

**The Role of Mega-Sport Development  
in Projects of Urban Renewal – Investigating the  
"Lansdowne Partnership Plan" in Ottawa**

by

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## **Abstract**

Cities are attempting to benefit from of the globalized economy by branding themselves as locations for tourism, investment and consumption. Consequently, cities are planning and executing urban expansion projects with a focus on image and marketability—tactics that directly impact how cities are perceived by global and domestic onlookers. This research paper reports on the City of Ottawa's decision to partner with the Ottawa Sports and Entertainments Group (OSEG) in the redevelopment of Lansdowne Park. Specifically, this paper examines local opposition to the redevelopment and motivations behind the City's decision to partner with a private interest group. Core concepts and ideas of the field of urban communication are explored in this research. The findings indicate that the City is taking on characteristics of the entrepreneurial city; rebuilding Lansdowne Park with a focus on image and marketability in order to sell the City as a location for investment, tourism and entertainment.

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## Introduction

The professional sports industry exercises immense power and influence over the decisions of municipal governments. The mere prospect of landing a major league sports franchise will often capture immediate interest from civic leaders. This is due to a perception that professional sports facilities and their surrounding infrastructure are strong drivers of urban revitalization, in both economic and socio-cultural terms. Consequently, cities will invest considerable public funds into sports stadiums believing that they will stimulate recovery of decaying or vacated urban districts (Chapin 2004, 2002; Gibson & Lowes, 2007; Schimmel, 2006). Despite the perceptions that sports facilities can rejuvenate downtown districts and drive urban growth, the evidence suggests that they deliver little economic return (Baade, 1996; Coates & Humphries, 1999; Noll & Zimbalist, 1997). This evidence notwithstanding, many cities continue to fund sports facilities with the hope that they will shine a spotlight on the city, in turn driving economic growth in the surrounding communities. For these reasons, city leaders almost invariably regard professional sports and sport mega-events as essential components to a growing, modern city.

Sports stadia, combined with their surrounding developments, are among the most dominant landmarks on an urban landscape. Trumpbour (2007) argues that sports stadiums fulfill the role that was once filled by the grand cathedrals of centuries ago, both serving as a symbolic feature for a city while also providing a location for the public to gather. However, in the 21st century, the construction of these modern grand cathedrals is often a contentious issue because urban governments are choosing to massively subsidize construction costs in the hopes of making their city more attractive for a sports franchise (Chapin, 2004; Gibson & Lowes, 2007; Lowes, 2002). The reason for these significant public subsidies is that stadiums attract attention, they stimulate urban regeneration, and most importantly, they draw large groups of people to one

location. Commercial interests are peaked when private industries know where masses of people will gather; and that leads to large-scale shopping districts, coffee shops, restaurants and other consumption-biased spaces being built around sports venues. These cultural and economic benefits are promising, and that is why the City of Ottawa chose to move forward with a public-private partnership in its redevelopment of Lansdowne Park.

In late 2007, the City of Ottawa was confronted with a problem that would set the course for a contentious redevelopment of its historic Lansdowne Park. When cracks were discovered in the grandstands of Frank Clair Stadium—the park's centerpiece property—it was evident that a major portion of the stadium's south-side stands would require demolition. Lansdowne Park is an iconic piece of Ottawa's park system and has long been considered a historic jewel in the heart of the City. The park is located in the Glebe, a prime area of old Ottawa, at the intersection of the Rideau Canal and Bank Street. In the years and months since the exit of Ottawa's two Canadian Football League (CFL) franchises ( the "Rough Riders" in 1996 and the "Renegades" in 2006) the park had been falling into disuse and decay. The crumbling state of the stadium prompted the City to initiate a redevelopment review of this publicly owned urban space, which sparked heated debate and organized community opposition against the eventual redevelopment plan.

In brief, the problem confronting Ottawa's city leaders was how to redevelop the iconic space in an appropriate manner—and what constitutes "appropriate". At the forefront was finding a plan that would protect the site's rich heritage while also capitalizing on its potential for economic return. After abandoning a public design competition (titled: "Design Lansdowne"), the City chose to move forward into a public-private partnership with a group of local developers, known as the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG). By March 2008, OSEG had been awarded a new CFL franchise, contingent upon the ownership group securing a

stadium in which to play. The partnership between the City and OSEG—named the Lansdowne Partnership Plan—decided on a redevelopment that includes: a rebuilt stadium, redeveloped grounds with a focus towards residential and commercial use, as well as a newly constructed public park. The City's decision to abandon a public design competition and partner with private developers was met with significant condemnation from community-based groups. Tensions quickly mounted between those in favour of the redevelopment and those who opposed it, culminating in legal challenges that eventually reached the Superior Court of Ontario.

The struggle between the Lansdowne Partnership Plan and local community groups is a classic conflict over the development and use of urban public space. On one side, the Lansdowne Partnership Plan argue that the rational use of the space at Lansdowne Park is to reify the property into a revenue-generating, sports and entertainment facility. On the other side, the community-based groups demand inclusive public consultation in the redevelopment and want the park to remain strictly a public space. These competing visions for urban space are common elements of a redevelopment process in which public space is appropriated and redeveloped in the vision of a private venture (Lowes, 2002).

This research paper explores why mega-sport developments and their attendant entertainment facilities symbolize such a high degree of value to city leaders. I will argue that sports megaprojects, such as the Lansdowne Partnership Plan, play a key role in the cultural and economic growth strategies of the contemporary city. These large-scale entertainment districts are fundamental elements of an entrepreneurial city and key features of place marketing campaigns. The City's decision to partner with OSEG rather than invite public consultation exemplifies a neoliberal approach to urban governance. Such neoliberal policies are exemplified

by gentrified neighbourhoods and spectacular consumption complexes that have a direct impact on urban culture and economic growth.

The redevelopment of Lansdowne Park illustrates a broader, global phenomenon, whereby cities are turning to sport mega-events and their infrastructure to project the image of a world-class city (Bélanger, 2000; Lowes, 2002, 2004; Rowe & McGuirk, 1999; Silk & Andrews, 2006; Waitt, 1999; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). The new Lansdowne Park will represent more than just sports—it will be a consumption-biased entertainment complex. Aside from the stadium, there will be a movie theater, restaurants and a variety of shopping venues—this creates a distinctly consumerist destination, what amounts to an entertainment complex anchored in mega-sport franchises and events.

Against this background this research paper examines strategies of urban renewal and place marketing as they relate to mega-sport development. Specifically, this paper explores how the construction of sports facilities are serving as a catalyst for urban renewal and place promotion; its empirical component develops through a document analysis of Ottawa's Lansdowne Park redevelopment project. As I develop the central concept of each chapter, the Lansdowne Park redevelopment will be used as a point of reference to illustrate key points.

Jacobs (1984), argues that the city is more important than the nation in the global economy, and thus is the key contributor to national prosperity. The work of Jacobs (1984) pioneered further important research into the city (Barke, 1999; Harvey, 1989; Sassen, 2000; Zukin, 1995, 1998), which has contributed to the emergence of urban communication as a field of study. Urban communication is a developing research field which draws on multiple disciplines, including sociology, urban geography and planning, political science, and cultural

studies. Much of the work in this emerging field is concerned with examining culturally produced images, urban landscapes and promotional discourses (Gibson & Lowes, 2007).

Urban governments now face the challenge of growing their city's wealth in a highly competitive global marketplace. As a result, new and innovative tactics are required for cities to compete with each other in a race for economic and cultural growth. Large-scale urban redevelopment projects are often fuelled by mega-sport facilities and frequently used as a means to drive urban expansion (Chapin, 2002, 2004). The increasing promotion of professional sports and entertainment, and its ultimate effects on socio-economic, political and cultural factors poses noteworthy questions in the field of urban communication.

The focus of this research is directed both at the Lansdowne Park redevelopment project itself as well as the local opposition to it. Analysis of court documents, public statements made by various stakeholders (from both booster and opposition camps), websites, scholarly research and coverage in local newspapers will serve to illustrate the ideas put forth in the review of literature pertaining to urban communication. Using the Lansdowne Partnership Plan as a case to refer to—a case in the sense that it is a single phenomenon to examine—the paper develops four major subject areas: the entrepreneurial city, gentrification, neoliberal urban governance and place marketing. This research is important because it surveys a contemporary phenomenon in which municipal governments are turning to mega-sport development to re-organize urban spaces with a bias towards privatization and consumption.

My analysis starts in the next chapter with some preliminary observations about the concept of the entrepreneurial city. I situate Lansdowne Park in the context of the city as spectacle—part of the entrepreneurial city— as a destination for leisure and consumption activities for both tourists and local residents alike. I also examine the economic and cultural

implications to destinations such as these and assess the relevant literature regarding entrepreneurial cities. Chapter 2 provides a concise historical overview of the development and primary uses of Lansdowne Park since its establishment in 1847. I then situate the recent struggle over its redevelopment in the context of competing visions for urban space; whereby residents actively oppose the redesign of public urban property. Later, I undertake an analysis of the economic and cultural implications of the Lansdowne Park redevelopment from the perspective of the opposition groups. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 examine the reasons why the City chose to abandon a public competition and move forward in a public-private partnership. Chapter 3 assesses the political-economic motivations behind the deal, which I will argue were rooted in a neoliberal approach to urban governance. Chapter 4 explores the cultural implications to the redevelopment, specifically with regard to the gentrification of neighbourhoods. Chapter 5 examines the implications of the redevelopment for place marketing and image construction. In the concluding chapter I assess why the Lansdowne Park redevelopment controversy can be seen as a catalyst for economic and cultural growth in Ottawa.

## METHODOLOGY – DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Data collection for the research was derived from both primary and secondary sources. Specifically, primary source material consisted of: court documents, printed media coverage, stakeholders' web sites, video presentations made to city council, artist-depicted images, promotional videos and a report submitted to city council. Secondary sources consisted of scholarly articles and research into the Lansdowne Partnership Plan itself (Hilton, Shepherd & Stoney, 2010; Hudon & Zaato, 2010; Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011). This collection of resources provided a detailed account of the motivations behind the public resistance groups and the implications of the redevelopment to the surrounding community.

Printed coverage of the timeline of events surrounding the redevelopment was retrieved from the database "Canada Newsstand" where articles from the *Ottawa Citizen* and *Ottawa Business Journal* were collected. These sources provide a detailed account of the controversy surrounding the City's deal with OSEG. This includes quotes from stakeholders, motivations for the opposition and a comprehensive timeline of events. Court documents were collected via links from the Friends of Lansdowne website. These documents were crucial in understanding the motivations for opposition on the part of the community group. The courts' decisions are also pertinent to the paper's analysis as they provide a thorough explanation for the rationale behind the City's actions. Stakeholders' websites present a detailed account of each side's position in the development and also describe the competing visions for a new Lansdowne Park. Pertinent websites include those from: the Friends of Lansdowne, OSEG, City of Ottawa, Lansdowne Park and the Glebe Community Association. A video of the Lansdowne Conservancy's proposal to the city council in November 2010 was retrieved from YouTube (lpclansdowne, 2010). The video shows Conservancy coordinator, John Martin, presenting an alternative to the OSEG

redevelopment. This is a key source as the Conservancy no longer maintains a functioning website. Thus, the video presentation to council provides the only publicly accessible account of the group's position and expectations for the redevelopment of Lansdowne Park. Artist-depicted images were retrieved from OSEG and City of Ottawa websites. The City provides 48 images of the planned redevelopment while OSEG provides three on its home webpage. These images reveal detailed depictions from numerous perspectives of the new site and show a vibrant, busy place. Further to these images, OSEG has produced four promotional videos with additional imagery and detailed explanations of the planned redevelopment. The video that was submitted with OSEG's proposal to city council provides extensive detail and explanation of the planned redevelopment—this video was retrieved from YouTube (VideoManOttawa, 2010). The OSEG website also provides two shorter videos and the City provides a brief video consisting of video images. These sources were extremely valuable in discerning how the developers envisioned the redevelopment. Lastly, the "2010 Audit of the Lansdowne Proposal" is a report that was tabled at city council in June 2010, and it states that the City did not provide unreasonable bonuses to OSEG. This report was a key piece of evidence used in the courts' decision to rule against the Friends of Lansdowne.

