WHERE SPIRIT MEETS MATTER:

A PARTICIPATORY GAZE ON COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

FOR A UNITED CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

by

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Abstract

The conundrum of what the community and individual roles are in the sustainability of our physical and social environments is a global issue taking precedence at a local scale. Tensions between neo-liberal forces and sustainability goals often alienate community members from participating in decision making and policy outcomes. Through the exploration of a grassroots, community-initiated, collaborative planning process for a construction project, the community-level reaction to global pressures, dominant rhetoric, and the social needs of the community becomes evident through gazing at the dynamics between the technical experts and community participants within the planning process. The dominant rhetoric of place, identity, and power from technical experts often transfer into the design and construction of built environments. While construction projects require the technical input of engineers, architects, and planners, input from community members—who will live, work, and utilize the built environments—is also critical to achieving sustainability goals.

Dedication

I dedicate my thesis to the communities I have encountered: to the rural communities of southeastern Wyoming that firmly grounded me in generations of grassroots community participation and lit the fire within me to strive for the appreciation of diversity; to the Te-Moak Tribe of Western Shoshone, who inspired me to understand the "spirit of community;" to my United Church community, which has given me love, support, and faith in the importance of inclusivity; to the construction community, which has helped me gain strength and perseverance; to my school community, which has pushed me to work through barriers and to give voice and purpose to my work; to my ethnic communities, which have given me my multicultural roots and reason to contribute to sustainable reconciliation; to my friends and family, who have given me joy, encouragement, and support; and to my children, who have made every moment worthwhile. I have learned so much from being your mother; I feel truly blessed. With the utmost gratitude to all who have walked along with me on my journey, I dedicate the following work.

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Introduction:
Where the Pavement Ends and the Learning Begins

As I was driving from my office to the gate of the construction site, I could see the concrete trucks waiting to dispense the load into the forms erected to construct the walls of the building. Good, I thought to myself, another target date met. Concrete-pour days mean progress. This was what you could call a typical day on site, until I got out of my car. I was met by the site superintendent.

"Dena we have a serious problem here," he said. "The zone was positioned incorrectly, and three feet of concrete will have to be removed before it sets. This is going to put us way behind schedule. The engineers don't have a fix for us yet, and this building is scheduled for use sooner than we have time for all of this."

Although conversations are brief when the construction pace picks up, I understood the main points of his concern. I could feel and see the stress, and now my job was to help create a collaborative solution to our project setback.

The sounds of concrete trucks and hammers pounding, the sight of concrete forms suspended from the tower crane, and the constant motion of construction workers moving in the synchronized rhythm of the project demands create energy at a construction site that you cannot find anywhere else. This is where I work—welcome to my office. I am not an armchair anthropologist; I would be what you might describe as an applied or practicing anthropologist in training. Just as the carpenters use their hammers, saws, and levels to construct the building, I use participant observation, ethnographic methods, and planning principles as my tools on and off the site. Is this what I have to do to pave the way for anthropology in construction, to make my place as a female professional and project planner in the construction industry and communities I work with? Perhaps, but it is also a conscious choice that I have made. I thrive with the pressures and demands, blending both the technical and social skills required to build buildings and cooperating with the workers, projects, and communities I contribute to. I enjoy the banter and the humour of the people I work with. It is an honour to listen to the dreams, choices, and challenges that brought us all into the construction industry.

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I see the power dynamics and the layers of identity politics that create contested terrains and listen to a multitude of stories that are rarely captured after the building is built and turned over for occupancy. The building's blueprints are not solely created by the vision and skill of the engineers and architects; they are added to, challenged, and changed by the contributing contractors, workers, and the community's demands over the course of the project. The project takes on a life of its own, and for a brief moment, a collectivity of diverse cultures is created, a micro-society in itself. Each technical consultant and trade contractor brings to the site their own work culture, which may or may not complement the common values of the project managers. I see anthropology as a very comfortable fit in the construction and development environment. It is both a research and a management practice. Anthropology methods can bring voice to a diversity of interests, a balance to power dynamics. They can identify communication gaps and aid in the translation of technical values into local and community goals. Anthropology adds a strong foundation to my 17 years of construction and development fieldwork experience, because I am able to blend the technical with the practical and the physical with the social—the crossing of borderlands. Welcome to my world.

