"Common-Sense" Neoliberalism: Progressive Conservative Urbanism in Toronto, Canada

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This paper argues that urban neoliberalism can best be understood as a contradictory re-regulation of urban everyday life. Based on an analysis of neoliberalism as a new political economy and as a new set of technologies of power, the paper argues that the urban everyday is the site and product of the neoliberal transformation. Governments and corporations play a key role in redefining the conditions of everyday life through neoliberal policies and business practices. Part of this reorientation of everydayness, however, involves new forms of resistance and opposition, which include the kernel of a possible alternative urbanism. The epochal shift from a Keynesian-Fordist-welfarist to a post-Fordist-workfarist society is reflected in a marked restructuring of everyday life. The shift changes the socioeconomic conditions in cities. It also includes a reorientation of identities, social conflicts, and ideologies towards a more explicitly culturalist differentiation. Social difference does not disappear, but actually becomes more pronounced; however, it gets articulated in or obscured by cultural terms of reference.

The paper looks specifically at Toronto, Ontario, as a case study. An analysis of the explicitly neoliberal politics of the province's Progressive Conservative (Tory) government under Mike Harris, first elected in 1995, demonstrates the pervasive re-regulation of everyday life affecting a wide variety of people in Toronto and elsewhere. Much of this process is directly attributable to provincial policies, a consequence of Canada's constitutional system, which does not give municipalities autonomy but makes them "creatures of provinces." However, the paper also argues that Toronto's elites have aided and abetted the provincial "Common-Sense" Revolution through neoliberal policies and actions on their own. The paper concludes by outlining the emergence of new instances of resistance to the politics of hegemony and catastrophe of urban neoliberalism.

The Short Life and Times of Urban Neoliberalism

On 21 September 2001, a by-election for the provincial legislature of Ontario was held in Toronto. The vote in an East Toronto riding[1] carried a New Democratic Party (NDP) politician, a former mayor of the borough of East York named Michael Prue, to a decisive victory over two high-profile contenders from the Liberal and Progressive Conservative (Tory) parties. Prue, a Social Democrat, received 50% of the popular vote; the candidate of the governing Tory party, Mac

Penney, won only 10% and was even humiliated by the Liberal candidate, who garnered 36%. Prue's electoral success went almost unnoticed in the midst of the world crisis around him, yet the following day this local event triggered television talk shows to contemplate the sudden demise of neoliberalism and neoconservatism (at least in Ontario and Toronto). The neoliberal period—and the Tory Mike Harris government, which had effected massive incisions in the traditionally more welfarist Ontario state—looked as if it was nearing its end. In his acceptance speech, Prue reminded Premier Harris that he had promised to "go after" him three years earlier, when the provincial government amalgamated Prue's hometown, East York, with the new City of Toronto. This, he thought, he would now be able to accomplish in the legislature.

However, three weeks later, on 16 October 2001, Harris resigned. While he was giving a press conference to explain his decision, thousands of demonstrators assembled in downtown Toronto to protest his government's policies. Planned for months and orchestrated under the leadership of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), this demonstration aimed to "shut down" the financial district of Toronto as part of a series of province-wide actions of economic disruption. While some demonstrators claimed—tongue in cheek—that it was their action that brought down the mighty premier of the province, the two events were not causally connected. What was remarkable, though—and widely commented upon by local observers—was the fact that throughout his premiership, Harris had been a symbol of neoliberal societal restructuring, which drew huge protests at every stage of his government's "Common-Sense Revolution" (CSR), so called after the election platform by the same name during the 1995 campaign. This paper traces some of the steps of this "revolution" as they pertain to the urban scale, and particularly to Toronto, Canada's largest city and the capital of Ontario.

The theoretical argument put forth in this paper is that urban neoliberalism can be read as a specific intersection of global—in the sense of both general and worldwide—shifts in the structure of capitalist economies and states with the everyday life of people in cities. As explained in more detail below, this is an extension of Lefebvre's notion of the "urban" as the level of mediation between the global (general) and the personal (lived space) (Kipfer 1998:177). As a state strategy, urban neoliberalism creates new conditions for the accumulation of capital; yet it also inevitably creates more fissures in which urban resistance and social change can take root. For the purposes of this paper, it is assumed that there are two partially contradictory but intertwined modes of explanation, which are useful to consult when it comes to the workings and effects of neoliberalism. One is the neo-Marxist political economy approach, especially its regulationist

tradition; the other is a certain Foucauldian strand in social theory which is concerned with the emergence and spread of new technologies of power, particularly in the urban context. While both of these approaches are insightful and contain particular sorts of merits, it will be argued here that they may be usefully complemented by an examination of transformations of urban everyday life.

This theoretical argument is explicated using a current case study: the neoliberalization of the urban through deliberate policy decisions of a programmatically interventionist but substantively anti-statist, neoliberal government that has been present in Ontario since 1995. This government's actions will be interpreted as creating a policy context though which the everyday lives of Ontarians, and specifically Torontonians, have been fundamentally changed in many ways.

The Political Economy of Urban Neoliberalism

The advance of neoliberalism has been an often coordinated, politically directed, rarely self-propelled, often violent process of change in the global architecture of capitalist production, trade, and consumption. As many would agree, after a quarter century of neoliberal advance, this phenomenon is now historical in at least two ways: it refers to a more or less coherently defined *era* of recent developments in world capitalism; and in debates among critical social theorists and activists, it is a *keyword* with a history of its own.

