Joining Learning and Making: A Practitioner's Retrospective Auto/biographical Account of How Inquiry Can Contribute to Social Justice Efforts in a Community

by

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Abstract

An opportunity arose in the author's work as an animator in a community group to design a socially innovative project to address homelessness in her city. Her retrospective auto/biographical account of the design and implementation process demonstrates how qualitative inquiry can contribute to the efforts of community-based practitioners committed to advancing social justice in their communities. Two inquiry frameworks were used. The first, mindful inquiry, is guided by phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical social theory, and the Eastern knowledge tradition of Buddhism. The second, ALMOLIN (alternative models of local social innovation), explores the dynamics of social exclusion and social innovation. Its ethical social-justice position provides alternative criteria to determine whether a social innovation responds to human deprivation; empowers disenfranchised citizens by building capabilities; and changes social and power relations, transforming exclusionary mechanisms into inclusionary strategies. Drawing on these intersecting frameworks, and thinking through and with relationships and lived experiences in her practice setting, a bold vision emerged of what the author here calls the Whole Community Project. Practical actions of coordination and collaboration with multiple stakeholders brought into being places and spaces in the community that provided material pathways to formal education, employment, affordable housing, and home ownership for citizens who had been left behind due to homelessness, addiction, mental health issues, and unemployment. In joining *inquiry* with *making*, this unique project design demonstrated that such citizens can recover, achieve employment that provides a sustainable livelihood, and own their own homes in less than two years. The project met the goals of improving the lives of citizens in the author's practice. The inquiry also informed the design of inclusive interactive civic spaces to promote broader inclusive participatory inquiry: what had been perceived as individual troubles (e.g., homelessness, addiction) could now be transformed into community issues for public deliberation towards more socially just public policy.

Keywords: mindful inquiry; critical social theory; phenomenology; hermeneutics; Buddhism; social innovation; social justice; storied accounts

Dedication

This dissertation honours the efforts of practitioners and activists working in the voluntary sector—ordinary people choosing the work of creating healthier, more socially just, democratic, and sustainable communities.

I believe that this is one of the most significant ideas for readers to hear. For ordinary people striving to make a difference in the world, it is easy to feel disheartened and somewhat hopeless about creating positive change. The problems can seem too big and too complex to be able to determine the right thing to do.

This dissertation shows how ordinary citizens like us can accomplish extra-ordinary things. It shows how we are capable of creating spaces that empower all of us as citizens to rise above the dehumanizing circumstances of poverty to begin anew; to become once again the unresigned and uncontainable spirits that we as human beings all really are.

Acknowledgements

At the present time, a dissertation is considered an individualized work.

However, this is a work that has emerged out of courageous, astonishingly beautiful, unexpected, determined, and creative collaboration with others committed to making a more just community.

I am grateful to Dr. Suzanne Smythe, my Senior Supervisor, who supported and challenged my wayfinding through this academic writing project to its completion, and to my supervisor, Dr. Heesoon Bai, for her thoughtful support in finding a structure to tell the story.

I wish to acknowledge Dr. Valerie Malhotra Bentz whose vision of mindful inquiry and ongoing commitment to its embodiment provided inspiration for my own inquiry and a strong foundation for this work of joining inquiry and making.

The courage and great beauty of the many citizens who have experienced loss of home and hope for the future have taught me what I need to be open to knowing in order to make spaces of inclusion and belonging that realize an exit from poverty.

Finally, this work would not be what it is without the greatest blessing of my everyday collaboration with my husband Michael in living and working towards making a better world.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Term	*Meaning*
ABE	Adult basic education
ADHD	Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder
ALMOLIN	Alternative models of local social innovation
BTP	Business Transformation Project
CBRC	Community-Based Research Canada
CCL	Canadian Council of Learning
CLI	Composite Learning Index
CRESSI	Creating Economic Space for Social Innovation
CWB	Community well-being
CWBS	Community Well-being Society
EI	Employment Insurance
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MI	Mindful inquiry
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
OCD	Obsessive-compulsive disorder
OCP	Official Community Plan
OECD	Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights
RFP	Request for proposal
SFU	Simon Fraser University
UNCESCR	United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCP	Whole Community Project
WTO	World Trade Organization

Preface

Journal Entry, August 10, 2014: On thinking and being the complex

I surveyed my papers and opened books strewn across the table. I stood, strengthening my intention to write. I held my plate with a warm, freshly baked chocolate croissant on it in one hand, and a spiritual text I had picked up for inspiration in the other. As I was about to sit down, I sensed that something unusual was happening on my plate. A spider had suddenly landed beside my croissant.

Shocked at such apparent incongruence, my thoughts began firing rapidly. How did a spider suddenly appear on my plate in midair? I looked up to the ceiling. Had it descended on a web? Spiders don't belong with croissants! Spiders . . . outside not inside! Why my plate? What does this mean?

Having cultivated what I had interpreted as the beneficent practice of relocating spiders found indoors to the outside world, I dropped my spiritual text, and moved quickly to the patio door to bring my plate and the spider outside. Once outdoors, the spider leaped from the edge of my plate to float gracefully on an invisible strand to the earth. I watched it steal away silently into the deep shade of the impatiens.

Breathless and shaken into wonder at the spider's unexpected visit, I began to descend along my own invisible strands in search of its meaning. Having made this communicative connection with the natural world from a young age, I was easily led by the capacity of my consciousness to grasp an important message in the spider's visitation. What was it trying to communicate to me?

Yes, I sat elbow deep amongst works of theory and analysis, stories from my practice, and drafts of my dissertation. I had set myself the task of thinking my way through and weaving seemingly disjointed strands of my consciousness—theory, lived experience, and practice—into meaningful connection. And I was attempting to communicate these connections in the language and culture of a dissertation. Caught in that web of tension, I was in the deep shade of doubt about my capacity to accomplish this.

I reflected on my automatic response—analysis and categorization—to the spider's sudden entrance into my awareness. I had unreflexively rendered a judgement of incongruence, setting the spider apart from me and my intellectual preoccupations.

Now, with warm, buttery pastry and dark chocolate on my tongue, I allowed the spider to visit in its fullness this time without the hurried and half-hearted carelessness of classification and separation.

What was the spider's communication? Communication is derived from Latin origins which point to the ideas of sharing, exchange, of commonality; of making and holding in common. Now, I wondered: what knowledge of sharing, exchanging, and making was the spider insisting that we hold in common? The spider was helping me to understand the meaning of Morin's (1999a) "connective tissue" that exists between knowledge and its context. Morin argued that we had severed this tissue. We had decontextualized knowledge from the lifeworld and had created the complex crises we are facing globally through our thinking and action. This morning, the spider was pointing to my own disjointed thinking. By demanding to be included, to be on the inside not on the outside of my awareness, the spider was calling me not only to "think the complex," but to "be the complex"; to link what is disjointed and compartmentalized (Morin, 1999a, pp. 130–132) into a new web of relations.

The spider had also deftly shown me how to anchor in the complex conditions in which I was located and weave that connective tissue between knowledge and the lifeworld. I understood that my task, as Kincheloe (2003, p. 49) imagined, was to interweave inquiry and action for social justice in the "the civic web of the political domain, the biotic web of the natural world, the social web of human life, and the epistemological web of knowledge production."

Prologue

> *To begin always anew, to make, to reconstruct, and to not spoil, to refuse to bureaucratize the mind, to understand and to live life as a process—live to become . . .*
>
> —*Freire,* Pedagogy of the City

This doctoral dissertation describes a process of building capacity to begin anew. As Freire (1993) argued, this capacity is about a refusal to bureaucratize the mind. It is about deconstructing dominant stories, building the capacity to understand, and living life as a process. It is the art of reconstructing new stories to live by. It is also about making: making it possible for the lives of others to be restored from the ashes of poverty, unemployment, addiction, and homelessness. Freire argued that a significant capacity for educators to build was to see themselves as change agents, cultivating the capacity to begin always anew. In this dissertation I describe my efforts to begin anew: to join inquiry with change for social justice. In particular, I wanted to know: "What is the capacity of qualitative inquiry to contribute to my organization's social justice efforts?"

I was very young when I learned about my own capacity to begin anew. Yet I can only understand this retrospectively, by deconstructing one story and reconstructing another. This is a thread that weaves its way through my work. In a rural, one-room school house where a single teacher was responsible for 20 students from Grades 1 to 8, a well-worn, unassuming vocabulary workbook catapulted me into a deep love with worlds of meaning I had not known existed. I became aware of my capacity to begin anew, to make, to reconstruct myself; the girl-child-self that was being taught to me via the power politics of home and community life: to be good (~~curious~~, quiet), to be nice (~~different~~,

self-erasing), and to be obedient (~~inquiring~~, passive). I had already been seeking alternative perspectives on my situation. I often left the kitchen without leave, preferring the company of the tall spruce trees in our yard. I climbed to a friendly crook of trunk and branch where I listened intimately to the instruction of wind and spruce branches. So I came to the classroom with a healthy mixture of suspicion and curiosity, and a history of frustrating those higher authorities.

These early experiences—of refusal, willfulness, curiosity; of knowing there must be something more, of discovering a love of learning, and of experimenting with alternative ways of knowing and being in the world—taught me that learning was intimately connected to freedom: to know, to understand, to become, to participate, to make, to live as fully in the world as possible. Later, as an adult working in a city, I fell deeply in love with work in the community-based, nonprofit sector where I had opportunities to help citizens begin anew, citizens whose lives were marginalized by homelessness, addiction, unemployment and poverty. In this work I had the feeling of coming home. It took a while before I unravelled the mystery of this sense of homecoming. I had much to learn about how to create opportunities for experiences of learning, where possibilities to begin anew could be fully actualized for citizens trapped in poverty. This work describes some of my learning.

I was blessed, despite my bad behaviour as a child, to be supported by my parents. Their sacrifices, unknown to me at the time, made it possible for me to enter university where they wanted me to get an education. My mother, living her formative years in the deep poverty of the Great Depression on the Saskatchewan prairie, had to leave school to

help her own mother (a survivor of domestic violence) and her two sisters and little brother to survive. My father had left school to join the ranks of young teenage men in Canadian regiments travelling overseas during World War II. Both survived the massive social, economic, and political upheavals of their time. Meeting and marrying after the war ended, they made their first home in a building that had been used as a granary, where they lived in poverty during what my parents euphemistically described as their lean postwar years. From their lived experience of the precariousness of human existence, they resolved that their children would receive an education. Both wrongfully carried the shame of not having an education, even though neither had had access to educational opportunities. My mother carried the multilayered effects of the deprivations of poverty to her death in 2016. She would often ask me about my dissertation. When I would tell her what I was writing about, she would invariably say: "I'm so proud of you. You know, Ann, I only have a Grade 9 education!" This unflagging shame could still utterly cross out the undeniable evidence of her enormous capability, giftedness, resilience, creativity, and resourcefulness.

Shame infuses the lived experience of citizens surviving in poverty. It was described as Canada's "national shame" more than 45 years ago, in a report written by Senator David A. Croll (1971). The report was designed to investigate and report on all aspects of poverty in Canada. At that time, Croll found that one in four Canadians lacked sufficient income to maintain a basic standard of living. He warned that unless action were taken nationally, in a new and purposeful way, "five million Canadians will continue to find life a bleak, bitter, and never-ending struggle for survival" (Croll, 1971,

p. 1). Croll also pointed out the need to study not only the effects but also the causes of poverty—specifically, how our society and economy not only tolerate poverty but also create, sustain, and even aggravate it.

Thirty-eight years later, in another senate report entitled *In from the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness*, Senator Art Eggleton (2009) found that the previous decades of social policy-making at different levels of government only continued to entrap people in poverty, rather than lifting them into full participation in the economic and social life of their communities. The Croll and Eggleton reports were both highlighted by Alan Broadbent (2015) during his welcoming address to a Poverty Reduction Summit in Ottawa. While emphasizing the well-documented costs of poverty in these and other more current reports, Broadbent recalled Croll's phrase, "our continued toleration of poverty." He argued that rather than being inevitable, poverty "is constructed by the economic and social policies we choose, by which voices we choose to listen to, and by which rights we choose to support and which rights we choose to ignore" (Broadbent, 2015, p. 1). This was his call to action:

> If poverty is something we have chosen to construct as a society, . . . if it is something we have built, we can also choose to tear it down. We can tear it down because we have decided to believe in human dignity for everyone, in healthy communities, in social justice, in moral fairness, and in shared economic prosperity. (Broadbent, 2015, "Constructing and un-constructing poverty," para. 2)

Broadbent (2015) also argued that a tolerance of poverty in Canada was made possible by a predominant narrative of scarcity. This narrative, whose proponents have been among the nation's leaders, has promoted the story that in Canada, one of the

wealthiest nations in the world, resources to address poverty are scarce; debt reduction and fiscal responsibility must trump a compassionate response to Canadians living in poverty (Gaetz, 2012). Today, it is estimated that nearly five million people in Canada still live in poverty (Canada Without Poverty, n.d.). In British Columbia, notably one of the wealthiest provinces in Canada, it is estimated that 10.4 percent of the population, or 469,000 British Columbians, live in poverty (BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, n.d.).

This dissertation is a work of deconstructing such prevailing narratives and social policy choices. As Croll (1971) observed more than 45 years ago, these narratives not only suggest the tolerance of poverty, but actually create, sustain, and even aggravate it. This dissertation is an example of beginning anew. It is also a work of critical reconstruction of learning and knowledge generation strategies for action for social justice. It stems from learning during this inquiry project that when we are empowered to recognize the socially constructed nature of existing arrangements that perpetuate poverty, we are also empowered to change our epistemological standards of judgment, our knowledge generation strategies, as well as our identities, circumstances, and actions.

My dissertation is a retrospective auto/biographical account of this process of deconstruction and critical reconstruction of learning and knowledge generation for social justice. My goal is to render a reflexive process of developing creative capacities of inquiry and learning across individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels of praxis for the purpose of increasing social justice. I tell the story of what we have done as an organization, and what I/we have learned, made, and reconstructed for the benefit of other groups grappling with similar issues.

In this account, I demonstrate the work of thinking through-and-with the relationship between theory, lived experience, and practice. I do this in the context of a practical engagement in emergent conditions of complexity through storied accounts from my practice setting. Stories are part of our everyday life as practitioners. They help us express and negotiate lived experience. They are the site of a dynamic interplay between life and experience. I provide these practice stories as examples of wayfinding for others doing similar work. But for me, stories also describe the lifeworlds in which inquiry takes place and to which it is accountable. The storied accounts draw on my field notes, key documents, technical reports, and other texts that for me have highlighted particular moments in my everyday practice that pose possibilities for mindful inquiry. These lifeworlds and stories have posed opportunities for me/us to bring attention, being, knowing, analyses of power, compassion, love, and purpose into relation with right conduct and action for social justice.

My everyday encounters with stories, like those of Andrew and Leah that follow, were the impetus for this doctoral dissertation. But more than that, these encounters were opportunities to transform everyday stories of citizens from a socially constructed context of private troubles, and anchor them in the historical moment, into locations where they could become visible as publicly relevant issues to the community. Fictionalizing accounts of people and encounters emerging from my practice is a strategy I use in this dissertation to tell important stories not about individuals but about the issues and lives that are entangled in poverty. I will elaborate on my use of storied accounts in the next chapter but for now it is sufficient to say that the stories are fictionalized to protect

people's identities. They emerged from an inquiry into my own practice through field notes and retrospective auto/biographical inquiry.

The storied account of Andrew brings to life an otherwise distant computation, a statistical indicator of poverty and unemployment among youth. Youth aged 16 to 24 make up about 20 percent of the homeless population in Canada; 13 percent of youth between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed (Statistics Canada, n.d.). Andrew is their representative here.

Andrew: On having enough of hopelessness

> 9:45 a.m. At our team meeting, information collected from an applicant to the program is presented by admissions staff. A young man has called from the psychiatric ward at the hospital. He reports that he "planned a suicide by police." Andrew explained that his strategy was to steal something from a store. When police were called, he planned to provoke a confrontation, hoping to be killed. He said he had not thought of this himself, but had gotten the idea from someone he met while he was pacing back and forth on a bridge trying to get up the courage to jump.

Nine months later, I listened to Andrew masterfully delivering a mix of stand-up comedy improv and slam poetry. Andrew's ability to transform his experiences of poverty and homelessness as a youth aging out of the child protection system into a performance that left the audience simultaneously shocked and shaking with laughter reminded me that his immense talent and his ability to call us all to attention had almost been lost. His performance shocked me into questioning our capability to understand and respond to the lived realities of increasing numbers of homeless youth in our city who live without hope for their future.

Leah's story below is the embodiment of other statistical indicators of poverty. In 2009, the United Nations described housing and homelessness in Canada as a "national emergency" (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2008; UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, 2009). In 2012, Olivier De Schutter, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, reported that nearly a million households and 2.5 million people in Canada were too poor to afford adequate diets. The province of British Columbia has had one of the highest poverty rates in Canada for the last 13 years—10 percent of citizens in the province of British Columbia currently live below the poverty line. The last province to formulate a poverty reduction plan, poverty costs the BC provincial government $8 to $9 billion annually in higher public health care and criminal justice costs and lost productivity. It is estimated that a comprehensive poverty reduction plan would cost a third to half that amount (BC Poverty Reduction Coalition Committee, 2013).

Leah is one among the 21 percent of single mothers in Canada raising their children while living in poverty after becoming unemployed in a precarious market economy (Canada Without Poverty, n.d.). Leah's family is also among an estimated 380,000 households living in severe housing need in Canada (Gaetz, Gulliver, & Richter, 2014). Leah raises questions of accountability that demand answers of us as mindful inquirers.

Leah: On what kind of world we are making

> 11:15 a.m. In a women's support group this morning, I listened as Leah described her experience of losing her home and her three daughters. Laid off along with

> 47 other employees when an offshore technology firm replaced their jobs, Leah's children were taken from her when she could not provide for them.
>
> Leah wonders what kind of world we are making that would allow her young children to be taken from their mother when her job loss was not her fault. "What can we be thinking?" she asks.

What is my capacity to grasp and respond to Andrew's utter despair and hopelessness? What is my response to Leah's disquieting questions? As a citizen with a home and stable employment, I might see the experiences of people like Andrew and Leah as inaccessible and separate from me. As a society, the habitual detachment that infuses thinking about these complex issues has resulted in the development of sophisticated systems to codify human experiences of such profound loss, separation, isolation, and alienation as largely private or singularly personal matters that might best be treated by remedial or therapeutic intervention. At broader organizational levels, Leah's and Andrew's circumstances have been interpreted and organized as the social, economic, and political backwaters of neoliberalized market economics. At broader institutional levels, systemic interpretations of ballooning numbers of citizens without a home in Canada structure our thinking of Leah's and Andrew's circumstances as both private and public phenomena. At a private or individualized level they are a matter of personal limitation and responsibility. At broader systems levels, Leah and Andrew are further reduced, objectified along a continuum of deviance running from "the homeless," "the mentally ill," "addicts," "criminal," to "the marginalized."

To learn how to begin anew; to become curious about the nature and meaning of the lived realities of citizens' experiencing the multiple deprivations of poverty; to recognize that these realities are but one of a number of consequences of the social and

conceptual world that we humans have built and presently inhabit, and to contribute toward making more socially just communities: these should be the major work of our human imagination and ingenuity. This dissertation is directed towards this imagining, intellectual effort, and action for social justice.

Chapter 1.

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation is to show how the scholarly tools of qualitative inquiry can contribute to social justice efforts in the areas of community engagement in higher education, community-based adult learning, learning for community mobilization, and community development with disenfranchised citizens.[1] Through a retrospective auto/biographical account, my dissertation shows how I lived this question into action as a practitioner thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship while actively engaged in social innovation efforts at individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels of change. In this thesis, *social innovation* refers to the mobilization of social and institutional resources to respond to deprivations of all kinds: material (poverty, lack of housing), social (lack of access to education, health), political (no citizenship, lack of access to participate), economic (lack of access to stable employment and income supporting a sustainable livelihood), and existential (lack of connection to purpose, meaning, contribution). Such mobilization is designed to empower previously excluded groups through creating capabilities that change the social

[1] Social justice efforts in this doctoral thesis means working towards a community, and a world, in which resources are distributed more equitably, in which race, gender and other social categories do not lead to various forms of oppression and structural inequality, and in which hierarchical power is countered by a resurgence of democracy, on both the local and global levels, as the power of the private sector is balanced by that of government and civil society.

and power relations towards a more inclusive and democratic governance system (Gonzalez, Moulaert, & Martinelli, 2010).

I describe how I used two inquiry frameworks to show the contributions of qualitative inquiry to action for social justice. Mindful inquiry (MI; Bentz & Shapiro, 1998) is a reflexive inquiry framework guided by the theories: phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical social theory, and the Eastern knowledge tradition of Buddhism. Alternative models of local social innovation (ALMOLIN; Moulaert, Swyngedouw, Martinelli, & Gonzalez, 2010), the second framework, directly links knowledge generation to improving the lives of marginalized citizens. I draw upon these intersecting frameworks to document processes of thinking through and with these relationships and lived experiences, and to demonstrate the contribution of qualitative inquiry to social justice efforts.

In this introductory chapter, I outline the context out of which the storied accounts I present emerged. I situate myself in the research process and describe my location as a scholar-practitioner, working with marginalized citizens in a community-based nonprofit organization. I talk about the unique opportunity that emerged to begin anew—to design a socially innovative project that would address an issue conceptualized by policy makers in our city as homelessness, and how this project shaped my inquiry and was shaped by it. I describe the need for research-informed strategies that address the gap between institutionalized knowledge generation and the relevance of this knowledge for improving the lives of citizens trapped in poverty. I share how my process of wayfinding

involved building capacity to find my way through practical engagement in emergent conditions of complexity and uncertainty.

I describe the methodology of retrospective auto/biographical inquiry used in my dissertation to tell the story of what we have done as an organization and what I have learned, for the benefit of others grappling with similar issues. I also address my choice to use storied accounts in the chapters as opportunities for everyday practical engagement in mindful inquiry and action for social justice. I outline the chapter structure that illustrates processes of thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship and I explain my use of footnotes throughout the chapters. And finally, I outline the limitations and significance of my inquiry.

Context for the Inquiry

My dissertation was written from a place of deep immersion in my everyday lived relationships and interactions in a community-based, nonprofit organization[2] located in the Metro Vancouver region of British Columbia, Canada. The organization's mandate was to assist citizens to exit poverty. These were citizens who were living the dehumanizing experiences of homelessness, unemployment, addiction, declining physical and mental health, and criminal justice involvement. My work in the area of program

[2] The Community Well-being Society (CWBS) (a pseudonym) is a community-based, nonprofit organization where I work. It was founded in 1989 in a rapidly growing city in the Metro Vancouver area. The organization has previously developed prototypes of integrated programs that effectively provide equitable access to opportunities for education, employment assistance, health care, residential addiction services, and long term affordable housing for marginalized citizens.

development was to design learning approaches that improved access to educational opportunities for disenfranchised citizens.[3] These approaches were complex, multifaceted, and often felt next to impossible. They needed to respond to citizens' material, social, economic, political and existential deprivation: lack of access to a safe, affordable home, food, clothing, health care, education, and sanctuary, and existential solidarity with a community of supportive others. My companions in this everyday work of inquiry, learning, and change were adult educators, architects, builders, marginalized citizens, housing workers, addiction counsellors, representatives from all orders of government, business and financial sectors, health and housing authorities, legal specialists, physicians, social planners, employment counsellors, activists, mental health workers, welfare administrators, and social workers within the criminal justice system.

When I say that I wrote from a place of deep immersion in these everyday lived relationships, I do not mean that I placed myself intentionally in an ethnographic sense in this particular context to observe and extract data, and then went away to write about it. I mean that this dissertation was written while rooted in the rich humus of my everyday lived interactions in my practice setting in which I, my colleagues, and the citizens we served were all striving to understand and to take meaningful action on the complex circumstances in which we found ourselves together.

[3] Rather than referring to a disentitlement to vote, the term *disenfranchisement* in this dissertation takes its reference point in Schugurensky's (2006) argument that citizens who become marginalized lose their access to participate in the social, economic, and political life of the community.

The work I discuss here took place during a period when I undertook research on transformational change in a doctoral educational program. I was driven to enroll in this program by what I had long observed as a glaring dislocation in the relationship between research generation, knowledge, and policy, and the consequences of this dislocation for the already marginalized citizens with whom I worked. Institutionalized knowledge generation seemed distantly removed from their lived experiences of deprivation. In my scholarly work, my attention was drawn to examining knowledge paradigms (epistemology, ontology, axiology, and methodologies) that could assist community-based practitioners like me to generate knowledge and practices that prioritize this accountability to individual and collective well-being.

I was engaged in this inquiry process when my organization was presented with an opportunity to respond to a request for proposal (RFP) from the provincial government to build affordable housing units in our city.[4] The RFP is a bureaucratized product of institutionalized knowledge generation. In this case, it was designed to solicit responses to a complex set of problems already conceptualized in distant social policy arenas as *homelessness*. It contained a set of instructions, templates, and procedures prescribing a response to homelessness. As a nonprofit organization, we were also embedded in the historical background and consciousness represented in the RFP text.

Here was an opportunity for us "to begin anew, to make, to reconstruct" (Freire, 1993, p. 98). My organization submitted a proposal for a capital project in the RFP

[4] An RFP is part of a government procurement process for products or services.

process. So began the journey of inquiry that informed a bold vision of what I call here the Whole Community Project (WCP). Practical actions of coordination and collaboration with multiple stakeholders brought places and spaces in our community into being that provided material pathways to formal education, employment, affordable housing, and to home ownership. In addition to the goals of improving the lives of citizens we served, the inquiry informed the design of inclusive interactive civic spaces that would promote community engagement and broader participatory inquiry into pressing social issues in our community.

The WCP irrevocably brought inquiry, theorizing and praxis together into what I came to describe as *thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship*. The storied account I provide here documents how the WCP was shaped by the process of inquiry and in turn how the project shaped the inquiry. As we built our capacity to "begin anew, to make, and to reconstruct," bringing knowledge generation into accountable relations with social justice aims, the WCP was built and exists today in the community as a $12-million, 34,000-square-foot, comprehensive urban development project combining three kinds of affordable housing and interactive civic elements:

- a 26-unit supportive housing program designed to receive parolees, one of the most marginalized groups in society, and to help them in the transition from institutional to community life;
- 23 posttreatment transitional housing units for men and women who have previously experienced homelessness, addiction, declining mental health, and other poverty-related issues, and who are now actively participating in the

social, economic, and political life of the community of which WCP is now a part; and

- 23 shared-equity home ownership units—a new design prototype of affordable home ownership created through mobilizing cross-sector collaborations amongst civil society, the state, and institutional actors to increase access to home ownership for excluded groups.

The WCP also includes an All Nations' Art Gallery, which was designed to provide inclusive, interactive space for local and global indigenous artisans to work, teach, share knowledge, and exchange ideas about the role of the arts in community life. Its operation was structured by fair trade agreements. A social innovation centre, developed through collaborative partnerships among city government, community organizations, and university partnerships, offers accessible opportunities for community-based formal and informal education.

The process of learning and transformational change that resulted in WCP occurred across the domains of business, education, civil society, governance and the law, and the arts. It involved integrating auto/biographical inquiry and action. This integration comprised a process of developing creative capacities of inquiry and learning across individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels of praxis. These levels of learning, theorizing, and praxis are also associated with particular kinds of action for transformational change together known as social innovation. Processes characterized by social change efforts are directed at four scales of change (Westley, 2008):

- individual level: changes of heart and habits of mind;
- group level: changes in conversations, routines, and resources;
- organizational level: changes in procedures and strategies; and
- institutional level: changes in social and power relations.

I will elaborate on social innovation and its methodologies later in this chapter. In the chapters that follow, I show how my inquiry was engaged at these four levels of change efforts with a variety of teams in my organization.

Need for the Research

The need for this research arose in my encounters with problematic theory-research-policy relationships that affected the marginalized citizens I served. Such policy initiatives served to exacerbate social and educational inequality, entangled as it is in the multiscalar and cross-sector (global through local) effects of policy strategies in neoliberal policy making. I describe the work of social innovation researchers examining these relationships between knowledge generation and the dynamics of increasing social exclusion. I also pursue questions about methodology-building processes that examined the links between knowledge generation, political activism, and the mobilization of local social innovation efforts to empower citizens to exit poverty.

The need for research-informed strategies that address the gap between institutionalized knowledge generation and the relevance of this knowledge for

improving the lives of marginalized citizens is evident in a policy announcement by the province of British Columbia, in December 2014, in which it withdrew its support for free adult education. Appeals to reason and fairness infused its rationale for introducing high tuition fees for basic education courses for adults. These adults, who are among the citizens we serve, may or may not have graduated from secondary school and thus may not have the grades or required courses to enter employment or postsecondary education. Many employers and postsecondary institutions do not recognize the qualifications newcomers bring from other countries. Nevertheless, the Province of British Columbia wanted adults who have "already benefited from public K–12 education" to "pay their share" for tuition fees—that they cannot afford—for these basic education courses (Government of British Columbia, 2014). The policy relied on an established ideological position that has informed governments' continuing retreat from social policies contributing to social well-being and social equality.

This is an example of a problematic "theory-research-policy relationship" (Kovach, 2015, p. 373) in which policy knowledge serves to erase the local lived experiences of citizens, and individualizes responsibility for social and educational inequality. If we accept the policy logic that citizens have the responsibility and choice to determine their educational and labour market futures, then we have thereby chosen to depoliticize the systemically generated inequitable access to educational opportunities for adults. To begin anew involves deconstructing such policy initiatives and their accompanying political rhetoric to uncover their clear political choice of forfeiting the

life contributions of citizens without financial means to participate in higher education, their community, and the economy. I illustrate my efforts to do this in Chapter 2.

My work in a nonprofit, community-based organization has involved navigating the spaces between communities and government departments and systems in the areas of health, education, housing, mental health, and poverty. In these spaces I have often encountered presentations of social policy claiming to be evidence-based, or underwritten by scientific knowledge represented as objective and apolitical. As Hallstrom (2009) noted, however, policies that structure possibilities for citizens' life chances are not only explicitly political, they are also expressions of multiple forms of power: epistemological, social, economic, and political.

The problems of the accountability of knowledge generation to social justice I found in my everyday practice were also evident in my research into qualitative inquiry. Denzin and Giardina (2015) observed: "Inquiry is cut off from politics. Biography and history recede into the background. Technological rationality prevails" (p. 14). Critics of neoliberalist policy initiatives have long noted that economic and rationalist paradigms validate the knowledge currently predominating as top-down policy approaches to human

and social needs (Habermas, 1987;[5] Kemmis, 2008[6]). Business models and managerial approaches (drawn from market logics, whose primary goal is to achieve efficiency at the lowest cost) are evident in the increasing adoption and presentation of technical-rational policy frameworks and so-called evidence-based business performance metrics.

The need for research-informed strategies that critically examine the relationships among institutionalized knowledge generation, market logics, and the dynamics of marginalization is also evident in current research on social innovation. Moulaert, MacCallum, Mehmood, and Hamdouch (2013) investigated questions about

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[5] Habermas (1987) argued that the system-world and the lifeworld had been separated (p. 382). In his critical analysis of advanced industrial society, he observed a pervasive tendency to extend what he called instrumentally, strategically, or technically rational ways of thinking and behaving of the system-world to every aspect of life and thereby to replace citizens' cultural and personal experience with categories of thinking that derive from bureaucracies, markets, and the state. Habermas called this the colonization of the *lifeworld*, a concept he borrowed from phenomenology, meaning the way in which experience is personally and culturally manifested in our daily lives by the system-world. With respect to epistemological concerns, Habermas' analysis would point out that technical rationality was becoming the dominant ideology in our society for thinking about humans, organizations, and social issues and policies, so much so that other experiences, other voices that suggest other ways of being and knowing that do not fit in with this kind thinking are obscured, dismissed, or pathologized.

[6] Kemmis (2008) argued that economic and rationalist paradigms informing policy logics could be understood as practice architectures enabling ordinary people to explore them as socially constructed formations which may need to be transformed as a whole. Based on the urgent need to understand the consequences of human activity and social practice in our era, the indicator in this model of the need for transformation is whether the character, conduct, or consequences of the practices are found to be unsustainable in any of the following ways:

Discursively unsustainable: incomprehensible or irrational, relying upon false, misleading or contradictory ideas or discourses.

Morally and socially unsustainable: excluding people in ways that corrode social harmony or social integration; unjust because it is oppressive in the sense that it unreasonably limits or constrains self-expression and self-development for those involved or affected, or dominating in the sense that it unreasonably limits or constrains self-determination for those involved or affected (Young, 1990).

Ecologically and materially unsustainable: ecologically, physically and materially infeasible or impractical, consuming physical or natural resources unsustainably.

Economically unsustainable: too costly; costs outweigh benefits; transferring costs or benefits too greatly to one group at the (illegitimate) expense of others; creating economic disadvantage or hardship.

Personally unsustainable: causing harm or suffering; unreasonably "using up" the people's knowledge, capacities, identity, self-understanding, bodily integrity, esteem, privacy, resources, energy or time.

methodology-building processes that examined the links between scientific analysis, political activism, movement organization, and advocacy planning. Mehmood & Moulaert (2010) described social innovation efforts as knowledge generation and action strategies to overcome social exclusion, conditions of alienation, and changes in broader social relations.

Similarly, Budd, Naastepad, & van Beers (2015) investigated the conditions—empirical or theoretical, public or private, economic or noneconomic—that engender (or characterize) marginalization. Their work focused on creating economic spaces for social innovation efforts directed towards overcoming economic marginalization. Like Moulaert et al. (2013), Nicholls and Ziegler (2015) also explored knowledge generation strategies in their investigation of the relationships between marginalization, markets, and public institutions. This led to their development of an extended social grid model in order to analyze the dynamics among social networks (structures of social relations in society); institutions (constraining rules and norms of society); and cognitive frames (commonly shared meanings and interpretive material to make sense of society and its actions).

