive impacts of street prostitution on healthy

⁹⁷ CROWE, “Presentation,” Aug 26, 1983, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 6, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁹⁸ Gordon Price, “Street Prostitution in Canada: Problems and Positions,” Jul 1983, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-1 file 4, Position Paper, City of Vancouver Archives.

residential neighbourhoods have been ignored or discounted by those opposing change to the Criminal Code.” In this respect, the “feminist lobby is clearly prepared to sacrifice neighbourhoods for the sake of their feminist ideology.”⁹⁹

A large focus of CROWE’s fight against feminists “opposing change” was the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (the Fraser Committee) hearings that toured the country late 1983 and early 1984 in an effort to achieve consensus amongst all levels of government. CROWE wrote to Justice Minister MacGuigan requesting to be placed on the committee, but MacGuigan refused the organization’s offer, explaining the committee had sufficient citizen representation and the addition of more resident groups would be seen as “biased and representative solely of interest groups.” Price wrote a searing letter in response, shocked by MacGuigan’s “audacity,” that asked the Minister how he could “appoint people who have direct contacts to the Civil Liberties Association and the Status of Women ... and pretend that [he was] concerned about the Commission’s perceived bias?” Price accused the Fraser Committee of being “transparently stacked” since it was “chock-full of Liberals, feminists and civil libertarians.”¹⁰⁰

Price’s outrage at the MacGuigan’s blocking of CROWE as a member on the Committee testified to the prominent position the group had achieved as spokesperson of the issue of street prostitution. John McLaren, a member of the Committee, acknowledged this prominence when he commented that the issues of street prostitution that faced the Fraser Committee could not have been sidetracked because of the “significant alliance of the Association of Canadian Police Chiefs, the mayors of most large Canadian cities, and the articulate and well-organized community groups, such as the Concerned Residents of the West End in Vancouver.”¹⁰¹

CROWE was denied membership on the committee, but its leaders managed to submit several briefs at the Vancouver hearing through their numerous organizational offshoots. One of these was the submission made by “Women of the West End,” put

⁹⁹ Gordon Price, “Street Prostitution in Canada: Problems and Positions,” Jul 1983, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-1 file 4, Position Paper, City of Vancouver Archives: 13.

¹⁰⁰ CROWE, Newsletter No. 4, Aug 1983, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 973-B-1, file 5, CROWE Newsletters 1-4 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble*, 64.

forward by five women who were members of CROWE and forcefully opposed to the social analysis of street prostitution put forward by some feminists that argued against new laws. These women argued, "The feminist movement, in its unwavering support of prostitutes, has abandoned the 20,000 non-prostitute women of the West End of Vancouver." They argued there was "little statistical data to prove that poverty forces women into prostitution," saying "poverty may provide an explanation, but no justification" and that "we all must work if we do not wish to end up on welfare." They argued that if prostitution was decriminalized, women could find themselves "forced into prostitution" because there would be "nothing to stop a social worker from telling a single mother on welfare that she is now cut off – there are lots of opportunities for her to sell her body." This was something they considered likely in light of the "recent actions of the B.C. government [that showed] governments are prepared to be ruthless in order to reduce social services expenditures." Further attacking the feminist analysis of the social and economic roots of street prostitution, the group argued that if women's oppression and poverty were the root cause of street prostitution, what would "explain the existence of gigolos, or the high percentage of male prostitutes (40-50%) in the West End?" According to Women of the West End, it was "West End women (and men) [who were] deprived of the enjoyment of their homes and of a good night's sleep" because of street prostitution. They argued there was a constant "atmosphere of fear and intimidation" and feminists were misguidedly promoting "the liberty of a few prostitutes versus that of 40,000 residents." For them the real victim of street prostitution was "the neighbourhood in which it occurs" and there were "40,000 such victims in the West End."¹⁰²

One consistent aspect of the position advanced by Women of the West End and CROWE was that feminists were overlooking both the issue of male prostitution and the rights of the many women living in these neighbourhoods who were not working as prostitutes. Drawing attention to the problematic universalizing of the street prostitute as a woman and the rights of non-prostitute women was an astute political move. Discussing the rights of the "majority" of women gave the illusion of a gendered analysis to an anti-feminist critique without engaging in the ways sexism was deployed

¹⁰² Women of the West End - Marie Hietakangas, Linda Thayer, Carole Walker, Sandra Amos, Barbara Brett, "Brief to Fraser Committee," Jan 1984, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 14, Women's Committee – CROWE, City of Vancouver Archives.

systemically – it discussed women, but not patriarchy. In terms of the issue of male prostitution, many feminists who were opposing CROWE and their allies did not attend to the sexual politics of street prostitution, but focused instead on the connection between women’s oppression and sex work and defended the rights of women broadly to access civil rights and safe work environments. Few feminists were attending to the political, social and economic reasons young men or gender non-conforming people were on the streets. CROWE pointed to the absence of this analysis in an attempt to undermine feminist positions, but also did not engage these social dynamics directly.

However, despite CROWE’s battle against feminist analysis, the findings of the Fraser Committee signaled at least a small victory for feminists. Unlike the conclusions of the Justice Committee, the pro-criminalization forces did not succeed in pushing through their position and the Fraser Committee’s report did not recommend tougher criminalization. The appointment of feminists on the Committee resulted in findings that were rooted in a social analysis of street prostitution and attempted to recommend social solutions to what they ultimately considered a social issue. But as their mandate directed, the Committee was focused on examining the existing legislation and considering Criminal Code amendments. The Committee concluded that establishing a public consensus on prostitution was not possible, and focused instead on striking a compromise position between an analysis that pushed for full or partial decriminalization, and pro-criminalization forces like CROWE and city officials. As such, the Committee tried to address the public nuisance aspect of street prostitution by reconfiguring the distinction between public and private space and recommended amendments that would make sex work that occurred in private spaces less criminalized.¹⁰³

The Committee produced its final report in April of 1985. However, as sociologist Deborah Brock has pointed out, the Liberal government that had appointed the Committee and determined its mandate had “fallen from grace” with the federal election of a Progressive Conservative majority, and the recommendations were now “out of step with a growing political conservatism in Canada.”¹⁰⁴ One month later Tory Justice Minister John Crosbie would table a bill to amend the solicitation law by introducing a tougher bill with a much broader scope of regulation, a bill that passed into law that

¹⁰³ Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble*, 73-81.

¹⁰⁴ Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble*, 80-81.

November. CROWE wrote a letter to Crosbie that attempted to frame the issue as a simple and purely legal solution, urging him “not to create a new law, not to restrict a long-held freedom – but to restore the law to what it once did before a misapplied interpretation led to our recent situation.”¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

CROWE had done much to put the issue of street prostitution on the federal stage, and consistently agitated at the municipal level for the ability to determine federal policy. CROWE had to compete against feminist organizers and their allies at the grassroots level to secure the support of local officials. CROWE’s success in securing the support of state authorities signaled a setback for the feminist movement on the ground and a setback to the legal gains made by the movement in the decade previous. In response to CROWE’s activism and political pressure, city officials pressed Ottawa for changes in the Criminal Code to respond to the growing disaffection of resident groups in the West End. Street prostitution was an issue pushed on federal officials who were reluctant to make Criminal Code changes to address a problem experienced only in some neighbourhoods in some cities across the country. Historian Thomas Sugrue argues against political scientists who advance a “unidirectional interpretation of federal government power” that “emphasizes the impact of jurisprudence and regulation on the states and municipalities, with little attention to the ways in which subnational political institutions and actors have continued to shape and constrain policy outcomes.”¹⁰⁶ The example of CROWE’s activity in the West End shows an example of both the influence of local actors in shaping changes in federal policy and also the political struggle between grassroots politics on the ground.

