

Vancouver's Downtown Eastside: An ethnography of restaurateurs and neighbourhood change

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between high-end food and beverage establishments and neighbourhood change, which come together to produce 'foodie gentrification'. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, including participant observation, archival analysis, and interviews, I provide accounts of the micro-level practices enacted through material and symbolic boundary-making to elucidate how spatial manifestations of exclusion are enacted and narrated from the perspective of restaurateur gentrifiers. This research project begins with an understanding that cultural production on the ground is a key component of contemporary urban restructuring. First, I ask: how might the study of 'food space' production and consumption in urban neighbourhoods inform an understanding of the complementarity between the political economy and cultural politics of gentrification? Producing uneven and contradictory experiences which vary from amicable and neighbourly to dehumanizing and violent, these micro-practices are an everyday aspect of high-end food space production, and are instrumental to how gentrification unfolds. Second, I examine the cultural production of 'foodie gentrification', and its increasing orientation toward 'social enterprise' as an important contextual and discursive feature of gentrification in the Downtown Eastside. I argue that by paying attention to the different ways restaurateur gentrifiers are significant agents of these processes, we can gain important insight into how the interrelation of culture and economy produce neighbourhood change. This research therefore offers inroads to developing an empirical reconciliation of cultural and economic explanations of gentrification. The micro-practices of exclusion and displacement are not 'surface-level' results of, but rather are requirements of the cultural and economic production of urban restructuring.

Keywords: Gentrification; Social exclusion; Consumption; Foodie culture; Complementarity; Restaurants

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family, friends, peers, and fellow organizers, without whom it would not have been remotely possible. It is especially dedicated to the residents of the Downtown Eastside, whose struggle for inclusion, to protect their community, and for their right to the city is one I have only recently begun to understand, and it is something every one of them must contend with in different ways each day.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Vignette: Tourist as 'chaperone'

I'm seated alone in a window seat of a popular fine-casual breakfast place in East Vancouver reading and having coffee. Someone appearing to be a tourist enters with a woman following. After a moment I gather that this woman has asked the tourist for change, who in turn offered to purchase her breakfast. They wait in line for a few minutes, not speaking. Many eyes are on them, curious or anxious about the exchange. When it is their turn, the tourist stands aside while the woman approaches the counter to order:

I'll take bacon and eggs

We don't have bacon... we have pancetta

What's that?

Um it's sort of bacon, it's cured differently. It's served with roasted pearl onions, a light salad of sunflower sprouts from the UBC farm, a mint and pea puree on a bed of scrambled eggs, and fresh filone.

...Can I just have the bacon and eggs part?

According to the worker, not only is this the only dish containing bacon, but it cannot be separated from the other ingredients. Someone else interjects to suggest just eggs with plain toast. They joust this way back and forth for a few more moments until the tourist loses patience, the line growing and now curving behind them. She chooses instead to buy her a lavender muffin. The woman accepts the muffin, asks the tourist for the spare change from the purchase, and when rebuffed, leaves the cafe.

Vignette: A seniors 'inclusion'

I visit a new diner with a friend in the Downtown Eastside. Its large windows, fresh white walls and dark, minimalist wood accents belie its 1960s diner aesthetic. And though it seems to me from the outside as being a trendy upscale space for higher income people, I have heard from others doing research work with non-profits that low income residents report feeling welcome here. We aren't seated for more than 10 minutes when a low income senior comes in the door. He carries a paper bag with a meal from a nearby McDonalds and announces loudly to no staff member in particular that he is "old, and just needs somewhere to sit". The diner is half empty at midday, and he chooses a four seat booth and proceeds to eat. One of the male owners approaches to say hello, and the senior reiterates that he won't be buying anything, that he "just needs somewhere to sit and eat". The owner assures him casually that this is fine, and then sits down with him for a short chat. They talk about the days plans, if the senior lives nearby, and whether he has been in before, until work demands draw the owner away. A little while later he joins another low income senior sitting with her walker in the front window eating a lunch she has ordered from the diner: a soup and sandwich. As the owner chats to her about how things are going, their conversation suggests to me that they are already acquainted. Meanwhile the McDonalds toting man rises from his booth and makes his way out the front door, leaving his wrappers behind. The owner turns to wish him a good day and thanks him for stopping by.

In urban neighbourhoods, food and beverage consumption spaces are key sites for the assertion of boundaries that dictate inclusion and exclusion. Particularly in contexts of ongoing gentrification, vignettes of poverty sit alongside and are often clashing with stark spectacles of urban opulence brought about through upscaling (Zukin, 2009). We find examples of upscaling when historic buildings are restored to make way for new glass facades, or through more subtle means, such as when an existing store replaces older items with more expensive niche products to cater to middle class residents. These commonplace displays in contemporary urban landscapes are especially manifested through the consumption of food in high-end restaurants and bars. While 'high-end' is widely and subjectively defined, in the context of a gentrifying neighbourhood it is a label that may be applied to any space that low income people cannot afford to enter, or do not feel welcome. The above vignettes suggest that such spaces - even those with slightly more modest price points or decor - offer experiences of inclusion and exclusion that are multiple, uneven, and contradictory.

As experiences, inclusion and exclusion can be enacted through different types of boundaries such as price points, 'outside food' policies, or symbolic performances of culture and taste. Despite the woman's potentially shaming experience of ordering 'bacon' in the wrong place, or the senior's defensive claims to be 'not buying anything' in exchange for his much needed seat, others might characterize those moments as inclusive, or humanizing even, perhaps based on notions of charity or help. As such, these vignettes raise questions about how circumstances of exclusion can be perceived or defined by the individuals purported to enact them.

Low income residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside describe the dehumanizing effects of upscaling amenity spaces as an "internal displacement", that results in, "the feeling of being out of place in one's own neighbourhood" (Marquez et. al., 2011). No matter how varied or subjective definitions of exclusion may be, it is ultimately those experiences that are most often the rule for low income people in these contexts. And yet despite evidence of exclusion, the 'new middle classes' (Ley, 1996) who create, operate, and consume these spaces generally subscribe to a liberal politics valorizing inclusion, and community. This contradiction between ostensibly liberal gentrifiers and excluded poor people is not only illustrated in the above vignettes, but has also been highlighted by numerous gentrification researchers (Butler, 1997; Ley, 1980, 1996; Rofe, 2003). Indeed, spaces of food consumption which are considered to comprise "foodie culture" are most often high-end and characterized by niche cuisine, craft products, and updated trends in atmosphere and decor. In the context of Vancouver, "foodie culture" represents a segment of new middle class tastes that align with a prominent liberal politics valorizing localism, independent ownership, community and increasingly, social enterprise. Despite their association with these politics, spaces of "foodie culture" nonetheless construct, on one hand, material boundaries in the built environment, as well as symbolic exclusions wrought through cultural prerequisites of taste, competency, and comportment. This contradiction is important to interrogate if we want to better understand the relationships between foodie culture, consumption, and gentrification, as well as urban political economy more broadly.

The higher-end spaces for food and beverage consumption which epitomize foodie culture are a significant feature of the symbolic economy of new middle class tastes (Ley, 1996), or a 'gentrification aesthetic' (Jager, 1986). When realtors advertise

lease opportunities in newly renovated spaces for a "Character Restaurant", they frame an aestheticized and classed set of expectations for that space. Imagery of modest food portions, unique ingredients, and meticulous interior design come to mind, whereas condiment caddies, napkin dispensers, and Formica tables tops do not. Yet while foodie culture may be imagined and characterized as locally produced, it exists on multiple scales in large urban centers around the world. Transnational foodservice distributors such as Gordon Food Service (GFS), and Sysco, have operational networks all over North America. Their production of mixed salad greens, paper napkin rings and plate ware on a continent-wide scale undermine the unique and local imaginaries that have come to define both the casual and fine dining experiences of foodie culture. The cultural production required to construct foodie spaces has globalizing tendencies and should be understood as an important aspect of urban restructuring (Lees et. al., 2008; Smith, 2002; Atkinson & Bridge, 2005). While this larger scale of food and commercial development is beyond the scope of this thesis, local level foodie culture and neighbourhood change are situated within this wider context. Paying attention to restaurateur gentrifiers as significant agents of these processes can offer important insight into the relationships between food production, foodie culture, consumption and gentrification.

1.1. Foodie Gentrification and Complementarity: Research Purpose

Following work on the relationship between political economy and culture (Zukin, 1991; MacLeod & Jones, 2011; Sayer, 2001), this research project begins with an understanding that cultural production on the ground is a key component of contemporary urban restructuring. Historically however, the literature on gentrification has tended to analyze production-side and consumption-side processes separately, privileging either economic or cultural analyses (Lees et.al., 2008). Although there have been recent efforts to bring these two approaches into productive conversation, calls to formulate a *complementarity* between economically and culturally determined explanations of gentrification (Lees, 1994; Zukin, 1990; Clark, 1992) have not been fully answered. Furthermore, studies of food and gentrification have tended to focus on consumption. They have not paid enough attention to the perspective of individuals who

work in the industry, and who are therefore playing the role of both producers and consumers of 'foodie gentrification' (but see Parkhurst & Zukin, 1995; Bridge & Dowling, 2001). Importantly, these largely overlooked producers of spaces for high-end food and beverage consumption work to enact urban restructuring on the ground, and can be considered significant agents of broader urban redevelopment processes. By using an embedded ethnographic position in the food industry¹, as well as gathering detailed narratives of other actors' experiences through interviews, this research contributes to an empirical reconciliation of cultural and economic explanations of gentrification.

The central goal of this study is to understand the relationships between foodie culture, consumption, and gentrification in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Specifically, it addresses: (1) how the tension-filled co-presence of liberal politics and social exclusion are developed, persist, and work to shape neighbourhoods, and (2) how this contradiction and its spatial manifestations are understood and negotiated daily by those who work in high-end food and beverage establishments in gentrifying neighbourhoods.

Guiding research questions are:

1. Through what micro-level spatial practices are material and symbolic exclusions around 'food space' enacted in a gentrifying neighbourhood?
2. How are the tensions between the liberal, inclusive politics of foodie culture and its attendant physical and social exclusions understood, narrated, and negotiated?
3. How do food and beverage industry actors understand and experience their role in neighbourhood change?
4. How might the study of 'food space' production and consumption in urban neighbourhoods inform an understanding of the complementarity between the political economy and cultural politics of gentrification?

I examine practices of production and consumption in 'food spaces' through the perspectives of two key groups: (1) Proprietors and upper management who own or oversee conduct in bars and restaurants and (2) Mid-level front-of-house staff who work

¹ I have over 13 years' experience working in the service industry in Canada (Alberta and British Columbia), three of which were in one of my fieldsites (Gastown) prior to the beginning of this project, as well as during the research phase as a component of my participant observation.

in these spaces. These groups' experiences of neighbourhood change via their participation in the restaurant industry is drawn out by an ethnography that focuses on opinions and narratives of change in everyday life. Specifically, I investigate my research subjects' role in producing and consuming gentrified spaces, their motivations and experiences of symbolic and material boundary-making, and the details of their relationships with a broad spectrum of economically marginalized neighbourhood residents. The critical goal of this research is to address how spatial manifestations of inclusion and exclusion are enacted, narrated, and understood from the perspective of those who own and work in food and beverage establishments.

1.2. Outline of the Thesis

This thesis will proceed first by outlining a conceptual framework for this research, beginning with the literatures from urban political economy, and neoliberal urbanism in order to understand Marxian contributions to twentieth century urbanization and current day gentrification. Next, I briefly sketch emancipatory and revanchist interpretations from the gentrification literature, followed by a stronger emphasis on the duality of production and consumption arguments. Accounting for Loretta Lees' call for complementarity, I consider the theoretical import of seeking an empirical reconciliation between economic and cultural understandings of neighbourhood change, before considering geography's consumption literature, and examining similar dichotomies between economic and cultural viewpoints. Last, in an effort to answer to Lees' additional call for a geography of gentrification, I draw from work on settler-colonialism to better contextualize ideologies of the frontier inherent in gentrification. This conceptual chapter is followed by a detailed description of the empirical context of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, paying close attention to my three field sites, providing data of their commercial development via restaurant and bar spaces over time, as well as some of the antagonistic politics of gentrification therein. Following this, there are two longer empirical chapters. The first discusses the micro-level practices on the part of restaurateur gentrifiers, considering the way their accounts contrast with my observations, as well as their own experiences and descriptions, both positive and negative. The second examines the broader discourses which arose in my results, with a primary focus on the increasingly present aspects of 'social responsibility' in foodie

culture, as well as more revanchist characterizations of the neighbourhood as a vibrant yet 'empty' space, characterized by improper use of space, as well as requiring active measures of control.

Chapter 2. Conceptual Framework

The research questions for this project center around on the ground practices in order to better understand the relationship between commercial restaurant gentrification, and urban change. Distinctions between culture and economic processes have been present in the literature, as well as more mainstream discussions about gentrification, for some time. What is the role of culture and individuals? In what ways might they coalesce and fortify broader political economies? There are significant movements of capital, and economic processes that work to produce major shifts in land value that promote redevelopment, but to what extent are people, in their day to day micro-production of neighbourhoods, agents in this process? Further, how do their own understandings of their role become shaped, and in turn also shape how gentrification is experienced?

I begin by drawing from urban political economy and neoliberal urbanism to consider broad structural economic shifts which elucidate the unprecedented growth of service sectors and their role in urban revitalization. Second, I draw on the gentrification literature to consider consumption-side and production-side explanations of urban change, as well as the ongoing discussion around complementarity between these two purportedly competing explanations. Geography's consumption literature follows, which provides important insights into cultural aspects of neighbourhood relationships surrounding food. Lastly, given more recent calls to develop a "geography of gentrification" (Lees, 2000), I consider how understandings of settler-colonialism, and the ideologies which underpin colonial claims to space continue to appear in the discourse of gentrifiers, thereby enriching the contextual understanding of the discursive and ideological processes which help to justify displacement.

2.1. Urban Political Economy

Growing from Marxian roots, the development of the urban political economy literature has been indispensable for theorizing the relationship between urbanization and capitalism. Key contributions by Marxian urbanists, such as David Harvey (see also: Logan & Molotch (1987), Castells (1972)), seek to understand cities as spatial manifestations of the circulation of capital. For Harvey (1985a, 1985b), the urban built environment is the epitome of capitalism's central contradiction. A complex composite form of material physical elements, such as buildings, factories, and roadway infrastructure to facilitate capital flows, its creation as a fixed entity is required for production, circulation, exchange and consumption under capitalism. At the same time, as new and more productive fixed capital comes into being, it devalues the old, and this fixity must be destroyed to make way for new forms. The ever-present drive for accumulation therefore requires the constant 'creative destruction' of this fixity, to allow further accumulation. Harvey (1985b) argues that urban processes of creation and destruction are predicated on the relationship between capital accumulation and class struggle. Thinking of accumulation as an imperative to capitalism is an important way to understand urbanization.

Urban political economy has also contributed valuable conclusions about new accumulation strategies that have arrived through key shifts in production and consumption processes under advanced capitalism. Considering twentieth century urbanization through the lens of globalization and advanced capitalism more broadly, accumulation is now characterized by increasingly flexibilized labour markets (ie: contractual, part-time, temporary forms of labour), as well as new organizational forms and technologies of production, both of which allow for unprecedented turnover times, ever more mobile capital, and faster profits (Harvey, 1985a). The growth of service and knowledge sectors in cities is deeply linked to this, particularly in the context of Vancouver. The Accommodation and Food Services (AFS) sector, whose growth will be explored further in Chapter 3, has undergone well documented trends toward part-time, contingent, and precarious labour, a feature of these shifts in accumulation described by Harvey (Vosko, 2006). Understanding how the growth of this industry is linked to the need for accumulation strategies which better lend themselves not only to flexibilization,

but also to higher rates of 'creative destruction' is an important aspect to consider in understanding the proliferation of restaurants and foodie culture in gentrifying neighbourhoods.

Related to this is the changing nature of consumption. Harvey (1987, 1990) sketches a historical materialist argument for post-modern cultural shifts characterized by quick changing fashions, and a culture of conspicuous consumption and aesthetics, all of which come together to provide an apparently forever expanding source of profit. Despite critiques of the urban political economy literature for placing too much of an emphasis on the structural explanations of modern urban development, these contributions have guided an understanding of the shifts from industrial forms of production to post-industrial built environments as the new accumulation regimes in urban centers. Never before seen growth in the service and knowledge industries, a key feature of post-Fordism, has directly and forcefully shaped the urban landscapes of stadia, malls, convention centers, and entertainment districts we easily recognize in cities today.

Logan and Molotch (1987) described this urban growth as a process driven by a wide-ranging group of actors, such as developers, bureaucrats, politicians, and local elites, who come together to constitute a "growth machine". Their influential thesis led to a greater understanding of the way capital interests manifest into a pro-growth ideology among urban actors, a logic which fulfills capitalism's accumulation imperative by valuing growth per se. For Logan and Molotch, it is not just necessarily individual actors who coalesce into a growth machine, but rather a, "multifaceted matrix of important social institutions pressing along complimentary lines" (p. 89). They explain that the manner through which such institutions and their actors govern patterns of land use, policies, and public budgets ultimately serves the purpose of increased profit generation through rent by intensifying the use of and demand for land. Logan and Molotch's growth machine thesis relates to gentrification if we consider both how a pro-growth ideology is present in mainstream narratives that champion the benefits of upscaling in low income neighbourhoods.

Another important contribution by geographers like Helga Leitner (1990) and David Harvey (1989) compliment Logan and Molotch's offerings by diagramming the

significant shift in urban politics from cities being managerial to more entrepreneurial in orientation. Where before, local government policy and practice centred around a welfarist form of social provisioning to city populations, more recently cities exhibit entrepreneurial characteristics. Since the 1970s and '80s a significant scaling back of federal support for public projects has in turn forced competition between cities in order to attract private capital to meet their fiscal needs. Describing this entrepreneurial shift as related to his thesis of 'flexible accumulation', Harvey explains that moving toward an innovative entrepreneurial approach to economic development involves cities remaking themselves as attractive sites for capitalist development (p. 5). These shifts have meant a major prioritization of economic growth and development that represents the interests of elite groups at the expense of economically marginalized members of urban communities.

Echoing Logan and Molotch in his attention to actors, Harvey cautions against theorizing of cities as active agents, insisting that we conceptualize urbanizations as a "spatially grounded social process in which a wide range of different actors with quite different objectives and agendas interact through a particular configuration of interlocking spatial practices" (p. 5). This line from Harvey is particularly salient if we consider the extensive networks which contribute to the production of 'foodie' spaces and culture, from the City of Vancouver's engineering department, to provincial-level liquor licensing, architects and consultants, or even restaurant investors who also own property in the same neighbourhoods (and stand to directly benefit from upscaled land use) each of these are crucial to the physical production of a restaurant space, but also its cultural positioning. The emphasis placed by the urban political economy literature on the structural conditions of capitalism, its effects of urbanization, as well as the manner by which individual actors retain important roles, better characterizes the context for gentrification.

2.1.1. *Neoliberal Urbanism*

The more recent literature emerging from political economy which addresses neoliberal urbanism, attempts to describe the relationship between neoliberalism and urban change. Picking up from Harvey's entrepreneurial city argument, using a similar Marxian lens, scholars like Peck & Tickell (2002) and Brenner & Theodore (2002), have

sought to illustrate the broad structural economic shifts of the last forty years which have manifested in and have been shaped by cities. Processes such as the deregulation of markets, the weakening of the welfare state, as well as an increase in public-private partnerships to meet the social needs of citizens, have all been highlighted as key components of the way neoliberalization unfolds in urban contexts. Gentrification is one process emerging out of these broader shifts. Driven by an accumulation imperative, the upscaling of low-rent areas in the central city through reinvestment represents a relatively new way to fix capital and generate profit in many places. The link between low rent and upscaling will be further examined in the section on gentrification below, however thinking through how these neoliberal structural changes manifest on a local neighbourhood scale through processes of gentrification is an important consideration for a research project about local actors and neighbourhood change. Aspects of foodie culture, particularly the social enterprise orientation of many new restaurants, evident in their connections with non-profits or municipal government actors, are afforded greater clarity when considered in light of these political economic arguments.

For Brenner & Theodore (2002), however, understanding cities does not mean describing them as sites where broader processes simply become 'localized', but instead we must see them as central to the deployment of neoliberal projects and schema. In order to theorize this, neoliberalism should be conceptualized as a process that is relationally constituted, multiple in its scale and sites, but also producing of uneven and contradicting geographies. Unlike its earlier theorizations, neoliberalism does not describe a zero-sum shift from state to market; instead its different projects and processes demonstrate a constant shifting of any discernable boundary between the two, where connections between state and market can be indistinct, and difficult to identify. Insights from neoliberal urbanist literatures will help to consider linkages across scales, such as state-facilitation of the service sector through permits and licensing, relationships of knowledge sharing between restaurateurs and local police, or public-private partnerships in food 'charity' or employment programs for low income and 'at-risk' residents.

Echoing earlier contributions from Harvey on entrepreneurialism, Peck's (2005) critique of Richard Florida's (2003) "creative class" thesis is also helpful in theorizing the relationship between gentrification and foodie culture. Florida's thesis at its most basic

argues that cities can no longer compete for mobile capital through costly mega-projects or niche resource industries, but instead must attract "creatives" who make up the now highly flexible knowledge and service sectors workers (including 'foodie' gentrifiers) which are the primary economic drivers in urban settings. A group Florida defines as young, middle class white collar professionals, 'creatives' are an amorphous class of identities such as professors, scientists, artists, architects, film industry workers, and even restaurant consultants to give some examples. Their attraction to cities is guided by their middle class consumption desires, and the amenities that can sate them. While I risk oversimplifying Florida's argument here (a significant component of attractants of creatives is technology), the relationship between 'foodie culture' and this category of 'creatives' is significant, both if we consider consumers of gentrification, but also actors who produce spaces.

Despite astute interventions that describe Florida's theory as developed with misread or inadequate economic data, amounting to an "amateur microsociology" (Peck, 2005, p. 744), his account of urban revitalization has been widely influential in urban policy circles worldwide. Culture and entertainment amenities are important features of Florida's purported urban revival fix, and restaurant culture can be better understood as a part of this entrepreneurialism and investment at the neighbourhood scale. Food is now a major signifier for the perceived vibrancy of urban centers, and this is due not only to the individuals who create the demand for such culture (who have received the most attention in the literature), but also leisure industry actors, who arguably are instrumental to this process. Increasingly a key aspect of a 'liveability' discourse, which is particularly evident in Vancouver, foodie culture is one way that cities have worked to sell themselves to mobile capital. Today's condo pamphlet advertisements feature testimony from local restaurateurs and chefs in order to sell their neighbourhoods. Even a recent article about the growing beer culture in Vancouver describes eagerly how a local brewery operator studied under the tutelage of Florida himself, thereby bringing knowledge about, "the rising importance of creative thinkers in the urban economy" to local beer brewing and consumption culture (Smith, 2014, p. 29).

Ultimately, an analysis of Vancouver that pays attention to these emergent political structures will help to bring cultural aspects of consumption based neighbourhood change into greater context. However, some of the ways that neoliberal

urbanism is conceptualized fall short with respect to describing the agency of individual actors who operationalize urban change via cultural production on the ground. Further theoretical offerings from more culturally oriented approaches, both in the gentrification and consumption literatures will help to fill this gap in understanding.

2.2. Gentrification

Gentrification has been considered by researchers to have constituted a major 'leading edge' of contemporary urban restructuring (Lees, et. al., 2008; Smith, 2002, Atkinson & Bridge, 2005). In a basic sense, it is defined as the class transformation of the central city, whereby a previously working-class, lower income or even vacant area is 'revitalized' for middle class residential or commercial use (Less, et. al, 2008). While it has purportedly resulted in both positive and negative effects (Lees, et. al, 2008), it is generally understood by academics and communities to have manifested as urban regeneration at the cost of displacement for low income, and otherwise multiply oppressed populations. Earlier, and even more recent theoretical work has attempted to attribute stages or waves of gentrification (see Clay, 1979; Hackworth & Smith, 2001) with more or less identifiable progressions toward an endpoint, or 'maturity'. However, more recent critiques have called the use of 'stage' gentrification theories into question, suggesting that while perhaps useful for the US context, they work to obscure differing temporalities of gentrification across place, and therefore, even gentrification contexts and 'types' (Lees, 2012). Importantly, Loretta Lees (2000) argues that it is a cyclical process, "driven largely, but not completely, by investment flows" (p. 398). This cyclical aspect is necessary to understanding the effects we see on the neighbourhood level, particularly when gentrification appears to be incomplete or unevenly produced, evident in gaps between older gentrified spaces and newer ones, sometimes even on the same block.

In addition to 'stage' gentrification theory, much of the gentrification literature has been concerned with 'identifying' gentrifiers; the necessary "agents and beneficiaries" of the process by which neighbourhoods become remade (Beauregard, 1986). Attempts to answer such questions took researchers in many directions, attending to connections between gentrification and gender (Markusen, 1981), gentrification and sexuality (Lauria

& Knoff, 1985), and importantly links between race and gentrification (Taylor, 1992; Bostic & Martin, 2003). Indeed, 'who are the gentrifiers?' has been an often asked question, and the subject of much debate within the literature, as well as in more mainstream or community-based discussions.

My project in part attempts to pose an answer to this question by considering practices of gentrification. Pointing to the observable phenomena of a quickly upscaling and expanding restaurant industry and asking by what processes these neighbourhood scale agents are contributing to, or outright producing gentrification. This may complicate questions about 'who' the gentrifiers are, partly because this is an inquiry of producers rather than consumers, and workers rather than residents (although both in some cases). Such practices also raise interesting questions about class categories, particularly 'service class' producing actors within restaurants. Should the youth dishwasher from a lower income family commuting to his Gastown job from suburban Surrey, who keeps a restaurant functioning by his labour every night, be considered an 'agent' of gentrification? Fine grained distinctions about who is a gentrifier and who is not arise in my empirical findings. By also asking questions about how gentrifiers understand their own role, it is my hope that the additional focus on practices will trouble previously arrived at ideas about 'agents' of gentrification.

2.2.1. *Emancipatory and Revanchist cities*

Definitions of gentrification have also given considerate attention to its purported 'positive' or 'negative' outcomes. Loretta Lees (2000) sketches three different, though overlapping themes that have emerged from the literature which partly center around explanations of gentrification, but also what its outcomes are, or how it is to be viewed. The first is the 'emancipatory city' thesis, elaborated from Marx's view that city life fosters a greater class consciousness by bringing together of people from different positions. Caulfield (1989, 1994) in particular advanced this idea in his analysis of gentrification in Toronto, arguing that gentrifiers' embracing of the perceived 'difference', 'subversive forces', and spontaneity of inner city neighbourhoods reflected their rejection of conservative or hegemonic culture. Embracing such difference carries with it an emancipatory potential, where encounters with others is liberating, and whereby "gentrification creates tolerance" (Lees, p. 393). Other researchers have instead argued

that city life more often retains a quality of anonymity, is producing of negative encounters, and even anxiety or fear in new residents (see Merry, 1981). Such discussions are also reflected in the idea that social mix is producing of harmony and mutually beneficial circumstances, and those too have been countered by others arguing that they are inherently unequal and "socially one-sided" (Blomley, 2003, p. 89). Questions about who benefits from "mixed" encounters are important in gentrifying neighbourhoods, and these can be difficult to negotiate given the extent to which 'diversity' is viewed as a venerable goal.

The second theme identified by Lees is that of the 'new middle class'. Described by David Ley (1996) in his now seminal book, gentrification is the spatial manifestation of new cultural values distinctive to a large heterogeneous, multiply grouped cohort of middle class urban professionals who are liberally oriented, culturally sophisticated, and whose desire to settle the inner city is informed by these values. New development in inner city areas which shift toward a landscape of consumption and conviviality is produced in part by and via the demands of these new groups. Ley also describes this process as an "evolutionary cycle", as differently stratified groups of the new middle class (such as poorer artists, students, or professionals) can come to replace each other, "Repeating the cycle of residential gentrification, the victims are invariably the small, independent producers who gave the market its initial identity" (p. 306). Ley's analysis is considerably present in mainstream discussions on gentrification, however simplified, which understand artists, youth, and students to precede developers, chain stores, and other non-independent entities. Oversimplifications of his analysis have at times meant that questions of complicity for neighbourhood change purportedly rest with these ground level actors, partly obscuring the inclusion of structural shifts, however carefully Ley attended to these in his work.