The findings of this research on social innovation confirmed that my inquiry demanded broader, more critical and complex perspectives than those bounded by particular disciplines, theories, or particular policy sectors. The researchers sought to develop theoretical orientations for social innovation efforts and seemed to point to the necessity of critical analysis as well as a metatheoretical approach to the construct of social innovation that served social justice aims. Moulaert's (2009) research suggested that for local social innovation efforts involving multiple stakeholders, like my inquiry,

knowledge generation required the development of an epistemology characterized as an "activity of inquiry leading to a negotiated consensus on the way to develop knowledge" (p. 2). Knowledge, for Moulaert, was relationally conceived; criteria for truth of the knowledge should be concerned with the relevance of scientific answers in responding to human needs, the transformation of social relations, and the empowerment of populations and communities. In this view, consensus should be reached on what knowledge is relevant to overcome social exclusion across a wide range of stakeholders, including marginalized citizens, as was the case in my inquiry. Similarly, Moulaert advocated for an open ontology to validate the multiple realities in play across a range of stakeholders in an inquiry like mine to inform a future vision of more socially just communities.

Questions about the legitimacy and accountability of knowledge generation to enhance the participation of all citizens in the social, economic, and political life of communities have also been under debate in the field of adult education. Two opposing movements were evident in the field with respect to the relations among knowledge generation through research, reflection, scholarship, and action. One was the idea that knowledge generation should serve the larger public purpose of human and social well-being (Tandon & Hall, 2012; Yang, 2013) while the other viewed knowledge as a commodity for exchange in a so-called knowledge economy (Ball, 2012; Davidson-Harden, 2009; Döring & Schnellenbach, 2006).

Debates about the authority of knowledge generation were as lively for educational practitioners as they were in the field of qualitative inquiry. Practitioners working within and against the politics of evidence where technical-rational, evidence-

based policy frameworks prevail are acutely aware of their place in the knowledge divide and perceptions of their competency to make claims about knowing: they were typically viewed as knowledge users or implementers, not knowledge generators. The nature of this knowledge divide was problematized in the introduction to *Higher Education at a Time of Transformation*, where Escrigas and Lobera (2009) argued the need to challenge ideas about dominant knowledge residing in the hands of experts. They identified three key issues that required the engagement of scholars and practitioners regarding the use and impact of knowledge in our societies:

1. a better understanding of how we build knowledge and transcend disciplines towards complex thinking in a context of complexity, uncertainty, and transdisciplinarity;

2. the integration of knowledge from diverse backgrounds (community-based research, indigenous knowledge, intercultural dialogue) and the ethical implications of scientific and technological research and its applications that have been excluded by the instrumental-rationalist pattern of thinking;

3. the ethical implications of scientific and technological research and its applications in light of pressing concerns about the ways in which human societies should coexist with others and how human societies should coexist with other species. (Escrigas & Lobera, 2009, p. 10)

Ten years earlier, in *Seven Complex Lessons in Education for the Future*, Morin (1999b) had acknowledged the need for alternatives in knowledge generation, in light of an emergent global context of complexity and uncertainty. Morin argued that the dominating instrumental-rationalist pattern of thinking had decontextualized knowledge generation from the human, lifeworldly realm. This had not only created conditions where “we can no longer learn what human being means” (Morin, 1999b, p. 10); it had also resulted in the complex interconnected crises, or “polycrisis,” that we now face on a global level—in the economy, climate, war, loss of species, environmental degradation, and an unprecedented scale of social polarization, poverty, marginalization, human deprivation, and suffering. Morin (1999a) also forcefully argued that these global crises were the result of human thinking and action. He proposed that we must learn to “think the complex” (p. 130) in order to engage effectively with the complexity of the conditions we were facing. He proposed that “thinking the complex” was a kind of thinking that “relinks that which is disjointed and compartmentalized” (Morin, 1999a, pp. 130–132). He advocated for the notion of a “connective tissue” that existed between knowledge, its context, and human beings rather than the conventional notion of the disciplinary separation of knowledge and the decontextualization of knowledge generation from the human, lifeworldly realm.

The need for research informed strategies that improved the lives of marginalized citizens placed my inquiry in the context of complexity that Morin described. I needed to develop my capacity for thinking the complex in order to engage effectively with the conditions in which I found myself as an inquirer.

Wayfinding: Which Way to Methodologies . . . Please?

My dissertation is a retrospective auto/biographical account of thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship. I engage with current concerns of writers in the field of qualitative inquiry and social innovation that I have outlined above who are drawing critical and pragmatic connections between lived experience and research for social change. Engaged with questions of methodology, like these writers, I too am concerned with the politics of knowledge production and I too question the ability of traditional paradigms and methods to respond to emerging issues about practice.

Morin's concern about the connective tissue between knowledge and its lifeworldly context and the accountability of knowledge generation to the lives of all citizens is also a current issue in the broader field of qualitative inquiry. In the preface to the fourth edition of the *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) framed the current historical moment of qualitative inquiry as taking place within and against a complex historical field that is defined as much by breaks and ruptures as by a future-oriented vision where critical qualitative inquiry inspired by the sociological imagination can make the world a better place. More recently, in an examination of the current state of qualitative inquiry, Denzin and Giardina (2014) reference C. Wright Mills's (1959) *The Sociological Imagination*, in which he states that the imperative of inquiry is to begin with lived experience but to anchor experience in its historical moment. Mills wrote:

> Know that many personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues and in terms of the problems of history-

> making. Know that the human meaning of public issues must be revealed by relating them to personal troubles and to the problems of the individual life. Know that the problems of social science, when adequately formulated must include both troubles and issues, both biography and history, and the range of their intricate relations. (p. 226)

Kebede (2009) described the practice of sociological imagination through writing sociological autobiography, where writers "step in and outside of themselves in order to see themselves in a social and historical context" (p. 354). Brinkmann (2012) also focused on the study of the social world from the perspective of the interacting individual, advocating for qualitative inquiry into everyday life taking place at the intersection of the researcher's life and a larger social and cultural history.

In this respect, this dissertation reflexively questions research methodology itself, since inquirers' disengagement or separation from the lifeworlds they study can occur through their selection of methods and methodology (Kajner & Schultz, 2013). My situatedness as inquirer and practitioner did not allow for the comfort of the conventional distance of the researcher from the phenomenon of interest. I was not only close up—I was immersed in my context of inquiry. I wondered what kind of knowledge paradigms and methodologies could assist community-based practitioners like me in "thinking the complex" as a means of generating knowledge that prioritizes accountability to individual and social well-being. These questions multiplied as I studied. The messy, complex nature of the conditions I lived and worked with as a practitioner did not fit neatly within disciplinary boundaries of inquiry. Nor, when my thesis advisors asked: "What is your data?" did I have a crisp, delineated package ready for submission. For me, "the data" included a complex process of thinking through these issues with colleagues and

constituents in our practice setting, the literatures I had reviewed, the knowledge paradigms I had examined, consultations with my thesis advisors, and my work with community stakeholders and others. The field note below illustrates this struggle, as well as the emerging contours of the retrospective auto/biographical approach I develop in this dissertation. It emerged following conversation with my thesis advisors on drafts of my proposal for my dissertation where I struggled with how I could render the kind of theory-lived experience-practice relational process I was experiencing within the parameters of academic requirements.

Field notes: December 12, 2013

> I am still troubled by your questions about what my data is. The data is my story of taking up questions about the relation of theory to practice in the context in which I work. My paper seems to be taking shape as a story of "questioning" which includes reflections on philosophy as well as practice, stories, and experiences from the perspective of an inquirer.

I did find some fellow travellers thinking through what is understood as a dual crisis of representation and legitimization in the current historical moment of qualitative inquiry. At this time questions focus on whether researchers can directly capture lived experience, and how qualitative studies can be evaluated. I learned that I was not alone in addressing the complexity and uncertainty of knowledge generation in practice contexts.

In his examination of the globalization of education policy, Ball (2012) reported his analysis in the unique form of a "work-book" in which he illustrated how his methodology developed in the context of his work. Working, as I do, in the context of rapid change and complexity, Ball described the frustrations and failings of the analysis he had undertaken. In particular, he identified a need for "methods and sensibilities which

are attuned to movement and flow rather than structure and place" (Ball, 2012, p. 143). Earlier, Law (2004) also addressed the challenges inherent in knowledge generation in the context of complexity when he argued that methodologies may not only describe the realities that researchers, practitioners or citizens are studying: they may also produce those realities. Much earlier, Morin (1977/1992) described methodology as a process of learning which also strongly resonated with my everyday lived experience as I navigated the theory-lived experience-practice relationship:

> At the beginning the word *method* signified advancing along a path. Here we must accept to advance without a path, to make the path by advancing. What Machado said: Caminante no hay camino, se hace camino al andor. [Walker, there is no path; the path is made by walking.] The method can be formed only during research; it can be disengaged and formulated only afterwards, at the moment when the term once again becomes the point of departure, this time endowed with method. . . . The return to the beginning is not a vicious circle, if the voyage, as the word trip is used today, signifies experience from which we come back changed. Then, perhaps, we will have been able to learn by learning. (p. 17)

Jackson and Mazzei (2012) discussed their struggle to find the language to describe their process of "thinking with theory." In contrast to the conventional approach of applying theory to generate a monistic and coherent reading of qualitative data, as in a one-way relationship, they wanted to generate different, and perhaps contrasting readings of their data. Mazzei (2014) argued that "a reading of data with theoretical concepts (and/or multiple theoretical concepts) produces an emergent and unpredictable series of readings as data and theory make themselves intelligible to one another" (p. 744). For Mazzei, this strategy moved qualitative analysis away from habitual normative readings (for example, utilizing a theory to explain a phenomenon), to produce different knowledges that illuminate textures, contradictions, and tensions. Mazzei (2014)

described this kind of qualitative inquiry as involving processes of reading “the texts of theory, experience and data *through*, *with,* and *in relation to* each other to construct a process of thinking with the data and with the theory” (p. 744). Their struggle provided an example of a way forward for my own inquiry. Although my goal was to join theory, lived-experience, and action, and not only to produce texts and readings, Mazzei’s approach began to illuminate the contours of the retrospective auto/biographical approach that I develop in this dissertation. In Chapter 3, for example, I describe a process of thinking through Schutz’s (1932/1967) social phenomenology and Smith’s (1987, 1990) critical sociology into actionable designs of accessible learning spaces for marginalized citizens. In Chapter 4, I document the process of thinking through and with Gadamer’s self-reflective hermeneutics and with our actions at organizational and institutional levels of change.

Similarly, in the field of education, self-study (a genre of qualitative research) focuses on exploring how understanding and action grow in the spaces in the theory-experience-practice relationship. Hamilton and Pinnegar (2009) further illuminated possibilities for representing my wayfinding along the path. They argued that while practitioners raised questions about the ownership of knowledge, practice also raised issues about ontology: how realities are socially constructed, mediated by power and ideology, and open to change. The genre of life writing, a curricular and pedagogical approach exemplified earlier by Aoki (2005), purposefully disrupted the prevailing relations between theory and practice to propose theory as a reflective moment in praxis.

In this genre, writers engage with questions emerging from practice: critical moments of learning and teaching (using field notes, critical moments, vignettes, and stories).

The Work of Retrospective Auto/biography

Freeman (2006) framed retrospective auto/biography as a work of interpretive construction. According to Freeman, auto/biography is an effort to uncover meaning. It privileges context and highlights the situatedness of the inquirer in the socio-cultural-political-material world through which they move. The retrospective auto/biographical approach that I began to think through also found resonance with what Cisneros Puebla (2015) called "a sociology of our practices as researchers, as scientists, as persons of flesh and blood" (p. 388). For Cisneros Puebla, this involved "knowing more about ourselves in historical, geopolitical, and epistemological views . . . as a matter of ethics and responsibilities" (p. 389).

Roth (2005) situated auto/biography as a form of inquiry in the field of teacher education and pedagogy. The slash inserted between the words *auto* and *biography* is meant to highlight a dialectical relationship between the individual and society. *Auto* refers to the notion of a self that is constructed in relation to and with the other side of the slash: the larger social, cultural, and political world. Accordingly, in this dissertation the focus is not on my personal history or on making my subjectivity the focus of my speculation. Neither do I wish to depersonalize my account by avoiding examining assumptions that may be outside my awareness. Rather, what you will encounter in the pages that follow is my attempt to show a process of drawing the *auto* into relationship

with the larger social, cultural, and political world to render a reflexive process of developing creative capacities of inquiry and learning across individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels of praxis for the purpose of increasing social justice.

Kincheloe (2005) related the nature of the dialectical auto/biographical process to the necessity to build one's capacity as a practitioner-inquirer to gain insight into the construction of selfhood in relation to larger social structures and epistemological dynamics. He argued that our being, knowing, and doing as practitioners must be brought into dialectical relationship in a process of developing a critical consciousness that he described as "a way of being that is aware of the ways power shapes us, the ways we see the world, and the ways we perceive our roles as teachers" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 53). Kincheloe clearly linked dialectical auto/biographical inquiry and action. He saw this as a process of developing what he called critical ontological agency to act on self and world in a just and an intelligent manner (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 47). Kincheloe (2003) eloquently captured this dialectical auto/biographical process in the following:

> As we examine the self and its relationship to others in cosmological, epistemological, linguistic, social, cultural, and political contexts, we gain a clear sense of our purpose in the world especially in relation to justice, interconnectedness, and even love. In these activities we move closer to the macro-processes of life and their micro-expressions in everyday life. (p. 57)

Like Cisneros Puebla's attention to the ethics and responsibilities of auto/biographical inquiry, Kincheloe (2005) suggested that auto/biographical inquiry could facilitate the inquirer's "ability to become a responsible and transformative member of larger communities where socially just activities are coordinated—activities that address oppression and alleviate human suffering" (p. 156).

This dissertation provides a retrospective auto/biographical account of my wayfinding, of making a path by advancing. As an approach, what I present here is not a step-by-step, systematic, planned, and linear process or a definite and proven procedure that you can follow in a logical, orderly fashion. I do not illustrate a formula of proven rules to be followed, but rather a path, a direction, a frame of mind, a sensibility—perhaps even a philosophy. I do this by offering examples of living important questions into action, or what Morin (1977/1992) and Horton and Freire (1990) have referred to as "making the path/road while walking." In Ingold's (2000) description of wayfinding as a process in which people "feel their way through a world that is itself in motion, continually coming into being through the combined action of human and nonhuman agencies" (p. 155) can be found the contours of thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship.

The metaphor of wayfinding as a methodology also resonated in the material conditions in the design of the WCP. In fact, wayfinding surfaced in a conversation with the architect, who was also grasping my organization's aspirations to design inclusive dialogical spaces and social processes in built forms. *Wayfinding* is a technical term for architects directed towards spatial problem-solving in a built environment. For architects,

the term involves locating oneself in an environment, and how one finds one's way from one location to a desired destination. According to the architect, when wayfinding systems in a built environment are not adequate, the wayfinder does not have enough information to make a decision about which course of action to take.

My conversation with the architect spurred me to think about the kind of auto/biographical wayfinding I describe here and how it departs from wayfinding in a static environment. For me, wayfinding involved building capacity to find my way through practical engagement in emergent conditions of complexity and uncertainty. It also involved grasping the social, political, and historical dimensions of my location, and becoming more consciously aware of my positionality within local and global systems of power. As another architectural writer put it, this account describes an attempt: an attempt to figure out how the moment in which we collectively find ourselves can be appropriately understood; and how the kind of knowledge we are able to create and deploy to understand our situation can inform our actions, including our need for self-transformation (Fry, 2011).

Other writers have described similar findings using an auto/biographical approach. Elbaz-Luwisch (2014) described her experience of bringing auto/biographical writing as a tool of professional learning and development into a graduate level course for teachers coming from diverse cultures and backgrounds in Israeli society. She observed that students' learning included: an increased awareness of the influence of one's history and past experiences on the shaping of one's identity and world view and its impact on one's teaching; the perception of students' identity as something flexible, open to change

and reconstruction; the development of a reflexive capacity to break down old and fixed thought patterns to allow a process of ongoing learning about the present and the future from a critical perspective; and the ability to restory their own experience and grow as educators (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2014, p. 156).

Similarly, Wagenknecht's (2015) study of Iranian-American autobiographical writing is a striking example of the exploration of self as the performance of identity in the context of larger social, cultural, and political realities. In her interpretative work, Wagenknecht observed how the authors' storied accounts were defined by the Iranian Revolution, forced migration, and diaspora. She regarded their autobiographical accounts as information about the self's current constitution, negotiation, and construction that were fraught with politics, intentions, and market logics.

Use of Fictionalized Accounts

> *Stories go in circles. They don't go in straight lines. It helps if you listen in circles because there are stories inside and between stories, and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. Part of finding is getting lost, and when you are lost you start to open up and listen.*
>
> —*Tafoya,* "Finding Harmony: Balancing Traditional Values with Western Science in Therapy"

In this work of retrospective auto/biography, I used storied accounts throughout the chapters to demonstrate the work of thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship. They emerged in the nexus of relations among my lived experiences in my practice setting with colleagues and stakeholders at individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels of our change efforts for social justice. At an

individual level, stories are part of our everyday life as practitioners, and part of living. As Tafoya has suggested, they help us connect with, express, interpret, and negotiate lived experience. They are the site of a dynamic interplay between life, experience, and story. But for me, they also describe the lifeworlds in which inquiry takes place and to which it is accountable. The storied accounts draw on my field notes, key documents, technical reports, and other texts that posed problematics and wonderings and significant possibilities for mindful inquiry.

By fictionalizing the accounts and details of the participants, I set my inquiry apart from an empirical study that aims at facticity, wherein factual details and data are important to goals such as prediction and control. In this retrospective auto/biographical work, where I was immersed in interactions with others in individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels and processes of change, my concern was my ongoing process of inquiry. My goal was to illustrate the importance of examining the process of thinking through and with the theory-lived-experience-practice relationship to action and change for social justice by illustrating the shifting-shifted thoughts-ideas, theories-paradigms, modus operandi–vivendi, and sharing these with the reader, with the aim of moving/shifting the reader's head, heart, and spirit. The storied accounts anchor my inquiry in the context of my scholar-practitioner work with my colleagues and the citizens we were striving to assist. Pseudonyms are used in all field notes, journal notes, fictionalized accounts, protocols, vignettes, and discussions. Details that would not change the contours of the story have been modified to protect confidentiality; in any

case it is not the study of the people that I engage in here, but the study of the connective tissue of lifeworlds and my experience of these in the doing of the work.

The use of storied accounts in this retrospective auto/biographical account also calls attention to the notion that we exist at this time and place in history in what Mead (2014) referred to as "a multistoried space." I mean this in the critical analytical sense that I develop in this work: we are situated in a highly contested space of storytelling. Many stories describing what is happening in our time and in our particular location compete for our attention. Some of the stories about poverty enjoy a particular dominance, because they are allied with powerful interests that set the terms of engagement and debate about what stories are important, who should tell them, and what change should look like.

There are also big stories of our time about knowledge generation. Lyotard (1984) made visible the "grand narratives" such as the enlightenment story of how through instrumental reason and action humans can produce objective knowledge to guide progress and development on a global scale. Another story, the story of industrial growth in our societies, is aligned with this grand enlightenment story in that it promises growth towards a presumed ideal of progress. However, there is an abundance of evidence that this story is losing credibility as more evidence comes to light about the harms caused by these ways of thinking, knowing, and acting. Climate change, declining resources, poverty on massive scales, escalating conflicts, environmental degradation, and devastation of species suggest that we as a human society are not progressing—socially, economically, environmentally, or otherwise.

This retrospective autobiographical account calls attention to the idea of stories as a means of making sense of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. To pay attention to these stories increases our awareness that the systems that we live in are socially constructed. Coming into awareness of our thrown-ness into an already storied world in a particular historical place and time has helped me and others to become aware of our own relationships to these bigger systemic stories and to take informed action. Thinking in this way invited questions like: What is the story I am in? Am I even the main character in my story? Who am I as a character in relation to the large-scale stories out there about our world? Am I aware of the stories that I am living, where they have come from, what explanatory function they play in my world, and what their underlying assumptions are? I have included questions like these, questions that arose as part of my process of wayfinding, at the end of each chapter.

But to bring our attention to the ways we are making sense of our circumstances in this particular historical time and place goes against the predominating social currents of our time. It goes against prevailing pressures to close down our awareness, to be singularly preoccupied with our individualized concerns. To choose to pay attention, to awaken, to become mindful in inquiry and as a way of living has consequences, as Bentz and Shapiro (1998) argued, both for inquirers and for the lifeworlds of citizens they study. This is a time when diverse and geographically distant peoples, cultures, and economies have become subject to dominant modes of political and economic organization, and are interconnected through increasingly complex communication technologies. This suggests to me that we may have all come to share a common

historical trajectory. It means that at individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels of praxis, we can no longer mindlessly objectify the other and locate ourselves at a remote distance from her or his concerns.

Kincheloe (2005) underlined our interconnectedness and the necessity of building our collective capacity for insight into the construction of selfhood in relation to larger stories, social structures, and epistemological dynamics. In an auto/biographical inquiry, he describes the inquirer as one who is empowered to engage in critical action that transforms not only one's own life but also the lives of others (p. 155). The storied accounts were opportunities for mindful inquiry. They posed opportunities for me to bring thinking and being the complex into relation with right conduct and action for social justice. My everyday encounters with stories like the ones below are at the heart of this doctoral dissertation. But more than that, they were opportunities to transform such everyday stories of citizens from a socially constructed context of private troubles anchoring them instead in the historical moment, and into broader public spaces where they can become more visible as publicly relevant issues capable of being transformed into socially just public policy (Denzin & Giardina, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Below is a storied account that was the occasion for mindful inquiry. It is a partial transcription of a screenplay performance I observed. Clare, whom you meet again later in Chapter 4, was an immensely talented carpenter, hardworking father, and husband whose sense of purpose and fulfillment in life was expressed in his statement that he was happiest when he was practising his craft and providing for his family. In the screenplay, against projected numerical data quantifying homelessness in Canada on a screen behind

the performers, Clare and his peers communicated the utter abjection that is the lived experience of a citizen who became unemployed, homeless, and subject to the criminalization of poverty.

The performance was produced collaboratively by Clare and his peers. Through their participation in the creative writing class offered weekly at the Community Well-Being Centre (CWBC) where I work, they transformed their identities from the socially ascribed homeless or other to alternative identities that they were trying on and trying out, such as student, writer, and performer. The writing class was part of my organization's initiative to introduce the arts as alternative forms of inquiry to generate knowledge about how to create inclusive learning spaces. Its focus was to encourage the voices of students through artistic media as a process of inquiry and discovery, and to promote alternative ways to interpret lived experience than through the negative stereotypes that infuse the socially organized stories told about them as citizens experiencing homelessness.

Clare Storied: November 2013

> The place is jumpin and flickering from the street. This is what he said it would look like . . . four storeys? . . . tall trees at the back. I just want to walk into those trees and fuckin disappear.
>
> I stop walking when I catch movement near the ground in the distance. . . . I see people standing together at the end of the building. They turn to look as I walk down the driveway. I look the other way. I'm not interested in seeing them or answering them if they call out to me.
>
> I pass a large window on the left full of light. I lose my balance as if I'm gonna be sucked into it. Someone is sitting at the desk at the window. She looks up and smiles at me. She is waving at me. What's to fuckin smile about? I hold my breath when my hand is on the door handle. I don't have to do this.

A woman steps out of the elevator and smiles at me as I come through the glass entrance door.

"Shit."

"Hi, can I help you find your way?" she says. Like its not fuckin obvious I need to find my fuckin way.

I've been walking since the shelter booted me out at 7:00 o'clock. It's fuckin November . . . man . . . fuckin holes in my shoes with all the rain and shit and filth from the street oozing between my toes.

Christ . . . she's actually putting out her hand to me.

"I'm Mel," she says, "What's your name?" I shake her hand. My hand is a half frozen piece of meat.

"Clare."

Fuck . . . . she keeps looking at me and I can tell she's saying something to me though all I can hear is faraway echoes. I can't hear it . . . my head is so hot . . . it's floating somewhere near the ceiling. I can't fuckin breathe. She grabs my arm.

"Shit."

She starts to walk with me towards the office door. I want to run. What kind of hell is this now? I swing my pack over my right shoulder to keep her away from me. I keep my eyes on my shoes . . . .they're not connected to me anymore . . . . . . they keep fuckin stepping forward towards the doorway...

"Darkness . . . am I dead? Please let me be fuckin dead God. I don't have it in me to keep going."

"Fuck, I'm still alive." I hear voices and I see jagged cracks of light.

"You know you're gonna die." Kim said. Fuckin Kim. Found the fucking light . . . He's well out of it. Fuckin born again . . . tryin to save me every fuckin time I see him.

"He's coming around," says a man's voice.

I see shapes of people moving around me leaving trails of colour and shadow. "Where am I?"

"You're gonna be OK." It's man's voice. Kind.

"Jeez . . . you're skin and bones under all these coats." When was the last time you had something to eat . . . eh?" the kind voice chuckles.

> "Don't remember." I wheeze and start coughing again.
>
> "Well, you're home now. We need to get some grub into ya. Good thing you had a soft landing here and you didn't hit your head."
>
> "My hat, where's my hat?"
>
> "Right here," the kind voice says. Now I can see him. He's crouching beside me. He's got a grin a mile wide. He's got kind eyes too, like he can see right through me.
>
> "OK, how 'bout some good strong coffee and a sandwich to start. Whadya say eh?"
>
> He helps me get up. He doesn't take his eyes off me. I feel his hand on my shoulder, the solid weight of it as we start to walk together.

The performance of the students embodied an example of inquiry and action for social justice. For me, the students had shown us how to begin anew; how to become curious about the nature and meaning of the lived realities of citizens' experiencing the multiple deprivations of poverty. They had confirmed that inquiry and action needed to be directed at individual, group, and organizational as well as institutional levels of change; and that I would need to direct my inquiry at the process of inquiry itself. Below I outline the two reflexive inquiry frameworks that helped me to build the capacity for learning and change for social justice.

Guides in My Wayfinding: Thinking Through and With Mindful Inquiry and Action for Social Justice

Two reflexive processes of inquiry helped me to build capacity to integrate the making of this inquiry with action for social justice in the making of the WCP. The first was *Mindful Inquiry in Social Research* (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998); the second was the ALMOLIN model (Moulaert et al., 2010), which directly links knowledge generation to

improving the lives of marginalized citizens. A startling question posed by the authors of MI, Bentz and Shapiro, resonated strongly with the dynamic auto/biographical inquiry in which I was engaged. Their question signalled that I was on the right path: "Through the practice of compassion and right conduct, pay attention to the suffering of sentient beings in the world, and ask yourself what kind of inquiry and action would diminish that suffering" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 52). This incisive question made inquiry and action directly accountable to the citizens with whom I worked who experienced the suffering of multiple forms of deprivation: lack of access to a safe, affordable home, food, clothing, access to health care, education, sanctuary, and existential solidarity with a community of supportive others. The ALMOLIN model integrated alternative knowledge creation strategies with action for social justice and identified a tangible set of measures and standards of judgment to assess whether a certain social innovation improves the lives of marginalized citizens and transforms exclusionary mechanisms into inclusionary strategies. I outline the reflexive approaches of MI and the ALMOLIN analytical framework below.

Mindful Inquiry

Designed for scholar-practitioners, MI is a spiralling, reflexive process guided by four cultures of inquiry: phenomenology, hermeneutics, critical social theory, and the Eastern knowledge tradition of Buddhism. More recently, Bentz (2013) has suggested that MI may be seen as a metahermeneutic process, since each culture of inquiry challenges our habitual ways of thinking, knowing, and ways of being in the situation we wish to understand more deeply in order to take wise action. Bentz described the

dynamics of auto/biographical inquiry I write about here as the spiralling movement of the interpreter outward to the world, to observe, obtain data, communicate, analyze, comprehend, intervene, act; and the return to the self/interpreter who is changed and grows through and by the understanding of them. This mindful movement contributes to her skills in moving forward with a community of others in which she works.

MI felt intuitively right to me as a process with which to explore the question of how qualitative inquiry could contribute to our social justice efforts—how inquiry connected with the individual, group, organization, and institutional levels of change which characterizes social innovation. In MI, change at an individual level demands attention to citizens' lived experience of profound social, economic, cultural, spiritual, and political deprivation. This requires a shift of consciousness prompting phenomenological inquiry. It also demands critical interpretive work—a deepening of awareness and analysis of how one perceives and makes sense of the social world and how one's subsequent interpretations inform one's own actions and affect others. At a group level, it demands changes in methods of formerly learned thinking and relating. At an organizational level, change efforts involve examining and changing language, conversations, and familiar routines, policies, and procedures. At an institutional level, it demands critical analytical efforts to understand and engage with the deep complexity of the conditions in which one works. Actions for social justice demand the shift to expanding the capacity to build collaborative relationships and partnerships across disciplines as well as across private and public sectors, and civil society. In Chapter 4, I describe how thinking through and with Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics helped

WCP create unique collaborative relationships with a municipal government, a financial institution, developers, and a housing authority to empower citizens to exit poverty.

MI is rooted in the foundational belief that inquiry itself "springs from the lifeworld of the researcher" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 42). Recalling Morin's concern for the connective tissue between knowledge and the human lifeworldly realm, MI affirms the idea that the inquirer and the inquiry are situated within a particular socio-economic-historical-spiritual context rather than within an institutionalized academic discipline that might define or circumscribe the inquiry (Moulaert, Hillier, Miciukiewicz, MacCallum, & Cassinari, 2011). MI "sets up a Buddhist-like framework for opening a space for contemplation in which research occurs" (p. 56). Rather than a procedural guide to inquiry utilizing assumed epistemological frames, Bentz and Shapiro (1998) argued that in a mindful inquiry, all theory, research procedures, and other cultures of inquiry are performed using a phenomenological technique called *bracketing* (p. 41). Bracketing encourages practitioners to question their familiar, taken-for-granted assumptions about their everyday social reality. Thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship utilizing MI became a route to defamiliarizing myself from my lived experience and illuminating the unnoticed in my everyday life. Further, the authors proposed that "the Buddhist tradition of mindful awareness, the ability to hold several perspectives respectfully, a belief in the clearing or space underlying insight, and a desire to alleviate suffering are the cornerstones of [the] approach" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 161).

Haddock (2013) argued that researchers' values, social commitment, political views, awareness of their embodied identity, and the effects of the latter on research design, the selection of research methodologies, and human interaction during field work (referred to as *positionality*) should be the constant object of reflection and negotiation for researchers, practitioners, activities, and ordinary citizens involved in social innovation efforts. MI is characterized by its reflexive nature. Bentz & Shapiro (1998) visualized this inquiry approach as a spiralling movement in an expansive, forward-moving "motion that comes from circling in time and touching various points, each time from a new point in time and in one's own self-development" (p. 42). The interactive nature of MI has strong connections with Mazzei's (2014) description of her reading of data with theoretical concepts (and/or multiple theoretical concepts) and reading "the texts of theory, experience and data *through*, *with,* and *in relation to* each other to construct a process of thinking with the data and with the theory" (p. 744). But it was also strongly resonant with my experience as a scholar and practitioner involved in movement, carrying awareness, questions, and ideas into my daily being in practice. In this sense, I became aware that this not only required "thinking the complex," it also required "being the complex" (Morin, 1999a).

There are also strong similarities between the Buddhist-like approach of MI and Morin's idea of thinking the complex. Like Buddhist mindfulness practices, thinking the complex calls for a transformation in consciousness. The aim of Buddhist mindfulness practices is to alleviate suffering associated with our so-human thinking that the self is separate from other living beings. Buddhist knowledge traditions place great emphasis on

raising consciousness through the cultivation of mindfulness, compassion, loving-kindness, and the capacity to be present throughout the process of inquiry. As we are confronted with the devastating consequences of the dualistic thinking of the self, thinking the complex means that we must imagine “our coming into consciousness as a process in which the subject becomes aware of this ‘otherness’ in the world in a self-affirming and inclusive way” (van Breda, 2007, p. 3).

Thinking Through and With Buddhist Teachings as Part of Mindful Inquiry

Principles of equality, reciprocity, loving-kindness, and compassion are the axiological foundations of the Eastern knowledge tradition of Buddhism, which if cultivated within a society, it is argued, can increase harmony and peace.[7] Equality and reciprocity are principles drawn from Buddhist teachings describing the universal nature of human existence and the essential quality of all living beings—namely, that all living beings fear death; that all living beings desire happiness; and that all living beings fear pain. The understanding that all living beings are alike is the basis for the fundamental equality of all living beings. Naturally flowing from this understanding, it is thought that one develops and cultivates principles and practices of loving-kindness and compassion so that all living beings may be free from suffering.

[7] My integration of the Eastern knowledge tradition of Buddhism into my mindful inquiry is explored as a key component of the MI framework. As I outline in this section, I considered Buddhism as a knowledge paradigm and explored its axiology, epistemology, ontology, and methodology for its potential for knowledge generation strategies and practical action for social justice as well as its contributions to thinking and being the complex.

While there is an appeal to the notion of a fundamental equality in Buddhist teachings, it is based on experiences of suffering such as fear of pain or fear of death, and on a desire for a future-based vision of happiness, which are all held in common. The notion of a fundamental equality disrupts the idea of the self (the I and/or ego) as separate, not in relation to other beings. Because Buddhist teachings are grounded in principles of equality and reciprocity, there is no emphasis on the self. In fact, an attachment to the idea of the permanent ego/self and an independent *I* that is opposed to and separate from the surrounding living beings is considered ignorance. It is one of the chief causes of suffering, in Buddhist thinking. The Buddhist purpose of developing insight, wisdom, and knowledge generation through mindfulness practices is related to removing ignorance. MI points to this paradox in one of its philosophical assumptions: "Inquiry usually requires giving up ego or transcending self, even though it is grounded in self and requires intensified self-awareness" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 7).

That Buddhist knowledge traditions are present in MI has implications for knowledge generation and practical action. Rather than arguing for sameness and against difference, Buddhist teachings propose the disruptive idea that in our continued focus on or preoccupation with self, we are fundamentally out of relation with other beings. Buddhist teachings have a relational epistemology suggesting that we only know in relation, and a relational ontology suggesting that there is always relation. These relations may be fraught with fear, anxiety, or anger because of our perceptions of difference from or with the other, but they are relations that we are living within, that we can inquire into, and potentially transform, not through recuperation into sameness, but into a different set

of relations perhaps informed by reciprocity, as Buddhist teachings argue. Bentz and Shapiro (1998) have proposed that Buddhism "focuses on the ways in which our personal ways of being, thinking, perceiving, and feeling can create distorted understanding and on the need for the personal, existential choice of mindfulness as a way of life" (p. 42).