The secondary sources consisted of three studies that were conducted immediately after the City's deal with OSEG. Krawchenko and Stoney (2011) conducted a study of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in Ottawa and investigated the Lansdowne Partnership Plan as an empirical case. This was a valuable source used in garnering detailed information regarding the particulars of the City's deal with OSEG as well as implications to oppositional discourses. The works from Hudon and Zaato (2010), as well as, Hilton, Shepherd and Stoney (2010) were unpublished documents written for separate presentations to the 82nd Annual Canadian Political Science

Association Conference, June 1-3, 2010, at Concordia University. The information retrieved from these documents was strictly descriptive data regarding the context of Lansdowne Park to Ottawa, the PPP itself and the plans for the redevelopment.

The primary method of data analysis utilized for this research was document analysis. This consisted of a thorough investigation of relevant published information from the start of the redevelopment project in the fall of 2007 to its current state in early 2014. The method of analysis entails a comprehensive examination of each source in order to make sense of the motivations behind the opposition to the redevelopment as well as support for it. Principally, the Lansdowne Park redevelopment was used as a case to refer to as an illustration of the theoretical concepts developed in the paper. In order to illustrate a deeper understanding of how cities integrate sports-mega developments in urban growth strategies, the Lansdowne Park redevelopment was used as a point of reference for discussion, rather than a formal case study.

## CHAPTER 1: THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CITY

This chapter develops the concept of the entrepreneurial city through a discussion of urban governance and the city as spectacle. I argue that the Lansdowne Partnership Plan exhibits many of the traits which are characteristic of the so-called entrepreneurial city. Early in the process, the City of Ottawa made a calculated decision to abandon an open design competition and instead partnered with private business developers to re-build Lansdowne Park. In that single decision, the municipal leaders in Ottawa decided to transform Lansdowne Park into a sports and entertainment district. I argue that this decision is demonstrative of a city that is privileging to the *consumer*, rather than the *citizen* in a major urban redevelopment, a point I return to in the next section of this chapter.

The City and the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG) have promoted the Lansdowne Park redevelopment as a multi-use facility where people can take part in everything from shopping, to seeing a show or relaxing in the park. There is a quote on the OSEG website stating that the new Lansdowne Park will be: "Ottawa's 'Jewel by the Rideau Canal'". This allusion draws on the imagery of world famous urban parks such as Hyde Park in London, England, or New York's Central Park. The difference with Lansdowne Park is the commercial and residential complex that will dominate the park's skyline. The Lansdowne Park planners are attempting to draw on qualities from both Hyde Park and Central Park with respect to its green space and public access. However, a significant difference with Lansdowne Park lies in the integration of a sports and entertainment complex with a condominium tower and residential zone. Throughout the OSEG promotional video (VideoManOttawa, 2010) the developers emphasize how the park will be designed as a public meeting place, where people can go to walk, cycle and relax. Ritchard Brisbin, master plan architect, is quoted as saying: "there are a

number of objectives here we are pursuing, amongst those perhaps the most important is that we give this park back to the public realm, allowing people to take ownership of it"

(VideoManOttawa, 2010).

This is an interesting point, considering that of the 48-acre site, only 18.5-acres will be reserved for the public park (City of Ottawa, 2014). From the Lansdowne Partnership Plan's promotions, the messaging paints an image of the public park being the dominant feature on the landscape. However, the fact is that over 60 per cent of the facility will be privatized and transformed into a commercial and residential complex, while the public park and green space will encompass what's left. This speaks to the fact that the City values the economic component of the redevelopment rather than its cultural benefits. While benefits are to be had in both the cultural and economic realms, the scale of the redevelopment's commercial side reveals that the City and OSEG are more interested in satisfying the consumer than the citizen.

### **The Citizen vs. The Consumer**

"The citizen has been replaced by the consumer as the focal point in public life" (Lowes 2002, p. 117). This observation is made in the context of an environment dominated by consumerism and the constant promotion of consumer goods. Lowes (2002) argues that the sports entertainment industry has become a catalyst for the constant promotion of consumer goods and styles. The industry has achieved a global reach and has become so integrated into the marketplace that these sources of satisfaction lead to the formation of meaning and identity through consumption. This relates to Lansdowne Park, as the crux of redevelopment is rooted in the promotion of sports and entertainment. The City's decision to invest public resources into this mode of redevelopment demonstrates a desire to integrate with the global network of sports and

entertainment. This indicates that the City is taking an entrepreneurial approach to the Lansdowne Park redevelopment, helping to build a space that privileges consumer culture.

Turner (2002) argues that the contemporary city has made a noticeable transition from a centre of production to a location for consumption. Cities have transitioned to tourism, entertainment and foreign and domestic investment to fill the economic shortage left by deindustrialization. This trend has been chronicled most notably by Harvey (1989a, p. 4), who contends that the contemporary city has altered its governing focus in a “reorientation in attitudes”, shifting from providing a management function to fostering the development of a more entrepreneurial culture. Harvey (1989a, p. 4) explains this shift as: “a general consensus emerging throughout the advanced capitalist world that positive benefits are to be had by cities taking an entrepreneurial stance to economic development”. It is also important to note that this shift transcends national boundaries and even holds true across political and ideological spectrums (Harvey, 1989; Hobbs, 2009). Therefore, city leaders around the world are identifying the consumer as a vital asset in economic growth and as a result look to facilitate and benefit from the consumption patterns of the citizenry.

Local governments throughout the advanced capitalist world have made a philosophical shift in urban governance, favouring an outward focus rather than a concentration on the inward issues of the city (Dear & Flusty, 1998; Gibson & Lowes, 2007; Harvey, 1989a). Since the decline of the manufacture sectors within western capitalist cities there has been a shift in focus for urban governments. While issues of the inner city remain a concern for city leaders, there is more of a focus placed on an integration with the global marketplace. In efforts to achieve this integration cities are becoming more entrepreneurial and using a business-like approach to economic growth. Entrepreneurial cities can be characterized by a political shift that is rooted in

the deindustrialization of western economies, which started in the early 1970s. As Gruneau and Whitson (1997, p. 359) explain, by the late "1980s the postwar era of increased international trade was giving way to a post-national economy in which the effective power of governments to control transnational capital was diminished". Since then urban governments have adopted alternative approaches to economic policy, encouraging diversity in modes of accumulation and consumption, while favouring private investment in urban redevelopments.

Traditionally, urban governance focused more directly on its managerial function. Attention was paid to areas such as social welfare, placing a high regard on public services, community groups and public spaces. Harvey (1989a) argues that there has been a distinct transition from this managerial role of urban governance to an entrepreneurial role. Strategies of entrepreneurial urban governance include economic development that is directly related to production and investment, the promotion of new businesses and publicly subsidized infrastructure (Blunkett & Jackson, 1987).

A direct result of this transition can be seen in the urban landscapes of current cities. Entrepreneurial cities are dominated by landscapes of consumption rather than production (Boyer, 1988; Lowes, 2002; Zukin, 1998). Cities that were once heavily reliant on a manufacturing sector are now leveraging the consumption habits of residents to generate economic activity. Lowes (2002, p. 30) notes that "with the decline of industrial production and employment, and the rapid growth of the service sector—it is consumption factors, taste and a certain visual aesthetic that now dominate the urban landscape". The result is downtown cores that are being transformed into "spectacular consumptive environments" (Silk & Andrews, 2006, p. 315), dependent on leisure spaces such as shopping malls, mega sports complexes, gentrified housing and waterfront properties.

Baltimore is an excellent case illustrating how a city can reinvent its economic focus and transform its landscape under the conditions of post-modernity (Harvey, 2001). In the immediate post-war years Baltimore was primarily a hub for industrial activity, however by the 1960s its Inner Harbour was in disuse and began to decay. In the decades that followed, Baltimore was transformed into a model for urban redevelopment and in 2005 was considered one of the top "up-and-coming" tourist destinations in the world (Silk & Andrews, 2006). Baltimore had re-crafted its "armpit-of-the-East image" into a reputation centered on "the spectacular entertainment-oriented space of the Inner Harbour" (Silk, 2004, p. 365).

Ottawa, like Baltimore, was confronted with the same problem of how to revalorize a decaying piece of urban property. While Ottawa is not a former industrial hub like Baltimore, the decaying property at Lansdowne Park can be compared to the neglected space at Baltimore's Inner Harbour. Both properties provided significant value to their respective municipalities. The value of Lansdowne Park was primarily cultural, historical and community-based, while the Inner Harbour provided principally economic value from trade and labour.

Following Baltimore's model for redevelopment, the City of Ottawa is using sports and entertainment as its main driver for economic and cultural growth. A significant feature of the Inner Harbour redevelopment was the construction of two major league sport facilities. Baseball's "Oriole Park" at the Camden Yard Complex combines with football's "M&T Bank Stadium" to anchor Baltimore's "urban revitalization and destination repositioning" (Donovan, 2005). The city leaders in Ottawa are attempting to follow this model in their redevelopment at Lansdowne Park. The stadium construction at Lansdowne Park is the engine driving the entire redevelopment. Much like Baltimore's Inner Harbour, the space at Lansdowne Park will be transformed into a large-scale entertainment complex.

The comparison of Lansdowne Park to Baltimore's Inner Harbour is being made here in order to demonstrate that the city leaders in Ottawa are acting in the same manner that the leaders in Baltimore acted in 1990. "Oriole Park" at the Camden Yard Complex was an economic and cultural driver for the City of Baltimore much like the football stadium at Lansdowne Park is the driver for the redevelopment in Ottawa. The return of the CFL to Ottawa was the linchpin for the Lansdowne Partnership Plan. Without the stadium construction there would be no OSEG and the redevelopment would not be taking the form of a spectacular entertainment complex.

### **City as Spectacle**

Silk and Andrews (2006, p. 315) argue that urban landscapes of contemporary capitalist cities are in the process of, or have already become "spectacular consumptive environments predicated on capital leisure spaces: shopping malls, themed restaurants, bars, theme parks, mega complexes for professional sport franchises, gentrified housing, conference complexes and waterfront pleasure domes". Bélanger (2000) uses the term "spectacularization of urban space" to describe the processes of transforming urban space into landscapes filled with sports complexes, casinos, themed restaurants and megaplexes. This process of transforming the city into a place of spectacle has resulted in a struggle over urban space which is being fought between development boosters and opponents. Turner (2002) suggests that urban spaces geared towards consumption-oriented districts favour the interests of the developers rather than the people of the city. Urbanscapes featuring large-scale shopping districts, casinos, cinemas and professional sports stadia are being constructed to cater specifically to the wealthy and the middle class (Gibson & Lowes, 2007; Smith, 1987; Soja, 1989; Turner, 2002). What these revitalized sections of the city

have in common is their focus on consumption and entertainment as a means to create value to both the city and the citizenry. These landscapes are constructed to fulfill a specific business model and generate revenue for the city. While that may sound appealing to the city councillor who is trying to drive economic growth, the urban activist will argue that these places take away from the public nature of urban space.