In 1985, after sustained feminist opposition, CROWE secured these changes, but the organization had to mount a sustained political opposition that undermined a feminist analysis in order to reverse the feminist legal gains of the decades previous. As CROWE

¹⁰⁵ Gordon Price, “Letter to Hon. John Crosbie,” Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Resident of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 16, WECAC and CROWE Correspondence 1984-85, City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas J. Sugrue, “All Politics is Local: The Persistence of Localism in Twentieth-Century America,” in *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History*, ed. Meg Jacobs, William J. Novak, Julian E. Zelizer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 302.

and its allies fought against sex workers and feminists, street prostitution was positioned as a threat to the survival of a neighbourhood and the individuals within it rather than a marker of social inequality. Citizens, argued CROWE, were the true victims of street prostitution and it was the responsibility of government to ensure their protection. Feminist analysis of the social and economic roots of street prostitution and concerns about human rights were placed on the periphery of the neighbourhood, a minority position that jeopardized the rights of the majority.

As CROWE and their allies fought against ideas that stressed the danger and injustice in further criminalizing poor and marginalized people and pointed to the broader attack on women's rights and Canadian civil liberties, the group's rebuttal was to call for more laws backed up by state power to forcibly relocate this issue of "nuisance." CROWE's position was framed as non-moral and non-political, but it advanced an individualist politics that claimed middle-class central-city neighbourhoods as state protected spaces that would reflect the hegemonic stratification of Canadian society. By 1985, this hegemony had shifted rightward, and CROWE's grassroots campaign had contributed some of the legwork to reorienting that power locally and federally.

Chapter 4.

From Neighbourhood Activism to Community Policing: Imagining Community, Redefining the Urban Ideal

In 1984, Price stood before the Fraser Committee to make a “more personal presentation” that would outline the consequences of continued street prostitution in the West End should the Criminal Code go unamended. He began with a description of the streets and the nature of the street level sex trade. For Price, “each hooker act[ed] like a little advertisement on every corner that [said] this is a neighbourhood that doesn’t really care; the normal bounds of social behaviour don’t apply here.” If prostitution continued it would become “institutionalized” in the streets and apartment buildings: “The pimp [would] deal drugs; the dealer [would] adopt the prestige of the pimp,” clubs and 24-hour restaurants would begin to “cater to the scene,” the “drug culture” would move up from Granville Mall and “the porno industry [would] likely follow.” Then the “middle class and seniors [would] move away,” market rents and property values would fall, and the remaining West Enders would stop walking the streets, leaving the public spaces to this growing subculture.

Then, argued Price, should the situation continue, “the questions get more complex.” Price laid out for the committee the broad implications of street prostitution in the West End on the rest of the city: “Does downtown Vancouver, particularly the business, hotel and commercial districts, need a stable, safe West End? Naturally, everyone wants a livable inner city, but what are the consequences if we lose it?” This dark forecast ended with an articulation of the central significance of what was at stake;

“The issue is not solely street prostitution. The issue is also whether the West End is worth saving ... This community is to some extent the model of the future.”¹

At stake in the vision of the grassroots anti-street prostitution movement in the West End was not only the removal of street prostitution from the residential streets of the downtown core, but the advancement of a new type of urbanism. In this urban ideal, downtown residential districts would be safe, comfortable, socially diverse, tolerant, cosmopolitan, and mostly middle class. Street prostitutes, drug dealers, the sex “scene”, and the drug “scene” were the antithesis of this vision, physical markers that indicated “decay” and the types of people who would initiate the inevitable destruction of the neighbourhood unless the “community” organized to address the issue. Price told a reporter that the West End posed a sociological question facing not only Vancouver but the nation: “Can Canada build high-density, inner-city communities that are safe and livable that have accommodation for a diverse range of people with different incomes?”² The answer to his question may not have seemed obvious in the deepening recession of the early 1980s. The solution to the growing social “disorder” that CROWE and their allies advanced was that proactive community activism in the form of neighbourhood organizations, backed up by the state, could effectively exclude the dangerous people that would disintegrate these communities and thus ensure the survival of the neighbourhood. It was this exclusion that would ensure “model” downtown residential areas as well as benefit the city’s international reputation, the tourist market, and the real estate market.

The rhetoric of “livability” and social peace rooted in community safety and health that Price was deploying had first emerged in Vancouver in the late 1960s and 1970s in the urban vision of liberal middle-class professionals in the city. Many of these middle-class professionals had entered into city politics – particularly in the city planning and social planning departments – through the 1970s urban reform projects of postindustrial

¹ Gordon Price, “Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution,” Jan 1984, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-6 file 16, WECAC and CROWE Correspondence (vol. 2), City of Vancouver Archives.

² Mike Tytherliegh, “Westenders Invited to Help Shape Their Destiny,” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Oct 24, 1983.

Vancouver.³ CROWE's use of politically salient concepts like livability and neighbourhood health alongside the group's articulation of an urban ideal that promoted mixed income and socially diverse neighbourhoods tapped into this liberal urban tradition, and the group found allies in the Vancouver city planning and social planning departments. Mayor Mike Harcourt was also very much of this political tradition, having been a member of the late 1960s and early 1970s liberal reform-oriented Vancouver party TEAM, as well as the lawyer for the Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association (SPOTA), a Vancouver neighbourhood organization that fought against high modernist planning strategies of slum clearance and freeway proposals. Harcourt was very committed to the liberal urban vision birthed in the 1970s. Aldermen Marguerite Ford and May Brown were also members of TEAM and were consistent supporters of CROWE throughout the organization's campaign. Part of the social vision of the 1970s liberal urban reformers in Vancouver was to create a more socially just city through a focus on human-scale development and community consultation. These reformers produced concepts like "livability" to guide urban planning policies and championed neighbourhood activism and community consultation to guide urban governance.⁴ In the coalition that emerged more formally between West End anti-street prostitution activists and city officials in the early 1980s, urban planning concepts like livability and political channels of community consultation were deployed in order to banish and exclude street prostitutes from the downtown core. While the vision of social justice promoted by Vancouver's urban reformers of the 1970s certainly had its limitations, the urban ideal was nonetheless focused on creating a more socially just, human-centred, and inclusionary city.⁵ This vision was waning in the 1980s, and what surfaced instead in the

³ See, in particular, discussions of The Electors Action Movement (TEAM) in Vancouver. Ley, *New Middle Class*; Punter, *The Vancouver Achievement*, 27, 28-30; Gutstein, *Vancouver Ltd.*, 143-146; Harcourt and Cameron, *City Making in Paradise*, 86, 92.

⁴ Greater Vancouver Regional District, Planning Department, *A Report on Livability*, Vancouver, Nov 1982, 4.

⁵ For the focus on social justice, see: Ley, *The New Middle Class*, 4; Ley, "Styles of the Times: Liberal and Neoconservative Landscapes in Inner Vancouver, 1968-1986," *Journal of Historical Geography* 14, (1987): 47. For the critiques of the limitations of the analysis a) that this newly articulated urban vision did not fundamentally affect the economic pursuits of commercial development that municipalities had sought historically, see Punter, xxiv, b) the community consultation was often selected to be in line with city projects, see Gutstein, 124; c) the reforms in practice were mostly focused on aesthetics rather than ensuring social equality, see Punter xxiv; Ley, *New Middle Class*, xxv.

anti-street prostitution coalition that emerged in the West End was an urban vision that imagined punitive and exclusionary solutions to address urban poverty and social “disorder.”

