

# Thinking Global, Beyond Limits

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## *Of Lofts and Basements: Housing and Economic Restructuring in Vancouver*

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Discussant: Lorena Zárate, Habitat International Coalition

**Of Lofts and Basements: Housing and Economic Restructuring** Secondary suites (also known as accessory dwelling units) are self-contained apartments created through the subdivision of detached houses, most often by retrofitting the basement to serve that end. This article explores the role of secondary suites in the contemporary economy of Vancouver, Canada. Three parallels are identified between Vancouver's secondary suite market and the emergence of the residential loft phenomenon in New York City. First, both lofts and secondary suites have provided a necessary social and built environment for their city's economic structure; secondly, the mainstreaming of these two very different housing markets has depended heavily on government intervention; finally, government intervention in both cases was geared at creating short term economic stability, even as it opened the door to a different form of instability through the inflation of real estate prices. In this sense, the story of loft living helps shed light on the significance of secondary suites to Vancouver.

**Friday October 6th 2017  
Kroeger College Boardroom  
(D199 Loeb Building)  
12:00PM – 2:00PM  
Lunch Provided On-site**

To receive a copy of the paper, please register for the  
event via e-mail to: [Jenelle.Williams@carleton.ca](mailto:Jenelle.Williams@carleton.ca)