Boyer (1993) describes redeveloped segments of the city as being inauthentic representations of the actual city. Urban designs such as these imply that the city functions largely as entertainment and that people are there to visually consume the urban sights and purchase the goods for sale. It is in this sense that the city has become "a place of escape, a wonderland that evades reality, for there is nothing more to think about in pure entertainment (Boyer, 1988, p. 51). Boyer is referring to urban entertainment districts that are built to sell the space as a destination. In such districts the built environment is crafted in the form of a spectacle, designed to dazzle and amaze the visitor. From a business perspective, entertainment districts serve a specific function—to entice people to visit and convince them to spend money when they get there. These spaces serve no practical function to the operation of the city; they don't house community or youth centres, nor do they provide public space for residents. In this sense, such entertainment-biased districts can be seen as inauthentic urban spaces, because they do not serve any operational function to the city, rather their *raison d'etre* is to attract the consumer.

However, from the perspective of many city leaders, both political and business, who endorse this sort of development strategy, such entertainment districts can play a valuable role in fostering economic and cultural growth. While they may not be authentic representations of the city from a traditional sense, they have become common features of the modern, capitalist

urbanscape (Lowes, 2002; Thornley, 2002; Zukin, 1995). A key driver of these spectacular entertainment districts are mega-sports and their surrounding entertainment complexes.

It is almost a truism among boosters that a professional sports franchise can enhance a city's image and bring economic prosperity "through spectacular leisure and consumption-biased developments" (Lowes, 2002, p. 9). Thus, when Ottawa's city leaders were propositioned by OSEG with the opportunity to bring the CFL back, and introduce professional soccer to the City, this brought significant potential for both economic and cultural growth. With a rebuilt stadium, entertainment district, real-estate properties and an urban park, Lansdowne Park is in position to represent the City as a symbol for cultural and economic vibrancy.

The Lansdowne Park redevelopment project appears to fit seamlessly with Hannigan's (1998) conception of the "fantasy city". Hannigan (1998) argues that urban entertainment districts are becoming a distinct urban form and can be identified from a number of distinct features. These entertainment districts have a variety of defining characteristics: (1) they are "theme-o-centric" in that they borrow scripted themes from sports, history or popular entertainment, (2) they endorse around the clock, year-round activities, (3) they combine cultural and leisure components, and (4) they often disregard the character of the wider urban surroundings (Hannigan, 1998).

The Lansdowne Park redevelopment project meets Hannigan's elements of the "Fantasy City". The park is borrowing heavily on the scripts of both sports and history in their branding of the space. The refurbished stadium is the centerpiece of the new park and the two historical buildings are seen as cornerstones of the built environment (VideoManOttawa, 2010). Moreover, the location has been branded as a "place that will be alive 365 days of the year" and will be a non-stop entertainment hub (VideoManOttawa, 2010). The park will also combine public art

with open park space and feature one kilometre of public bench seating. Lastly, the new infrastructure being built at the park does not appear to blend well with the historic Glebe community. The newly build townhomes along Holmwood Ave., along with the high-rise condo building along Bank street are incongruent to the quiet, heritage neighbourhood that currently surrounds the park property.

Furthermore, the conditions of the Lansdowne Park redevelopment closely relate to Hannigan's (2007) observations of typical projects of urban revitalization:

To reignite local economies, urban growth machines embraced a strategy of city building that is rooted in sports, tourism, and entertainment. Initially this revolved around what [Gibson and Lowes (2007)] call 'conspicuous consumption'. Typically, this relied on taxpayer subsidies and public private partnerships to underwrite the construction of urban entertainment centres that include sports stadiums, casinos, megaplex cinemas, virtual reality arcades, aquariums, themed restaurants, and aggressively branded retail outlets. (p. 64)

This correlation of the Lansdowne Park redevelopment project to Hannigan's observations is important because it reveals that the City has chosen to follow a specific model of urban revitalization, one predicated on consumption and spectacle. The City is focusing on the economic benefits of commercial redevelopments in a project that is rooted in sports, entertainment and private investment. Ottawa's leaders are borrowing from the "fantasy city" style of redevelopment, reinvigorating Lansdowne Park with the sparkle and glitter of an entertainment oasis.

Hannigan (2007) argues that urban planners will construct a set of discourses surrounding these redevelopments in order to legitimate the project and secure public support for them going forward. The Lansdowne Partnership Plan has promoted this project through a narrative that speaks of giving the park back to the public, preserving the park's heritage, being a destination for all residents and visitors, and establishing the park as a model for modern-day

innovation (OSEG, 2014; City of Ottawa, 2014). Hannigan (2007) argues that these uniformly positive discourses act to conceal the negative fallouts of fantasy city developments. For example, opposition groups raised the negative impacts to small businesses, the increased air and noise pollution, the impact to the Ottawa Farmer's Market and the detrimental effect to the park's historical character. These competing discourses are a characteristic trait of large-scale urban redevelopment strategies which feature major league sport developments; and in the case of Lansdowne Park, it appears that the City and OSEG were successful in establishing their narrative. With the opposition groups no longer a threat to the redevelopment, the City and OSEG are moving forward in the park's construction and have continued to frame the redevelopment as a major economic and cultural win for the City of Ottawa.

The deindustrialization of economies has impacted more than just economics, but also the cultures of cities (Zukin, 1995). As cities turn to tourism, private investment and entertainment to fill the economic void left by deindustrialization, low income residents are being marginalized in favour of the middle and upper classes. Silk (2004, p. 349) argues that "spaces of corporatized sport production and consumption...can be seen to be destroying the older urban fabric thereby exacerbating structural divisions and creating new lines of inequality." Soja (1989) identifies a dualist nature within the city, where clusters of the very wealthy live alongside the extreme poor. This is common in many downtown districts, where historic neighbourhoods, tourist hot spots and revitalized areas interweave with underprivileged parts of the city. This often leads the wealthy to strengthen their hold on these affluent areas to prevent interaction with impoverished communities (Dear & Flusty, 1998).

In the case of Lansdowne Park, with the inclusion of high-priced condominiums and new town homes, as core features of the project, there is a high probability that ultimately the

redeveloped space will strengthen the upper class' stronghold on the area. The Glebe is considered to be an upper-middle class neighbourhood (ONS, 2014; Symons, 2012) and the redeveloped Lansdowne Park appears to accentuate that lifestyle. If the redevelopment had taken the form of a large urban park, with minimal privatization of the public property, there would be considerable opportunity for the lower class groups to use the space. Instead the redeveloped Lansdowne Park will create a space which marginalizes sectors of society because it is creating space that is privatized. Lansdowne Park was previously 100 per cent public, however it will now become 60 per cent privatized. In this case, the lower classes are being marginalized as their opportunity to use the space will be limited. Meanwhile, the affluent in Ottawa can buy into the Glebe lifestyle, taking ownership the commoditised segments of the redevelopment while strengthening its hold on the community.

That is not to say that the new Lansdowne Park will be a place for only the wealthy. All levels of society will have access to the park space and public vistas. However, ownership of the residential properties will be reserved for the more affluent members of society with the newly built properties being tailored towards the upper and middle classes. Residential properties are priced in the range of \$300,000 to \$1.5 million (Minto, 2014), with retail and restaurant space being a focal point in the surrounding area. However, with a large public park, pathways and bike trails, the space is not strictly a place for consumers.

Establishing Lansdowne Park as an urban entertainment and residential space is touted as a means to attract all levels of economic classes. The upper-middle classes will purchase the high-priced properties, dine in the lavish restaurants and purchase the goods sold in the retail outlets. Meanwhile, there will be green space and public space where people can enjoy the visual components of the park, visit historical buildings and enjoy public art without entering a private

establishment. According to the OSEG website, the redeveloped park will be ideal for "a lunch-hour stroll, a picnic with the family, community events and outdoor festivals. The urban park will be unfenced and welcoming for pedestrians, joggers, rollerbladers and cyclists from the paths along the Queen Elizabeth Driveway" (OSEG, 2014). However, while the opportunity will exist for all classes of society to enjoy the green space, public art and many pathways at Lansdowne, it is evident that the majority of the park is geared towards a consumption-biased space.

In summary, the entrepreneurial city is characterized by a consumer-driven economic model, valuing urban spaces that are geared towards private investment. Cities are increasingly partnering with private developers in large-scale projects that favour retail space and spectacular urban designs. A fundamental aspect of the entrepreneurial city is an approach to urban governance which places a priority on privatization and deregulation. The result is urban redevelopments that are tailored to the consumer rather than the public citizen.

## **Chapter 2: Background and Context of Lansdowne Park**

This chapter is a predominately descriptive account of the use and development of Lansdowne Park over the last 150 years for the purpose of contextualizing its cultural significance to the City of Ottawa. This consists of a brief historical overview of the park including its role as a public gathering place and sporting venue. An account of the conflict between the City and local opposition groups will provide context for the motivations behind the competing visions for the use and development of this public space.

Lansdowne Park is a 40-acre (48-acres after the redevelopment) historic sports, exhibition and entertainment complex located in south central Ottawa, roughly 3 km from Parliament Hill. The surrounding area is a largely upper-middle class residential neighbourhood, known as the Glebe. The area has been a vital part of Ottawa's park system since Canada's Confederation in the late 1800s. The land where the park now sits was deeded by the Dominion government to Bytown in 1847. Since then the park has been used for agricultural shows and public gatherings, the most notable of which was the Central Canada Exhibition, which began in 1888 and continued until 2010. The park was also used on a number of occasions as a gathering point for military personnel. It was used to house soldiers and equipment during the Boer War. Troops gathered at the park before deployment to France during World War I. The park also served as an introduction centre for troops being sent to the battlefields of World War II (Hilton, Shepherd & Stoney, 2010). The site also houses two heritage buildings: the Aberdeen Pavilion, which was built in 1898 for the Central Canada Exhibition, and the Horticulture Building, built as a curling rink and exhibition space in 1914 (Ottawa Lansdowne Park, 2014). The Aberdeen Pavilion hosted the 1904 Stanley Cup championship, which was won by the Ottawa Silver Seven.

Over the last 150 years, Lansdowne Park has held a cultural and historical significance for residents and visitors of Ottawa. Since the park's inauguration, it has been a gathering point for people to meet, enjoy sporting events, recreational activities and civic proceedings. Following its inception in 1847, the park has undergone many changes, and being a publicly owned park, these changes were often contested and debated. The most recent dispute started in May 2007, with a plan conceived by Ottawa's city council to redevelop the park. In response to the deteriorated infrastructure at Frank Clair stadium (the former home of Ottawa's CFL franchises), a public design competition was initiated in October 2007 ("Design Lansdowne"). This resulted in immediate discussion regarding how the City and its communities could work together to decide on the future use of this public space.

With a crumbling stadium, an aging hockey arena, a large parking lot and two heritage buildings, the City commenced its design competition with public consultations and a review of design submissions. However, in May 2008 the process was halted to examine a proposal from a group of local businessmen. The group now known as the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG) was comprised of Minto Chairman and CEO, Roger Greenburg; Ottawa 67's owner, Jeff Hunt; Chairman of the Shenkman Corporation, Bill Shenkman; and president of Trinity Development Group, John Ruddy. The group has since added a fifth member, John Pugh, president of the Ottawa Fury FC soccer club. OSEG had secured a conditional offer from the CFL to bring a franchise back to Ottawa, as long as they had a stadium to play in. This was a key factor in the OSEG bid, as the proposal would not only rebuild the stadium into a world-class facility, but it would also bring back the popular sport of football, which had been part of Ottawa for 104 years (from 1896-1996 and 2002-2006). Professional soccer would also be housed at the new stadium with the Ottawa Fury joining the North American Soccer League in 2014. The City

finalized a deal with OSEG in the spring of 2009 to redevelop a majority of the Lansdowne Park property. The City also initiated a separate design competition and public consultation to help design the remainder of the property, which would take the form of a public park.