Anthropological Applications: From Local to Global

The purpose of my thesis is to explore and describe a community-generated planning process by a non-profit, non-governmental organization interested in developing sustainable and affordable housing in Vancouver, British Columbia. It is apparent that the rising construction costs and demand for market housing and infrastructure to support the upcoming 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games has pushed the provision of affordable housing into a discourse of rhetoric rather than toward a discourse of action. Tensions between neo-liberalism and sustainability goals create global issues that are evident at a local scale. Rich Coleman, who serves as BC's Minister Responsible for Housing, in his "Message from the Minister," reports that construction costs have risen 40% during the current boom period (Coleman 2006).

Philip Hochstein, president of the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of BC reports that the province has been accustomed to boom-and-bust

construction cycles, although he feels that the construction trend we are currently experiencing is more sustainable than in the past (Coleman 2006). The consistent push remains to develop infrastructure for the upcoming Olympics and to meet the demands for towers of market residential housing and high-density condominiums. Dotting the skyline of the Lower Mainland are tower cranes, the skeletons of buildings under construction, and the production of re-invented social and physical spaces within our urban landscape. These are exciting and lucrative times for the construction and development industries of BC There is growing optimism that construction projects will continue well beyond the Olympics. Project sequencing is being encouraged to keep up with building demands. There is an ongoing need for qualified tradespeople, and the fact that development is province-wide—not just within the Lower Mainland—are all productive signs (ibid.).

Although these are healthy indicators for the construction industry, there are a few questions that keep surfacing for me. For example, the current construction and development trend is sustainable for whom? Is the construction boom that we are experiencing in BC market driven by event planning and development for the Olympics and high-end residential housing demands, or is it a movement based on "practicing" principles of sustainable building and development? Moreover, when thinking about building and development as sustainable, I question if those participating in the building and development of BC are considering the communities of end users. Who is being excluded by the increased infrastructure, gentrification, and select funding practices that are meeting the needs of some communities but excluding others in the process?

Who is defining sustainability, and what processes justify the definitions? These questions and the implications of construction on community are coupled with project demands that are placed upon the companies and technical consultants to produce with limited resources, workers, and time. These factors bring forth a tangible tension between the desire to create a welcoming host city for the Olympics, the rising cost of construction and housing, and the housing needs of many for whom housing is an elusive but essential service beyond their grasp. Therefore, in the course of this research study, my inquiries into the tensions generated between neo-liberal policy frameworks and the

planning and delivery of affordable housing in Vancouver will be organized around the following research framework.

Summary of Research Purpose

Hegemonic discourses of development are often co-modified and reproduced through the rhetoric, power, and decision-making authority of dominant technical experts. The three primary purposes of my research are as follows:

1. To explore the relationship between the stakeholders (technical experts and community members) involved in the collaborative planning process of a new construction and development initiative for a community organization
2. To observe how the proposed planning outcomes are discussed, decided upon, and achieved during this process
3. To identify how collective measures of sustainability are generated to meet the diverse needs expressed by the organization and surrounding communities

Main Research Question

How do multiple levels of power, identity, and place within planning processes intersect with and influence neo-liberal values and the sustainable development of a built environment intended to support the diverse economic, environmental, and social needs of a local community?

Sub-questions:

1. What are the main objectives and sustainability goals of the planning process?
2. Who are the participants and stakeholders in the planning process?
3. What methods of communication and decision making are incorporated and facilitated within the planning process?
4. How are the positions and identities of the stakeholders represented within the decision-making processes and planning outcomes?
5. What kinds of gaps exist between stakeholders within the process, and how do they influence the goals and objectives of the planning process?
6. How do the community's actions represent a reaction toward neo-liberalism?