In 1983, the city hired Gordon Price as a West End community organizer to act as a liaison between residents in the West End and City Hall. This chapter outlines how community activism and neighbourhood preservation, hallmarks of late 1960s and 1970s liberal middle-class urbanism in Vancouver, were reimagined with a shifted focus on community-led crime prevention strategies and strategies of spatial regulation, to ensure the exclusion of “urban undesirables” from the West End. This shift is made evident in the formation of the West End Community Advisory Council (WECAC) that Price formed in his city position as community coordinator, and the organization’s West End Livability Directions (WELD) project. The examples of WECAC and the WELD project reveal how some West End residents’ understandings of community and community activism in the early 1980s crystallized through the unifying project of defining who and what did not belong, and organizing “neighbours,” City Hall, and the police to expel them. Although resisted by some West End residents, the urbanism this coalition advanced to be the “model of the future” imagined community empowerment in community crime prevention strategies. The model urbanism that was promoted by the coalition of anti-street prostitution residents was one where those with the power and privilege to do so sought to police, exclude, and banish people who did not, or could not, conform to the standards of community “health” and livable urban neighbourhoods these residents were advancing.

“WELDiNg” Community Consensus: The West End Livability Directions Project

Gordon Price, Mayor Harcourt, and his assistant Shirley Chan met during the summer of 1983 and decided to get Price a city-funded position as a full-time community organizer through the Social Planning department. They agreed the position would be to “handle organizational work in the West End and to continue the work of CROWE to achieve change to the Criminal Code to deal more effectively with street prostitution.”⁶

⁶ Gordon Price, Memo to Harcourt, Jul 4, 1983, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-3, file 4, CROWE Core Strategy Papers – 1983, City of Vancouver Archives.

As the Mayor, Price, and the Social Planning Department worked out the details of the position, their clearly stated goals were to continue the anti-street prostitution work of CROWE and co-ordinate briefs between residents and the City to present to the Fraser Committee. When the city posted an ad for the ostensibly public position, the job as West End coordinator took on less overtly anti-street prostitution objectives. Instead, the coordinator was intended to form a citizen advisory group in order to “identify, research and monitor social problems in the West End,” come up with “ameliorating strateg[ies],” and act as a liaison between the community and city hall.⁷

The City hosted a public meeting in the West End to identify community concerns and establish the terms of reference, and then coordinated a selection committee for the hire. Max Beck, Director of Social Planning, who was aware of the ideological divisions in the West End, wrote in the terms of reference that the community organizer would “have to be seen as neutral to have credibility and cooperation from all sides.”⁸ As a result, Price publicly resigned as director of CROWE but remained a member of the group.⁹ The selection committee for the position was made up of West End community organizations, representatives from the Social Planning department, some members of CROWE, and the Vancouver police department. During a City Council meeting before the selection, Alderman Libby Davies tried to intervene in what she likely saw as Price’s inevitable hire. Davies put forward a motion to select instead a member of the Vancouver Women’s Multicultural Association for the position. Reflective of the politically divided Council at the time, her motion was lost to a tie vote.¹⁰

⁷ Gordon Price, “Report of the West End Community Organizer,” Jun 14, 1984, City and Social Planning Department fonds, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives; Advertisement in newspaper for West End Community Coordinator, Aug 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁸ Max Beck, Aug 19, 1983, “Manager’s Report,” City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁹ CROWE, Newsletter no. 4, Aug 1983, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 973-B-1, file 5, CROWE newsletters 1-4 1982-1983, City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁰ City Council Minutes, Aug 23, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, File 5, Community and environmental protection - prostitution and delinquents 1982-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

Price was officially hired for the position of West End community coordinator in September of 1983. In the press release he issued announcing his new position, he reported that he was appointed by the city to “act as a coordinator on aspects of livability for Vancouver’s densest downtown neighbourhood.” Admitting that it would be “a major challenge to unite an extraordinarily diverse group of people,” he insisted he was “not going to be advocating a single point of view – even on street prostitution.”¹¹ Instead he understood his role as “a consensus creator.” Price named the initiative the West End Livability Directions Project, because, as he noted in his first newsletter as community coordinator, the title “suggests the intent of the exercise: to weld the West End together in order to come up with new directions for improving livability.”¹²

Price understood the central role of the position as one of creating a consensus in the neighbourhood, which had both short-term and long-term objectives. The short-term goal was twofold: to act as a “welder” of a strong community network, and to help prepare community briefs that would coordinate with the City’s and the Vancouver Police Department’s visions on how to best regulate street prostitution for the January visit of the Fraser Committee.¹³ The long-term goal was to secure the “improvement and maintenance of the quality of life and livability of the West End” and uncover and promote a unified community vision to execute those objectives.¹⁴

As Price began the work of organizing a citizens’ advisory group, he did, at least nominally, conduct broad public outreach. In a *Westender* article announcing the first public meeting, he urged West Enders to attend as he would be setting up “a community-wide council” and wanted “to involve as many groups and individuals who are prepared to make a commitment to try to improve the liveability of the West End.”

¹¹ Gordon Price, “Press Release,” Oct 13, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

¹² Gordon Price, *The Welder No.1*, Oct 11, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

¹³ Gordon Price, Letter to Ailish Boyle, Oct 12, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁴ Gordon Price, Civic Grant Application form, Apr 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

This was open to anyone “who wishes to join and is prepared to give it the time” and he noted he was particularly looking for people who “represent specific interests, whether it be tenants, property owners, seniors or gays, as well as those who are concerned about the West End in general.” He told the paper that community participation was crucial because he had to produce a report to council that would provide recommendations from the community to the city on how to best resolve some of the area’s “more recent problems.”¹⁵ Price made other public gestures towards creating a broad-based citizen council, saying in WELD’s first newsletter he wanted to “establish contact with everyone, from street people to absentee owners” in the community.¹⁶ However, although Price made these nominal gestures towards broad community inclusivity, in practice he outreached most actively and immediately to members of CROWE and other anti-street prostitution allies in the neighbourhood. As a result, and likely due to Price’s reputation in the neighbourhood, the Community Advisory Committee that was struck was comprised of many members of CROWE and identified the central problems of the neighbourhood as street prostitution and street safety.¹⁷

The Community Advisory Council identified four main areas of concern in the West End: safety, transportation, environmental quality, and housing. It formed four subcommittees to address these areas of concern but as Price maintained, the “priority was ... from the beginning, safety and street soliciting.”¹⁸ The Environmental Quality subcommittee was to focus on “beautification” in lanes, on school grounds, and with regard to traffic diverters. It was headed by one of the main organizers of Shame the Johns, Raimo Heitakangas. The Transportation subcommittee focused on the “perennial traffic problems” in the area. The Safety subcommittee was to construct “a proposal for a crime prevention program in close liaison with the police.” And finally, the Housing

¹⁵ “Save the West End,” *Westender*, Nov 20, 1983.

¹⁶ Gordon Price, *The Welder No.1*, Oct 11, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁷ Gordon Price, “Report to the Council of the City of Vancouver,” Apr 24, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives; Gordon Price, “Report of the West End Community Organizer,” Jun 14, 1984, City and Social Planning Department fonds, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁸ Gordon Price, “Report to the Council of the City of Vancouver,” Apr 24, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

subcommittee was headed by Phil Mondor from the planning division at City Hall, and was to focus on the impact of Expo on the housing stock. Despite the group's focus on street solicitation and safety, Price reported to city hall that there was "a good cross-section of West Enders on the Council - renters, owners, managers, seniors, the right, the left, the middle," and that the only groups the CAC was missing were retail merchants, hoteliers, and major downtown businesses.¹⁹