Throughout the design competition and after the decision to make a deal with OSEG, there was heated public debate. The plan to redevelop Lansdowne galvanized the communities it impacted and there was little compromise between supporters and opposition groups. Those who opposed the deal continually pointed to the sole-sourcing of the project as well as the abandonment of the public design competition as the main grievances towards the deal. Meanwhile, supporters of the project lauded the deal for its admirable objective of returning CFL to the City. Debates over the project played out in the news-media, city council sessions, public meetings and ultimately reached the Superior Court of Ontario.

### **Summation of the Public Opposition**

Opposition to the Lansdowne Park redevelopment came from a variety of sources. Ottawa city councillor, Clive Doucet, who represented the Glebe in the Capital Ward during the redevelopment negotiations, described the process that led to the OSEG proposal as "corrupt" and an "offense to democracy" (Duffy, 2009). Oppositional sentiments stemmed from a number of factors. Notably, the private nature of the negotiations, the privatization a majority of the site, the relocation of the Horticulture Building (a designated heritage building) and the significant financial public investment. Heritage Canada placed Lansdowne Park on its list of "Top Ten Endangered Places" in August 2010, with a description that states: "massive redevelopment project incompatible with heritage of 142-year-old park—selling a public legacy short" (Heritage

Canada, 2010). Heritage Ottawa was also vocal in opposition, urging the City not to damage the historic nature of the site.

The key factor in the opposition to the project was the manner in which the City came to agreement with OSEG; specifically, the lack of public consultation and transparency to the deal. The public was not included in the City's negotiations and after a prolonged period of closed door meetings, a sole-sourced partnership was agreed upon with OSEG. The Federation of Citizens' Association (FCA) was unanimous in its position that "any discussion concerning the development of Lansdowne Park should be conducted in an open and transparent public forum and not behind closed doors" (Fulton, 2007). Agnes Warda, president of the Glens Community Association, was quoted saying: "Lansdowne has belonged to the people of Ottawa for more than 100 years and any development should include their input. It is a legacy property that deserves thoughtful time and public attention" (Fulton, 2007).

The Glebe Community Association (CGA) echoed these sentiments, criticizing the City's closed door negotiations with OSEG and demanding in October 2009 that that the City re-open a public competition for the redevelopment of the site (Duffy, 2009). These impassioned sentiments demonstrate the importance of Lansdowne Park to area residents. The City's decision to shut the public out of the planning and negotiation process contributed to organized resistance against the redevelopment proposal. Opposition to the project was mobilized in the form of two community groups—*Lansdowne Park Conservancy* and *Friends of Lansdowne*—and both were unsuccessful in court-challenges against the OSEG-led redevelopment. Both were opposed to the private nature of the negotiations and supported a redevelopment that would maintain the site in its 100 per cent public form. The following section will examine the arguments of these two

groups and summarize their legal disputes with the City. This will include a brief discussion of the court decisions and analysis of the implications to the City.

### **Friends of Lansdowne Park**

Friends of Lansdowne Park is a community organization, created in July 2009, in response to mounting public concern over the process undertaken by the City to redevelop Lansdowne Park. The group started as a coalition of people from separate community associations and eventually grew into a city-wide organization. Following a number of meetings and rallies, the community group identified 14 main issues that the City was refusing to address. These issues fell into two main categories: social and political. *Social concerns* included an influx of traffic that would place a large burden on the surrounding community as well as an increase in noise and crowds to the neighbourhood. Further, the Ottawa Farmer's Market would not be able to compete with the chain grocery store proposed for the park. Also, the historic character of the park would be compromised by the influx of retail outlets as well as the relocation of the Horticulture Building next to the Aberdeen Pavilion. *Political concerns* included the lack of public consultation and abandonment of a competitive process to redevelop the space. Further, the heavy burden on taxpayers, the premature approval of the deal and failure to explore alternatives were seen as unacceptable. Lastly, the City would be surrendering over 60 per cent of the park to private interests, under a deal predicated on a return of the CFL, which already failed twice in Ottawa (Friends of Lansdowne Park, 2014).

The Friends of Lansdowne also pointed to the fact that the City had called the park a "crown jewel" yet it had neglected the property at Lansdowne Park for decades (Friends of Lansdowne Park, 2014). The City's choice to abandon a public design competition and partner

with developers on a project that would privatize a majority of the property was not acceptable. The Friends of Lansdowne brought their dispute with the City to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in September 2010, alleging that the City (1) acted in bad faith; (2) gave illegal bonuses to OSEG; and (3) violated its procurement laws (*Friends of Lansdowne Inc. v. Ottawa*, 2011).

In July 2011, Justice Hackland dismissed the application on all fronts. He held that neither the City, the City manager nor any member of council had acted in bad faith. Hackland noted that the City had engaged in significant public consultations prior to its partnership with OSEG and he reasoned that the City was acting in the public's best interest. He also held that there was no "obvious advantage" given to OSEG that could be construed as an illegal bonus (*Friends of Lansdowne Inc. v. Ottawa*, 2011, para.84). The Friends of Lansdowne argued that the City granted a below market lease to OSEG which constituted an illegal bonus. Hackland relied on a June 2010 report from the Ottawa Auditor General (Office of the Auditor General, 2010) which held that the redevelopment plan was sensible with minimal repayment risk . The final argument, claiming that the City violated its procurement laws, was also rejected by Hackland. He held that "the City was lawfully entitled, when acting in good faith to make the decision to depart from the procedures in its procurement bylaw" (*Friends of Lansdowne Inc. v. Ottawa*, 2011, para.84). This is significant, as the court ruled that a city council is not restricted by its own bylaws, as long as it is acting in good faith.

The Friends of Lansdowne challenged this ruling at the Court of Appeal for Ontario in November 2011. Their arguments were identical to those presented to Hackland. In April 2012, the appeal was dismissed in a unanimous decision, adopting Hackland's decisions (*Friends of Lansdowne Inc. v. Ottawa*, 2012). The court did not find any "obvious advantage" given to OSEG (para.46), agreeing with the Auditor General's conclusion that the financial

agreement was sensible. The argument of bad faith was not substantiated (para.70) and the City's breach of its procurement laws were merely technical in nature (*Friends of Lansdowne Inc. v. Ottawa*, 2012, para.73). The Friends of Lansdowne decided against appealing to the Supreme Court of Canada and have since surrendered their legal challenges.

The courts' decisions provide an interesting review of how they interpret public-private partnerships, such as this one. The courts found no evidence that the City or its staff acted in bad faith or provided illegal bonuses to OSEG. Any procurement laws that were breached were technical in nature and did not substantiate the court's intervention. Hackland established a high standard in proving bad faith, requiring the evidence to demonstrate that the City acted other than in the public interest. The courts' decisions demonstrate that City governments are largely left to govern themselves and the courts are not willing, without demonstrable justification, to intervene in municipal affairs. Since the City exhibited a sincere interest in redeveloping Lansdowne Park, their choice of options was not up to the courts to influence.

### **The Lansdowne Park Conservancy**

The Lansdowne Park Conservancy was established in March 2010 and joined the Friends of Lansdowne in opposition to the redevelopment. However, their main focus was to provide an alternative to the OSEG bid. The Conservancy modelled its approach after the Central Park Conservancy in New York, which benefits from extensive support from the municipal government for its operations (Hilton, Shepherd & Stoney, 2010). The group submitted an unsolicited proposal to redevelop Lansdowne Park, in June 2010, twelve days after the City's initial approval of the OSEG plan. The City responded to the Conservancy's bid in August 2010 with a statement that no further bids would be considered. After a second unsuccessful proposal

was submitted in November 2010, the Conservancy applied to the Superior Court of Ontario for a judicial review. Their chief objective was to seek an order that the sole-sourced partnership between the City and OSEG be forced to cease because it was illegal. The court ruled against this argument in the spring of 2012 and an application to the Court of Appeal for Ontario was refused leave on August 28, 2012.

The root of the Conservancy's position lies in the public space of Lansdowne and protecting the legacy of this space from further commercial development. According to the coordinator of the Lansdowne Park Conservancy, the goal of the Conservancy was to "preserve and protect the park for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations" (Ipclansdowne, 2010). In their plan, the Conservancy proposed renovations to the stadium and a greening of the remainder of the park, while protecting the integrity of the two heritage buildings. There was no entertainment district and no condominium tower or townhouse development. The park would remain entirely public and consist predominately of green space. In his closing remarks to the city council, the Conservancy's coordinator posed the question: "who does the council work for, is it the public?... [if so] the answer is clear which way to proceed" (Ipclansdowne, 2010). The objective of the Conservancy was to protect Lansdowne from private ownership and maintain the public legacy of the park for future generations.

### **The Lansdowne Partnership Plan**

With the legal challenges behind them, the City and OSEG were able to continue with their plan to redevelop Lansdowne Park, with construction beginning in May 2012. The project includes a complete overhaul of the park, revitalizing the space into a multi-use property that includes retail, real-estate and mega-sport facilities.

Construction at the Lansdowne property is ongoing as of this writing in early 2014. Although there remains continued social opposition from the Friends of Lansdowne, there is nothing more legally that they can do to stop the redevelopment. The Lansdowne Conservancy no longer maintains its website and appears to have left the fight against the City.

Both the City and OSEG have developed promotional videos and website content that paints a vivid picture of their plans for the redeveloped Lansdowne Park (OSEG, 2014; City of Ottawa, 2014). A recurrent theme from this material is that the site will be a multi-dimensional location for residents and visitors to go shop, play, eat a meal, be entertained, live, work and play (City of Ottawa, 2014). According to the OSEG website the newly renovated space will be a spectacular destination offering live sports and entertainment, shopping, condominium living and a major urban park (Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group, 2014).

### **Competing Visions for Urban Space**

The redevelopment of historic public space inherently involves a struggle over the most appropriate vision for its future use. Prior to the OSEG redevelopment, the use and development of Lansdowne Park maintained the form of a public space. Due to the site's public ownership and importance in the community, area residents expected to be integral in the redevelopment's planning process. Their exclusion from the process and the City's subsequent deal with OSEG led to the mobilization of opposition against the City. Public spaces, such as Lansdowne Park, are common sites of struggle over competing visions because they are "stages on which identities and communities are built, imagined, performed, and fought for" (Rogaly & Qureshi, 2013, p. 423). Glebe residents feel a connection to the past through Lansdowne Park and are fighting to maintain the site's cultural and historical significance. Di Masso, Dixon and Pol (2011) argue

that when public space symbolizes shared historic significance, there will be power struggles over the use and development of that space. In the case of Lansdowne Park, the site's historic and cultural importance was shared by the City and the opposition groups, which contributed to the struggle over the "appropriate" use of the new space.

Conflict between the City and local opposition groups was rooted in their differing visions regarding the use of an iconic urban public space. While the Friends of Lansdowne did not formally express a vision for a redevelopment, they were specific in their disagreements with the OSEG plan. The main concern for the Friends of Lansdowne was the fact that the City abandoned its design competition and then partnered with OSEG without consulting a concerned public (Friend of Lansdowne, 2014; *Friends of Lansdowne Inc. v. Ottawa*, 2011). The City's actions are indicative of a shift towards an entrepreneurial approach to urban governance (Harvey, 1989a). In the sense that choosing to partner with OSEG in a redevelopment that privatizes a majority of the public park, the City is making a statement that urban growth can be achieved through large-scale entertainment districts. It is a signifier of the direction the City is now taking with regard to urban regeneration. Ottawa's leaders are looking to craft an image of the City as being economically vibrant with a growing sports and entertainment scene that is worth investing in and visiting.