To transform our consciousness and our practices calls for mindfulness—thinking the complex and being the complex. Buddhist mindfulness practices provide relevant methodological direction because they promote freedom from illusions that cause suffering, by deepening awareness. Mindfulness practices cultivate both attitudes and actions that are thought to lead to enlightenment and the end of suffering. Buddhist teachings propose that the practice (action, praxis) of helping other beings to become free from suffering contributes to our own enlightenment and our own freedom from suffering. Bentz and Shapiro (1998) linked Buddhist mindfulness practices to critical social science's orientation to emancipatory knowledge. Emancipatory knowledge is knowledge that reduces suffering and increases happiness, freedom, and justice (p. 53). Rather than a retreat from the world, the practice of Buddhist mindfulness is congruent with auto/biographical inquiry, in demonstrating a performative practice of actively being and living in a complex, lived-in world: "Today, we must all become part of this self-reflection to understand and act meaningfully in relation to the intellectual, social, and environmental chaos surrounding us" (Bentz & Shapiro,1998, p. 160).

Thinking Through and With Critical Social Theory as part of Mindful Inquiry

While equality and reciprocity are the principles underlying Buddhist mindfulness practices, we live in a world in which social, economic, and political systems create conditions of inequality and injustice. Bentz and Shapiro (1998) stated that the tradition of critical social theory asks us

> . . . to be aware of the ways in which ourselves, our lives, our relationships, our society, and the things of the world are distorted and deformed by economic, social, political, cultural, and psychological oppression, domination, exploitation, violence and repression. An important implication of this approach is the idea that, because of oppression and domination, we do not encounter people and things as they truly are. For people and things are not what they could be if it were not for oppression and domination. (p. 166)

The perspectives of critical social analysis are informed by an interpretive approach combined with a pronounced interest in critically appraising and disputing actual social realities (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, p. 100). Critical social analyses have often been the subject of criticism themselves because they focus on critique and deconstruction and often fail to offer constructive and concrete possibilities for real-world practice. In this dissertation, critical social theory finds congruence with Buddhist mindfulness practices in that the purpose of a critical analytical orientation is to transform consciousness and to change situations, institutions, and practices that are shaped by injustice.

Thinking Through and With Phenomenology as Part of Mindful Inquiry

Bentz and Shapiro (1998) emphasized the connection between ontology and epistemology; with phenomenological inquiry, "the development of awareness is not a

purely intellectual or cognitive process but part of a person's total way of living her life" (p. 7). As a means of cultivating mindfulness, phenomenology, then, is a way of knowing and a way of being in the world. Cultivating phenomenology as a living practice or a practice of living builds an inquirer's capacity to awaken curiosity about and deepen awareness of everyday experiencing. Rehorick and Bentz (2008) described *wonderment* as a way of seeing or being in the world. The "deliberate act of curiosity" is a phenomenological practice that can reveal "the imaginative, the hidden and the possible" in the everyday lifeworld (Rehorick & Bentz, 2008, p. 6).

Phenomenology as integral in the development of critical ontological agency is also described as transformative, according to Rehorick and Bentz (2008), because its capacity to illuminate what we have learned to ignore in our everyday lifeworld can uncover fresh knowledge. Through phenomenological practice, it is possible for scholar-practitioners to learn how to bracket[8] assumptions and habitual ways of experiencing, bringing a fresh curiosity and presence to lived experience in our practice contexts.

Phenomenology is similar to Buddhist mindfulness practices in that it privileges a relational orientation to inquiry. The relationship between the knower and the known is characterized by an emphasis on empathy, curiosity, interest, thoughtfulness, reciprocity, embodied consciousness, and attachment. Its perspective stands in stark contrast to the

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[8] *Bracketing* is a phenomenological practice that can assist scholar-practitioners in learning "to recognize, then set aside, the myriad assumptions, filters, and conceptual frameworks that structure our perceptions and experiences" (Rehorick & Bentz, 2008, p. 11). While bracketing can never fully remove all these interferences to appreciating the fullness of a particular reality, Rehorick and Bentz state that in practising phenomenology, "one can never again take the world of everyday life at face value" (p. 12).

conventional distance, anonymity, and neutrality required of scientific researchers in their relationship with the phenomenon of interest. The relationship in phenomenological research between the inquirer and the phenomenon of interest is marked by a relational reciprocity.

Phenomenology provides a reflexive methodology for inquiring into lived experience.[9] The methods of phenomenological inquiry involve writing rich descriptions (including sensory and somatic experiences, memories, dreams) of lived experience. Phenomenological inquiry situates researchers at the centre of their research, self-reflexively exploring how their positionality as inquirers, interpreters, and knowledge generators plays a role in understanding the phenomenon of interest (Rehorick & Bentz, 2008). Because of its valuing of lived experience, phenomenological inquiry encouraged me to consider how ideas, concepts, and theories associated with practice relate to lived experience within a broader context.

Thinking Through and With Hermeneutics as Part of Mindful Inquiry

Hermeneutic inquiry invites inquirers to undertake a reflexive process to uncover what modes of consciousness, assumptions, and biases inquirers are using in the process of interpretation that informs action. Like Buddhist mindfulness practices, its purpose is to help inquirers to move beyond surface interpretations and habituated seeing and thinking. Because our interpretations as practitioners have profound implications for the

[9] Schutz (1932/1967) proposed that one's lived experience becomes meaningful only when a past experience becomes an object of one's reflection and interpretation.

lives and lifeworlds of the disenfranchised citizens with whom we work, hermeneutics was helpful in a very practical way for contextualizing my work as practitioner and clarifying my relational responsibility to the citizens with whom I worked more fully. Gadamer (1975, 1976) proposed that in our everyday human attempts to understand our world, we always bring our foremeanings or what he calls “prejudices” to bear in our work of hermeneutic understanding. Rather than seeing prejudices as an obstacle to understanding, Gadamer saw them as an integral part of our human meaning-making process, presenting important opportunities for deepening our understanding of self and other. Table 1 summarizes the inquiry paradigms in MI that I draw upon in this inquiry.

Table 1
Inquiry Paradigms in Mindful Inquiry

Inquiry paradigm	Buddhism	Critical social theory	Lifeworld phenomenology	Hermeneutics
Axiology (the study of values and principles underlying knowledge claims)	Equality, loving-kindness, compassion, reciprocity inform inquiry to promote a peaceful and harmonious society	Alleviation of human suffering and emancipation of human potential	All inquiry is about aspects of lifeworlds and therefore is responsible for the condition of the lifeworlds it affects	Conditions for human understanding mediated by maintaining a moral-ethical relationship with the phenomenon of interest
Ontology (the study of the nature of being)	All living beings fear pain, and death. All living beings desire happiness	Reality is socially constructed, mediated by power and ideology, and can be changed	There are multiple realities. Realities are constituted meaningfully by conscious human beings by the way we conceptualize, categorize or reflect on them	The nature of human being is hermeneutic: humans strive to understand the meaning of our being on earth
Epistemology (the study of ways of knowing)	Alleviate suffering through the removal of ignorance associated with human thinking of self as separate	Knowledge is generated for the purpose of changing institutions and practices shaped by domination and	Circumvent predefinitions and elucidate the complex and elaborate structures through which the world and our	What counts as knowledge is mediated by language and ability to maintain a moral-ethical relationship with the phenomenon of interest

	from other living beings	oppression	knowledge of it are constructed	
Methodology (a way of knowing)	Cultivate mindful practices of inquiry to alleviate suffering	Critical appraisal and analysis of oppressive social practices for the purpose of transforming them	Cultivate curiosity, empathy, love, thoughtfulness, about phenomenon of interest	Self-reflexive inquiry that maintains a moral-ethical relationship with the phenomenon of interest

Thinking Through and With the ALMOLIN Analytical Framework

ALMOLIN

The second guide I used in thinking through inquiry with action for social justice was ALMOLIN, the analytical model developed by Gonzalez et al. (2010) and Moulaert et al. (2010). ALMOLIN was designed to explore the dynamics of social exclusion at local, regional, national, and global scales, enabling a fuller understanding of the nature of the challenges and opportunities in the local spaces where practitioners were currently working. Integrating alternative knowledge creation strategies with action for social justice, Moulaert et al. identified three dimensions of social innovation as a tangible set of measures and standards of judgment to assess whether a particular social innovation (a) responded to human deprivation; (b) empowered previously silent or excluded social groups by creating new capabilities; and (c) changed social and power relations towards a more inclusive and democratic governance system.

In the following chapters, I show how ALMOLIN was used to connect alternative knowledge generation and practice in a socially innovative project (WCP) in a unique

local context. ALMOLIN offers a more holistic approach to knowledge generation through a sociology of knowledge approach and supports researchers in evaluating the quality of their own work and the work of others in the process of conducting research informed by an ethical social justice position. The thread of thinking through and with the ALMOLIN model will be carried through the following chapters to illuminate understandings about the theory-lived experience-practice relationship and the process of and conduct of inquiry involved in social justice methodologies.

Limitations of the Inquiry

Choosing retrospective auto/biography as a means of representing the process of thinking through and with the theory-lived-experience-practice relationship means that my choices in representing the stories of practice are mine and include taken-for-granted assumptions and blind spots that I as the inquirer might not have been aware of.

In my dissertation I explore the possibilities of integrating theory, research, and action in the pursuit of social justice goals, in the everyday work of practitioners engaged in local social innovation efforts. I provide an account of events, incidents, and key moments that represent my experiences of the unravelling and the remembering of relationships among qualitative inquiry, theory, lived experience, and praxis in the service of social justice goals while I was engaged in the development of the WCP project. This is a work of interpretation. My interpretations are solely my responsibility. The storied accounts that I have provided in this thesis are particular stories that posed opportunities for thinking through and with the theory-lived-experience-practice

relationship. My colleagues and the citizens with whom I work might choose other stories or other story lines, images, and metaphors that are more meaningful, relevant and of more significance to them.

In this dissertation, it has not been possible to include all the conversations with community stakeholders, legal and financial specialists, engineers, urban planners, health and housing authorities, corrections' officials, architects, and builders even though they have all participated in and influenced thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship required of the WCP.

Overview of Chapter Structure

The following chapters illustrate processes of thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship to guide others embarking on similar work. I have used footnotes extensively throughout my dissertation. Footnotes were a way for me to refer to scholarly work that was influential to my inquiry project. I wanted readers to know about this work but did not want to disrupt the foregrounding and flow of the stories and my sense-making. Each chapter begins with field notes that include texts that organize and regulate the terrain in which I work. I show how developing creative capacities of inquiry and learning across individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels of praxis informed the making of the WCP. To this end, Chapter 2 demonstrates a process of thinking through and with critical theoretical perspectives with the ALMOLIN model. A more complex and socially robust analysis emerged as I deconstructed the ongoing interactive dynamics of social exclusion at local, regional,

national, and global scales. I show how this enabled a fuller understanding of the nature of the challenges and opportunities and where change efforts at institutional levels of praxis might be directed. In Chapter 3, I share my experience of thinking through social phenomenology and with critical sociological perspectives. I weave together Schutz's (1970) theoretical concepts including *lived experience*, *lifeworld*, *everyday reality*, *the natural attitude*, *intentionality*, *typifications*, *stocks of knowledge*, *and relevance.* I also engage with Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1998) theory of *embodied consciousness.* I show through an example of phenomenological writing interwoven with these phenomenological concepts how it is possible to deepen awareness of and engage with the structures of consciousness that shape and constitute our everyday experience. Here my goal is to understand and trouble the practices we deploy to respond to poverty and homelessness. Chapter 4 begins with a standard case management guideline that structures our organization's relationship with the citizens we are striving to help. Field notes from my practice setting show how thinking through and with Gadamer's three levels of self-reflective hermeneutics created new possibilities at group, organizational, and institutional levels of praxis. In Chapter 5, I propose directions for further inquiry and learning across individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels of change that emerged in the making of the WCP.

Significance of the Inquiry

These limitations are also strengths. This work may offer possibilities for thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship for practitioners

committed to social justice efforts who are working in the areas of community engagement in higher education, community-based adult learning, learning for community mobilization, and community development with marginalized citizens. In this dissertation I hope to respond to current calls for reflexivity within the research process. The dissertation focuses on illustrating the affordances of exploration in the initial stages of research and of anchoring oneself in the lifeworld prior to determining methods and methodology. In this retrospective auto/biographical account I also hope to contribute to the literature on social innovation. Specifically, this account aspires to extend the work of social innovation researchers (Moulaert et al., 2010) by providing a case example of alternative knowledge building processes which informed an alternative model of local social innovation.

In addition, I strive to illuminate the paradoxical nature of the process of MI: namely, that while the intention and the spirit of mindfulness introduces the notion of resting in the present moment with no fixed agenda and letting go of any ideas about an end goal, the purposes of MI are steadfastly attached to boldly acknowledging the suffering of sentient beings and identifying and acting on the kind of inquiry and action that would diminish that suffering.

By far the greatest significance of this inquiry for me is to be found in the lives of citizens who were able to find the resources they required to begin anew, and to restore their full participation in and contribution to the social, economic, political, and cultural life of the community.

Chapter 2.

Thinking Through and With Critical Social Theory

Field notes: October 2012

Excerpt from a journalist's article in local newspaper:

Doug, 54 (photo shown above) was especially happy to get some socks.

"Socks are always welcome on the street," he said.

Doug is the son of a Baptist preacher, and hails from a fishing village in Nova Scotia. He wanted to see the Rocky Mountains, and eventually ended up here. "There was that old saying, "Go West, young man" he chuckled while packing up his bike and gear.

He used to work as a painter, and then ended up on employment insurance (EI). Lately, he's been sleeping on sidewalks, under awnings, in ravines, and frequents the shelter. He heard about Wednesday's event through the shelter.

"It's nice to know homeless people are being recognized," Nickerson said. "There is a difference to homelessness and being addicted to drugs.

"Perhaps the most notable thing about him, as far as first impressions go, is how happy he seems to be.

The "haves," as it were, have not cornered the market on philanthropy. Nor is the material wealth the be-all and end-all. Doug spends his nights handing out 'harm reduction' packs—containing clean needles—to drug addicts on the street. He gets the packs from the Needle Exchange.

I begin this chapter thinking through and with critical social theory to action in the WCP with an excerpt from a local journalist's interview with a man who is identified as homeless. I do this to problematize the assumptions embedded in this short article and place these within the broader context of knowledge of the phenomenon of homelessness.

Like many journalistic accounts offering portraits of homelessness, cinematic storytelling devices commonly splice images of the homeless other with interview sequences with other marginalized identities such as youth at risk or drug addicts. The intention seems to involve imagining that one can break in to get empirical material about a social reality out there in order to make substantive knowledge claims (Alvesson, 2003). Alvesson has pointed out that those who are subjects of such research are unevenly distributed among the general population; this poses political-ethical dilemmas, and raises questions about the power and politics of inquiry (p. 191). Since my inquiry process was directed towards developing creative capacities of inquiry and learning across individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels of change for social justice, I was interested in the capacity of critical perspectives to problematize knowledge. Rather than a reflection of reality, critical approaches view knowledge as a social phenomenon in itself. Critical perspectives emphasize active questioning of the social realities we encounter and our ways of knowing about them.[10]

[10] The theorizing of critical social theorists associated with the Frankfurt School such as Adorno (1973), Gramsci (1978), Horkheimer (1974), and Marcuse (1964) was most relevant to my wayfinding, since their collective work combined critiques of society with action for social change. Collectively, these writers argued that, in contrast to the Enlightenment's claim that freedom would be won through knowledge and reason, we had produced societies that foreclosed on freedom and justice. For Horkheimer, critical social theory should not only be oriented to critique or explanation. For example, the Frankfurt School advocated for ideology critique as a way to critically reflect on and ultimately challenge how dominant ideologies pervade our internalized human experience in the form of uncritically accepted beliefs, assumptions, emotions, ways of knowing and being, and come to legitimate unjust social structures and practices. Gramsci (1978) described hegemony as an expression of power that achieves its ends through domination of the ideas of one group over those of another that justify social inequities. Achieved by consent rather than by coercion, hegemony normalizes some realities, practices, and structures so that we accept them as common sense and immutable, while negating others. His ideas recall Morin's exhortation to "think the complex." For Gramsci, this was also an intellectual struggle, involving challenging ways of thinking and knowing promoted by dominant systems and instead imagining a different way of living that promoted individual and collective wellbeing.

Retrospective auto/biography as a practice of inquiry highlights a dialectical relationship between the individual and society. It privileges context and highlights the situatedness of inquirers in the socio-cultural-political-material world through which they move. This meant directing my inquiry towards "knowing more about [myself as a researcher] in historical, geopolitical, and epistemological views . . . as a matter of ethics and responsibilities" (Cisneros Puebla, 2015, p. 389). Thinking through and with critical inquiry to create the WCP was a process that involved pressing beyond the reflections rendered in the camera's gaze. This was a process of coming to view knowledge itself as substantive–constitutive relations of personal identities, social practices, institutions, and power structures. Understanding these relations involved deconstructing the socially constructed context of homelessness as a private trouble, as rendered for example in the journalist's article. Moving to action involved anchoring the issue of homelessness in the historical moment and into broader public spaces, where it could be made more visible as a publicly relevant issue that deserved public attention. From here, it was possible to move towards transforming current policy mechanisms into inclusionary strategies (Denzin & Giardina, 2015; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Concurrently, as I encountered the research texts and technical reports I review in this chapter, I also reflected on the construction of my self in relation to the larger social, cultural, and political world I was examining. I was reminded again of what Cisneros Puebla (2015) called "a sociology of our practices as researchers, as scientists, as persons of flesh and blood" (p. 388).

An anonymous, nonreflexive, cinematic gaze at the homeless that focuses narrowly on an already imposed storyline, highlighting tragic turns of fate, triumphs over

insurmountable odds of survival, or "how happy [the homeless person] seems to be," does not exemplify MI. This cinematic gaze has what Bentz and Shapiro (1998) proposed are "epistemological blinders," leaving the viewer and viewed invisible. This is a view from nowhere that occludes the broader, more complex realities of the phenomenon of homelessness experienced by the citizens we assist. The cinematic gaze as applied to homelessness does not open to appreciating the complexity of the social processes, policies, and practices that inform the dynamics of social exclusion, nor does it communicate the urgency to respond to the human deprivation of citizens experiencing homelessness. This reinforces a naïve, uninformed perception of homelessness as an isolated, exceptional, singularly individual plight. In this chapter I show how, through a sustained critical inquiry using ALMOLIN, it is possible to gain more socially robust perspectives on the complex dynamics producing the phenomenon of social exclusion evident in homelessness.

In the city where I live and work poverty, social exclusion, homelessness, income inequality, crime, urban decline, and unemployment are most apparent at the local level. A critical social analysis using the ALMOLIN analytical model assisted me to identify the dynamics of social exclusion generated in wider political and economic conditions. In this chapter, I demonstrate how I used ALMOLIN to guide a critical investigation of the trajectory, over time, of the restructuring forces of neoliberalization at macro international levels, and its structural impacts at different territorial scales, from federal welfarist and collectivist institutions through to the local spaces where we worked. I examined policy documents, technical reports, and research on poverty, homelessness,

and access to adult education. I also examined research describing shifts towards new governance arrangements amongst state, markets, and civil society that influenced our change efforts at institutional levels in our development of the WCP. I describe here the results of these efforts, which culminate in making the restructuring forces of neoliberalization on the spatial configuration of cities more visible, especially in my own city.

I discovered ALMOLIN (Gonzalez et al., 2010; Moulaert et al., 2010) as I looked for social movements in the world where voluntary sectors were at the forefront of efforts for social justice. I was interested in its critical analytical model for three reasons. First, like my inquiry process, ALMOLIN also emerged from a collaboration of researchers across disciplines (Moulaert, Martinelli, Gonzalez, & Swygedouw, 2007; Moulaert et al., 2010; Miciukiewicz, Moulaert, Novy, Musterd, & Hillier, 2012; Novy, Coimbra Swiatek, & Moulaert, 2012; MacCallum, Moulaert, Hillier, & Vicari Haddock, 2009). Second, the working definition of alternative local social innovation began from an ethical position of social justice. Third, the various researchers wanted to make knowledge generation directly accountable to the lives of marginalized citizens. Their concern with the connection between inquiry and action for social justice led them to identify three dimensions of social innovation as a tangible set of measures or standards of judgment about knowledge generation (epistemology) that contributed to actual change towards social justice: whether a social innovation responded to human deprivation, whether it empowered previously silent or excluded social groups by creating new capabilities, and whether it changed social and power relations towards a more inclusive and democratic

governance system (Gonzalez et al., 2010, p. 56). Moulaert et al. (2005) viewed these three dimensions as axiological: that is, as interconnected features of individual and collective well-being. In addition, the entry point to their research on social innovation was located at the local level, where the multiple deprivations of social exclusion were evident. In addition, the research collaborators studied the complex multilayered realities of selected European cities marked by social disintegration resulting from market failure, the erosion of welfare state policy, and the failure of the labour market. To this end, their studies included a diversity of actors, agencies, sectors, social relations, and governance processes that demonstrated a dialectical process between exclusion conditions and the collective processes and practices deployed to overcome them in the work of alternative local social innovation. These researchers articulated a process for practitioners like me, acting at a local scale, to analyze the dynamics of social exclusion in the local and particular context in which we were located (individual, group, organization) and how these were connected with broader structural levels (institutional).

The ALMOLIN Analytical Model: Understanding the Dynamics of Social Exclusion

The ALMOLIN analytical model (Figure 1), as I redesigned it to suit my inquiry and the design of the WCP, helped me to gain a fuller understanding of the complex realities existing in our local and particular spaces. It guided my analysis through the idea

of path dependency[11] (in the vertical axis entitled TIME) and its analysis of the relations between spatial scales (the horizontal axis entitled SPACE). Analysis using path dependency focuses on the socio-economic-historical-cultural-political contextual conditions over time that facilitate or obstruct possibilities for socially innovative actions. It can help clarify how problems experienced by marginalized citizens at a local scale have multiple dimensions and are related at multiple spatial scales. Figure 1 shows how the ALMOLIN analytical model guided my thinking through and with critical perspectives to examine the dynamics of citizens' social exclusion from social welfare, health care, employment, education, housing, and active citizenship that I have discussed in Chapter 1.

[11] Path and context dependency refers to those changes in agendas, agency, and institutions that lead to better inclusion of excluded groups and individuals in various spheres of society at various spatial scales (Moulaert et al., 2005). It is a term that explains the effects of lock-in, in decision making that may be influenced by historical tradition or systemic pressures (neoliberalization) at individual or system levels and that have durable consequences. Canadian federal policy lock-in on short-term, emergency responses to homelessness, for instance, has had durable consequences for many citizens such as prolonged homelessness, compromised health, and mental health crises.

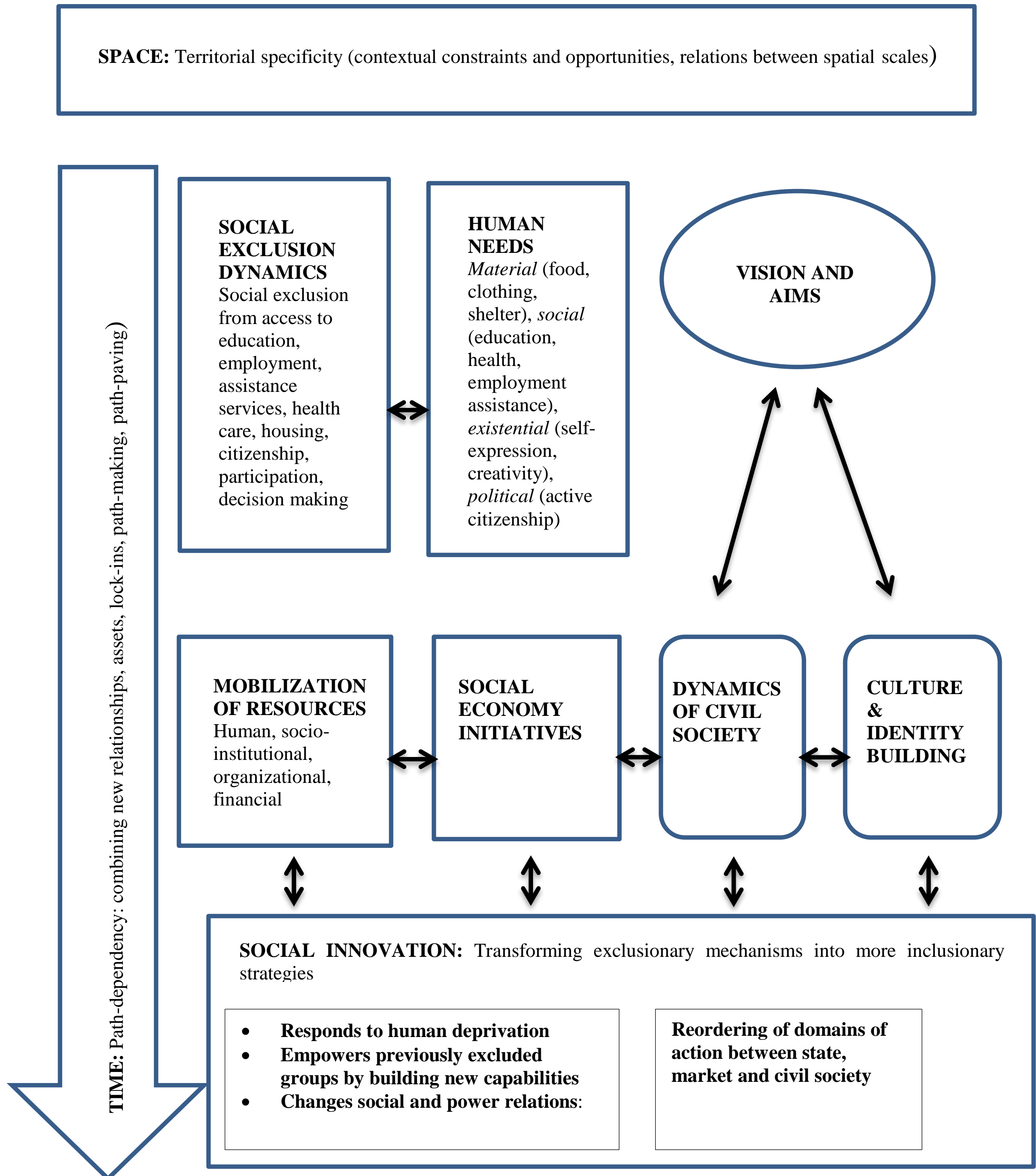

Figure 1. *Adaptation of the ALMOLIN Analytical Model (Gonzalez et al., 2010).*

Thinking Through and With the Dynamics of Social Exclusion Across Time

Thinking through and with the vertical axis of time in the ALMOLIN model expanded my investigation beyond the local conditions in which I worked. I began to investigate changes over time (and at broader scales) in agendas, agencies, and institutions that increased the social exclusion of citizens I saw each day. The citizens I worked with who were attempting to move from social assistance to employment to exiting poverty were underserved and unprepared to succeed in a competitive, globalizing world. With reduced access to education to improve their employability, described in Chapter 1, they were not only educationally underserved, but also were mired in conditions that were structurally inequitable. For example, even if such citizens were able to achieve employment, they were likely to join the ranks of the working poor, rather than move out of poverty. Many citizens reported employment opportunities that were mostly low-waged, seasonal, or temporary work with few if any benefits.

ALMOLIN's analytical concept of path dependency enhanced my understanding of these complex realities I was observing in my local and particular location. As I proceeded with my inquiry, guided by the concept of path dependency, I observed that critical researchers commonly identified the global economic crises of the 1970s as a turning point; it was then that economic competitiveness became the key priority for nation states' survival in what had quite dramatically become a neoliberalized, self-regulated, global, capitalist market economy under new trade liberalization policies

(Brenner & Theodore, 2002).[12] Canada adopted neoliberalist market-based logics during this period, and Canadian federal and provincial policies prioritized deficit reduction in order to remain integrated with the new global political-economic-spatial order. In this new globalized structure, networks and flows of capital became the norm instead of fixed places of production (Moulaert et al., 2011). Canada's adoption of trade liberalization policy (NAFTA) and trends towards deindustrialization reflected this realignment with neoliberalization.

Other critical writers have argued that the reorganizing and restructuring forces of neoliberalization typically oppose government regulation, particularly those regulations involved in the social collectivist institutions of the welfare state (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Peck & Tickell, 2002). Canada's welfare state policies were not exempt. Welfare state arrangements have a profound impact on social well-being. They provide social protection to citizens against the social risks of unemployment, illness, disability, and old age. The logics of Canadian welfare state policy that evolved in the post–World War II period were based on relationships, reciprocity, and the idea of collectively pooling social risk (Boychuk, 2004; Jensen, 2004; Myles, 1996). Access to education, the development of pensions and health insurance in post-World War II Canada were the key pillars of a social safety net. Universal social provision of health care, pensions, family allowances, and education were also meant to be viewed as entitlements of Canadian citizenship. In recent years, with rapid social and economic change towards neoliberalist regimes, the

[12] These included the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT, implemented 1995), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA, implemented 1994) and those policies imposed by the World Bank (WB), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

popular understanding of citizens as members of collectives who benefit from the advantages of pooling risk has been slowly undermined (Jensen, 2004).

I observed these trends in my work on the WCP. In the current context of economic crisis there was a deepening trend towards retrenchment of social protections. In Canada today, this has come to refer only to protection for the poor and the prevention of social exclusion. Canada's welfare state has increasingly shifted towards residualist social provision, meaning that governments will only step in when markets fail to provide supports; and only then, by subjecting applicants for income assistance to strict means-testing. I researched writers examining these policy shifts among postindustrial nation states in Europe and North America (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1996, 2002; Hacker, 2004; Jensen, 2004; Pierson, 1994, 2000, 2001; Scott, Spencer, & Thomas, 1998). Many of these authors confirmed that the new residualist welfare architectures were built at the expense of nations' existing systems of social protection and access to education.

In my everyday work with disenfranchised citizens, it was apparent that Canada's current welfare state, the realignment of relationships among markets, families, communities, and the state had dramatically shifted responsibilities for individual and community well-being towards communities and individuals. A new body of knowledge was emerging, which had begun to produce and name new conceptions of the role of the state, processes of governing, and the role of individuals as citizens. At an ideological level, political rhetoric describing the commitments of the Canadian welfare regime still maintained an emphasis on equality and freedom. However, these values were now subsumed within the framework of free markets. The new rhetoric valorized individuals

as free market actors, capable of exercising choice and freedom to determine their own health care, educational, social care, and labour market futures.

As I grasped the notion of path dependency in the ALMOLIN model and applied its insights into the dynamics of social exclusion to technical and research reports, new questions began to emerge. For example, what were the effects of these multiscalar, neoliberalist regulatory and institutional transformations in the spaces in which I was working? The construct of path dependency revealed the effects of policy lock-in and organizing and restructuring that had occurred in the late 1990s. These effects began to appear in reports at the local level and in communities where my organization was located. My colleagues and I were working on the front lines of in these conditions, and the unprecedented rates of homelessness, poverty, addiction, and other social, health, and safety impacts on the community were staggering. For example, a report on social issues in local neighbourhoods in my city published by Human Resources Development Canada (2001) detailed the critical challenges our inner city communities faced. Because of federal cuts in social spending, increasing restrictions on eligibility for EI, and provincial implementation of workfare criteria for income assistance, greater numbers of people in our local neighbourhood were known to be falling through social safety nets and were forced into dire emergency situations: homelessness, criminal lifestyle, and addiction. The critical need for affordable housing and supportive housing, evident then in the report's description of lengthy waitlists and turnaway number from shelters, has not changed substantially today. Similarly, in my organization's programs, waitlists for access were and still are lengthy.

In another study, *Poverty Reduction Policies and Programs in British Columbia*, Graham, Atkey, Reeves, and Goldberg (2009) argued that the province had created a legislated form of poverty. The report notes a 47 percent reduction in income assistance caseloads occurring from the mid-1990s onward, largely through changes in eligibility requirements. In 2001, the Liberal government in BC introduced changes to BC's welfare system, modelling it after the workfare reforms made to the social welfare system in the United States in the 1990s. The ideological rhetoric of personal responsibility was first introduced in provincial welfare policies in 2002 (Government of British Columbia, 2002, p. 2). This new ideology depoliticized the problem of poverty, locating it at the level of the individual. In reality, it resulted from a complex set of political and economic conditions including changing economic trends, systems, and structures due to trade liberalization, combined with a withdrawal by the state from programs that promoted and enhanced equality. The report notes that in 1990, the poverty rate in one of the largest Metro Vancouver municipalities was 15.7 percent. By 1995 it had reached 21.4 percent.

A study entitled *Still Left Behind: A Comparison of Living Costs and Income Assistance in British Columbia* (Atkey & Siggner, 2008) reported that from 2002, a 70 percent decline in income assistance caseloads, or about 53,850 cases, was documented. The Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance reported that the acceptance rate of those applying for welfare dropped from 90 percent in June 2001 to 51 percent by September 2004. In addition, the report notes that no rate increases for income supports occurred between the early 1990s and 2007. Income assistance rates are not tied to any measure of low income and are not indexed to inflation. The report notes that in 2007 a

single adult on income assistance received enough to cover only 45 percent of her or his basic living expenses, and a single parent with a teenage child could meet only 62 percent of basic costs.

In this literature I recognized the path dependency and multiscalar nature of neoliberalist policy logics, and how they had deepened social exclusion and increased the marginalization of citizens I served. The new welfare state policies which prioritized employability over assistance were part of broader neoliberalist policies articulated by supranational organizations like the Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD) and the World Bank. While the ideological rhetoric of neoliberalization promised that a free market economy would lift all boats, the link was becoming clear between neoliberalist policy logics and the precarious labour market conditions facing the citizens I served (Chunn & Gavigan, 2004; Neysmith, Bezanson, & O'Connell, 2005).