In the first sense, neoliberalism denotes that period of time that started roughly with the governments of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. This period "swept aside" previously held doubts about the value and power of markets and introduced "its mantras of private and personal responsibility and initiative, deregulation, privatization, liberalization of markets, free trade, downsizing of government, draconian cutbacks in the welfare state and its protections" (Harvey 2000:176). The progression and success of neoliberalism as a set of policies, ideologies, and what Larner (2000) calls "governmentalities" (see below) has been summarily associated with the emergence of a new regime of capitalist accumulation variably called post-Fordist, neo-Fordist, neo-Taylorist, flexible, liberal productivist, and so on (Jessop 2001a, b; Lipietz 2001). Among political economists, this shift has led to a general debate about the value of periodizing (Albritton et al 2001; Candeias and Deppe 2001; Hirsch 2001) and to a specific debate about the boundaries of periods (Amin 1994; Jessop 1993; Peck and Tickell 1994). In addition, the short history of neoliberalism has already produced internal periodizations. For example, Peck and Tickell have introduced the useful distinction between "roll-back neoliberalism"—the dismantling and deregulation of post-WWII Fordist-Keynesian modes of regulation—and "roll-out neoliberalism"

—the active creation of new institutions and regulations of the state and society (Peck and Tickell this volume).

Simultaneously, neoliberalism—together with its "cousin" globalization—has become a major reference point for social theory overall. For instance, in attempting to pinpoint the special characteristics of our current period, theorists have looked at the relationship of neoliberalism as a political project with "a new technological revolution (the 'information revolution'); new managerial achievements; and the new hegemony of finance" (Duménil and Lévy 2001:141; see also Castells 1997). Some debate has taken place on the renewed opening of cleavages, after Fordism, between the "moments of marketization and privatization on the one hand, and the moment of *Vergesellschaftung* [societalization] on the other" (van der Pijl 2001:2). As scholars have assessed the impact of neoliberalism on human societies worldwide, they have pointed to two imbricated yet counterposed dynamics: the continued and accelerated destruction of human and natural communities and the nearly unlimited—and seemingly unopposed—potential for capitalism to unleash its disciplinary regime onto societies on the one hand (Hardt and Negri 2000; van der Pijl 2001), and the renewed capacity of subversive communities to resist the total victory of capitalism at "the end of history" (Bourdieu 1998; Hardt and Negri 2000; Harvey 2000; Klein 2000; Panitch 2001) on the other.

In all of this, debates on *space* have figured prominently in geography and urban studies in particular and the social sciences in general (among the most prominent and influential voices have been David Harvey, Ed Soja, and Neil Smith). After much neglect in the traditional nongeographic disciplines, space has now become a general point of interest in the social sciences, particularly in theories of regulation (Alnasseri et al 2001). More recently, following influential work by Lefebvre (1991), authors in the English-speaking world have moved from a widespread debate on the social production of space to a new interest in *scale* (Brenner 1999; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999a, b; Marston 2000; Smith 1992; Swyngedouw 1997). One aspect of this larger theoretical and empirical debate has been the specific interrelationships of urbanization and neoliberalization or, more specifically, globalization.

Taking Brenner and Theodore's postulations in this volume on the "urbanization of neoliberalism" as a point of departure, this paper looks at a specific case of neoliberal urbanization in Toronto, Canada. Two specific points relevant to my discussion below deserve mentioning. First, I agree with Brenner and Theodore (and others) that neoliberalism comes in many guises, is articulated on multiple spatial scales, and moves through divergent historical trajectories. This means that neoliberalism—like globalization—is not a monolithic affair that impresses itself onto local, regional, or national states, civil societies,

and economies. Instead, it exists through the practices and ideologies of variously scaled fragments of ruling classes, who impose their specific projects onto respective territories and spheres of influence. Second, I agree that there is no such thing as a pure form of neoliberalism that is being "applied" to various places. Rather, there is "a contextual *embeddedness* … defined by the legacies of inherited institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices, and political struggles" (Brenner and Theodore [paper] this volume).

The Foucauldian Critique: Explaining Urban Neoliberalism With Changing Technologies of Power

Theorists critical of traditional political-economy approaches have introduced an alternative view of its emergence as a globally visible set of new technologies of power. With explicit reference to the work of Foucault, it has been suggested that neoliberalism can be understood as policy, ideology, or governmentality (Larner 2000). Particularly important in our context is the notion of neoliberalism as *governmentality*, which refers to the many ways in which neoliberalism emerges on the basis of a restructured political subject: "Neoliberal strategies of rule … encourage people to see themselves as individualized and active subjects responsible for enhancing their own well-being" (Larner 2000:13). In this view, citizens as active agents—or clients—operate on a governance terrain whereon previous distinctions between state, civil society, and market are largely blurred, as "marketization" rules each of those domains and the relationships among them. More than pure ideology or a set of practices thought of as imposed from outside or above, neoliberalism as governmentality becomes an overarching frame of reference for contradictory discursive events that link the everyday life of individuals to the new world of "advanced liberalism."

Isin (1998) has looked at neoliberalism not as merely a prescription for state retreat, but rather as a complex set of *changing technologies of power*. He argues that current capitalist societies have undergone three related shifts towards such new technologies. First, new relationships between expertise and politics place more emphasis on performance, efficiency, and marketability of knowledge. Second, a shift has occurred in the technologies of power towards privatization and away from accountable public processes. Third, Isin (1998) suggests a shift towards a new specification of the subject of government, whereby citizens are redefined as clients and autonomous market participants who are responsible for their own success, health, and well-being.

This interpretation is directly relevant to my case. In Toronto, a set of practices driven by right-of-centre ideologies has created a discursive universe in which accumulation occurs in new ways, where marketization and privatization of previously public services is rampant,

and where new hegemonic discourses based on and accepted by new subjects and collectives have emerged in what is clearly a post-Fordist socioterritorial compromise. Yet, as I hope to show through the discussion of everyday neoliberalism below, Larner's and Isin's views need to be complemented by a perspective that interprets the introduction of neoliberal technologies of power less as a distant state act than as a project of re-regulating the everyday lives of people through ideological/discursive, economic, and political interventions.