This vision was not shared by the Lansdowne Conservancy, which proposed its own redevelopment plan (lpclansdowne, 2010). The Conservancy was in search of a spectacular natural landscape rather than a place of intense entertainment spectacle (lpclansdowne, 2010). For the City, the problem with this plan was a lack of economic benefit or marketable space to reap from the redevelopment.

Issues such as these are at the core of many disputes over the redevelopment of public space (Rogaly & Qureshi, 2013). Many local activists and grassroots movements oppose these trends in support of less expensive leisure and recreation-based uses of downtown space (Lowes, 2002). Mobilized in opposition, these groups seek to protect their urban spaces from large-scale, concrete-laden shopping districts that are focused on consumption, spectacle and profit. However, urban governments cannot pass on the opportunity to transform their decaying properties into spectacles of modernity. These are the signifiers of economic and cultural prosperity in the contemporary city (Gibson & Lowes, 2007). Consequently, city leaders are embracing private partnerships and choosing an entrepreneurial focus in governance as they seek to bring their cities into the 21st century (Chapin, 2002; Harvey, 1989a). The following chapter will examine this transition to privatization and deregulation, two of the central elements of neoliberal urban governance strategies.

### **Chapter 3: Neoliberal Urban Governance**

At the outset this chapter develops the concept of neoliberal urban governance as an articulation of a distinctive political-economic ideology which drives urban redevelopment strategies featuring sports entertainment mega-projects at their core. This is followed by an analysis of the Lansdowne Partnership Plan from the perspective of neoliberal urban governance. In documenting the partnership between the City of Ottawa and the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG), I will argue that the City has taken a neoliberal approach in leading the redevelopment of Lansdowne Park. The OSEG investors have been given control over a majority of Ottawa's most coveted public park and the City has rationalized this partnership based on the hopes of fostering economic and cultural returns. The City is taking a market-led approach to urban redevelopment, turning to privatization and entrepreneurialism in its growth strategy. These are constitutive elements of neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism has become a common frame for understanding and critiquing the experience of urban development over the past twenty years. The concept of neoliberalism as an analytic frame has been applied to many different contexts, such as politics, society, economics or history. For the purposes of this paper, the concept of neoliberalism and its application to urban governance strategies provides a useful conceptual framework to help make sense of the shifting philosophies of urban governance. Exemplified by market-led economic development policies and a more laissez-faire approach to economic development, neoliberalism is a political ideology rooted in policies that favour privatization, deregulation and breaking up of the welfare state (Harvey, 1989a). With western economies relying less on a manufacture base and combined with the evolving conditions of globalization, urban governments began to apply concepts of neoliberalism to solve municipal problems (Harvey 1989a; Gibson & Lowes, 2007).

Traditionally, city governments were tasked with stimulating economic development, managing municipal services and dealing with issues of urban social welfare. This changed, however, in the early 1970s when many capitalist nation states initiated reductions in federal allowances to cities, while also reducing the role of the state in municipal affairs (Harvey, 1989a; Lin & Mele, 2005). Harvey (1989b) argues that this large-scale shift in the federal political climate resulted in cities altering philosophies of urban governance, moving from a managerial role in the post-war years to a rising entrepreneurial focus since the 1970s. The neoliberal consensus that began to take hold within many western nations was cemented by the political rightward shifts of the Reagan and Thatcher administrations in the 1980s (Lowes, 2004; Freidman and Andrews, 2010).

Harvey (1989a) attributes the phenomenon of time-space compression to the shift to flexible accumulation as a contributing factor in the evolution of neoliberal urban policies. The transition from Fordist-Keynesian economic policies (characterized by rigid state control) to a regime of flexible accumulation (globalized accumulation of capital, focus on the service economy and growth of multinational corporations) has influenced the political, social and cultural conditions within the contemporary city (Harvey, 1989a). Time-space compression and flexible accumulation speak to corporations' increasing ability to choose where to locate their head offices and where to employ workforces. In general terms this means that companies are no longer restricted to a specific location or region. As a result, large companies frequently construct factories in overseas locations, employ cost-efficient workforces and establish offices in select cities. Ultimately, time space compression is enabling corporations to acquire a global reach and consequently to achieve flexibility in their accumulation of capital.

Neoliberalism stresses innovation, corporate investment and modernization as essential components required for cities to compete, both nationally and internationally (Harvey, 1989a). The concepts of flexible accumulation and time space compression are relevant in the context of interurban competition, as corporations are open to choose where to locate and invest their capital. Gibson and Lowes (2007, p. 4) label the emergence of interurban competition as "place wars", where cities are in a state of constant competition on a national and international level, for a limited amount of resources. These resources consist primarily of investments from corporations, choosing where to locate head offices and invest their capital. Cities want to be recognized as world-class, boasting highly educated populations, state-of-the-art infrastructure and real-estate. Therefore, time-space compression and flexible accumulation have a direct impact on the development and use of urban landscapes, because the spaces within the city are its most valuable assets. Cities are now confronted with the task of fostering an economic environment that is beneficial to capital investment or else face the possibility of economic or social decline. If one city does not meet the demands of the market, the argument runs, it risks losing investment capital and tourism activity to another city.

Cities now rely heavily on local revenue and therefore must focus more intensely on strategies of economic growth than previous generations. Harvey (1989a) contends that the shift in philosophies of urban governance has resulted in a growing interurban competition for investment, jobs and attention, thus cities are: "playing the capitalist game and performing as agents of discipline for the very processes they are trying to resist" (Harvey, 1989a, p. 5). Cities are now engaged more than ever in rivalries with other cities, states and nations, and a key strategy in this competition is the spatial transformation of public and private spaces (Judd & Simpson, 2003; Rowe & McGuirk, 1999).

Sassen (2001) argues that global cities face the pressure of focusing their key functions on being a command centre for the world economy. In order for cities to compete in the global arena they must become a hub for the financial and services industries. Ultimately, cities are tasked with harbouring a location for high-tech innovation while also becoming a place for consumption and leisure (Silk, 2004). In recent decades, trade and investment have achieved a global reach, bringing wealth to cities that were once considered peripheral, some cities have grown while others have declined (Whitson, 2004). Whitson (2004, p. 1217)) argues that cities must therefore employ entrepreneurial strategies in attracting business investment, particularly the kinds of "post-industrial or knowledge economy businesses that bring with them well paying scientific and professional jobs". This shift in cultural and economic importance within cities is a motive for their use of mega sports as an economic development vehicle (Gibson & Lowes, 2007; Bélanger , 2000; Whitson, 2004).

Bélanger (2000, p. 378) argues that cities are embracing large-scale urban redevelopments that are centered on sports venues as they seek to integrate with the growing entertainment economy; and this is in "response to pressures associated with flexible accumulation and globalization". This is relevant in the context of the Lansdowne Partnership Plan as the City is attempting to leverage the redevelopment of Lansdowne Park into a symbol of economic and cultural vibrancy. Motivations behind the deal with OSEG lie in the fact that the developers will create a world-class entertainment facility—and more importantly—construct high-end condominiums and office spaces. Project boosters argue this will have the effect of infusing the property at Lansdowne Park with exponential value, ripe for corporate and real-estate investment. The multi-use nature of this facility is designed to attract foreign and domestic investment. Further, the rebuilt stadium will attract corporate investment into suites, corporate

boxes and season-tickets. The new space at Lansdowne Park will provide the opportunity for corporate investment which the City anticipates will drive economic growth in the Ottawa region.

Neoliberalism is an ideology that identifies all human behaviour as guided by "rationality, individuality, and self interest" (Peters, 2001, p. vii). Rooted in this idea is the notion that a rational actor will protect their own interests, largely considered as economic self-interest. Corporations are viewed in a similar fashion, assumed to be motivated by rationality, individuality and self interest, the same as an individual (Roe, 2009/10). Thus, under neoliberalism, collectives that are motivated by economic reason are preferred over those which advocate for irrational change. For example, rational behaviour considers the economic implications to an action. Groups advocating for a change that is not economically profitable would therefore be seen as acting irrationally. This can explain why the City chose to partner with OSEG rather than negotiate with community groups whose vision for a redeveloped Lansdowne Park did not include a profit motive.

As cities are increasingly being governed in an entrepreneurial fashion, they are being drawn into partnerships with the private sector (Krawchenko and Stoney, 2011; Thornley, 2002). OSEG and the City share the same business interests, motivated by rationality, individuality and self interest. OSEG's concern in making the Lansdowne Park redevelopment profitable relies heavily on effective management, fiscal responsibility and world-class infrastructure. These "rational" goals correspond to the City's desire to transform the space into a world-class facility that will drive economic and cultural growth. Conversely, community groups such as the Lansdowne Conservancy were not interested in generating profit from the park, rather they wanted a more leisure based space, predicated on open green space. From the City's perspective,

this plan was interpreted as being economically irrational. Therefore, the City's objectives of economic rationality and self-interest were well suited for a business-like partnership with OSEG.

Public Private Partnerships (PPP) are defined as "contractual arrangements between a government and a private party for the provision of assets and the delivery of services that have been traditionally provided by the public sector" (de Bettignies & Ross, 2004, p. 136). The case of the Lansdowne Partnership Plan is a classic example of an infrastructure PPP whereby the City has partnered with OSEG to share the cost of redeveloping the public park.

In Krawchenko and Stoney's (2011) investigation of the Lansdowne Park case they found that the PPP between the City and OSEG lacked transparency throughout the negotiation and planning process. For instance, they note that the total cost of the redevelopment has never been fully disclosed. Further, the public was not involved in any negotiations or planning for the commercial aspect of the redevelopment. This is significant given the historic and cultural significance of Lansdowne Park to the community. Krawchenko and Stoney (2011, p. 86) argue that the lack of public involvement and transparency throughout the planning stages may explain why citizens were suspicious of the process and organized in opposition to the redevelopment.

It has been estimated that the total cost of the project to the City will be \$129 million, with a majority of that to be borrowed for repayment over the next 40 years, making the total cost to City: \$285 million (*Friends of Lansdowne Inc. v. Ottawa*, 2012). Meanwhile, OSEG will pay \$125 million for their allocation of the cost and equity share. OSEG will also pay one dollar per year to lease 10 acres of the Lansdowne property on which they will build the commercial and residential buildings. It has also been reported that OSEG will be awarded a 30-year contract for an undisclosed amount to manage the park (*Friends of Lansdowne Inc. v. Ottawa*, 2012).

This agreement appears equally favourable to both parties, at least on its surface. For instance the City will have its historic park redeveloped while generating an economic return. Further, OSEG benefits from the partnership by sharing the cost with the City, assuming operational authority of the park for at least 30 years while earning profit from its investments. However, Hudson and Zaato (2010) contend that the deal is economically structured more to the benefit OSEG than the City, as the City is assuming more of the cost and risk. Meanwhile, OSEG can make a profit for 30 years before the City will see financial return. Krawchenko and Stoney (2011) argue that the Ottawa public has not been fully engaged in the negotiations with OSEG, specifically regarding the public cost for the project as well as any comparative options from other proposals. Obtaining access to this information was a key component of the lawsuit taken against the City.