Price's understanding of having achieved a "good cross section" in the Advisory Council is significant. In his report to council, the example he gave that proved he had reached this broad-based inclusion was his exclamation, "Who would have imagined Carole Walker of the West End Traffic Committee and Howard Faulkner of WEDNESDAY moving and seconding a unanimous motion?" Both Walker and Faulkner would have been well known to City Council. Carole Walker was a West End aldermanic candidate who was defeated, according to the *Body Politic*, because she was "vague in her support of gay issues." Walker was also one of the women who penned the anti-feminist "Women of the West End" brief to the Fraser Committee. Howard Faulkner, also an aldermanic candidate who was openly gay, pushed "a free enterprise ethos for gays," and was publicly critical of the province-wide movement Operation Solidarity that formed to fight against the Social Credit party's austerity measures. Faulkner had also, according to the *Body Politic*, "gained notoriety by well-publicized shouting matches with city staff and his involvement in the Wednesday group, a near-vigilante organization dedicated to getting the prostitutes out of the West End." Walker's group, the West End Traffic Committee, was also an anti-street prostitution organization that pre-dated CROWE.²⁰ Price was right to consider their coming together in WECAC a marker of new type of political union. Walker's "vague" homophobia and otherwise socially conservative politics would have, prior to the 1980s, likely prevented her from forming an alliance with an openly gay politician like Faulkner despite his "free enterprise ethos." But here in the

¹⁹ Gordon Price, "West End Livability Directions Project Coordinator's Report, no.3," Jan 27, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁰ Gordon Price, "West End Livability Directions Project Coordinator's Report, no.3," Jan 27, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives; Don Larventz, "Validity of new bylaw may be challenged," *Body Politic* no. 90, Jan 1983: 13; Don Larventz, "Gay Candidates Seek Seats in Vancouver Race," *Body Politic* no.109, Dec 1984: 11-12.

early 1980s, they were able to find common ground through the shared commitment to fighting street prostitution in the West End. Although Price understood this as a positive marker of having achieved a broad based coalition, what their coming together indicated was not necessarily a broader democratic co-operation between previous political foes, but instead a coming together of new allies on the conservative political spectrum – be it economic or social – to secure their privileged access to and control over the public spaces and social organization of the city.

The WELD project's newsletter, *The Welder*, further situated the political dimensions of the fight to control the public spaces of the West End, as well as the type of community consensus the project was generating. In the second edition of the newsletter, Price gave a brief summary of the history of the neighbourhood and noted, "The most interesting change has been the growth in concern about what are classed as 'undesirables,' whether hookers, drunks, panhandlers, or vagrants." He included a piece by James Q. Wilson, co-author of the *Atlantic Monthly* article "Broken Windows." Wilson's article was titled "Thinking About Crime." Both articles advance a response to urban poverty that calls for a tighter regulation of people's "disorderly" behaviour through a greater policing of public space, a thinking which counters welfare state solutions to urban poverty and understandings of crime as a socially produced phenomenon. Price reported to the readers of *The Welder* that Wilson was "one of the most interesting writers on this subject today" and that "Broken Windows" was "in many ways, a pivotal piece that led to the formation of Concerned Residents of the West End."²¹ Wilson's article contributed to what is known as "broken windows theory," a theory that seeks to explain the causes of urban crime and provide suggested solutions to ensure neighbourhood safety. Part of this thinking sees "urban disorder" as the primary threat facing the urban neighbourhood. Urban disorder is defined by the presence of behaviours such as panhandling, street prostitution, public drunkenness, squeegeeing, public urination, graffiti, etc. It is argued that should these behaviours be permitted to occur in a neighbourhood, the area inevitably becomes prone to serious crime. Crime and these behavioural markers that signal urban disorder are thus inextricably linked in

²¹ Gordon Price, "The Welder no. 2," Oct 24, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3 file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

this thinking, and the first step in preventing crime and ensuring neighbourhood safety is to regulate and prohibit these types of behaviours from occurring in a neighbourhood.²² WECAC's information backgrounders that were distributed alongside the newsletter introduced the concept of broken windows thinking on crime, and included a briefer on the federal law regulating bawdyhouses, the Justice Committee's five recommendations that suggested Criminal Code amendments to further criminalize street prostitution, and also a cautionary discussion of the West End clinic that distributed methadone.²³ These backgrounders revealed the focus of the group on addressing the ways the state was regulating the "disorderly" behaviour of street prostitution, but also the expanded focus on methadone treatment as a potential harbinger of social disorder. From the onset of the organization, WECAC's leadership was calling for tighter and tougher regulations of public space by the state to assist these residents in preventing and prohibiting the types of behaviours associated with crime from occurring in the West End.

As WECAC and the WELD project's vision of community, crime, and safety predicated on social exclusion crystalized, the "welding" of community consensus that Price sought to present to City Hall was contested by other residents and organizations that did not agree with the group's punitive and prohibitive assessments. Early on in WECAC's formation, Delicia Crump, who attended Community Advisory Council meetings as a representative with the Vancouver Multicultural Women's Association (VMWA), was barred from further attendance on the basis that she did not live in the West End. She wrote a letter to Alderman Yorke, who issued Max Beck to investigate the charges. Crump wrote to protest that she and the VWMA had been barred from participating and to voice her concerns over how the meetings were conducted. She reported that the meetings were "stacked with pro-CROWE people," and that Price "who was also a member of CROWE appears to share their view and does not present an 'open mind' on the subject of livability in the West End." The meeting in question was intended to be an information session hosted by WECAC. ASP, members of CROWE, and the police were invited to speak. Crump reported that ASP representatives were met with "lengthy uninterrupted, abusive and repeated dialogue" by CROWE members, and

²² Don Mitchell, *Right to the City*, 199-204; Kelling and Wilson, 15, 29.

²³ WECAC, Backgrounder 1-5, Nov 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

that the “prostitutes were not protected against the slanderous attacks” by the chair or by Price as coordinator.

Crump reminded City Council that their hire of a community organizer was intended to focus on livability and safety of the West End and liaise with city hall. She noted that instead at the meeting a CROWE member gave a presentation on “noise and crime” and “no light was shed on the subject of ... livability.” For Crump, Price was “bent on setting up a new group that [did] not reflect the citizens of the West End.” She insisted that instead of working with groups that were currently engaged with the issues in the area, “he is eliminating groups such as the VWMA already established and working with the issue of prostitution in the West End.” Crump charged that through “imposing membership restrictions, only those persons who agree with CROWE’s point of view [were] included in meaningful participation.” She requested Price’s position be rescinded and replaced with a neutral person, because as the project stood thus far, “it appear[ed] as if monies [were] being spent by the City to conjure a report to show that the prostitutes are responsible for all the problems in the West End.”²⁴

Other charges against Price as coordinator came from Bev Ballantyne, a representative of Gordon House who sat on the Community Advisory Council. She wrote to Harcourt and council to voice her concern with WECAC. Ballantyne reported that she did not receive any notices of meetings or any correspondence until she contacted Susan Anderson at the city’s Social Planning office. She attended three meetings for WELD and of the three the tone was always “agitated” and “very uncomfortable.” In Ballantyne’s view the focus of the meetings was only on street prostitution, “with little consideration” to anything else. She also noted that even though there were three other standing committees, “only reports of the safety committee which deals with street solicitation, have been discussed.” Ballantyne thought that city officials had an “opportunity to be innovative and possibly successful in tackling a multifaceted social problem, that of a residential inner city,” but through her experiences she understood that “The West End Liveability Project will not do it for you and neither will getting the prostitutes off the streets! I beg all of you to take a longer, closer look at my

²⁴ Delicia Crump, "Re: West End Advisory Council and Gordon Price, Co-ordinator," Dec 16, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

neighbourhood.”²⁵ Another letter to council, signed by six Vancouverites, spoke out against WECAC, saying that the organization had been “harassing both johns and prostitutes verbally and physically.” The letter took issue with Price’s hire by the city, saying it was “ludicrous” since he was known for “his strong anti-prostitute stance.” They called for Price’s immediate replacement by someone with “a little more objectivity and fairness” and that prostitutes who “had never been taken seriously” should be “given a chance.”²⁶