The Urban, the Everyday, and Neoliberalism

Urban neoliberalism refers to the *contradictory re-regulation* of everyday life in the city. This requires a brief explanation. Lefebvre thought of the everyday as "the decisive category linking the economy to individual life experiences" (Ronneberger 2002:43). Its emergence as a central category of Lefebvre's thinking is a critique of the productivist and determinist traditions of Marxism in the middle of the 20th century. In the first instance, this leads Lefebvre (1991:89) to a concern with space: "The problematic of space, which subsumes the problems of the urban sphere (the city and its extensions) and of everyday life (programmed consumption), has displaced the problematic of industrialization." Moreover, in Lefebvre's (1972a:105) view, modern societies produce a specific relationship of production and reproduction/consumption, which is reproduced through everyday practices (regulated but not entirely dominated by the state): "Everydayness is the main product of the so-called organized or steered consumer society, and of its decorum: modernity." The emergence of the category of the everyday is directly linked to the differentiation of the concept of social space and the evolution of new forms of (modern) subjectivity. As Ronneberger (2002:44) reminds us, Lefebvre's concept of everydayness "is focused not only upon the sphere of reproduction but takes into consideration the processes through which society as a whole is produced." Caught between the "economic-technological imperatives which colonize space and time" and increasingly rebellious collective social practice, the contours of the everyday are constantly shifting and can never be entirely fixed by social forces interested in the imposition of order (Ronneberger 2002:44). Lefebvre's concept of the everyday is a reflection of the Fordist "societalization" of European societies after World War II. Lefebvre captured the very technologies of power that late 20th-century capitalist states and societies had at their disposal through the channels of mass production, culture, and consumption. The recurring theme of a colonized everyday became a trope of the 1960s cultural revolutions, which have defined a rebellious urbanity since that period. Everydayness is both an imposed reality of mass society and the constantly virulent source of subversive action, never pacified, never resting (Lefebvre 1972a:105).

The upheavals of this societal constellation were urban revolts, which Lefebvre both predicted and fueled through his writing. The countercultural communes and urban alternatives that sprang up everywhere after the 1960s provided an excellent example of the powerful politics of the lived space celebrated by Lefebvre (1991). Everydayness and the politics springing from it during this period were a lively mix of adaptation (for example, the "march through the institutions") and continued radical rebellion (not incidentally, the terrorist Red Army Faction in Germany, for example, had its origins in a series of attacks on department stores, symbols of consumer society). Subsequently, both everydayness and its politics changed shape as the Fordist-Keynesian welfare state made way for the post-Fordist workfare state of our times (Jessop 1993; Peck 2001). Built on technologies of power developed in the previous era, the everyday has now become a space in which individuals (divided and collectivized by class, "race," gender, etc) are suspended in a web of control, homogenization, and controlled isolation on one side and opportunity, identity, and individual expression on the other (at least for the privileged classes, mostly in the urban north). Even though it had already been initiated under Fordist capitalism, the subjectivization and militarization of public space in cities has progressed in leaps and bounds under post-Fordism.

Insofar as they are aggressive extensions of their Fordist-Keynesian predecessors, neoliberal societies are characterized by a propensity to engulf the individual and social collectives with rules that are accepted as naturalized forms of behaviour. During the 1960s, in language that is closely reminiscent of other critical theorists of that era such as Herbert Marcuse, Lefebvre (1972a:200) described this state of affairs as follows:

> *Repression extends to the biological and physiological life, to nature, childhood, education, pedagogy, the entry into life.* It demands abstinence, ascetics, because it succeeds by way of ideology, to present sacrifice as merit and fulfillment of life. In this sense, repression also extends to the ruling classes, at least at certain moments in time. Their "values" and strategies demand discipline and constraint, which are executed into their own ranks. (emphasis in original)

As a mode of regulation, neoliberalism operates to regularize urban everyday life in ways that represent and reproduce the specific form of globalized, unrestrained capitalism that has been crystallizing since the crisis of Fordism. In contrast to the situation during the Fordist period, the workplace is no longer the unrivaled center of regulatory practices in the current era. As SpaceLab (2000:9) insists, the desires and demands of new social movements are being recast into lifestyle differences as the new "flexible" form of neoliberal capitalism evolves: "It is obvious that currently the social position of

subjects does not just depend on their place in the process of work and production, but increasingly also on symbolic forms of distinction, which rest on aesthetic experiences and certain consumption patterns." In this process, the urban replaces the factory as the prevalent location in which these distinctions are produced. With apologies to Harry Braverman, it can be argued metaphorically that the mall has replaced the assembly line as the major purveyor belt of the regulatory regime. This process is part of the overall "global and total production of social space" that characterizes our period and gives global capitalism a new lease on life (Lefebvre 1972b:165). As an important part of this spatialization of industrial society, the urban plays a key role in the regulation of "contemporary" society:

> There is nothing more contradictory than "urbanness." On the one hand, it makes it possible in some degree to deflect class struggles. The city and urban reality can serve to disperse dangerous "elements," and they also facilitate the setting of relatively inoffensive "objectives," such as the improvement of transportation or of other "amenities." On the other hand, the city and its periphery tend to become the arena of kinds of action that can no longer be confined to the traditional locations of the factory or office floor. The city and the urban sphere are thus the setting of struggle; they are also, however, the stakes of that struggle. (Lefebvre 1991:386)

The intermeshing of economic and cultural hegemony on the one hand and sociopolitical control on the other has certainly intensified in the current era (see Smith this volume). However, the state's role in this process is deeply contradictory. On the one hand, it becomes an increasingly punitive rather than a caring institution in the current restructuring process. At the same time, even as issues of police brutality and the fear of crime become ever more salient in the public sphere, the state's ability to protect its citizens from attack is significantly compromised (as witnessed in recent events in the United States from Oklahoma City in 1995 to New York City in 2001) (Castells 2001; Davis 2001).