The Lansdowne Partnership Plan is a case that exemplifies the tensions and conflicting motives that often arise in municipal PPPs. Whereas OSEG's primary focus is towards profit, minimization of risk and timeliness, the City of Ottawa is tasked with maintaining due process, protecting the public interest and ensuring value for its investment. In this case, the City's decision to abandon its open and public competition effectively removed the public from the redevelopment and planning process while placing significant authority in the hands of the OSEG developers.

Krawchenko and Stoney (2011, p. 75) argue that there is a fundamental tension within PPPs "between the inscrutable elements of corporate-style decision-making and public's perceived 'right to know'". A public competition would have reduced costs to the City, improved efficiency and established a level playing field for all the stakeholders. However, the developers created a sense of urgency by offering their bid as a limited time offer and threatened to

withdraw if a competitive process was initiated (Krawchenko & Stoney, 2010). The City chose to partner with OSEG following brief deliberation and the result was a redevelopment plan that excluded the public from a majority of the planning process.

This process suggests that the City had a pre-conceived idea of the kind of redevelopment it wanted. Although it was in the process of an open competition, there was little hesitation from the City's part to halt the submission of new proposals and negotiate a deal with OSEG. The private nature of the negotiations (a constitutive feature of neoliberal governance) also suggests that the City was aware of the impending public opposition to the OSEG plan. It shows that the City is aware of the kinds of tactics it must utilize in order to bring Ottawa onto a level playing field with Canadian "world-class" cities, such as, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

Gotham and Haubert (2007, p. 27) apply the concept of "neoliberal revitalization" to explain the role of "state devolution, deregulation, and privatization" in pressuring municipal governments to integrate innovative methods of revitalization. Although Gotham and Haubert (2007) examine the role of casinos and prisons in urban regeneration, mega-sport developments are also serving a major role in projects of urban revitalization (Bélanger, 2000; Chapin, 2004; Smith, 2008). While it has been argued that sports facilities are poor economic investments, (Baade, 1996; Coates & Humphries, 1999; Noll & Zimbalist, 1997), cities continue to perceive them as a mechanism for economic growth (Chapin, 2004, 2002). For example, in Friedman and Andrews' (2010) examination of Nationals Park in Washington D.C., they discuss the city's \$611 million funding for the stadium's construction. This was an important action, as it showed that the city leaders valued the stadium, which would largely benefit visitors and business interests, over the pressing needs of D.C. residents (Friedman & Andrews, 2010). This case epitomizes the complex struggle that city leaders are faced with in the entrepreneurial economy. Although

nearly 20 per cent of Washington residents live in poverty (Lazere, 2007), the city provided the largest public subsidy to a sports facility ever in North America (Friedman & Andrews, 2010).

Chapin (2004) argues that since the mid 1990s there has been a shift in rationale amongst advocates for publicly funded sports stadiums. In the 1970s and '80s, the argument in favour of these investments emphasized indirect economic returns, such as spin-offs, job creation and tax revenue (Chapin, 2004). Economic spin-offs from sports facilities can impact many industries that rely on professional sports, namely, local and national print and broadcast media, local food industries, construction companies, marketing and advertising firms and the transportation industry. However, the current economic argument is based on a "development rationale" as a majority of these sports-based facilities rests upon the idea of "district development" (Chapin, 2004, p. 194). Not only will the sports facility bring indirect economic returns, but it will drive the revitalization of urban neighbourhoods. In the case of Lansdowne Park, support for the redevelopment follows this argument. Lansdowne Park's new stadium and surrounding retail centre will stimulate indirect economic return, but more importantly, it will redevelop the physical landscape of one of the City's most coveted properties. The motivations behind the City's partnership with OSEG can be directly associated to this argument. While the City has invested a significant amount of money and resources into the redevelopment, the promise of revitalizing this historic, city-owned property is just as important a consideration as the indirect economic return it may provide.

The Lansdowne Partnership Plan presents an exemplar case of a neoliberal approach to large-scale urban redevelopment. The City has taken an entrepreneurial focus to the project following its partnership with OSEG. In doing so, the City has committed a significant amount of resources into a public-private partnership that will see Lansdowne Park transformed into an

urban entertainment district. The City's focus on economic growth and willingness to partner in a business-like venture signifies a shift to neoliberal urban governance. A by-product of neoliberalism is the gentrification of neighbourhoods and the infusion of value to decaying urban property. As cities and private developers rebuild urban spaces, downtown districts are transformed into commodities for investment. Segments of downtown properties are reinvented and infused with value resulting in ancillary impacts to the rest of the city.

Every city has its own unique qualities that make it distinct in relation to global counterparts. In other words, every city speaks with a unique voice that can only be created by the place of its origin. These distinct voices are a product of the urban landscape, the architecture, the history, the people and the culture of the city. In the case of Ottawa, the City's investment into a redevelopment that is focused on spectacle, tourism and consumption demonstrates that Ottawa is expressing itself with a similar, yet unique voice as compared to many other gentrifying cities.

The next chapter will examine the process of gentrification and its effects on the social, cultural, economic and physical conditions of the contemporary city. Gentrified neighbourhoods are a product of the entrepreneurial city and a necessary element of urban growth. These redevelopments influence the economic structure of surrounding areas while impacting the socio-cultural fabric of the neighbourhood.

## Chapter 4: Gentrification

This chapter examines a range of economic and social impacts of the redevelopment of Lansdowne Park from the perspective of gentrification theory. The park's redevelopment illustrates a process that has taken place in many contemporary cities whereby a devalued segment of urban property is infused with value through a sports-based development mega-project. The space at Lansdowne Park will be transformed from a location of urban decay to an upscale real-estate and sports entertainment complex. For the purposes of this analysis, I will argue that the gentrification at Lansdowne Park is motivated by aspirations of both economic and cultural growth. Economic returns will be collected from the redevelopment itself while cultural returns will be gained through sporting events, consumption and urban aesthetics.

Gentrification is a process that involves the redevelopment of decaying urban property, revitalizing the landscape and infusing it with value. There is an intrinsic monetary value in rebuilt properties as they can be sold or leased for an higher cost. Cultural value of gentrified neighbourhoods are manifest in the urban aesthetics and distinct architecture often incorporated in contemporary redevelopments. New infrastructure that houses entertainment and shopping districts provide a sense of meaning through consumption.

In the late 1970s, cities across North America, Europe and Australia initiated significant investments into the built environment, resulting in projects of large-scale urban revitalization—the central products of gentrification (Hobbs, 2009; Lowes, 2002). Ley (2003, p. 2527) identifies gentrification as a signifier of the entrepreneurial city; seeing it as a “transition of inner-city neighbourhoods from a status of relative poverty and limited property investment to a state of commoditisation and reinvestment”. As the trend of suburbanization increased in the immediate post-war years, there was an exodus of the upper-middle classes from urban centres. Downtown

properties slowly fell into disuse and were soon populated by low-income residents, resulting in a widespread devaluation of urban property. With a rising stock of inexpensive urban space, developers and city leaders identified an opportunity to accumulate capital through investment in these decaying properties. The result was a spike in urban redevelopments and the subsequent re-infusion of value to many downtown districts.

Hamnett (1991) argues that the phenomenon of gentrification occurs under a combination of social, cultural, economic and physical conditions. He identifies gentrification as the middle-upper classes taking back decaying parts of the inner city and removing the original occupants who often belong to the working or lower classes. In the process, decaying housing stocks and their surrounding areas are upgraded and renovated, revalorizing properties to meet the high-end standards of the new tenants. As neighbourhoods are gentrified, they undergo a considerable appreciation of value and eventually transition from a market of renting to owning (Atkinson, 2003; Hamnett, 1991; Ley, 1986; Lowes 2002; Smith, 1987). Smith (1987) argues that while gentrification includes inherent social implications, there is a significant alteration in the aesthetic physical environment and also an economic shift in the land and real estate markets.

### **Motivations for Gentrification**

The impetus for gentrification is a transitioning economy from one which is primarily manufacture-based to one more focused on knowledge and service. The late 1970s were significant years in the transition to the post-industrial economy, as decisions for land use in cities were being motivated by influences of consumption rather than production (Ley, 1986). According to Ley (1980), gentrification can be explained from an economic perspective, based on patterns of consumption and production; however he emphasizes factors of social and cultural

concern as having a more influential role. Thus, a change in cultural trends and shifting consumer habits has contributed to the rise of gentrification.

Ley (2003) further contends that project boosters are more focused on projecting glorified images of gentrified neighbourhoods than promoting how the new spaces will function within the social context of the community. As he (Ley, 2003, p. 2529) describes it, the restructuring of urban space in contemporary cities is more about the "exaltation of representation over function". This point describes the aspirations of entrepreneurial cities, which place high importance on spaces that can function in the global economy rather than spaces that can function within the social and cultural contexts of the city. The result of this bias is a triumph of image over utility in a glorification of spectacular entertainment. This speaks to the view that when cities partner with private industry to construct large developments, the result is often high-priced property that can only be purchased by a minority of society. In many cases, these luxury dwellings are unaffordable for even the middle class and therefore these locations become neighbourhoods for society's elite. The resulting relocation of the rich into the city centres also pushes the poor and middle class to the periphery (Atkinson, 2003).

The question of who benefits from gentrification is not easily answered. Atkinson (2003) writes that the process of gentrification can be seen as either a positive or negative for the city. On one side, the city is being reinvigorated, infused with valuable modern infrastructure. While on the other side, people are being displaced and the city is being robbed of its authenticity and energy. There is no denying that the aesthetic aspect of gentrification is impressive and the improvements to the urban landscape are difficult to challenge. However, as Atkinson (2003, p. 2343) states, "the process has led to less perceptible population displacement and internalised social conflicts over the ownership of local space." This speaks to the struggle that often plays

out within the political and social arenas, where competing visions for urban space will dominate the early stages of a redevelopment.

The gentrification phenomenon is occurring for various reasons, and a driving force behind it is a combination of economic and cultural change. Lowes (2002) acknowledges that a consensus is lacking within the academic community as to a distinct definition of gentrification. He identifies two competing explanations for why gentrification is occurring on such a prevailing scale: first is the "rent gap" and second is "the production of gentrifiers" (Lowes, 2002, p. 27). The rent gap is in essence the result of suburbanization, as property developments move outside the inner city, many downtown properties fall into disrepair and abandonment. The result is large portions of urban property not holding the value that they once had or have the potential to have. Lowes (2002, p. 28) explains the rent gap as: "the difference between the capitalized ground rent under present land use and the potential ground rent under a more profitable function". Therefore, developers see great potential for profit when investing in decaying pieces of urban property, as the spaces can be transformed into high-rent upscale properties and infused with value.

Lowes' (2002) second explanation for gentrification involves shifting consumer patterns in the land and housing markets amongst the middle and upper classes. Accordingly, the landscapes created through gentrified properties are symbolic of the shifting consumption patterns in entrepreneurial cities. The gentrification of inner-cities has therefore created a demand within the upper-middle classes of people who now want to live in these high-priced, luxury residences that are located in newly redeveloped properties. Lowes (2002, pp. 28-29) suggests that these high-class consumers form their identities through a process of "conspicuous consumption" as he describes: "these people use the strategy of gentrification to be distinctive

within their own cultural context, and to demarcate themselves from others". Thus, the landscapes created by gentrification are markers that point to shifting consumer patterns within cities. This speaks to Ley's (1980, pp. 242-243) contention that individuals in the higher classes place a greater importance on the aesthetic: "with a secure economic base, they represent the present day counterparts of Veblen's leisure class, displaying the canons of good taste, intent upon the aesthetic. Their lifestyle is ... consumption and status orientated in pursuit of self-actualization".