Path Dependency in Policies on Housing and Homelessness

The path dependency of neoliberalist logics was also evident in the history of the context of homelessness, its causes over time, and the path unfolding into the present as it related to my work. In a study entitled *Shelter: Homelessness in a Growth Economy*, Laird (2007) observed how Canada was globally recognized as a top economic performer in steering a growth economy—meanwhile, a nation-wide homelessness crisis continued to accelerate. Laird highlighted the example of the city of Calgary, Canada's biggest boom town in the growth economy at that time, which reported a 740 percent increase in

homelessness between 1994 and 2006 (City of Calgary, 2006). Laird traced the historical trajectory of the burgeoning crisis of homelessness to Canada's dismantling of its national affordable housing program. The study noted that up until 1993, Canada's policy on affordable housing had created 650,000 housing units for Canadians. In the 1980s, approximately 20,450 new social housing units were created annually. By 1995, this had dropped to a 1,000 units per year (Shapcott, 2007).

In *The Real Cost of Homelessness: Can We Save Money by Doing the Right Thing?* Gaetz (2012) argued the importance of examining the then Conservative government's policy rhetoric that debt reduction and fiscal responsibility trumped a compassionate response to homeless Canadians. Laird's (2007) study had estimated that in 2007 there were 150,000 citizens who were homeless, costing Canadian taxpayers approximately $4.5 to $6 billion per year. However, based on increasing street counts of homeless citizens at municipal levels, Laird estimated that the numbers of homeless across Canada may have actually ranged from 200,000 and 300,000 citizens. Canada's response to the crisis, according to Laird, had largely been a short-term crisis management and containment strategy deploying costly emergency services such as temporary shelters, day programs, hospital wards, welfare offices, and soup kitchens, as well as emergency interventions in the criminal justice system and mental health institutions. Gaetz argued that the neoliberal discourse promoting disciplined fiscal management in order to produce a growth economy that would benefit all Canadians had not delivered. He cited a 2006 Statistics Canada report showing a growing income gap between the median net worth of the lowest 10 percent of households which fell by

roughly $7,500 (in 2005 dollars) between 1994 and 2005, and families in the top 10 percent which increased their share of total wealth by $659,000 in the same period.

Pomeroy (2005), in *The Cost of Homelessness: Analysis of Declining Government Housing Expenditure*, estimated the annual cost associated with prolonged homelessness per person for emergency shelters at $13,000 to $42,000, and the annual cost per person for prison, detention, medical, and psychiatric hospitals stays at $66,000 to $120,000. The annual costs associated with prolonged homelessness per person in total have been estimated at $134,642 (Calgary Homeless Foundation, 2008). Laird (2007) calculated the cost to Canadian taxpayers of these emergency management approaches to homelessness, across all services and jurisdictions between 1993 and 2004, at $49.5 billion. His study concluded that the Canadian government had not only added public debt at all levels of government, but it had also failed to help Canadian citizens to exit homelessness.[13] In the conclusion of his report, Laird predicted that if current government policy prevailed, it would continue to fuel homelessness, accelerate urban decay, and in a so-called growth

[13] In the process of my research, I also discovered that in 2006, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESCR) took the unprecedented step of serving notice to the Canadian government to address homelessness and inadequate housing as a national emergency. It exposed Canada's failure to meet its international treaty obligations in providing basic policy and resources to protect a growing population of marginalized citizens, noting that more than 11 percent of its citizens still lived in poverty in 2004 despite its growth economy. Canada's growing income gap, long waitlists for subsidized housing, inadequate minimum wage levels, low social assistance rates, high levels of homelessness and hunger, and unfair treatment of the unemployed were of such concern to the UNCESCR that it required the Canadian government to report on its progress on these targets annually, rather than every four years.

economy would ensure the general economic erosion of quality of life for millions of Canadians.[14]

Gaetz (2012) argued that Canada's policy approach had helped to create and sustain chronic poverty and housing insecurity, and noted that deepening poverty was the leading cause of homelessness in Canada. The Social Planning and Research Council of BC'S (SPARC; 2005) report, *On Our Streets and in Our Shelters: Results of the 2005 Greater Vancouver Homeless Count*, noted that 66 percent of all homeless people surveyed cited lack of income or cost of housing as the main cause of homelessness. Laird (2007) noted that in Calgary's homeless shelter in 2007, 40.2 percent of shelter users reported that they worked more than 32 hours per week but were still unable to find affordable housing.

These critical analyses of poverty and homelessness traced the path dependency of neoliberal policy logics at multiple scales. The withdrawal of social protections for citizens and the deconstruction of policy discourses were incisive, but examples of practical, constructive action were not identified. Furthermore, a polarization of positions was evident in the critical literature, appearing to pit the forces of neoliberalization against those of social change for social justice. Many questions started to emerge for me about how critical inquiry could inform the WCP. How could I think through and with a body of theory that so often created a bipolar impasse between the status quo and calls for

[14] In February 2013, Bill C-400, an act that proposed the establishment of a national housing strategy to ensure secure, adequate, accessible, and affordable housing for Canadians was defeated in parliament. At that time, Canada was the only G8 country without a national housing strategy.

radical change—agendas that often stopped at explanation of unjust conditions and fell short of action for social justice for the citizens my organization served?

Path Dependency in Policies on Access to Adult Education

I found a similar historical trajectory at multiscalar levels that intensified the exclusion of marginalized adults from educational opportunities, in reports beginning in 2001. The *Thematic Review of Adult Learning in Canada* conducted by the OECD (2002) expressed concern about adult literacy levels in Canada. In particular, the report noted large cohorts of adults at Literacy Levels 1 and 2, indicating that there should be greater attention to the overall level of funding for adult basic education (ABE), the intensity of ABE programs, the approaches to providing ABE, its articulation with other education programs, and its pedagogy. (According to the Conference Board of Canada (2016), literacy skills at Level 3 are required for minimum job standard levels.) The OECD's report found little evidence of policies specifically designed for adult education, and recommended that both federal and provincial governments develop a coherent policy focused on adult learning. Such policy should establish priorities among different kinds of adult education, and special provisions for vulnerable groups such as Aboriginal people; the disabled; those without basic literacy; the long-term unemployed; or the working poor, including older workers (OECD, 2002, p. 49). Further, the report noted that the working poor were often denied access to adult education because of the special circumstances of their lives or because they failed to meet conditions of eligibility. The OECD (2002) called upon federal and provincial governments to consider whether

programs undermined access to this group (p. 50). The conclusion issued a warning: if the recommendations were not considered, the recent speech from the throne calling for "expanding Canadians' access to knowledge and skills and extending our abilities to think, innovate, and create in a world transformed by information and technology, will be difficult to implement" (OECD, 2002, p. 51).

Five years later, Myers and de Broucker's (2006) report, *Too Many Left Behind: Canada's Adult Education and Training System*, found that although the policy rhetoric of Canada's federal and provincial governments recognized the importance of lifelong learning, participation levels for less-educated learners had scarcely improved. Examining Canada's adult learning systems in the provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec, Myers and de Broucker documented the availability of formal learning opportunities for adults, and identified factors influencing participation of less-educated/less-skilled adults in these opportunities. The findings revealed that less-educated individuals were not well served by the current system so as to enable them to realize their social and economic potential (Myers & de Broucker, 2006, p. 67). Further, none of the provinces in the study had a coherent incentive framework designed to encourage individuals, employees, community organizations, and educational institutions to engage in learning activities. Findings included insufficient government investment that targeted neither disadvantaged workers nor incentives for employers to support training for less-skilled employees. Instead, the report noted, competitive firms were following a race to bottom, focusing on low-cost, low-skills work.

The last federal initiative on lifelong learning in Canada was the formation of the Canadian Council of Learning (CCL) in 2004, which was designed to support research to improve all aspects of learning in a national scope. In its report, *Taking Stock of Lifelong Learning in Canada 2005–2010,* the CCL (2010) examined Canada's progress on lifelong learning between 2005 and 2010. It noted that Canada lacked a lifelong learning system to transform the rhetoric of lifelong learning into a coherent vision and a plan for action (CCL, 2010, p. 34). It estimated that approximately 42 percent of Canadian adults (9 million) had low levels of literacy. Not only did the report indicate that almost half of Canadians performed below the internationally accepted minimum considered necessary for participation in a knowledge society, the literacy projections for 2001–2031 suggested little improvement.

In 2006, the CCL adopted UNESCO's (1996) International Commission on Education's report, with its pillars of "learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be" as the basis for the composite learning index (CLI), a tool to gauge the extent of a population's progress in lifelong learning. The CLI measures for learning through the life cycle includes the development of general and applied skills and knowledge, social values, and interpersonal skills; and personal qualities of mind, body, and spirit. The four pillars are premised on the understanding that these skills, knowledge, and attributes are acquired in various contexts, including at home, in the community, at school, and at work. The CLI was chosen because of its positive relationship to social and economic well-being. However, the Canadian federal

government withdrew funding in 2009, in favour of developing a more comprehensive learning information system aligned instead with labour market demands.

At an international scale, UNESCO's (2010) *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education* (2010) expressed several concerns about the global trend of withdrawal of governments from direct responsibility and involvement in adult education. Looking to reduce public spending, governments were now attracted to market solutions specifically to private, for-profit educational provision since this was perceived as being more flexible to market demand than publicly funded systems that were slow to respond to rapid changes in workplace requirements (p. 55).[15] As the number and scope of private providers increased, the report warned that the privatization or commercialization of certain types of educational programs would raise the issue of regulation over the invisible hand of the learning market.

Other researchers noted that neoliberalization had produced new actors in knowledge generation in the field of education, in addition to UNESCO, the OECD, and the European Commission (Dale & Robertson, 2007; Resnick, 2008). Klees, Samoff, and

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[15] The UNESCO report also warned that privatization posed a threat to equity and balanced development in adult education provision and participation. Citing the work of Bourdieu & Passeron (1977/2000) the report argued that "unless consciously redressed through equity-oriented policies, educational systems tend to reinforce social inequalities" (p. 67). As national governments withdraw from the statecraft of policy making, and responsibility for educational systems is transferred to others, there is a notable increase in international and regional policy making in education and training provision (p. 56). The report identified a need for government to maintain an interest in equity issues both for economic reasons and for maintaining social cohesion. It warned that without a stable legal and financial framework, adult education provision was extremely susceptible to even minor economic or political change. As an example, the report referred to the Asia Pacific Regional Synthesis Report (Ahmed, 2009) which noted the variety of economic, political, social, and structural barriers that constrain women, the poor, older adults, ethnic minorities, and Indigenous groups. These are exacerbated under unstable conditions.

Stromquist (2012) argued that the World Bank was an increasingly influential actor, having far-reaching impacts on educational systems not only in countries to which it linked, but more broadly in all parts of the world, often more so than UNESCO. In Klees et al.'s critical reading of UNESCO's most recent education sector document, *World Bank Education Strategy 2020. Learning for All: Investing in People's Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development*, they observed that the World Bank claims its global status as a knowledge bank and produces its own evidence about the nature and role of education in society.

Similarly, Ball (2012) called attention to the knowledge generation activities of global edu-businesses such as Cambridge Education and Pearson Education. Other actors identified by Ball influencing educational policies from global to local spaces were management consultancy firms such as PricewaterhouseCoopers, which were transitioning into knowledge-based professions. Ball argued that academic researchers were effectively marginalized by these new global actors in the business of brokering knowledge to inform education policy in communities. Strategically aligning with current neoliberalized policy positions of governments seeking to make their nations more competitive in the global economy, consultants were marketing their knowledge management services to assist governments in making their public services more productive and cost effective (Ball, 2012, p. 99). Resnick (2008) proposed that these managerialist discourses depoliticized and effectively removed the political issues of adult education from public debate (p. 10). Examining the discursive texts of these global actors in the knowledge economy, Davidson-Harden (2009) found that in such

conditions, knowledge was reduced to “an input and a good which enhances profitability” (p. 271).

Here again in the area of access to education for adults, the ALMOLIN model assisted me in identifying the dynamics of social exclusion generated in wider political and economic conditions affecting the citizens we served. Of particular concern to me was the appearance of new knowledge actors—the knowledge management firms seizing opportunities to engage in statecraft in the context of the neoliberalization of public policy. How could my colleagues and I and the citizens we served understand and take meaningful action on the complex circumstances in which we found ourselves? The ALMOLIN model helped to identify the mechanisms (policies, practices, routines, resources, and authority flows) that were strengthening social exclusion. Social innovation focused change efforts for social justice at individual, group, organization, and institutional levels of change. Not only did my colleagues and I need to bring change to mechanisms, our work as practitioners was also embedded in oppressive practices in relation to this wider social and political context. To make something new, our change efforts would need to take place within and against the social, economic, and political structures and mechanisms of social exclusion in which we were embedded.

Socially Innovative Response to the Business Transformation Project of BC

An example of the politics of knowledge generation aligned with market logics, and its effects on vulnerable citizens with whom I work, is the Business Transformation

Project (BTP), a policy direction initiated by the province of British Columbia in 2012 to transform the delivery of provincial employment assistance services. Employment assistance services in communities across the province of British Columbia had, until 2009, largely been provided by the voluntary sector through community-based nonprofit organizations. Nonprofits served as subcontractors of the Canadian federal government to provide services in communities under the department of Human Resources Development Canada. In 2009, this funding devolved to the provinces. Following similar system-wide initiatives implemented in jurisdictions including eastern Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands, the province of British Columbia, under the BTP, engineered a massive transformation of the public employment assistance services sector. Its primary goal was to produce efficiencies and cost savings for government. Provincial spokespersons lauded the initiative as a means of providing universal access, customer choice, and outcome accountability judged by business performance criteria. However, its narrowly prescribed services for workforce development excluded the participation of the vulnerable citizens my organization served whose needs also included safe, affordable housing, and access to health care and education that would improve their chances of finding employment and achieving a sustainable livelihood.

The BTP was technically complex. To engineer the transfer of business performance metrics to the community-based, voluntary-sector delivery of human services, the province initiated a consultation process with the voluntary sector. This lengthy process generated over 3,000 pages of responses to proponents' questions just to

explain its implementation. No agreements on how to proceed emerged after two years of consultation. Yet, at the end of the consultation period, despite the sector's whole-scale opposition to the BTP, the provincial government announced unilaterally that the initiative would proceed.

In response to the BTP policy initiative, my organization mobilized a socially innovative response. We attempted an analysis of the BTP at individual, group, organization, and institutional levels to determine how we could ensure that the vulnerable citizens we served would continue to have equitable access to employment assistance services. In our analysis we began to understand the multiscalar and cross-sector nature of the BTP policy initiative. Canada's international trade agreements, for example, enabled well-resourced international corporations, offering an array of technological solutions for social and human services in big-box storefront models, to compete in the provincial RFP. These agreements certainly had impact in a global context but we were seeing them enacted first-hand in communities. Many place-based nonprofit agencies across the province without the history or capacity to operate as a business in the new BTP policy model were forced to close their doors in the face of fierce competition with large, for-profit firms from the United Kingdom, Australia, Eastern Canada, and the United States.

My organization mobilized knowledge generation for action by inviting other local nonprofit organizations to form a collaborative network of nonprofit employment services providers to submit a collective bid to offer employment assistance services in our community. We argued that through cooperation and integration of our voluntary-

sector services, we could build the capacity of the narrowly circumscribed BTP approach to workforce development, to gain better outcomes for all citizens served than had been identified in the limited prescribed services of the RFP. Through our collaborative network, we ensured that vulnerable citizens were not excluded and further marginalized by the BTP's limited instrumentalist and economistic, efficiency-driven model. Secondly, through the formation of a legal architecture for our collaboration, we ensured that in this newly imposed for-profit model of service provision, our community-based network could reinvest profits in developing further socially innovative models to ensure equitable access to services, rather than seeing corporate service provider profits exiting the community and possibly the country.

I developed Table 2 as a way of summarizing the work of thinking through and with critical approaches to identify the dynamics of social exclusion, over time and at multiple dimensions and scales. I began to see more clearly that the citizens with whom I worked were located at the intersection of impacts of poverty and neglect at societal and institutional levels. However, the horizontal axis of the ALMOLIN model, which addresses the relationships of spatial scales—local, regional, national, and global—that can advance or hinder social innovation, further built our capacity for learning and transformational change in the development of the WCP.

Table 2

Cascading Effects of Changing Policy Rationalities on Citizens With Whom I Worked

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="9">TIME: Path-dependency: (combining new relationships, assets, lock-Ins, path-breaking, path-paving)</td><td colspan="6">Global economic crisis: National economies must remain economically competitive globally</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Emergent neoliberalist policies
Free market economics—claims best, most efficient way to allocate resources and opportunities
Free Trade—open economies, political and financial deregulation
Laissez-faire—free markets are naturally self-regulating, state creates the conditions in which the free market operates
Individualization—individuals are economically self-interested and the best judge of their interests and needs; the worthy citizen is consumer/entrepreneur; the unworthy citizen is unmotivated
Withdrawal of public expenditure in education, welfare, housing, health, mental health, social protections</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">New knowledge generators
Supra-national agencies (The World Bank), international consultancy firms (PricewaterhouseCoopers) emerge as new generators of knowledge informing government policy and statecraft</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Policy shifts to business logics: Ideology of personal responsibility</td></tr>
<tr><td>Welfare state
Social protections reduced to residualist model

Policy logics
Poverty is a personal responsibility, not a result of systemic forces and social practices</td><td>Health
Business management practices to contain costs

Policy logics
Health is a medical concern, not socially determined, (citizen as consumer)</td><td>Employment
Shift from industrial to knowledge economy

Policy logics
Participation in the labour market is based on individual choice and responsibility</td><td>Access to education
Reduced access to ABE

Policy logics
K-12 is free. Adult education is a personal responsibility</td><td>Housing
Reduced investment in affordable housing

Policy logics
Reduce social expenditures to balance fiscal budget</td><td>Citizenship
Based on individual consumer choice and responsibility

Policy logics
Citizenship recast as participation in the labour market</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Shifts toward governance
Devolution of responsibilities for health, labour market, adult education, housing to lower levels of government, communities, nonprofit sectors without the resources to respond to citizens' needs</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Effects on marginalized citizens</td></tr>
<tr><td>Reduced access to social protections</td><td>Reduced access to health services</td><td>Reduced access to stable employment providing a sustainable livelihood</td><td>Marginalized learners sidelined</td><td>Homelessness increases</td><td>Citizens cease to have access to participation when they become marginalized economically, politically and socially</td></tr>
</table>

The Horizontal Axis of the ALMOLIN Analytical Model

The horizontal axis of the ALMOLIN model addresses the relationships of spatial scales—local, regional, national and global—that can advance or hinder social innovation. It also identifies the dynamics of power relations and how socially creative strategies may resist and/or transform structural arrangements. Such arrangements that act to block alternative social innovations include top-down public sector pressures to adopt technological and economic strategies that subject emerging initiatives to the ideology and logics associated with the market.

Neoliberalist Restructuring: From Government to Governance

As Table 2 shows, another significant feature of multiscalar, neoliberalist regulatory and institutional transformations is reflected in new forms of governance in the interactions between state, market, and civil society. New arrangements have generated new forms of governance beyond the state, which can appear to challenge traditional state-centred forms of policy making. But while they may present potentially significant terrains for fostering inclusive development processes, enabling new forms of participation and articulating state–civil society relationships in potentially democratizing ways, there is concern about how they may redefine and reposition the meaning of (political) citizenship and consequently the nature of democracy itself (Swyngedouw, 2005).

New governance models have rapidly implemented the transfer of what had been national responsibilities for health, welfare, education, infrastructure, immigrant

settlement, and housing to regional and local levels without building community capacity or providing resources to respond to these emergent and complex needs in a sustainable way. Accompanying these new shifts towards complex governance interactions between the state, the market, and civil society, were discourses that explained this transfer of responsibility for the social well-being of citizens to individuals in a new ideological frame of individual freedom and choice of services that were closer to home.

These new horizontal and networked arrangements of governance were of significance to community-based scholar-practitioners like those of us working on the WCP. Market forces and business logics have redefined the relationship between governments and civil society organizations in communities. For example, nonprofit organizations like the CWBS emerged from a grassroots history of activism for social justice in the community, an activism that advocated for equality for oppressed groups and militated against oppressive systems and policies. Now, governments enter into contractual arrangements with such service providers. The rationale behind contracting stems from the perception of the voluntary sector as outside the purview of governance and accountability. Made subject to the regulatory measures of neoliberalist governance arrangements, the voluntary sector can now be made accountable. Nonprofit organizations, which originated as champions for social justice, have now been recast in this new governmentality as service providers, acting at the behest of governments and subject to its policy logics, to deliver services to its citizens.

Strict accountability rules enforce performance-based contracts to ensure that the activities of nonprofits are tightly circumscribed within the clearly defined limits of

jurisdictional issues. Advocacy work is strictly prohibited and perceived as a conflict in interest. As a result, governance arrangements constrain the efforts of nonprofits working for social justice in their communities. Special divisions of labour have been articulated in this new spatial dispersal of governance. The for-profit sector frames good citizens as those who assume individual responsibility for taking their place as life-long learners, contributors to the market economy, and those who "take up the role with which society has entrusted them" (Walker, 2009, p. 343). Contractual arrangements with nonprofit, community-based organizations direct remedial measures to those who are framed as either lacking competence to participate or having problematic personal characteristics such as complacency and lack of motivation. The reasons for nonparticipation are thereby individualized (Walker, 2009, p. 345).

The work of nonprofit organizations assisting marginalized citizens in these arrangements subsequently becomes identified with and rendered as individualized and psychologized interventions promoting self-help for private troubles. Through these contractual measures, voluntary-sector organizations based in communities have thus become marginalized themselves, their work newly institutionalized as a quasimarket according to neoliberal logics, and their operations relegated to the social, economic, and political backwaters of market economics.

In working on my retrospective auto/biographical inquiry highlighting the dialectical relationship between the individual and society, I began to viscerally feel the vulnerability of my situatedness as an inquirer in the socio-cultural-political-material world through which I was moving. ALMOLIN had helped me illuminate how processes

far from the lives of the citizens I was assisting at a local level had an enormous impact on the possibilities that existed for them to exit poverty by earning a secure income. My examination and critique of these new governance arrangements posed new questions to consider for our development of the WCP. Through what socially creative strategies could the WCP project effect change in the existing dynamics of power relations and the structural arrangements that were increasing the social exclusion of the citizens with whom I worked? These dynamics represented powerful blocks to our alternative social innovation efforts, by exerting pressure on voluntary-sector organizations to adopt political rationalities, technological and economic strategies, and the ideology and logics associated with the market. How could the CWBS maintain its focus on assisting marginalized citizens to exit poverty and also direct our organization's change efforts to these higher levels of governance? Immersed in the stories of citizens with whom I worked each day, how could the WCP resist the stories cultivated about them by neoliberalist rhetoric which rationalized the withdrawal of supports in education, housing, employment, and health? How could we make a compelling counternarrative through the design of the WCP? How could we make an inclusive urban development project within and against the spatialization of social exclusion in our city?

Neoliberalist Spatialization of Cities: New Centres and Margins

In this section, I carry forward these questions with a focus on the more visible forms of the restructuring forces of neoliberalization in the spatial reconfiguration of cities. I show how city spaces are being shaped by a web of interrelated regulatory relations at multiple scales. In particular, I show how the city in which I live and work

has been affected by this multiscalar regulation through city policy documents, and how this in turn has affected our work at the CWBS. Urban geographers such as Sassen (2012) have argued that economic globalization has contributed to a new geography of centrality and marginality (p. 323). While a territorial dispersal of corporate economic activities is one phenomenon, Sassen notes that some cities have become the sites of immense concentrations of economic power by centralizing the most advanced professional users and providers of financial information. Cities that once were major manufacturing centres have suffered catastrophic declines in some countries. Cities can be marginal or central to a global neoliberalized economy, and parallel inequalities are also occurring inside cities (p. 324). These include dramatic income disparities between workers in highly specialized services supporting the most powerful sectors of global capital and finance, and growing numbers of the most disenfranchised groups.

When I presented with a colleague at a conference on learning cities[16] in Hong Kong in November 2013 (Cities Learning Together, 2013), we observed first hand this phenomenon of a new geography of centres and margins. Approximately 300,000 domestic workers, migrating mostly from Indonesia and the Philippines, are employed in Hong Kong. On Sundays, their only day off, the metropolitan space of Hong Kong's global financial centre was overtaken by thousands of domestic workers who gather together to eat, dance, rest, and share information. Vulnerable to exploitation, they also gather together to organize for workers' rights to fair wages, better working conditions,

[16] A learning city is part of OECD terminology. The Pascal group supports/challenges the concept (Cities Learning Together, 2013).

and protection from exploitative treatment such as unjust living conditions and threats of deportation from employers.

Researching more deeply into these broader global structuring forms of centres and margins, and how they are expressed in the spatial configuration of cities, I examined the work of other urban geographers to explore the spatialization of social exclusion in our city. Massey (2007), writing about cities in their broader geographical and political context, argued that particular geographical imaginations are being mobilized in cities striving to be global, to legitimate the dominance of a neoliberal form of globalization—the deregulation, financialization, and commercialization of all aspects of life. This, Massey argued, is resulting in an ever more unequal world. Ruddick's (1996) earlier studies also examined how social difference is produced and power deployed through the organization of urban space. Ruddick's investigations focused on cities as contradictory sites of both cosmopolitan hope and social exclusion, on how identities are intertwined with the places in which we live, how environments both reflect and shape particular ways of life, and how inequities take spatial expression in practices of exclusion, most notably in urban areas.

Herbert and Brown (2006), examining the connections between conceptions of space and crime in cities, have suggested that urban spaces are increasingly subject to a variety of regulatory mechanisms that work to separate the desired from the undesirable; "social divisions are mirrored in spatial ones" (p. 755). Herbert and Brown paid detailed attention to the ways in which neoliberalism conceals inequality by dividing urban landscapes between so-called healthy neighbourhoods that are able to repel unwanted

outsiders, and urban neighbourhoods that emit a signal of vulnerability to crime. An essential part of this conceptualization of space is the polarization between insiders and outsiders, between the crime fearing and the crime enacting, and between the normal and the pathological. Herbert and Brown argued that the neoliberalist agenda, through the social production of fear, and the categorization of citizens and of low-income neighbourhoods as already criminal, effectively act to bracket or elide a structural analysis that would reveal the deepening structural inequality in urban areas.

Cities are the sites of tensions between local, national, and in some cases supranational forms of governance and decision making on critical social issues. As the vertical axis of the ALMOLIN analysis of path dependency showed, federal and provincial governments, in new horizontal governance arrangements, have passed responsibility to municipal authorities for significant aspects of urban infrastructure, ranging from transportation and communications to social services and cultural programs. Cuts in federal funding that protected citizens from falling into poverty followed, in health, postsecondary education, and social welfare services.

Cities, as the analysis shows, are shaped by a web of interrelated regulatory relations. These range from macro trade and financial regulations by international governance institutions such as the WTO and the IMF, to provincial welfare-to-work programs and urban planning; to micro forms of regulation such as local ordinances prohibiting loitering and panhandling in particular areas of cities. Cities straddle the local and the global, navigating higher-level policy prescriptions and emerging local needs. They have become responsive to issues that have traditionally been outside their scope,

such as homelessness, and to the demand for citizen participation in dialogue and deliberation on emerging community needs (Moulaert et al., 2005; Swyngedouw, 2005). Evidence of these tensions can be found in the policy documents in the city where I live and work.

Our Town (a pseudonym for the city where my work is located) acknowledges the complex challenges that have emerged in the spatial shift from government to governance in cities. The *Plan for the Social Well-being of* Our Town *Residents* (known as the *Social Plan*) was adopted by City Council in 2006 to provide strategic direction for the city's action on social issues. Significantly, in its introduction, the report directly addresses the reorganization and restructuring processes of neoliberalization most pointedly in the shedding of federal government responsibilities, in stating:

> Based on the Constitution of Canada, the Local Government Act and the Community Charter, the Federal and Provincial governments are responsible for the delivery of social programs and services to the citizens of Our Town. These services include health, welfare, social assistance, housing, etc.

The report categorically states that "local governments, including Our Town, have very limited mandates for social service programs and services." One of the report's stated goals is to provide clarification on the "roles and responsibilities of local government in dealing with social issues" which the plan notes "often seem blurred." Among its traditional responsibilities, the city identifies "the delivery of parks, recreational, cultural and library services; and in the planning of communities and the regulation of development to foster a safe, clean, efficient and healthy living

environment." The report notes that despite this limited mandate, municipal governments are on the 'front-lines' of numerous social service issues and concerns.

In 2008, Our Town adopted a Sustainability Charter (n.d.) as a guiding document intended to direct the corporate operations of the city as well as the evolution of the community towards sustainability. The Charter focuses on the three pillars of sustainability: economic goals, of building an economy providing local employment and strong revenue base; environmental goals, emphasizing stewardship and protection of the community's natural assets; and sociocultural goals, including:

> . . . the promotion of a safe, caring, engaged, and livable community, with a sense of place, that is inclusive of all aspects of diversity and provides a range of education, recreational, cultural and employment opportunities, affordable and appropriate housing, transportation options and personal, health, and social services that are accessible to all. (p. 23)

The Charter organizes actions into areas of direct operational responsibility, regulatory authority, and influence over the short, medium, and long terms. Its overall framework provides guiding principles and goals in the Official Community Plan (OCP; 2013, 2013), a by-law enacted by local government that directs the growth management of the city. It governs land uses and density, infrastructure and facilities, and improvement to the quality of the community. The OCP established a set of economic goals and objectives to guide planning and policies for economic development. Its two primary goals were to achieve a strong and balanced fiscal base to support public infrastructure, facilities and services, and to balance the number of jobs with the resident work force in Our Town.

The key economic development strategies deployed by the city include an ambitious Build Our Town program designed and marketed to situate the city as a regional economic hub by attracting economic investment. Designated economic investment zones, including a new City Centre, were established to attract key sectors of clean energy, high technology, advanced manufacturing, and health by streamlining approval processes, eliminating property taxes for three years from the date of occupancy, reducing development cost charges, and building permit fees. Regional infrastructure projects in partnership with provincial and federal governments have invested $5 billion in the local economy to create an estimated 23,000 jobs. Investment in key sectors such clean energy included plans to establish an incubator centre for the commercialization of clean energy research, and a biofuel facility. Health sciences, another key sector identified by the city for investment, created an Innovation Boulevard within the city Centre regeneration area through a network of health institutions, universities, and private sector companies focused on innovation in the areas of medical technologies, technologies for independent living, and digital health technologies. Expansions of both the university campuses into the areas of biotechnology, science, the health sciences, and business, as well as architecture and engineering, are part of the City Centre economic development plan.

Within the city's policy documents there is an evident tension between the need for economic development strategies to build a strong local economy and the need for responsiveness to issues that have traditionally been outside the city's scope, such as homelessness and other social issues. While progress on economic development

strategies is widely celebrated, progress on strategies that ensure accessibility and social inclusion for all is less robust. The Sustainability Charter provides indicators to evaluate the city's progress towards its sociocultural goals. It proposes :

> For a community to be sustainable, the basic needs of it residents must continue to be met. This includes the need for housing, health care, employment, sufficient income and safety. A socially sustainable community must have the ability to maintain and enhance individual capacity and community capacity. To be effective and sustainable, individual and community resources need to be developed within the context of guiding principles of equity, social inclusion and interaction, security and adaptability.

In its most recent report on its sustainability indicators, the city reported that its Poverty Reduction Plan completed in 2012 had developed a plan of action in the priority areas of transportation, housing, income, and supports. While the plan notes that one in five Our Town residents, or about 71,000 people, live in poverty, working poverty is a phenomenon that is being recognized across metro Vancouver. A recent study published by the Metcalf Foundation found that Metro Vancouver had the second-highest rate of working poverty of any major city in Canada in 2012, with a rate only slightly lower than Greater Toronto (Ivanova, 2016).

The Social Plan also acknowledged that affordable housing was a critical component of a healthy community. Subsection I-4 of the OCP sets out policies that would allow people to live with honour and dignity regardless of income level and ability. The city has taken action. It has developed a Homelessness and Housing Fund, allocating over $9 million towards affordable housing in the city, and a partnership agreement with BC Housing to develop supportive housing units in Our Town; and has produced a Master Plan for Housing the Homeless (CitySpaces Consulting, 2013).

Despite these efforts, more than 400 citizens were estimated to be homeless in the 2014 homeless count. In the province as a whole, an estimated 116,00 people were still either homeless or living in insecure housing conditions in 2014 (First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, 2014). The Master Plan for Housing the Homeless in Our Town outlined an implementation program towards developing 450 new units of supported housing over a five-year period. The Parks, Recreation and Culture 10-Year Strategic Plan adopted in 2008 also sees that part of its mission is to enhance the quality of life in our communities by ensuring accessibility and inclusivity and promoting individual and community wellness. Similarly, Our Town's new Cultural Plan, unveiled in 2011, was designed to enhance urbanization through arts and heritage resources, to achieve a dynamic, sustainable, and socially cohesive city with an enviable quality of life. While Our Town has adopted several strategies and plans to meet its sociocultural sustainability goals, and while several programs are being delivered, strategies and plans to address urgent issues of equitable access to housing, education, health care, and employment, and inclusion for marginalized citizens in social, economic, cultural, and political life remain pressing challenges.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter I have demonstrated how thinking through and with critical social theory, using the ALMOLIN analytic model, guided me in my investigation of the trajectory over time of the restructuring forces of neoliberalization at macro international levels, and its structural impacts at different territorial scales, from federal welfarist and

collectivist institutions through to the local spaces in which we were working. In summarizing the path dependency of the dynamics of social exclusion (see Table 2), impacts were most notable in the areas of poverty, homelessness, and access to education that can enable an exit from poverty. I investigated the creation of new governance arrangements between the state, markets, and civil society. I also observed the more visible restructuring forces of neoliberalization on the spatial configuration of cities, especially in our own city, by examining some key city policy documents.