Everydayness and Urban Resistance

> [E]verything (the "whole") weighs down on the lower or "micro" level, on the local and the localizable—in short, on the sphere of everyday life. Everything (the "whole") also *depends* on this level: exploitation and domination, protection and—inseparably— repression. (Lefebvre 1991:366)

Neoliberal urbanism is grounded upon a restructuring of the political economy as well as on a changing set of technologies of power. Related to both processes are two overlapping critical discourses. On one hand, there is the traditional discourse of *social* critique (*critique*

sociale), which points towards political strategies to oppose exploit-
ation and inequality; on the other hand, there is a *cultural* critique
(*critique artiste*), which deals with aspects of individual and collective
autonomy and self-realization. Both forms of critique must be com-
bined in order to decipher the politics of the neoliberal city (Boltanksi
and Chiapello 2000; Ronneberger forthcoming; SpaceLab 2000). As it
stands, much of urban policy oscillates between punitive local state
measures and an enlightened postexclusionary discourse of social
integration (Keil 2000a; Schmals 2001). To truly achieve a critical
interaction of social and cultural critique, though, such policies must
be superseded through an activated urban political sphere. For Lefebvre,
urban politics is a dynamic and thoroughly contradictory social space:
"[c]aught up in the contradictions between the macrostructures of
capital and state and the microworlds of everyday life, urban politics
is no mere local affair," but rather is multiscalar, potentially uni-
versalist, and most importantly perhaps, transformational (Kipfer
1998:177–178). In the heyday of the 1960s, Lefebvre hailed urban society
as the possible site and process of positive social change. By contrast,
urban society under neoliberalism seems at first glance to have become
a space for the controlled, marketized, consumerist capitalization of
everydayness. Since much of the dirty work of globalization (and
neoliberalization) is done in cities (Keil 2000a), the urban plays a
specific role in the grounding of neoliberal modes of regulation.

Yet the reproduction of capital through the production of urban
space is not a linear, capital-driven process. Urban cultures and
subcultures have been subjected to and have resisted neoliberalism in
its many urban guises. Cities under neoliberal rule continue to be
huge nexuses of mass production and consumption, very much in the
tradition of the Fordist city. In this context, traditional forms of social
criticism—with their focus on power, exploitation, and inequality—
remain a powerful strategic precondition for urban resistance through
class struggle and collective consumption mobilizations. At the same
time, however, cities have also become machines of differentiation,
fueled by contradictory processes of social struggle and conflict.
Typically, postmodern consumerism comes with a distinct dialectics
of resistance (Morris 2001). For example, the "bible" of the anti-
globalization movement, *No Logo*, by Toronto author Naomi Klein
(2000), can be read as an urban manifesto in the tradition of the post-
Lefebvre debate on the right to the city and the systemic lack of urbanity
in our cities (Ronneberger forthcoming). Klein (2000:311) speaks
of the "tension between the commodification and criminalization of
street culture." She (311) goes on to argue:

  It is one of the ironies of our age that now, when the street has
  become the hottest commodity in advertising culture, street culture

itself is under siege. From New York to Vancouver to London, police crackdowns on graffiti, postering, panhandling, sidewalk art, squeegee kids, community gardening and food vendors are rapidly criminalizing everything that is truly street-level in the life of a city.[2]

In this process, the social and the cultural critique are inseparably connected to political strategies. While unionization drives among immigrant workers, citizenship struggles, environmental justice conflicts, and the like have been on the rise in the multicultural urban centres of this period, cultural events as diverse as the music of hiphop and Brit pop, films such as *Fight Club*, ad-busters, culture jamming, "Reclaim the Streets," raves, and full-fledged antiglobalization riots (which generally include diverse forms of cultural expression) provide particularly excellent venues through which the urbanization of neoliberalism and new forms of resistance can be studied (Klein 2000; Morris 2001).

In some of these events, both social and cultural forms of critique are fully developed as discourses of radical change. In others, they are exercises in cooptation and integration. In any case, the urban provides the stage for their development. The "collective daydream" or "large-scale coincidence" of a "Reclaim the Streets" event explicitly challenges the spatialization of power represented by the neoliberalized urban landscape: "Like adbusters, RTSers have transposed the language and tactics of radical ecology into the urban jungle, demanding uncommercialized space in the city as well as natural wilderness in the country or on the seas" (Klein 2000:313).

The "Common-Sense Revolution" (CSR) in Ontario

In what follows, I present a brief heuristic application of the theoretical approaches presented above to the urban impact of the CSR. I will merge the insights of the three previously discussed strands of explanation—political economy, shifts in the technologies of power, and everyday urbanism—into an interpretation of urban neoliberalism in Toronto. Implicitly, I assume the continued relevance of political-economic shifts in the construction of the neoliberal project, but I also acknowledge that, as suggested by some Foucauldian writers, the concrete implementation of new technologies of power has played a key role in these processes of neoliberalization as well. Most importantly, I propose to look at urban neoliberalism as a combination of political-economic restructuring and new technologies of power, which ultimately results in an active re-regulation of the urban everyday and in the concomitant emergence of new forms of resistance and political action by socially and culturally marginalized and attacked constituencies.

Today's Canadian neoliberalism has to be seen before the backdrop of the country's traditional "uneven spatial development" (Peck 2001:224) and its specific history of Fordism and postwelfarism (Peck 2001:213–260; see also Jenson 1989; Shields and Evans 1998; Teeple 1995). One also needs to take into account the tradition of austerity politics that has characterized the federal government, provincial governments, and municipal governments since the mid-1980s (Shields and Evans 1998). Provincial governments have been at the forefront of neoliberal restructuring in Canada; the neoliberal medicine has been prescribed across the country by New Democrat, Progressive Conservative, and Liberal governments alike (Peck 2001; Shields and Evans 1998).