In Veblen's (1899) survey of capitalist society at the turn of the 20th century, he identifies an evolving leisure class whose members do not work, but accumulate wealth through an appropriation of capital surpluses. Trigg (2001) argues that when societies consistently produce surpluses there is an increasing importance of the affiliation between private property and status. As Veblen (1899, p. 29) describes it: "it becomes indispensable to accumulate, to acquire property, in order to retain one's good name." This observation appears to hold true in Lowes' (2002) description of shifting consumer patterns. The same race to accumulate capital is taking place in contemporary contexts. The difference in contemporary society is the fact that more segments of the population are participating in the accumulation of capital, it is not just the super rich, and the motivations are primarily economic rather than the promotion of status.

Therefore, gentrification represents changes in many levels and aspects of society. It reflects the changes of post-industrial economic and social structures and these changes are manifested in the physical landscapes of urban space. In the context of the Lansdowne Park redevelopment, the gentrification in this section of the Glebe has been motivated not only by economic interests but also the cultural and social value of the historic property.

## **Gentrification at Lansdowne Park**

The redevelopment at Lansdowne Park is a classic case of gentrification, illustrating both the rent gap and the shifting consumer habits of the upper-middle classes. The Glebe neighbourhood is located in a historic and relatively affluent part of Ottawa. It is generally regarded as an affluent community with a concentration of upper-middle class residents. According to the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study (2014), the Glebe-Dows Lake neighbourhood ranks in the city's top 20 per cent for socio-economic status. The Glebe was also on a list of Ottawa's richest neighbourhoods, based on a survey of average household net worth, compiled by Environics Analytics (Symons, 2012). Thus, the Glebe community is largely comprised of the common gentrifiers, described by Filion (1991) as typically young, well educated and employed in white-collar occupations.

The Lansdowne Park redevelopment will provide an influx of high-priced condominiums to an already well-established neighbourhood, thus enabling real-estate consumers to buy-in to the Glebe community. The upscale properties that will line the north and west borders of the new Lansdowne Park will meet the demand that Lowes (2002) identifies as a growing culture of conspicuous consumption. The rent gap theory also applies to the Lansdowne Park redevelopment, as the space was previously in disuse and cost the City an estimated \$3-4 million annually to maintain in its underdeveloped and decaying form (Krawchenko & Stoney, 2010). While the property at Lansdowne Park held little value prior to redevelopment, the potential value for the stadium and surrounding property was extremely high. The City and OSEG developers therefore saw a great potential to infuse the property with significant value.

The desire to accumulate capital in the Glebe is illustrated by the conversion of Lansdowne Park into a multi-layered commodity. From an economic perspective, this is

significant to the surrounding neighborhood. The area's physical environment is largely comprised of an aging housing stock that will soon be infused with value. Glebe home owners along the north and west edges of Lansdowne Park should see an eventual rise in their property values following the redevelopment. While residents of the Glebe will likely see an economic gain in their property values, renters may not be as fortunate. New renters to the neighbourhood surrounding Lansdowne Park will likely see increases in their cost of living when the development is completed. Thus, the majority of economic benefit from the redevelopment will be reaped by Glebe home owners, investors and the development partnership.

Cultural benefits from the redevelopment will be seen in the spaces and experiences created by the new Lansdowne Park. There are various of social and cultural benefits that professional sports franchises bring to the community. Some argue that local teams serve a role in building local identity and culture, through shared memories and experiences (Groothuis, Johnson, and Whitehead 2004; Jarvie, 2003). Schimmel (2006, p. 166) states that “sport developments almost always appeal to a sense of solidarity based on territory and a sense of community.” Although football in Ottawa has failed in the past, there is an argument to be made that the new franchise (the "RedBlacks") will foster a sense of local identity and community around the team. Moreover, the stadium itself has the potential to serve as a symbol to the community, due to its visibility and distinctiveness on the landscape:

"The design for the stadium component will transform what is now an eyesore into an architectural icon, paying homage to the Ottawa Valley's historic roots in the lumber trade, the completely rebuilt south side stands will grow out of the canal and natural edge with a sweeping open wood slat envelope, presenting a striking new face to the passing tour boats, cyclists, pedestrians and motorists" (VideoManOttawa, 2010).

The new stadium at Lansdowne Park will be a unique structure that has the potential to foster pride within the community. Such facilities have been shown to promote a sense of place and

have the ability to symbolize a city's identity, representing a "source of intense localism" (Baker 2004, p. 31).

From this perspective, which certainly typifies the boosterist arguments in favour of the project, the Lansdowne Park redevelopment has the potential to serve both an economic and cultural function for the people of the Glebe, as well as the City and OSEG. The gentrified sections of Lansdowne Park will infuse the surrounding neighbourhood with value while also adding to the cultural significance of the area.

In summary, the gentrification of Lansdowne Park was initiated primarily from economic motivations, but also serves to foster civic pride and identity to those living in proximity to the redevelopment. Economic incentive for the redevelopment includes the potential to market the City through the spectacular images and symbols originating from Lansdowne Park. The City has invested a large amount of public money into the redevelopment itself and will be looking to capitalize in every way possible in order to see a return on their investment. The next chapter will explore strategies of place marketing and survey how the Lansdowne Park redevelopment has the potential to brand Ottawa as an energetic economic hub with rich cultural diversity.

## Chapter 5: Place Marketing

In the previous chapters I have argued that the City of Ottawa is applying neoliberal practices to urban governance with respect to the redevelopment of Lansdowne Park. The City's entrepreneurial approach to urban growth has led to the gentrification of a historic piece of property in the Glebe. The intended economic and cultural growth resulting from the Lansdowne Park redevelopment will ultimately lead to a re-imagining of the City as a location for tourism and investment. This chapter will discuss the practice of place marketing and explore urban branding in the context of the entrepreneurial city. Gentrified neighbourhoods and urban entertainment districts—essential tenets of the entrepreneurial city—produce spectacular urban imagery that can serve as symbols for a city's economic and cultural vibrancy. These images are projected to local and global audiences as part of a place marketing strategy to attract tourism and investment. I will argue that the Lansdowne Park redevelopment can serve as a vehicle for the promotion of the City. The reinvigorated spaces have the potential to capture images of economic and cultural vibrancy through its spectacular built environment, sports events and entertainment district.

In the increasingly globalized marketplace, cities are recognizing the need to advertise themselves as a location for investment and a destination for tourism. Due to this reality, cities are planning and executing redevelopments with a focus on image and marketability. Place marketing and urban branding serve to establish a desired narrative of place, to illustrate the virtues of a city. Urban images serve a basic function in this process as they help simplify the complex nature of urban environments. Imagery is the front line of place promotion as it serves to foster meaning in relation to the space it reflects. The following discussion will explore the concept of place promotion through an examination of place marketing and the strategy of urban branding.

Place marketing strategies are fundamental aspects of an entrepreneurial city and signify the need for cities to sell themselves as products to be consumed. Virgo and de Chernatony (2005) contend that there is a rise in urban branding campaigns due to the fact that cities are being tasked with generating their own revenues as federal governments are increasingly lowering municipal subsidies. This is pushing city leaders to look for alternative revenue streams, and branding their cities produces a tangible return on investment.

For the purposes of this discussion, place marketing is defined as a method for publicising a place or redevelopment to potential investors, tourists and existing residents (Oakley, 2007). As a strategy, place marketing employs branding and advertising techniques to promote the qualities of, and encourage local support for, an urban redevelopment (Hubbard, 1996). Further, place marketing strategies involve more than just the crafting and promotion of a city's image; at its core it is about the creation, or re-creation of an image of place within the city (Kavaratzis, 2007). Thus, place marketing is about fostering a particular sense of meaning in relation to a place. In the context of the entrepreneurial city, successful place marketing will associate economic vibrancy, entertainment and tourism to the images of the place. Whitson (2004) contends that cities are actively promoting their urbanscapes in an effort to attract business investments and to compete in the post-industrial "knowledge economy". While modern infrastructure and efficient transportation networks are essential to the success of a growing city, projecting an image as a location of entertainment and culture will help attract tourism and investment.

Gentrified neighbourhoods and commoditised urban spaces are the basic products of an entrepreneurial city. Like most products these urban commodities must be marketed and sold to prospective investors and customers. Jessop (1997) argues that there is one distinct feature of an

entrepreneurial city: a strategy with the goal of constructing a positive image of economic competitiveness. Bélanger (2000, p. 380) writes that the entrepreneurial city "refers to the promotional re-imagining of local economies in and through discourse and projects about the space". Thus, a fundamental goal of place marketing is to influence the shaping of particular discourses surrounding a place and to point those conversations in a specific direction.

City leaders and urban boosters often employ strategies of place marketing in the context of urban redevelopments, in efforts to establish a pre-conceived idea of the space (Oakley, 2007). This speaks to the case of Lansdowne Park—which is not yet completed at the time of this writing in early 2014—yet has been the subject of much commentary. The City and OSEG have been active in promoting the virtues of the new space with descriptive language and numerous images from artists' conception. The OSEG promotional video uses superlatives such as "unique...model of modern day innovation...crowning heritage jewel...architectural icon" (VideoManOttawa, 2010). The promotional video also describes the space as a mixed use facility, belonging to the public realm "where people can go to walk, cycle, shop, enjoy a good meal, work, live and play" (VideoManOttawa, 2010). The City and OSEG have provided many artist-depicted images of the new space showing open green space, full-grown foliage and trees, bustling vistas and stadium, within a backdrop rich in vibrant colours.

The imagery and discourses originating from the City and OSEG evoke the idea that this space is *already* active, the stadium is sold out for sporting events and the shops and restaurants are full of customers. This imagery serves many functions. First, existing residents and potential visitors will relate to Lansdowne Park based on the constructed imagery and crafted descriptions. Second, businesses looking to invest in the retail and restaurant outlets will identify the space as attracting constant activity and thus returning a profit. Third, people looking to invest in

residential real-estate will identify the property as a sound investment due to the site's popularity. A consequence of these pre-conceived images is the potential that they are not accurate in depicting the reality of the space. Hubbard (1996) argues that select imagery used in place promotion reflects the values of the campaign rather than the authentic sense of place that local residents experience; that is to say, a gap is created between the imagined space and the real space—what can be effectively characterized as an "image-reality gap".

Place marketing is used in the crafting of a homogenized and specific image of the city. This constructed image often diverges from the pre-existing image of place in the city. A common criticism of place marketing is that place promotions create an image-reality gap by not fully disclosing societal implications of a redevelopment (Hobbs 2009; Paddison, 1993). Zukin (1998, p.16) uses the label, "imaginative reconstructions", to describe images that are created to attract outside investment, which often fail to adequately capture the authenticity of city spaces they represent. The motive for this is the fact that unpleasant images would have deleterious effects, as the realities of authentic city life are not always as glamorous they appear. Waitt (1999, p. 1056) argues that "places are more about myth than substance", as a person's conception of a place is less about material reality and more about the *story* that surrounds it.

The gap between the idea of a space and the reality of the space is inherent in the process of place promotion. This occurs in many instances of product endorsement, as the brand idea behind a product often exceeds the product's true potential. Harvey (1989a) argues that entrepreneurial cities often enable multiple realities to coexist within the same place. Therefore, the constructed image of place will co-exist with the true nature of the place in the same physical space. In the case of Lansdowne Park, the imagined and projected images of the redevelopment will exist in perpetuity and serve as a comparison to the final product. The image of a bustling

stadium at Lansdowne Park is one that the City and OSEG will have a vested interest in becoming reality. The sports component was a driving force behind the partnership and will be a catalyst for any potential success.