Thinking through critical social theory and with the complex issues in the spaces of our city outlined in this chapter demonstrates that a critical inquiry should not stop at critique. This is demonstrated in the use of ALMOLIN, which showed that knowledge generation informs socially innovative actions to respond to unmet human needs. In cities like ours where poverty, social exclusion, homelessness, income inequality, crime, urban decline, and unemployment are most apparent at a local level, a critical social analysis using the ALMOLIN analytical model can assist scholar-practitioners to identify the dynamics of social exclusion generated in wider political and economic conditions, and can encourage thinking about how these may be addressed. ALMOLIN examines these multiscalar links at local, national, and global scales in order to illuminate the nature of the challenges and opportunities in local spaces where socially creative strategies may be developed.

While thinking through the theory-lived-experience-practice relationship over the course of the development of the WCP project, I and my colleagues were in the process of recognizing the nature of our current location as practitioners in a civil society

organization—how we came to be in a place in history where particular understandings had been developed at institutional levels about managing social risks like poverty and homelessness. Systems have been developed based on technical rational interpretations of social risk. At these larger institutional scales, welfare systems, financial systems, legal systems, educational systems, health systems, and others are informed by particular renderings of how we as a society have responded to the social risks of homelessness, unemployment, illness, addiction, mental illness, criminal justice involvement, and poverty. My analysis showed that the path dependency towards neoliberalization actively marginalizes citizens through social, economic, and political systems that cultivate and exacerbate conditions of inequality and injustice.

In using ALMOLIN's approach, my analysis has showed the complexity of the problem of insufficient affordable housing in the city indicated that the problem was located both inside and outside the boundaries of our local community. It would therefore need to be addressed in a similarly multiscalar and systemic way. Secondly, I advocated for an experimental approach while we worked with actual realities on the ground in the community in order to demonstrate a different way of thinking of the problem of insufficient affordable housing in the city.

My analysis indicated that home was a need for all citizens; however our collective thinking across systems and sectors about the social risks of homelessness was fundamentally unsustainable into the future and needed to change. I felt that we needed to direct our attention to that connective tissue Morin (1999a) identified between our processes of knowing and the complexity of the lifeworldly context in which my

organization's work was located. Morin argued that through our habitual thinking we had severed this connective tissue. The challenge was to make a path of learning while advancing and making an inclusive urban development project within and against the dominant modes of thinking about homelessness and poverty. Below are some of the questions that challenged us to leave the comforts of our habitual thinking to construct a process of thinking and experiencing that deepened our learning about how we might design the WCP.

Scholar-Practitioners

1. What are some of the larger (multiscalar) drivers beyond the territorial space of your local community that may impose constraints or present opportunities for creating socially creative strategies that empower disenfranchised citizens?
2. What historical (path dependency) conditions are the antecedents of your current situation in your community? What relationships and resources are facilitating or constraining your community project?
3. What are the dynamics of social exclusion in your community?
4. What mechanisms (policies, practices, routines, resources, and authority flows) are strengthening social exclusion?
5. In what ways might your work be embedded in oppressive practices in relation to a wider social context, and in particular to dominant and prevailing power interests?
6. Whose interests are being served by these practices?
7. What unmet (alienated) human needs are you hoping to become more responsive to?

8. How do you propose to empower those citizens who are currently disenfranchised and in need of access to inclusive learning spaces?
9. How might you articulate your local community or neighbourhood efforts within larger systems or social movements to enhance change in social relations?

Chapter 3.

Thinking Through Lifeworld Phenomenology and With Critical Sociological Perspectives

> ***Field notes: November 2011***
>
> 7:30 a.m. Arriving at work, I see a young man wrapped in a flannelette sheet, head downcast, leaning against the wall by the door as I approach the main entrance to the Centre.[17] It is too early for admissions staff.
>
> He is visibly shivering. It's mid-November. I've had a restful sleep in the warmth and safety of my home. I was finding the brisk morning air refreshing until I begin to imagine the relentless cold of the night he may have experienced.
>
> The white sheet signals that he has come from the hospital. My heart tells me it means surrender.
>
> As I walk towards him, I think of the last time I had to experience surrender as a way of bringing myself closer to what his experience might be. I have to actively do this as I can't imagine it.

In Chapter 2, I showed how thinking through and with critical social theory encourages practitioners to ground themselves in the concrete experiences of the everyday social world, and to actively question the social realities we encounter and our ways of knowing about them. Similarly, lifeworld phenomenology (Schutz, 1932/1967) encouraged me to cultivate curiosity about the everyday realities of my practice setting; to leave the comforts of my habitual thinking to construct a process of thinking and

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[17] The CWB Centre is a community-based, integrated services centre located in the City Centre, operated by my organization, the Community Well-Being Society. The Centre integrates educational opportunities, employment assistance, heath care, residential addiction services, and long term transitional housing programs for marginalized citizens.

experiencing that deepened my learning about how we might design the WCP. In this chapter I show examples of how I engaged in the process of mindful wayfinding; how, in Morin's (1977/1992) words, one makes a path of learning while advancing—thinking through and with inquiry and action to animate change efforts at individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels for the purpose of social justice in the WCP. Aroused by Morin's (1999a) concern that the decontextualization of knowledge generation from the human lifeworldly realm has created conditions where "we can no longer learn what human being means" (p. 10), I began thinking through lifeworld phenomenology to explore what Morin called the connective tissue between processes of knowing and the complexity of the lifeworldly context in which my organization's work was located. Phenomenology's focus on the complexity and wholeness of human experience held promise as an essential foundational component of social innovation research. I had not seen phenomenological inquiry included in the social innovation literature.

In this chapter I show my process of thinking through and with phenomenology in a retrospective auto/biographical approach as a way of examining what Cisneros Puebla (2015) called "a sociology of our practices as researchers, as scientists, as persons of flesh and blood" (p. 388). Lifeworld phenomenology guided my investigation into the connective tissue between my processes of knowing and the complexity of the lifeworldly context in which my organization's work was located.

In this chapter, I draw upon field notes and storying of incidents and key moments in my practice, to show how in thinking through the theory-lived-experience-practice

relationship, I left—and encouraged others to leave—the comforts of habitual thinking. I show a process of thinking and experiencing that produced an emergent series of readings as lifeworld data, theory, and lived experience made themselves intelligible to one another. I do this by weaving together Schutz's (1970) theoretical concepts including *lived experience*, *lifeworld*, *everyday reality*, *the natural attitude*, *intentionality*, *typifications*, *stocks of knowledge*, and *relevance.* I also engage with Merleau-Ponty's (1945/1998) theory of *embodied consciousness.* Finally, I show how thinking through lifeworld phenomenology, Smith's (1987) critical standpoint theory, and the lifeworld context of our practice setting influenced the creation of inclusive learning spaces in which marginalized students' accounts of their experiences in these spaces dramatically deepened our learning about how we might design the WCP.

In the first section of the chapter, I share my attempt at a phenomenological protocol which captured a kind of stream of consciousness account. I brought it to a WCP team meeting at the CWB, whose purpose was to experiment with thinking through and with phenomenological inquiry, with a view to informing social innovation efforts in the WCP project. My field notes also illustrate the importance of the dialogical nature of thinking through my auto/biographical methodology, which explores the theory-lived experience-practice relationship in phenomenological inquiry. Some of the WCP project team's discussions are shown on the left-hand side of the page, counterposed with my experiment in phenomenological inquiry on the right-hand side.

Team interactions	*Field notes, November 2011*
The safety protocols dictate that we are supposed to leave Sam standing in the cold outside while we enter the building. We are supposed to call the security guard to deal with Sam. Here you are making our location visible… our privilege, our whiteness, our membership in the dominant social group and how easy it is for us to ignore the conditions people are facing when they don't affect us directly. We can afford to be poets can't we? I am thinking of my own blindness from my privilege, there are few if any occasions I can think of where I have had to surrender… I think this is a phenomenological way of working you are describing…trying to remove some of the lenses we are using to bring clarity to our vision - to figure out where we are coming from He is not surrendering. He is looking for help. Surrender brings up the process of interpretation we've been talking about, how we construct fictions about people...	7:30 a.m. I see a young man wrapped in a flannelette sheet, head downcast, leaning against the wall by the door as I approach the main entrance to the Centre.[18] It is too early for admissions staff. He is visibly shivering. It's mid-November. I've had a restful sleep in the warmth and safety of my home. I was finding the brisk morning air refreshing until I begin to imagine the relentless cold of the night he may have experienced. The white sheet signals that he has come from the hospital. My heart tells me it means surrender. As I walk towards him, I think of the last time I had to experience surrender as a way of bringing myself closer to what his experience might be. I have to actively do this as I can't imagine it. I say a friendly "hello there" from a few steps away, not wanting to startle him. "I'm Ann," I say when I'm closer and hold out my hand to greet him. He looks up quickly. I see dark shadows under his eyes against his pale face. He extends his hand in greeting. His hand is dry and calloused, stiff with cold. "Sam," he says softly. "You look like you're cold, Sam." I say.
Gary has knowledge and experience that is different from our training… He knows what to do right away without question…in solidarity.	Gary, a resident appears in the lobby and reaches out the door to hand Sam a gray fleece jacket. "Here," he says grinning at Sam in solidarity, "take this, man. I don't need it."

[18] The CWB Centre is a community-based, integrated services centre located in the city centre, operated by my nonprofit, community-based organization. It provides educational opportunities, employment assistance, heath care, residential addiction services, and long-term transitional housing programs for marginalized citizens.

The way you have described Sam makes me think of the white sheet as a binding sheet for a body, a corpse. I was thinking that he is already almost dead.

These are good questions, poetic questions, questions about stories

I'm sure Sam has some stories that could help us understand what we need to do if we could find ways of inviting him into this story space.

The sophisticated systems and the technology we have designed are not capable of responding to this.

Who is qualified to care?

Sam looks up at him as he accepts the gift and nods in thanks.

Against the safety protocols, and with only the intention of offering a simple kindness, I invite Sam to come inside to warm up. I'm not sure how I can help. I think of the impossibility of responding adequately to what I am sure is a long list of hurts and harms.

When I bring us some cups of coffee, we sit silently at first. He is rocking himself from side to side holding the coffee cup tightly to his lips. As I sit with him, my heart knows and asks silently: "Where are you from wanderer and where have you been?"

"I walked to the hospital." He says. "I just didn't know where else to go. I am at the end. My brother just died. He always knew when I was in trouble. He would always call me and ask me what's up. I thought…what's the use of sticking around? I thought I should go too but I guess I didn't take enough. I'm still here."

He tells me that he told the nurse that he had tried to overdose. When he was finally seen by the doctor, the doctor told him: "Well, you are alive now, so you can go." This was at 1 a.m..

Admissions staff are arriving. Hayley looks through the window and picks up the phone to call another resource to see if they've got room. I tell Sam that Hayley is looking for a safe place for him to stay where he can rest. He has been up for three days now. I say my goodbyes and ask him to stay in touch with us. I have to be at a meeting at 8 o'clock. As I am leaving, Gary comes to sit with Sam.

These field notes illustrate how phenomenological inquiry places a high value on an awareness of the local and particular context of knowledge generation. This valuing is expressed in two key phenomenological terms that describe the location of my account:

in *lived experience* and in a particular everyday *lifeworld*. Lived experience is defined by Rehorick and Bentz (2008) as the "direct feelings, thoughts, and bodily awareness of actual life" (p. 3). This locates knowing as an embodied process that is embedded in the complex conditions in which as practitioners our work, being, knowing, and doing is situated. We typically think of the body as absent from our consciousness and therefore from knowledge generation, but Merleau-Ponty (1945/1998) argued that there is no consciousness of the world separate from the body.

In terms of an auto/biographical inquiry, where I am inquiring into my lived experience, the body is the foundation for conscious awareness. But the body is situated in a particular world, in a location, culture, and time in history that also provides a situated context for consciousness. Lived experience also calls attention to the relationality and spatiality of our consciousness—how we interact with others in the spaces where we work and live. In this phenomenological account, I experimented with allowing these aspects of consciousness to enter. This approach stands in stark contrast to the fragmentation and compartmentalization of lived experience into the categories I typically work with and enact in my work setting. Privileging relational and spatial awareness allows the body in.

Upon reflection, I noted that, in the field notes, I am an embodied inquirer located in the act of perception: "I see a young man wrapped in a flannelette sheet, head downcast, leaning against the wall by the door." Rather than adopting a more distant, anonymous perspective, that might be expressed as: "A young man stands outside the main entrance." I describe several embodied experiences that trouble the clinical and

managerial ways of knowing. My embodied experience is a source of knowledge troubling the standard forms of relating with Sam. In my descriptions, I call up embodied experiences of the "warmth and safety of my home" and the sense of refreshment in "the brisk morning air." These are positioned alongside my imagining of Sam's experience of the "relentless cold of the night." Tensions and contradictions arise between an account of attending to what "my heart tells me" and thoughts locating Sam via my technical training and knowledge of homelessness and addiction. More complex phenomenological textures of this encounter with Sam are illuminated in my accounts of auditory experiences (the softness of Sam's voice) and the tactile bodily experience of contact with Sam's hands as "dry and calloused, stiff with cold." As members of the team continued to work with this account of an everyday experience in our lifeworldly setting, it was only upon reflection and in dialogue with each other in the process of making meaning that I became aware of the textures, movements, and tensions characterizing this embodied experience in the moment and the alternative forms of knowledge it could invite.

This process of reflection on acts of meaning making illustrates Schutz's (1932/1967) theorizing of "meaningful lived experience." My intent in this phenomenological account was to capture a stream of experiencing in the field notes. Schutz proposed that the possible meanings of our lived experience can only be accessed through an act of reflection, "in the course of which the latter is lifted out of the stream of consciousness and identified as an experience in such and such a way and in no other" (Schutz, 1932/1967, p. 215). Remembering Morin's (1999a) call for "thinking the

complex," I recognized that we were engaged in a considerably more spacious process of uncovering a complex process of thinking, remembering, experiencing, and constructing that was typically outside our awareness in our everyday lived activities and interactions. By bringing my attention to our lived experience in everyday interactions, I got a sense that we were uncovering how our processes of knowing were based on our lived experience and through our interactive engagement with the social world we inhabited.

Understanding the concept of *lifeworld* as embedded in the intersecting and overlapping lifeworlds I encountered in the WCP was significant for me as a practitioner. Husserl (1970, pp. 122–123) defined *lifeworld* as the world of one's lived experience in everyday life. I wondered about the interdependence and intersectionality of the structures of the lifeworlds of disenfranchised citizens; the lifeworlds of officials engaged in city governance and urban planning; the lifeworlds of provincial and federal housing policy departments; the lifeworlds of architects designing spaces in cities; and the lifeworlds of officials engaged in health, mental health, social welfare, educational policy, and federal community corrections policy departments, among others. In these interactions I grew to appreciate Morin's concern about the connective tissue that had been severed between knowledge and its lifeworldly context. As I navigated in the spaces between the lifeworlds of the citizens with whom I worked and government departments and systems, the complexity and wholeness of human experience as a source of knowledge was often dismissed in favour of the more powerful discourse—evidence, or scientific knowledge.

Expert discourses about trauma and the professionalization of clinical systems directed towards treatment are an example of this complexity. The stories participants shared with me and my colleagues indicate that trauma is endemic of poverty. But experiences of trauma are not unique to the citizens with whom we work. The experience of trauma is widespread across all sectors of society. In Canada, for example, it is estimated that 76 percent of Canadian adults report some form of trauma exposure in their lifetime, and 9.2 percent meet criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (van Ameringen, Mancini, Patterson, & Boyle, 2008). Given the widespread incidence of trauma throughout society, Bloom (1997) noted that there are many more traumatized people than there will ever be individual therapists to treat them. Moreover, as my analysis showed in Chapter 2, health, mental health, education, housing, and other social service systems are under significant stress as governments continue to withdraw funding for these supports. These factors led Bloom to argue for the creation of naturally occurring healing environments like the inclusive learning spaces our organization has created, which provide experiences, vital for recovery, that are integrated with material pathways out of poverty towards full participation in the social, economic, and political life of the community.

The meaning of the term *lifeworld* has sociological roots as well as existential philosophical underpinnings. For Bentz and Shapiro (1998) it referred to

> . . . the lived experiences of human beings and other living creatures as formed into more or less coherent grounds for their existence. This consists of the whole system of interactions with others and objects in an environment that is fused with meaning and language (for human actors) and that sustains the life of all

> creatures from birth through death. It is the fundamental ground of all experience for human beings. (p. 171)

This sense of the lifeworld was articulated by existential phenomenologist Martin Heidegger (1962), who theorized that human consciousness was not separate from the world, as the empirical sciences insisted. Rather, he proposed that as human beings our learning and meaning making were structured by a person-world connectedness that is fundamentally directed towards understanding our relationship with and our dwelling on earth (Heidegger, 1971).

Schutz's (1932/1967) unique contribution in social phenomenology was to articulate how the lifeworld figures in the social aspects of consciousness. He theorized that at birth we enter a lifeworld which has existed before our arrival on the scene and is "from the outset, a preinterpreted one" (Natanson, 1962, p. xl). Further, Schutz proposed that we take for granted the intersubjective world thus given to us as an organized world that has a quality of coherence and unity such that we take its thereness for granted. We are not usually mindful of our everyday experience. We tend to view our experiences as unfolding automatically. We are usually not mindful of how our lived experience is influenced by broader social, economic or historical structures.

Schutz (1970) also theorized that there are multiple realities in a lifeworld, chief among them *everyday reality*, or what he referred to as "the world of common sense and daily life." He assigned the term *paramount reality* to convey the strength of its demands on our consciousness (Schutz, 1970, p. 253). With respect to the common-sense, everyday world, Schutz called this wide-awake quality of our consciousness our *natural*

attitude. He meant that in our everyday routines, we accept this as a natural way of being in the world. Schutz noted specifically that our lived experience is embodied in the natural attitude. We orient ourselves in the natural attitude in terms of the here and now of our human body: "Our bodily movements—kinesthetic, locomotive, operative—gear, so to speak, into the world, modifying or changing its objects and their mutual relationships" (Schutz, 1970, p. 253). Schutz (1970) described this kind of interactive engagement in the notion of the lifeworld thus: "[the] world in this sense is something that we have to modify by our actions or that modifies our actions" (p. 209).

Thinking through lifeworld phenomenology, the field notes show how I as a practitioner unsettled the apparent coherence of my everyday reality in my work setting by mindfully taking the everyday, lived-in world as an object of inquiry. The field notes reflect this kind of interactive engagement. Following Schutz, for example, they show how I was gearing into my everyday world of work as I walked toward and attempted to make sense of a young man wrapped in a flannelette sheet standing outside the door. My interactive engagement was shaped by the normative structures, routines, and relationships in my everyday reality of work and how I was also shaping or modifying these relationships. When I noted my process of thinking "it is too early for admissions staff," I was identifying my knowledge of the everyday routines in this setting, which involve the allocation and coordination of the roles that will respond to Sam. During business hours, team members in the admissions office routinely greet citizens presenting at the main entrance door. After business hours, as a colleague noted: "we are supposed to call the security guard to deal with Sam." Gearing into my everyday reality, I was

modifying and changing the everyday world's objects and their mutual relationships; I went "against the safety protocols," altering my relationship to them and changing my relationship to Sam, when I decided to invite Sam to come inside to warm up.

My process of thinking through and with phenomenological inquiry was congruent with Schutz's conceptualization of two ways of knowing the lifeworld: one, that our meaning-making occurs through our firsthand, subjective, lived experience; and two, through secondhand constructs of our experience. Schutz theorized how we come to understand the structures of our lifeworld. He proposed that our knowledge of our intersubjective world was social and that the "typifying medium par excellence by which socially derived knowledge is transmitted is the vocabulary and the syntax of everyday language" (Natanson, 1962, p. 14). He described these processes of learning and knowing our intersubjective world thus:

> Only a very small part of my knowledge of the world originates within my personal experience. The greater part is socially derived, handed down to me by my friends, my parents, my teachers and the teachers of my teachers, I am taught not only how to define the environment (that is, the typical features of the relative natural aspect of the world prevailing in the in-group as the unquestioned but always questionable sum total of things taken for granted until further notice), but also how typical constructs have to be formed in accordance with the system of relevances accepted from the anonymous unified point of view of the in-group. (Natanson, 1962, p. 13)

In this complex account of Schutz's theorizing, he described how we learn about the structures of our social world by recognizing "typical features . . . prevailing in the in-group" (Natanson, 1962, p. 13). These typical features take form as larger organizing structures called *typifications.* Schutz proposed that typifications are shared; that is, they "have to be formed in accordance with the system of *relevances* accepted from the

anonymous unified point of view of the in-group" (Natanson, 1962, p. 13). In this proposed shared reality, Schutz theorized that typifications provide interpretive schemes—formulas or recipes that provide the structures of our lifeworld: that help us make sense of our everyday reality, influence our understanding, and guide our actions. Through our lived experiences and primarily through language, we learn the already existing socially constructed and shared objectifications or typifications of the lifeworld from our parents, teachers, and other authorities (Schutz, 1970). Layers of typifications accumulate over time through our ongoing experience, becoming the stocks of knowledge that help us find our way through the complexity of our everyday experience in the lifeworld we share with others (Schutz, 1970, p. 72). Our stocks of knowledge inform the way we speak to each other individually, as a group of practitioners, or with others at organizational and institutional levels. Stocks of knowledge are operationalized as systems of typifications that shape consciousness and the ways practitioners communicate with each other. Stocks of knowledge then are organized by systems of relevance shaping the constitution of what useful knowledge is, how we interpret events in the lifeworld, and what actions we take. Rehorick and Bentz (2008) helpfully explained the interplay between typifications and relevances:

> What we see as relevant is shaped by our personal stock of knowledge, an accumulation of our typifications. In turn, our typifications are formed by what is relevant to us, and relevancy is shaped by our tacit awareness of what we think we should be doing with our lives, moment to moment and situation to situation. (p. 18)

For Schutz (1932/1967, 1970), it was possible to explore and theorize the social world through these concepts. However, his above description of the relations between

typifications and the "in group" make an indirect reference to issues of power. His discussion about the importance of a procedure called *bracketing* in lifeworld phenomenological inquiry points to a more critical appreciation of the relations of knowledge and power. In exploring everyday reality, "what we have to put into brackets is not only the existence of the outer world, along with all the things in it, animate and inanimate, including [other people], cultural objects, society and its institutions . . . but also the propositions of all the sciences" (Schutz, 1970, p. 105).

Taking my everyday lived reality as an object of curiosity allowed my experiment with phenomenological inquiry to illustrate the practice of bracketing: the phenomenological practice of setting aside the usual preconceptions that structure perceptions and experiences. The object was not to fully remove them, but to become more deeply conscious of how they structured a particular reality I encountered (Rehorick & Bentz, 2008, p. 11). My perceptions of and relationship with Sam were structured by my everyday experience working with marginalized citizens. My *natural attitude* was informed by typifications, stocks of knowledge, and systems of relevance structured by my personal background and experience as well as by my professional training and the broader structures and systems of relevance that shape my work. As practitioners, this is a shared reality to varying degrees. However, in this account, I allowed other aspects of consciousness to enter.

Phenomenological inquiry proceeds by cultivating a fresh curiosity towards lived experience in order to allow it to reveal aspects of itself that through professional training I may have learned to ignore. In this writing experiment, bracketing my beliefs in my

everyday reality of the social world of work, part of my consciousness immediately recognized that “the white sheet signals that he has come from the hospital.” These are the typifications and stocks of knowledge associated with emergency treatment at hospital. But another aspect of consciousness emerged when my “heart tells me that it means surrender.” This sensibility is disruptive to the natural attitude. The sheet Sam is wrapped in invited me to think about Sam’s vulnerability, in contrast to the impersonal and often dehumanizing security measures and protocols put in place to keep people like Sam separate from me.

That other forms of consciousness emerge is also illustrative of the phenomenological principle of intentionality: human consciousness is always reaching out into the world, taking some phenomenon as its object. Our consciousness is always conscious of something. Husserl (1936/1970), a leading theorist of the phenomenological approach to knowledge generation, was critical of the natural attitude in the methodology of empirical sciences, where the meanings of the world “out there” seemed to be taken for granted (as reality), separate from the inquirer’s consciousness “in here.” Husserl argued against this artificial separation of person from lifeworld, proposing instead that meanings arise from a person-world connection and are created or constructed through intersubjective processes.

I reflected on the impressions and associations others shared on the phenomenological account I had experimented with. Some of my colleagues on the WCP project team had had first-hand knowledge of prolonged periods of homelessness, like Sam, as well as knowledge of secondhand typifications of homelessness and addiction,

and involvement with the criminal justice system. They raised the issue of the power relations informing some of the interpretations of the citizens with whom we work, like Sam. Indeed, they took objection to what they felt were the poetic features of my writing. They connected in an embodied way with Sam's experiences and circumstances. I acknowledged the limitations of my knowledge of Sam's experience, and extended our discussion further from this point. I wanted to know how we could create opportunities for participants to give shape, form, and sound to experiences that my colleagues described as traumatic and largely nonverbal, so that we could learn from the mistakes we made from the limited experiences some team members had.

Helping to uncover more in the relationship between phenomenology's principle of intentionality and knowledge generation, my attention was drawn to the experiences of other participants. In my phenomenological account, I had included my observations of a participant at the Centre who came downstairs to the lobby to give Sam a jacket. In our discussion, my colleagues noted that participants had knowledge and experience that was different from our technical training. They pointed out that the participant who came downstairs to give Sam a jacket was acting in solidarity with Sam. His response to seeing Sam shivering in the cold outside the entrance prompted the question from a colleague: "Who is qualified to care?" The participant's immediate response stood in stark contrast to the socially constructed systemic responses, such as from the shelter that had ejected Sam, and from the over-burdened hospital emergency department that, in spite of an attempted suicide attempt by overdose, released Sam back to the street. My colleagues' observations also pointed out that allowing these alternative forms of consciousness (or

ways of knowing) to emerge and find voice was a way of resisting what Schutz would call the traditional structuring of our consciousness in our work, what he called the natural attitude.

In our everyday interactions structured by the systemic routines, rules, expectations, and norms of clinical and managerial paradigms, we were aware that citizens experiencing homelessness, addiction, and criminal justice involvement (among other poverty-related issues) were objectified and typified as *clients*, *patients*, or *persons in care*. As I argued in Chapter 2, the natural attitude is characterized by prevailing typifications that privilege a medical and increasingly psychiatric and criminogenic analysis that highlights deficits in social skills, thinking, and behavior problems. I analyzed the implications of dominant typifications, systems of relevance, and stocks of knowledge for the life chances of disenfranchised citizens. Cultural stereotypes of citizens such as *addicts* or *homeless people* or *the mentally ill* were homogeneous typifications. Such typifications were reproduced and distributed in wider cultural venues as commonplace understandings, and they were internalized in the interactive engagement characterizing the lifeworld of my practice setting. As practitioners, we heard typifications recited in citizens' self-appraisals, such as "I am . . ." *an addict*, *sick*, *a worthless person*, *morally defective*, *a deviant*, *a piece of shit*. These typifications and systems of relevance infuse the cinematic gaze I described in Chapter 2, which reinforces a naïve, uninformed perception of homelessness as an isolated, exceptional, singularly individual plight. Until critically examined, these typifications would have powerfully shaped the everyday reality of citizens with whom we worked. If they remained

uncritically accepted, they would also powerfully have shaped our own everyday reality as practitioners, and our natural attitude: our everyday understanding about the citizens the organization served and who we were as practitioners. We were becoming aware of how these typifications shaped our interactions with one other in this setting and what we could potentially create in the WCP by developing ways of resisting these typifications and creating new life-giving typifications.

Phenomenology as a Western culture of inquiry shares similar philosophical interests with Eastern knowledge traditions that encourage mindfulness. These traditions privilege a relational orientation to inquiry characterized by an emphasis on empathy, curiosity, interest, thoughtfulness, reciprocity, embodied consciousness, and attachment. The phenomenological account I experimented with above illuminates the tensions between the prevailing paradigmatic constructions promoting a more distant and detached view of Sam and more holistic and complex appreciations: "As I walked towards him, I thought of the last time I had to experience surrender as a way of bringing myself closer to what his experience might be. I had to actively do this as I couldn't imagine it." In this phenomenological protocol, it seemed that I wanted to draw myself "closer to what [Sam's] experience might be" by calling on my own experiences of wandering, as a means of connecting with Sam's knowledge. Rather than deploying technical, rational knowledge to situate Sam within an already typified classification, I experimented with an embodied consciousness that resisted this impulse. I chose to sit silently, to allow Sam in his fullness and complexity to appear within and against the historical consciousness, traditions, and background of my past experiences and patterns. From this embodied

consciousness, my heart knew and asked silently: "Where are you from, wanderer, and where have you been?"

The project team's exploration of these and other aspects of consciousness activated a discussion related to change efforts at a group level in conversations, routines, and resources. Specifically, this prompted a discussion about how particular interpretations of the citizens we assisted structured and coordinated our actions. A colleague highlighted the place in my field notes where I wrote that I had to actively focus on bringing myself closer to Sam's experience "as I can't imagine it." Another colleague remarked: "I am thinking of my own blindness from my privilege; there are few if any occasions I can think of where I have had to surrender." Another colleague proposed that my field notes were helping to make "our location visible . . . our privilege, our whiteness, our membership in the dominant social group and how easy it is for us to ignore the conditions people are facing when they don't affect us directly."

This phenomenological experiment, like thinking through critical analysis and through the ALMOLIN model described in Chapter 2 presented us with opportunities to inquire into and appreciate our location and positionality, critically engaging with and challenging our views about ourselves, how we were actively making sense of the citizens we were attempting to help, what we thought we knew about society, how it worked, and our place in it. A dynamic process, both iterative and reflexive, my inquiry became richer as I shared perspectives with colleagues. Thinking through the theory-lived experience-practice relationship through phenomenology's principle of intentionality

uncovered the high stakes in knowledge generation and how it structured our relations with the citizens we were trying to help.

Thinking Through and With Critical Sociological Theory and Lifeworld Phenomenology

Because of my organization's activist interest in an analysis of the materiality of the everyday world for marginalized citizens in our city, as well as its social, existential, political, and macrostructural elements, I began to think through lifeworld phenomenology and the work of feminist sociologist, Dorothy Smith (1987). Smith also problematized knowledge and the everyday world, disrupting that quality of coherence and unity characterizing the natural attitude that she saw as being taken for granted in institutional structures as well as in structures of consciousness. Drawing from her own experience, she noted that each of the lifeworlds in which she was active (as a mother and as an sociologist) was marked by what she termed *institutionalized consciousness*, and by a complex set of socially constructed relations that she described as "relations of ruling" (Smith, 1990).

Smith's (1987, 1990) standpoint theory illuminated how socially constructed relations of ruling are aligned with prevailing social, economic, and political structures. Smith critiqued traditional sociology, arguing that it took up a position outside of society and social relations in order to claim objectivity. She argued that sociology's claim to objectivity relied on its ability to exclude marginal social positions (Smith, 1990, p. 372). She also questioned the objectivity of sociology when privileged constructions of mental

illness became aligned with the “practice of government” (Smith, 1990, p. 372). Smith’s (1987) standpoint theory highlighted the idea that knowledge claims produced by traditional sociology concealed the fact that its standpoint was biased by particular interests. However, its descriptions of social organization and social relations were presented as neutral, disinterested and unbiased, a view from no-where. She proposed that one could uncover the interests at play in knowledge claims by paying attention to what she called *active texts* in our everyday activities. Smith argued that active texts coordinated actions, consciousness, and forms of organization estra-locally (Smith, 1987). (Later in the chapter, I provide examples of active texts that we identified as regulating our work in our practice setting.)

Smith argued that sociology should be a people’s sociology, which focused on local and everyday experiences, especially those of women and others who were located in marginal positions in society. Sociology, she argued, should provide knowledge that would make visible the social practices of power, the heretofore invisible structures and organizations of social relations, thus allowing citizens to learn about and understand their circumstances and help them to act. Such knowledge, she argued, should start from the local and particular, rather than from any preconceived, abstract, conceptual structures developed by science. Thinking through lifeworld phenomenology and with critical sociological perspectives helped me illuminate how social processes and activities aligned with powerful discourses shaped what typifications and stocks of knowledge were privileged over others.

Another experience graphically highlighted the critical intersection of hegemonic social, political, racial, and economic structures of the lifeworld, shaping the life chances and the consciousness of the citizens we were seeking to help. The following is a storied account of my experience of appreciating the intersectionality of everyday life and larger systemic structures in the lifeworld:

Field notes: November 2012 attendance at court proceedings

> It takes a while for me to get my bearings. The lighting is dim. I make my way to the public gallery at the rear of the court room and sit down on the hard wooden bench. I look up to see that I am being observed closely by a sheriff who sits below and to the immediate right of the judge presiding over the proceedings from an elevated dais.
>
> The practices of power are reflected in the structure of the room. Plexiglas separates the everyday world of the audience in the viewing gallery from the remoteness of the legal proceedings that are broadcast through speakers to the gallery. The Crown's lawyer is presenting arguments. The woman's history, complexity, strength, vulnerability, resiliency and depth are quickly erased by the lexicon of the system. She is "the accused" here in this space where right and wrong have been legislated and demarcated clearly. She has not declared a small amount of savings she has impossibly and meticulously put aside each month for her child. She is accused of welfare fraud.
>
> The young woman sitting beside me sneezes. The sheriff looks towards us. The young woman looks at me warily . . . not wanting to attract the "gaze" of "justice," having knowledge that a sneeze could be perceived as being disruptive and disorderly. From disorderly, it is a short step to being viewed as disordered and culpable, by virtue of being poor. I feel fearful too in this space. The risk of loss of freedom is palpable.
>
> I observe the woman, known as "the accused," protesting to her defence lawyer at one point about the Crown's presentation of evidentiary claims. She is disciplined by the judge: notified that her testimony has already been documented, that she does not have a voice in these proceedings.
>
> It is to such a system that the sheriff motions us to do the ritual obeisance: to stand and bow as the judge leaves the room with his long black robes billowing like death in his wake. He disappears into a space inaccessible to us.