In Ontario, an uncompromisingly neoliberal provincial government under Tory Premier Harris since 1995 has created a political environment reminiscent of Thatcherism and Reaganism. The Tories came to power in a rather surprising election victory on the basis of their CSR election platform. Populist in its appellations, the Tory program was a textbook case of a neoliberal policy strategy and project. It contained many internal contradictions. Despite its embrace of a rhetoric of small government, the Harris cabinet was, in effect, perhaps the most interventionist government this province/city has ever seen. The Ontario Tories preach market liberalism but practice authoritarian and classist fantasies that are bound to generate lasting effects upon Ontario society. Instead of just dismantling the state, the provincial government has inserted itself into the lives of many groups in Ontario society in a recognizable, tangible way. Teachers and school boards, universities, nurses and other health-care professionals, government workers, homeless people, welfare recipients, urban residents, and many other groups have been adversely affected through countless interventionist policies by Ontario's provincial government. Job cuts, environmental and social re-regulation, boundary redrawing of municipal government, welfare cuts, and all manner of restrictive legislation have affected the everyday life of millions of Ontarians over the past six years. In fact, amalgamation has created new and bigger local state institutions. In Toronto, for instance, the number of municipal employees has grown since amalgamation. As the government has implemented new regulatory modes—for example, in education—teaching professionals in schools and universities have reeled under the quotidian effects of changing workloads, stagnating salaries, increased class sizes, shifting curricula, altered governance, and reduced budgets.

The seductive simplicity of the CSR has led to dramatic incisions into the everyday life of many common people in Ontario and Toronto. Overall, the local neoliberal project in Toronto appears as a mix of half-hearted market reforms (including the privatization of Toronto's

collective consumption, a leaner local state, and so forth) and frontal attacks on the poor, the left, labour, and so on. Among the provincial policies since 1995 that have most directly affected the urban are the following: drastic welfare cuts (starting with a 21% cut in benefits in September 1995), the "Safe Street Act" (directed against squeegee kids and panhandlers), the reduction and redesign of local government (Boudreau 2000; Keil 2000b), the amalgamation of hundreds of local governments (Sancton 2000), the reduction of the number of provincial full-time social service positions by 21,000 (Mallan 2001), the introduction of workfare (Peck 2001), the legalization of the sixty-hour work-week (based on total intransigence towards public and private-sector unions and their concerns and demands), the loosening of planning restrictions and the pursuit of an aggressive (sub)urban growth strategy (only recently reined in through a "smart growth" strategy with doubtful credentials), the elimination of all public housing programs and downloading of responsibilities to the local level (Urquhart 2001), the deregulation of the province's environmental regime (Winfield and Jenish 1998), strategic attacks on public-worker unions, the dismantling and systematic underfunding of the education system, the curtailing of school boards and their rights, and the monitoring and harassment of civil society organizations. During the roll-back phase of neoliberalization alone, the Tories rescinded the Planning Act (which had just been reformed under the NDP), killed antiscab legislation, and did away with other comparatively progressive regulations dating back to previous NDP or Liberal governments.

Certain aspects of the Tory agenda can be explained by the sociology of power. The inner circles of Mike Harris' regime, as well as their counterparts in the Toronto elites, were largely drawn from three or four distinctive groups: they tended to be composed of small, nonurban entrepreneurs (such as car salesmen and resort owners); they often displayed an antiurban bias; and they are mostly white, Anglo males. Harris and his inner circle were supported by rabidly neoliberal young right-wing intellectuals and practitioners, who were ideologically tied to ideas of market liberalism and state retrenchment. The modernizing, global appeal of their "reforms" blended in well with the more reactionary, socially conservative, nonurban or even antiurban agenda of the provincial Tory party. Yet rather than separating themselves out from the masses, these "common-sense" revolutionaries attempted to walk a fine populist line based upon a carefully guarded centrist hegemony that captured the spirit of middle Ontario (Dale 1999; see Patten 1996 for a similar analysis of the western Reform Party). Only after the public blamed the water debacle in the small town of Walkerton north of Toronto, where seven people died in 2000, on Tory budget cuts and deregulation did this

populist strategy unravel, as there was then mounting evidence that this state was no good for the people and that this government was associated with the notion of "death" (Salutin 2001:A13).

Urban Neoliberalism in Toronto

In what follows, urban neoliberalism is viewed through six lenses (see Table 1). In joint work with Stefan Kipfer, I have elsewhere developed this view in more detail for the political economy of Canadian urbanism and have suggested that it allows a categorical glimpse into major areas of contradiction in the country's urban system (Keil and Kipfer forthcoming).