Max Beck admitted in a report to council that from the outset, the “West End project and the Community Organizer, Gordon Price, have attracted considerable controversy ... based on Mr. Price’s former role as chairman of CROWE and his outspoken views on the subject of street prostitution.” But Beck concluded that while Price was hired to address all livability issues, prostitution was the one identified by the community as the most pressing issue alongside the imminent visit of the Fraser Committee to Vancouver. In Beck’s experience, the West End had been “troubled by lack of consensus and diversity of interests in the past” and Ballantyne’s objections to Price were a continued reflection of that diversity of interests.²⁷ Beck also reported that the WELD project was “under control and progressing smoothly,” and that “Gordon [had] impressed many people with his work with the West End Community Advisory Council.”²⁸ Phil Mondor, from Vancouver’s Planning Department echoed approval of Price’s work in the area. After attending a public information meeting hosted by WECAC that focused on traffic issues, he concluded, “Whatever the present credibility and representativeness of WECAC and the success to date of its co-ordinator in achieving his terms of reference, it is now evident ... that it is imperative for this endeavor to continue.” He urged Social Planning to grant WECAC’s application to extend the group’s

²⁵ Bev Ballantyne, Letter to Mayor and Council, Mar 15, 1984, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449, 973-B-6, file 16, WECAC and CROWE correspondence [vol. 2], City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁶ M. Van Loon, Kandace Ken, Faith Jones, Jeff Sommers et al, Apr 4, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁷ R. Henry, “Report on the West End Community Organizer,” Jun 14, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁸ Gordon Price, West End Livability Directions Project, Nov 21, 1983, series 571 717-B-3 file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984.

funding. Admitting that the group should be “encouraged to become more fully representative of the diverse interests and concerns in the West End,” he now believed the organization could achieve “a broadly-based, full-spectrum, non-profit community group.” He was particularly impressed by WECAC’s planning savvy and argued that a “group which has managed to rally considerable and enthusiastic [sic] participation in such a short period of time ... should not be allowed to flounder in its formative period.”²⁹ Despite objections that WECAC and the WELD project were not representative of the West End community, the project received the support of city officials. The coalition that emerged positioned the solution to street prostitution in the West End – and the survival of livability in the downtown core – in tougher laws to regulate the street level sex trade and tighter enforcement of the area’s public spaces despite community opposition to such measures.

As WECAC did the work of rallying the anti-street prostitution forces on the ground in the West End, Price was simultaneously working with the City to coordinate briefs between the two groups for the Fraser Committee hearings. Price requested the assistance of the City’s Law Department to work with WECAC’s legal subcommittee to “develop a consistent position” on calls to regulate street prostitution locally. He also wanted the city’s finance department to inform WECAC of the property tax base of the West End, “its importance to the city and the consequences of its decline,” in order to present to the Fraser Committee an analysis of the centrality of the West End to the success of Vancouver. He also requested information from the city’s health department to identify the “impact of prostitution on sexually transmitted diseases,” and access to the city’s planning department’s enumeration data to be able to chart the impact of prostitution and crime in the area.³⁰

As CROWE, WECAC, and Price made their submissions to the Fraser Committee the groups included a view that argued the removal of street prostitution from the West End was a necessary condition for the success of Vancouver as a whole.

²⁹ Phil Mondor, “Subject – West End Community Advisory Council,” May 5, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3 file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

³⁰ Gordon Price, West End Livability Directions Project, Nov 21, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series 571 717-B-3 file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

WECAC put forward a scenario that outlined the consequences of continued street prostitution in the downtown core that fused the liberal urban vision of high quality of life, and diverse, tolerant, and healthy neighbourhood communities, with the conservative focus on crime and disorder. Fearing the imminent loss of “social diversity” from the West End, the brief reported that “single women, women with children, older people and couples with children [were] moving away or [were] refusing to consider the West End as a reasonable place.” This meant, “Standards of civility [were] eroded” and many had already hit a “breaking point.” The West End was quickly becoming “regarded as a place where ‘anything goes’ – locally, nationally, and even internationally” – and the inability of local authorities to control the urban disorder on the streets had led to a “cycle of deterioration in the quality of life.” Then, the brief pointed to the larger significance should this process of decay initiated by the presence of street prostitution be tolerated by the federal government: “If the downtown dies, what [could] we possibly gain? ... Are we beginning to see the central core of our cities follow the disastrous example of some American cities – at a time when planners and developers are calling for even greater residential densities downtown? The question has to be asked. Is this the beginning of the end for the traditional civility and livability of Canada’s central cities?”³¹

The fusion of the rhetoric of liberal urbanism with a conservative social vision continued in the briefs, and dovetailed with the new centrality of the real estate and tourist economies to Vancouver in the early 1980s. For these residents of the West End, what was critical to the economic success of Vancouver, as well as the success of marketing Vancouver internationally, was maintaining the presence of the middle class in the central city. In his personal submission, Price argued that Vancouver was a “frontier city” too young to experiment with state-sanctioned prostitution, and that a red-light district would be devastating for the city’s international reputation. He argued, “the social condition of the street [would do] the job of frightening away a desirable clientele” and the city’s core would become “a tax drain.” Then he asked, “What will be the effect on the family tourist market...? As the inner core is turned over to the street subculture ... where will the middle-income tenants go? Since the West End is 93 percent rental, an

³¹ WECAC, “Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution,” Jan 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

exodus could occur almost overnight. ... Is this the vision of Vancouver that people want ... a downtown core of extremes, where wealth and poverty are the only alternatives?"³² Similarly, CROWE's paper "Scenario of the Impact of Continued Street Prostitution" warned that the "middle class and seniors" would move away and asked: "Does the core of Vancouver, particularly the business and commercial districts, need a stable, safe West End? ... How badly will real estate and rental markets be affected? ... Will the kind of person who has lived in the West End to date move to B.C. Place, leaving behind a declining West End? ... What will be the impact on tourism? ... What will this do to our international reputation? ... What does this all say about Vancouver's ability to create and retain safe, livable, middle-class and mixed residential environments in the core? ... Will B.C. Place and the outer ring of the West End consist of highly secure – and consequently expensive – apartments and highrises, while the inner core is dangerous, decaying and a severe social embarrassment to the entire city?"³³

These West End resident groups positioned the ideal downtown community within the liberal urban vision of a tolerant, diverse, and safe downtown core comprised of middle-class people but also those perhaps outside of the middle-class like seniors, single women, and women with children. In this understanding, these ideal residents would naturally produce a high quality of life and a tolerant milieu within their community as well as create and retain safe places for economic investment, a positive image for the city's reputation internationally, a welcoming atmosphere for visiting tourists, and by virtue of their existence, a livable downtown core. These West End residents were positioned as a determining factor to the future success of the city. Thus, the interests of the city and these ideal residents were presented as mutually constitutive. As the mayor and the VPD made the claims that they were working in service of these select residents, these residents were, in turn, making claims of their centrality to the economic interests of the city as a whole. The social vision that guided the liberal urban reforms of Vancouver in the seventies promoted concepts of a livable, diverse, and neighbourhood-

³² Gordon Price, "Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution," Jan 1984, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-6 file 16, WECAC and CROWE Correspondence (vol. 2), City of Vancouver Archives.

³³ CROWE, "Possible Scenario of the Impact of Continued Street Prostitution in Vancouver," Jul 4, 1983, MSS 1449, 973-B-3, file 4, CROWE core strategy papers, City of Vancouver Archives.

focused city in order to promote a human-centred and socially focused city. This vision was being reoriented towards a more individualistic, market focused, and punitive urbanism, but the political saliency of the concepts remained. What these residents and their allies were advancing was an urbanism that argued crime was a result of the behaviours of the urban poor, and pushed for solutions to a growing urban poverty through tougher laws that would secure the expulsion of people whose behaviours indicated neighbourhood “decay.” Street prostitutes and the street activity they engendered would both destroy livable urban villas like the West End and indicate and forecast Vancouver’s failure as a city. The rhetoric of livability, diversity, and neighbourhood safety of the 1970s remained, but the execution of these ideals was now imagined in very different ways.