In our work at the center, we observe that women are frequently and violently subjected to state-sanctioned systems that are underwritten by the social relations and

practices of patriarchy, colonization, racism, and sexism. These social practices impact how welfare and welfare fraud are perceived and regulated. Public perceptions of welfare recipients as lazy intersect with classist and sexist stereotypes of women. Women on welfare are commonly perceived as failures and deviants, having strayed from the role assigned to them by the ideology of the nuclear family (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2004; Smith, 1987). The lives of women who are poor are subject to public scrutiny and regulated through the welfare system. The field notes below show how my auto/biographical location was magnified considerably by my lived experience of observing the court proceedings.

> I locate myself as a white, privileged, educated, middle-class woman working with marginalized citizens for the past 20 years. I've never been homeless, never lived on welfare, never been arrested, diagnosed. What I understand from my location, however, is that what I have just seen enacted is the materiality of socially constructed practices of marginalization and disenfranchisement through multiple systems of welfare, housing, criminal justice, mental health, among others sanctioned by the state through interlocking webs of typifications and stocks of knowledge as an active social process.

Other colleagues in my organization were working at organizational and institutional levels of social innovation efforts involved in the WCP. They also identified how these interlocking structures could be located in funding policies for community-based projects using Smith's (1992) concept of active texts and Schutz's concepts of typifications and stocks of knowledge. An assessment form is prescribed by funders for use in our work setting. It is administered when an applicant is admitted to the CWB Centre's residential addictions services program, at the midpoint of their stay, and upon discharge from the program (see Table 3).

Table 3

Assessment Form—Excerpt from Global Appraisal of Individual Needs—Short Screener

The following questions are about common psychological, behavioural or personal problems. These problems are considered significant when you have them for two or more weeks, when they keep coming back, when they keep you from meeting your responsibilities, or when they make you feel like you can't go on.		3	2	1	0
		In the past month	Two to 12 months ago	One or more years ago	Never
IDScr	When was the last time you had significant problems				
	With feeling very trapped, lonely, sad, blue, depressed or hopeless about the future?				
	With sleeping such as bad dreams, sleeping restlessly or falling asleep during the day?				
	With feeling very anxious, nervous, tense, fearful, scared, panicked or like something bad was going to happen?				
	When something reminded you of the past and you became very distressed and upset?				
	With thinking about ending your life or committing suicide?				

(*table continues*)

The following questions are about common psychological, behavioural or personal problems. These problems are considered significant when you have them for two or more weeks, when they keep coming back, when they keep you from meeting your responsibilities, or when they make you feel like you can't go on.		3	2	1	0
		In the past month	Two to 12 months ago	One or more years ago	Never
EDScr	When was the last time that you did the following things two or more times?				
	Lied or conned to get things you wanted or to avoid having do something?				
	Had a hard time paying attention at school, work or home?				
	Had a hard time listening to instructions at school, work or home?				
	Were a bully or threatened people?				
	Started fights with other people?				

As I argued in Chapter 2, contractual arrangements with nonprofit community-based organizations direct remedial measures to those who are framed as either lacking competence to participate, or having problematic personal characteristics such as complacency and lack of motivation. The excerpt of the assessment form shows how social organization is textually mediated through carefully defined procedures for the extraction of information from and about citizens. Ecclestone (2010) observed that funding policies are based on a bipolar system of *norm* and *deviance*; interventions are increasingly individualized and often therapeutic in nature, targeted at those who *fail to comply* with normative expectations, and who are therefore assessed as vulnerable and disengaged. The socially produced construct of deviance becomes the organizing

construct that governs the production of accounts of accomplishing *service provision* to the *target population*.

The assessment form above represents a world view that locates and defines an individual according to "common psychological, behavioural or personal problems" rather than as a citizen located within a complex web of structural, political, and economic conditions. The citizens with whom I work are in contact with the health, mental health or addiction treatment, or the criminal justice system. For these citizens, the disclosure of personal histories is accepted practice for identifying disorders and deficits. It will determine eligibility for or disqualification from shelter, housing, medical treatment, or income assistance—or to provide the basis of evidentiary claims that support the enactment of public policy that may contribute to deepening their marginalization.

I wondered what kind assessment form could be designed based on an ontology of individual and community well-being? What would emerge if we enumerated strengths and trajectories of resilience in the face of the enormous challenges that citizens who live in poverty endure? What problems would we find that we shared in common, rather than consigning problems solely to individuals?

Practices of Social Innovation Using Phenomenology and Critical Sociology

In this section, I discuss the implications of thinking through and with lifeworld phenomenology and critical sociological approaches in the context of social innovation in

the WCP. I show some of my experimentation with thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship so that I could shift from identifying typifications and the limits of institutional discourse to imagining how things might be otherwise. This included problematizing the everyday world through phenomenological inquiry and disrupting what Smith termed institutionalized consciousness—that quality of coherence and unity that characterizes the natural attitude, or what she saw as being taken for granted both in institutional structures and in structures of consciousness.

Change efforts at individual, group, organization, and institutional levels included experimentation in the development of a 14-week program designed collaboratively with professors at a local university who were willing to donate their time to teach in the community and marginalized citizens with whom I worked who participated in designing their ideal learning space. They expressed interest in learning about many things including literature, history, philosophy, urban geography, the science of sustainability, sociological myths, and environmental justice. In the final result, students suggested the theme of Self, Society and Social Justice. There was a wide age and demographic range in the class. What all held in common were their poor experiences in school and experiences of the stigma of low education or low literacy. A significant challenge for many was mustering sufficient courage to walk through the door to the classroom in spite of their fear and trepidation of being exposed and humiliated again. Many believed they had learning challenges and several mentioned a diagnosis they received in school. They had been told that “they would not amount to much.” The professors who volunteered their time to visit and present on the theme of the course from the perspective of their

discipline highlighted examples of the broader systemic structures of the lifeworld and their possible relations to individual consciousness and life chances of the students. Students took ownership of the course and designed a wisdom circle and a celebration where they presented a portfolio project to share what their experience of what it was like to be in the course in order to improve it for other students who would come along later. The students saw the portfolio projects as opportunities to communicate what their experience of learning had been like and the most important things they had learned. The criteria for the portfolio projects were open and included writing, music, performance, photography, and other forms of artistic expression. I describe some of this work below.

Experiments in Creating Inclusive Learning Spaces from Lived Experiences

The painting. Julia was a course participant who described the process of working on a painting over the period of the course.[19] The painting was a striking image of a woman's eye. In its centre she represented the pupil of the eye as the earth as if seen from outer space, vividly coloured using blue and green tones. Turning the painting over, Julia indicated that she had included a quote on the back of the canvas from Lillian Smith (1897–1966), an American writer and antiracist educator: "Education is a private matter between the person and the world of knowledge and experience, and has little to do with school or college." Julia said this quote was important to her because it drew a connection

[19] Students in the Self, Society and Social Justice Course gave their permission when they entered the course to share their artwork as part of the work of the CWBS.

between herself, whom she described as a person with experiences who is ever learning, and a person who already had a world of knowledge inside.

The embodiment of Julia's knowledge in the striking image of the eye drew attention to knowledge and knowing from her particular standpoint, a theme that was acknowledged by Julia and by her peers. When one of Julia's colleagues observed that there was something special about painting a woman's eye, Julia indicated that while she was working on the painting she had reflected on how her learning process had helped to redefine her cultural heritage. She gave examples of situations when she had shared her world view and was told she was crazy. But she had come to see that there was real value in how she saw the world rather than associating her way of seeing with being crazy. I interpreted Julia's presentation as showing a dramatic shift in her learning identity. Her comments appeared to reflect her embodied experience of how her standpoint (an alternative epistemology) was commonly pathologized by dominant typifications and systems of relevance as *irrelevant* or *crazy*.

The striking painting invited participation from the rest of the cohort.

> Manuela said: "I like how your painting of the eye shows a different perspective of the earth rather than the usual images of the earth that show Europe and North America. Your painting invites us to reflect on those perspectives and to find out where they came from."
>
> Judy said: "Your painting is an unwavering eye. It's very powerful. I take the meaning of the direct gaze of the eye to be about gaining confidence as a woman. In our culture, women are not allowed to display their wisdom so openly."
>
> Art said: "Julia, your painting of the eye reminds me of the center of the labyrinth! Remember in Ross's class? It's the place of illumination and power in the hero's journey!"

> Rory jumped in excitedly to say: “Yeah Julia, remember how the professor said that the one who stands at the center of the labyrinth is the one who writes the story. You’re writing your story Julia!”

The students’ comments showed that rather than being passive recipients of knowledge, they communicated an embodied knowledge that questioned the status quo and offered other interpretations and visions of reality. In contrast to some prevailing curricula aligned with market logics that focused solely on the economy and employment, the students were engaged, just as I was, with the curriculum of being, knowing, and doing in the tensions and contradictions of our lived-in world.

Collages: Inquiries into multiple realities. Several students made collages to give expression to their experiences in the course. Many of them had received diagnoses of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). One participant shared a collage that she described as showing the different parts of her experience when she first came to the class. She pointed to a large, green, blob-shaped cartoon figure walking down the street in the dark with a cut-out caption she had placed on it: “You gotta stop saying ‘Maybe one day.’” She interpreted this figure as representing her feeling of defeat the first night of the class. She described how, at the doorway, she turned and ran after seeing everyone in the classroom. She described the pain of imagining that everyone would know that something was wrong with her when she walked in.

Others spoke openly about receiving diagnoses: anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), or a diagnosis of ADHD in elementary school. For me, the collages showed the stocks of knowledge and systems of typifications belonging to the field of mental health that served to name, classify, and categorize their lived experience. I

interpreted these as oppressive structures in their lifeworld. Such pathologizing typifications are common among citizens living at the margins, who report that diagnoses only served to confirm many of the messages they heard elsewhere: that they would *never work*, *would never do well in school*; and were *no good*, *worthless*, or *would never amount to much.*

One participant pointed to a Gollum figure in his collage. Gollum, the chameleon-like charater in J. R. R. Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings*, was an expression for him of the embodied experience of being diagnosed: how he felt that he was becoming something monstrous. But the course presented opportunities to work out these typifications against other discoveries, discoveries of strengths and unique capabilities. Gollum, explored in a class on mythical narratives, came to be reframed as the monster at the centre of the labyrinth—an aspect of self to be curious about in a much broader context of meaning making. Other collages gave expression to the silencing and erasure of students' lived experiences through the stigmatizing labels that had named their experiences and identities. One collage included the image of a face with a missing puzzle piece over the mouth. Another collage included a photo of a woman with a paper bag over her head.

An evening class with a professor of sociology presented opportunities to work out typifications against students' emerging identities. A photo of Foucault's famous text, *Discipline and Punish*, appeared in one participant's collage. It conveyed the importance of what he, the student, had learned from the professor's presentation on Foucault's ideas, which, he said, had caused him to reflect on and question his diagnosis of ADHD in elementary school. The professor had shared her experience of being called to meet with

her young son's elementary school teacher. Using this example to illustrate Foucault's idea of the *norm*, the professor described her experience of hearing how her child was labelled as deviating from the norm of expected behaviour at school. After he heard the professor's account, the student described how he had reinterpreted his desire to draw and paint in an elementary school class about the topic being taught, as an exploration of the topic from a different perspective rather than as a confirmation of his diagnosis. Against the messaging he typically received about himself, which was overwhelmingly about what was wrong with him, he saw his choice to draw as a sign of health and creativity. As participants continued to speak, I heard them tracking a shift from what they had thought were personal individual troubles that predicted their destiny towards a view of these troubles as situated in a larger pattern of social structures and processes that were open to be explored and challenged.

One student's closing remarks about her presentation indicated to me how these larger systemic structures of the lifeworld had affected her life chances as an adult. Telling the story of the day that she received a diagnosis as an adult, she described how she felt that everything was over. Here was decisive evidence from experts confirming that she was deficient, permanently deficient. She felt she had no hope for her future. She then described how she had spent two years living with her child in isolation and loneliness because of the diagnosis. She said that through her experience of solidarity with her classmates in the Self, Society and Social Justice course—who shared experiences similar to her own—she recognized that she was human. Pointing to an image of a flower growing out of concrete, she interpreted the image as describing how

she felt when her classmates acknowledged her courage, creativity, and her “fun, joking, and healthy laugh.” In contrast to a focus on what we recognized as standardized discourses of dysfunction in which she learned *what was wrong with me . . . my diagnosis*, she stated that she had turned to thinking of her future and what was possible for her to achieve.

The ontology of lemon meringue pie. One participant shared his doubts about coming into the class. He said he had gained a lot from the experience of practising reaching out and asking questions. Although it was awkward in the beginning, this became a practice that opened new horizons for him and jarred things open that he had formerly preferred to keep buried. Being in the class brought him back to how much he had loved learning, something that he had also buried. He reached under his chair to pull out his portfolio project. As he held a beautiful, meringue-topped pie in his hands, he recounted his story of losing his mother at a young age. His mother had loved lemon meringue pie and had taught him how to make it. She had become ill and was eventually taken away to hospital. He recalled how he made lemon meringue pie for his mother and brought it to her when he visited her. He shared how angry he was when he lost his mother, and how he had decided that he would never make another lemon meringue pie. It was from that moment that he felt his life had not gone well. But in this class, he was able to listen to and really connect with people’s stories. He realized that he had many stories to tell himself. He had discovered that contrary to his experiences, he had a lot he could contribute. The student’s story displayed the movement from his experience of

profound social dislocation to an experience of belonging, through participation in a process of individual and collective learning in the course.

Reflecting on the portfolio presentations, I began thinking through my experience and with Gadamer's belief that the possibilities for new understandings to occur happen in the dialogic space between one's horizon of understanding of the world and an encounter with those of others whose voices are seeking expression alongside ours. I began thinking about what we and the students and the professors were making together and what had been made possible. Here, we located value where value had not been detected in the prevailing curricula informed by market logics.

The remarkable gift to the class of lemon meringue pie inspired me to think about alternative structures of lifeworlds we could construct that would make more lemon meringue pies possible. How could we create lifeworldly spaces that counteracted negative typifications; that could produce alternative active texts of empowerment and emancipation, and encourage the construction of new typifications and stocks of knowledge according to relevances that prioritized individual and collective well-being? In a reflective discussion later with my colleagues, we recognized that our efforts should not be confined to creating inclusive learning spaces alone at individual, organizational levels of change efforts. The clarity of this insight was evident in each portfolio project: there was a projection outward from these spaces of learning to *what it is possible for me to achieve*, to *ever learning*, and the recognition of the potentialities in connection to a lifeworld where *I have something to contribute*. In hearing these words we recognized

that we had much to learn and our own learning would necessarily involve the difficult work of change at institutional levels.

As the WCP project team made space for further reflection on the portfolio presentations, a clearing opened so that I was able to recognize my own aspirations as a learner myself. It was a sobering and humbling recognition. While I was busy noting my interpretations of students' significant movements from what I perceived as passive recipients to active producers of knowledge, I found my own reflection in the mirror of their words. This is an example of auto/biographical inquiry practice. I, along with the students was engaged in learning about how to create conditions in which I could learn "what human being means" (Morin, 1999a, p. 10). In their book *Transformative Phenomenology: Changing Ourselves, Lifeworlds, and Professional Practice*, Rehorick and Bentz (2008) described the practice of transformative phenomenology as more than a lens of understanding. Rather, they proposed, that it is a "mirror, which allows the phenomenologist to see oneself in a new way" (Rehorick & Bentz, 2008, p. 4). Rehorick and Bentz expressed the transformative nature of reflective phenomenological inquiry through their extension of the metaphor of the mirror: "The phenomenological looking glass also reflects the lifeworld behind the image, revealing structures that we had not seen before, and pathways to new destinations" (Rehorick & Bentz, 2008, p. 4). In this extended metaphor, I recognized myself as a learner in the mirror who was engaged in the reflexive work of exploring structures that influenced how I was making meaning of the overlapping and intersecting individual, group, organizational, and institutional lifeworlds in which I and the WCP were embedded. I was questioning whether I was a

passive recipient of knowledge and what was possible to create within and against a newly visible network of structures of our lifeworldly setting and newly visible "pathways to new destinations" in the development of the WCP.

Bentz and Shapiro (1998) argued that phenomenological inquiry is a deconstructing and reconstructing process. As I have demonstrated in this chapter, our work as practitioners was structured predominantly by a clinical paradigm aligned with the prevailing hegemony of managerialism and so-called evidence-based approaches that measure effectiveness in restricted economic terms. I have shown how an alternative set of understandings emerged against the constraints of professional norms and economic efficiency as I was thinking through and with phenomenological inquiry. This involved exploring the practice of bracketing my pre-existing structures of thinking and acting to explore alternative ways of being and knowing, guided by *empathic immersion*, described by Bentz and Shapiro (1998) as "a slowing down and dwelling, magnification and amplification of the situation, suspension of belief, employment of intense interest, turning from objects to their lived meaning" (p. 99).

Thinking through the theory-lived experience-practice relationship in the making of the WCP project in terms of inclusive learning spaces meant that these would be spaces for what my colleagues, marginalized citizens, and I in our everyday work could come to describe as individual and collective well-being. We used the term *well-being* as a critical ontological mainstay in the WCP project and as a future-oriented vision of how citizens might be placed first in considering how we could imagine spaces, communities,

and cities that were socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable into the future.[20]

Coming to use the language of *creating spaces* also importantly acknowledged that marginalization had spatial implications, as the ALMOLIN model acknowledged; that increasingly fewer spaces exist in the city to provide access to education and other resources that empower dispossessed citizens to exit poverty, to achieve a sustainable livelihood, and to participate actively in the social, economic, political, and cultural life of the community. We agreed that we would actively use the term *citizens* to refer to the persons with whom we worked rather than such distancing objectifications as *the homeless*, *the mentally ill*, or *addicts*, as a purposefully disruptive act to call attention to the recognition that citizens who become marginalized lose their social, economic, and political citizenship status (Schugurensky, 2006). What I take Schugurensky to mean is that becoming marginalized means that citizens lose their capacity to participate in social, economic, cultural, and political life. Designing the WCP project in terms of socially

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[20] There are by now many writers considering alternatives to the gross domestic product (GDP) to measure collective well-being. Prilleltensky (2012) argued that distinct conditions of justice are implicated in well-being at the society level. He identified several measures that offer a picture of collective well-being at community, national, and international levels. These include the World Values Survey (Inglehart, 2008); the Gallup Work Survey (Rath & Harter, 2010), the Unhappy Planet Index (Abdullah, Thompson, Michaelson, Markis, & Steuer, 2009), the Social Progress Index, 2014, the Latinbarometer, the Eurobarometer, and the Africabarometer (Graham, 2009; Stevenson & Wolfers, 2008). In 2008, a Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (CMEPSP) authored by Stiglitz, Sen, and Fitoussi (2008) was struck by Nicholas Sarkozy, President of the French Republic, to identify the limits of the GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress. The National Economic and Social Council of Ireland published a report entitled *Well-Being Matters: A Social Report for Ireland* in 2009 which referred to collective well-being as based on the common good, equality, justice, freedom, and democracy. Further work was accomplished on designing measures and implementing policies to develop a national well-being index for Ireland (Hogan & Broome, 2013).

inclusive spaces in the city solidified its integral connection to the restoration of and enactment of active citizenship.[21]

The WCP can be viewed in phenomenological terms of the lifeworld where place, home, and individual and collective well-being are systems of relevance that hold citizens and the world together in relationship. I envisioned how we could create lifeworldly spaces that counteracted negative typifications that infused citizens' experiences; and how we could create alternative active texts of empowerment and emancipation; and new typifications and stocks of knowledge according to relevances that promoted individual and collective well-being. These relevances were noted in expressions of participants who were grasping new kinds of relationships with their worlds. For one student it was a vision of *what it is possible for me to achieve*; for another it was a vision of *ever learning*. One student's vision was of connection to a lifeworld where *I have something to contribute*. I envisioned the WCP as not only identifying consciousness construction but finding alternative ways of thinking and being the complex that expanded possibilities for creating new social contexts, relational processes, and experiences, and new patterns of interconnectedness that would provide platforms for the reconstruction of self and other. This is my experience of Bentz's proposal that in a mindful inquiry there is the spiralling movement of the interpreter outward to the world, to observe, obtain data, communicate, analyze, comprehend, intervene, and act; followed by the return to the self/interpreter who is changed and grows through and by the new understandings.

[21] In our community-based work, *citizenship* refers to the capacity to participate in the social, economic, cultural, and political life rather than a citizen's legal status in a country.

A phenomenological sensibility infused the design process of WCP as a philosophical, political, and practical exercise. It involved a deep attunement to how embodied citizens and their environment interrelate experientially, and the complexes of pattern and meaning that create a sense of "dwelling" (Heidegger, 1971). This was an essential consideration in designing the project in view of the lack of safety; the compounding losses of employment, home and emotional ties; and the experiences of violence, displacement, isolation, discrimination, deprivation, alienation, and abiding loneliness that characterize citizens' endurance of prolonged homelessness. Citizens shared the lived meanings of these experiences with the architect. In the architect's design process, he infused a relational flow in building design between a sense of home (safety, my personal world) in relation to place (relations with the history of the city, roads, parks, schools and neighbourhoods, urban planning, on the border of the new city centre, and how place might be invented or reinvented), and to outer spaces that communicated a sense of interconnectedness, hopefulness, and vision of the future beyond the WCP project's immediate and familiar spatial boundaries.

Thinking through and with a critical social phenomenological sensibility and through the hermeneutic architectural meanings into action occurred within and against prevailing traditions and assumptions about building designs of social housing projects that typically leave out connections with social, epistemological, and civic webs of participation. Hallways, for instance, are traditionally regarded as devoid of meaning—as impersonal passageways to the more highly valued personal and private spaces of residents' homes. Opening to hermeneutic architectural meanings occurred when

residents identified hallways as significant intermediary spaces between their homes. Hallways emerged as a specific design feature—as purposeful places of residents' connection with their neighbours, and as civic spaces where they could give and receive support, and exchange views, valuable information, and resources. They were designed in ten-foot widths, with large windows at either end to allow in natural light, and open onto views of the community outside the property's boundaries. As an interesting aside, during the building appraisal, no additional value was detected by professional appraisers, who were unused to imagining hallways as significant civic spaces connecting residents with increasing socio-political-epistemological capability.

Spatializing Citizenship: Making Public Space into Sites for Knowledge Exchange

A significant design strategy that emerged from this phenomenological sensibility directly addressed knowledge generation and ownership of knowledge by marginalized citizens. A Social Innovation Centre was designed as a vibrant, interactive incubation space for a broader, more inclusive kind of social convening that promoted participatory research approaches to encourage a diverse exchange of ideas to take action on.

Community gardens included in the design of the WCP project were also an example of reinventing public spaces for inclusive dialogue and exchange. Jointly imagined and designed by and with marginalized citizens, the gardens were developed by the CWBC in partnership with the city on lands adjacent to existing common walking trails in a greenway. The gardens were strategically designed as a widely welcoming

community engagement space promoting social inclusion. They brought together "the civic web of the political domain, the biotic web of the natural world, the social web of human life, and the epistemological web of knowledge production" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 49). The gardens were envisioned as means of creating significant opportunities for co-constructing meanings in a space that embodied a relational view of social, economic, and environmental sustainability, posing disruptive challenges to the dominant interpretations of so-called urban development. While they proposed possibilities for connecting culture and nature, they were also an unapologetically political project, congruent with the purposes of the WCP. Their colocation on city property adjacent to but part of the WCP project reinvented civic spaces for diverse, inclusive, social, and cultural encounters, and knowledge exchange. Curating this convergence of spaces in the WCP project meant that the gardens existed as a negotiated space calling into awareness the need for more harmonious relationships between humans and between humans and nature. They also provided an example of building landscapes that could heal and empower communities.

In this chapter I have described moments of wayfinding by thinking through lifeworld phenomenological theory; with critical sociological approaches and experimental practices that guided our experiments in the work of beginning anew; and the making of inclusive learning spaces. Inquiry made visible macro discourses and structures such as colonization, global capitalism, and patriarchy. These are the hegemonic social, political, racial, and economic structures of the lifeworld that shape the life chances and the consciousness of the citizens we seek to help. I became conscious of

how oppression through the relations of power normalized some typifications, stocks of knowledge, realities, practices, and structures so that I had accepted them as commonsense and immutable. I also saw how I negated other structures. I came to critically appreciate that we, as practitioners alongside the citizens we assisted, are citizens situated in a world that is structured politically, economically, and socially in ways that inhibit all of us as citizens from realizing our full humanity and our contributions to the social, economic, cultural, and political life of the community.

In Chapter 4, I show the relevance of Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics to my auto/biographical approach in deepening my consciousness of the historical, social, cultural, ideological, and discursive construction of knowledge and selfhood. Gadamer imagined that understanding deepens when attention is focused on encounters and developing relationships with the phenomenon of interest, whether it be a text, a conversation, a work of art, or a person over time. I show some highlights of thinking through and with hermeneutics as part of our change efforts at the individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels. Below are some questions that guided my wayfinding as I was thinking through lifeworld phenomenology and critical sociological approaches, imagining and making inclusive learning spaces in the WCP project.

Scholar-Practitioners

1. What structures do you notice in the lifeworldly setting you work in?

2. In what ways do you think they are currently shaping your consciousness?

3. How do you think they shape the consciousness and life chances of the citizens you work with who need access to learning opportunities that will enable an exit from poverty?

4. What lifeworlds intersect in the work you are doing in your location?

5. Do you notice a divergence between the values you espouse in your work setting and those values being expressed in policies and practices that structure and regulate your setting?

6. What are the effects of these structures in your lifeworldly setting?

7. What are the effects of these structures on you?

8. Is it possible to unlearn what we have been taught and trained to accept?

9. How might thinking through the theory-lived experience-practice relationship, utilizing lifeworld phenomenology and critical sociological approaches, assist you in thinking and being the complex in relation to your community-based initiative?

Chapter 4.

Thinking Through and With Gadamer's Self-Reflective Hermeneutics

The delinquent is an institutional product.

—*Foucault,* Discipline and Punish

Field notes: November 2013 excerpt from a case management document

> Describe the client's personal appearance, including whether or not the client was appropriately dressed for the weather on the day of the interview, the client's personal hygiene, ability to maintain eye contact and the client's mental orientation (awareness of person, place, time and event). Reports are often written in a narrative form that tells the story of the client's current problem or problems and how and when those problems initially appeared.

This field note is a brief excerpt of instructions from a typical, standard case management document used in social work practice settings such as the ones we use at CWBS. Foucault's statement above the excerpt draws our attention to the case management document as an interpretive work, an institutional discourse, a socially constructed practice providing direction on how to produce a technical rendering of a particular social reality. It is an "active text" (Smith, 1992) that organizes us and our work as practitioners, and prescribes our ways of being with the citizens we work with in our practice setting. Relations of power structure a one-way directional flow of conversation. They instruct practitioners like us on how to interpret persons we encounter in an interview using socially constructed norms that the interviewer deploys to tell the

story of the interviewee. It encourages the practitioner to view the person instrumentally as someone and/or something to be regulated. Practitioners can easily become persuaded to view themselves as experts legitimately positioned to do the regulating. The storyline is prescriptive. What often emerges is a narrative of individualized problems authored by a proxy expert.

In contrast, mindful inquiry encourages practitioners to bring focus, intention, and awareness to whatever is present in a situation or experience. In this chapter, I show how the process of thinking through and with hermeneutics—the interpretation of texts—can aid practitioners doing similar work to bring focus and awareness to contextualizing such texts as the case management document, and its related institutionalized products and practices.

Hermeneutics as a culture of inquiry was historically concerned with interpretation of biblical texts. While its origins might seem remote from the everyday concerns of practitioners, Schleiermacher (1918/1977) broadened the focus of hermeneutic inquiry to include larger social, historical, and political processes. Schleiermacher argued that a text could only be understood in relation to the larger social, historical, economic, political, and cultural context in which it was situated. Dilthey (1900/1977) further demonstrated how hermeneutic inquiry could be insightfully applied to the social world—that is, to understand the meanings of human action. Bentz and Shapiro (1998) highlighted the importance of contextual consideration in any interpretation of human action when they proposed that a hermeneutic approach begins from an assumption of "the interconnectedness of all aspects and elements of the

intersubjective world" (p. 112). Heidegger (1927/1962) theorized about the hermeneutic process of human being. He described our "thrownness" into a world that had already been formed and already interpreted by others. As human beings, we are constantly interpreting the complexity of our "being in the world." He argued that the nature of human being was focused on learning about the meaning of our "being" in relation to our "dwelling" on earth as mortals (Heidegger, 1971). Gadamer's (1975) interest in his philosophical hermeneutics, was focused on these broader relational processes of human understanding over time. Gadamer (1976) developed a hermeneutic approach that took up the ontological questions of human being raised by Heidegger to inquire into the conditions in which understanding itself takes place (Gadamer, 1975, p. 295). Rather than developing a definitive method, he developed a relational model of interpretive understanding called *self-reflective hermeneutics*. Recalling Morin's (1999a) idea of "thinking the complex," Gadamer referred to hermeneutics "as a theory of the real experience that thinking is" (1975, p. xxxiii).

Nakkula and Ravitch (1998), practitioners engaged in work similar to mine in assisting marginalized youth, argued that hermeneutics highlighted the power of interpretive action; for them, every interpretive act in their work had ethical implications for people's lives. For them, hermeneutics provided a framework for developing a more ethical praxis. I was also concerned with the accountability of knowledge generation to the lives of disenfranchised citizens, and in the context of my involvement in developing the WCP, I was interested in thinking through and with hermeneutics at individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels of change.

I came to see the three levels of Gadamer's (1975) self-reflective hermeneutics as most relevant to my auto/biographical approach, in deepening my consciousness of the historical, social, cultural, ideological, and discursive construction of knowledge and selfhood. In this chapter, I show some highlights of thinking through and with hermeneutics as part of these individual and collective change efforts at an individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels in the development of the WCP.

I present three sets of field notes. The first, Application Process Field Notes, describes the enactment of an active text used in our practice setting that produces a story of a person, whom I call Clare (a pseudonym). Clare had called the CWB Centre's residential addiction services program to apply for admission. The Admissions Coordinator transcribed her conversation with Clare in order to present Clare's application to the residential addiction services team. The second is a set of field notes, Team Meeting Field Notes, that document an unfolding process of understanding at a group level that emerged in a residential addiction services team meeting where, as a group of practitioners, we were experimenting with thinking through and with Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics in an attempt to explore our process of interpreting the story of Clare that we ourselves had constructed. The third set of field notes, Field Notes from the Student/Mariner/Teacher Class, describes an exceptional example of a moment when thinking through and with self-reflective hermeneutics, a teacher and a student began to exercise the ability to intervene in their own consciousness construction. Both teacher and student gained new understandings and insights about who they could become. This set also exemplifies the possibilities of developing capability to embody self-reflective

hermeneutics at an organizational level of praxis. In the final section of the chapter, Thinking Through Gadamer's Self-Reflective Hermeneutics at Institutional Levels of Change in Social Innovation Efforts in the WCP, I describe how this was instrumental in the making of the WCP.

Gadamer's Three Levels of Self-Reflective Hermeneutics

Thematic in Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics is his imagining that understanding deepens when attention is focused on encounters and developing relationships with the phenomenon of interest, whether it is a text, a conversation, a work of art, or a person over time. In addition, an important orientation to thinking through and with self-reflective hermeneutics is Gadamer's (1975) idea that our relations as inquirers with the phenomenon of interest are characterized by a polarity of *familiarity* and *strangeness*. We may experience a sense of familiarity with the phenomenon because we access what Schutz (1932/1967, 1970) called our typifications or stocks of knowledge, locating the phenomenon in the context of our lived experiences. Gadamer might have said that these stocks of knowledge, made up of layers of typifications we have acquired over our lifetime, represent our "horizon of understanding." However, in the process of interpretive understanding we may also experience a sense of *strangeness*. For Gadamer, while we bring our horizon of understanding to locate the phenomenon, there are many ways in which a phenomenon may not fit with our familiar typifications. In this case, strangeness describes a breach in our everyday sense-making of the world. We encounter an experience that does not fit with our horizon of understanding. He saw this as an

opportunity for learning that requires interpretive effort. For Gadamer, the greatest possibilities for something new to be created are through dialectical encounters with other horizons of understanding.

Gadamer (1975) characterized the nature of the relationship between the inquirer and the phenomenon of interest as being filled with tensions and play (pp. 293–295). Over time, as such encounters continue, Gadamer proposed that we always bring our "prejudices" to bear in our work of hermeneutic understanding. The term *prejudices* does not carry the negative connotations we may be accustomed to. Instead, Gadamer used the term to refer to preconceived ideas or existing beliefs. He proposed that if we were open to our prejudices—that is, how our thinking has been socially constructed—exploring them could accelerate individual and collective learning. Gadamer (1975) viewed our prejudices or biases as positive indicators of our openness to learning about the world and our ongoing interpretive efforts to make meaning of our being in the world (p. 355). He invited our prejudices into what he called the *serious play* of interpretive understanding, which he states has "its own sacred, seriousness" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 110). Rather than forestalling understanding, he noted that, in a work of interpretation, "the recognition that all understanding inevitably involves some prejudice gives the hermeneutical problem its real thrust" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 272). He cautioned that if we attempted to cleanse our preunderstandings from view, or to deny or hide our preconceived ideas in order to adopt a more detached (or objective) position in relation to our study, the consequence would be to "[flatten] out the nature of hermeneutic experience" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 353).

Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutic approach is congruent with Smith's (1992) theorizing:

> Inquiry starts with the knower who is actually located in a particular spatial and temporal site, a particular configuration of the everyday/everynight world. Inquiry is directed towards exploring and explicating what she does not know—the social relations and organization pervading her world but invisible in it. (Smith, 1992, p. 91)

The I and the Thou Relationship in Hermeneutic Understanding

Gadamer's (1975, 1976) self-reflective hermeneutics is grounded in relationship, in the ongoing encounters between an I and a Thou. In the process of hermeneutic understanding, the I stands as the inquirer whereas the Thou may be a text, a conversation, a person, the earth, or a work of art. For Gadamer, the quality of the relations between the I of the inquirer and the Thou of the phenomenon of interest was critical in generating knowledge. Gadamer moved beyond the duality of subject and object positions to describe the relationship between the I and the Thou as mutual and dialectical. Importantly, Gadamer also described the relationship as having a moral character. Characterizing the relationship in this way suggested that the I and the Thou had an impact on each other in their ongoing encounters. For Gadamer, the movement toward understanding is mediated by language and other symbolic expressions between the I and the Thou.