- *Changing the space of politics*: The CSR has had severe spatial effects. Amalgamation has been the main venue through which the Harris Tories have "revolutionized" state-society relationships in Ontario. Since the province has sole constitutional jurisdiction over urban affairs in Canada, the shift towards a radical neoliberal agenda has had severe impacts on the province's cities, most notably Toronto. First, the provincial government amalgamated seven local governments in Toronto into one municipality. Secondly, the province downloaded social welfare and transit costs to the city and caused a painful budget crunch at the municipal level. Thirdly, the province has since continued to cut rather than expand the powers of local government to tax or otherwise raise funds in order to meet the growing needs of an expanding world city reality. The Tories gave priority to the amalgamation of mostly large urban regions rather than to rural or exurban municipalities, where their voter base was located in the 1995 and 1999 elections. Mostly white and relatively wealthy voters in the suburbs and small towns of Ontario now determine the political fate of the entire province and its major cities. Tax cuts, law and order, free-market rhetoric, and "small government" are the ingredients in a political stew that has been digested well by voters in the affluent "blubber belts" of Toronto and Ottawa (Dale 1999). It is significant to note, though, that like other neoconservative and neoliberal governments before them, the Harris Tories have made the "political splits"—resting one foot of their platform on a rhetoric of small-town conservatism while placing the other on a radical modernization strategy.
- *The "reluctant global city" strategy*: The same kind of political gymnastics have been present in the Tories' relationship to Toronto as an international city. While widely considered ignorant of urban issues and uncomfortable with, if not antagonistic towards, this metropolis's multiculturality and diversity, the Harris government has consistently pushed Toronto as

Table 1: Six Perspectives on Neoliberal Urbanism in Ontario

	Political Economy	Technologies of Power	Everyday Urbanism and Resistance
Changing the space of politics	Amalgamation, leaner government	Downloading, fewer politicians; Bill 46 (Public Sector Accountability) brings all public sector organizations under strict auditing controls	Suburbanization of the city, but fierce resistance to amalgamation
The "reluctant global city" strategy	Waterfront plan, Olympic bid, the "competitive city"	Urban revanchism (Safe Streets Act) and entrepreneurialism; Toronto Competes and the new general plan	Diversity as public relations strategy, but continued racism in institutions and on the street; new political force in immigrant politics
Bourgeois urbanism	Condominium boom, high-end culture	Gated communities; private policing; end to public housing programs; 60,000 Ontario families evicted in 2000; growth in provincial eviction rate; end of rent control (Walkom 2001)	Priority of housing property in the public mind; renters fight back; homeless activism soars
The rescaling of the urban imaginary	The global region; the learning region; the auto region; leisure economy, sprawl, suburban subdivisions	Re-regulation of the relationship of city and countryside; no development controls; lately: "smart growth"	The reversal of the downtown-centred imaginary brings in new urban actors; struggle over development of the Oak Ridges Moraine
Ecological modernization	Development with instead of against "nature"; privatization of natural resources and services (water, sewers, etc)	De- and re-regulation of everything environmental; ecological citizenship becomes defined through markets	The Tory heartland, the "905" telephone region around Toronto, gears up for protest as their suburban exclusivity is threatened by out-of-control development
New social disparities	The new economy; continentalization; Americanization, Globalization	Cuts to welfare, workforce programs; no public housing, labour standards lowered; working time has increased; health-care for marginal groups has worsened; Bill 57 weakens workers' right to refuse unsafe work; Bill 147 introduces potential sixty-hour work-week	Redefined social norms: welfarism stigmatized, poverty made invisible; strong anti-Tory resistance throughout their mandate; days of action, antiglobalization movement localized in OCAP protests

a location for international capital accumulation. This was nowhere as visible as in the period of the (unsuccessful) bid process for the 2008 Summer Olympics.

- *Bourgeois urbanism*: Reminiscent of their counterparts in Europe, Canadian elites are increasingly presenting themselves as "urban." This is a reversal from earlier North American trends characterized by a middle-class flight to the suburbs. This new trend also goes beyond the traditional left-of-centre middle-class reformism to which Canadian cities were accustomed. Interestingly, the new urbanity of certain elite factions is quite compatible with the continued colonization of the rural countryside through wealthy urban fugitives in their pursuit for gated communities and proximity to luxury "rural" entertainment such as golf courses. The "re-embourgoisement" of the city goes hand in hand with the continued tendency in Canadian capital to reinvest its resource-based superprofits into real estate and the built environment. This tendency also corresponds well with the increased movement to sanitize, control, and sub-urbanize inner-city spaces so as to transform them into sites for global elite culture and spectacle. The Harris government's policies of liberalization of urban development regimes and policing of urban space have strongly supported these general trends.

- *The rescaling of the urban imaginary* (Jessop 1997): The claim for Toronto's global prominence, or at least competitiveness, is now built on the larger region, in which the old core is considered only one among many possible growth poles of economic and residential developments. Rather than being viewed as the core of a regionally or nationally constructed hinterland, Toronto now appears as an almost denationalized throughput node of a global economy, whose flows of capital, people, and information dissolve traditional spatial arrangements of the urban region. On one level, neoliberalism appears as a mode of re-regulation of the city and the countryside, town, and suburbs. This is a central feature of Ontario's neoliberal urbanism. Patches of mass-produced cheap subdivisions continue to eat up Ontario's prime farmland in the most arable areas of the most populous centres of the country. They house both the well-to-do and the newly arrived: Toronto suburbs are often now the ports of entry for new waves of non-European immigration. The Harris government has deliberately resisted any attempts to regulate development in Ontario. They rescinded extensive planning-reform measures just implemented under the previous NDP government and created the conditions for continued sprawl in the province. Only late in their second

mandate did the Tories feebly voice a "smart growth agenda," which—at close inspection—was nothing more than a stepped-up and rationalized road-building program.

- *Ecological modernization*: The Harris Tories have fundamentally affected the societal relationships with nature in the province. Deregulation of the environment and cutbacks in the Ministry of the Environment have proven deadly in Walkerton. Harris has also re-regulated forests, hunting, the land-use process, and conservation, to name just a few environmentally salient policy spheres. The resulting image is again one in which government retreat, ecological modernization, and outright regulatory interventionism are recombined in favour of mostly privileged social groups (such as suburban homeowners). The exurban strategy of development—which attempts to proceed "with" rather than "against" nature—has its inner-city counterpart in diverse "green" strategies for the waterfront, urban wetlands, and a golf course next to the CN Tower in the city's downtown core. With few exceptions, these strategies are mostly apt to increase the role of the neoliberal project in the restructuring of the societal relationships with nature, particularly through marketization and privatization of land, services, and resources.