The third theme in the literature as described by Lees is based on Neil Smith's (1996) thesis of 'the revanchist city'. Smith's analysis advocates a shift to pay less attention to the social practices of the middle classes, and more to the real effects they have on the lower income populations being displaced. Rather than viewing the cities convivial spaces as being emancipatory in their potential, Smith argues that such ameliorating narratives on the part of the urban middle class do the work of obscuring a violence which is inherent to class struggle. The revanchist city is not only demonstrative

of a violence spatialized through displacement, but is related also to a revenge style discourse, where low income groups and minorities are cast as having destroyed the once venerable inner city: "...cloaked in the populist language of civic morality, family values and neighbourhood security...", the revanchist city is expressed as a "race/class/gender terror" felt by middle class groups who perceive the inner city and its inhabitants to epitomise danger, and insecurity, and whose very presence has produced distressed property markets, crime, and general urban malaise (p. 211). The discourse illustrated by Smith is a familiar one, and also reminiscent of activist Jean Swanson's (2001) work on "poor bashing", and its effect on marginalized communities. Revanchist themes present themselves in the context of the Downtown Eastside both in the media and in the public discourse as a neighbourhood representing the most extreme example of urban poverty and drug trade run amok, requiring a 'clean up'. The streets, and the built form are frequently characterized as having been neglected, not due to disinvestment, but at the hands of undeserving poor. Indeed, Smith's contributions are important for understanding these discourses, and their relationship to claims to space, and justifications for gentrification generally.

Echoing this dialogue between 'emancipatory' and 'revanchist' interpretations of gentrification, Slater (2006) critiques some strands of the literature which attempt to address consumption-side processes that are too often characterized by a framing of gentrification as positive (see Caulfield, 1989; 1994; and more recently Zukin and Kosta, 2004). Inflected by Floridian tones of the aesthetic and economic benefits (social mix) of embourgeoisement of the inner city, and even an "obsession with the formation of middle class metropolitan 'habitués' ", they evict any analysis of negative effects, as well as the experiences of working class and low income people. For Slater, this ultimately diverts attention away from a research programme which must work to answer questions about displacement - one of the most vital effects to understand about gentrification.

In this sense, I consider an examination of the practices of exclusion, to be contributing to our understandings of how micro everyday displacements are related to, and generated by, low income retail displacement more generally. Nevertheless, my conceptual framework is shaped by aesthetics and consumption, as will be explored in the below sections. Be that as it may, this project is an exploration of consumption spaces, and therefore consumption explanations, which in the case of 'foodie

gentrification' in the Vancouver's Downtown Eastside are directly related to these displacements Slater calls to our attention. This next section turns to the discussion between production and consumption-side arguments to further equip such an inquiry.

2.2.2. *Production and Consumption arguments*

As mentioned in the introduction, the literature on gentrification has historically preoccupied itself with analyzing production and consumption-side processes of gentrification somewhat separately. On one hand, there is the analytic of political economy which focuses on rent gaps, capital flows, the role of the state, and the imperative of accumulation to explain urban regeneration. On the other, is a more cultural-focused analysis that seeks to explain central city upscaling through a "back to the city" movement on the part of middle class residents, who are motivated by consumption desires, liberal values, and revitalizing practices to 'reinhabit' the metro (Ley, 1996). While I am slightly over-simplifying the production versus consumption sides of this debate (neither Ley (1996) nor Smith (1979) necessarily eschewed an analysis of economy or culture respectively), the distinction between the two as mutually exclusive has had a dramatic effect not only on the literature, but also in mainstream discourses.

Production-side explanations argue against the notion that gentrification can be explained through a shift in consumer preferences, or even a resistance to suburban lifestyle per se (Smith, 1979). Instead, Marxian urbanists such as Harvey (1973) and Smith (1979, 1982) convincingly argued that logics behind gentrification have to do with dynamics of capital flow through development, investment, and disinvestment across time and space. With his rent gap thesis, Smith (1979) argued that central city neighbourhoods, after first experiencing disinvestment, become reinvested when the gap between the current value of the land (capitalized ground rent), and its highest 'best use' value (potential ground rent) is wide enough to attract investment. This analysis tends to place the most importance on the logic that capitalism requires property to make the highest returns possible; once an area declines enough in property value, and the gap between capitalized and potential rent is enough to attract investment, the structural conditions for gentrification are set. While Smith acknowledged the role of culture (and later incorporated it more significantly to his analysis, see Smith, 1996), he maintained

nevertheless that the importance of culture did not extend beyond its role in determining the "surface form" taken by urban restructuring (1986, p. 31). Such structural imperatives help to at least inform an understanding of why entrepreneurs and developers find certain retail districts attractive.

Consumption theorists on the other hand, have critiqued economic explanations in the literature as deterministic, and overly dismissive of the finer-grained cultural agency that they argue is crucial for the production of gentrification on many scales. Seminal contributions by David Ley (1996) and Sharon Zukin (1982) sought to understand middle class gentrifiers as espousing a liberal politics as well as cultural pursuits that were not easily understood through economic explanations alone. Consumption-leaning theorists do not dispose of a Marxian analysis, but instead are interested in understanding how class transformation of the city is constituted, and how we might locate an aesthetic of gentrification (Jager, 1986) that is related to it, and may help to explain it. Zukin's work in *Loft Living* (1982) excellently illustrated how forms of consumption linked deeply to aesthetics and historic preservation more particularly put into motion efficacious accumulation strategies. Echoing political economy and neoliberal urbanism's understanding of the consumption turn in urbanism, residential and retail land value, and in turn food space production, are important components of the landscape of consumption where gentrification is ongoing. Related to neoliberal urbanism's elaboration on urban regeneration and 'creativity', there is a growing consensus among scholars that in the contemporary context of 'creative city' ideology, culture is not a trivial outcrop of economic development (Macleod & Jones, 2011). Not only this, but it is an important element if we want to consider complicity. Unlike Richard Florida's 'creative class' category, a group whose economic clout he celebrates, Ley instead notes their role in producing gentrification as an ambivalent one. However, Lees argues that by representing middle class gentrifiers as "inadvertent instruments of abstract economic forces", Smith and other economically oriented contributions, run the danger of entirely absolving gentrifiers of responsibility for their practices (2000, p.399).

2.2.3. Complementarity and 'Geographies of Gentrification'

Numerous scholars have made reference to the need for a greater complementarity in gentrification research, so that divergences between the political

economy and post-structural approaches may be brought into more productive conversation (Lees, 1994; Zukin, 1990; Clark 1992). Taking into consideration critiques by these scholars, the theoretical contributions of this project do not seek to diagram 'stages' of gentrification, nor to answer any explicit questions about "who" exactly are the gentrifiers. I am primarily interested in processes and discourse engaged in by producers of gentrification themselves. As such, this thesis hopes to offer an entry way into the empirical reconciliation between production and consumption-side explanations, in part because it focuses on individuals who are producers, or functionaries of the process, yet also interrogates their practices as they play out on the ground. In his writing on complementarity Clark (1992) describes how the call for complementarity arose from the seemingly impossible reconciliation of two theoretical developments. Explaining how we can overcome the fissure of competing theories, he writes, "...if [they] are mutually exclusive due to incommensurable abstractions, they may *both* be true and necessary for a thorough description of that which the theories are about" (my emphasis, p. 361). In this sense, they are complimentary pictures, two differing images, or double exposures, of the same process. Aiming for complementarity asks of us that we not only accept that both chaotic (Rose, 1984; Beauregard, 1986) and essential or 'root cause' (Clark, 2005) definitions can occur at the same time, but also, how chaos, or flexibility might be essential to the structural processes to continue barely impeded.

Loretta Lees (2000) includes in her call for complementarity the more specific task of determining the complex relationship between aspects of personal identity, which are multiple and can include 'practices', and the "constitution" of a gentrified place, which she maintains are unclear and under-analysed. In line with her call for complementarity, Lees also calls for a more, "updated and rigorous deconstruction of not only the process of gentrification but also discourses on gentrification. A closer look at how gentrification is represented...and how knowledge on gentrification is produced and constructed... will shed further light on this subject." (p.404). In order to accomplish such a rigorous task, Lees further suggests that this requires we study the 'geography of gentrification'. First put forward as an idea by Ley (1996), a 'geography of gentrification' entails paying close attention to context, with sensitivity to history as well as identity, rather than strive to develop a universalizing theory of gentrification to be applied elsewhere. While the deeper attention to culture that lacks in the neoliberal urbanism literature is partly

attended to by gentrification researchers, there is not enough empirical work that elucidates the micro-practices and discourses of individuals on the ground who, through socio-cultural production, enact spatial change. While discussions that emerge in the consumption literature discussed below act as a corrective to this part, it is ultimately the goal of this research project to speak back to the need for a detailed empirical reconciliation of the economic and cultural knowledges.

2.3. Consumption

The dynamic between political economy and culture, or 'supply side' and 'demand side' perspectives is not unique to the gentrification literature, but is a far broader antagonism that exists in many other areas of study. The vast literature on consumption has in many ways developed as a response to the dominance of political economy. This has grown not simply as a corrective, but simultaneously out of an increasing significance of the culture of the consumer and consumerism in contemporary economic practices (Goss, 2004). Certainly, consumption has become much more ubiquitous and visible upon the landscape than ever before - especially in urban contexts (Mansveldt, 2005).

Two seminal works by Urry (1995) and Wrigley & Lowe (1996), both concerned with consumption and retail, made important assertions about how place, space and scale are crucial factors in the manifestation and experience of consumption. At the neighbourhood level, Beauregard (1986) argues that consumption's ubiquity also takes on the added importance of competition, where entrepreneurs must capture the discretionary incomes of consumers by offering unique and distinct experiences that go beyond simple needs or functions: "...implicated is the status of being at that shop in that neighbourhood and buying that particular brand. Thus the dynamic of capital accumulation, fuelled by affluence, is wedded to conspicuous consumption" (p.16). The importance of distinction, particularly in a marketplace like Gastown which is made so competitive by the presence of many restaurants, this is key. Not only is there a need for these spaces to distinguish themselves, conspicuous consumption works to sell the neighbourhood as a whole, and even Vancouver on a global scale.

Another important consideration of consumption's effects on cities is the extent to which they are unevenly constituted (Jackson, 2002). Echoing other theoretical contributions pertaining to uneven development (Smith, 1996) at the urban scale, this is an important and unique feature of capitalist societies, and bears down on processes of development and gentrification in uneven and sometimes contradictory ways. Given this, it is possible to think of consumption at the neighbourhood scale as being geographically contingent, especially when considering the striking differences between Vancouver's service sector growth, compared with slower growth elsewhere. Further, if we understand uneven constitution as being a hallmark of consumption landscapes, then disparity between low and high end in the same place is not necessarily indicative of the purported success of 'mix', but a manifestation of these uneven effects.

Consumer subjectivity and identity formation are also important sections of the consumption literature. Pierre Bourdieu (1984) offered crucial insights about identity formation through his theorization of the notions 'cultural capital' and 'habitus'. For Bourdieu, processes and practices of self-identification, such as dress, comportment, credentials, niche knowledges, through the consumption of goods is how difference is constructed between people and groups. Cultural capital is not just demonstrative of simple differences between groups, but actually a source of social inequality. It is through these oppositions of cultural competency via a complex typology of 'taste' and 'value' that in turn reproduces the ideology of the dominant class. Building off of this, the idea of habitus refers to the embodiment of cultural capital. In their work on "metropolitan habitus", Tim Butler and Garry Robson (2003) explain:

Habitus refers to the ways in which processes of class formation, and reproduction, are facilitated by the storage and (transposable) transmission of core cultural dispositions in the individual: the body itself materialises class dispositions and histories (p. 8).

Habitus offers a way to consider how deeply ingrained cultural habits, skills, and knowledges inform how we conduct ourselves and operate in neighbourhood or city space. Our life experiences and socialization cause us to reproduce class dispositions in a manner which is embodied. In this sense, a space of exclusion, such as a high-end restaurant does not only exclude with its built form or price points. The fine grained performances of comportment required for such spaces of middle class consumption are

deeply important as determinants of inclusion or exclusion; epitomized by vague suggestions that 'you can tell when someone is in the wrong place'. Further, these embodiments are mediated between, "'objective' structures of social relations and the individual 'subjective' behaviour of actors" (Calhoun, 2002, p. 204), allowing for a more nuanced consideration of agency and structure, suggesting that difference is demarcated, and therefore exclusion is enacted by both.

Building on Bourdieu, Mansveldt (2005) points to how commodity practices are in fact productive of very powerful discourses, which work to define appropriate consuming practices, relationships, and objects involved in consumption. The places where these discourses develop into exclusion, as Mansveldt puts it, are the moments when bodies are made to be "out of place", and therefore where power *in* space is at its most obvious (p. 86). With respect to foodie culture in Vancouver's gentrifying neighbourhoods, these are very germane theoretical insights. Place-based identity formation through consumption practices is a prevalent feature of neighbourhood change, not only for its consumers but also for producers who operate those spaces, and who sometimes consume them at the same time. Not only do narrations of taste and value inform how gentrifiers define their own relationship to neighbourhood change, but symbolic significations such as dress, language and food distinguish 'gentrifiers' from 'others' on the street, in the public discourse, and in the imagination.

What is key to bear in mind from Bourdieu's offerings, is that such social distinctions are an important source of social inequality. In the context of upscaling in low income neighbourhoods, not only do new commercial spaces displace neighbourhood serving amenities, they also contribute to the overall perceived market value of a given building or block from the perspective of commercial and residential real estate, a prerequisite for the speculation that leads to more extensive (residential) displacement. They produce social dissonance between classes, an uneven yet nevertheless alienating form of social violence. Further, the displacement of neighbourhood service amenities produce what Mitchell and Heynen (2009) call "geographies of survival". A complex yet *ad hoc* network of institutional arrangements which have emerged to address increasing inequality which ultimately define peoples practices of survival and ability to stay in a place. Made up of food banks, soup kitchens, and hot-food tents which are ultimately inadequate to meet the needs of lower income people, their emerging

presence in central city milieus is at least partly a reflection of middle class consumption and production patterns whose higher price points exclude low income residents, and where increasing land values and rents make an unviable environment for neighbourhood serving businesses with genuinely affordable options.

Miewald and McCann's (2012) work on 'foodscapes' in the Downtown Eastside informs this with their analysis of the coexisting abundance of low-cost or free food alongside a large proportion of food insecure residents. The nature of the *ad hoc* food provision characteristic of social services is that they produce a complex, and constantly changing landscape of food which demands an inordinate amount of time and energy for low income people to navigate. Meeting one's subsistence needs then, is not as straightforward as an abundance of low-cost food in an area would suggest. Not only this, but Miewald & McCann also describe how 'foodie gentrification' involves the displacement of inexpensive diners and corner shops, which are spaces of consumption that offer low income people more dignity, less stigma, and are less time consuming and safer than long outdoor line ups at charitable providers (p. 547). Their insight suggests that there is a lot at stake when private neighbourhood-serving stores, restaurants and bars are replaced by higher-end spaces of exclusion. Rather than theorize new consumption spaces as additive to a social diversity of market options, as proponents of social mix are wont to do, new spaces for upscaled consumption and urban development have potentially negative effects on the Downtown Eastside's 'geography of survival'.

2.3.1. Complementarity of culture and economy

Related to the calls for complementarity in the gentrification literature, Mansveldt (2005) explains that in consumption research, geographers in particular have attempted to address this 'productionist bias' that the political economy perspective has tended toward. Consumption scholars, she explains, have developed an understanding of consumption and production as being highly interdependent. Similarly, McDowell & Court (1994) insist that there cannot be a traditional separation between production and consumption identities, nor between the material and symbolic constitution of consumption. This is an insight from the scholarship that may well be empirically informed by the stories of restaurateurs in the Downtown Eastside, who, as mentioned

before, are active in the simultaneous production and consumption of the neighbourhood. Not only do they seek out affordable rents, they must themselves consume from suppliers in order to build their space of consumption, and so are actively involved in both processes. Despite these theoretical contributions by geographers, empirical work in the consumption literature has tended to have a bias toward the perspective of consumption on the part of consumers exclusively. A disproportionate focus on consumers is the case even for work that explores relationships between urban change and food culture (see Roseberry, 1996; Belasco, 1999; Bell & Valentine, 1997). In addition, the consumption literature contains even less research done on restaurants (see however, Crang, 1994; Crang & Cook, 1996; Parkhurst & Zukin, 1995; Spang, 2001).

Sociologist Sharon Zukin's work on restaurants offers valuable insights to the connections between urban restructuring and cuisine (1990, 1991, 2009). Her research has contributed not only to a framing of gentrification through a "new organization of consumption" (1990), but she has also helped to illustrate the significant role of individuals that are implicated in cultural production. For Zukin, individuals are a "new group of cultural mediators" who comprise a part of the critical infrastructure of global urban restructuring because they are integral to its social processes of spatial remaking (p. 214, 1991). Her understanding of gentrification describes the relationship between changing patterns of consumption and broad transformations in economic structures as deeply connected: "...the small events and individual decisions that make up a specific spatial process...feed upon a larger social transformation" (p.187, 1991). Considering the cultural aspects of gentrifying neighbourhoods, particularly the extent to which aesthetic and material qualities of old neighbourhoods apparently appeals to gentrifiers, Zukin (1982) reminds us that "affluent gentrifiers' cultural appropriations do not lack economic rationality" (p. 227).

While theoretical reconciliation of economy and culture may be articulated in theory, a more detailed empirical undertaking which examines how larger processes are spatialized through cultural output will contribute a more effective and strengthened connection between political economy and post-structuralism within three of these literatures. Loretta Lees' (1994) call for complementarity parallels tensions all the way across neoliberal urbanism, gentrification and consumption research. While on one

hand, these literatures diverge in important ways, each of them helps to inform this research project differently by providing complimentary lenses through which to theorize urban restructuring.

2.4. Settler-Colonialism

In the spirit of David Ley and Loretta Lees reference to developing a 'geography of gentrification', I offer this last section as a way of deepening the context of my research. Thinking and theorizing about processes of urban change in North America, where cities exist on land previously occupied by indigenous peoples, must be situated within the history and ongoing processes of colonial dispossession. While it should be made clear that this thesis does not engage directly with questions of race or identity, there are still theoretical offerings from literatures interrogating colonialism that are helpful to recruit for our understanding of how individuals think about neighbourhood change as they operationalize it. As will be explored briefly below, thematics of colonialism have already been developed in some of the work done by critical geographers on gentrification.

There are features of the 'geography' of gentrification in Vancouver that bear serious consideration. In the context of British Columbia, and Vancouver, indigenous territories have never been ceded to the Canadian state, since no treaties or land agreements have been signed (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). The Downtown Eastside is a neighbourhood with a disproportionate number of urban indigenous people, for whom a great deal of violence in different forms and ways - racialized, gendered, economic - is present in everyday life. Its streets and people carry trauma associated with this marginalization, and the everyday experiences in such quickly gentrifying neighbourhoods are continually marked by dispossessions and displacements of a new form. The relatively recent history of indigenous encampments will be explored briefly in the Chapter 3, however it is relevant in this context to think of Vancouver as a continued settlement space, where the Downtown Eastside in particular emerged as a core economic and political node that was key to original colonial dispossessions (Blomley, 2003). Given this relatively recent history of the Downtown Eastside which continues to be Musqueam, Tsleil-waututh and Squamish nation territory, experiences of violence

and displacement cannot be only considered through the lens of class, and capitalism, but should also be situated in an understanding of colonialism.

An important starting point is to conceptualize colonialism as a structure, rather than an event (Wolfe, 1999; 2007). This is not to suggest that colonization is without chronology, but rather than having a beginning and end, colonialism represents an organizing logic which is reasserted through the same political, economic, and social regimes every day. This approach allows a better understanding of the relationship between initial dispossession, repeated dispossessions and (re)enclosures that came after, and current day events which we talk about as 'displacements'. When thinking about gentrification, displacement is writ larger than residential suites. Particularly in the context of Vancouver where homelessness is widespread, and residents frequently gather in *ad hoc* built structures and encampments, I argue that displacement occurs not only through residential tenancy, but also through exclusion and eviction from temporary claims to space, such as parks, sidewalks, doorways, patios, and even restaurants. There are unclear boundaries between such spaces, and life in the street includes all of them, therefore spaces of commercial gentrification have a role in the displacement of low income people in addition to their economic effect of increasing land value.

In North America, settler-colonialism imposes unique characteristics which are distinguished from colonialism generally. Here, there is no separation between the metropole and the colony, because settlers make indigenous land both their home as well as their source of capital (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5). In addition to resources, land is the most crucial feature of this reproduction. Coulthard and Alfred (2012) define settler colonialism as the continued dispossession of land for settlement purposes, capitalist development, and ongoing state formation. Land in this sense is at the forefront in the settler colonial city; through each cycle of urban disinvestment and revitalization its appropriation continues to rupture indigenous relationships to land, as well as displace lower income and racialized groups.

Despite being largely absent in the urban literature, this analysis is taken up by Nicholas Blomley in his now seminal 2004 book "Unsettling the City: Urban land and the politics of property". According to Blomley, following initial acts of dispossession under settler-colonialism, continuing processes of displacement frame the city as though it

were a "necessarily and naturally non-native space" (p. xx). For Blomley, contemporary city living is predicated on the sustaining of private property through the ownership model. Tuck and Yang's discussion of settler-colonialism also echoes this argument: "...land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to this property" (2012, p. 12). It is the "naturalness" or the "common sense" understandings of ownership and property that both discursively and structurally reinforce this regime (Blomley, p. xviii). While this description of property and land, and the severing of human relationships to land is not different from accounts of settlement under capitalism broadly speaking, the context for where these dispossessions occur and continue to is relevant. Not only in the sense of how history haunts place, but in the way that certain logics that facilitate claims to space are specifically colonial, and continue to ideologically inform justifications for displacement.

The ideology that underpins concepts of property and ownership have origins in Euro-American political philosophy. This link is well described by theorists of settler-colonialism, such as James Tully (1996) and Barbara Arneil (1996), who illustrate that the ownership model of property is owed significantly to the liberal political philosophy of John Locke through his theory of property in *Two Treatises on Government*. According to Locke, claims to personal property through the act of enclosing land were only legitimate if one could "improve" upon the land. In the colonists view, since indigenous societies were not agrarian, they could not own or claim their land because they let it 'lay in waste'. Therefore, appropriation (without consent) of a 'wasted' commons was justified if an application of labour upon the land produced more value for humankind. Notwithstanding many other aspects of Lockian political philosophy, this rationalization of appropriation and private property is possibly the most consequential legacy of his writings. Logics that script space as 'laid in waste' or that insist that it may be properly claimed if improved upon persist in our urban social and political discourses, and they are powerful.

In addition to these Lockian justifications are similar agrarian based rationales for propertied enclosure present in other Euro-American imports such as the idea of *'terra nullius'*, defined by The Doctrine of Discovery in 1455. Its definition has changed in important ways over time. First considered to mean in a basic sense 'empty land' or 'land without owners', this definition derived from colonists' first arrivals as a way of justifying

settlement. After discovering that the land was in fact not 'empty', later definitions were altered (so that continued settlement could be justified) to mean more specifically land not 'civilized' by agriculture (Geisler, 2013). Further to this is added the racist notion that indigenous people were considered inferior, and too 'primitive' to possess legal title to any property (Coulthard, 2001; see also, Tully 2001). A number of scholars of political theory have argued that concepts such as *terra nullius* were deployed then to justify colonial expansion, but also to continue today as a mechanism for maintaining a relationship of domination between indigenous people and the Canadian state (Asch, 1999, as cited in Coulthard, 2001). A further echoing of Lockian rationality, *terra nullius* was both a discursive justification but also a practical political technique which guided processes of land theft and state formation the world over. Its own shifts in definition are similarly mirrored in discourses of gentrification: space is empty, there is no one there, there are people there, yet the space and the people are 'uncivilized'. These may be long passed historic credences, yet they continue to persist in ideas of what constitutes 'landed property', who resides there, what their activities are, how they 'care' for space. All of these notions are ever present in how claims to space are justified and determined in a number of contemporary cities, though in particular in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Despite these connections, analyses of North American cities which at least partly use a framework of settler-colonialism seem to be absent in many significant scholarly works in the urban and gentrification genre.² This fact is pointed out early by Blomley in his 2003 book, as he reflects on the lack of scholarship on "the city as an aboriginal space" (p. xx). Accounting for this blind spot is beyond the scope of this thesis, though it is an erasure to at least consider. When colonialism is raised analytically, it is most frequently used as a metaphor, or comparison. Notably, in their introduction to a collection of work in "Gentrification in a Global Context: The New Urban Colonialism", Atkinson and Bridge (2005) argue that gentrification manifests into a "new urban colonialism" because it can now be characterized as 'global' in its movement.

² There have been significant and long overdue interventions in urban theory by scholars such as Ananya Roy and Aiwa Ong (2011) who make the necessary case for a 'post colonial urbanism'. Similarly, Jennifer Robinson (2011) argues for the 'internationalization' of urban theory, as a corrective to 'western' hegemony in urban studies (and simplistic oppositional categories of 'North' and 'South').

They draw useful connections to colonialism by describing how gentrification privileges wealth, whiteness, and results in forms of appropriation that produce elite enclaves supported by a local service class, but theorize them as "reminiscent of earlier waves of colonial and mercantile expansion" rather than recognizing these as part of ongoing dispossessions (p. 2).

Neil Smith (1996) is perhaps best known for examining the relationship between gentrification and colonialism in his work on the gentrification 'frontier'. A concept he developed as a way of describing how both capital and people pursue 'uncharted territory' as a process of conquest through urban revitalization. Smith rightly characterized mid-20th century narratives of the city as a crude "urban wilderness" needing to be tamed, famously illustrating how the language of gentrification - 'urban pioneers' and 'urban homesteaders' - suggested the city was uninhabited. Not only this, but he identified a persistent aesthetics to frontier symbolism, in "Wild West" bars, and exotic themed boutiques. We can see similar examples in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, such as a new high-end restaurant and event space named "Settlement", which opened in the spring of 2014 across the street from low income housing and a women's drop in centre. Or the more modest, though nevertheless exclusive "Far Out Coffee Post" located just beyond east of the Downtown Eastside. Other places are also rife with colonial themes similar to those Smith illustrates, such as maps, antlers, and skulls. Taking stock of the romantic aestheticization of frontier gentrification, we can also consider how colonialism is characterized, as discussed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), as a "discursive field of knowledge" (p. 21) that extends beyond its expressions of economic expansion and subjugation of 'others'. In conjunction with logics that can justify how space is used, it becomes clear that ongoing colonial dispossession in the city is represented by interrelated material and discursive processes.

In Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, where evictions are increasingly common, shelters are frequently full, and displacement is not only about home but also about services, food, safety, and health, debates about displacement are always about ways of life and often about survival. The encroachment of high-end commercial businesses, as well as their arguably 'frontier' themes, along with a dwindling affordable housing stock increasingly under the threat of speculation represent an interrelated material *and* symbolic colonial violence. By incorporating settler-colonialism in our thinking of the

context of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, it is possible to show connections between discourses that initially provided the justifications for dispossession and violence which also inform discourses of present day gentrification. Such 'histories' continue to repeat themselves, and engaging with them can offer an inroad to the 'geography of gentrification' in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Chapter 3. Empirical Context

3.1. Post-Industrial Vancouver and the Downtown Eastside

Beginning with the forced removal of indigenous coastal societies throughout areas of Vancouver, such as the Kitsilano Reserve (Khelsilem, 2012), as well as long time settlements in XwayXway, now known as Stanley Park (Barman, 2005), Vancouver's relatively short history has always been one defined by displacement. Within the Downtown Eastside, the current site of Alexander and Columbia streets, which in today's Gastown is occupied by high-end restaurants and condominiums, is especially significant. Named Luck Luck EE (Grove of Beautiful trees) by the Squamish people, after an ancient grove of maple trees that grew there, a large Squamish encampment existed there until its eventual displacement by encroaching downtown development (Wonders, 2008).