The Three Levels of Self-Reflective Hermeneutics

To display the movement toward understanding, Gadamer described (1975) three levels of self-reflective hermeneutics, expressed in the movement, tension, and progress of the relationship of the I and the Thou. At the first level, Gadamer (1975) proposed that the I usually acted as an observer, noting only what was familiar and typical, since it reflected the I's cultural and historical prejudices (p. 353) or what Schutz (1932/1967) would call our stocks of knowledge, typifications, and systems of relevance. At the second level, Gadamer stated that the I of the inquirer becomes capable of acknowledging the Thou as a person. However, Gadamer noted that the Thou may only be recognized in terms of the I's (inquirer's) interpretive schemes. At this level of interpretive understanding, tension arises in the relationship between the inquirer and the phenomenon of interest and a struggle for mutual recognition. The I who claims to know something about the Thou may be upset by the Thou's counterclaims that throw the I into uncertainty. However, this is the "serious play" that animates the process of active meaning-making again.

The third level of self-reflective hermeneutics for Gadamer is the epitome of hermeneutic understanding. Here the relationship is characterized by the I's authentic openness to the Thou. Rather than overlooking the Thou's claim based on the I's prejudices or foremeanings, authentic openness to the other is characterized by the I's recognition "that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 355). At this third level, the I is capable of speaking about having been transformed by the Thou. Opening to the Thou has

significant implications then, for thinking and being the complex. Table 4 represents my adaptation of Gadamer's three levels of self-reflective hermeneutics and its assumptions. You may want to keep the table close by as you read through my interpretation of our attempts at thinking through and with Gadamer's three levels of self-reflective hermeneutics in the next sections.

In the next section, I show the affordances of thinking through and with Gadamer's three levels of self-reflective hermeneutics when the boundaries of hermeneutics are expanded to individual, group, and organizational levels to include broader institutional structures and systems. I begin with the application process field notes, a set of field notes that were transcribed during a meeting of the residential addiction services team at the CWB Centre.

Table 4
Gadamer's Three Levels of Self-Reflective Hermeneutics

<table>
<tr><td>I: with my prejudices (typifications, accumulated stocks of knowledge, and systems of relevance)</td><td colspan="2">Thou: the stranger, the text (an academic text, my field notes, phenomenological protocols), a person, a work of art, a system, my community, the earth</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Level 1</th></tr>
<tr><th>I</th><th>Relations</th><th>Thou</th></tr>
<tr><td>In this first encounter between the I and Thou, I, the interpreter am self-absorbed in my process of interpretation and "uninvolved" with the other. This level is similar to general qualitative research where the researcher finds themes in a text and groups these themes into categories. "One interprets an event in relation to the tradition from which it came, such as the practice of constitutional law by way of precedent. Themes can only be visible to the inquirer if they reflect aspects of the inquirer's culture and history. The inquirer looks for patterns in order to see what may be repeated and, perhaps, predictable" (Rehorick & Bentz, 2008, p. 21).</td><td>In this first encounter, no apparent opportunity for the Thou exists to communicate with the I. The Thou is objectified as 'other.'

Thou is an object in my "naïve faith in method" (Gadamer, p. 352). I see myself as somehow separate from the Thou, a stranger. With my prejudices at my disposal I observe and strive to make meaning of the Thou by finding characteristics familiar to my stocks of knowledge.</td><td>The Thou is subject to observation and description

The Thou is a stranger.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Level 2</th></tr>
<tr><td>I look upon the Thou as a person who may contradict my interpretations of them and make counterclaims. (1976, p. 352-53).</td><td>Dialectical reciprocity

There are tensions and 'serious play' in the claims and counter-claims between I and Thou</td><td>The Thou is acknowledged as a person, but is still a form of self-relatedness. Relation is not immediate but reflective (1976, p. 353).</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">Level 3</th></tr>
<tr><td>I am ready to open to the Thou "truly as a Thou—i.e., not to overlook his [her] claim but to let [the Thou] really say something to [me]" (p. 355); to enter fully into conversation with the Thou; and, to be open to be changed by the Thou (text, citizen).</td><td>Openness

Immediacy

Caring for the moral bond of the relationship</td><td>The Thou can influence the I.</td></tr>
</table>

The application process field notes describe the presentation of an application by Clare,[22] a fictionalized applicant seeking admission to the CWB Centre's residential addiction services program. The program provides a sanctuary for men experiencing addiction and homelessness. During their stay, they are able to access employment and educational assistance and safe, affordable transitional housing. Applicants to the CWB Centre's residential addiction services program are referred from other points in the continuum of care or they may apply themselves.

The field notes below capture part of an application process in which data were collected in order to make a determination about the applicant's—in this case, the fictional Clare's—care in this setting. In the system world's terms of evaluation, the data also establish a baseline assessment against which outcomes may be measured. Information about applicants is typically collected by admissions coordinators either through telephone inquiries, or through conversations with applicants who arrive in person in need of support. The application process is constructed through a conversation between the admissions coordinator and an applicant. In CWB's routine practice, the admissions coordinator presents information collected in the application form to the integrated services team during regularly scheduled team meetings during the week. The team listens to the presentation of the application data. Team members may ask questions to clarify some information as part of the process of determining whether there is a good

[22] A pseudonym.

match between what services and supports are offered and the needs and plans presented by applicants.

Next, I present team meeting field notes. These document an unfolding process of understanding that emerges in a project team meeting where we experiment with thinking through and with Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics, in order to interpret and evaluate Clare's application. The following are my field notes documenting the presentation of Clare's application.

Application process field notes: November 2012

> Clare is 43, homeless, unemployed for four months, has Grade 10 education, has worked in construction. He says that he has had trouble over the years with alcohol. He states that he has a couple of beers a day, but it occasionally gets out of hand.
>
> In his criminal justice history, he states he was charged with assault in 2007 and spent time in jail. He states he got into the middle of a domestic dispute when he observed a woman's husband strike her on the street. The man pressed charges. Most recently, he was arrested and has charges pending for another assault as a result of intervening when, according to Clare, "some punks were harassing a young kid on a bus."
>
> When asked about his mental health, he states that he was diagnosed with depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder in his 30s when he was in an alcohol treatment program. He stated that he did OK for a while afterwards, but things fell apart pretty fast after he left treatment.
>
> He states that during a recent hospitalization after the incident on the bus, he received a diagnosis of bipolar (which he noted was "bullshit") and was prescribed trazodone, seroquel, risperidone, ativan, and another benzodiazepine that he could not remember the name of (but which he states is "bullshit" too). He reports that he did not take the medications and is not currently taking any of the medications, which is why he was discharged from the hospital. He states that he "supposed this would hurt his chances of getting into the CWBC."
>
> When the admissions coordinator asked Clare about what his primary needs were, he stated that he needs a safe place to live while he sorts himself out, and he needs to find stable work so that he could provide for his two boys. He

mentioned that his kids are with his mom at the moment as his wife is no longer in the picture, and he is hoping to reunite with his family.

When asked about his hopes and dreams, he says that he is happiest when he is working hard and able to provide for his family. He would like to get his Red Seal certification in his trade so that he could find better and more stable work than seems to be out there right now.

After the admissions coordinator presented the hard copy application information gathered from Clare on the phone, the team conferred together, actively constructing meanings from the information that had been collected and presented. No one had met Clare in person. In the following discussion documented in the field notes, you will notice that we had been reading about and studying Gadamer's concepts. You will note some speaker's use of Gadamer's term *serious play*, where *familiarity* and *strangeness* are present, and where all of our prejudices and prejudgments are considered potential openings into the deepening work of interpretive understanding.

Team meeting field notes: November 2012

A colleague notes that a physician is concerned about all the medications Clare was prescribed and the fact that he is noncompliant.

Another team member prefaces their remarks by saying they are acting in the mode of Gadamer's *serious pla*y, arguing that rather than being passively compliant, Clare's challenge to the system's diagnoses from the perspective of his lived experience might be construed as a sign of "health."

The trustworthiness of Clare's reporting and of Clare himself is raised when a team member suggests that Clare may actually be "underreporting" the amount he drinks. His untrustworthiness in this interpretation is raised as a possible reason for *treatment failure*, a term in the lexicon of substance misuse treatment. Clare's perceived failure to report raises the concern that he may potentially need detoxification, an intervention in the system of addiction services offered prior to his entry to the CWB Centre.

Another experiment with Gadamer's idea of serious play is suggested by a colleague who challenges us to think about how treatment might have failed Clare and argues that getting more information from Clare about his experience

> could help us understand how he might be interpreting who we are and how we might be of help to him.
>
> Clare's educational level is also highlighted as a concern in light of his goals. A team member proposes that the long haul of academic upgrading may be too much for him.
>
> Clare's criminal justice history is raised as a significant concern, particularly the two assaults. A colleague expresses doubt about his suitability for the setting given the risk he poses to the safety of others. There is an appeal to get a release of information in order to contact Clare's probation officer.
>
> A colleague says that they are thinking about this in terms of Gadamer's levels of I and Thou. She states that she is aware that we are interpreting Clare in a self-referential way, at the first level of Gadamer's hermeneutics. Reflecting on the three different levels of hermeneutics allows some openings to curiosity about the context of the assaults; the fact that Clare seems to intervene in situations where someone who is vulnerable is being attacked.

As an alternative to diagnosis, labelling, and categorization, Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics opened up discussion about how it was that we were constructing possible meanings. Mindful of Schutz's concepts of typifications, stocks of knowledge, and systems of relevance now that we were thinking through and with hermeneutics, we entertained the idea that we were actively constructing a fiction of a person we hadn't even met yet and were in fact making decisions based on the fiction we had constructed ourselves. Gadamer's work resonates strongly with Dorothy Smith's (2005) work on institutional ethnography. Specifically related to this chapter is Smith's study, *K is Mentally Ill* (1978). Smith's analysis illustrates how K's identity and subjectivity are constituted through institutionalized discourses, narratives, and active organizational processes that "construct an account of behaviour so that it can be recognized by any member of the relevant cultural community as mentally ill type behaviour" (p. 51).

My own reflections on our experiment of thinking through and with self-reflective hermeneutics follow.

At this first level of Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics, the Thou (Clare, in this case) is objectified as the other or the stranger. If our conversational exchange were placed in brackets, the I (the interpreter) constructed the Thou as an object, as Gadamer would say, in my "naïve faith in method" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 352). What I take Gadamer to mean in this statement is that in our efforts to understand, the I acts as an observer noting only what is familiar and typical as it reflects the I's cultural and historical prejudices (Gadamer, 1976, p. 353) or what Schutz (1932/1967) would call our stocks of knowledge, typifications and systems of relevance.

We could have difficulty recognizing the power we have over Clare; that is, we might be unaware that we have the power to define, label, approve or deny his application. Nevertheless, as people in positions of power we might see ourselves as somehow separate from the Thou, a stranger. Clare, however, was clear about the power we held. He knew, for instance, that his refusal of his diagnoses and the medications provided him in hospital could "hurt his chances of getting into the Centre." With the prejudices and preunderstandings (our typifications, stocks of knowledge, and systems of relevance) at our disposal, we observed patterns and strove to make meaning of the Thou by finding familiar characteristics in our stocks of knowledge. For Rehorick and Bentz (2008), themes can only be visible to the inquirer if they "reflect aspects of the inquirer's culture and history. Without a self-reflective approach, the inquirer looks for patterns in order to see what may be repeated and, perhaps, predictable" (p. 21). In our conversations

we used stocks of knowledge that were active in our lifeworldly setting, such as addiction, mental illness, homelessness, criminogenic risk assessment, trauma, and risk management. These structured the possibilities and potentialities for our relationship with Clare and the possibilities that exist for Clare's life chances.

Thinking through and with hermeneutics at group and organizational levels of change, our efforts were helped by Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obsfeld's (2005) notion of *sensemaking*. Weick et al. explained that from the perspective of sensemaking, "who we think we are as organizational actors shapes what we enact and how we interpret, which affects what outsiders think we are and how they treat us, which stabilizes or destabilizes our identity" (2005, p. 416). Sensemaking for Weick et al. was an activity that "talks" events and organizations into existence. The authors suggested that patterns of organizing are located in the actions and conversations that occur on behalf of the presumed organization and in the texts of those activities that are preserved in social structures. In the above exchange among team members reviewing the application, we "talked Clare into existence" based on the cues we extracted from the presentation of the application. Team members carved out concerns about psychiatric diagnosis, treatment failure, noncompliance, educational capabilities, criminogenic risk assessment, and risk assessment for violence.

Gadamer (1976) affirmed the influence of our sense of identity on our sensemaking when he states that at the second level of self-reflective hermeneutics, the "Thou is acknowledged as a person, but is still a form of self-relatedness" (p. 353). However, Weick (1995) proposed that in the process of sensemaking, destabilizing

identity has the effect of increasing our receptiveness to new meanings. All this comes about, Weick (1995) argued, because “sensemaking begins with a self-conscious sensemaker. . . . Sensemaking is triggered by a failure to confirm one’s self [but] sensemaking occurs in the service of maintaining a consistent, positive self-conception” (pp. 22–23). People learn about their identities by projecting them into the environment and observing the consequences, in a complex mixture of *proaction* and *reaction*. Sensemaking is filtered through identity, as illustrated in this question: “how can I know who we are becoming until I see what they say and do with our actions?” (Weick et al., 2005, p. 416). If the main thrust of our appreciation of Clare rested on our ability to confirm our own identity, this would narrow the opportunities to fully appreciate Clare, what we could learn from him and what we could learn about ourselves by examining how our “experience of thinking,” as Gadamer would say, is socially constructed.

A physician highlighting Clare’s noncompliance, for example, would be aligned with the powerful knowledge regime of medicine. Physicians carry the weight of authority and power, but in a self-reflective hermeneutic space their comments could be challenged and counterclaims offered, as proposals of equal weight to be considered. Similarly, a colleague’s extraction of “the two assaults in Clare’s criminal justice history” as concerns would align with the powerful knowledge regime of criminology and the roles and identities of officials like probation officers who, it is thought, could supply the most authoritative account of Clare.

In this mode of serious play, however, the CWB team were engaged in a process of challenging the usual typifications and stocks of knowledge through attempts to place

the cues they were extracting from the text of the application within larger contexts. In this way, we were attempting to work with the notion of the part/whole hermeneutic. We were attempting to find deeper understanding by exploring the meanings of a part of the story within the much larger context in which it is situated. A colleague suggested that Clare's hope to get his Red Seal certification so that he can find "better and more stable work than seems to be out there right now" drew attention to the question of how his unemployment for four months could be connected to the rising increase in precarious employment over the last two decades in Canada. Another colleague brought the larger context of the social organization of addiction treatment into view when she questioned the labelling of Clare's previous treatment experience as his *treatment failure*. Offering an alternative interpretation in which treatment might have failed Clare opened up our thinking about how we might come into a self-reflective relationship with Clare. She asked us to consider how we might be more sensitive and aware of the movements and tensions in our relationship with him rather than coming to the relationship with a certainty in our claims that we already knew him. At this moment we came to grips with the uncomfortable truth that just as we constituted the fictive identity of Clare, we had continued to reproduce ourselves as proxy experts.

Similarly, in contrast to the proposition of Clare's identity as a *noncompliant mental-health client*, a different trajectory, framed by a broader social context of health, was envisioned. Clare's agency was highlighted in his active challenging of the system's diagnosis from the point of view of his lived experience. In addition, his history of assaults came to be viewed within a larger context than just the knowledge regime of the

criminal justice system. Contact with a probation officer, who could supply the typification's and stocks of knowledge from the knowledge regime of criminology, could have authoritatively confirmed the Thou's capacity for violence. However, we opened to different proposals, which provided an alternative context for Clare's actions relating to his lived experience and his perception of injustice.

Thinking through and with Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics, these alternative readings of this active text were characteristic of the second level of Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics. They offered important challenges to the institutional discourses that exercise disciplinary power. They also caused us to look upon the Thou, Clare, as a person who might contradict our interpretations of him (Gadamer, 1976, p. 352–353). Reminding us of the moral nature of the relation between the I and the Thou, and pointing to issues of power, Gadamer warned that to "claim to understand the other person in advance functions to keep the other person's claims at a distance" (Gadamer, 1976, p. 354). He cautioned us about the consequences of claiming "to know the other's claim from his point of view and even to understand the other better than the other understands himself" (Gadamer, 1976, p. 353). If we withdraw from the dialectic of reciprocity, we reflect ourselves out of our relation with the other and so become unreachable by the Thou (Gadamer, 1976, p. 353). The work of understanding, then, required us to be able to be present and accounted for in the reciprocal care for and mutuality of the relationship, remaining open to the counter claims of the other.

Gadamer rendered the work of interpretative understanding in terms of an ongoing relationship. The ideal relations are described by Gadamer as *dialectical*

reciprocity, which is what happens when the I is ready to open to the Thou, to listen to the Thou's claims, to let the Thou really say something to me, and to fully enter into conversation with the Thou; and, most importantly, to be open to be changed by the Thou. The notion of dialectic reciprocity was brought into view when we opened to the suggestion that we inquire into what happened in treatment for Clare. This invitation to see Clare as the Thou involved our opening to Clare's counterclaims, to let Clare really say something to us (rather than allowing Clare to remain as a form of self-relatedness associated with second level hermeneutics). To actively cultivate an openness to Clare's counterclaims shifted the relationship into what Gadamer described as the mutuality of the I and Thou relation.

The third level of hermeneutic analysis is characterized by an authentic openness to the Thou. Rather than overlooking the Thou's claim because of our prejudices or foremeanings, hermeneutic analysis at this level involves an authentic openness to the other that involves recognizing that "I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one else forces me to do so" (Gadamer, 1976, p. 355). For Gadamer, opening to the Thou clearly had moral and ethical consequences for our ways of seeing, knowing, doing, and being in the lifeworld and system world. In translating hermeneutics into practice as a way of doing and being, Nakkula and Ravitch (1998) stated that in their practice, "Every act in our work is an act of interpretation and every interpretation made in such work is an ethical act, because people's lives are the focus of these interpretations and of the intervention strategies that result from them" (p. xi).

From the auto/biographical perspective I am developing here, if we stay within the comforts of the prescribed power relations and procedures of the managerial paradigm for thinking about Clare, the I may enjoy protection from the challenge of exploring and understanding its self-construction, world view and self-image. But to avoid the challenge of MI violates the moral nature of the relationship between the I and the Thou, effectively removing ourselves from the Thou. It allows us to keep the Thou at a comfortable distance. Instead, I am interested in the process of learning, as Gadamer (1975) would say, to examine the "experience that thinking is" (p. xxxiii). In an auto/biographical inquiry, I am, as Kincheloe (2005) stated, focused on examining the social construction of selfhood for the purpose of building the capacity to become "responsible, transformative members of larger communities where socially just activities are coordinated—activities that address oppression and alleviate human suffering" (p. 156).

An example of the implications of thinking through and with Gadamer's hermeneutics at individual, group, and organizational levels of change was a discussion of the issue of evaluation within a relational frame informed by Gadamer's three levels of self-reflective hermeneutics. Evaluation structured by a clinical-managerial paradigm would prescribe the form of the relationship we had with Clare. Using Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics, we could gain insight into the social construction of knowledge in this paradigm and deepen our consciousness of our own social construction as practitioners as well as the construction of the other's, Clare's, subjectivity. If we unquestioningly accepted the prescribed form of the relationship, the person would not be

likely to disclose his story in an authentic way. In fact, in our experience, it takes six to nine months before the person may trust us as practitioners enough to disclose the multiple realities of their situation. In many cases, applicants do not share how dire their circumstances are and choose to disguise them for fear of being denied service. The necessity to disguise their circumstances is systemically generated and must be located within the context of their multiple embeddedness in wider social, political and economic conditions rather than in what is perceived as individual troubles such as diagnoses.

In Clare's case, after six months, and only after we had proved that we were trustworthy as practitioners in the context of Gadamer's I–Thou relationship, Clare disclosed more details of his story. Clare's wife had died in a horrific car crash which his two boys somehow survived. Consumed with grief, paralyzed by the loss of his wife, and faced with an increasingly turbulent economy and unstable job market, where he was only able to secure temporary work scrambling from job to job, Clare followed the opportunities and had to travel to remote areas to work to support his family. He sent his paycheques home consistently until he was injured on the job. When there were no benefits to cover his time off work, because of an unscrupulous employer, Clare had to apply for income assistance. He also sent those funds home to his mom for the boys, and began living in shelters, trying to pick up work when he could. Living in prolonged homelessness, Clare was soon subject to the criminalization (arrested for intervening in violent assaults) and psychiatrization of homelessness (receipt of diagnoses rather than an appreciation of the toll of socioeconomic deprivations). When Clare arrived at the CWB

Centre, he had a severe health condition, undetected at the hospital, which if left untreated would have threatened his survival.

Intervening in the Social Organization of "Self"

The text in this section is a storied account from an arts class offered at the CWB Centre. As part of a broader initiative in my organization to introduce arts as alternative forms of inquiry to build capacity to generate knowledge about how to create inclusive learning spaces, the focus of these educational opportunities was to encourage marginalized citizens to experiment using a variety of media to inquire into how our identities are socially constructed. The field notes describe this experimentation. Residents whose previous identities had been limited to *the homeless*, were given the opportunity to try out their identities as *students* through exploring artistic media as a process of inquiry and discovery. The following field notes describes a class where an instructor created learning opportunities offering students a variety of ways to interpret lived experience other than through the negative typifications that infuse the socially constructed accounts others have produced about them.

> ***Field notes: Student/mariner/teacher: October 2014***
>
> The instructor begins by sharing with the students that she is feeling nervous about presenting her thoughts about a poem she has brought for the students to explore.
>
> As she moves around the room to hand out a photocopy to the students of Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, she says that she doesn't have a "canned lecture" she has taken out of the cupboard to present tonight.
>
> She says that while she has some ideas about the poem that she can share, she tells the students that there is a lot she feels she doesn't yet fully understand

about it. She asks permission from the students to puzzle through the poem with them as they read it together.

The students know that she is an instructor and an authority but she has positioned herself as somewhat of a guide based on her own experience of attempts to find meanings in the poem. She advises them that there are clearly things about this poem that have eluded her. She has also created a space of mutuality in the sense of a collective effort towards learning and understanding in the face of ambiguity and complexity. She has declared that she does not have the authoritative interpretation of the poem in her grasp.

She says that one puzzle of the poem is a question about whether the meanings are to be found in the poem or whether we as readers bring to light the meanings of the poem in reading it together.

Each student takes a turn reading a passage. One student laughs out loud at several points in the poem. The instructor is curious as are other students, and invites him to talk about what was causing him to laugh. The student says that he was recollecting his experiences of fishing on the open ocean with his grandfather and other fishers from his village. The student connects with the mariner's description of the strange things they also saw in the sea, how sudden storms would come up, and how they struggled through big swells to find their way home. The student is also a mariner.

As we travel along with the narrator recounting his harrowing journey on the sea, we arrived near the end of the poem where the mariner asks a holy man to grant him forgiveness for killing the albatross so that he can be free.

The student/mariner highlights the notion that even though the mariner is unburdened by telling his tale to the hermit, he isn't really free because he is compelled to tell his tale again and again. A question mark seems to appear at the end of his statement.

The instructor highlights the student/mariner's observation as an interesting puzzle point of the poem for her as well. She asks him to share what it is that catches his interest.

The student/mariner who is now in a treatment program says he is struck by this because he is working on Step 5 (from the AA literature) which he stated is also a recounting of his journey. He states that he feels the moral overtones of the task. He explains that the spirit of Step 4 asks you to admit your wrongs to God which is what he imagines the mariner wanted so that he could be free of the harms he has caused. In Step 5, the student/mariner noted, you are asked to admit to God and to another human being the exact nature of your wrongs.

The instructor is clearly fascinated by this and asks the student to stay with it and say more about what he is thinking.

> The student/mariner says that he heard that the exercise of the steps offered an opportunity for his learning and personal growth. But in the poem, he notes that it is the mariner who is able to identify who needs to hear his tale and the teachings in it.
>
> The instructor recognizes the power of the moment. Looking at the student/mariner, she states unequivocally that in the telling of his story, the student/mariner is the teacher and we are the students who need to hear the teachings in his story.

There is a critical hermeneutic aspect to these classes in that works of art are framed as opportunities for inquiry into and interpretation of human experiences. As practitioners working with Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics, my colleagues and I work with our consciousness of the ways that power constructs the social, cultural, and economic conditions in which meaning is made and in which subjectivities are shaped. We pose questions and invite discussions about how we are located in a particular social and historical time, where some stories enjoy more currency than others. Students are encouraged to explore ideas about those stories in light of their lived experience of homelessness, addiction, criminal justice involvement, and poverty as well as the healing and transformative processes they are undertaking. Their lived experiences are welcomed in the process of inquiry. In learning about art, students are introduced to questions with a hermeneutic thrust: questioning the author's perspective, what kind of traditions and genres art forms belong to, whether they stand outside traditions, what kind of world the works create for readers, what vision they hold of a future, what traditions the characters belong to in the story, how the reader may be engaged in the story; and what we as readers seem compelled to look for in a story. Students are engaged in the practices of active interpretation involving contextualizing themselves and others in their world.

These activities stand in stark contrast to clinical-managerial paradigmatic prescriptions such as *treatment*, *anger management*, and *identifying your crime cycle*.

As I pointed out in Chapter 3, few students remember positive or meaningful experiences in school. For many, whose past experiences have been interpreted as personal failures in education, walking through the door into the classroom takes a great deal of courage. When I observed the students as the instructor stated that she did not have the authoritative interpretation of the poem, and that she was asking their permission to "puzzle through the poem by reading it together," I noted both relief and bewilderment in students' faces, especially when she wondered aloud whether the meaning of the poem was inside it or whether meanings arose as they read it together. Demonstrating a self-reflective hermeneutic approach, the instructor not only showed us how meanings of the poem were shaped by historical traditions, she argued that we could actively construct meanings in the poem together, from our lived experiences. A student deconstructed his Step 5 homework materials, which interpret his experiences as individual *wrongs*. Through meaning making about the ancient mariner, he reconstructed possibilities for being and becoming in the world. Like the ancient mariner, the student found wisdom in his lived experiences that was meaningful and life giving. A range of possible alternative identities emerged as he shifted from the identity of the addict to the student, to the mariner, to the teacher who could teach others. The instructor emphasized how he had actively constructed meaning in the poem in contrast with interpretive approaches that aimed to reflect a reality that supposedly already existed.

In the next section, I describe further alternative active constructions of meaning guided by thinking through and with Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics. These were instrumental in the change efforts at institutional levels that made the WCP possible.

Thinking Through Gadamer's Self-Reflective Hermeneutics at Institutional Levels of Change in Social Innovation Efforts in the WCP

An important indicator of social innovation, according to the ALMOLIN model, is whether an initiative changes social relations—that is, whether it "determines durable changes in social-power relations between social groups, among scales of government, and among civil society, the state and the market sectors" (Gonzalez et al., 2010, p. 55). Exploring the conventional problematization through policy concepts of insufficient affordable housing in the city, my colleagues and I began with an acknowledgement that the complexity of this problem was located both inside and outside the boundaries of our local community and it would therefore need to be addressed in a systemic way. Secondly, we recognized that we needed to adopt an experimental approach while working with actual realities on the ground in the community. Thirdly, we acknowledged that it would be most important to demonstrate a different way of thinking of the problem of insufficient affordable housing in the city. We acknowledged that not only was *home* a need for all citizens, but our collective thinking across systems and sectors about the social risks of homelessness was fundamentally unsustainable into the future and needed to change.

Changes in rules, resources, and authority flows and a redistribution of knowledge and resources occurred in dialogue with city management, urban planners, housing authorities, and with a financial cooperative about how the WCP might respond differently to interpretations of social risks in our city. For example, in complex discussions with the planning department at the city management level, we recognized that, thinking through and with Gadamer's first level of hermeneutics, the city had its historical consciousness, traditions, precedents, and prejudices in the form of laws and procedures. Gadamer might say that its horizon of understanding about creating affordable housing for marginalized citizens was based on a set of interpretive acts about what a city is. These take the form of structures like planning and zoning templates. Similarly, the housing authority had a historical consciousness informing its horizon of understanding about what social housing looked like. It had produced a set of structures—design templates—for architects and constructors to set out what buildings should look like, where they would be located, the size of units, and the materials used.

In thinking through and with Gadamer's I and Thou relationship at this first level, I began to think of the I as representing the institutional arrangements and the Thou as our organization, the CWB. In our conversations about the potential of the WCP, my organization brought different horizons of understanding about city governance, inclusive spaces in the city, and what a home would look like and feel like, based on the values of social justice and the lived realities and aspirations of the citizens we served. These conversations progressed through to Gadamer's third level of hermeneutics, where the city entered fully into the conversation, taking in and acting on a different horizon of

understanding about the potential of the WCP to create a new prototype for inclusive spaces in the city.

Actions indicative of Gadamer's third level of hermeneutics were reflected in how city management collaboratively worked with the CWB Society on changes in city governance (a social innovation in itself) to accommodate the multifaceted comprehensive development of the WCP that combined three different kinds of affordable housing: an innovation centre, a gallery, and a community garden, in collaboration with the city and on city land. This collaboration also produced other social innovations such as the modification of zoning templates, and the development of unique strata documents that were approved and filed to enable the creation of a new prototype for inclusive and affordable housing developments in the city. Evidence of the positive progression through Gadamer's three levels of interpretive understanding in the ongoing encounters in the relationship between city management and CWB Society was a significant contribution made by the city towards the construction of the social innovation centre and community gardens as essential components of the housing project.

Similarly, our dialogue and evolving cross-sector collaboration with a financial cooperative was influenced by thinking through and with Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics. In the progress of our encounters in our continuing relationship with the financial cooperative, I kept in mindful awareness that financial institutions had already systematized their interpretations of the financial risk of lending to applicants for mortgages or other kinds of financing. These were the technical-rational horizons of

understanding, as Gadamer would say, that had developed about how social risk was treated in our society.

Our organization proposed to the financial institution that they consider lending to the CWB Society's constituents. These would be citizens who might have poor credit histories, experiences of addiction, criminal justice involvement, short or sporadic employment histories, and other barriers to accessing traditional financing. In our organization's dialogue with the financial cooperative we considered interpretations of risk within and against social, economic, and historical consciousness and traditions. We introduced our reflections on conventional interpretations of what risk was to them. We also acknowledged their deep financial expertise: the development of systems of algorithms that quantified risk, while also introducing axiological questions about how relations of trust could be also be considered in developing a new model of inclusive access to home ownership. In these ongoing discussions, I noted that they used their historical traditions or precedents to make sense of our alternative ideas about how inclusive spaces could be created in the city. As an organization with social justice values, we had demonstrated our credibility and trustworthiness over many years in our work with disenfranchised citizens. Our organization and the financial institution shared a common commitment to become more deeply connected with and supportive of citizens in the community. Out of these relations of trust we were able to create collaborative arrangements with the financial cooperative that were based on a different horizon of understanding of social risk, in order to create opportunities for excluded groups to ladder into the housing market through the prototype of shared equity home ownership.

Out of this cross-sector collaboration, customized financial products and processes were developed for applicants whose poor credit histories would typically have disqualified them from home ownership. The financial cooperative developed a financing protocol that accepted a letter from our organization as part of the prospective homeowner's application process, based on our relationships of trust with homeowner applicants, and our relations of trust with the financial cooperative. These in turn were based on a period of treatment, where critical destabilizing features of prolonged homelessness such as addiction and declining mental health were addressed, and where the applicant demonstrated stability in employment and income. The financial institution contributed the legal fees and appraisal for homeowner applicants, and provided financial literacy education sessions and assistance to prospective buyers to prepare for home purchase. Through our ongoing self-reflective encounters in our relations with the financial cooperative, this cross-sector collaboration has made home ownership accessible to previously disenfranchised citizens based on a wage rate of $15 per hour.

This is a clear example of ALMOLIN's criteria of changing social and power relationships: the relationships among citizens, the market and institutions. The bank's technical procedures for calculating financial risk comprised one horizon of understanding. From our organization's work with disenfranchised citizens, we brought our horizon of understanding informed by social justice. A fusion of horizons of understandings occurred that has allowed institutions and community organizations to build relationships of trust in order to create new horizons of understanding about how a

society or a city can respond to citizens whose lives are marginalized by unemployment, homelessness, and poverty.

Through financial investment and construction financing from the financial cooperative, the CWB Society was empowered to develop a design prototype of the project that expands the continuum of housing supports and provides an increasing stock of affordable home ownership options, in perpetuity, for low and moderate income home buyers. To ensure a perpetual supply of affordable housing (in the context of an inflated real estate market), the shared equity model design prototype determines that homeowner participation in equity gains over time is defined by a covenant in place guiding future resale of the unit. To ensure long-term affordability for future purchasers of these units, a specific resale framework is in place which limits the maximum allowable selling price. Through this mechanism, equity in the unit is "shared" between the seller and the homeowner community. By retaining a portion of the equity value in the housing unit, the CWB Society created the platform for subsequent purchasers to also access home ownership at a price below future market price—thus ensuring continuing accessibility for future home purchasers. Home buyers are not only attracted to the opportunity for home ownership, the interactive elements of the project such as the community gardens, social innovation centre and gallery, but also by the opportunity through their contribution of shared equity to leave a legacy in the form of opportunities for others to own their own home.

A relational appreciation of our process of working collaboratively across sectors and systems to create the WCP deepened our awareness that a system's or sector's

current position can be viewed as a horizon of understanding. This relational appreciation helped us to unseat what we had often experienced as a binary conflict of positions. This deepening awareness encouraged a focus instead on paying attention to the nuances in the relationship with the other. This had an unmistakable influence on the emergent process of dialectical reciprocity in the relationship and on the process of practical accomplishment of meaning and the making of the WCP based on the social justice values of improving the lives of disenfranchised citizens.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shared some key moments showing our process of thinking through and with Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics, at individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels of change. I have shown the implications of these for social innovation in the WCP. Working in a context where powerful policy makers increasingly set the terms of debate about what is useful knowledge, we thought through and with Gadamer's ideas to view a much broader horizon of understanding of our work as community-based practitioners, which had not been visible to us previously.

