

## Cultural Security and the City

Meric Gertler

Recent scholarship in urban geography, urban economics and related fields demonstrates that cities contribute to national economic wellbeing in a disproportionately important way. Much of this analysis argues that this economic contribution rests on the *social character* and dynamics of city-regions. Cities are now seen as spaces of social tolerance, openness to newcomers, and havens of diversity in all its social forms: ethnic, racial, religious, sexual, cultural, and political. In essence, they are spaces where the security of the individual is realized and reproduced over time. This is achieved by integrating diverse newcomers into supportive social networks and facilitating access to employment, both of which enable the social and economic security of the individual. It is further reinforced by building harmony between groups of social difference in the city, thereby serving as the foundations for greater social cohesion locally and nationally.

This presentation will explore the conceptual arguments underlying this thesis, present some empirical work examining this hypothesis in a comparative context, and consider some of the countervailing and contradictory forces currently at work that both support and undermine the production of human security in Canada's cities.