Airbnb versus the city: The political economy of short-term rentals

When: Friday, February 2, 2018
Time: 2:45- 4:00
Location: A-220, Loeb Bldg.
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Abstract:
How have short-term rentals changed the political economy of urban land use and housing? Relying on big data spatial analysis, key informant interviews, and hedonic regression modelling, I investigate the impact of Airbnb on New York City and Toronto. The paper makes three specific arguments. I show, first, that Airbnb is introducing major new rent flows into New York’s housing market which are driving gentrification pressure unevenly across the city. Second, I demonstrate that Airbnb has facilitated the large-scale conversion of long-term rental housing to short-term rentals in New York and Toronto. And finally, I identify the new urban political interests and coalitions which Airbnb’s activities in these cities has generated. I conclude by discussing the politics of the sharing economy, and the ways in which it is disrupting local governance and everyday life.

Biography:
David Wachsmuth is the Canada Research Chair in Urban Governance, and an Assistant Professor of Urban Planning at McGill University. He is an interdisciplinary urbanist whose research examines urban governance problems which exceed the spatial and conceptual boundaries of the city. His recent publications have examined large-scale local economic development partnerships in the United States, new forms of sustainability thinking in global urban policy, and the impact of global capital flows on local housing markets. He is also the co-editor of Whose Streets? The Toronto G20 and the Challenge of Summit Protest (Between the Lines, 2011).

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