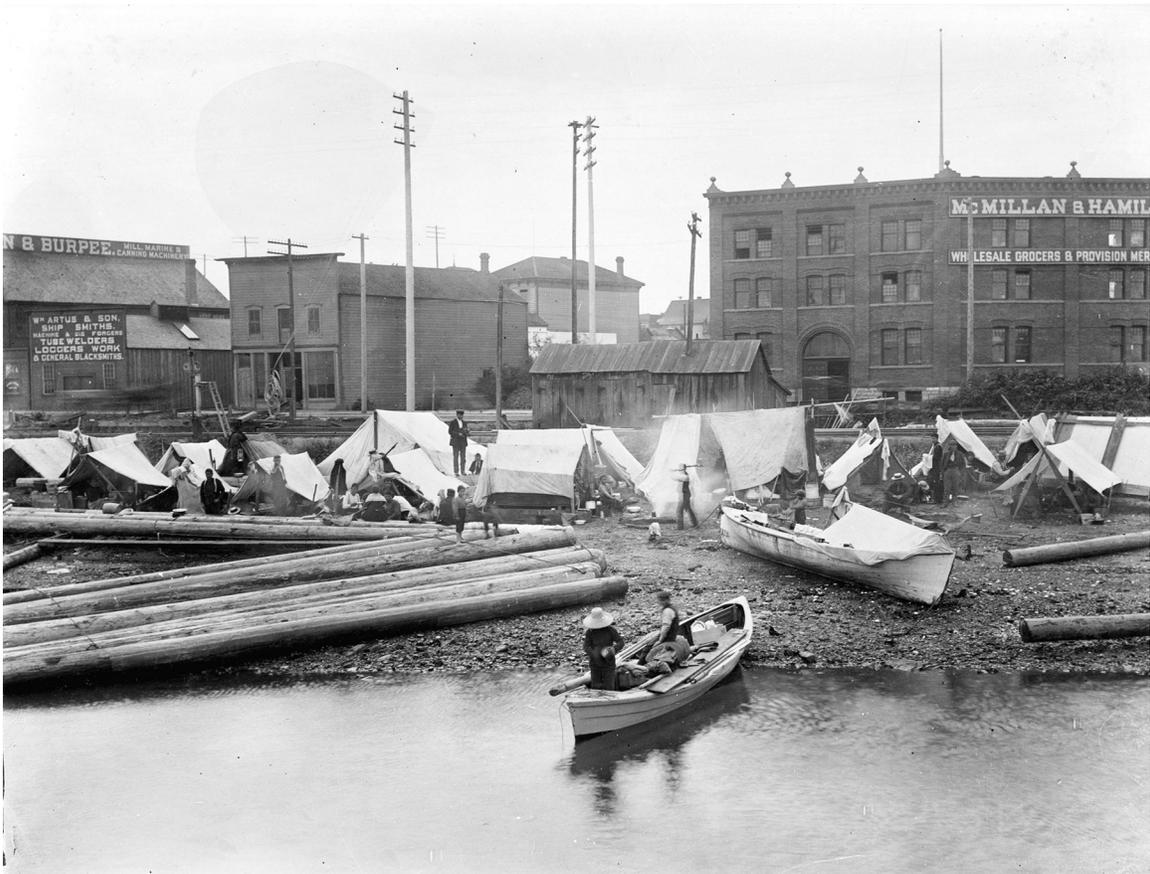


Figure 3.1. “First Nations people camped on Alexander Street beach at foot of Columbia Street”, City of Vancouver Archives, dated 1898.

The Downtown Eastside also bears a difficult history of anti-Asian racism, exemplified by the Chinatown and Japantown Riots in 1907 (Barnholden, 1997), as well as the displacement of Japanese Canadians by internment during the Second World War. The destruction of Hogan's Alley, Vancouver's only black neighbourhood, to make way for the Georgia Viaduct in 1970 is also an important part of this displacement history (Compton, 2005; Anderson, 1991). These displacements were not only a matter of theft and bulldozing, but ensconced in a racist and classist state-led discourse which identified the east-side of downtown Vancouver as an urban blight, needing to be 'rehabilitated' (Scott, 2013). Such characterizations are still very present today, and these examples of displacement represent only a snapshot of relevant context for current day struggles against upscaling and development in this community. They also suggest that current processes of gentrification reproduce this history, rather than occurring in a 30 year vacuum marked only by its entry into our urban lexicon.

Following a period of accelerated capitalism, and major post-industrial shifts since the 1980s, Vancouver has been transformed from a regional city with a resource-based economy to a globally-connected one with most growth in service and quaternary market sectors (Ley, 1996; Hutton, 2008). Especially apparent in property markets and real estate development, these economic shifts have effected significant alterations in the built environment, remaking the downtown core, and now more recently its eastern edges. A perennial example of Harvey's (1989) thesis of urban entrepreneurialism, Vancouver continues to experience a scaling back of state controls in order to create an attractive atmosphere for fixing highly mobile global investment capital. A recent KPMG study reflects this well, reporting that Vancouver has the lowest corporate tax rate in the world of the cities studied (KPMG, 2011). Through an urban reinvestment scheme replicated many times elsewhere via redeveloped waterfronts, multiple stadia, shopping centers, a cruise ship port and convention centre, downtown Vancouver has long exhibited characteristics that are consistent with market-led and state-backed gentrification (Ley, 1996; Hutton, 2008; Mitchell, 2004; Blomley, 2003). Perhaps the biggest indicator apart from its built form is the rate of change in residential real estate. Since 1976 property values in Vancouver have increased just under thirteen times, which, as Siemiatycki (2013) points out, far exceeds rates for other west coast cities, like San Francisco. Not only this, but Vancouver's housing price-to-income ratio has not kept pace compared to other "top-tiered" American cities. Today an unaffordable city for most of its inhabitants, the crisis of housing affordability has fully entered popular discourse across a wide-spectrum of political positions (Antrim, 2013; Robinson, 2014).

In addition to unprecedented growth of property markets, is the aforementioned expansion of service and quaternary sectors, and within those, the Accommodation and Food Services sector in particular (AFS). There is strong evidence that Vancouver in particular is an important area for research in service sectors, broadly speaking. Using total employment data for Canada and Vancouver from 1987 and 2010, a shift-share analysis reveals AFS growth of 85 percent in just those two decades (compared to only

34 percent nationally) (Statistics Canada, 2010).³ This significant proliferation of restaurants and bars have been arguably a major feature of the revitalization schemes for Vancouver's different downtown areas. In particular, and most recently, the Downtown Eastside reflects this growth imperative. Its proximity to the waterfront and attractive lower rents due to disinvestment over time have been key factors in the city's ongoing push to 'revitalize' the area, creating a market for what is now a heavy concentration of new high-end food and beverage establishments concentrated in certain areas. If gentrification is cyclical, as Lees asserts (2000), the growth depicted here is also cyclical, as similar rapid growth of consumer functions was outlined in detail by Ley (1996), citing restaurants and cafes that nearly tripled in number along Fourth Avenue in Kitsilano during the 1980s (p. 302).

3.2. Rapid Upscaling and Contested Field Sites

While the Downtown Eastside has seven sub-districts, the more specific empirical sites of my research are focused on three of them: the more heavily gentrified Gastown, and Chinatown neighbourhoods, as well as the more recently gentrifying Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District (DEOD). To give a broad view of Downtown Eastside demographics, just over 85 percent of its dwellings were renter occupied in 2006 (City of Vancouver, 2012). The Downtown Eastside, for geographically contingent and historical reasons, as well as partly due to municipal policy around zoning, has retained the highest concentration of single resident occupancy (SRO) hotels and other types of social or affordable housing for low income residents in the city (Blomley, 1997). Apart from Victory Square, and Gastown, Chinatown, and the DEOD continue to hold most of the Downtown Eastside's low income community; 49, 58, and 70 percent of those neighbourhoods being low income respectively (City of Vancouver, 2012). In addition to this, the great majority of the land in the Downtown Eastside that is

³ This number calculated by the author using total employment data retrieved from Statistics Canada (2006), *Labour Force Survey*, Monthly and Annual releases, Ottawa: Statistics Canada. While this data encompasses traveler accommodations and recreational vehicle parks, it also includes all full and limited service food and drinking places for Vancouver, illustrating at least a partial picture of industry growth.

designated as commercial and mixed-use residential resides in these three sub-districts (City of Vancouver, 2012).

Ultimately, the broader processes of economic and political change which have manifested in material and cultural neighbourhood change through upscaling, especially through the Accommodation and Food Services (AFS) industry, have resulted in significant displacement pressures for the economically marginalized residents of these areas. Gastown, Chinatown, and the DEOD constitute Vancouver's current gentrification frontiers (Smith, 1996), both exhibiting the clearest juxtapositions between the existing and recently-arrived cultures of the neighbourhood, as well as heightened costs of living, increasing rents, poor access to temporary shelter, overall displacement, in addition to dehumanizing experiences of exclusion, as all-encompassing and related consequences (Pedersen & Swanson, 2009). The following chart (Figure 3.2) depicts the number of food and liquor primary licenses⁴ (granted by the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch of the Province of British Columbia) operating as of July 2014. Each data point represents a currently operating space, and where they fall along the y axis represents the year the spaces associated with these licenses opened⁵. Years prior to 1980 were grouped together in order to fit the most meaningful detail between 1990 and 2014, however since this data was retrieved in July, the bar for 2014 represents only partial data for that year. Indicative of a major proliferation of new spaces, particularly between the years

⁴ Liquor Primary are granted for bars and night clubs which are not required to have full food service in order to serve alcohol, where as Food Primary are granted to restaurants, in which cases alcohol service much occur along with food service. This chart, and the maps following therefore exclude establishments such as cafes and bakeries, etc. which do not apply for liquor service licensing.

⁵ While the data file retrieved from the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch reflected real "issue dates" on file, these did not always correspond with the year those establishments opened. In order to achieve more consistency, and a more accurate picture of neighbourhood change, each of those individual places were researched in order to ascertain their opening dates, and the data file was adjusted accordingly. In some unique cases, while an establishments opening date may have technically been earlier, I adjusted to a more recent date if it had undergone major renovations which altered their aesthetics through built form, and therefore shifted the course of their demographic and consumer base. (For example, *The Blarney Stone* which has been open for many years underwent major renovations in 2010 which arguably upscaled its space, price point, and clientele). Refer to Appendix A for a detailed chart of the data used for Figures 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4.

2010 and 2013, this chart illustrates well both the extent of the neighbourhood change⁶, as well as the growth of services in Vancouver more generally.

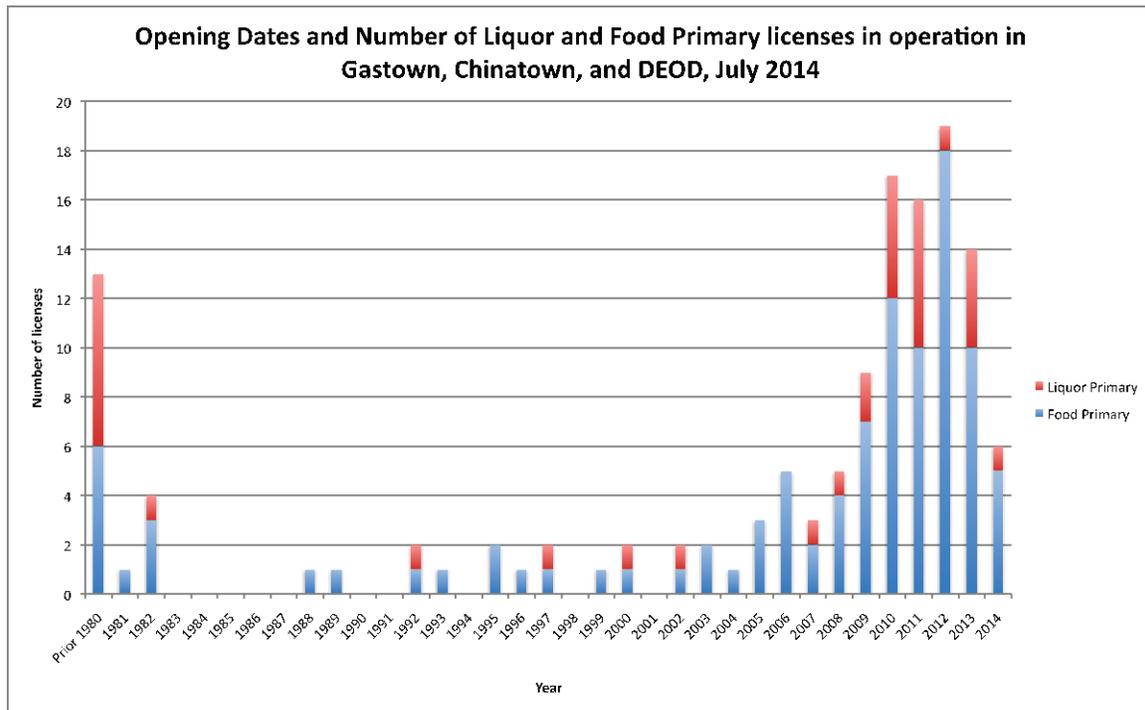


Figure 3.2. Source: Curlix data file, Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, Ministry of Justice, Province of British Columbia.

Historically, both Gastown and Chinatown neighbourhoods have undergone multiple stages of historic-themed revitalization since the 1970s. Both have acquired heritage designation over time, through various initiatives led by community groups, the Province, as well as the City of Vancouver. Throughout the 1970s, Gastown underwent beautification initiatives resulting in its red cobblestone, Victorian-era themed street furniture, and planted trees (Punter, 2003). Similarly, Chinatown's current 'character' is partly the outcome of city-led "orientalized" design regulations for traditional Chinese

⁶ It is important to note that the data points here (detailed in Appendix A) have been selected by me primarily from data available for the neighbourhoods in my field sites, and only represent a partial picture of gentrification for the Downtown Eastside (among other Downtown areas). Here, I show licensed establishments for Victory Square, Gastown, DEOD, and Chinatown, in order to set my focus on the neighbourhoods where I conducted fieldwork.

architectural features such as lantern lighting, bright colors, and a Chinese constructed arch gate entrance on Pender street (Punter, 2003, p. 55); all of which were imposed upon an otherwise reluctant or disinterested mixed Asian-Canadian community (Hasson & Ley, 1994). Continuing to be marked daily by identifiable changes in the character of their built environments, and the 'social mix' on their streets, Gastown and Chinatown in particular have become practically synonymous with foodie culture in Vancouver. Over time, the added informal branding of these neighbourhoods, reproduced through tourist literature, local food and lifestyle bloggers, as well as the more word-of-mouth indie-culture surrounding food has led to a seemingly thriving tourist and locally oriented commercial district, containing restaurants and bars in particular.

The following map (Fig 3.3) depicts the same data points from Fig 3.2, though now geo-coded according to the addresses associated with those Food and Liquor primary licences. Red points correspond to establishments opened prior to 1999, Yellow to 2000-2009, and Blue to the most recent growth since 2010. Gastown, Victory Square, and Chinatown show the most blue points for the Downtown Eastside as a whole, with Chinatown and Oppenheimer still retaining the highest density for spaces prior to 1999.

**Liquor and Food Primary establishments in operation July 2014:
Gastown, Victory Square, Chinatown, and DEOD**

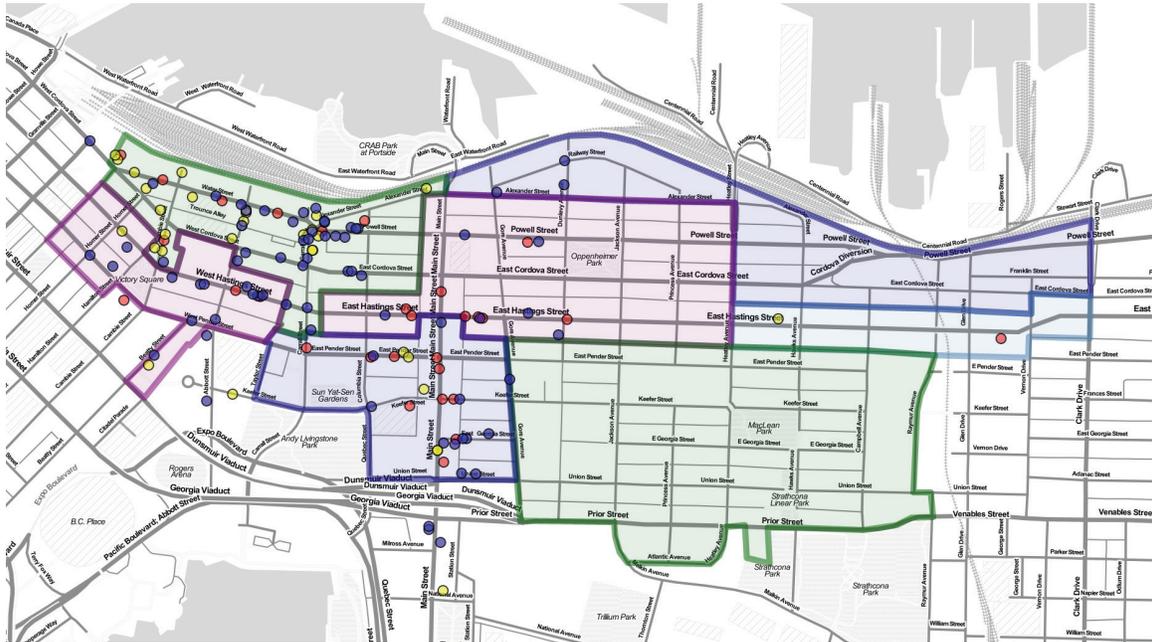


Figure 3.3. Key: Red - Prior to 1999; Yellow 2000-2009; Blue 2010-Present. Source: Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, Ministry of Justice, Province of British Columbia. Map by Alan McConchie.⁷

In terms of a more specific 'foodie gentrification' geography, Gastown has identifiable 'waves' in restaurant development, ending with the most recent major expansion for 2006 and onward. In the years following the 2010 Winter Olympics, 17 new restaurants opened in this district. Gastown also appears to have 'hot spots' along Carrall and Water Streets, popularly understood to represent the unofficial center point of this entertainment district. While it seems to have experienced the fastest proliferation of restaurants out of all the neighbourhoods in the Downtown Eastside, this is at least partly reflective of land use, since commercial zoning is highly concentrated in this area. Nevertheless its revitalization is part and parcel of its objectification as an historic, but also both 'gritty' and aesthetically unique area, along with Victory Square, and Chinatown on either sides. A lit sign in the entrance of a popular cocktail bar extols to

⁷ Colored areas on map distinguish between the different sub-districts of the Downtown Eastside. Beginning clockwise from the left side, they are designated by the City of Vancouver as follows: Victory Square, Gastown, DEOD, Industrial, Hastings East, Strathcona, Chinatown.

patrons the secret virtues of place: "I live in Gastown. By Choice. Those unfamiliar with its particular allures are entitled to wonder why" (Fieldnotes, April 2012).

Chinatown on the other hand has experienced relatively recent changes in its high-end food space, with 11 new higher-end establishments since 2010, showing a now similar pace to that of Gastown between 2005 and 2010. This dramatic upswing in three years follows a major up-zoning by the city in 2011, which allowed heights to be increased to fifteen stories along Main Street, and parts of Chinatown South (Walia, 2011). A 2009 Community Mapping exercise conducted by the Carnegie Community Action Project reported a list of nearly 60 "neighbourhood serving" stores, cafes, bars, and restaurants that low income participants identified through asset mapping (Pederson & Swanson, 2009, p. 19). The map below (Fig 3.4) depicts the establishments from that list which had either Liquor or Food Primary licenses. The green points indicate spaces which were still open as of this writing, whereas the red points show spaces which have closed since the 2009 asset mapping was conducted. That the majority of these are situated in Chinatown and the DEOD hints at the important role these sub-districts play in housing amenity space that their majority low income residents would find accessible. Indeed, of my three field sites, the DEOD is made up on the most low income residents (70%), the lowest land values, and the least number of the new high-end food and beverage establishments.

'Neighbourhood Serving' Liquor and Food Primary establishments closed or remaining open since 2009.



Figure 3.4. Key: [Red - Closed; Green - Open]. Source: "Our Place & Our Words: Mapping Downtown Eastside Community Assets and Challenges", Carnegie Community Action Project (Swanson & Pederson, 2009). Map by Alan McConchie.

While it has not progressed at the same rate as the other areas, the DEOD can be considered a true frontier (Smith, 1996) in the gentrifier mentality. This is not only a part of the discourse among entrepreneurial restaurateurs, but also exists in different discourses, for example, characterizations of the area by the city's development industry more broadly. According to Fig 3.4, it had 7 new drinking and dining establishments open since 2010, compared to only 1 prior to 2009, and this more recent growth appears to be a sign of growth to come. The approval of a development application for condo market housing on the 100 block of Hastings Street in April 2012 was a significant turn of events for this community. It was the first major permit approved for Oppenheimer in thirty years; up until then the speculative reach of development was suppressed by a 30 percent social housing requirement for the area (Markle, 2012). Followed by another major rezoning of a large site at 955 East Hastings ("Strathcona Village") in October 2012, residential upscalings such as these will be having considerable ripple effects throughout the DEOD in the years to come, as smaller businesses and eateries will undoubtedly continue to appear in order to cater to new higher income residents. Perhaps most damningly, the April 2014 conclusion of the city's local area planning

process for the whole of the Downtown Eastside has all indications that the DEOD is slated for a slightly slowed, though guaranteed 'revitalization'. While the city did decide to rezone it as a rental only district, only 20 percent of new rental units will be required to rent at the social assistance and basic pension rates of \$375 per month (Wallstam & Crompton, 2014). With the remainder to be dictated by what the market will allow, anti-poverty activists argue it is only a matter of time before low income amenities and truly affordable rentals are majorly displaced (Carnegie Community Action Project, 2014).

While discourses of social mix and frontier exist across the space of the Downtown Eastside, they are especially present in conversations around the DEOD. The York Rooms Hotel, a Powell Street SRO which came under new management in 2013 and seemingly undergoing a web-based rebranding currently advertises, "Affordable housing for low income individuals, students, and those in the early stages of their careers wanting to live DOWNTOWN [sic]" (NewYorkRooms, 2013). According to local housing activists, the new management has begun a process of evicting low income residents to make way for new tenants to occupy its "micro-lofts" (Ellan, 2013). Though upscale restaurant development has been much slower than other areas, partly due to its zoning geography (which has dictated for almost 30 years that any new developments in the DEOD were required to include 20 percent social housing), a few closer to Main Street have managed to attract middle class consumers to this otherwise 70% low income community. The ground floor of the aforementioned York Rooms made way for a new high-end Mexican taqueria named "Cuchillo", presumably owned by the same building owner, suggests a compelling connection between retail and residential gentrification. The various successes of establishments in this area however, have been described as fleeting. Last year, local food and style blog Scout Magazine editor Andrew Morrison lamented the closing of Fat Dragon, a high-end restaurant serving Asian fusion which lasted not nine months one block from Oppenheimer Park in the DEOD: "...I understand that nothing stifles an appetite quite like anxiety, however baseless and prejudicial the anxiety might be... [Fat Dragon] took a big chance by opening in the heart of the DTES, which proved - rather quickly - a bridge too far" (Morrison, 2012, para. 3). The suggestion that a bridge might be required in order to make the trek to this symbolic outpost of foodie gentrification is only a hint at the broader aesthetic and symbolic economy of restaurant culture in this, and other areas.

Anishinabe scholar John Borrows illustrates how Euro American portrayals of colonialism fail to capture the transformative role of indigenous people in reacting to settler institutions. He reminds us that: "[indigenous people] are not passive objects of colonial policy, but...active agents and creators of our own history" (1992, p. 297-298). So too, the advance of the development and 'revitalization' industry in the Downtown Eastside have not proceeded without resistance; gentrification has been stridently and consistently contested (Hasson & Ley, 1994; Blomley, 2003; Walia & Diewert, 2012). Across three decades, organizations such as the Carnegie Community Action Program (CCAP), the Downtown Eastside Residents Association (DERA), the original Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Council (DNC), the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), and the Portland Hotel Society (PHS) have been, to varying degrees, at the forefront of anti-poverty resistance. Whether providing supports for low income residents who struggle to meet their subsistence needs in an increasingly unliveable area, working to gather data about these socio-economic transformations, or showing their opposition to rezoning and development applications at city hall, resistance has been multi-pronged and has won a number of battles.

Drawing attention not only to issues such as persistent rent increases, but also to food insecurity due to 'zones of exclusion' (Marquez et al., 2011) in the neighbourhood, and the combined effect these factors have had on access to affordable food for low income residents, activists have been strident and firm in their position that restaurant or 'foodie gentrification' is to be resisted. Zones of exclusion, from their perspective are not only producing of dehumanizing experiences, but have a greater significance in a community with quickly disappearing neighbourhood serving spaces given how increasingly policed and quasi-private public spaces to gather have become. The street, and the parks are, in effect, low income people's living and gathering spaces, where they see their friends, socialize, and maintain important networks to their survival (Miewald & McCann, 2014). Given the extent to which foodie culture is implicated in the gentrification of these areas, resistance has more recently meant resisting restaurants and bars themselves. Rather pragmatically, anti-gentrification resistance has actively called out high-end restaurants and businesses, clearly locating commercial upscaling as a key site for fighting the detrimental effects of gentrification. The poster in Fig 3.5, which was published as a full size poster in Downtown East (a low income news source),

went so far as to include photographs of restaurant and other business facades with addresses, and even included the Vancouver municipal city services hotline, by which one could report a gentrifier.



Patronizing these places condones the loss of affordable housing, gentrification, displacement and the destruction of the vibrant low-income community that already exists here.

Figure 3.5. "Gentrifuckation Stoppers" poster printed in Downtown East newspaper, December 2012, Vol. 1, No. 8., With permission.

The early 2011 reopening of *Save on Meats*, an iconic butcher and diner redeveloped by local restaurateur Mark Brand, has been a particular flash point in the community. Operating with the social goal as a 'low barrier' space that seeks to be both accessible to and employ low income members of the community, it has even been the subject of a new reality documentary on the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN). The show is framed around the difficulties of the 'rough-and-tumble' Downtown Eastside neighbourhoods, and the respective viability of a rebranded *Save on Meats* in that context. Yet, Brand's social enterprise approach has not been welcomed by many social justice activists. The *Save on Meats* sandwich token program in particular has received criticism. It offers an alternative for middle class consumers who do not want to give change to panhandlers, to give tokens for food instead, echoing a similarly paternalistic theme as the tourist in 'tourist as chaperone' vignette in Chapter 1 (p. 1). On the heels of

this were the spontaneously organized activist pickets outside of *PiDGiN* and *Cuchillo* restaurants in February and July of 2013 which brought the social dynamics and politics of gentrification to the forefront of discussions in the neighbourhood, and the discourse of gentrification in the city more broadly.



Figure 3.6. Two window posters in a retail shop beside *PiDGiN* Restaurant, facing Pidgeon Park at Carrall and Hastings Streets. Poster reads "Pick-It Line Starts Here", Photo by author (2012).

All together, these developments have manifested in increasingly antagonistic politics between activists on one hand, and producers of foodie culture on the other. While many actors in the restaurant industry either ignored or kept a distance from these politics, others reacted to the criticism with their own positions. The above image (Fig. 3.6) was taken a number of months after the pickets began, and were even starting to dissipate. This poster, apparently installed in the new retail space beside *PiDGiN* restaurant (and not, as many thought by the owners of *PiDGiN*) was a direct, if cheeky reference to the antagonistic politics that played out with respect to foodie gentrification. In a more critical vein, Figure 3.7 below shows an illustration by a local artist and worker in the restaurant neighbourhood of Gastown. Depicting the inherent paternalism in charity, it makes a direct reference to the *Save on Meats* sandwich tokens, unpacking their hypocritical aspects, given their classed assumptions about who can safely or acceptably consume illicit substances.



Figure 3.7. Illustration by local artist, with permission (2012).

The more complex nuances of these politics will be explored in subsequent empirical chapters, but for the purpose of context, it is important to bear in mind how these struggles have brought discourses of development and gentrification very much to the forefront of the local neighbourhood culture, and the city-wide imaginary. As sites of study, Gastown, Chinatown, and the DEOD all offer varied and distinct geographies of history, race, ethnicity, and class. The majority of low income residents of these neighbourhoods in turn traverse them all, and in different ways. Given both the centrality of food to urban survival, and the quickly unfolding pace of upscale foodie culture in Vancouver, these field sites they provide a strong indication of how micro-level practices surrounding restaurant culture work to constitute neighbourhood change.

Chapter 4. Methodology

This research examines processes of neighbourhood change from the perspective of those owning and operating spaces for higher end food consumption in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. I focus on three neighbourhoods in this area: Gastown, Chinatown, and Oppenheimer. As discussed in Chapter 3, each are undergoing varying degrees of gentrification, and are demarcated by increasing trends in commercial gentrification, restaurants and bars in particular. The rationale for focusing on the activities, intentions, and perspectives of producers is threefold: 1) The role of producers (rather than consumers) in gentrification has received little attention in the gentrification literature. Moreover, these participants represent a group of producers who act as producers of neighbourhood change *on the ground*. 2) A core goal of this research is to contribute to an empirical reconciliation of the theoretical differences between production-side and consumption-side explanations of gentrification. Focusing on the role of producers in so-called 'consumption-side' processes helps to reconcile this dichotomy, by accomplishing a better understanding of the relationship between the cultural production of food through commercial development and urban restructuring more broadly. 3) Lastly, I chose to study producers of restaurant gentrification because this is a group I have considerable access to as a researcher.