- *New social disparities*: As the social is now increasingly redefined in cultural terms, difference is also marked more or less in cultural terms (SpaceLab 2000). There is certainly a rising inequality in income distribution, debt, and wealth, accompanied by mounting rifts in labour markets between "good," well-paid, and relatively secure managerial and (selected) professional jobs and a rapidly increasing number of "bad," low-paid, nonunionized, and "casual" (part-time, temporary, or contract) jobs. These new social disparities have mostly been attributed to economic restructuring (layoffs, downsizing), neoliberal policies (tax cuts, cuts to social programs, reduced public employment, financial deregulation, high real interest rates, etc), the heightened influence of aggressive corporate interests on public policy, and the role of finance and speculative business interests in accelerating economic restructuring, prolonging economic stagnation and pushing corporate interests into neoliberal directions.

In virtually all these domains, the Harris Tories have played a decisive role in redefining the norms of poverty, welfarism, workfarism, housing, and so forth. Initial cutbacks to individual welfare payments have been followed by aggressive workfare programs (albeit with spotty implementation records). No public housing has been funded or constructed. Labour standards

have been lowered. Legal working time has increased. General security has decreased. Health care for marginal groups has worsened. While the general conditions for accumulation have improved, the specific conditions of working-class and poor individuals have drastically worsened over the past few years.

Toronto Neoliberalism: Aiding and Abetting

Anyone who says we won't save money under amalgamation is talking horseshit. But we'll never save any money until we get rid of those lefties at city hall. (Mike Harris, quoted in Drainie 2000:78)

Of course, the Harris agenda could only have been successfully implemented with a high degree of collusion and complicity in society and other levels of the state. It is not plausible and not possible to reduce urban neoliberalism to the agenda of a specific provincial government. The province provides the framework and makes the rules within which local actors readjust to the neoliberal regime. Not just reactive victims (as many Torontonians like to present themselves), these local political actors merge their state strategies and projects with those at other scales of the Canadian government system. Clearly, the existence of these various neoliberal strategies and projects does not in itself mean that they will be automatically implemented. On the contrary, these policies are always contested terrains. Individual policy initiatives may be only partly successful and may be articulated with other (compatible or noncompatible) items on the neoliberal agenda (Peck 2001).

At the urban scale, metropolitan Toronto and its successor local state, the new City of Toronto, have been spearheading new public management, budget discipline for social activist and environmental organizations in the city's governance perimeter, and leaner service delivery as mainstays of neoliberal policies for more than a decade (Conway 2000; Kipfer 1998).

Toronto's amalgamation laid the ground for a new political regime in what is now a city of 2.5 million people. The mayoral victory of conservative suburban politician Mel Lastman in 1997 (and his subsequent re-election in late 2000), as well as a solid conservative council majority, signaled that the "exurbanization of provincial politics" found its smaller scale counterpart in the "suburbanization of urban politics" in Toronto. Lastman also represents a similar kind of mix of populism and radical neoliberalism to that encountered at the provincial scale. A former appliance salesman and reputed dealmaker, Lastman has mastered the political skill of pacifying diverse political constituencies with a law-and-order and tax-cut agenda of his own. Often involved in highly publicized political spats with Harris, Lastman postures as the defender of taxpayers and homeowners in

Toronto (alleged victims of provincial downloading and footers of the provincial tax-cutting bill), while at the same time lashing out wildly against the poor and their advocates, making racist statements, and imposing a law-and-order agenda. Lastman also plays the role of the indomitable booster of Toronto, be it for the city's failed bid to host the 2008 Olympics or for the large-scale restructuring of its waterfront.

The city of Toronto's agenda of neoliberal restructuring under Lastman's mayoralty has included the following issues: the rewriting of the City's Official Plan into a document that combines the definition of livable urbanity with the explicit goals of the competitive city; similar initiatives from the economic development office of the City (Toronto Competes, the Toronto Waterfront and Olympic Bid proposals); the restructuring of the workings of the local state administration (with a clear push towards lean government); crackdowns on marginal populations, such as squeegee kids; and so forth. This agenda may be described under the label of the "competitive city," which represents a mix of strategies to create the entrepreneurial city, the city of difference, and the revanchist city (Kipfer and Keil 2002). Other policies that have worked well in conjunction with this agenda include flexible soil-clean-up policies to create new spaces for development in old industrial areas (Desfor and Keil 1999) and the privatization and marketization schemes for the city's water and sewerage system. In all cases, the understanding of what it means to be a citizen, to live everyday life in Toronto, has been shifted strongly to a novel concept of the individualized subject responsible for his or her own well-being, supported largely through the marketplace, market orientation, clientelism, consumer fees, voluntarism, and criminalization of marginal behaviours and spaces.

The neoliberal urban regime in Toronto has to some degree, been a perverse replay of previous traditions of all-partisanship: Lastman has created a new political umbrella for the continuation of previous liberal and social democratic policy traditions where needed. There is a narrative of complicity, a neoliberal storyline to which many subscribe under the hegemony of middle-class urbanism (Isin 1998; Keil 1998). The traditional Toronto liberal compromise has been eclipsed by the new times. This is personified in the decline of the political fortunes of former mayor John Sewell. In some ways, this is not surprising, as it has much to do with the changing demographics and power relations in the city: this kind of liberalism was the program of the inner-city white bourgeoisie. Meanwhile, however, the flag of Toronto's old ("red") Tory political elite—welfare-state-supporting Tories—continues to be carried by former mayor David Crombie, who is in the midst of every major political project in the city. While the trade-union movement is now entirely marginalized in the provincial

regime and has little impact on the city, there is what I would call a peripheral "third-way"-type inclusion of the traditional social-democratic agenda when it is needed for stopgap measures of governance.[3]