As WECAC’s activities progressed, the ideal West End community would be more clearly defined through the act of excluding who and what did not belong in the neighbourhood in collaboration with the City. In the partnership that formed between city officials and select West End residents, WECAC and the grassroots alliance of anti-street prostitution forces were able to extend their authority to more concretely determine belonging in the West End, buttressed by the legitimacy of the state.³⁴

Reorienting Community Activism: Spatial Regulation and Community Crime Prevention

As Price’s report to the Fraser Committee suggested, the central concern of the West End “was not solely street prostitution,” but whether or not the West End, being the “model of the future,” was worth saving.³⁵ The West End Livability Directions project embarked on broader anti-poor measures that moved beyond the scope of street prostitution in the defence of maintaining the quality of life and livability of the area. Price’s first report to the mayor outlined what he saw were encroaching dangers that were threatening the neighbourhood. For Price the “‘Granville Mall’ scene [was] now identifiably entrenched on Davie Street and [was] beginning to move on to the side streets. Open drug dealing and drinking [was] now occurring on the three-block strip, at

³⁴ Sanchez, “Enclosure Acts,” 129.

³⁵ Gordon Price, “Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution,” Jan 1984, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-6 file 16, WECAC and CROWE Correspondence (vol. 2), City of Vancouver Archives.

intersections with high-intensity prostitution activity, and in at least one mini-park.” Price had received “at least one” report of an apartment being used “by hookers to turn tricks,” which signalled the beginning of the “institutionalization” phase that indicated neighbourhood decay. Also of concern were the “panhandlers and drunks at the lower Robson Street liquor store” and “vagrants who [were] sleeping overnight in that area in underground parking garages.” Price argued “the situation [was] more threatening and, in some respects, [seemed] to be slipping out of control.”³⁶ WELD also targeted illicit drug users, “parolees out on drug charges,” panhandlers, street prostitutes “and other criminals,” and open drug dealers as people that detracted from, rather than indicated, the livability and quality of life in the West End.³⁷

WECAC began targeting business and public amenities in the neighbourhood in their reports to the Social Planning Department and City Council. One of the first targets was a clinic that distributed methadone at Pendrell and Denman Streets in the west side of the area. WECAC’s backgrounder on the clinic charged that it “clearly served no West End clientele,” and that it lacked “community input.” Alongside WECAC, the provincial Alcohol and Drug Program, the Bureau of Dangerous Drugs, and the VPD all agreed “the relationship between drug abuse, prostitution and the accessibility of drugs, services and money in the West End” was a dangerous combination.³⁸ A letter to Police Chief Constable Stewart from the Sands Hotel requested help in shutting down the methadone distribution by arguing they had just spent money upgrading their foyer and did not want people who had received a methadone treatment coming into their hotel.³⁹ WELD, alongside the board of directors of the Ocean Towers (a private housing co-operative

³⁶ Gordon Price, West End Livability Directions Project, Nov 21, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3 file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

³⁷ WECAC, “Brief to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution,” Jan 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

³⁸ Gordon Price, “WECAC Backgrounder 3 - Methadone Distribution,” Nov 29, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3 file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

³⁹ Ted Prystay, “Letter to Police Chief Constable Stewart,” Dec 16, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3 file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

across the street from the clinic), successfully pressured City Hall and the pharmacist had his licence to distribute and prescribe methadone withdrawn.⁴⁰

Price, as West End coordinator, also successfully fought against licensing applications to open a Burger King and a 24-hour arcade. The arcade was of a particular focus for Price. He raised “the strongest possible objection” to the arcade proposal, explaining the consequences of allowing the arcade “in an area already characterized by prostitution and drug dealing” would be dramatic since there was “a synergistic effect when 'compatible' uses are combined.” Since the application for the injunction was pending, he argued should the injunction be granted there would be an “immediate search for new venues by the male prostitutes who do not have the latitude to move visibly to another part of the city.” For Price the arcade would be the perfect place for them to go. Price claimed the arcade would attract young male prostitutes – “chickens” – and the “chicken hawks” that would seek their services. Price felt that the arcade would have “immediate ripple effects” on the neighbouring businesses that were thus far serving “a normal, local market” and was “inappropriate use in a high-density residential area.”⁴¹ He included in his objection an article from the *New York Times* about arcades on 42nd Street in New York. The article quoted a report from New York City’s Urban Development Corporation’s Environmental Impact Statement that claimed pinball arcades were among “the most pernicious” hang outs on the street as they “offer cheap entertainment to young, predominantly low-income patrons, and provide shelter for the street crowd” and contribute “the most to serious crime.” Defending his use of an article from New York City, Price wrote some could consider “the comparison of Davie Street in Vancouver with West 42nd Street in New York City [as] exaggerated and unrealistic. I disagree. In some ways, our street prostitution problem is worse.”⁴²

⁴⁰ Gordon Price, “West End Livability Directions Project Coordinator’s Report, no. 3,” Jan 27, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴¹ Gordon Price, “Memo Re: Proposed Video Arcade for Davie Street,” Jun 22, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3 file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴² Gordon Price, “Memo Re: Proposed Video Arcade for Davie Street,” Jun 22, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3 file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

Also on the organization's watch list was the Robson Street Pre-Release Centre, which had promised to "tighten up its act" with "improved supervision and security" in response to the WELD project's concerns voiced to the City.⁴³ The Robson Street Liquor Store stayed under close watch of the organization's Safety Committee, as did the many mini-parks in the area which were problematized as places too frequently used to turn a trick, drink alcohol, or sleep in.⁴⁴ In one of his weekly reports to Social Planning, Price included again an article from the *New York Times* as part of a research backgrounder to compare the "clean up" redevelopment of Times Square in New York with Vancouver. For Price, the "most fascinating comparison is in the numbers of those who 'loiter' on 42nd Street and give it its threatening and sleazy ambience [sic]."⁴⁵

To execute WECAC's vision that saw both disorderly people and the spaces and places they use as dangerous detractors from the quality of life of the area, the group came up with local community strategies of policing. The Safety Committee was the arm of the WECAC that was most focused on policing, monitoring and regulating the institutions, spaces and people in the West End. Since safety had "repeatedly been demonstrated to be the No. 1 West End concern," the Safety Committee had the most responsibilities and highest priority amongst the Advisory Council in terms of putting forward recommendations to City Hall.⁴⁶ Safety Committee volunteers had a broad range of tasks focused on social and spatial regulation and surveillance. They focused on police response to resident complaints, working with police to form "apartment watch" and "commercial watch," monitoring the Robson Street Pre-release Centre, conducting foot patrols, tracking the "social impact" of Davie Street business hours, observing commercial use and liquor store expansion, and keeping tabs on people whose

⁴³ Gordon Price, "West End Livability Directions Project Coordinator's Report, no. 3," Jan 27, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴⁴ Gordon Price, West End Livability Directions Project, Nov 21, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3 file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴⁵ Gordon Price, "Memo," Jun 22, 1983, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴⁶ WECAC, "Minutes," Jan 3, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

presence in the streets, parks, and underground garages indicated a dangerous threat to the safety of the community.⁴⁷