I have six years' working experience in Vancouver's restaurant industry, including three different Gastown restaurants off and on over that period, from 2007-2009, and during the summers of 2011, and 2012. This experience equips me with specialized knowledge of production, operations, and consumption practices in this industry. Notwithstanding my role as a researcher, I have known many of my participants - and key figures who did not formally participate - in both a professional and social capacity since arriving to Vancouver in 2006. I have a strong understanding of the culture, values and beliefs of this study group, enhancing my ability to gain access, generate qualitative research data, as well as better understand the discourse, activities, and different approaches to commercial food service development within their social and cultural

contexts. My embeddedness not only fostered access to research participants who might otherwise be guarded or uninterested in participation, but also allowed me to draw on extensive lived experiences in the subject position as a worker within my research group. This subject position has led me to consider a more ethnographic approach in my fieldwork. As a part of this ethnographic approach I employed a mixed methods methodology involving: (1) archival research, (2) semi-structured interviews and (3) participant observation. I will begin this chapter with a section on each of these methodologies, followed by a longer discussion about their use, my experiences, including current contributions in their respective literatures.

4.1. Archival Research

The archival component of this research has three purposes: (1) To chart identifiable changes in the character of the neighbourhood and changing food scene in the Downtown Eastside over the last five years and (2) to help define more clearly the nature of the liberal, inclusive narrative that defines local foodie culture as well as (3) explore the tensions and increasingly antagonistic politics between this foodie culture and anti-poverty resistance in the community. I use resources such as the *City of Vancouver Archives*, *City of Vancouver* website, local daily newspapers such as *The Vancouver Courier*, and *The Vancouver Sun*, including alternative online news sources such as *The Mainlander*, *The Carnegie Community Action Project's* online blog, and *The Vancouver Media Co-op* to gather secondary data across a broad set of topics such as restaurant openings, interviews with restaurateurs, editorial pieces about local gentrification politics, as well as past and current commercial permit applications, such as liquor licensing, for my field sites. These data were supplemented with food and culture blogs such as *Scout Magazine*, *Vancouver Is Awesome*, and the *Vancouver Observer* food blog, industry magazines such as *Edible Vancouver*, as well as the tourism literature and travel guides for my empirical sites. The editorial and comments sections of all these sources are a wealth of information about foodie culture in the Downtown Eastside. As well, due to more recent antagonistic regarding gentrification in the community, these sources also contain narratives and discussions which deal with gentrification rather explicitly, and have been useful to answer research questions pertaining to how gentrifiers who produce food space see themselves in relation to the

neighbourhood they actively change. Online comments sections, especially when anonymous, raise questions about how they are to be attributed, and whether these are effective means to gather meaningful data (Proudfoot, 2011). In the case of this research, however, they provide important social meaning for discourse analysis, particularly for politically sensitive topics. Though I don't rely strongly on them, for this reason, I include them as one part of archival data, in relationship to the broader discourse.

Social media in particular has played an important role in archival research. Across Tumblr, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, restaurateurs and other participants in foodie culture utilize these media as pivotal components of their public relations strategy. They are tools to disseminate information about new restaurant openings, DJ events, programming, menu specials, as well as opinion. Twitter and Instagram accounts representing food blogs, restaurants, or key individuals, such as *Scout Magazine*, *Save on Meats*, *PiDGiN* restaurant, and even the public (personal) accounts of owners, have provided significant insight into my understanding of restaurant culture, and the politics of gentrification as it unfolds. These sources also allowed me to learn about events to attend, relevant programs, and social dynamics between key individuals.

The online spaces of social media are also where individuals who may otherwise be inaccessible can be engaged, as is often observed in the tense exchanges between anti-poverty activists and the gentrifiers they have been known to engage or 'call out' via social media. Given the dynamics, and the 'publicness' of such forums, social media data collection often takes the form of participant observation, much more than simple 'archival analysis'. This is particularly true when researchers have the opportunity to observe both the online and offline behaviour of research subjects, as I did. Moreover, the content produced through social media is rarely static or discreet, but participatory and relational (Boyd, 2013). Scanning through Twitter, and Instagram feeds does not entail analyzing images and commentary by individuals in the traditional 'media' sense, because the content is both shared, 'liked', and responded to and mixed by others. (Boyd, 2013). Though I was gathering archival images in the form of screen captures, those frequently led to follow-up searches, following hash tags, shares, 'retweets', leading to streams of other people, and connecting discussions happening across platforms, thereby learning about how they relate. For example, I was able to ask one of

my participants about their thoughts on a discussion pertaining to the restaurant pickets which had played out on Twitter between activists and another restaurant owner. They discussed this with me, as well as their own conversations with others about this same online exchange which was apparently witnessed by many. In this sense, the traditional distinctions between archival research, and interviews were blurred.

The archival research also includes some analysis of *Gastown Gamble*, a documentary television show on the *Oprah Winfrey Network* (OWN), which aired during 2012, and closely followed the experiences of local restaurateur Mark Brand and staff as they reopened the historic diner, *Save on Meats*. The show's narrative is centered around the aims of Mark Brand, and his partner Nico's aims to give back to the community, partner with non-profits through food programs, and be accessible and welcoming to low income patrons. Hence its analysis provides some important insight into the intents and the perspectives of one high profile business owner in the area. I took the time to watch both Seasons 1 and 2, making notes, and included a number of insights from this in my empirical sections.

Photography has also been an important component, particularly for documenting aspects of the built environment in order to understand ways it may contribute to experiences of social exclusion in the neighbourhood. Online retrieval of secondary photography has also provided documentation of interactions between low income residents, anti-poverty activists, business owners, supporters on both sides, as well as police. In some cases I have also relied on photographic sources from activists and fellow peers who were often closer to events than I. In the summer of 2012, I went to my field sites on three occasions with the explicit goal of photographing business fronts of many different kinds of restaurants, ranging from both newer high-end spaces to older spaces with more affordable price points. However most of the photographs that have been instructive for this research were taken intermittently over the course of three years of research, often when I was in the field sites by chance without the intent of documenting in mind. This is especially true of the use of my phone camera to snap photographs of menu items, prices, or posted signage in restaurants.

Douglas Harper (2005) describes photography in qualitative research as both "empirical and constructed" (p. 748). In this sense, photographs themselves are part of a

process, where a photographer constructs, and shapes what image they want to show. Harper maintains, however, that they never the less are evidence of "something seen" and contain meaningful information. Given how visually oriented social media is, and the many screen captures I took during my online fieldwork, the same could be said to be true for those data. All together, these media-based qualitative data about new restaurant openings, food price points, restaurant design, editorial pieces, Twitter and Instagram screen captures, as well as comments sections of relevant articles have provided a thorough picture about the nature of food spaces and food culture in the DTES, the tense politics of protest and resistance of gentrification, and overall helped to indicate how practices of inclusion and exclusion are enacted by gentrifiers in these contexts.

4.2. Semi-structured Interviews

Data gathered through semi-structured interviews is another central component to this research. I focused on two key groups - proprietors and workers - with the aim of gaining further insight into how they understand their roles in the community as agents of neighbourhood change specific to my chosen field sites. I interviewed 8 owners, 2 managers, and 2 servers from 7 different restaurants, and in one case, I interviewed one person from each position in the same restaurant. The main goals were to ask participants to discuss their understandings of gentrification, how they see their role in producing and consuming low income and gentrified spaces, their motivations and experiences of interacting with different groups both within and outside their establishments, as well as the nature of their relationships with a broad spectrum of economically marginalized neighbourhood residents. Often I would broach these subjects by sharing some of my own work experiences as a starting off point. In general, I found that sharing the same background as my research participants was really useful in getting conversations going, and given that most of these interviews were held in restaurant and bar settings, their casual nature led to more relaxed and authentic exchanges, which Kobayashi (2001) describes as "relational moments". I also intended to ask participants to reflect upon and share how they simultaneously produce and consume neighbourhood change both inside and outside their places of work. The more structural aspects of production, such as real estate, city permits and licensing, were

also discussed to gain insight into procedural aspects that enable or hinder the production of food-space in different ways. This type of discussion in particular was sought in order to inform a better understanding of economic and cultural explanations of agents who produce 'on the ground'.

Most participants in the study were recruited through already existing friendly or work relationships. Other participants were sourced through contacts established via informal networking, in some cases by approaching individuals spontaneously, or intentionally, but with no prior contact or relationship established. In choosing participants I aimed to find those with restaurant affiliations that varied across different characteristics, such as geographical location, proximity to lesser gentrified areas, or even proximity to 'hot spots' such as a particular street that is very popular, or if street protests of other restaurants was occurring nearby. I was intentional in my choices by recruiting individuals associated with high-end places, as well as those perceived to be more casual; choosing participants with many years of industry experience and history in my field sites, and those that were 'new to the scene'; approaching proprietors that were under significant attention from media and anti-poverty activists as well as those that managed to steer clear of the limelight despite their proximity. This approach to selection served well, as the range of total participants is fairly well distributed across age, occupational position, community familiarity, their associated establishments tenure in the neighbourhood, as well as the degree of attention they were indirectly or directly receiving. Gender parity, however, has been a challenge, due mainly to the fact that higher-level management and ownership in particular in the industry tend to be dominated by men, and the women included as either interviewees or through participant observation in my research have only been workers and almost exclusively Front of House staff.

4.3. Participant Observation

While I glean most of my qualitative data from years of experiences and embeddedness in these neighbourhoods, being employed in a Gastown restaurant during my fieldwork phase allowed me to take on a more formal practice of participant observation while working there one night a week during July and August 2012. This

restaurant opened in Gastown as *Amici*⁸ 15 years ago, at a time when gentrification was beginning, but nevertheless much more nascent. Unlike many of its newer high-end 'foodie' counterparts, *Amici* is more mid-range in its price points, with a slightly less opulent feel than many other food spaces. Frequented by a wide-ranging mix of tourists, local business owners, lawyers, non-profit service workers, off-duty police officers, and the occasional longshoremen, the mix of loyal and regular clientele is much more eclectic than higher-end spaces down the street.

While there, I observed the activities and relationships between my key groups, as well as the wider population of the neighbourhood. I focused on observing interactions among workers and low income individuals, listening to how workers negotiated the choices and tensions involved in enacting exclusion or inclusions at different times and for varying reasons. Being in the dynamic spaces of a functioning restaurant also allowed me to observe clientele in these social interactions, and even speak with them on occasion about the goings-on in the neighbourhood. On Sunday nights when I finished my shifts, I would frequent nearby bars and restaurants in the neighbourhood, reconnecting with old friends and even old regular customers from my previous years. This practice, along with attendance at industry-related events (i.e., beer festivals, restaurant openings), also allowed me to make new contacts. Although it was the time spent consuming and socializing in various establishments in my research sites that provided me with some of the most fruitful discussions, observations, and interview opportunities, the more formal method of participant observation while working at *Amici* served the purpose of situating me in the neighbourhood more, bringing many new experiences to bear on the old ones, that provided me with some of my most valuable insights.

⁸ Name changed.

4.4. Critical Ethnography and 'Situated Knowledges' in Field Work

In developing my qualitative research design, I draw primarily from critical approaches to urban ethnography. By paying close attention to micro-level practices and experiences of urban life, we can better elucidate much broader macro contexts of political-economic changes that effect our lives. Robert Fairbanks (2012) terms these "experience-near accounts", and argues that these are necessary to help address and understand the major crisis-driven shifts we have seen in cities in recent decades which have, "induced a burgeoning of urban-poverty survival, management, and governance strategies that are new and in urgent need of study (p. 546). The street, Fairbanks insists, is an important site for understanding the substance and impact of these changes in urban restructuring. Urban informality, is one example he points to, of an experience that is increasingly common among marginalized groups in city neighbourhoods. I draw closely from Fairbanks in my own field work, not only by aiming to provide 'experience-near accounts' but to also examine them critically. According to Foley & Valenzuela (2005) critical ethnographers have developed a tradition which both rejects overly positivistic approaches to ethnography, but also are deeply committed to research which examines divides between the powerful and powerless, are oriented toward social justice aims in their work, and also work, "to produce both universalistic theoretical knowledge and local practical knowledge" (p. 214). It is my hope to be able to provide both with this research.

Many of the practical and theoretical issues inherent in a mixed methods approach involving interviews, participant observation, and ethnography contain even more tension when a researcher's subject position is like mine. Going beyond a "folk ethnography" (Anderson, 2003) which records observations and instances from public life, my position has been much more embedded, allowing for a more rich and longer term approach to recording and understanding culture. While restaurant and foodie culture has been the object of my research, it has also been a fact of my everyday life when I am in my role as a worker in the industry. Pin pointing where my research begins, and where it ends, or when exactly I am 'doing research', and if there are times when I am not, is not straightforward in light of my subject position, and the methods I chose have been influenced by, and are in unique tension with this. I have had to take great

care to be aware of when I am relying on experiences gathered during my formal post as a participant observer, and when I draw from experiences of many years previous. I am also aware of the extent to which my interpretations of events are greatly nuanced by the opinions and assumptions which I have developed over time, and have to be careful to not accept them without question.

Given that my data is a result of this mix, or observations I gleaned during times when I was not explicitly 'doing research' from years of previous experiences that I culled from memory, as well as from more formal attempts at fieldwork and recording, the boundaries of where my 'sample' lies are not always clear. To be sure, all qualitative researchers must address the question of the relationship between their 'samples' and the larger whole of the topics they study. This question is particularly poignant for me given my history of experience, and my methods. In some ways, it troubles the question of "participants", since there are many individuals who I have interacted with over many years, prior to interviews, who have influenced this research. Nevertheless, I have taken great care in my writing to try to make clear when I am sharing an idea, an observation from memory, from my field notes, or from recorded interviews. Some events and quotes I wrote down either during or shortly after, those are often represented by 'single quotes' since they are not recorded nor verbatim.

Years' experience as a worker in the industry not only gave me considerable access to my research participants, it also meant that many of my participants were acquaintances and friends. By and large, this project sprang out of life experiences and personal reflections on my role and participation in gentrification. I arrived at the research with years of 'participant observations' gathered prior to assuming any researcher role. Ultimately, the participant observation I engaged in was the formalization of a process that commenced many years before. It is one in which I have had the opportunity to think about in newer, perhaps deeper ways, informed by new knowledge of urban social and economic process, as well as shifts in my own political consciousness. During this time, I became increasingly involved in different types of community-based organizing, such as volunteering for a research project with the

Carnegie Community Center⁹ which employed field work and surveys to diagram the rent increases and evictions which were displacing low income residents from the very same neighbourhood I worked in. Navigating this position, while continuing to be a service labourer, *and* maintain the ties required to conduct my ethnography has been a great source of insight, stress and contention.

It is also important to discuss how the nature and environment of the research changed significantly during its course. When low income residents and their allies took to the streets in February and June of 2013 to picket two new high-end restaurants (*PiDGiN* restaurant, and *Cuchillo*) which threatened the affordable housing and amenities in their community, the issue of restaurant-led gentrification was catapulted into the national and local news, community forums, the local area planning process, the online spaces of comments sections, and personal spaces too. While I began interviews in November of 2012, most were conducted between February and August of 2013, at the same time as these protests began, making the timing of my interviews both fortuitous and difficult. As Fontana and Frey put it, "interviewing is...inextricably and unavoidably historically, politically, and contextually bound" (p. 695).

Certainly, the activist and media attention received by Brandon Grosutti's *PiDGiN* Restaurant made for a very relevant and worthwhile focus. Frequently during this time acquaintances and peers remarked to me how these recent developments were "perfect" for my research. On one hand, it brought the issue of restaurant gentrification to the fore, both in the media and in everyday conversations between producers and consumers of gentrification, low income residents, anti-poverty activists, and others. At the same time, the picketing and media attention that followed contributed to a far more politically tense environment than existed before, which quickly made access with many potential research participants more difficult. Interestingly, those participants closer to the spectacle were more inclined to participate, whereas people who were otherwise in the background were often keen to stay that way, resistant to taking part. There were potential participants I approached early on who subsequently changed their minds

⁹ A City of Vancouver community center located in the DEOD which primarily serves low income residents with a wide range of programming. They are also home to the Carnegie Community Action Project (CCAP), a research initiative which works on housing, land use and income issues in the Downtown Eastside.

about engaging with me, even for informal unrecorded conversations. On two occasions, when I approached restaurateurs at this time, I was asked specifically if my research was grounded in an "anti-gentrification perspective", the reason being that they were reluctant to be involved with someone whom they perceived to be a 'biased' researcher.

In cases with willing participants, despite the risks they saw for themselves, the drama of the *PiDGiN* picket tended to dominate the direction of our interview. Because interviews were semi-structured, I would often bend in the direction interviewees took our conversations. During this time period, however, they would often veer toward gossip about the pickets, anecdotes, or more straightforward questions about whether targeting individual business owners was 'right' or 'wrong'. Overall, the advent of the restaurant picket seemed to distill questions of gentrification into value judgments of 'for' or 'against', locating everyone on one side or the other. I wondered often what my data (interviews especially) would look like if the protests never transpired. While I wished for conversations less dominated by the more spectacular current event of the *PiDGiN* picket, the effect the pickets had on my access and the tenor of my conversations with participants is not necessarily a hindrance to my research, but valuable data in and of itself. These experiences illuminate the significance of political context and even timing of research, and in what ways researchers are required to adapt to shifts in the climate of their field sites.

Other features of restaurant culture made gathering interested participants tricky. Unlike other business field sites, e-mailing proved to be an ineffective tool for connecting to participants, and I instead recruited through my immediate or extended networks, or by making spontaneous "cold call" visits. I knew if I wanted to manage face time with higher-level workers or owners that I had small windows between 1:00 and 4:00 pm on weekdays to make my visits; arriving during busy times and expecting access is as much a faux pas for resume hopefuls as it is for researchers seeking voluntary time and participation. Moreover, the managers and owners I sought would frequently be absent or running errands during these times, making spontaneous face time more difficult. If an establishment was only open during evening hours, the time window I had narrowed to the one hour before dinner service begins, between 4 and 5pm normally. Since it is industry standard to not provide interested people with personal contact information, and because work schedules for managers and owners are not necessarily fixed, the vast

majority of my visits were conducted on the basis of chance. In one case, I returned to the same restaurant three times in one week, still unable to find one potential participant. Ultimately, these constraints made for drawn-out field work, as the amount of places I could visit on my given weekdays were not many.

While the logistical features of restaurants, and the political tension of resistance to ongoing gentrification provided challenges, the rapport I was able to build as a result of my insider status provided for effective research. My style of approaching research participants, and informing them about my project was significantly aided by my ability to make relevant small talk, discuss past work experiences and co-workers in common, or even specifically relate shared perspectives about working in a gentrifying neighbourhood like Gastown. When restaurateurs question my possible 'anti-gentrification' approach, they are right to bring up the issue of my bias. Conducting ethnographic work demands plenty of open-minded observation and self-reflexivity from the researcher, but it is not possible to go about this work and claim objectivity. This is reflected in the practice of Foley and Valenzuela's (2005) "critical ethnography", which draws from previous critical practices of qualitative researchers who reject strictly positivist approaches at objective or value-free research, critical ethnographers practice reflexivity, and embrace subjective ways of knowing. Similar to this is Donna Haraway's (1988) notion of "situated knowledges", which "encourages researchers to embrace context and dialogue with limited points of view, taking the position that such contexts ultimately produce richer, even more complete perspectives" (Foley & Valenzuela, 2005, p. 251). Considering Haraway's contribution, it becomes more clear that not even the choices and tactics we enact as researchers can be objective - something as simple as choosing who to approach for an interview is a theoretically motivated and biased decision. For example, I opted always to try and conduct interviews in places familiar to my participants, often the bars and restaurants they own or work in, or at least a place they frequent in the area. Furthermore, interview locations were always in my field sites, where vignettes of urban inequality were easily accessible, and could provide opportunities to consider many of the questions I was interested in.

Reflection on the motivations behind such choices and decisions, and the different positionalities of a research and research subjects inevitable brings up the issue of power relationships in research. This was a concern I had early on when this project

began, particularly in terms of the power or leverage I was deploying by asking friends and acquaintances to take part in my research, where pre-established trust works in my favor. It is quite possible that these same people would not be amenable to discussing the tensions that interested me in their practice as gentrifiers, were they not either trusting friends, or at least strangers that become unguarded when engaging with an 'industry person'. Michael Angrosino (2005) argues that more recent postmodernist turns in approaches to observation and ethnography have encouraged researchers to move away from strict standards which hold them to objectivity, and instead embrace "membership" identity in the communities they study, while developing "a strong consciousness of their situational identities and to the perceptions of relative power" (p. 734). This is an approach that quite accurately describes my research. At the end of each interview I took the occasion to ask my participants if they had any questions they wanted to ask me in turn, and it was very common to be asked what it was that I hoped to get out of my study - what *exactly* was I "looking to find". This was a difficult question to answer. While I had a sense of my own experiences working in a gentrifying neighbourhood, I could not be sure that those understandings would be common among my participants. The best I could answer was the truth - that I was a junior researcher interested in culture, community, restaurants, poverty, social justice, and cities. Though as a participating gentrifier who came to be inspired to undertake this research due to the contradictions and personal anxieties I experienced in that role, I could not deny that my own opinions about political consciousness, class, and social exclusion did not come into play in my inquiry.

I was also aware that participants were more likely to be unguarded with me because I too was in their position. To the extent that my own understandings and perspectives on gentrification had shifted a great deal prior to my 'return' to now study the practices of gentrifiers, there is power inherent in that too. I had grown and learned very much in the years since I left my last full time job in Gastown (2008). I read urban geography texts in school, I began involvement in community organizing around youth, housing, and anti-poverty. Commencing with this research project felt very much like a 'return', but to a community and culture of which I had grown increasingly critical. Though I learned that many others I knew in the industry were also struggling with these questions. On one occasion, during an interview with a participant who was also a friend,

I was asked in earnest if my opinion was that their affiliated restaurant space could be considered an exclusionary one, and if I thought that *they* were contributing to the gentrification of the area. I tried to answer them honestly, but was suddenly very aware of the position of power I occupied in that moment: They saw me as an engaged person with answers about urban issues, but also as someone with shared history, and even shared vulnerabilities. Here we were, friends, and yet they were the object of my research, which we both understood (El-Or, 1992). I felt in a position of power in this instance, partly because he looked to me for truths that I felt ill-equipped to provide, but also because of the new and unclear boundaries the 'researcher' and 'subject' overlaid a top our previously existing relationship. Fontana & Frey (2005) remind us that neutrality is not achievable nor necessarily desirable in research, and that increasingly qualitative ethnographers should interact "as persons with the interviewees" and be aware, while acknowledging that they are doing so (p. 696). The extent to which I shared openly with my participants my own stance and position was great, and an interaction 'as persons' is ultimately most reflective of the dynamics that took place.

Moving between spaces of research and spaces of community work also provided its own challenges. While I have not included anti-poverty activists or low income residents as my research subjects, engaging with them was inevitable, both because of my connections to organizing in the city, and also due to their involvement in the pickets. There were numerous town halls and community forums, one in particular at SFU Public Square in February 2013 which was on the topic of the restaurant pickets that brought together unlikely groups of business and property owners, middle class residents, low income residents and activist allies. While I wanted to be present for research reasons, I often felt anxiety about the perceptions of others, both those of potential research participants, as well as the activists. At one community organized dialogue event, a restaurateur passed me and remarked they were glad to see a 'friendly face' after receiving hostility from community residents at another forum. It is true, I felt no animosity toward him, but I found myself thinking very much afterward about his comment, wondering what it said about his perceptions of my position or stake in all of it.

In turn, relating to my activist friends also had the potential to be strained. Many showed an interest in my research, yet discussed it as though I were involved in some sort of 'undercover' operation 'for the cause': 'Oh, I just can't wait to read what you come

up with. It's going to be so good.' I was once even introduced in this way: 'Dani is researching restaurant gentrifiers, but in an incognito sort of way'. Though they knew I did not participate intentionally, organizers I knew would invite me to come picket the restaurants with them, reminding me that I was 'needed in the streets'. These types of judgments filled me with the related, yet opposite anxiety that my research would eventually prove to not be very useful or worthwhile, or worse, that I would be seen as a centrist, or even a sympathizer. Over time, after many conversations and thinking, I grew to be more comfortable with my subject position on all fronts. I realized that many of the problems I perceived as real were often more the product of my own projections or fears, particularly with respect to identity and politics. While they inflected my approach to ethnographic research, and inevitably effected the outcome, intertwined with unique and challenging dynamics of power as they were, I aimed to be well attuned and reflective of this at all times. Though this has lead me to reflect that perhaps the biggest challenge of 'doing ethnography' in this sense, was that it rarely entailed obviously discreet times for 'work' that were set aside, but instead 'work' was entirely dispersed, and permeated my everyday and personal life. On one hand, a researcher who is this embedded is in a very good position to be doing such work. On the other, it comes with a whole set of difficulties with respect to subjectivity, power, framing and intention. My hope is that these unique methodological circumstances can nevertheless contribute to new understandings about what doing research in such subjective and embedded circumstances can look like.

Chapter 5. Micro-level practices, Contradictions and Restaurateurs as Drivers of Neighbourhood Change

5.1. Relationships, Contradictions and Practices

Beginning with the first research question for this project, I sought to know through which micro-level practices exclusions and inclusions are enacted around spaces for food and beverage consumption in my field sites. In this chapter I will examine these micro-practices, focusing on how restaurateurs and workers define their relationships with neighbourhood residents, and considering this in the context of the many practices I observed and discussed with participants.¹⁰ In a big picture sense, my interviews and observations demonstrate again and again that inclusion and exclusion are enacted unevenly, and that there are myriad factors involved in these practices. Perceptions of what defines a moment of exclusion, or inclusionary practices vary widely, not only across individuals but even within the same person's perspective. Those contradictory experiences and accounts are shared across all of my research participants, and they have a number of ways they materialize, such as through social interactions, price points, or informal working relationships.

I normally would ask participants near the beginning of interviews to give examples of their experiences of operating in the neighbourhood, specifically with regard to their interactions with low income residents, and whether they might describe those as having been 'negative' or 'positive'. Their descriptions revealed a dynamic milieu which was wide ranging with many positive and negative examples. Though many were able to

¹⁰ My research subjects were owners and workers in the service industry. As such, while my data includes direct examples of physical exclusions and inclusions, their character is ultimately defined by me, and my research subjects. In other words, definitions of what constitutes an exclusion are subjective, and not indicative of the subject position of someone who self-identifies as excluded, but instead those witnessing and 'doing' the excluding.

cite interactions they deemed negative, almost all characterized the neighbourhood as a friendly space where they have good relationships with low income residents. Many described friendly conversations with residents outside of their establishments, and an overall feeling that they were actively building good relationships by getting to know their neighbours. These social dynamics were not only described in terms of neighbourly or friendly street life, but also one where relationships are longer term, and where people are 'looking out for each other'.

There's a handful of older people, like low income older people that come in. It's kind of cool... The staff stand outside and smoke outside and talk, like we have a really good rapport. Certain street people that are here every day all day, like they've given us feedback, for instance, one of our cleaners was doing a shoddy job... doing things they shouldn't have been doing. And we were told that by someone from the street. It's quite personal down in this area. People actually ask you about how your day is, it's nice. They notice if you are busy or quiet. So we haven't had major issues. We have been quite embraced, which is great (Owner 4, April 22, 2013).

While the above owner cited a number of examples of other businesses who had "a more difficult time", he claimed that his establishment did not have any "major issues" in dealing with the neighbourhood, and that their being embraced was a direct result of the rapport they consciously worked to establish. This type of rapport building was raised by owners in particular. Whereas workers were more likely to view it as an everyday normal part of neighbourhood life, owners indicated an intentionality behind this practice, and it was characterized by some as a necessary aspect of doing business in the neighbourhood. In one case, a participant described this as a process that begins early, even before an establishment opens during the designing, planning and building of a space: "...during that time [prior to opening], I was out here [the street] every single day. You get to know people in the neighbourhood" (Owner 6, March 13, 2013). Owner 6 went on to explain that he would sometimes go out and share food, or talk to low income residents he had met about entry-level dishwashing jobs they could potentially have once the space opened. Rapport building seemed to give him and other owners a sense that they were liked and accepted by the local residents, the importance of which only became more pronounced as *PiDGiN* and *Cuchillo* restaurants began to receive negative attention from anti-poverty activists.