Scholar-Practitioners

1. What horizons of understanding can you identify that shape practice in your work setting?

2. What prejudices or preunderstandings can you identify in your everyday lifeworld?

3. Can you think of a time when your horizon of understanding was challenged by an event or incident, or by meeting a person, which required you to go beyond your usual stocks of knowledge and typifications?

4. Are there ways in which particular authoritative interpretations talk people into existence in your practice?

5. What authoritative interpretations in your work setting do you think need to be challenged?

6. In your practice setting, how might thinking of hermeneutics as a way of being and doing in the world affect your practice?

7. In your practice setting, which level of self-reflective hermeneutics do you think your organization operating at? What do you think are the implications?

8. What would it mean to move your practice to the Gadamer's third level of self-reflective hermeneutics in your practice? What would need to change? Is this possible?

Chapter 5.

Openings

Inquiry may contribute to social action and be part of social action.
—*Bentz and Shapiro,* Mindful Inquiry in Social Research

In this concluding chapter, I review the contributions of MI, the ALMOLIN model of local social innovation, and the methods of auto/biographical inquiry that I adopted in this inquiry to the making of the WCP. I propose directions for further inquiry to bring about social justice aims that emerged in the process. These include questioning oppositional dynamics of theory and practice, thinking, and making; the need to engage with questions about the conduct of inquiry; the need for community university partnerships for social innovation; the need for cross-sector research collaborations; and the need for participatory, community-based research.

In thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship in the WCP, a critical analysis showed that the alignment of research-knowledge generation and policy with neoliberal policy logics and rationalities was highly problematic in light of the consequences for the already marginalized citizens with whom I work. The knowledge tradition of phenomenology, combined with critical analysis, showed the path dependency of the construction of identities of marginalized citizens through scientific classification, categorization, and subjectification processes according to regimes of truth

(criminology, law, economics, education, medicine, psychiatry, and social policy). A hermeneutic approach helped my colleagues and I, as practitioners, to understand the historical consciousness, traditions, and trajectories of these institutional dynamics. The approach offered ways to uncover what modes of consciousness, assumptions, and horizons of understanding informed the changing rationalities in multilevel layers of public policy that acted to rename and reshape the meanings of social welfare, citizen, citizenship, risk, and the responsibilities of communities, governments, and citizens. Buddhist mindfulness practices sustained necessary spaces and clearings for contemplating questions concerning what kind of inquiry and action would diminish the suffering of the citizens with whom we worked (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). These mindful spaces also sustained focus on intention for action for social justice.

MI and the ALMOLIN model guided my wayfinding through complex and emergent conditions of uncertainty. Thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship offered significant openings for making the shift in consciousness required for thinking and being the complex, where, as Morin (1999a) stated, we must imagine “our coming into consciousness as a process in which we become aware of our ‘otherness’ in the world in a self-affirming and inclusive way” (van Breda, 2007, p. 3).

In Chapter 2, I demonstrated how thinking through and with a critical social theoretical analysis and the ALMOLIN analytical model uncovered larger social, historical, economic, political, and cultural contexts as they opened or constrained possibilities for action in our particular location. ALMOLIN guided critical analysis of

the path dependency and spatiality of ongoing interactive dynamics of social exclusion of citizens (the vertical and horizontal axes of TIME and SPACE). I showed how the analytical model enabled me to deconstruct these exclusionary dynamics at local, regional, national, and global scales, enabling a fuller understanding of the nature of the challenges and opportunities in the local spaces where we as practitioners were currently working.

Creating Table 2 (in Chapter 2) to visualize the analysis using the ALMOLIN model uncovered multiple relationships over time and at several spatial scales. This allowed my colleagues and I to see the complex realities existing in the local and particular spaces where we as practitioners were striving to make knowledge generation accountable to marginalized citizens. Visually representing the cascading effects of changing policy rationalities stemming from the global economic crisis of the 1970s into the areas of social welfare, health care, employment, education, housing, and active citizenship expanded our critical appreciation of how the lived realities experienced at a local scale by marginalized citizens had multiple dimensions. Table 2 also enabled us to see how they were related at multiple spatial scales: at global, national, provincial, regional, local, and neighbourhood levels.

My analysis, using path dependency (the vertical axis of TIME), focused on shifts in socio-economic-historical-cultural-political contextual conditions over time that facilitated or obstructed possibilities for informed socially innovative actions. Findings from my critical literature review (Chapter 2) suggested that, over time, governments had withdrawn from policies for affordable housing, social protections, and adult education,

among others—actions that exacerbated the marginalization of citizens. Foucault's (1978) concept of governmentality was useful in guiding my analysis of how changes in policy logics occurred concurrently with shifts from traditional forms of government toward governance: a recrafting of relationships and interactions among the state, the market, and civil society. I also observed the emergence of new knowledge actors such as the World Bank, and global corporate knowledge generation and management firms such as PricewaterhouseCoopers. Specializing in bringing knowledge generation into alignment with processes of neoliberalization, such global knowledge actors have made significant inroads in the dynamics of statecraft.

In concert with these strategic alignments of neoliberalization with knowledge generation, I observed emerging policy discourses that explained these transfers of responsibility for the social well-being of citizens to individuals themselves within a new ideological frame of individual responsibility, freedom, and choice. These findings illuminated a trajectory over time of the restructuring forces of neoliberalization at macro international levels. They also uncovered the structural impacts of neoliberalization at different territorial scales, from federal welfarist and collectivist institutions through to the local spaces in which we as practitioners were working. These impacts were most notable in the areas of poverty, homelessness, and access to education that can enable an exit from poverty.

Reflecting on the experience of thinking through and with critical social theory and the ALMOLIN model, I was struck by the relational and process-oriented nature of ALMOLIN. Gonzalez et al. (2010) proposed that while the boxes in the model in Figure

1 (Chapter 1) reflected a macro language, their interest was in illuminating the connections between these elements; that is, to show that the valued outcomes of the process of social innovation were brought about through the dialectics between and among the mobilisation of actors, social, institutional and financial resources, social economy, and institutional dynamics, to overcome exclusionary processes (p. 55). Interpreting the ALMOLIN model in this way embodied the hermeneutic principle that the phenomenon of interest can only be understood through a process of interpretive understanding of its relation to the larger social, historical, economic, political, and cultural context in which it is situated.

Our deeper reflections on hermeneutics in Chapter 4 began practically at micro levels with exploring the active texts, policies, procedures, and processes in our practice setting. These learning experiences showed how crucial it was to deconstruct the processes of the social construction of knowledge, understanding, and socially oppressive meanings of human subjectivity. This critical hermeneutic learning helped to deepen my awareness that the actions we as practitioners might take, based on our interpretations, would have consequences for the lives and the lifeworlds of already vulnerable citizens. Without being mindful of the ways in which meaning is imposed in our work settings, one can unconsciously be swept along in the sway of whatever ideological framework prevails, becoming complicit in socially oppressive practices. Instead, I was focused on building our capacity to address oppression and alleviate human suffering. Thinking through and with Gadamer's self-reflective hermeneutics in change efforts at institutional levels exemplified Gadamer's argument that new understandings can emerge when there

is a fusion of horizons—when one's prejudices or understandings, based on the past, come into dialectical relationship with other understandings, prompting renewed efforts at meaning making that are directed toward social justice aims.

Deconstructing and reconstructing processes emerged as themes in the work of thinking through lifeworld phenomenology and with critical sociological approaches for social innovation in the WCP. Our work as practitioners at the CWB Society is structured predominantly by a clinical paradigm aligned with the prevailing hegemony of managerialism and so-called evidence-based approaches, which measure progress in restricted economic terms. Using Schutzian social phenomenology, a phenomenologically inspired design for the WCP involved not only deconstructing social structures of consciousness—such as predominating clinical, technicist, and managerial paradigms—but also creating and experimenting with new social contexts, structural dynamics, relational processes, and experiences, and new patterns of interconnectedness that could potentially provide platforms for the reconstruction of self and other(s) (i.e., the world).

My work of reconstructing the meanings of the WCP, using a prioritized theory-lived experience-action relationship, was critical. Our ethical social justice position aimed to respond to human deprivation; to empower the dispossessed through building new capabilities; and to transform exclusionary mechanisms into inclusionary strategies, inquiry and action. My reconstruction work showed that all these could be mobilized to inform a transformative praxis at individual, group, organizational, and institutional levels.

Case examples like the WCP, which extend and expand on the ALMOLIN model, may be useful starting points for productive collaboration and dialogue with community stakeholders about policies and practices that are no longer sustainable. They may pose opportunities for beginning the process of finding meaning, solidarity, and significance in reweaving the lifeworldly web so eloquently described by Kincheloe (2003), where citizens connect to "the civic web of the political domain, the biotic web of the natural world, the social web of human life, and the epistemological web of knowledge production" (p. 49). In the WCP, this involved significant realignments in and repurposing of governance relationships to imagine new possibilities for our community's future.

I now turn to directions for further inquiry that encourage the imagination of these new possibilities.

Proposed Directions for Further Inquiry

> The question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire. The right to the city is far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources; it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, moreover, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inestimably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights. (Harvey, 2008, p. 23)

In thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship, the framework of MI provided a highly reflexive way to uncover and choose one's orientation to inquiry that would produce action accountable to improving the lives of

disenfranchised citizens. In addition, it raised valid theoretical, philosophical, analytical, and practical questions of significance for me as a scholar, researcher, educator, and practitioner as it did for policy makers, urban planners, and citizens interested in generating knowledge directed toward creating cities into the future that that are just, inclusive, humane, and sustainable.

The substantial achievement of integrating inquiry and action in establishing the WCP through cross-sector and cross-disciplinary efforts in our city may also contribute to and be part of a strengthening antipoverty movement, in progress all across Canada, that is producing more positive structural shifts toward addressing poverty and homelessness. There is evidence of a renewed commitment on the part of the federal government to developing a National Housing Strategy. While this indicates a positive direction, national poverty reduction strategies are yet to be announced. Nevertheless, voluntary sector antipoverty activists are moving to frame poverty reduction strategies with the language, goals, and elements of a human rights approach. In this new rights-based approach, poverty is viewed as a violation of human rights. Citizens living in poverty are recast as rights-bearers who are entitled to hold governments accountable at all levels.

These strategies stem from Canada's commitment to several human rights obligations that guarantee social, economic, and cultural rights to all. Among these is Canada's commitment to and ratification of the UN International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976). In the Covenant, Article 11(1) recognizes "the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself [sic] and his [sic]

family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions."

Poverty activists, anticipating a flow of funding from the federal government to provincial and municipal governments for physical infrastructure in cities and other communities, recognize that a rights-based approach has the capacity to "change the calculation from what current government budgets can afford to what investment is needed to fulfill the rights of people living in Canada" (Broadbent & McIsaac, 2016, p. 10). In addition, an acceleration of new poverty reduction strategies in the past year have been launched in large and small cities to reduce poverty, not just to alleviate the symptoms. At a recent conference, *Cities Reducing Poverty: When Mayors Lead*, rights-based initiatives of mayors of cities across the country were showcased, including the adoption of Charters of Rights and Freedoms in Montreal and Edmonton. One striking presentation, by the Mayor of Edmonton, Don Iveson, acknowledged that participatory approaches to knowledge generation were among the most powerful incentives that propelled the city's poverty reduction plans into action. The mayor stated that the experience of coming face to face with citizens everyday, lived experience of poverty and racism produced a shift in consciousness of the issues. As a result, he was more fully able to appreciate the production of poverty through the intersection of racist, social, economic, political, and global policies. This experience galvanized his efforts, as a municipal leader, to take immediate action.

Questioning Oppositional Dynamics of Theory and Practice, Thinking and Making

My impetus for this project was wrestling with the relations between the theoretical and the practical. I wondered what contributions qualitative inquiry could make to action for social justice in the WCP. Thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship with the four cultures of inquiry—hermeneutics, phenomenology, critical theory and Buddhism—meant that I encountered the complexity of my practice issues with greater insight and depth. However, this was not just a cumulative effect. I experienced MI as a spiralling process that deepened my understanding through a layering of unique sensibilities: analysis, observation, curiosity, reflexivity, empathy, interpretation, attunement, understanding, and action. I carried these sensibilities into the flux and flow of my own life and the lives of those with whom I worked, and into the world, to share with a community of others so that the *thinking* and the *making* became woven together.

Shifts in conversations, routines, resources, procedures, and strategies are associated with group and organizational levels of change involved in social innovation. At these levels, thinking through and with critical, hermeneutic, and phenomenological inquiry and practice presented multilayered challenges in staff development and organizational culture. One of the most compelling questions in this project concerned how we might as practitioners recast ourselves as change agents within and against these prevailing organizational and institutional challenges.

One complex challenge was that the team was comprised of members from a number of disciplines and sectors with various levels of education and expertise: public health, addiction, medicine, welfare, adult education, labour market, psychiatry, psychology, nutrition, housing workers, artists, and alternative health practitioners. The ontologies and epistemologies of Aboriginal elders and other spiritual advisers have also been part of our processes of interpretive understanding. Secondly, our work as practitioners has been dominated by a clinical paradigm that is further distorted by the prevailing hegemony of managerialism and associated approaches that measure effectiveness of practices in restricted economic terms. Thinking through and with theory lived experience and practice as a pedagogic approach has meant a substantial commitment to creating, maintaining, and supporting a culture of inquiry and learning in a team of practitioners working towards social justice goals. This challenge encompasses a substantial shift from the expert, technical-rational orientation of many professionals' training and experience that typically deploys diagnosis and categorization to approach the citizens with whom we are engaged. A significant challenge for professionals across these fields was to relinquish the perception of control that comes from their alliance with technical-rational knowledge regimes, and open to alternative epistemological, axiological, and ontological claims. Creating a culture of inquiry involves modelling the freedom to challenge and rigourously deliberate on whether established knowledge regimes, systemically generated interpretations, typifications, and stocks of knowledge in the fields of addiction, mental health, housing, medicine, criminal justice, and employment assistance among others, are relevant to improving the lives of the citizens we are trying to assist.

These group and organizational change efforts can make significant contributions to the literature on social innovation. Outcomes and replications of social innovations dominate this literature, while processes that set the stage for selection of relevant methodologies have yet to be explored in depth. In addition, little attention has been paid to the process of creating a social innovation, what happens during implementation, and how it maintains its transformative effects. These limitations constitute significant gaps in knowledge and in possibilities for making social innovation accountable to the values and outcomes of social justice. This dissertation responds to this gap by emphasizing processes and practices of thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship guided by MI and how these can be directed to action for social justice informed by the ethical social justice position of the ALMOLIN model of local social innovation.

Need to Engage With Questions About the Conduct of Inquiry

Hegemony requires that the experiences of the oppressed must remain invisible in order to normalize some realities, practices, and structures so that they are accepted as commonsense; others can be negated (Gramsci, 1978). In view of the alignment of social policy discourses with prevailing neoliberalist economic and rationalist paradigms, which validate knowledge, it is crucial for scholar-practitioners to engage with questions about the conduct of inquiry and the values and purposes of knowledge generation. In this inquiry, social innovation was directed at responding to the fundamental needs of groups of citizens deprived of a minimum income, access to quality education, and other benefits of an economy from which their community had been excluded. Mindful inquiry deepens

awareness of how practitioners may become embedded within particular ideological frameworks (e.g., economic policy, social welfare policy, adult education, health, and mental health) that impose pressure in a variety of forms to think, operate, and act within their logics.

For example, place-based approaches to planning and policy design are presently being researched by the Canadian federal government to inform policy addressing complex socioeconomic issues that are converging on cities. Cities, as this dissertation has shown, are sites of tensions between local, national, and in some cases supranational forms of governance and decision making on critical social issues. They straddle the local and the global, navigating higher level policy prescriptions as well as the demand for citizen participation in dialogue and deliberation on emerging community needs. Part of the rhetoric of this neoliberalist policy discourse includes the notion of creating home-grown solutions. In cities struggling with complex issues like homelessness, poverty, and immigrant settlement, the idea of a solution that is the product of *home-grown common sense and ingenuity* finds receptive audiences.

However, knowledge generation can go significantly off course with respect to cities' accountability to the most vulnerable citizens in their communities. Moulaert et al. (2005) have warned that to confine an analysis to the local level holds both analytical and strategic risks (p. 1978). Thinking in terms of *sociopolitical localism*—an exaggerated belief in the power of the local level agency, systems, and institutions—may be dangerous, according to these authors, for such a restricted analysis would disregard the interscalar spatiality of development mechanisms and strategies. Mechanisms and

strategies at national and global levels shape possibilities at local spatial levels (see my analysis reflecting this idea, in Chapter 2).

Similarly, Moulaert et al. (2005) posited a danger in adopting an *existential localism*; that is, the belief that all needs should be satisfied within the spatiality of the local by local institutions. They argued that this position cannot make sense, for economic, social, cultural, and political reasons (as identified in my critical analysis in Chapter 2). For example, the failure to plan for food security in our city leaves us vulnerable to inflated futures markets in New York, or to increasing conflict in the Middle East that drives oil prices higher. These examples of interscalar spatiality of development indicate that we cannot confine our analysis to our local community.

A third danger is identified as *misunderstood subsidiarity*. This refers to the belief that local level agency, systems, and institutions are best able to respond to certain local needs. Of course, this belief aligns with a neoliberalist policy that is shedding responsibilities—such as welfare and immigrant settlement—that were once the purview of national governments to lower organizational levels where, it is argued, needs such as these more properly belong. The research emerging in Europe on selected cities identifies the need for inquiry that examines these multiscalar links at local, national, and global scales in order to uncover the fullest understanding of the nature of the challenges in local spaces. City governments such as ours, hit by waves of fiscal retrenchment by the federal government, need the fiscal support of other levels of government but they also need new knowledge generation strategies that respond effectively to the complex, emergent issues of economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Need for Transdisciplinary Knowledge Generation for Social Justice

Research methodologies informed by phenomenology and hermeneutics are needed to generate knowledge that privileges the relational and prioritizes the lived experience of citizens who endure poverty, marginalization, and social exclusion as part of a daily struggle for survival. More attention to the transdisciplinary and cross-sector process of integrating research and practice is also needed, particularly in community-based initiatives, although it is well beyond the scope of this inquiry. Such integration would allow individual and collective well-being to inform the epistemology, axiology, ontology, and methodologies directed towards inclusive urban development. Consider the following example from my field notes.

Field notes: January 2016

ABC Consulting,[23] contracted by an institutional actor contributing funding to the WCP, arranged a conference call to ask a series of questions whose purpose is to assemble meanings of WCP. Lines of inquiry shaped by metrics and analytics focus on inputs, outputs, and outcomes of community investment. A furious clicking on laptops on the other end of the call busily assembles the knowable: primarily quantitative, expressed in square footage, number of units produced, dollars invested. The WCP is, according to one set of understandings, a $12 million, 34,000-square-foot comprehensive, urban development project combining three kinds of affordable housing:

- a 26-unit supportive housing program designed to receive parolees, one of the most marginalized groups in society, and to help them in the transition from institutional to community life;

- 23 post-treatment transitional housing units for men and women who had previously experienced homelessness, addiction, declining mental health, and other poverty-related issues and who are now actively participating in the social, economic, and political life of the community of which WCP is now a part; and

- 23 shared-equity home ownership units, a new design prototype of affordable home ownership—created through the mobilization of cross-sector collaborations

[23] A pseudonym.

> amongst civil society, the state, and institutional actors to increase access for excluded groups to home ownership.
>
> Mindful of the hermeneutic space we are in, we reach out to the stranger at the other end of the line, to provide an account of creating the project. We seek to reach out to a sensibility that can appreciate a process of social innovation that might open a conversation about the meaning of *home* in our cities. Also beyond the boundaries of the quantitative, are the other interactive civic elements of the WCP project—the social innovation centre, the gallery, and the large community gardens surrounding the project. Not really of interest to ABC Consulting, these socially interactive elements are irrelevant in the process of valuing established by computation and quotients.

It might be argued that ABC Consulting's evaluation was warranted and relatively benign in its effects. Nevertheless, the interpretations that emerged were informed by the prevailing hegemony of managerialism, including evidence-based approaches that measure effectiveness in restricted economic terms. They served to remind us that hierarchies of thought do exist, in which the practices of theorizing social innovation that the WCP represents are subject to interpretations that may be reinscribed within in a politics of domination. Moulaert et al. (2010) argued that "the space left by capital for nonmarket-oriented social innovation is largely dependent on the interpretation the state gives to it" (p. 56).

Moreover, Moulaert et al. (2010) observed that while local movements for social innovation may be allied with local, political, and institutional actors, they may have to counter mechanisms of social exclusion stemming from higher-level public or private authorities. One example was a challenge that emerged from a utility company with whom our organization and the city had negotiated complex agreements regarding the construction of the community gardens in the utility company's right of way. These agreements had been established at the beginning of the project's design. One day, prior

to receiving a building permit for the construction of the community gardens, the utility company issued a notice that they planned to build a pipeline through the right-of-way corridor as part of the liquid natural gas energy, labour market, and economic initiatives of the province. This pushed back the development of the community gardens for more than a year.

In another, more complex, example of working with and against interlocking webs of systemic typifications and stocks of knowledge proved that we had radically underestimated the resistance of systems to social innovation. As sales of the home ownership units proceeded, the provincial assessment authority, whose purview is to assign values to property, sent an annual notice of assessment of the shared-equity home ownership units of approximately $40,000 more than the original appraised value. The new assessment threatened to dismantle a complex system of financial formulas and legal mechanisms that had been painstakingly developed over two years in complex cross-sector collaborations. These efforts ensured that subsequent purchasers could access home ownership in perpetuity at a price always below future market price. Four appraisals of the units had been conducted over the course of the development of the WCP. Ignoring the appraisals that supported the process of providing access to home ownership to previously excluded home purchasers, the assessment authority took its reference points in the logics of the current inflated real-estate markets. The authority argued that it was simply correcting the assessed values. This required launching an appeal to the authority's assessment. In mediated proceedings, an appointed mediator upheld the purposeful process that our organization and its cross-sector institutional

networks had undertaken to establish the values of the shared-equity home ownership units. A more positive development is that the shared-equity home ownership prototype has been scaled up by the financial cooperative. Working with a voluntary sector organization in another jurisdiction based on the WCP prototype, a further 500 units of shared-equity home ownership are planned.

Need for Community-University Partnerships for Social Innovation

There is an urgent need to promote an alternative mode of co-construction of knowledge between universities and the communities in which they are located, in order to develop an equitable and sustainable urbanization. Such urbanization would accomplish many things:

- Issues of access to education in relation to social inequality would be addressed.
- Strategies for integrating formal and nonformal education in inclusive spaces would be devised.
- To strengthen civil society and to address pressing social issues, multiple stakeholders would establish collaborative participatory working relationships.
- Educational programs would be developed that focus on community harmony and peace education, human rights, environmental sustainability issues, and

health. In turn, these programs would help citizens develop skills of critical thinking and reflection, so that they could reclaim the ownership—and the responsibility— to participate and deliberate, hold government accountable, and resolve problems in their community.

- Community educational hubs would make education accessible to marginalized, underrepresented communities, and underresourced community-based organizations including self-help groups such as family welfare, youth, and others, in order to develop integrated educational strategies and bring inclusive spaces into the community.

- Finally, transdisciplinary research would be promoted, producing new knowledge that would facilitate the social, economic, and political participation of all citizens.

Need for Cross-Sector Research Collaborations

Social polis (Moulaert et al., 2011) is a European example of a cross-sector research collaboration that developed the potential for critical, state-of-the-art, transdisciplinary research on the problems of social exclusion in cities. A participatory research platform was created where a variety of stakeholders could contribute their views on what the research agenda should be. To mobilize many different kinds of knowledge in the service of making cities more inclusive and democratic, international, national, regional and local research funders, researchers, public sector and civil society workers, and citizens were all invited. The research priorities were expressed in terms of

12 existential fields affecting citizens' participation in the social, economic, and cultural life of the city (Moulaert et al., 2011, pp. 41–43; see Table 5). This proposed research framework shows promise for cross-sector research agendas.

Table 5
Social Polis Research Framework by Existential Field (EF)

Existential Field (EF)	Social polis research framework
1	Welfare and social services
2	Labour markets and economic development
3	Housing, neighbourhood, and health
4	Mobility, telecommunications, security
5	Urban ecology and environment
6	Governance
7	Education and training
8	Social and spatial inequalities on urban and regional level
9	Diversity and identity
10	Creativity and innovation
11	Neighbourhood development and grassroots initiatives
12	Social cohesion and the city as a whole

The research framework has identified priorities for European researchers that are also priorities for Community-Based Research Canada (CBRC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC-CRSH). CBRC recently announced the formation of a network of universities to promote universities' engagement with communities through participatory inquiry to address the challenge of public engagement and the issues of the social relevance of universities in their communities. SSHRC-CRSH (2013) has released a report, *Imagining Canada's Future*, in which it identifies key areas of research for the academic social sciences and humanities research community, for which it will provide funding: sustainable, resilient communities; creativity, innovation, and prosperity; values, cultures, inclusion, and diversity; and governance and institutions to assist Canada to weather the challenges of rapid global-local change.

Need for Participatory Community-based Research

However, participatory models of community-based research face critical challenges that are both political and philosophical. Morin (1999a) argued that "thinking the complex" relies on deepening an awareness of the devastating consequences of a dualistic thinking of the self as separate from other beings in our world. Because participatory inquiry places emphasis on discovering or uncovering knowledge through the process of collaboration among coparticipants, it dissolves the traditional split between the self of the researcher and the object of the inquiry. Given that this current inquiry has noted that strengthening neoliberalist logics had brought academy, government, and markets into alignment, forms of participatory inquiry face more intense competition for funding, resources, and publication than traditional positivist research orientations which accept the subject-object split, present their research program as common sense, privilege particular knowledge traditions over others, and sanction particular realities. On a more practical note, the institutional requirements for research proposals do not account for the time required for the collaboration of research partners in preparing a participatory research proposal. Nor do they account for the time it takes for the kinds of dialogic and deliberative processes needed when including research partners in the knowledge-generation process of participatory inquiry, nor for the openness to uncertainty about what may be the outcome of the inquiry.

Bergold and Thomas (2010) suggested that participatory research requires particular social conditions; namely, a social and political context that favours social commitment and the participation of marginalized groups in the inquiry. Kemmis (2001,

2008) appeared to disagree. Drawing on Habermas's theory of knowledge constitutive interests, in which he proposed that social life is structured through language, practices, and power, Kemmis posed the notion of *communicative space* for both critical action and participatory inquiry. He located this at the boundaries where social systems and lifeworld collide (Kemmis, 2008, p. 123). Kemmis saw these boundaries as optimal spaces for social transformation. Rather than Habermas's idea of the ideal discursive space, where interlocutors are free from the effects of domination, Kemmis suggested that participatory inquiry offered ideal opportunities for deliberation and contestation about knowledge generation. These included: the values (axiology) driving the research program; the ways of knowing (epistemology) to be included; and the realities to be privileged (ontology).

Conclusion and Openings to New Beginnings

A limitation of this inquiry, which also points in directions for further research, is the treatment of the participation of multiple community stakeholders in an inquiry such as this, where researchers are immersed in a practice setting. Two challenges for further inquiry are posed. Typically, participatory inquiries include documentation of conversations, focus groups, artifacts, and the like. Within the scope of this dissertation it was not possible to include transcripts that would have numbered in the hundreds of meetings, conversations, and encounters with citizens, social workers, researchers, urban planners, architects, physicians, lawyers, financial specialists, elders, housing and health authorities involved in the project, to show the flow, stops, setbacks, impasses, and

restarts of the living process of such an inquiry. Just as Ball (2012) identified a need for "methods and sensibilities which are attuned to movement and flow rather than structure and place" (p. 143), I problematized the issue of methodology and have presented a process of advancing along a path of inquiry, to represent a generative flow of a methodological process that could match the complexity of the conditions in which I found myself as a scholar-practitioner.

In addition, another challenge facing this inquiry was that it was not time bounded like most research projects that have a definitive beginning, middle, and end. That is, this account of thinking through and with the theory-lived experience-practice relationship in the WCP can only represent a small part of a highly complex process currently in motion and ongoing. It will continue long after the last word is written in this doctoral dissertation. Perhaps this retrospective auto/biographical account could be considered a chapter in a workbook, as Ball (2012) suggested. It sets out a process of wayfinding through the theory-lived experience-practice relationship to uncover potential contributions of qualitative inquiry to social justice efforts. It is my hope that this work will inspire participation of future community stakeholders to become involved in the ongoing participatory design process that the WCP project initiated in our city and other jurisdictions.

In her writing about education as a practice of freedom and theorizing as a liberating practice, bell hooks (1994) stated: "Theory is not inherently healing, liberatory, or revolutionary. It fulfills this function only when we ask that it do so and direct our theorizing toward this end" (p. 61). Seeing the glaring dislocation of knowledge

generation and action directed toward stopping the human deprivation evident in citizens' experiences of poverty, I both wanted to know and to show how a qualitative inquiry could contribute to action for social justice. I wanted to show how practitioners could change the lives of citizens deprived of a minimum income, a home, access to quality education, and other benefits of an economy from which they are excluded.

This dissertation honours the efforts of practitioners and activists working in the voluntary sector—ordinary people choosing the work of creating healthier, more socially just, democratic, and sustainable communities. I believe that this is one of the most significant ideas for readers to hear. For ordinary people striving to make a difference in the world, it is easy to feel disheartened and somewhat hopeless about creating positive change. The problems can seem too big and too complex to be able to determine the right thing to do. It is important to confirm that hope, rather than a passive sentiment, comes about through both intellectual and practical action. And on a personal level, I have written this dissertation as part of a practice of keeping my own hope alive, by bringing the aesthetic and intellectual pursuits in my life into dialogue with practical engagement and action to show how ordinary citizens like us can accomplish extra-ordinary things.

Actions, as my parents taught me, do speak louder than words. I have demonstrated that ordinary people can be empowered to increase their aliveness, capability, and scope to contribute to and create positive changes in their neighbourhoods, workplaces, schools, cities, countries, and the world. We are capable of creating spaces that empower all of us as citizens to rise above the dehumanizing

circumstances of poverty to begin anew; to become once again the unresigned and uncontainable spirits that we as human beings all really are.

Chapter 6.

Epilogue

As I write this epilogue, the WCP is still in a process of becoming. More importantly, the potential meanings of WCP are still in a process of being constructed and enacted, introducing further possibilities of bringing forth the not-yet-seen or yet-to-be imagined. Gadamer envisioned hermeneutics as a form of play, as a series of dialectical encounters amongst historical consciousness, traditions, and actors. I propose the WCP as a relational, process-oriented model of learning, experimentation, and knowledge building that extends beyond its conventional appraisal as an urban development project. I also propose interpretations of WCP as a dynamic process opening possibilities for knowledge building for inclusive urbanization informed by social justice. That is, I actively propose interpretations of WCP as a complex human construction that is socially and politically produced, a phenomenon that is strategically positioned in dialectical relationship both within and against historical traditions of knowledge generation about homelessness and other poverty-related issues.

As I bring forward these efforts to document the process of demonstrating how inquiry may contribute to and be part of social action to completion, I am mindful of the distance we have yet to travel in creating and sustaining more socially just communities. During the course of this project, Clare, whose artistry with his peers communicated the

human deprivations of poverty and homelessness, died—carrying the burden of shame that did not belong to him.

Leah, a single parent and sole provider for her family, asked sobering questions in the Prologue: “What can we be thinking?” and “What kind of world are we making?” Leah, with the support of the CWB Society’s affordable housing, employment, and educational assistance programs achieved full-time employment, enabling her to be reunited with her daughters. At the time of writing, she was taking financial literacy courses and accessing assistance through the financial cooperative that the CWB Society collaborated with to make home ownership possible for her and other citizens marginalized by the economy.

We came very close to losing Andrew. His immense talent, creativity, and resourcefulness were almost lost when, after aging out of the child protection system, he found himself in the grinding daily existence of living in poverty, hunger, and homelessness. Attracted by a creative writing class with free coffee at the CWB Centre, Andrew learned about the community-based adult education centre and achieved his high school diploma and Red Seal certification in his chosen trade; and he achieved full-time employment. *Having enough of hopelessness*, the theme of his comedy improv performance, carried over into Andrew’s volunteer work with his peers, who reach out to kids living homeless and addicted on the street, to let them know that there is hope, connecting through music and slam poetry.

Recently, I attended the first annual general meeting of the WCP strata homeowners at the Social innovation Centre. I was present as the homeowners elected the first strata council to govern their homeowner community. I was excited to be present at this meeting in a space that we had jointly designed as a broadly inclusive, interactive community space that imagined the city from the margins. The Social Innovation Centre is a future-oriented space designed to promote experimentalism and incubation of new ideas, and to demonstrate how these ideas can be directed toward enhancing the social, cultural, and economic well-being of citizens in an inclusive and creative city. I stood, with ordinary citizens with extra-ordinary potential, who had successfully exited poverty. Here, in less than two years, they had recovered their lives from poverty, trauma, addiction, declining mental health, and homelessness. Not only had they achieved home ownership, they had restored their capabilities for social, economic, and political participation in the community and the economy.

As I was reflecting on this momentous event, I was reminded of Bentz's (2013) description of the spiralling movement of MI. All of a sudden my attention was drawn to a rapid movement to my left. A spider had appeared on the window sill beside me. This time I did not mobilize to relocate the spider outdoors, to the "outside." I was alive to its dramatic and unexpected entrance into my awareness and into my writing. I was mindful. I allowed the spider to be: a sentient being from the nonhuman world. Spiders, I began thinking, carry the medicine of rebirth and renewal. But this spider interrupted me midthought, with a sudden staccato dance in the sunlight as if to shake off the projections and interpretations I was spinning as a large, lumbering human being mistaking the

relations between us. I made another attempt at coming into respectful relation. I sat silently as the sun withdrew behind a cloud. And then the spider was gone as suddenly as it had appeared. Then as the sun revealed itself again, a shimmering web came into view glistening with intricate beauty in the sunlight. Anchored in the lifeworld, the spider had shown the now-visible strands of connection to begin weaving anew.

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