WECAC's Safety Committee created and promoted a "Crime Prevention Program" with the VPD, the social planning department, and the provincial Solicitor-General. The Safety Committee's Crime Prevention Program was intended to "help the community police itself" and was celebrated by its creators as "the future of policing in a high-density community." Max Beck at Social Planning, pleased with the strategy, called it a policing model that was "a prototype for high-density urban areas."⁴⁸ As Safety Committee member Jill Maase explained to City Council, WECAC wanted to see the dawn of "the age of policeman as community worker with the goal to prevent crime rather than wait for it to happen."⁴⁹ The Program sought to make residents more active in the policing of their neighbourhoods through citizen foot patrols and greater police presence. The proposal called for two "Crime Prevention Co-ordinators," city paid positions that would, in cooperation with the Safety Committee and the VPD, assist and support citizens in laying charges and establish an elaborate "watchdog" network in the community to enforce and protect the safety of the West End residents and their belongings. The tasks were to "help and support people laying charges, and keep records, investigate how security of buildings and cars could be improved, how insurance rates reduced, organize programs and man a public office to educate people on how to reduce crime, develop a citizen awareness audio-visual program, and have car security signs." The proposal was to be worked out in further detail with the support and direction of the VPD and the Solicitor-General.⁵⁰ CROWE wrote to Council to

⁴⁷ Gordon Price, "Appendix 2 – Topics for Subcommittees," Jun 14, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴⁸ Gordon Price, "Report to the Council of the City of Vancouver," Apr 24, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives; Max Beck, "Manager's Report," Jun 9, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴⁹ Jill Maase, "Submission to Vancouver City Council," Mar 1984, Gordon Price fonds, Concerned Residents of the West End, MSS 1449 973-B-6 file 16 WECAC and CROWE correspondence 1984-85, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁵⁰ Gordon Price, "Report to the Council of the City of Vancouver," Apr 24, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

enthusiastically support the initiative. Council unanimously passed a motion to support the Safety Committee's crime prevention program and would make a request that the federal government fund the program.⁵¹

In 1984, after the BC Supreme Court granted the injunction that prohibited the public sale of sex in the area, the West End Community Advisory Council and the West End Livability Project disbanded due to lack of funds. As the WELD project and WECAC came to a close, Price put forward three "major areas to work on" in his final report to the city. First was "the development of the Crime Prevention Program and examination of the nature of policing in the West End"; second was an examination of current and future commercial developments, with particular emphasis on the proposal put to council for a fast-food restaurant; and third, a focus on housing and the "impacts of destabilizing forces" like rent increases and BC Place development.⁵²

WECAC's urban vision that fused the liberal urban concepts of livability and diversity alongside a conservative politics that centred on crime and safety continued on in the projects of some city officials. The City began a West End Residential Policy Plan in 1985 that stated the "overall challenge [was] to build and maintain a livable, attractive, higher density, inner-city community that accommodate[ed] a diverse range of people."⁵³ In the plan, the city continued to prioritize citizen input and sought to "ensure that the general environment of the West End [would be] maintained as an attractive place in which to live or visit."⁵⁴ In 1986, the Vancouver Police Department formed the Citizen's Crime Watch program, a project that continues to exist today. It operates through volunteers who patrol the streets working with police constables to "observe the activity around them and call in to report any criminal or suspicious activity." By 1989 the VPD formed its Block Watch Program, a program "all about neighbours helping neighbours,"

⁵¹ R. Henry, "Extract from minutes of city council meeting," Mar 13, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Office of the City Clerk, Series 62, 239-G-1, File 3, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁵² Gordon Price, "Report to the Council of the City of Vancouver," Apr 24, 1984, City of Vancouver fonds, Vancouver (B.C.) Social Planning Department, series S571 717-B-3, file 4, West End Livability Project, 1983-1984, City of Vancouver Archives.

⁵³ The West End Residential Areas Policy Plan Report 3, Strategies, Vancouver (B.C.), Planning Department, 1987: 9.

⁵⁴ The West End Residential Areas Policy Plan Report 2, Objectives, Vancouver (B.C.), Planning Department, 1986: 5

managed and maintained by a resident coordinator and one police officer. Block Watch members were to “watch out for each others home’s and report suspicious activities to the police and each other.”⁵⁵ Later in 1990, the VPD struck its official Police Crime Prevention Strategy that sought greater community involvement in policing as a response to federal, provincial, and municipal lack of funds. The VPD’s Crime Prevention Strategy’s vision echoed the model advanced by WECAC’s safety committee, as its stated aim is to promote “safe communities” and improve the “quality of life” through “crime prevention strategies and community education.”⁵⁶

Conclusion

Vancouver’s 1970s postindustrial urban reforms, largely ushered in by the city’s professional middle class, introduced policies of community consultation and planning concepts like livability as ways to democratize the city and to make council more responsive and attentive to people’s needs.⁵⁷ The rhetoric of livability and community safety alongside the political channels of community consultation were reoriented by some West End resident groups through projects like WELD and WECAC in the early 1980s to focus instead on community policing and crime prevention strategies. Imagined as proactive community activism, the social vision that informed the liberal urban reforms of the 1970s was replaced by a vision that called for tighter policing of the West End’s amenities and public spaces, buttressed by state support, to exclude poor and marginalized people in the city.

In 1988, Gordon Price, by then a city alderman, called himself “a watchdog on issues of livability.” He maintained he was working to ensure a “stable community and a quality of life in the downtown core” through regular consultations with the police. He boasted of shutting down a flea market that was operating out of a mini-park in the West End and told the press he was now “obsessed” with views, grass, trees, and “keeping things green.”⁵⁸ An article in the *Vancouver Sun*, written in 2002, celebrated Price’s role

⁵⁵ <http://vancouver.ca/police/community-policing/block-watch/index.html>

⁵⁶ <http://vancouver.ca/police/vpcps/index.html>

⁵⁷ Greater Vancouver Regional District, Planning Department, *A Report on Livability*, Vancouver, Nov 1982, 4. David Ley summarizes TEAM’s “urban vision of the livable city” as an “uneasy amalgam” that “incorporated growth management, urban aesthetics, and social justice.” Ley, *The New Middle Class*, 4.

⁵⁸ “Gordon Price: On Watch for West Enders,” *Westender*, Nov 10, 1988.

in shaping the area, arguing, “If it weren't for Price, the West End wouldn't be the model urban neighbourhood it is today.” Noting the area's history of street prostitution, the journalist commented “Price saved the West End” and that he “transformed the city's core from raw idea to livable community.”⁵⁹

If a “model” urban neighbourhood was predicated on tighter policing and the exclusion of those defined as undesirables to ensure its livability, how was a successful city being imagined? The new type of urbanism imagined in the 1980s in projects like WELD and resident groups like WECAC joined “concerned residents” with local powers of regulation to shore up and extend the authority of a privileged group. The exclusionary and punitive “community” response in the West End saw low-income or unemployed people as problematic drunks, vagrants, panhandlers, prostitutes, or potential crime suspects. The reframed urban politics proposed in the coalition between some West End residents and the City was one produced by the coming together of socially conservative actors with more liberal-minded members of the urban middle class, unified through the joint project of fighting against street prostitution in the neighbourhood. This unlikely merger deployed the rhetoric of the 1970s urban reforms, like livability, diversity, and tolerance, in the service of more conservative measures, like tighter policing and a focus on crime prevention.

⁵⁹ Sean Rossiter, “Mr. Price's Neighbourhoods,” *Vancouver Sun*, Sep 14, 2002.