At the same time these stories of conviviality, and an amicable, neighbourly environment were contrasted by stories of relationships which could be tenuous, conflict ridden, and constantly shifting. Times that my participants described as including tension or conflict could involve anything from having altercations with low income customers that refuse to pay their bill, to arguments over bathroom use for non-customers, or behaviour such as banging or spitting on the windows. As a more specific example, both workers and owners recounted asking panhandlers to refrain from approaching customers on the patios. This is a common occurrence which I saw during my participant observation, as well as during my experience as a worker. Viewed in the industry by varying degrees as either a minor nuisance or a potential point of conflict, 'patio policing' as a practice reflects the extent to which workers actions are shaped by the purported 'needs' or 'protection' of middle class consumers. Whether tense or familial, neighbourhood relations described by workers are deeply structured by class positions. If owners engage in establishing work relationships with low income residents, or workers interact with people well known to them who ask for spare change, cigarettes or food, it is always an interaction refracted through circumstances of relative power and class. As described by my participants, such interactions can sometimes feel neutral or amicable, but can also contain tensions where one feels anxiety or forms of pressure as a result of these exchanges.

Another aspect of these micro-practices are the many informal arrangements, economic or otherwise, which develop with low income residents. Interestingly, when I asked owners to share with me their 'positive' experiences, they most often gave examples of informality. These include hiring a resident to wash the windows once a week, or long term deals with bottle collectors to retrieve recycling, or even being hired for temporary maintenance or street cleaning jobs. Both throughout my years of working in Gastown, and during my participant observation, I saw again and again instances of low income residents working 'under the table'. On one occasion years ago, an industry colleague recounted to me his experience of working at a local night club, where apparently the owners regularly hired low income people off the street to stand in as temporary bar backs when they were short staffed, which was often. He claimed these owners to be particularly exploitative, offering work for a fraction of the minimum wage, knowing that they could save money by offering such a job to street entrenched drug

users on social assistance who will work for less. I was never able to ascertain whether these claims were true, though similar rumours circulated throughout the industry about informal arrangements such as these. Given their precarious and contingent nature, they are a concerning example of what informality, and barriers to formal employment can look like in sensitive low income communities experiencing upscaling.

While owners recount many 'success stories', hiring low income individuals is also described as a fraught and difficult process. Owners report people not showing up for work, trying in vain to locate employees who do not own cell phones, or having difficulty interacting in the work place with individuals struggling with mental health issues, or who engage in drug use. These behaviours while not at all not specific to low income Downtown Eastside residents (and fairly common among entry-level service workers in general), were nevertheless raised frequently as examples of why hiring 'locally' presents its challenges. Indeed, the same class differences that inform neighbourly relations with tension, were raised in narratives of employment and informality.

[Dishwasher 1] does work for us, but he asks for money a lot. And that's part of the problem is now he's digging himself a hole (Owner 6, March 13, 2013).

While Owner 6 mentioned on one hand that Dishwasher 1 accruing debt was a problem for their working relationship, at the same time he mentioned that low income individuals with barriers to the work place need a 'leg up' in order to get their debts under control, or to pay a damage deposit on a new apartment, in order to stabilize their lives. He made mention of another dishwasher with whom things were working out very well. This person had some difficulty at the beginning, but the owner described this as a transitive phase, where they negotiated expectations. This included the owner being more involved in his personal life, such as helping him find an apartment. Owner 6 described it as a social relationship where the employer must be flexible with an employee who has so many barriers to the work place, and therefore must tolerate behaviour such as not showing up for work, or frequently asking for loans. Another participant described a similar experience in hiring a low income resident, a relationship which became rather tumultuous during their drug or alcohol benders, when they

became unreliable. It was an aspect of the relationship which he described as frustrating, though nevertheless a fact of life and hiring 'in the neighbourhood'. Participants did not say what kinds of social differences result in some individuals being hired 'informally' and others being given access to entry-level, though nevertheless formal employment. Though it is clear from these examples provided by Owner 6 that access, tolerant approaches to 'unacceptable' behaviours, and general success in employment is uneven and subject to discretion. Evidently, what is already a chasm of social difference between industry workers and multiply oppressed low income residents is here additionally infused with the unequal power relations between owner and worker.

According to some owners and managers, navigating the purported sensitive nature of operating businesses in the Downtown Eastside, also involves instilling familiarity and awareness in the people one hires, and even preparing them for the social politics of working in the community. I recall with clarity my early shifts at my first job in Gastown, my manager going out of her way to point out to me the 'street people' (or 'junkies', in her words) that regularly visited the area outside. She would sometimes even make introductions, and share knowledge about who to 'watch out for' and who was 'harmless'. She would engage with them in front of me in ways that I perceived to be performative at the time, or intentionally modeling for how I should also behave. Given that I mentioned I was relatively new to Vancouver, and had not spent much time in Gastown yet, it seemed important to her to help me to understand the 'ins and outs' - not just of my tasks in the restaurant and the regular customers, but also the streetscape. This idea of preparing employees to better understand the context they would be working in came up in a few of my interviews, where one owner even described it as a process of vetting.

...I always bring it up in an interview, I say, Do you have experience in this neighbourhood? Or do you get it, kind of thing? You have to feel comfortable working down here. Seeing things that may upset you, or dealing with certain people. (Owner 4, April 22, 2013).

This issue of workers seeing activity that may upset them, or that they need to be prepared for potentially upsetting circumstances came up frequently during my participant observations as well. I recall while working at *Amici* more senior and experienced servers would step in to deal with difficult or escalating circumstances (in

one case, a resident who entered the restaurant who appeared angry, and was yelling obscenities) presumably to intercept someone who was new to working in Gastown, and perhaps feeling uncomfortable. Workers in particular discussed how important 'experience' in dealing with 'problem' residents was, and also suggested that this experience over time lead to a jadedness with respect to the marginalized conditions of others they witnessed over time. One reported that working in a community with open air drug use, where visitors and workers alike witness many vignettes of poverty, drug use, and sometimes violence, over time desensitized them to such things.

I have sort of been acclimatized to that alley after working [in the area] for a few years, I had seen some stuff, you just kind of become denatured or something. So even though that environment became... [it was] something I was familiar with (Server 3, February 6, 2013).

Sharing space with a wide spectrum of low income people, as many of the people I spoke to put it, is a 'fact of life' in the Downtown Eastside. The sharing of space can lead to other examples of informality where arrangements do not include work necessarily, but negotiations for how to literally share space. As new businesses arise in spaces previously claimed by existing residents, they must work to accommodate them. Given the stark shifts in land use and built form which can occur so quickly, it is a given that new claims to space will clash with older ones. One particularly good example of this arose one evening while I was concluding an interview. As I walked through Gastown with my participant after the interview, we came across a new eatery which was closed at that time of night. There we saw an elderly low income woman who I recalled from years past had spent her daytimes in the front doorway of this previously unoccupied building. The corner doorway now being the front entrance of the new eatery, she had moved her belongings to the second alcove a few meters away. It had a gate with a door, flush with the facade of the building (See Figure 5.1). Wondering what was going to happen to her spot now that the restaurant was open, we stopped to chat, and my participant asked her whether she had been hassled by the new owner of the restaurant. Right away, she stated that she was allowed to be there, and that the owner was going to let her stay. I asked whether her moving to the second doorway (not a primary entrance) was struck as a type of compromise, though she did not consider it that way. Explaining that this was her spot, she asserted that she had been there far

longer than the owner, which I knew to be true. She also said that so far he had been friendly, and even offered to frost over the windows of the alcove, so that people inside the restaurant could no longer see her, and she did not need to see them. We stayed to chat a little longer, after which we parted ways.



Figure 5.1. Alcove space in front of restaurant, covered with tarp, with one frosted window visible inside. Photo by author (2013).

My participant and I discussed afterward what could be the intentions of the owner in this circumstance. On one hand, I offered that in terms of optics, he would look bad if he were to push this woman off the corner which she had occupied for many years, and that in terms of how he is perceived by patrons as well as locals, he stood to gain from an approach that included her. He on the other hand considered it an act of kindness, or sensitivity, which he maintained was not limited to this one owner but actually representative of the way many businesses in the community act towards low income residents. I took the opportunity to share this story during other interviews, and also during informal conversations, asking people what they thought. Reactions were

often similar, first interpreting the owners behaviour as kind or sensitive to the woman's circumstances, a kindness which extended to facilitating her not having to experience the gaze of voyeurs in the eatery. Following more considered thought, people would pause and ask questions such as: 'Yeah but what does he get out of it?' While it is common for participants to cite their good natured relationships in the community as a point of pride, there is also an implicit understanding that relationships like that are desirable, and actually beneficial from a business point of view. Whether we can conclude that business owners view such arrangements as beneficial, they at least illustrate one way that social difference is negotiated between middle class consumers and excluded poor people by gentrifiers in this context.

Relationships like the one illustrated above are a common vignette of the Downtown Eastside. Workers describe the streetscape as one made up of different characters, each of whom has a story, and unique behaviours. Overhearing industry people discuss their familiarity with 'locals' is common, and is a social knowledge that works to demonstrate ones know-how or long-time presence in the neighbourhood. During my time of working in Gastown, and also during my field work, I frequently heard labels such as, 'junkie', 'destitute', 'bums', 'homeless', 'street person', 'binners', 'locals' to describe low income residents; they were not thought of as problematic or disparaging, and were often used freely. While on one hand some of those labels reify negative tropes of urban poverty, their use nevertheless indicates a fine grained register of markers for social difference, all of which have a function in a narrative that lends itself to a particular cultural capital, or credo of working in a Downtown Eastside neighbourhood.

This cultural capital is exemplified in the restaurant docu-reality television show *Gastown Gamble*, which even features one episode titled "Street Cred and Pink Slips" (Harpo Productions, Inc., 2012). Predicated on the idea that opening a diner in the Downtown Eastside comes as a great business risk, the show features an extended story line in the first season about owner Mark Brand's befriending and later employment of 'Football Mike', a local low income resident. Segments depict conversations where Mike offers Brand reassurances with the words: "I have faith in you boss!". Later in the show (Episode 2), Brand is shown hosting a free coffee stand as a tribute on the anniversary of the passing of local resident Brenda. Well known as a panhandler by many in the neighbourhood, the news of her passing reverberated not only through her

own community, but also through the community of service industry workers with whom she had many interactions with over time. I also had met Brenda during the time I worked in Gastown. She asked me on occasion to give her free coffee, or purchase her grocery items from the local convenience store. Even her funeral service was attended by a number of workers from the places where she frequently passed her time outside. She was such a constant presence in the neighbourhood that many felt they had a relationship to her, and this also comes through in Brand's own narrative of his memories and his coffee stand tribute. These relationships at least partly serve the function of providing middle class gentrifiers with the cultural capital necessary to develop their own sense of inclusion in a neighbourhood where they too can feel 'out of place'.

During one of my interviews a participant was visited by a vendor from *Megaphone Magazine*¹¹ whom they seemed to know well. They discussed neighbourhood happenings, and how business was going, after which the vendor took the occasion to sell him a magazine (afterward the participant admitted he had already purchased this edition, but bought it anyhow). Apparently they had an arrangement where the owner buys his *Megaphone* issues exclusively from that vendor, and even on days when the vendor doesn't have an issue to sell he drops by to chat with him. Since I did not have permission to record the vendor, I paused my recorder at the time and noticed our interview was interrupted by almost ten minutes by this exchange. In another five minutes, I had to stop the recorder again when a dishwasher, described to me as a low income resident, arrived to retrieve a small loan of money. Here we were discussing this owners' experiences as a gentrifier, framed by questions of inclusion and exclusion, and now I was inadvertently presented with a form of outside testimony that they have good relationships with local residents. Given the topic of my research, and the reason for my visit, this interaction with the *Megaphone* vendor felt infused with a self consciousness, a feeling that it stood as a good example of the micro dynamics of neighbourhood change. In certain moments it even verged on feeling performative, given the recent antagonism of anti-poverty resistance, and the sense on the part of many

¹¹ A local community magazine sold by homeless and low income residents in Vancouver, which publishes on topics of social justice and gives voice to low income people.

gentrifiers that they want to show their awareness and efforts to maintain good relationships.

This interaction caused me to think a great deal about relationships, neighbourhood knowledges, and how key they become when newly arrived residents are making claims to space. In my experiences, industry people were often keen on emphasizing their knowledge of the local people of the neighbourhood. I do not want to suggest that such relationships are not genuine, or real, but rather that they are a part of and are often foregrounded as indicators of one's familiarity and sense of belonging. Ultimately, they work to inform a sense one has of their own relationship to a neighbourhood, and the claims they make regarding their own legitimacy in space, whether that be the space they work, live in, or pass time in.

The importance of rapport is a common thread across a number of my interviews, which also appeared alongside themes of 'awareness' and 'respect'. The language of 'awareness' and 'respect' came up multiple times across five of my interviews without any prompting, and those participants shared the view that doing business in the Downtown Eastside comes with a responsibility to conduct oneself respectfully toward the community. One worker mentioned that they felt this awareness led to more compassion on the part of business owners, specifically citing a greater understanding of mental illness and that "addicts in this area are really self medicating" (Server 1, November 15, 2012). Many of my participants in fact seemed to have a fair bit of knowledge of the circumstances of the low income people they interacted with, and they directly related this to their self-described respectful practices. A few participants explained that respectfulness, or just simply how you go about interacting with people, was important to maintain good rapport because disrespectful behaviour is "going to get around the neighbourhood" (Owner 4, April 22, 2013). Another suggested that this 'respectfulness' was especially noticeable in the Downtown Eastside compared to other areas in Vancouver.

In relation to a lot of change that's been happening in the city, it's been more thoughtful, than in other neighbourhoods. And everyone's been fairly respectful in opening something that wasn't stepping directly on the toes of someone else in the neighbourhood, in a business sense, [with] what niche they were trying to fill (Owner 3, February 28, 2013)

Here, Owner 3 on one hand describes restaurant gentrification in the Downtown Eastside as more thoughtful, while also explaining that those establishments fill a niche, one that does not cater to local residents. I took this to mean that that 'respectfulness' is a contradictory aim given that the underlying goal of high-end spaces is profitability, and targeting consumers with niche tastes. Participants also discussed that enacting or practicing respect can be difficult at times, particularly when handling circumstances where mental health or drug use is a factor, which is often. Moreover, while talking about respect, people reported witnessing treatment of low income residents by business owners with which they did not agree with. And so while nearly all of the workers and owners I interviewed described more awareness and respect on the part of some industry people, there were at the same time many accounts of examples where this was not the case.

On the topic of 'respect' many participants admitted the contradiction inherent in aiming to treat individuals with respect while at the same time excluding them by operating a business they cannot enter. Interestingly, one participant stated explicitly that part of 'respect' requires a different attitude around business owner's approach to "aesthetics" in this case referring to the built form (Owner 2, January 23, 2013). Their opinion was that business owners need to embrace the neighbourhood by not imposing their own ideas of change, which entails an understanding that visible poverty is not something one should attempt to cleanse, but accept. This was echoed by Owner 3 as well.

It's just an understanding that these people are part of this community and it's not anyone's place to shoo, or to say 'we are trying to run a business here and you are trying to make us look bad', I feel like people get to know the residents. How much respect and how far that goes is up in the air. But I feel that people are making an effort to embrace that community somewhat... (Owner 3, February 28, 2013).

This same owner described later on in the interview that low income residents tried entering their establishment the first few weeks after opening to request the cheap all-day breakfast items they were accustomed to with the previous business. The new place now serves small tapas style items in the ten to fourteen dollar price range, and while the prices are not very high, they are nevertheless inaccessible to residents on

social assistance incomes. As well, though it is likely to be described as 'casual', the new space was designed with a higher end aesthetic that appeals to wealthier consumers, and is not a space low income residents feel welcome. So while this owner believed that many businesses have taken a friendly approach to "dealing" with the community, at the same time they made the concession that those same businesses do not "necessarily benefit" that community (Owner 3, February 28, 2013). This tension between 'respect' and 'exclusion' which seems irresolvable was a constant topic in my fieldwork.

The theme of 'awareness' as an important requisite for business practices in gentrifying neighbourhoods is not limited to the discourse of restaurateurs however. It is also subtly present in dialogues, such as the "City Conversations" event hosted by SFU Public Square (February, 2013) on the topic of the *PiDiGiN* pickets. This event was attended not just by restaurateurs, but also business improvement association members, low income and middle class local residents, SFU Urban Studies professors, and even business investors from the general area. The panel and discussion was meant to bring community-based and business interests together in one space in order to foster dialogue, and also to increase awareness on both 'sides' of the issue. Arriving at an understanding across stark class categories, in this context, is apparently believed to be achievable through awareness and dialogue alone. This is also reflected in Vancouver's municipal policy for the Downtown Eastside's Local Area Plan (LAP). The city's 2014 adoption of the LAP contained recommendations addressing commercial gentrification specifically. Where the LAP's low income caucus requested a moratorium on business licenses (such as food and liquor primary) until low income people could be involved in a process to approve new businesses, city staff recommended instead a program for "awareness packages" to be distributed to new businesses in the area. While it is not clear from city documents what these packages will eventually entail, presumably, they will help to foster awareness of the low income residents in the neighbourhood, and addressing the conduct and practices of people in spaces which are inaccessible to low income residents (Downtown East, 2014). The dominance of the theme of 'awareness' is important to consider from the perspective of how gentrification is carried out. Awareness does not necessarily have the same meaning as other terms such as 'tolerance' or 'solidarity', and connotes instead changes in understanding rather than changes in actions.

On the other hand the *lack* of awareness in the community, however, can at times be quite stark. A local strip bar called the *No.5 Orange*, located on the cusp of Gastown and Oppenheimer neighbourhoods received negative attention from local residents in the Spring of 2013 after advertising an amateur strip night on its outdoor marquee with the words "Fresh Meat" (Vancity Buzz, 2013). Broadcasting such language in a community where indigenous women are highly over represented as street-based sex workers, and who continue to confront and resist the extensive loss of family and friends who are missing and murdered as a result of gendered violence, was a moment of deep insensitivity and hurt in the community. Less visceral but nevertheless insulting elements present themselves throughout the neighbourhood, such as the large decal on the front door of a popular restaurant in the heart of Gastown which states: "Satisfying hunger, among other appetites". In the context of foodie culture, this sign is a tongue-in-cheek reference to food and alcohol consumption, night life and sociality more generally. For an excluded low income resident struggling to meet their subsistence needs, the sign will have another significance entirely. Of course, these are examples of how the practice of businesses are not simply a matter of inclusion or exclusion, and do not only hold the potential to be offensive, but can even take the form of a social or emotional violence. While such ignorance may perhaps be well addressed by the City of Vancouver's forthcoming "awareness packages", however, there are important questions about why such awareness is desirable when it will arguably not necessarily have an effect at changing the structural conditions of marginalized people, such as insecure housing, inconsistent access to healthy food, and safe spaces to use drugs and access health services.

On one hand restaurateurs have a strong sense that they must be sensitive to those vulnerable. These characterizations echo Ley's (2004) description of gentrifiers as liberal and tolerant, whose identities, Slayter (2006) reminds us are, "multiple and whose ambivalent politics often contradict assumptions of a group intent on booting out extant low income groups" (p. 578). Despite this, restaurateur gentrifiers' own sense of liberal tolerance contrasts frequently with what are real experiences of exclusion which are not amended by a friendly face. While on one hand we can consider awareness and respectful practices as producing less dehumanizing experiences for marginalized communities, at the same time there is evidence they function to produce a more

political palatable, or a nicer reality of gentrification, obscuring the necessary changes required to protect low income housing and amenity spaces.

5.2. Inclusion and (In)accessibility

While inclusion and exclusion can be analytically understood as either material or symbolic, such a framing is mostly only helpful conceptually and does not necessarily describe the nuance, and also overlap of material and symbolic factors in exclusion experiences. As demonstrated by the vignettes at the start of Chapter 1, exclusion is not determined by economic factors alone, but actually entails a great deal of discretion, and symbolic factors such as comportment, decor, or menu legibility. This results in a great deal of unevenness in terms of experiences. Restaurateurs were varied in their position on this, though most of the owners and servers I interviewed maintained that they never exclude local residents outright without good reason. A few participants remarked to me that they have never seen "anyone turned away for anything" (Server 1, November 15, 2012).

We never deny access to anybody ever. You know, I sat there with a dude, two weeks ago, a guy from the street, he drinks his rubbing alcohol everyday with his crew, and he came in here [asked for food], and I didn't charge him or anything like that. Obviously if it becomes an open door policy, I'm going to get overwhelmed with guys thinking they can come in here and get a free meal, but there is a balancing act that can be played with respect (Owner 6, March 13, 2013).

Owner 6 says above that on one hand they never deny access, but also admits that if a large influx of low income people discovered they were so 'accessible', this would be an influx he could not sustain. His insistence that no one is turned away, despite operating an arguably high-end establishment, particular in terms of decor, does not reflect the amount of people that simply would not try because they read the cultural register there to say it is not for them. While owners and also workers frequently would say that they are not in the habit of turning away any prospective customers, at the same time they conceded that full inclusion in such a community is not possible. Some cited price points that they could not change due to costs, or that they needed to make space primarily for customers with money to buy generously, rather than someone who orders

an inexpensive item with no drink to accompany it, for example. Therefore, at the same time that workers said they were not in the habit of *practicing* exclusion, they described in detail how they understand their spaces of consumption are exclusionary and also circumstances where they did practice that exclusion.

On the topic of accessibility, there was a fair amount of contradiction:

[A business] needs to be accessible... if we are talking about low income people and giving... having spaces for them to interact and be part of, then we aren't really talking about capitalist models of business. This is just not really something that's going to work for them because they don't have any money. So how can they participate in the business? A big part of our community here, is low income people. So right away low income people are being cut out of that equation of being part of the community of businesses. But I mean, to a certain extent you can have an accessibility for these people to businesses, I don't know, it's difficult. I think right away, if you create a space that is at least welcoming, whether or not you can afford it, if people feel that they can enter a business without feeling like they are going to be turned away, or that they are going to be given dirty looks, that is a start for sure. (Owner 2, January 23, 2013).

Here Owner 2 explains that being welcoming is apparently more important than being affordable, or at least must be considered first when determining what it is that makes a space *accessible*. The theme of awareness and respect is present here too, in the sense that despite not being economically in reach, friendly spaces are still important. The vignette in Chapter 1 of a seniors 'inclusion' is indicative of this practice, since he had purchased his meal at the McDonalds across the street, and the owner not only tolerated his non-customer presence, but made a point of making him feel included in the space. This question of accessibility, like the seniors vignette, often comes down to sharing space. The discussion of this in my interviews reflected conflicted feelings, where on one hand workers (in particular) are frustrated by some of the issues that arise from sharing space with low income people, but on the other, they recognize how this can lead to a position of intolerance, which they want to avoid in themselves.

Yeah, it's a strange dichotomy here. I complain about the soup kitchen on the corner, not because I don't want the soup kitchen to be there, but the people have left their buns all over the ledges at work and I have to clean it. And I'm thinking, so, what do you want? There not to be a soup

kitchen? Them not to have anything to eat? You know? So you just shut up and clean up the ledge (laughs). (Server 1, November 15, 2012).

Interestingly, this question of sharing space also arises when low income or street-involved people enter establishments seeking service. This can be a very tense experience for workers in particular, who have to decide if they are going to serve people based on appearance alone. The concern here is that customers may dine and dash, or cause other kinds of problems. While of course this concern applies to a wide variety of people that extends beyond a low income group, and while workers would agree that it can be impossible to determine how someone will act based on how they look, it is still nevertheless an important social register by which exclusion is decided upon. At the very least, it can structure a customers experience, for example, they may be asked to pay upfront or provide a credit card in order to carry a tab, though it may not be the establishments policy. Owner 4, for example, explains that there are certain rules of conduct for the drug dealers that enter his space.

...But yeah we honestly have a really good rapport with local people around here. If it be residents, or general street people. A lot of the street people will come in, but not so [much] the low income people. You know dealers will come in and eat, and they are totally respectful. You know we have to go over rules with them, and stuff like that. No counting money at the table, if they come in, they've got to be coming in to eat and enjoy it... I've told them they can't be coming in and out, using the washroom, and that sort of thing, and they are totally respectful. But the low income people can't really afford to dine here. I mean we do go out and give food out sometimes... (Owner 4, April 22, 2013).

Given the potential for problems, or having a dine-and-dash (something I experienced at least once during my years of working in Gastown) there is a tension inherent in wanting to be open and not turn anyone away. As I mentioned, while many participants described that assessing whether or not to serve or allow entrance to certain individuals primarily comes down to appearance, such as dress and comportment, they also expressed being conflicted about using appearance as a mechanism for judging whether or not to serve people. On several occasions, owners cited examples where they had a 'bad feeling' about serving a customer which turned out to result in major conflicts, where the police or security had to be called in order to deal with the situation. Owner 3 described one situation where the private security officers (hired by the building

owner) felt no choice but to become physically engaged with an aggressive customer, saying "it turned into a bit of cowboy situation actually, it was embarrassing" (February 28, 2013). Examples like this were of course contrasted, however, by the occasional story where accepting a customer and not making any judgements not only resulted in no problems, but was a point of pride on the part of the worker, who chose to take a principled position and ignore their peers suggestion that he should exclude.

So I had this one experience where all the other people I work with were saying: 'That's a junkie, she's going to run off on you.' And she looked, I mean, she was a junkie. Whatever. They picked the last table on the patio. By the door. And I thought, you know what? She's been polite with me. She hasn't done anything to me yet, I'm not going to judge her. So anyways, she comes in to use the washroom, and she says to me 'Can I have the bill?' and I went and got the bill, like 26 bucks, she gave me 40, and she said: 'Keep the change. Thank you for treating me like a human being.' You know? And I don't know if she heard through the open window what the others were saying, and heard my reply 'You don't know her, you don't know her story'. Like, you're making judgments on her appearance (Server 1, November 15, 2012).

The tenuousness of inclusions once inside the doors is dependent upon many different kinds of social cues. On a number of occasions over the years I have seen low income people enter a place where I worked, and place money down on the bar *prior* to ordering a drink. In this way, they were enacting a learned social cue about proving they have payment in order to be served. It is likely that in other spaces that person would be hassled, or asked to leave based on the assumption that they have no money, and this is in fact an assumption many workers make. On the part of workers, practicing inclusion or exclusion also means passing along specific knowledge between staff about *who* to include, particularly if they do not fit the socially acceptable appearance. In *Amici*, during my participant observation there, we had a longshoreman who would come in alone. He was gruff looking, with unkempt facial hair, with hands and finger nails dirty from labour, and based on appearances he seemed to my co-workers like someone who has even spent some time on the street. He would come in and drink nearly six pints of beer, order large meals, "keep to himself", and when the time came for the bill he would pull a large wad of money out of his pocket to pay, always leaving a generous tip. As one of my co-workers said at the time: 'Who cares if he stinks to high heaven? He tips! It's just the way things are down here, people are going to have to get used to that.'

In his suggestion that 'people' must get 'used' to the presence of people who do not fit into the socially acceptable mould for appearance and comportment, my co-worker was referring not to us workers, but to other customers who he perceived to be judging from afar. Of course, it is more often the 'preferred' customers that owners and workers feel they must accommodate. If offending events might be hindering a guests dining experience, that was often the guide for practices, such as 'policing patios' from panhandlers who ask customers for change. I discussed this practice with my co-workers at *Amici*, as we shared experiences of times we felt like there were expectations on us from management or owners that we should be first and foremost protecting the guests experience. This role is so commonly practiced, and fear on the part of low income residents or panhandlers that they will have a confrontation with workers, or even authorities is so strong, that most often all a worker has to do is approach and the excluded person will leave quickly.

In addition to these types of social practices, restaurateurs describe the built form as a key mechanism by which to control who can enter a space. Interestingly, the same participants who described their spaces as inclusive, were also able to recount in detail minutiae such as door watching practices, bathroom signs for 'customers only', as well as what types of comportment and appearance they look for when assessing whether or not to serve someone. A number of participants described the front door, where quick assessments are made based on appearance, as a form of threshold. In their view it is much more difficult to effectively remove an unwanted customer once they are inside, and their practice often involves trying to get to the door as quickly as possible in order to assess whether or not they want them to enter. "What happens outside is one thing, but as far as the situation once you deal with it inside it changes completely" (Owner 3, February 28, 2013). Owner 3 mentioned this in connection with the "cowboy situation" he described earlier, as one example where he wished he could have avoided such a scene by excluding the person in the first place. Owner 4 also mentions this inside/outside dynamic.

It's harder when you have someone in here that you don't really want in here to get them out. It's easier to catch them at the door. So I think the trick is to keep an eye on the door all the time, and then you kind of get there first, and you say 'Oh hey how you doing? Maybe you are in the

wrong place...' And sometimes people are like, 'oh yeah this is the wrong place..' you know? So that's kind of the trick... (Owner 4, April 22, 2013).