Conclusion: From Defense to Resistance

How to be truly critical in an age of mass camp? (Klein 2000:84)

Die Öffnung? Sie hat schon einen Namen: *Das städtische Leben* (oder die städtische Gesellschaft). [The opening? It already has a name: *Urban life* (or urban society).] (Lefebvre 1972a:257)

The main argument in this paper has been that throughout this chain of restructuring and rescaling of spatialized political economies, neoliberal ideological advances, and new technologies of power, a new urban everyday is being formed which dramatically redefines the social and territorial compromise, the mode of regulation, and the lived experiences (the perceived, conceived, and lived spaces) of the city. The Tory CSR has transformed the horizon of individual and collective expectation and has altered urban subjectivity. The Premier and his ministers have repeatedly commented on what they expect to be normal, and on what they expect others—like poor people, workers, or mothers—to view as normal. Remarks on the low price of tuna fish in the face of cuts to welfare, propagating the value of a warm breakfast cooked by stay-at-home mothers in reaction to cuts to school funding, expounding the virtues of home-ownership in an age of nonexistent funding for rental or social housing—these tropes have characterized the government's tenacity in making their policy reforms stick in the minds and practices of people in Ontario. The Harris government continues to cement neoliberal hegemony over Ontarians' everyday lives.

And yet, the hegemony of the CSR is showing signs of distress. What began as the dynamic and contested spirit of the CSR's program for a new "postsocialist" everyday (after five years of social-democratic government) has ended in a politics of fatigue and even failure. For a few short years, Harris appeared—at least in the eyes of his supporters—to have the Midas touch: turning around a floundering economy, stabilizing the provincial budget, ridding the cities of bloated governments, reducing crime, displacing street people and squeegee kids, breaking trade union power in the public sector, and so forth. Now his government is haunted by a series of deadly incidents that have affected regular people in their normal everyday lives: rural citizens die of water contamination; a highly pregnant woman under house arrest for welfare fraud passes away in unbearable summer heat; and the death of a Native protester at the hands of police early in Harris's first legislative period finally seems to have been linked to knowledge in or even orders from the Premier's office.

Nonetheless, the fundamental redesign of social values under the Tory regime has led to entirely new ways of living life in Toronto. It is interesting to note that the CSR represented both "roll-back" and "roll-out" neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell this volume). The speed with which the Tories destroyed and replaced time-honoured and engrained institutions of the welfarist local state took many by surprise. The "red" Tory-Liberal social welfarism and the feeble attempts at social democracy during the second half of the 20th century have given way to a workfarist, revanchist regime; ideologies of municipal service and public government have been replaced by neoliberal governance models and market-driven development schemes. The local state has diversified into a complex web of governance functions spread out over all parts of civil society but tied to the logic and technologies of rule one finds in the market place. The willful subjection of people to ethical laws and norms that demand sacrifices (SpaceLab 2000:10) plays an important role in a regime that pretends to have all opportunities open for all people. Many observers noted the contradiction in the policies of Harris, who saw no problem with raising his own income as premier while simultaneously campaigning against welfare recipients as potentially defrauding the public, cutting back their incomes, and resisting the urging of others to increase the legal minimum wage. Ultimately, the Tory CSR has posed some fundamental democracy-theoretical questions about the meaning and future use of public citizenship. As substantive neoliberal reforms have taken shape, they have also affected the understanding of the process of politics as public and democratic: Harris has governed on the basis of what one critic, in a different context, called "the streamlined, focus-grouped responsiveness of the marketplace" (quoted in Drainie 1998:80).

The CSR occurred under constant fire of resistance, civil disobedience, and alternative developments. Attacks on the legitimacy of public protest challenged but did not break the movement to construct alternatives to "market freedom" and the punitive state. In fact, as the concomitant damages of the neoliberal shift are visited upon large parts of Toronto's and Ontario's population through the Harris regime, critical discourses of all kinds have come into sharp relief: since 1996, Toronto has become a staging ground for large-scale protests against globalization, economic injustice, the housing crisis, the welfare debacle, racism, and—lately—war. The drive and legitimacy for this new mobilization stem from the very contradictions nurtured by the Tory regime. These are the contradictions of everyday life in the city. Accordingly, these mobilizations have moved from the ideological battlefield during the early days of the CSR to the concrete life-worlds of people. One poster sponsored by the Toronto Centre for Social Justice dryly observed: "Bad water. Your tax dollars at work." This

slogan ridiculed the tax-cut policies of the Harris government through the evocation of the damage they caused in the daily lives of people in Ontario.

Insofar as they go beyond the parameters of roll-*back* neoliberalism and engage with the emerging forms of roll-*out* neoliberalism, the current urban mobilizations create potentially new horizons for social change beyond both the Fordist past and the neoliberal present. This change of direction goes along with redefined polities beyond the traditional corporatist Keynesian pillars of the welfare state on the one hand and the neoliberal, asocial atomism on the other. We may see, then, the emergence of a new model of urbanity that far exceeds the mere structures of state and corporate economy and remakes the way we live our life in cities and the fundamental assumptions we make about this life. The right to the city is the right to the liberation of everyday life.

Acknowledgments

Endnotes

[1] "Riding" is the common English Canadian term for electoral districts in federal and provincial elections.

[2] "Squeegee kids" is a common Canadian reference to (mostly) youth who wipe windshields of cars for small change while the drivers of the cars wait at red traffic lights or intersections.

[3] Social-democratic councillors of the New Democratic Party play this role in various policy sectors: Jack Layton covers issues such as homelessness, housing, and the environment; Olivia Chow represents diversity; Kyle Rae stands in for the gay community; Joe Mihevic does health; and so on.

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