Conclusion

This thesis opened with the story of Bill C-49 passing into law and Vancouver Centre MP Pat Carney's exclamation that it was a victory for Canadian citizens. But perhaps a subtler victory for the residents of the West End was NDP MP for Vancouver East Margaret Mitchell's statements during the Bill's debate in the House of Commons. Street prostitutes in Vancouver had moved into her Mount Pleasant riding after the West End secured the injunction that prohibited the public sale of sex in the West End. Mitchell, NDP Critic for the Status of Women and for Social Policy, spoke out against the bill and voiced her party's opposition, arguing it was too simplistic a measure, did not account for the Fraser Committee's findings, and did not address the social and economic roots of street prostitution. The Bill did not have the support of Mitchell nor her party; however, she told the House that the party would not delay its passing. Despite Mitchell's feminist position and her negative assessment of the Bill, she agreed "emphatically" with Justice Minister John Crosbie's opening statements that "the quality of life in residential neighbourhoods and the safety and rights of residents must be protected and of primary concern." Mitchell argued that MPs could no longer "tolerate disruption to neighbourhoods. Citizens and communities [had] rights and it [was] up to all of [them] to assist in protecting these rights." Mitchell told the House she had helped establish Block Watch representatives in Mount Pleasant and they had come up with their own solutions to street prostitution in "police task forces, community policing, [and] neighbourhood block watch programs."¹ Her defence of citizens and neighbourhood rights signalled a clear win for CROWE and marked a rightward shift in the political spectrum more broadly.

¹ House of Commons Debates, "Official Report (Hansard)," Vol. 128, No. 135, 1st session, 33rd Parliament, Sep 9, 1985. Speaker: The Honorable John W. Bosley: 6409-6410.

The Bill passed with a vote of 111 to 35 and became Section 213 of the Criminal Code the following month at the close of 1985.² The new law replaced the solicitation law and the legal requirement to prove the act of solicitation had been pressing and persistent. The new “communications law” made it an illegal act for any person “who, in a public place, or in any place open to public view and for the purpose of engaging in prostitution or of obtaining the sexual services of a prostitute; stops or attempts to stop any motor vehicle; impedes the flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic ... stops or attempts to stop any person or in any manner communicates or attempts to communicate with any person...” Justice Minister John Crosbie claimed the new legislation would “reclaim the streets of major Canadian cities.”³ The pro-criminalization forces that had joined in the years prior were happy with the new law, but others voiced serious opposition to the punitive legislation as a solution to street prostitution.

The mandated review of the communications law three years after its passing reported that it had failed to reduce street prostitution across Canada.⁴ The report also found that prostitutes, the vast majority of whom were women, were sentenced more severely than their customers in every city across the country.⁵ In Vancouver, it was found that prostitutes were also disproportionately detained after their arrest, with roughly 70% held after their bail hearing compared to 25% of their customers.⁶ Criminologist John Lowman noted there were just as many people working the streets of Vancouver, but the trade was now contained in the two poorest areas of the city, the east side neighbourhoods of Mount Pleasant and Strathcona.⁷ Street prostitutes in Vancouver told the press they had moved into areas where there was the “least

² Brock, *Making Work, Making Trouble*, 83.

³ Stephen Bindman, “Anti-soliciting Law Fatal: Hookers,” *Montreal (QC) Gazette*, Oct 23, 1985.

⁴ Kim Pemberton, “Brothels Favored Over ‘Street Nuisance,’ Study Finds,” *Vancouver Sun*, Aug 18, 1989.

⁵ David Vienneau, “Soliciting Law Hasn’t Reduced Street Prostitution, Study Shows,” *Toronto (ON) Star*, Aug 1, 1989.

⁶ Kim Pemberton, “Brothels Favored Over ‘Street Nuisance,’ Study Finds,” *Vancouver Sun*, Aug 18, 1989.

⁷ Keith Faser, “Pressure Keeps Them on the Move,” *Province* (Vancouver, BC), Dec 29, 1989.

resistance” in the community to street prostitution, and that violence against them had escalated.⁸

Reports of increased violence experienced by people working the streets began almost immediately after the introduction of the new law. John Turvey, an outreach worker at the Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society, described the attitude on the streets as “absolute fear.” He said it was evident that “people are really preying on women” and the killings “could not be accidental.” Marie Arrington of ASP, reported the “tricks are getting weirder.” ASP’s “bad trick sheet,” a sex worker resource that recorded and monitored abusive or dangerous clients, listed “19 serious, life-threatening tricks,” and 877 violent customers. Arrington was shocked by the number, saying it was “one of the most perverted sheets [they] ever had.”⁹ A *Province* article in 1988 noted that in the past three years, more than twenty people who had been working on the streets had been killed. Sex workers blamed the federal laws and court ruling that forced them to work in “isolated and unsafe conditions.”¹⁰ A 1988 front-page article in the *Vancouver Sun*, titled “Prostitutes Fear More Killings,” captured the devastating consequences of the tougher law and listed the names of women working as prostitutes who were missing or had been murdered since 1986.¹¹

Street prostitutes by the late 1980s in Canadian cities were working under more dangerous conditions in increasingly unsafe and isolated areas of the city. The campaign launched by CROWE, its organizational offshoots, and city officials against street prostitution succeeded at introducing a new law that further criminalized the activity, but this campaign also contributed to a higher degree of stigma and public condemnation towards the street level trade. Another journalist, critical of the consequences of the new law, concluded, “We all continue to suffer the social costs of this failed strategy.”¹² In Vancouver, some suffered it more immediately, but we should

⁸ Kim Pemberton, “Brothels Favored Over ‘Street Nuisance,’ Study Finds,” *Vancouver Sun*, Aug 18, 1989.

⁹ John Armstrong and Jeff Lee, “Prostitutes Fear More Killings,” *Vancouver Sun*, Oct 3, 1988; the 877 number from August 9, 1988.

¹⁰ Deborah Wilson, “Vancouver Prostitutes Frightened by Slayings, Soliciting Crackdown,” *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, ON), Sep 8, 1988.

¹¹ Kim Pemberton, “Brothels Favored Over ‘Street Nuisance,’ Study Finds,” *Vancouver Sun*, Aug 18, 1989.

¹² Timothy Agg, “Change Strategies to Fight Prostitution,” *Vancouver Sun*, Aug 11, 1987.

all bear responsibility for the consequences. Some West End residents in the 1980s laid claim to the spaces of the city through concepts of community survival, neighbourhood safety, quality of life, and the protection of livable downtown neighbourhoods. The social vision that informed these concepts was exclusionary and punitive in scope and prioritized the safety and well being of more privileged citizens to the increased danger of those with less power and privilege. The consequences of this urban vision had a ripple effect; it joined in an uneasy alliance social conservatives with more liberally minded economic conservatives, unified in a shared project of social exclusion, and it deployed a new cosmopolitan and progressive-seeming language to mask the injustice of this displacement. The focus of this attack was on people who were selling sex on the streets of the West End, and they felt the violent consequences of this offence most immediately and most severely. But there were other effects of this rightward shift in Vancouver's West End. People whose non-heteronormative sexual orientation led them to the West End to engage in "taboo" sex, and male prostitutes or gender non-conforming prostitutes who felt a degree of safety in the neighbourhood, were now more tightly policed and denied the access to safety and inclusion they may have experienced prior to the anti-street prostitution campaign. Feminists, gay rights activists, and prostitute rights activists had been dealt a political blow on the grassroots level through the sustained opposition of CROWE and its allies, and also at the federal level with the introduction of a tougher law that curtailed the legal gains of the feminist movement.

At the time this thesis goes to defence, the prostitution laws in Canada are being challenged at the Supreme Court of Canada on the grounds that they violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The sexual, social, and political reorienting that occurred in the 1980s to secure the communications law required the efforts of many "concerned citizens" in Vancouver and their allies at City Hall and at provincial and federal levels. But they were forcibly opposed at every stage of their campaign by people on the streets, in council meetings, during federal committee hearings, and during debates in the House of Commons. Their victory for the streets was a narrow one, and it underscores the multi-layered, expansive, and tenuous process of hegemonic state formation. But also, the success of CROWE's campaign can be read as an example of the potential power of local battles for the streets that are fought in the spirit of resistance and in the pursuit of social justice.

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