This contradiction was also apparent in terms of what owners and workers perceived to be inaccessible in the way of price points. Again, while participants would say that they consider themselves to be inclusive, at the same time they described their price points as too high for many. On the other hand, others would describe their space as having a 'relaxed' or "earthy" feel which they considered to be welcoming (Owner 4, April 22, 2013). Of course, though these individuals felt that they are being welcoming, they also recognized the contradiction inherent in claiming this while real material boundaries exist. Interestingly, many owners considered the built form to act as a potential barrier or mechanism for exclusion, and cited in one case their lack of bars on the window as being an example of what makes them more accessible compared to other spaces. (The fact that they had never been broken into was also an example of their having been embraced by the neighbourhood.) Others discussed how they enacted barriers in order to facilitate better customer experiences, such as frosted over windows, higher patio guardrails, and even door men to control who could enter freely. Those individuals seemed to be very intentional with the way they produced their space in order to attract a particular clientele, while at the same time discourage certain people from attempting to patron their establishment. In one case, a worker I spoke to told me of the time a past restaurateur in Gastown and Chinatown discussed with him why his employees did not patronize the business on their time off: "He said something like 'I don't make these places for you guys, I make them for other people' so I think it's clear that he's after a certain demographic" (Server 3, February 6, 2013). Ultimately, the intersection of material and symbolic boundaries seemed well understood by restaurateurs as the main mechanism by which they could control the composition of their spaces, however subjectively and unevenly defined such boundaries can be. The lay out of a space and aspects of the built environment coupled with menu choices, music, and so on were techniques of which they were well aware would come to bear on whether certain people would be inclined to enter or not.

The understanding of the disconnect between what is outside and inside was explicitly described in this instance:

You do have to watch what you do. I mean, that little casual lunch spot [The Rainier Provisions]... it's just odd to me that you have people on the corner thirty yards away that are smoking crack and drinking wine out of a paper bag, and they've got this little restaurant set up [with] specialty products, little crystal vases, carafes for their water. It's... just, there is a huge disconnect there. You have to really question why somebody would open it there. When we opened here, I mean, at least we were on the main street. What we were doing, this has always been a restaurant. It wasn't something new. But what they are doing there, between them and PiDGiN, and you could say the same was true when they opened Boneta. You could say they were really pushing. I could never understand how someone could go down there and spend the kind of money they were asking, when you step out the door and you have to step over somebody with a needle sitting beside them (Owner 5, June 19, 2013).

What is most interesting is the way this owner attempts to distance himself from other spaces which he perceives to be more exclusionary, but also situated in a place which offers far greater contrast between those included and those not. This was common in some of my interviews, but not all. Other participants acknowledged these juxtapositions as a common vignette in the neighbourhood, but at the same time were more readily able to point it out in establishments other than their own. In most cases, individuals would characterize their practice as more welcoming, while in the same interview describe other spaces which they considered to be pushing a boundary or an invisible social code which was distinct from their own practice. (With one exception when a participant qualified his disparaging comments about a high-end restaurant with: "I mean I guess my place is the same" (Owner 3, February 28, 2013)). The social disconnects surrounding higher end spaces, such as PiDGiN restaurant, were characterized as being set apart, or crossing some kind of line. And yet, each of the participants who made this distinction owned establishments with comparable price points within a two or four block radius.

I saw the windows uncovered for the first time, I took a little bit of offence to it... just directly across from [low income community space] and just very clearly high design, and shiny, it was a very stark contrast between that side of the street and the other. And I'm a part of the same thing. But something about that rubbed me the wrong way. [Other places] just aren't in your face with 'check out how nice we are'... Anyone who has compassion or a conscience is going to have a bit of an awkward time enjoying themselves there (Owner 3, February 28, 2013).

The social effects of high-design which produces stark contrasts was mentioned by a number of participants as something they aimed to avoid in order to become more accessible. One owner, when asked directly what he thought made his space welcoming mentioned the pieces of carver art they have purchased from local neighbourhood carvers as a reason they are perceived to be friendly. It functioned as an indicator to people outside looking in that their space is embracing of the existing community, at least, the existing indigenous artist community. This way, the built form of their space was now imbued with the explicit meaning of good relations, which has the effect, in their view of humanizing the space as well as themselves, as they are perceived by outsiders. When I asked other participants about dehumanizing experiences they may have witnessed or even partaken in, their answers were similarly reflective of the contradictions between their intentions to be welcoming, and the structural limitations of their business practices.

Owner 2: It's never going to happen that somebody's going to come into my business and feel dehumanized. It will not happen. Certainly not by me, and if any of my staff would do it, then they would be reprimanded immediately for it.

Interviewer: I would argue that feelings of dehumanization are extremely subjective. And so how would you prevent something like that from happening? And how could you prevent it just with actions alone?

Owner 2: Right. I mean people could feel dehumanized because they come in and I'm really nice, but because they can't afford anything, they can't stay. So they feel dehumanized. So that, assuming I don't change my prices and give them a free coffee, it's out of my hands. Because I'm operating a business in the capitalist system, and this is just the way it goes. This is the way business in this model goes. So it's inherently dehumanizing. So yeah, no, I can't control that (January 23, 2013).

Owner 2 sums up the constraints of high-end businesses ability to prevent exclusion, despite being operated by people who endeavour, or at least desire to do so. Ultimately there are a great deal of subjective and discretionary procedures by which exclusion or inclusion can be enacted in the consumption spaces of a gentrifying neighbourhood. While my participants emphasized positive experiences and

relationships, the uneven, almost mercurial results of these realities indicate a great deal of unequal and frequently oppressive circumstances of social exclusion.

5.3. Violence, Exclusion & Instrumentality

The other side of the apparently amicable and neighbourly streetscape of these gentrifying neighbourhoods are the extremes of exclusion which include social and physical violence. Recall again the vignette from Chapter 1 where a tourist acted as a 'consumption chaperone' for a woman who did not have money to order any food in the cafe. While this was a dehumanizing experience, the woman left quickly and it did not result in any kind of physical encounter. In a neighbourhood where alcohol and drug consumption across classes is prevalent, however, interactions between patrons, workers, and lower income residents are frequently tense, fraught, and lead to physical confrontations. This potential for violent experiences is ever present in all three of my field sites. Four of my participants reported that while they did not define their own practices as exclusionary, the influx of middle class consumers in the context of the Downtown Eastside's nightlife held the potential for social and physical clashes with existing residents.

...doing this 'get out of here' like vermin, shoo, sort of thing which I have seen. People that come into the neighbourhood that are spending a Friday night there sort of thing, I see a lot of this 'get away from me'... just really negative, aggressive, demeaning, and showing no respect at all (Owner 3, February 28, 2013).

As Owner 3 describes, altercations between low income residents and nightlife patrons are common, and this was something I witnessed with frequency during the years I worked in Gastown. I too can attest that the presence of large groups of publicly intoxicated people (especially men) can feel tense and I have at times been the subject of unwanted attention or confrontations. Low income residents in this instance are particularly vulnerable, as they commonly interact with patrons to ask for change, food, or to sell wares and art. Even when interactions are not physically violent, they are often antagonistic and humiliating. I recall one evening awaiting a cab after work, watching a partygoer throw his pizza crust on the ground and suggest to a nearby panhandler that

he eat it. He told him that if he ate it, he said he would buy him a 'real slice'. Incidents such as these are not isolated. Low income people themselves report feeling unsafe, an issue raised recently by local artist Karen Ward (2014) during her public speech to Vancouver's city council who pointed out while the Downtown Eastside is stigmatized as an unsafe area for wealthier consumers, it is the low income residents who are in reality at risk in the face of unruly late night crowds, public drunkenness, and the behaviours of those newcomers.

In terms of the daily practices of restaurant workers, my descriptions in Chapter 5.2 illustrate the manner in which certain types of consumers are deemed to require protection from potentially negative interactions, epitomized by the 'policing' of patios which often takes place. Contrasting with this are the many examples my research participants described of fraught and tense nightlife experiences. Owner 4 mentioned that on the weekends they hire a door person which he claimed is "not really for the neighbourhood people, it's more for the idiots that come into town, and drunk people.. it's kind of ironic, we have a door guy on weekends, and it's not even for the people from the neighbourhood" (April 22, 2013). The irony here, according to Owner 4, lies in the fact that while low income residents are stigmatized as posing a risk due to their illicit and 'dangerous' behaviours, it is the visitors which require policing, a hypocrisy similarly highlighted by Ward (2014) above.

Vignette: 'Inclusion' as a social violence

It is a Sunday evening at a bar in Gastown. A mid or high-end feeling space with live bluegrass music, which is half full of drinkers on a drizzling evening. A group of six people spill in through the front door. They are loud, and it is obvious they have already been drinking elsewhere. One man appears after the others. He wears a light grey expensive looking suit, his sleeves slightly rolled up expose a large silver wrist watch, his blond hair is slicked back in a 50's style coif. He is followed by an older indigenous man with a cane. They approach the bar together, and grey suit wants to buy "this homeless dude a drink". The bartender looks already frustrated, and almost seems like he's going to say no, and even other drinkers seem to disapprove, but grey suit insists. ("Come on, really?"; "Is he supposed to sit with us??"; "No, he's not going to sit with us, I'm going to just buy him a drink, and then he's gonna go.")

Grey suit: What do you want old man?

Man: Budweiser

Bartender: We don't have Budweiser

Man: Kokan.. [Kokanee].

Bartender: Dude, we don't have that either. It's not that kind of place.

Grey suit: Let's get him a whiskey, do you want a whiskey?

Man: Crown Royal and coke

Bartender: I don't have Crown Royal either..

Grey suit: Whatever, Rye, doesn't matter what kind. Rye and coke.

Man: Rye and ginger

Grey suit: Fine. Here (hands over credit card).

Grey suit orders drinks for his friends, and they sit at a table across from the bar. The man is handed his rye and ginger, and he sits at an empty table nearby. He appears already quite drunk. He doesn't look at anyone, but down at the table. He talks to himself, but I'm not close enough to hear what he says. As soon as he takes the last sip, a staff member busses the empty glass. I hear staff discuss together how they are going to go about removing him without causing a scene. They say he is too drunk and they need to cut him off. A short time passes, and he begins to drift off into sleep at his table. One of the bartenders approaches to say he can't sleep in the bar (while it is common policy to cut off or eject people who fall asleep when intoxicated, I interpreted him using this as an opening - as a technical reason to get him to leave). The man asks for another drink, and the bartender tells him he's had too much and he needs to go. He raises his voice, and says something to the effect of 'You can't kick me out'. Bartender: 'You gotta go'. Getting agitated, he raises his voice again, as well as his cane this time. The bartender puts his hand out, flat, blocking and pushing the cane back down.

As soon as he touched the man's cane, things escalated instantly. Yelling now ('Don't touch my cane!'). The bartender signals to his other male co-worker that they are going to physically remove him. They grab him forcefully, and all three jostle violently and awkwardly toward the front door. He continues to swing his cane up high, and one bartender yanks it away. As they move through the front door to the alcove and the sidewalk, the elder falls down backwards. Now all three staff are outside, the fallen man gets himself up slowly. Somebody returns his cane by throwing it to the ground in front of him. He yells insults, and swings his

cane hard at one bartender, hitting him in the back. They stand outside for a few minutes as he begins to walk away, and they watch him with arms crossed until he rounds the corner of the block before they come back inside. The customers, including grey suit, laugh at this spectacle, though one of the men suggested it was a bad idea: 'Why'd you have to bring him in here man, look what's happened'; 'He got his drink, he's fine, whatever'. As the first bartender returns to serve us he says aloud to everyone, and yet no one in particular: "Just another night in Gastown!" (Field notes, December 9, 2012).

The above vignette unfortunately is not an uncommon occurrence in the Downtown Eastside. While it seems the grey suited patron was doing 'something nice' for this man by buying him a drink, which he apparently asked for, the man was subsequently perceived as being out of place. Not only a 'problem' due to his intoxication, but primarily because he was deemed to not 'belong' in this particular high-end cocktail bar. Certainly, middle class consumers can be intoxicated and 'thrown out' of spaces as well, however when these type of exclusions include low income - and in this case indigenous - people, the exclusion is undeniably figured around race and class. The moment grey suit entered with the older man, the workers exchanged weary looks with one another, a sign to me that they had already decided he did not belong (intoxicated or not), but which also indicated that this type of circumstance was not new to them at all.

These forms of violence should not be interpreted as mere aberrant foibles of night life in the city, but instead, they are one of the many ways that high-end spaces for consumption serve the function of controlling and diverting unwanted people in the neighbourhood. While the most predominant theme in my interviews was a characterization of convivial and neighbourly life in the Downtown Eastside, the observational evidence instead indicated too often otherwise. On three occasions people gave descriptions of the role of restaurants in remaking the streetscape. Even though their control over space is technically limited to the inside of their establishments, or perhaps their immediate entrance ways and patios, restaurateur owners included the streetscape in their narratives as a space over which they feel they have impacted (ie: gentrified) whether intentionally, or not. From their perspective, what people can see from the 'inside' of a consumption space matters a great deal to a guests experience, and therefore impacts, however temporarily, the overall reputation of the establishment.

Server 1 discussed with me how they felt their employers had at times been "uncompassionate", giving an example of a time they asked him to pour water on a man sleeping in the alley in order to get him to move. The man was apparently in full view of diners who made complaints that they did not want to see him while dining. He expressed indignation at such an expectation: "...pouring water on him, what the hell is that gonna do? He's already sleeping in a fucking alley with rats! Well people are complaining about him... well, then don't look!" (November 15, 2012). While this example, where an owner might ask their employee to deal with a man in the alley in this way are rare, even the suggestion of such a practice illustrates how owners of restaurant spaces see the neighbourhood streetscape as an extension of their 'jurisdiction', and a space which they have a stake in remaking.

Owner 1: Now.. as far as the neighbourhood when [we] took over, I would say there was significantly more open air drug use on [a] and [b] street than what there is today, and I think we were probably fairly aggressive and instrumental in pushing that drug use out of that [particular area]. Although, it is as widely used if you go one block east of us, there has been absolutely no change in that.

Interviewer: In what way do you mean 'instrumental'?

Owner 1: We didn't accept that it was okay for people to be dealing drugs outside of our restaurant. We would act aggressively to the people that were dealing drugs outside of our restaurant. (November 2, 2012)

Illustrated by these quotes, Owner 1 in particular stated this approach when discussing their perceptions of their restaurants role in the general shifts occurring on the immediate blocks in their neighbourhood. They first explained that the biggest change that occurred on their street was the drop-in centre around the corner which reduced its services from two meals daily, to only one meal in the early morning. Now that there was no longer an afternoon meal, this meant a positive change, since previously there was a line up all the way around the block, partly blocking the front entrance of the restaurant. While this change was not in the owners control, he alluded to the relationship between changes like the drop-in center services, and his own role in addressing the streetscape of drug use. This lead him to discuss his perceived 'instrumentality' in remaking the street into how it needed to be to make business more viable. While this is the only example of the use of this term, I identified it as a theme in a

broad sense, and found that many restaurateurs did indeed feel this way about the overall effect of their business in these areas, although they did not necessarily speak about it in this language.

Chapter 6. Discourses of Neighbourhood Change, Foodie culture, and Social Responsibility on the Gentrification Frontier

In Chapter 5, I examined the micro-level practices which inform the boundary making attendant to restaurant gentrification, considering the myriad contradictions across practices, narratives, and experiences of exclusion, as well as the extent to which restaurateurs see themselves as 'instrumental' in neighbourhood change. This next chapter will explore the broader contexts of foodie culture, its relationship to social responsibility and social enterprise approaches to gentrification, as well as the contradictions therein. In the last section, I will consider discourses of the frontier as they relate to gentrification as well as to colonialism. I will suggest that these discourses work through narratives of community as simultaneously vibrant, and empty, yet nevertheless needing to be controlled.

6.1. Foodie Culture & Social Responsibility

Foodie culture can be comprised of many different types of cultural registers, and may have different meanings to different people. In the context of this study, and the gentrifying neighbourhoods in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, I use 'foodie culture' to generally refer to the high-end or niche production and consumption of food and drink. As discussed earlier, scholarly work on consumption has drawn clear connections between the increasingly "conscious consumption" (Thompson, 2011) features of 'foodie culture' and the construction of a high cultural capital habitus, where distinction between social groups develops through these registers (Holt, 1998; Bourdieu, 1984). More recently, Carfagna et. al. (2014) argue that the most recent shifts in high cultural capital habitus have shown a preference for localism, arguing that the conspicuousness of ethical consumption is key to foodie culture's social register. This is evident in Vancouver, particularly in terms of the emphasis on environmental sustainability.

Outside of the neighbourhood, and across the city, this manifests in various ecologically oriented initiatives, such as *Ocean Wise*, a partnership program between the Vancouver Aquarium and restaurants or markets, which seeks to educate consumers about sustainable seafood consumption choices. If a restaurant, for example, enlists in the program they can display their *Ocean Wise* status on their menus. The demand for such indicators in Vancouver, where 'origin' of consumables is often front and center in the signage of the consumption landscape, is strong. Not only is origin an important marker, but so are items which are locally produced, based on the idea that greatly lessening the distance between producer and consumption site results in the most ecologically sustainable consumption practice (Ling & Newman, 2011). Along with status labels such as organic and free range, these localities are demarcated in restaurants by direct mention of both well-known or up and coming butchers, farms, or local breweries.

Foodie culture in Vancouver also presents an interesting overlap between high-end consumption, and ethical sustainable consumption. On one hand there are spaces considered very high-end which do not necessarily subscribe to sustainable branding, if at all. On the other hand, establishments which can be considered more 'casual', and in some cases more affordable, are very much oriented to claims of ethical eating. *Save on Meats*, for example, claims an affordable price point on some of its items, and also attempts a diner aesthetic, with its symbolic fetishization of traditionally low-end fare such as coleslaw, hot dogs, and Salisbury steaks. At the same time, their marketing and menu presentation announces locally sourced foods, and logos of non-profit partners, meanwhile event handbills advertise three course wine pairing dinners with the owners of an Okanagan Valley vineyard. Indeed, 'foodie culture' does not reliably indicate high-end, but nevertheless demarcates social distinctions of ethics, sustainability, and a 'green' lifestyle.

In the context of the Downtown Eastside, foodie culture has become increasingly wedded to social responsibility. This typically includes practices which are framed as beneficial to the low income community. There are many examples, such as the promotion of job creation for low income residents, proceeds of menu items to local charities who support locals, and even charity development via restaurateurs, such as Mark Brand's employment and food security initiative *A Better Life Foundation*. Menus which elsewhere in the city display an almost aggressive origin or 'appellation' campaign

also do so here, though they emphasize the social aspects of ethical eating. Consider this chalkboard sign in a local cafe: "Much of our farmed produce comes from Solefood Farms - a social enterprise providing urban agricultural employment to our inner city residents ☺" (Fieldnotes, May 2012). Similarly, another restaurant boasts a "misfortune cookie" on their menu, with \$1 of its sales going to a local charity. This type of text is a common sight on menus and chalkboards of restaurants in the area, indicating that the tenor of the most recent waves of restaurant gentrification here are perhaps more oriented toward a social and political consciousness, particularly with respect to poverty, than they are outside of the Downtown Eastside.

Social media in particular is a key way many of these businesses work to appeal to high-end consumers. In an area such as Gastown, where frequent restaurant openings make for a ruthlessly competitive market, socially inflected business practices are yet another way to distinguishing oneself from the crowd, and the Instagram feeds of up and coming restaurants reflect how important a socially responsible image is in order to accomplish this branding.

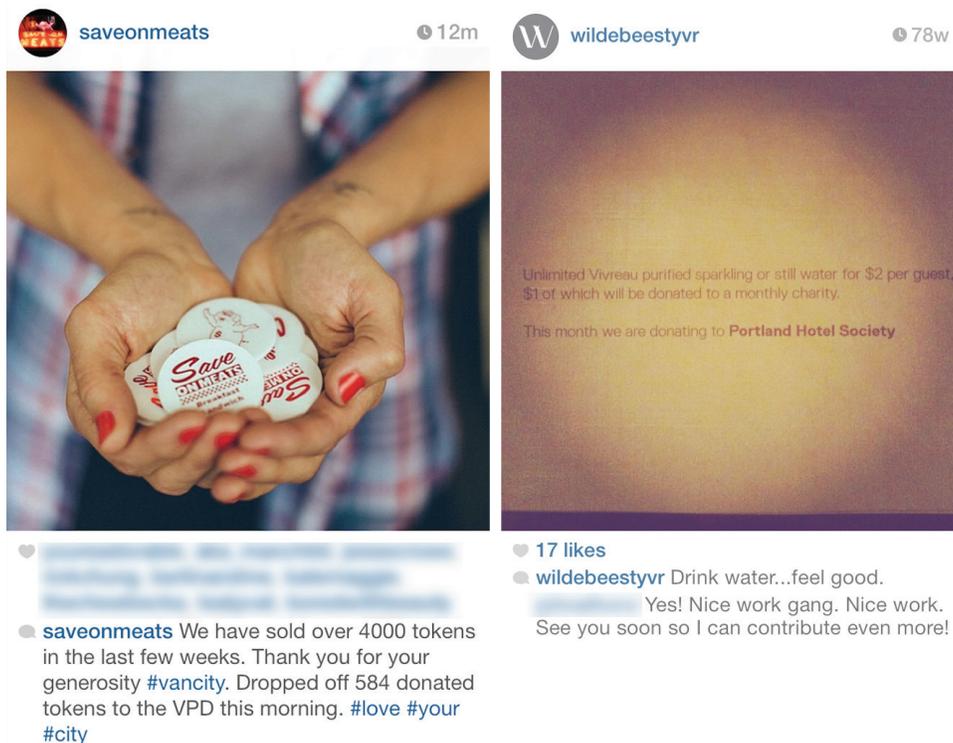


Figure 6.1. Instagram screen captures of two Gastown restaurant feeds, retrieved June 2012 and July 2014 respectively. Left frame is attributed to the restaurant *Save On Meats*. Right frame is attributed to the restaurant *Wildebeest* and image reads: "Unlimited Vivreau purified sparking or still water for 2\$ per guest, 1\$ of which will be donated to a monthly charity. This month we are donating to Portland Hotel Society".¹²

The intersection of social enterprise and ethical consumption is perhaps epitomized by the *Save on Meats* sandwich tokens, shown in Fig 6.1 on the left. An Instagram post from the same account a few days later depicted a thank you letter from the Vancouver Police Department, referring to the tokens as an important part of their outreach to vulnerable citizens in the area. It is important to note while taking stock of the consciousness of foodie culture that the desire to eat ethically, and produce spaces which provide ethically conscious products is by no means bad by definition. While such

¹² Given the social and interactive platform of *Instagram*, I have obscured the visible avatars underneath the images which show who 'liked' or 'commented' on them in order to protect those identities. The names of the actual accounts remain visible however, as they are publically accessible both through *Instagram*, but also via google for those without an account.

a consumption based politics has received criticism, it does bear the seeds of a more critical politics. It is, however, the manner by which these politics have become fused with other forces of revitalization and development, leading them to be a part of the production of a particular type of exclusion, which should not be accepted uncritically.

The use of social media for marketing ethical consumption suggests that consumers are considered by restaurateurs to have a role in neighbourhood revitalization, in so far as their dollar can be captured for 'good'. Some of my participants even went so far as to say that by drawing middle class groups to the area, they felt they were at least partly instrumental in raising the kind of awareness required among such class strata in order to 'make change'. Many believe that such practices are simply the 'right thing to do', or representative of 'doing one's part'; based in a consciousness that one can continue to be a business person but also contribute in a meaningful way nonetheless. Interestingly, some participants seemed to be keen on challenging prejudiced middle class perceptions of low income people and drug users, seeing this as a way in which they could do their part to facilitate better relations between the Downtown Eastside and the rest of Vancouver (a divide they perceived to be a barrier to long awaited and beneficial investment). In these cases, their perceptions of the efficacy of socially conscious practices were not often informed by an understanding of the attendant negative effects upscaling has on low income residents' livelihoods.

Across my fieldwork experiences, opinions of the magnanimous nature of social enterprise in the Downtown Eastside was mixed, revealing some interesting contradictions of foodie culture. Given its importance for being cutting edge in an apparently forever expanding restaurant market place, it is viewed by some participants as either genuine or 'shrewd'. Others believe it is the only way to do business in the Downtown Eastside, and that conducting oneself in such a manner is fundamentally a part of being in place and a part of the community. This seemed to be important to *Save on Meats* owners during the making of *Gastown Gamble*, where in Episode 2 they stated an explicit politics of hiring low income people in order to include everyone in the community in their operations: "...to have everyone under one roof, regardless of their income" (Harpo Productions, Inc., 2012). While this was not common to everyone, I came across many people who felt social change and poverty alleviation need private investment in order to be realized. Not only in terms of large scale development projects,

but in this case, all the way down to the scale of the street and independent businesses. In this narrative, businesses continue to consider their bottom line, but they also have a role in improving the community or 'doing their part', and are not only effective as an individual business but also to a broader neighbourhood scale, and beyond.

...But a guy like [Dishwasher 2], being able to give him an opportunity to help him get past, like you know he's an ex con, he does 200 ml of methadone a day, he's got a lot of barriers to the workplace. Sometimes these guys just need 2... 3 months to get their shit together. Get them on the other side of their debts, get them on the other side of their housing, a lot of these guys want out of the neighbourhood so they aren't surrounded by temptation. It's just that little bit of trust. And he fucked up at the beginning, but we pushed him through, and now he's awesome. And it's like, how do we do that on a bigger scale? (Owner 6, March 13, 2013).

Among those that do want to emphasize the 'social' aspects of their approach, many cited examples of hiring 'locally' as indicative of this, as is suggested by Owner 6's comment. I noticed that at times this reflected a conflation of practices that are informed by a social consciousness with the practice of drawing from a low income service labour pool. In one conversation, a participant scoffed at the idea that creating job opportunities for low income residents was a magnanimous act, asking me facetiously if I had any clue how long low income people had been his primary labour pool in the thirty years he had been running a business in the Downtown Eastside. This was an interesting point, which I took seriously. What, exactly, was new about hiring low income residents for entry-level dishwashing jobs? And through what thought processes was this becoming conflated with more traditional practices of social enterprise? Indeed, this practice is one of the more prominent features showcased in *Gastown Gamble*.

While many restaurateurs were keen to talk about their relationships with non and for-profit organizations, such as housing societies, urban farming initiatives, or mental health outreach programs in the neighbourhood, others were more critical of the incentive behind such approaches to business in the area, suggesting they represented a business strategy more than a benevolent practice. I raised these criticisms with other participants as a way of suggesting that social enterprise perhaps is deceiving in how it is defined, but also in its emancipatory potential. Frequently, they would concede that

this was true, but that they thought perhaps there is now more consciousness around skill development and bettering peoples lives than before.

Among those that disagreed with this approach, they all put a strong emphasis on the 'bottom line' of businesses, even going so far as suggesting that 'business' and 'social' are not compatible: "I'm in business to make money. That's the bottom line. My ego doesn't get involved, because you gotta make money" (Owner 5, June 19, 2013). This participant, among others, saw social enterprise as opportunistic, and even hypocritical. Owner 3 spoke about the *Save on Meats* rebranding, and their perceptions of Mark Brand's intentions as being a "smart move on his part" (February 28, 2013). While they did not elaborate on what this 'smart move' meant, they asserted that ultimately business, "[is] all shifty of some level" (Owner 3, February 28, 2013). In some cases there was quite a lot of vitriol directed at individuals who engage in forms of charity, or forms of social enterprise. In fact, with the exception of the *PiDGin* pickets, these contradictions of social enterprise, and foodie culture were the most frequent topic. The extent of the scepticism of social enterprise practices was indicative to me of how competitive the restaurant market place in the Downtown Eastside (and Vancouver) really is. Such 'ethical' approaches do in fact capture support and demand from local consumers, and those that position ethics, or ways of giving back to community, upfront and center to what they can offer as an experience, appear to succeed. In this sense, thinking through the relationship between the competitive market place of restaurateurs and the 'social' aspects of enterprise, the importance of the latter in processes of neighbourhood change become more clear. Rather than thinking of them as entirely benevolent, they also serve the purpose of linking the cultural and the economic in this context.

The same dissonance was present when participants were asked about the disconnect between discourses of local, organic, or ethical food and the extent to which businesses actually adhere to such principals. During the filming of *Gastown Gamble*, when the owner Nico opens the new butcher shop besides the diner, she discovered that nobody was buying the prime rib or filet mignon cuts. By Episode 2, in fact, customers of the *Save On Meats* deli were instead asking about turkey necks and pigs feet: "We've just been reminded of what the old *Save on Meats* used to provide, and here we are with our [premium cuts]" (Harpo Productions, Inc., 2012). In this case, she

drew a clear connection between niche or more expensive 'foodie' type products, and the displacement of an amenity which was previously neighbourhood serving. Not only is there a cultural dissonance here, between pigs feet and filet mignon, it is also one marked by class distinction, which, in their aim to be neighbourhood serving they needed to navigate.