### **Role of Sports in Place Marketing**

Sports events, their venues and surrounding infrastructure are playing an integral role in the construction of a city's image. The value of sports teams and stadiums is difficult to quantify with any accuracy. However, distinctive architecture and symbolic monuments can generate pride in the citizenry and also provide a unique image to represent the city (Loftman and Nevin, 1995; Smith, 2005). Sports teams and their stadiums promote a sense of place and an image to be used by promoters in marketing the city as a world-class location that is primed for investment and tourism. Whitson and Macintosh (1996) argue that one of the most influential and effective vehicles for showcasing the city and creating an image of destination is the use of major sporting events, sports franchises, new stadiums and related sporting experiences. Virgo and de Chernatony (2005) point to the City of Barcelona, Spain, which until the 1992 Olympics was identified as a decaying post-industrial city that suffered from high unemployment. However, following a rebranding campaign that stemmed from hosting the Games, Barcelona has become a much-frequented tourist destination and a city branded as a location with rich culture and beautiful landscapes.

Sporting events provide an excellent opportunity for promotion and marketing, while showcasing that the city belongs on a world-class stage (Whitson, 2004). The example of Barcelona speaks to the fact that mega-sport development projects are playing an increasingly influential role in place marketing and image construction in the contemporary city (Schimmel,

2006; Waitt, 1999). For cities that have not been the focus of attention in the past, and are emerging in the global economy, hosting a major sporting event provides the kind of attention that appears invaluable. Whitson (2004, p. 1229) argues that these events are undertaken specifically as "place promotion projects...by local business and political elites who have seen mega-events as an effective way of attracting international tourism, enhancing their international image and status, and encouraging future investment and economic growth."

Although Whitson (2004) is commenting on the impact of Olympic games and international sporting events, the same phenomenon can be applied to the Lansdowne Park redevelopment. The new stadium will be the host venue for minor league hockey ("Ottawa 67's"), professional football ("Ottawa RedBlacks") and soccer ("Ottawa Fury"). These events will draw local and outside visitors while serving to promote the space as a bustling and popular location. Although the open air stadium is designed with a capacity of 24,000 spectators, the venue can be modified to seat 45,000 when and if needed (OSEG, 2014). Events requiring more seating would include large outdoor concerts and world-class sporting events. The stadium will be the host venue for the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup. Further, Ottawa Mayor, Jim Watson, has said publicly that the City intends to be an integral part of Canada's bid to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup (Ottawa Business Journal, 2014). These world-class sporting events present invaluable opportunity to broadcast images of the City that depict a modern and exciting destination. The stadium's location bordering the Rideau Canal, a UNESCO world heritage site, presents an opportunity to frame images next to the world famous inland waterway. The sports component of the Lansdowne Park redevelopment presents an opportunity for the City to cultivate a brand image grounded in cultural diversity due to the variety of sports that will call the facility home.

## **Urban Branding**

Cities are now involved in a constant battle with each other to lure talent, investment and tourism. In efforts to establish a unique narrative about their city, municipal governments are turning to classic forms of branding to gain a competitive advantage over their urban counterparts (Virgo & de Chernatony, 2005). Virgo and Chernatony (2005) identify the current trend in interurban competition as a cause for cities to create a brand identity in order to differentiate themselves, thereby appearing more attractive to target audiences.

The practice of urban branding has become a common tactic in the governance of cities, most notably in projects of urban regeneration (Eshuis & Edwards, 2013). Frimann (2006) argues that a brand, and the process of branding, are natural aspects of marketing and market communication. Cities and regions are using brand practices to market themselves as trademarks similar to corporations branding a product. In fact, Stigel and Frimann (2006) note that cities are coming under increasing pressure to develop brands so they are not left without an urban identifier. There are those, however, who are critical of the notion that cities can be equated to products and branded under the same philosophies of corporate branding (Gibson, 2007; Paddison, 1993; Waite, 1999). For instance, Paddison (1993) contends that urban redevelopments represent an enduring landmark that will often outlast a branding campaign, given that cities' built environments require extended periods of time for construction. Therefore, the "inflexible" nature of cities' built landscapes make them resistant to sustained brand recognition.

The place brand of a city symbolizes the culture, heritage and values of a specific geographic region (Bekham, Kumar & Kim, 2013). The place brand is formed by communications that come from marketing and media as well as the landscape and design of the place (Bekham, et al, 2013). For example, the place brand of Las Vegas is centred on gambling,

sites and sights of consumption, glamour, night life and excitement. This brand is marketed through specific campaigns that target gamblers and businesses. Bekham, et al (2013), make note of the city's campaign "What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas" and the reinforcing "Sin City" moniker. These signifiers cause an immediate identification with Las Vegas and the Las Vegas Brand. Another example of an urban brand slogan can be seen in Baltimore under mayor Martin O'Malley, who renamed the Baltimore Inner Harbour, the "Digital Harbour". Silk and Andrews (2006) note that that this was meant to communicate that Baltimore was a part of the technology economy and part of a branding strategy to entice the young creative class to the city (Florida, 2002).

Urban redevelopment programs are increasingly being supported by governments based on the ability to remake cities into "more efficient, productive, economically and socially sustainable spaces within this global landscape" (Oakley 2007, p. 113). Gotham (2002) observes a distinct connection between the concepts of place marketing and spectacle. He notes that a consumerist society culture is directly related to the concept of the spectacle, as these societies are predominately focused on producing and consuming commodities. Gotham's (2002) observations essentially describe the processes of promotional discourse and consumerism. Cities project spectacular images of urban landscapes and promote the city as a dream-like place; this is thought to entice tourists and investors to visit the city, as they trust that it embodies their desires.

The aggressive entrepreneurial spirit that has influenced the way cities project, promote and design themselves appears to have taken root in the City of Ottawa among many of its political, cultural and business elites. The Lansdowne Park redevelopment project constitutes a vehicle for the City to be marketed under a brand of economic and cultural vibrancy. The

redevelopment has been designed to project spectacular images, from the distinctly designed stadium, to the open green space and heritage buildings. Lansdowne Park will host sporting events year-round, from hockey in the winter months to football and soccer throughout the summer and fall. The redevelopment itself has been branded as a multi-purpose location where visitors can come to see a sporting event, go to the cinema, visit one of two heritage buildings, enjoy a meal, shop, relax in the park, go for a bike ride, go ice skating, live and work (City of Ottawa, 2014; Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group, 2014; VideoManOttawa, 2010). Before the facility is even open to the public, these are the images and meanings being associated to the redevelopment. Thus, from a marketing perspective, the project is already a success as it has influenced the creation and deployment of a distinctly promotional discourse that relates to entertainment, leisure, cultural vibrancy and economic activity—the hallmarks of an entrepreneurial city.

Strategies of place promotion and the use of urban redevelopments to drive these promotions are characteristic of the entrepreneurial city. In efforts to integrate with the global economy, these cities are being marketed as destinations for entertainment and locations for investment. Integral to this are sports franchises and mega-sports events. Sports franchises associate meaning and identity to a city, they foster sentiments of civic pride and stimulate economic activity. The Lansdowne Park redevelopment therefore present value to the city through the sports franchises that will play at the stadium and the images that will emanate from these events. The new Lansdowne Park will produce imagery that contrasts the natural landscape of the Rideau Canal with the spectacular built landscape of the stadium and surrounding complex. Images of a sold-out stadium, bustling vistas and open green space will serve to promote the City as economically and culturally vibrant.

There is a neoliberal approach to building an entrepreneurial city, one that drives the arguments in favour of public subsidies and public private partnerships, in an attempt to build a leading world-class city (Chapin, 2002; de Bettignies & Ross 2004; Gotham & Haubert, 2007). A major product of neoliberal governance is gentrified neighbourhoods and redeveloped urban space which focus on entertainment and consumption. These reinvented urban spaces signify how cities are attempting to integrate with a global marketplace that is rooted in consumerism, investment and tourism.

## CONCLUSION

This paper set out to show how the City of Ottawa's approach to redeveloping Lansdowne Park is an example of the key role that sport-based major developments play in urban growth strategies. It was argued that sports megaprojects, such as the Lansdowne Park redevelopment, are central components of the cultural and economic growth strategies of many contemporary cities. This is due in large part to a perception that sports facilities and their surrounding infrastructure act as drivers for urban revitalization. Based on the results of the empirical component of this paper, it is evident that the City perceives the Lansdowne Park redevelopment to be an engine for cultural and economic growth.

The ensuing redevelopment will result in the privatization of a majority of the formerly 100 per cent public park. The City's motivations behind the deal with OSEG are rooted in a guarantee that football will return to Ottawa and that the stadium will be fully renovated as the centrepiece of the new site. The return of the CFL to Ottawa is a decisive factor in the City's decision to partner with OSEG. Professional football was a significant aspect of the City's culture for over a century. The "Ottawa RedBlacks" will renew a relationship between the game of football and the surrounding community that had been broken since 2006. Further, professional soccer will make its debut in the City with the "Ottawa Fury" marking the birth of a new chapter in Ottawa's sports culture. Meanwhile, the "Ottawa 67's" will maintain their home at the Civic Centre (the arena directly below the stadium's north side stands) and continue their affiliation with the community. These three sports franchises represent the heart of the Lansdowne Park redevelopment. They will be vital in attracting economic activity to the complex. Further, the images emanating from a sold out stadium and bustling vistas will be central components in place marketing strategies.

The decision to partner with OSEG in a redevelopment centred on sports and entertainment demonstrates a communicative action on the part of the City. The stadium, with surrounding upscale real-estate, entertainment and shopping districts are fundamentally a vehicle for sending strategic messages. The target audience is both local (retailers, residents and developers) and global (corporate investors and tourists). The messages projected to these audiences will rely heavily on spectacular imagery and expertly crafted messages that frame the City as a leading destination for investment and tourism. The risk for the City lies in a scenario where the stadium is not full, the vistas are not bustling and businesses begin to fail. This would project the image of a location that is not ready for investment or entertainment-based tourism. The ensuing years will determine whether the City made a wise investment or if Lansdowne Park is destined for failure. Irrespective of the park's success, it is clear that the City invested in the redevelopment due to the integration of sports and entertainment and the opportunities they present in branding the City.

At this stage of the project, in early 2014, imagery emanating from the actual redevelopment shows a construction site with unfinished infrastructure. The visions of the space remain theoretical and images of the new space come from the developers themselves. Consequently, the research here is limited in scope. Authentic images of the completed site will not be possible until the project's scheduled completion in 2015. Still, the promotional images do provide a basis to examine how the developers envision a successful Lansdowne Park. Ideally this research may be a foundation for further research, which may develop a more thorough examination of Ottawa's strategies for urban growth and renewal. Future research into Lansdowne Park could study the promotional imagery emanating from the completed site and investigate how the redevelopment influences the City's prospected place marketing strategies.

The study of urban communication involves making sense of how cities operate and understanding how cities speak through their built environments (Landry 2006; Gibson & Lowes, 2007). The Lansdowne Park redevelopment presents an opportunity for the City to communicate a specific message to both local and global audiences. This study focused on the image of one precise segment of the City; to be sure, there are many other parts of Ottawa that communicate alternative messages with regard to the location's socio-cultural fabric. Considering this limitation in the research; the social, cultural economic and political implications of this study will be useful to communication scholars.

This research paper has examined the City's efforts to redevelop a decaying piece of one of the most coveted properties in Ottawa. The controversial partnership with OSEG was strategic by nature, selecting a development partner that would incorporate a sports and entertainment aspect to the site while also preserving the park's cultural heritage. The redeveloped space will serve as a medium to communicate to local and global audiences that Ottawa is rich in cultural diversity, has a passion for sports, entertainment and leisure, and has modern infrastructure ready to support investment from all sectors of business.

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