A number of participants discussed that while they were interested or keen on ethical consumption, they were not really able to accommodate locally sourced food for their restaurants. One of the reasons they gave was consistency of supply, citing their well-intentioned attempts to use local urban agricultural initiatives (for example, *Sole Food Street Farms*) which became difficult when they could not rely on deliveries in order to acquire supplies for a busy weekend. The principal reason, however, was affordability. Not only would sourcing local food significantly increase their price points, but they felt that even their middle class customer base would not be able to afford them. This issue is also related to the difficult choices faced by some businesses between being more affordable to low income people, while attempting to keep their menu items 'healthy'. Owner 2 suggested that regardless of the 'local' character of food, price points were also a determinant of the 'healthy' character of the food they could offer. By his estimation, restaurateurs have a choice of compromising the quality of their ingredients in a niche foodie market place thereby becoming more affordable, or choosing expensive suppliers and thereby excluding certain demographics.

What I'm getting at here, is the balance between environmentalism, food security, accessibility... You have to decide what ingredients you're going to use, and what quality they are going to be, and whether or not you're going to be able to include a certain demographic of people in this. Either you're choosing more expensive food and they don't have access to it, or you are offering them low quality food that isn't good for you. Are you going to feed them shitty hamburgers with the lowest quality beef with white bread because they can afford it? Or are you going to offer healthy food at a higher price point? (Owner 2, January 23, 2013)

In this sense, Owner 2 was discussing accessibility in the context of explaining why he felt he could not afford to be accessible to low income residents; it was a choice between offering unhealthy food at an affordable price point (one that still allows for a decent profit margin), or healthy food at a price low income people cannot afford. This contradiction of accessibility and 'health' was only raised by two or three participants,

and for the most part people would not go so far as to consider an examination of foodie culture from the perspective of class and social exclusion. However, the issue of making claims to local, organic, and ethical food also drew criticism from others, who similar to their thoughts on social enterprise, conceded that they rarely 'walk the walk' of ethical eating. Most participants reported that their own real participation in such practices was in fact very limited, lending further support to an understanding of 'foodie' culture, or ethical eating as being instrumental to its own economic development, rather than representative of a real practice of 'ethics' per se. One participant in particular was very adamant about what they saw as the hypocrisy of the culture of 'local' and 'organic' food, insisting that very few places engage in such practices genuinely.

Bullshit, bullshit, and more bullshit. Okay? There are lots of those that talk the talk, and almost nobody walks the walk. All of their supplies are coming from the same places we get them from. Absolutely. GFS. Sysco. Yen Brothers. And you know what? Our customer base, here in this environment...would not be able to sustain or afford us if we sourced locally. The bottom line is California produces 85% of all the product consumed in British Columbia. We could probably be locally sourced in 20-30% of our products for maybe 6 weeks of the year, if we were lucky. All our garbage is going into the same landfills, we're all trying to achieve the same thing, which is profitability. (Owner 1, November 2, 2012).

Offering perhaps the most opinionated position on the subject, Owner 1 nevertheless echoed what many other people in the industry have also said: that the local and organic claims of many places, and foodie culture more broadly, were often fleeting when it came to their day to day practices. This was the same owner who raised the criticism of social enterprises touting their hiring of local residents as disingenuous. The space where the social and ecological features of foodie culture intersect seems to present a host of contradictions which raises questions about their import in terms of the culture of gentrification. Ultimately, they bring key insights to the extent to which these discourses of liberal and sustainable in some ways serve to be a patina, or conduit through which new forms of conscious conspicuous consumption can be delivered to middle class demands for niche and authentic experiences.

6.2. The Frontier of Neighbourhood Change

When asked what attracted them to open a business in the Downtown Eastside, it is no surprise that restaurateurs pointed first and foremost to affordable rents. This however, was frequently mentioned at the same time as they expressed a desire for "authenticity" (Zukin, 2009). Owner 4 explained that in order to stay afloat as an independent business in Vancouver's competitive market where land value is so high, opening in a low income neighbourhood is the only option (Owner 4, April 22, 2013). He, along with four other owners, described high costs and overheads in great detail, and compared rents across the city with theirs, stating that in other areas a restaurant can have two slow months and simply not survive. Moments later Owner 4 went on to discuss the history of the building, explaining why heritage is appealing, and that he was drawn to it because it is, "such a cool space, so original" (Owner 4, April 22, 2013). In a similar vein, a fold out pamphlet for an upcoming condo development, features numerous local restaurateurs in a section titled "Meet Your Neighbours". They are each quoted in turn, describing the virtues of living in the Downtown Eastside. One quote describes feelings imbued in the community's history: "You feel like you're connecting with the very roots of the city when you walk around the streets of Strathcona, Railtown, Gastown, and Japantown"¹³ (Strathcona Village, 2014). Reminiscent of Zukin's (1982) work in connecting consumption, aesthetics, and historic preservation, these kinds of narratives are ever present in the way restaurateurs, resident middle class consumers, and even visitors describe why they are drawn to the area. In this sense, the myriad forms of speculation that are enacted, whether by developers, home owners, or entrepreneurs, are informed just as much by an areas perceived cultural and historic value as they are by potential ground rent.

The draw of neighbourhoods like Gastown, or Chinatown however, is not only their purported cultural or historic value, but also their 'downtrodden' character, a value imbued via dilapidated or graffitied facades, 'dive bars', and 'greasy spoon' establishments, which give the area an 'edgy' feeling. A discourse which is decried by some activists as "poverty tourism" (Cooper, 2013), restaurants offer a particularly

¹³ Note the omission of the lowest income area, the DEOD or "Oppenheimer" here, though it is located right in between each of these sub-districts mentioned in the quote.

voyeuristic platform from where to experience this 'edginess'. In her recent work on the commodification of poverty in the Downtown Eastside, Burnett (2013) argues compellingly that class composition, and specifically poverty, becomes another neighbourhood selling point, a "competitive niche" whereby the community becomes a destination for "distinctive and authentic culinary adventures" (p. 157). Overall, it is a neighbourhood experience which appeals due to the area's infamy. One where not only outsiders are able to experience niche consumption of foodie culture, but they can do so while observing and mixing with low income people without having to experience any real poverty. While restaurateurs do not make direct mention of these ideas, they are present in their idealization of the neighbourhood as 'cool' and 'edgy'. This type of parlance is especially common in the entertainment and tourist literature, found in magazines, and online blogs.

From deep within the loins of Chinatown comes the rebirth of Vancouver's nightlife in the form of Fortune Sound Club. What was once the infamous Ming's Chinese restaurant, the revamped space focuses on innovative design, art that can't be messed with, and eco-friendly features... Nuanced by the grit and grime of the historic locale, Fortune Sound Club seamlessly blends high and low; downtown, up-from-the-street ambience in a clean and modern setting (ION Magazine, 2010, p. 30).

This quote from ION Magazine on one hand romanticizes the 'grit and grime' of Chinatown, and then, almost as a reassurance, contrasts the inside of the club as 'clean' and 'modern'. This suggests that the club can offer both experiences, but more importantly that the grit and grime are *outside*. Despite peoples' apparent desires to experience the grit of the Downtown Eastside, spaces of consumption still act as vessels from which to position a voyeur-like gaze that is removed from its object. Echoing Neil Smith's (1996) characterizations of the new urban frontiers of New York, and elsewhere, discourses of social blight, and decline are prominent in this context, and paint disparaging narratives of poverty and disorder in the Downtown Eastside. (Liu & Blomley, 2013). Editorials in local newspapers regularly feature denigrating language in reference to the neighbourhood, calling it a "notorious cesspool", and a "tiny patch of downtown dysfunction"; such tropes are frequently used in conjunction with a call to revitalize the area, and 'fix' the problems once and for all (Fralic, 2014; See also Vancouver Sun Editors, 2014). Added to the layers of foodie 'culinary adventure'

discourse, the 'edgy' urban malaise is paradoxically celebrated and condemned at the same time. Undoubtedly, the geography of Vancouver's gentrification is very much informed by this contradiction of being romanticized and disparaged simultaneously.

Similarly, despite restaurateurs attraction to the frontier, it provides a number of challenges to them as well. They recounted having clientele who do not see the value in the neighbourhood, and in one case even having reservations cancelled once customers from out of town realized the area they were located. I recall from my work experience many years ago that Gastown in particular was a draw for tourists due to its close proximity to the cruise ship port. Tourists would sometimes come in to the bar where I worked, inquiring about the safety of the area, and curious about Hastings Street, but genuinely in fear of the unfamiliar. Sometimes this fear was sparked by others: In one case a customer showed me a Gastown map provided by their hotel concierge, who took it upon themselves to demarcate a 'no-go-zone' for the tourist, all up and down East Hastings with X marks. Such interactions might be seen as amusing to some workers, but also an opportunity to confront prejudices by others.

At the time I felt offended by their map, and took it upon myself to try to inform them about the neighbourhood, that while it was a low income community where poverty was very visible, they should not be afraid to be in it. In retrospect, while I felt I was confronting prejudice, my role in that moment enacted a sort of facilitation for the tourist, accommodating their continued consumption of the neighbourhood. All the while, however, restaurant spaces and their operators communicate frankly about romanticizing the cutting edge locations of their spaces. A menu for a restaurant located in Gastown's "Blood Alley" explains the history of the area in a top corner bubble, stating at the end, and in a somewhat mocking fashion: "Yes, this is our only entrance." One participant discussed this restaurant located in Blood Alley, recalling that while the alley was partly a barrier this was also key to its allure:

I mean the whole thing with [restaurant] is that the alley was a big test. People park their cars, or take a cab down, and then they would have a difficult time finding it because it was half way down [alley way] and nothing else was down there at the time. And it's directly across from the back entrance of [SRO Hotel]. There is a lot going on in that back alley as far as drug use. So for people to kind of take this leap of faith by walking down that alley to find this restaurant they had heard of, that was one of

the talking points of the place for a long time. And then once you are there, it's a giant glass window view right to the alley (Server 3, February 6, 2013).

The allure of the frontier is also partly tied up in the success of businesses, particularly when restaurateurs report being chided by friends and family when they first set out to open a business in the Downtown Eastside. On more than four occasions, participants claimed that 'people thought they were crazy' opening up in the area, despite the low rent. This is frequently understood as 'pushing the boundaries', or endeavouring to do 'something that isn't so mainstream'. One owner put it very succinctly, tying the allure of the frontier to its economic potential: "From a restaurant point of view you want to be on the edge of where it's all happening" (Owner 5, June 19, 2013). Similar to Owner 4, while he explained his choice in Gastown was ultimately about low rent, he also connected this with an alternative or 'edgy' culture, as another reason for his businesses viability.

6.2.1. *Vibrant Communities of Uninhabited Space*

I began most of my interviews by asking my participants how they would describe or characterize any changes they had seen in the neighbourhood in recent years. This would lead to discussion about what operating a restaurant space is like in the Downtown Eastside. Participants were almost unanimous in their description of the neighbourhood as 'improving', indicated by new places opening up, and more economic activity generally, but also by pointing to more "people having a reason to be down here" (Owner 3, February 28, 2013). In this case, 'people' means clientele who patronize restaurants, or even people seen in the streets who visibly fit the profile of someone who might be a middle class consumer. Owners would describe these changes as good for business, citing economic activity as a sign that circumstances were improving. Many participants cited the redevelopment of the Woodward's Building¹⁴ as having a directly

¹⁴ A historic building in the Downtown Eastside which used to house the Woodward's department store. Its redevelopment was completed in 2010 with high-end ground floor retail, high-end market housing, as well as a small amount of non-market social housing. Its redevelopment was described by community activists at the time as a 'gentrification bomb' in the neighbourhood, due to the hundreds of new units for middle-class residents.

positive impact on their businesses by bringing more people to the area. This refrain of 'more people to the area' reappeared commonly across many interviews. Despite knowledge and explicit discussion of the low income community, which I illustrate in detail in Chapter 5.1, it was common for industry people to discuss the activity of new arrivals in the neighbourhood as though there was inactivity that came before them: "There being people living in the neighbourhoods, and there being grocery stores, coffee shops, actually a place where people live, and also a place where people come" (Owner 3, February 28, 2013). This owner was listing off the reasons why the Downtown Eastside was slowly improving.

Again, consider the extent to which relationships and community are foregrounded when restaurateurs shared stories of their interactions and practices. This is also apparent in archival sources. When writing an op ed about what makes the neighbourhood the best in the city, restaurateur Mark Brand, makes specific reference to the low income people, claiming that, "It's the residents" (2013, p.25). While interview participants painted a picture of a vibrant community of already existing people, and the myriad interactions that could occur therein, the specific language used in conversation frequently left out low income residents' presence. Many discussed 'improvement' as indicated by a decrease in the presence of open air drug use, panhandling, or types of informal economic activity. Owner 4 specifically described the daily street life as being less active, in this instance referring to less presence on the part marginalized people who engage in these activities.

The streets have become less active. On this block for sure. But it's more of a docile block, and they did the whole cycle block [cycling route] here, it all got ripped up and that made a big change. As in like, just sort of more stagnant areas just to attract more people generally. Other businesses have opened up too, and more general public from other areas of town are coming down because there are more things going on (Owner 4, April 22, 2013).

Interestingly, he describes the same block as being "less active" and as having "more things going on" in the same sentence. Changes in the neighbourhood then, are demonstrative as increased activity on the part of middle class visitors or newly arrived residents, and a decrease of illegal or unwanted activity on the part of low income residents. So while low income residents were consistently being erased through

language, their presence was primarily noticeable in these narratives through the spectacle of illegal street activity. In the context of this particular gentrification frontier, such erasures and negative characterizations are hauntingly similar to Euro-American accounts of indigenous societies in Coastal British Columbia, and elsewhere. The grounds upon which Euro-American settlers constructed indigenous people as a 'problem' to be 'managed' are based on comparable discursive acts of erasing, but also as a group engaging in behaviours construed as problematic (Bracken, 1997). While such logics exist elsewhere, and are not entirely unique to the Vancouver context, I argue that they are inherently colonial.

During interviews and informal conversations throughout my fieldwork, discourses of the low income community as drug users, criminals, or struggling with mental health issues, were dominant. In these conversations, most people were firm in their belief that the lessening of drug-related activities was the most positive aspect of neighbourhood change. These were the goings on they seemed to witness most, and such visible aspects of poverty strongly informed their understanding of what life is like in the neighbourhood for low income residents. When we got to talking about whether or not gentrification was a 'good' thing, their perceptions of urban malaise related to drug use would come up as an example of why gentrification is in fact a 'good' thing. While I cannot claim that this was the only way participants understood low income groups, the topic of drug use was raised nearly every time we discussed them. It was very clear that their own constructions of what low income people 'looked like' was construed around this trope, and its presence was strong in their imaginations about how 'bad' or 'seedy' the neighbourhood is. Not only was dampened drug use a positive effect of gentrification, but its eradication was described as a justification for displacement in some cases. Consider Owner 2's discussion of convenience stores which operate in connection to drug dealers in the area. According to him, they function as a holding place for large amounts of money, in the event that a dealer is stopped by police.

If [dealers] have nothing on them, then there's nothing [cops] can do. So they give the drugs to addicts who get a discount on the drugs, and they give large amounts of money, like they store it in the convenience stores. It's very common. There is one convenience store right around the corner from [restaurant] that does this. It's very obvious they are using it for their trade. So, say that [store] went out of business. And another business that didn't cater to drug dealers opened, would that be considered

gentrification? What I'm getting at is that there is a gradient of these things. Right? So... is all gentrification bad, do you think? (Owner 2, January 23, 2013).

This quote is revealing first of a 'gradient' or 'spectrum' understanding of gentrification, another theme that was common throughout in my fieldwork. Participants frequently wanted to discuss whether 'this' or 'that' place could be 'considered gentrification', and in some cases asked me my opinion of the extent of the gentrifying force of their own business, compared to others, even if they could agree the neighbourhood was gentrifying generally. Further, Owner 2's suggestion that because the drug dealing was displaced was a good thing did not take into account where that drug dealing would be displaced too. In this case I pushed a bit, and asked him to consider how these are informal yet nevertheless complex economic relationships which do not disappear over night. Moreover, that it is a trade highly sensitive to territorial changes, and that such a displacement actually creates new tensions, and results in new violence elsewhere by significantly destabilizing the environment of the street. "Symbolic annihilation" of drug use (Burnett, 2013).

Similar to Burnett's (2013) point that gentrification produces a "symbolic annihilation" of drug use, this participant, among others, seemed to think that because it was no longer visible, it had actually 'decreased' rather than moved elsewhere (or indoors) (p. 157). After explaining these dynamics, my participant suggested that this is where 'government' needed to have a bigger role in protecting people. The theme of street drug use as an example of how gentrification can do good is also addressed by Owner 6 below, though in this case, they see themselves as instrumental in the role of reducing drug use, similar to the quotes referencing instrumentality in Chapter 5.3. In this case, displacement is understood almost as a one time event, which resolves a problem in a particular contained place, the after effects of which are not fully considered at first.

Owner 6: Gentrification... it's a good thing, and ghettoization is the other side of this. We have ghettoized this neighbourhood over the last 30 years, and that is not any better than gentrification. Try and say that we are going to keep it this way? To walk out the door of my restaurant and see two guys od'ing in the same alcove at the same fucking time? Is that

right? Is that what we want to do? I'll gentrify the motherfucking shit out of this place if it means that guys aren't dying in alcoves.

Interviewer: Where would they go?

Owner 6: Well that's my point. So that's where the municipal government needs to start doing things. It's not businesses responsibility to pick up the slack for what isn't being done. It's the right thing to do what you can, but it's not our job. (March 13, 2013).

When pushed to consider where people go when they are no longer visible, Owner 6, like Owner 2, pointed to the responsibility of authorities. In both cases, I interpreted their understanding of a 'problem' as alleviated by its disappearance, which is related to the theme of erasure outlined above. Not only this, but the role of restaurants in gentrification in this case is both scripted as instrumental in preventing over doses, and at the same time as having no responsibility. These dual understandings reveal interesting contradictions about the narratives of restaurateurs, and they were not uncommon to conversations I engaged in throughout my fieldwork.

Most participants, when asked to explain what existed in their spaces before their current restaurant, reported either that the space was empty, or was previously and/or had always been a restaurant. The latter reason was sometimes offered as an example of how things are (contrary to the change they described witnessing in the same interview) not really changing dramatically, since the land use by their definition was the same if not similar. The former description of spaces as empty was common across three interviews, and this was frequently framed around a logic of economic activity. In other words, if there is no 'economic activity' in a space it could be thought of as empty. In one case a participant described their restaurant's space as being unoccupied for twenty years, and insisted that there was "nobody here", despite the fact that it was established community knowledge that the residential building above had been converted from low income housing into high-end market units. They saw the two spaces as separate, and not having much of a relationship, echoing a recurrent theme of understandings of gentrification which become narrowly construed to evaluating separate spaces, sometimes in the same building.

In another case, a participant described the process of disinvestment in the Downtown Eastside since the mid 1980s, but nevertheless concluded by characterizing

the neighbourhood, or certain blocks in particular, as empty. They stated directly that activists claims about displacement are not entirely true, and went on to suggest that when you take a "lump sum wholly abandoned" space that has "zero economic value to begin with" it could not be really considered gentrification: "Is that gentrification, where you take something that was nothing and you make it something?" (Owner 1, November 2, 2012). These characterizations conflict constantly with scripts of the neighbourhood being a convivial, and vibrant space. Ironically, the selling of this area, particularly Gastown, as entertainment districts and neighbourhoods, requires a championing of its qualities of being vibrant at the same time.

6.2.2. *Explicit and Revanchist Claims to Space*

The last theme to explore in gentrifiers narratives is that of revanchism (Smith, 1996) and control, and how they relate to the broader theoretical issues, such as colonialism. As mentioned in section 6.2.1, affordable rents were one of the primary reasons owners gave for their draw to the neighbourhoods of the Downtown Eastside. Rent as it relates to land, and land value was also connected to strong opinions about who could make legitimate claims to space, and who belonged where. Interestingly, while these opinions were characteristic of my older participants, particularly those that had been operating in the neighbourhood for more than a decade, they were not common at all among my younger participants, indicating somewhat of a generational difference. While this theme was not strong in the results of my interviews, it bears some brief discussion nonetheless, because overall I felt this issue came up in general from time to time, particularly with older people. One of my participants in particular focused on the need for social housing, telling me that he understood very well that low income people (in his narrative, single mothers with children) are in great need of affordable places to live. At the same time he questioned, on a more fundamental level, their right to the city, asking me "it's too expensive real estate, should it [social housing] be in the most expensive real estate in North America?" (Owner 5, June 19, 2013).

Owner 1 spoke on a similar theme, explaining that he commutes to his work from far East Burnaby because he could never afford to live in the city where his business is located. While not going as far as to suggest that low income people did not deserve to

be in the neighbourhood, both Owners 1 and 5 questioned why activists were able to make claims for social housing in such an 'expensive' and 'core' area of the city.

Owner 5 elaborates:

They have already protected so much of this real estate down here for SRO's and low income. And so now they say they can afford the rents, but they still can't live here. Nobody can [afford the amenities]. Who can afford the amenities downtown? I certainly can't. You can't have it both ways, because people who are working for a living... if I'm working 60 hours a week and I'm employing 35 people and I can't afford to live downtown, why are my tax dollars which continue to go up at a rate of 7% a year subsidizing somebody who's not doing anything to be able to live downtown. I have no problem with social housing. But it needs to be spread out. Let's move it out to [suburban] Surrey. You live within your means (June 19, 2013).

Here my participant implies that in order to secure one's place in the city, one must be working, or contributing in some manner. The individuals who are "not doing anything", by his estimation do not have the same right to space as those that are. We can locate, at least in spirit, similar themes of a Lockian rationality as they relate to how a place is 'cultivated', or at least contributed to. In this narrative, low income people are scripted as lazy, and as a result their claims to neighbourhood space are less legitimate compared with the claims of others who are more hard working. Coupled with the broader discourse of the Downtown Eastside as a dangerous (if "adventurous") and downtrodden frontier, altogether these coalesce to significantly contrast with the friendly and amicable narratives in Chapters 5.1 and 5.2.

Lastly, the notion of control plays a part in these discourses. This is related to the theme of instrumentality explored above, and suggests that restaurateur gentrifiers feel that not only do they have a role in effecting change in their immediate streetscapes, but that this role is perhaps connected to even broader shifts which benefit them, as the area upscales around them. As mentioned earlier, it was relatively common for participants to talk about changes as though there were some invisible or larger forces at play, 'shifting' or 'dampening' the activity on any given street. A few of my participants mentioned how their particular blocks which used to house activities they associate with low income residents are moving 'eastward'. Depending on their geographical location,

they would report less activity, or on the contrary being in the 'middle of it all'. Owner 5, who had been in the Gastown area for two decades were able to speak more about the long view of this kind of change, regarding that there was a time when the "ghetto" stretched from Seymour street through all of Gastown, and that "slowly it's been funnelled and controlled" (Owner 5, June 19, 2013). By whom the 'ghetto' is being funnelled and controlled in this case, was not clear from the interview. However, this idea of controlling and shifting low income communities is not uncommon in industry parlance. In his startling use of violent military imagery, local foodie writer Andrew Morrison recently wrote the following when discussing a new restaurant to open the DEOD area, which had seen very little development between 2000 and 2010.

A year or two ago I posited in a magazine article that new restaurant development in these parts was on its way. I likened the advance to that of an invading force employing pincer movement around the most seemingly prohibitive blocks of the DTES. The concentration of the attack was building up eastward pressure from Cambie through to Carrall in Gastown, where dozens of new establishments had opened since 2006. The left pincer was heading down Powell, Alexander and Cordova, while the right pincer was pushing up Keefer through Chinatown to hit Main around Strathcona. The two hooking flanks, I wrote, had already connected on East Hastings at Au Petit Chavignol (2009) and The Waldorf Hotel (2010), effectively enveloping the whole of the DTES with a ring of new eateries... Thus surrounded, the main concentration, what the eminent strategist Von Clausewitz would call the "schwerpunkt", has been getting ready to burst eastward on Hastings proper for the past year. All that remains to be conquered - to put it indelicately - are the blocks within the ring, at the center of which lies Fat Dragon, with its 12 SROs above (Morrison, 2012).

It is difficult to know what compelled this author to write in such antagonizing terms about the gentrification of the Downtown Eastside, if the article was instead meant to highlight commercial development as positive. While it is a more extreme example, and typically themes of control or 'funnelling' are much more subtle, this style of discourse is not uncommon. Coupled with the discourses of social and environmental responsibility, and additional contradictory discourses of space as vibrant, and yet empty, these narratives of neighbourhood change, foodie culture and the frontier are conflicting and confusing.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

At the outset of this research project, I began with the observation that there existed a contradiction between foodie culture's ostensibly liberal politics, and the social exclusion that occurs in restaurants and bars in gentrifying neighbourhoods everyday. From there, my questions evolved further, to a deepened consideration of boundary making, and the micro-practices which work to produce neighbourhood change, and even more broadly speaking, an examination of the interrelationship - or complementarity - between gentrification's cultural and economic production. I began with the understanding that there are significant movements of capital, and economic processes that work to produce major shifts in land value which promote redevelopment, and by extension, cultural revitalization, but I asked to what extent are people, in their day to day micro-production of neighbourhoods, agents in this process? Further, how do their own understandings of their role become shaped by and also shape how gentrification is experienced? And so I began with this first research question:

- Through what micro-level spatial practices are material and symbolic exclusions around 'food space' enacted in a gentrifying neighbourhood?

Taking an embedded approach to my research, I drew on years of personal experiences, participant observation in my field sites, as well as interviews, where I engaged directly with individuals who enact these spatial practices. In asking people about which practices they deemed to be inclusionary or exclusionary, and contrasting their narratives with my own observations, I concluded that questions of (in)accessibility and inclusion are highly contradictory and discretionary in the way they unfold. While restaurateur gentrifiers and workers experience and narrate their mixing with low income residents as neighbourly and convivial, their actual practices and the spaces they operate in are nevertheless exclusionary and often dehumanizing. Not only this but inclusions, when they do occur, are fleeting and fraught. Experiences which are dehumanizing and violent transpire frequently, despite anecdotal evidence that gentrifiers subscribe to a practice of respect, and strive for more awareness. These

illustrations of micro-level processes raise questions about what their real role is in effecting neighbourhood change. In so far as exclusions, and experiences of violence make up a myriad of ways that low income residents can be displaced from much needed amenity space in their communities, there is a meaningful relationship between making inside spaces and streetscapes uninhabitable, thereby 'moving people along', which is important to note. Considering this in addition to the role of culture in upscaling neighbourhoods, connections between the foodie gentrification and broader processes of neighbourhood change become more clear. Further, the presence of discourses which idealize relationships despite stark class differences, and which tout 'awareness' as a necessary goal for being a 'good' community business, give insight into how claims to space are developed among gentrifiers.

As these discourses contrasted with my frequent observations of exclusion, or at least tenuous inclusions, they lead me to my second and third research questions about the tensions between a liberal politics of foodie culture and social exclusion:

- How are the tensions between the liberal, inclusive politics of foodie culture and its attendant physical and social exclusions understood, narrated, and negotiated?
- How do food and beverage industry actors understand and experience their role in neighbourhood change?

In my interviews I asked direct questions about how restaurateurs defined gentrification, and what they thought about the role of their practices in their spaces. I also asked their perceptions of the contradiction between foodie culture and social exclusion. My inquiry of foodie culture and social exclusion also relied heavily on archival analysis, as well as past work experience in order to identify its discourses of liberal politics, and more specifically, social responsibility, a theme that was more nascent at the beginning of the research but became more prominent over time. The trend toward social responsibility in foodie culture, I argue, is indicative of yet another niche of consumption whereby 'culinary adventure' works to sell itself as well as the neighbourhood (Burnett, 2013). Not only this, but contradictions are apparent in the social enterprising desire for restaurateurs to 'hire locally', when local hires are nothing new in the realm of service-class strata in the Downtown Eastside. Coupled with restaurateurs own admission that the sustainable politics of local and organic food which

epitomizes and distinguishes foodie culture is barely economically sustainable, foodie culture as a 'politics' is much better understood as an accumulation strategy.

Discourses of gentrification more generally among restaurant owners brought up an interesting mix of frontier narratives which contrasted as much as the inclusions and exclusions which play out in them. This involved understandings of space as both vibrant and empty, or rich and bereft. On the other hand, some had the view that space in the Downtown Eastside is at once brimming with people who, because they do not make 'proper use' of space, therefore do not make rightful claims to space. Despite gentrifiers' described awareness and understanding, the lessening or absence of illicit activity in particular was an indicator to owners that the neighbourhood was improving. Furthermore, their narratives described gentrified space as one achieved through the control and shifting of the 'ghetto'. The intersection between the discourses of foodie culture, and those of revanchism and control is a confusing one, where it is difficult to understand such contrasting aims and means. I argue that we should not accept the progressive intentions of foodie culture's social enterprise trends uncritically. They signal a new means by which to draw niche consumption practices into the central city, all the while producing a gentrification which can be perceived as more politically palatable; a nicer, however, mercurial revanchism.

Understanding this interrelationship between culture and economy has been all the while a parallel goal of this research, both in terms of micro-level processes, as well as discourses. Thus, I posed my fourth research question to address this interrelationship from a more theoretical standpoint:

- How might the study of 'food space' production and consumption in urban neighbourhoods inform an understanding of the complementarity between the political economy and cultural politics of gentrification?

In her call for complementarity Lees (1994) speaks to the need for deeper understandings of *practices* and how they relate to the "constitution" of a gentrified space. This, she asserts, is one of the many ways a research programme of gentrification must work to better entwine the political economic and cultural production of neighbourhood change. The micro-level practices I examined illustrate this 'constitution' in a number of ways. First, they show that upscaled spaces are not just the 'surface

level' results of broader processes, but function to displace important amenities in low income neighbourhoods which render them far less liveable for existing residents than beforehand. Second, they suggest that we must be cautious of overly idealized discourses of 'community' and awareness, as they arguably obscure relationships which are deeply structured by class differences (often resulting in social or physical violence), and are partly the basis by which newly arrived residents legitimize their claims to neighbourhood space. In addition to this, discourses of foodie culture and social responsibility, as they intermesh with co-present desires for control and appropriation, require more critical attention if we want to understand how they may be a conduit, rather than an ameliorative aspect of neighbourhood change.

7.1. Implications

I see this research as having contributed first and foremost to a more empirically driven understanding of how culture is enmeshed with economic processes, and how micro-level practices function in doing the necessary ground work of broader structural forces. This research also contributes to a lack of work on restaurants, as well as their producers who operate primarily on the ground-level. Interestingly, if we consider their networked conditions, and the consumption that is required for their modes of operation, the producers I studied are simultaneously consumers of neighbourhood change on some levels. While I have focused on gentrifiers, I believe the insights offered by descriptions of exclusion also enhance our understandings of displacement, which may not only be relegated to the residential, but can also be micro, internal, and equally dehumanizing.

I also see this research as contributing to a much needed critical analysis of the recent shifts toward social responsibility in the foodie culture of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and I can only hope these insights will be relevant in the gentrified spaces of other cities. This project importantly works to enrich a research programme which aims to develop a 'geography of gentrification' by engaging in the context-based theorizing of settler-colonialism. It is my hope that this will help to begin a new direction in examining how the already existing contributions to frontier discourse from the gentrification

literature can be further strengthened by considerations of colonialism that go beyond their usual metaphorical import.

As I consider the value of this research, in theoretical terms, I am struck by how much more there is to be done. While the account I offer is fairly deep, in terms of empirical detail, I am still aware of the seemingly unending need for more "experience near" accounts of broader urban processes. There are a number of directions which can be taken from here, and an important one is an examination of the connections and networks through which social enterprise in on-the-ground establishments is increasingly melding with municipal policy actors as a manner to address urban poverty which absolves the ever deteriorating welfare state. Another would be of course, a project which better includes the voices and insights from low income peoples experiences of foodie gentrification, with its attendant exclusions and contradictions.

Methodologically speaking, I see this research as having contributed an interesting and insightful example of the potential in undertaking an embedded ethnographic position, based on previous life experience, in ones work. Of course my circumstances were unique, and not every researcher is able to choose a subject with which they command an 'insider status' and a deep understanding of from the outset. While this embeddedness allowed for a more rich account, it also posed problems of subjectivity, positionality, and power. This frequently caused me distress, despite being able to overcome it over time. In the end I learned a great deal about trusting myself, and my decisions, as well as my impulses toward a critical ethnography in an academic world which too often aims for objectivity.

With respect to policy, I consider that at the very least the data gathered here which demonstrates the rapid proliferation of neighbourhood change via restaurant establishments will be good reason to once and for all seriously consider moratoriums on liquor and food primary licensing in a community as sensitive to speculation as the Downtown Eastside. The ostensible intention behind city initiatives, such as the Local Area Plan's "awareness packages" I hope will also be more thoughtfully considered, as on one hand the violence inherent in upscaling requires more awareness, yet the impotence of 'awareness' rather than real solidarity, or policies that better control rapid upscaling, is concerning.

Lastly, I believe the data gathered in this thesis will be of some use to organizers in the Downtown Eastside, as at least a starting point for understanding the confusing and seemingly unstoppable changes to their community. Learning a great deal more about the nature of the change in this neighbourhood is an angle that needs considerably more attention than it has received to this point, and perhaps this work may be an entry point for that larger project.

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Appendix A.

Data for map

Licence #	Type	Open Date	Establishment Name	Type	Address	Postal Code	Licensee	Third Party Operator	Capacity
028047	Liquor Primary	01/01/12	Balmoral Hotel	Hotel	159 E Hastings Street	V6A1N6	Balmoral Hotel Ltd.	0864617 BC Ltd	269
005041	Liquor Primary	01/01/13	Regent Hotel	Hotel	160 E Hastings Street	V6A1N4	Triville Enterprises Ltd.	Dunlop, Darrel Peter	227
002542	Liquor Primary	01/01/13	Empress Hotel	Hotel	235 E Hastings Street	V6A1P2	0771168 B.C. Ltd.		118
019960	Liquor Primary	01/01/13	West Hotel & Bar	Hotel	488 Carrall St	V6B2J7	0985654 B.C. Ltd		150
107893	Liquor Primary	01/01/14	PATRICIA HOTEL ('Pat's Pub')	Hotel	403 E HASTINGS ST	V6A1P6	338186 B.C. LIMITED		245
041424	Food Primary	01/01/42	OVALTINE CAFE	Dining Establishment	251 E HASTINGS ST	V6A1P2	Golden Harvest Produce Inc.		81
183534	Food Primary	01/01/54	FOO'S HO HO RESTAURANT	Dining Establishment	102 E PENDER ST	V6A1T3	FOO'S HO-HO RESTAURANT LTD.		220
212329	Food Primary	01/01/65	Four Corners Restaurant	Dining Establishment	250 Pender St W	V6B1S9	Vancouver Community College		185
073414	Food Primary	01/01/70	OLD SPAGHETTI FACTORY	Dining Establishment	53 WATER ST	V6B1A1	Water Street (Vancouver) Spaghetti Corp.		307
305115	Food Primary	01/01/72	Hon's Wun-Tun House	Dining Establishment	108 - 268 Keefer Street	V6A1X5	0909176 B.C. Ltd.		112
021660	Liquor Primary	01/01/75	NO. 5 ORANGE	Hotel	205 MAIN ST	V6A2S7	SENTINEL PEAK HOLDINGS LTD.		186
004540	Liquor Primary	01/10/75	PALACE HOTEL	Hotel	# 35 - 37 W Hastings St	V6B1G4	Laurelwood Ventures Inc.		189

Licence #	Type	Open Date	Establishment Name	Type	Address	Postal Code	Licensee	Third Party Operator	Capacity
004178	Food Primary	01/01/78	Al Porto Ristorante	Dining Establishment	321 WATER ST	V6B1B8	Al Porto Ristorante (2003) Ltd.		260
032362	Food Primary	01/01/81	GAIN WAH RESTAURANT	Dining Establishment	218 KEEFER ST	V6A1X5	ANDREW & TIM ENTERPRISES LTD.		49
081891	Food Primary	01/01/82	PINK PEARL CHINESE RESTAURANT	Dining Establishment	1132 E HASTINGS ST	V6A1S2	Pink Pearl Restaurant (Vancouver) Ltd.		680
002846	Liquor Primary	01/01/82	GRAND UNION HOTEL	Hotel	74 W HASTINGS ST	V6B1G6	GRAND UNION HOLDINGS LTD.		240
021785	Food Primary	01/01/82	SITAR RESTAURANT	Dining Establishment	8 POWELL ST	V6A1E7	SITAR RESTAURANT LTD.		86
065870	Food Primary	02/15/82	New Mitzie's Restaurant	Dining Establishment	179 East Pender Street	V6A1T6	0912676 BC Ltd.		100
125761	Food Primary	01/01/88	WATER ST. CAFE	Dining Establishment	300 WATER ST	V6B1B6	WATER STREET CAFE LTD.		131
125975	Food Primary	01/01/89	PHNOM PENH "A" RESTAURANT	Dining Establishment	244 E GEORGIA ST	V6A1Z7	PHNOM PENH RESTAURANTS (1996) LTD.		96
003682	Liquor Primary	01/01/92	Brickhouse at Hogan's Alley	Cabaret	730 Main St	V6A2V7	Chow, Leo Chih Hwa		130
159790	Food Primary	01/01/92	AFRO-CANADIAN RESTAURANT	Dining Establishment	324 CAMBIE ST	V6B2N3	KIROS, MENASBO ASFAN		50
303123	Food Primary	01/01/93	Golden Garden Vietnamese Cuisine	Dining Establishment	509 Main St.	V6A2V1	Golden Landmark Enterprises Ltd.		80
166875	Food Primary	01/01/95	GARDEN VILLA RESTAURANT	Dining Establishment	2ND FL 127 E PENDER	V6A1T6	WIN LOK ENTERPRISES LTD.		158
167010	Food Primary	01/01/95	Steamworks	Public House - Neighbourhood	375 Water Street	V6B5C6	Quarterdeck Brewing Co. Ltd.		554

Licence #	Type	Open Date	Establishment Name	Type	Address	Postal Code	Licensee	Third Party Operator	Capacity
096693	Food Primary	01/01/96	Incendio	Dining Establishment	103 Columbia St	V6A2R4	JB Foods Ltd.		94
005543	Liquor Primary	01/01/97	SAVOY HOTEL	Hotel	258 E HASTINGS ST	V6A1P1	NO. 26 GREAT PROJECTS LTD.		125
178634	Food Primary	01/01/97	ARISTOCRAT RESTAURANT	Dining Establishment	342 POWELL ST	V6A1G4	RB GELERA ENTERPRISES INC.		50
169698	Food Primary	01/01/99	FLOATA SEAFOOD RESTAURANT	Dining Establishment	400 - 180 KEEFER ST	V6A4E9	Floata Seafood Restaurant (Chinatown) Ltd.		826
010087	Liquor Primary	01/01/00	Shine	Cabaret	364 Water St	V6B1B6	364 Water Street (Entertainment) Ltd.		200
119982	Food Primary	01/01/00	Mo-Mo Sushi	Dining Establishment	375 WATER ST	V6B5C6	Kim, Se Chan & Kim, Se Jun		60
003148	Liquor Primary	01/01/02	Ivanhoe Hotel	Hotel	1038 Main St	V6A2W1	GOLDEN SOUND HOLDINGS LTD.	LAUNHARDT HOTEL/ PUB LTD.	260
174493	Food Primary	01/01/02	Web Cafe	Dining Establishment	390 West Hastings St	V6B1K6	VANCOUVER FILM SCHOOL LIMITED		100
118051	Food Primary	01/01/03	Cambie 340	Hotel	340 Cambie Street	V6B2N3	Pub 340 Cambie Holdings Inc.		110
300658	Food Primary	01/01/03	Kitanoya Guu in Gastown	Dining Establishment	105-375 WATER ST	V6B5C6	Kitanoya Marketing Corp.		86
301105	Food Primary	01/01/04	Chambar Restaurant	Dining Establishment	562 Beatty Street	V6B2L3	Chambar Restaurant Corp.		172
181521	Food Primary	01/01/05	Black Frog Eatery	Dining Establishment	108 Cambie Street	V6B2M8	0721415 B.C. Ltd.		85
301439	Food Primary	01/01/05	Brioche Urban Baking	Dining Establishment	401 West Cordova St.	V6B1E5	Brioche Urban Baking Ltd.		28
301743	Food Primary	01/01/05	The Greedy Pig	Dining Establishment	307 W. Cordova St.	V6B1E5	Ripe Red Restaurants Inc.		69

Licence #	Type	Open Date	Establishment Name	Type	Address	Postal Code	Licensee	Third Party Operator	Capacity
178152	Food Primary	01/01/06	Six Acres Cafe	Dining Establishment	203 Carrall St.	V6B2J2	Six Acres Cafe Ltd.		100
183026	Food Primary	01/01/06	ALIBI ROOM	Dining Establishment	157 ALEXANDER ST	V6A1B8	0759041 BC Ltd.		195
200251	Food Primary	01/01/06	Chill Winston	Dining Establishment	3 Alexander Street	V6A1B2	Sojojo Holdings Inc.		304
302068	Food Primary	01/01/06	Salt	Dining Establishment	46 Trounce Alley	V6B2J2	Salt Tasting Room Ltd.		111
301847	Food Primary	01/19/06	Jade Dynasty Restaurant	Dining Establishment	137 East Pender Street	V6A1T6	0880355 B.C. LTD.		90
002249	Liquor Primary	01/01/07	Dominion Hotel	Hotel	216 Abbott St	V6B2K8	Provincial Rental Housing Corporation	Lamplighter Enterprises Ltd.	218
130331	Food Primary	01/01/07	Jules	Dining Establishment	210 Abbott Street	V6B2K8	L'ami Jules Holdings Ltd.		115
178750	Food Primary	01/01/07	La Casita	Dining Establishment	101 W Cordova St	V6B1E1	La Casita Del Marino Mexican Restaurants Ltd.		142
097414	Food Primary	01/01/08	Campagnolo Restaurant	Dining Establishment	1020 / 1022 Main St	V6A2W1	0828946 BC Ltd.		136
024168	Liquor Primary	01/01/08	CAMBIE HOTEL	Hotel	314 CAMBIE ST	V6B2N3	The Cambie Malone's Corporation		191
160915	Food Primary	01/01/08	Revel Room	Dining Establishment	238 Abbott St	V6B2K8	Revel Room Entertainment Ltd.		75
303131	Food Primary	01/01/08	Salty Tongue Cafe	Dining Establishment	212 Carrall St	V6B2J1	520664 B.C. LTD.		59
037381	Food Primary	02/15/08	The Irish Heather Gastro Pub	Lounge	212 CARRALL ST	V6B2J1	520664 B.C. LTD.		136
014783	Liquor Primary	01/01/09	Fortune Sound Club	Cabaret	#300 147 E. Pender Street	V6A1T6	0835501 BC Ltd.		294

Licence #	Type	Open Date	Establishment Name	Type	Address	Postal Code	Licensee	Third Party Operator	Capacity
139155	Liquor Primary	01/01/09	Astoria	Hotel	769 E. Hastings Street	V6A1R3	YANG-MYUNG HOTEL MANAGEMENT LIMITED	Saroop, Dasta	220
187387	Food Primary	01/01/09	Pourhouse Restaurant	Dining Establishment	162 WATER ST	V6B1B2	Talia Jevan Leckie	Pour House Food and Beverage Ltd	113
303320	Food Primary	01/01/09	Nuba Restaurant	Dining Establishment	B1 - 207 W. Hastings Street	V6B1H7	Nuba Restaurant Group Inc.		111
303364	Food Primary	01/01/09	Deacons Corner	Dining Establishment	101 Main Street	V6A2S5	C.V's Global Gourmet Venture Ltd.		110
303495	Food Primary	01/01/09	The Diamond Restaurant	Dining Establishment	6 Powell St	V6A1E7	TOMA THOMAS INC.		97
303524	Food Primary	01/01/09	Vera's Burger Shack	Dining Establishment	213 Carrall St	V6B2J2	Balpar Enterprises Inc.		55
303763	Food Primary	01/01/09	Bao Bei Chinese Brasserie	Dining Establishment	163 Keefer Street	V6A1X3	Bao Bei Chinese Brasserie Inc.		119
303785	Food Primary	01/01/09	Hakone Sushi Restaurant	Dining Establishment	82 Keefer Place	V6B0C9	Yu Hyun Enterprise Ltd.		16
009485	Liquor Primary	01/01/10	Blarney Stone	Dual	216 Carrall Street	V6B2J1	Blarney Stone Pub Inc.		301
004445	Liquor Primary	01/01/10	London Public House	Hotel	700 Main Street	V6A2V7	0866393 BC Ltd	London Public House Ltd.	166
004047	Liquor Primary	01/01/10	Met Pub	Hotel	320 Abbott St	V6B2K9	733603 BC Ltd.	Metropole Enterprises Ltd.	171
083491	Food Primary	01/01/10	Luncheonette	Dining Establishment	127 131 WATER ST	V6B4M3	131 Water Inc.		140
029061	Liquor Primary	01/01/10	Guilt and Company	Lounge	1 Alexander Street (bsmt)	V6A1B2	Haddington Island Holdings Ltd.	Sojo2 Holdings Inc.	110

Licence #	Type	Open Date	Establishment Name	Type	Address	Postal Code	Licensee	Third Party Operator	Capacity
173285	Food Primary	01/01/10	Lanalou's	Dining Establishment	362 Powell St.	V6A1G4	Lanalou's Restaurant Ltd.		100
302602	Food Primary	01/01/10	Rogue Kitchen & Wetbar	Dining Establishment	601 Cordova St W	V6B1G1	Steamworks Restaurant Co. Ltd.		497
303912	Liquor Primary	01/01/10	keefer bar	Lounge	135 Keefer Street	V6A1X3	Keefer Entertainment Ltd.		72
303907	Food Primary	01/01/10	Cork and Fin	Dining Establishment	221 Carrall St	V6B2J2	Cork & Fin Restaurant Inc.		60
303937	Food Primary	01/01/10	Gringo Restaurant	Dining Establishment	27 Trounce Alley	V6B0C4	Gringo Restaurant Inc.		34
303950	Food Primary	01/01/10	Terra Cotta Modern Chinese	Dining Establishment	52 Alexander St.	V6A1B4	Metro Hospitality Group Inc.		110
303978	Food Primary	01/01/10	Acme Cafe	Dining Establishment	51 West Hastings St.	V6B1G4	Acme Cafe Ltd.		48
304058	Food Primary	01/01/10	Calabash Bistro	Dining Establishment	428 Carrall Street	V6B1G6	Calabash Bistro Inc.		125
304080	Food Primary	01/01/10	L'Abattoir Restaurant	Dining Establishment	217 Carrall St	V6B2J2	0850980 B.C. Ltd.		83
304111	Food Primary	01/01/10	Buick 6	Dining Establishment	337 Hastings St. E.	V6A1P3	Buick 6 Restaurant Ltd		75
304197	Food Primary	01/01/10	Meat & Bread	Dining Establishment	370 Cambie Street	V6B2N3	Meat and Bread Sandwich Company Ltd.		48
304268	Food Primary	01/01/10	Peckinpah	Dining Establishment	2 Water Street	V6B0B7	083667 B.C. Ltd.		50
033649	Liquor Primary	01/01/11	Cobalt Hotel	Hotel	917 Main Street	V6A2V8	Northstar International Motor Hotel Ltd.	Kish & Drozd Holdings Ltd.	219
004141	Liquor Primary	01/01/11	New Brandiz Pub	Hotel	122 E Hastings Street	V6A1N4	0847939 BC Ltd.		160

Licence #	Type	Open Date	Establishment Name	Type	Address	Postal Code	Licensee	Third Party Operator	Capacity
001842	Liquor Primary	01/01/11	On the Edge Pub	Hotel	303 Columbia Street	V6A2R7	Columbia Pub Ltd.	Whiskey Dix Night Club Inc.	175
023342	Liquor Primary	01/01/11	American Hotel	Hotel	928 Main Street	V6A2W1	0886030 B.C. LTD.		272
304303	Food Primary	01/01/11	Nicli Antica Pizzeria	Dining Establishment	62 East Cordova St.	V6A1K2	Nicli Antica Pizzeria Inc.		53
304304	Food Primary	01/01/11	Sea Monstr Sushi	Dining Establishment	55 Powell St. Unit #100	V6A1E7	Baby Gorillas Enterprises Inc.		26
304355	Food Primary	01/01/11	Brixton Caffe	Dining Establishment	212 E Georgia St	V6A1Z7	Brixton Cafe Ltd.		60
304539	Food Primary	01/01/11	La Taqueria Pinche Taco Shop	Dining Establishment	322 Hastings St W	V6B1K6	La Taqueria Taco Shop Ltd.		17
304561	Food Primary	01/01/11	Save On Meats	Dining Establishment	43 Hastings St W	V6B1G4	Mark Brand Inc.		46
304615	Food Primary	01/01/11	Milano Boutique Coffee Roasters	Dining Establishment	36 Powell St	V6A1E7	Turk's Coffee House Ltd.		50
304689	Food Primary	01/01/11	Bitter	Dining Establishment	16 West Hastings St.	V6B1G6	Bitter Tasting Room Limited		100
304700	Food Primary	01/01/11	Clough Club	Dining Establishment	212 Abbott St.	V6B2K8	Lamplighter Enterprises Ltd.	0890496 B.C. Ltd.	77
304728	Manufacturer	01/01/11	Vancouver Urban Winery	Manufacturer - Winery	55 Dunlevy Avenue	V6A3A3	Freshtap Pour System Inc.		0
304738	Liquor Primary	01/01/11	The Rickshaw	Cabaret	254 East Hastings Street	V6A1P1	Live In Vancouver Entertainment Inc.		490
304742	Food Primary	01/01/11	Notturmo Cafe	Dining Establishment	280 Carrell St	V6B2J1	McTavish Hospitality Group Inc.		25
304753	Food Primary	01/01/11	The Union	Dining Establishment	219 Union St	V6A2B2	0888234 B.C. Ltd.		94

Licence #	Type	Open Date	Establishment Name	Type	Address	Postal Code	Licensee	Third Party Operator	Capacity
003347	Liquor Primary	01/01/12	The Pint Public House	Hotel	475 Abbott Street	V6B2L2	Abbott and Pender Hospitality Inc.		486
218032	Food Primary	01/01/12	The Flying Pig	Dining Establishment	102 Water Street	V6B1B2	Flying Pig Holdings Ltd.		200
303058	Food Primary	01/01/12	Ask for Luigi Restaurant	Dining Establishment	305 Alexander St.	V6A1C4	Ask for Luigi Restaurant Ltd.		27
303159	Food Primary	01/01/12	Medina	Dining Establishment	556 Beatty St	V6B2L3	Medina Restaurant Corp		48
304831	Food Primary	01/01/12	Catch 122 Cafe	Dining Establishment	122 Hastings St W	V6B1G8	Indispensable Services Ltd.		91
304934	Food Primary	01/01/12	Pizzeria Farina	Dining Establishment	915 Main St	V6A2V8	Farina Pizzeria Ltd.		23
304945	Food Primary	01/01/12	Secret Location	Dining Establishment	1 Water Street	V6B2H9	Secret Location Ventures Ltd.		100
304954	Food Primary	01/01/12	East of Main	Dining Establishment	223 Georgia St. E	V6A1Z6	East of Main Cafe Inc.		38
305033	Food Primary	01/01/12	Wildebeest Restaurant	Dining Establishment	120 Hastings St W	V6B1G8	0921137 B.C. Ltd.		146
305034	Food Primary	01/01/12	EXP Restaurant + Bar	Dining Establishment	309 Pender St. W	V6B1T3	0878509 B.C. Ltd.		60
305059	Food Primary	01/01/12	Sushi Den	Dining Establishment	609 Abbott St	V6B0J4	JJ43 Supplies Ltd.		45
305104	Food Primary	01/01/12	The Parker	Dining Establishment	237 Union Street	V6A3A1	Word of Mouth Restaurant Ltd.		25
305109	Food Primary	01/01/12	The Hastings Warehouse	Dining Establishment	156 Hastings St W	V6B1G8	The Hastings Warehouse Ltd.		93
305110	Food Primary	01/01/12	Lily Mae's	Dining Establishment	12 Powell St	V6A1E7	Lily Mae's Cafe Inc.		25

Licence #	Type	Open Date	Establishment Name	Type	Address	Postal Code	Licensee	Third Party Operator	Capacity
305116	Food Primary	01/01/12	Rodney's Oyster House	Dining Establishment	52 Powell St.	V6A1E7	Rodney's Oyster House (Vancouver) Corp.		100
305129	Food Primary	01/01/12	Tsuki Sushi Bar	Dining Establishment	509 Abbott Street	V6B0J9	9 Reeat Dining Ltd.		25
305187	Food Primary	01/01/12	Rainier Provisions	Dining Establishment	2 Cordova Street West	V6B1C9	Rainier Delicatessen Inc.		132
305216	Food Primary	01/01/12	Dunlevy Snackbar	Dining Establishment	433 Dunlevy Ave	V6A3Y4	Lloyd-Kohls, Theo Alexis		25
305232	Food Primary	01/01/12	Vicino Pastaria & Deli	Dining Establishment	68 Cordova St E	V6A1K2	Vicino Pastaria & Deli Ltd.		26
121813	Liquor Primary	01/01/13	The Portside Pub	Cabaret	7 Alexander St	V6A1B2	Haddington Island Holdings Ltd.	Mark Brand Pub Group Limited	246
300406	Food Primary	01/01/13	Bambudda Restaurant	Dining Establishment	99 Powell St	V6A1E9	Bambudda Restaurant Inc.		116
300430	Liquor Primary	01/01/13	The Alexander	Public House - Neighbourhood	91 Powell St	V6A1E9	0954731 B.C. Ltd.		243
303023	Liquor Primary	01/01/13	The Imperial	Lounge	319 Main Street	V6A2S9	319 Venue Location Inc.	The Imperial Venue Inc.	372
305246	Food Primary	01/01/13	Oyster Express	Dining Establishment	296 Keefer St	V6A1X5	Shawn Donald Chesney, So Ran Im		28
305264	Food Primary	01/01/13	Pidgin	Dining Establishment	350 Carrall Street	V6B2J3	Pidgin Restaurant Ltd.		75
305379	Food Primary	01/01/13	Tuc Craft Kitchen	Dining Establishment	60 Cordova St W	V6B1C9	0936284 B.C. Ltd.		87
305397	Liquor Primary	01/01/13	Empire Night Club	Cabaret	66 Water Street	V6B1A4	Empire Night Club Inc.		300
305483	Food Primary	01/01/13	Cuchillo	Dining Establishment	261 Powell St	V6A1G3	Cobre Restaurants Inc.		101

Licence #	Type	Open Date	Establishment Name	Type	Address	Postal Code	Licensee	Third Party Operator	Capacity
305505	Food Primary	01/01/13	Bestie	Dining Establishment	105 Pender St E	V6A1T6	Bestie Wurst Inc.		25
305527	Food Primary	01/01/13	Mamie Taylor's	Dining Establishment	249/251 Georgia St E	V6A1Z6	0945942 B.C. Ltd.		100
305578	Food Primary	01/01/13	The Emerald	Dining Establishment	555 Gore Ave	V6A2Z6	Zottenberg, Rachel Ruth		184
305591	Food Primary	01/01/13	Burgundy Restaurant	Dining Establishment	47 Hastings St W	V6B1G4	Erica and Lisa Restaurant Group Ltd.		31
305685	Food Primary	01/01/13	Railtown Cafe and Catering	Dining Establishment	397 Railway St.	V6A1A4	0894000 B.C. Ltd.		25
122843	Liquor Primary	01/01/14	Club 23 West	Cabaret	23 W Cordova St	V6B1C8	PHS Community Services Society	Disco Enterprises Incorporated	261
212926	Food Primary	01/01/14	WILD RICE	Dining Establishment	117 W. Pender St	V6B1S4	CHINATOWN BISTRO LTD.		99
302430	Food Primary	01/01/14	The Black Tailed Florist	Dining Establishment	200 332 Water St	V6B1B6	The Black Tailed Florist Inc.		166
305814	Food Primary	01/01/14	Matchstick Coffee Roasters	Dining Establishment	213 East Georgia St	V6A1Z6	Matchstick Coffee Inc.		82
305818	Food Primary	01/01/14	Lost + Found Cafe	Dining Establishment	33 Hastings Street West	V6B1G4	Lost + Found Cafe Inc.		142
305822	Food Primary	01/01/14	Cinara	Dining Establishment	350 Pender St W	V6B1T1	Syme, Lucais		48