Research Site

My research is focused on the participant observation, discourse analysis, and ethnographic interviewing of the church and technical community, who are either directly involved in the planning of a proposed new development at a church, actively involved in the promotion of affordable housing, or participating in the construction and development industry in BC. Through my research process, I hope to gain insight into the current and ongoing tension being created through the neo-liberal forces of progress, the current nature and demands faced by the BC construction and development sector, and the reaction and hopes of a non-governmental, grassroots community organization dedicated to serving the needs of their communities, which lack affordable housing and proper access to support services.

The church's mission is to create an inclusive community that actively strives toward sustaining social justice, community advocacy, and outreach programs to support the individuals and communities of southeast Vancouver. The church has shifted from a top-down management model to a community-based, committee-directed management model to oversee the mission and outreach programs for individuals who tend to be marginalized and/or excluded from government programs. The church is currently in the visioning stage of the planning and development of a built environment to support the growing social needs of the community. Through a collaborative visioning and planning process, the church committee has decided to apply for a re-zoning application through the City of Vancouver to develop a three- to four-story housing demonstration project that incorporates a sanctuary, offices, access for community space and programming, three levels of affordable housing, and green-building technologies.

Grounding My Research to the Local

On October 14, 2006, I attended the Church and Affordable Housing Conference in Vancouver that was organized by City in Focus, a Christian organization that is striving to facilitate dialogue and networking among churches, politicians, corporations, and communities to create solutions to the current lack of affordable housing in BC. Originally, the conference organizers felt that this conference could attract at least 50

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people interested in addressing the need for affordable housing in our province, but as the day unfolded, more than 200 individuals from churches, government agencies, political organizations, and the media, as well as community leaders, were present in a forum of discussion that led to a call for action. As MP Libby Davies, Vancouver East, addressed the conference, she stated, "As the world comes to Vancouver, we can't leave people behind." She asserted that you do not have to be partisan to be political, stressing that we need to work together to address the need to increase welfare rates and provide affordable housing in our region (Church and Affordable Housing Conference 2006).

MLA Jenny Kwan, Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, spoke at the conference about the fact that in 2001, the BC applicant list for affordable housing was 10,000 people, which has increased rapidly to 14,000 people in 2006. She stated that there is a growing housing gap and that 2,500 units each year have not been built due to BC provincial government policy changes. She went on to state that the lack of affordable housing in our province has reached a crisis point and that we need to campaign for affordable housing. Kwan called for national, provincial, and community-supported housing programs and asserted that "we all have a responsibility to keep government accountable for the basics, and housing is one of these" (Church and Affordable Housing Conference 2006).

So, I ask you this, as you drive down the widened roads, observe the progress of the improved transit, and gaze upwards at the towers of condominiums that are dotting the skyline of our municipalities in the Lower Mainland, what do you see? Sustainable progress? Sustainable profit? Sustainable community development? And if so, at what cost?

The BC government policy changes and social program cuts have been criticized for lacking an accountable focus on creating support strategies to address the social needs and voices of the individuals who are most impacted by the government's decision-making outcomes. BC Housing Minister Rich Coleman reports that $200 million has been set aside by the province to provide affordable housing, which is 70% more than what was allocated five years ago (Coleman 2006). There is now a commitment by the provincial government to spend more money on affordable housing and to fund the

development of 9,000 units—5,500 units that have already been built and 3,500 that are scheduled to be developed. In spite of some efforts, a housing crisis exists that is widening the gap between those who can afford housing, housing that is being approved for development, and individuals and families who are doing without housing completely.

Tim Stevenson, City of Vancouver councillor and United Church (UC) minister, also spoke at the conference about the current housing crisis and addressed the conditions of people living on the streets. He narrated his experience of participating in a program operated by an organization that will take you to the Downtown Eastside to live for two days and nights. You are given $2.00 per day, and you are required to beg for additional money if you need it. He stated that it was the most dehumanizing experience he ever had. He said that on the first night, he had to dig through a bin to find cardboard to sleep on, and at 3:30 a.m., a security guard arrived, literally kicked him to wake him up, and told him to leave the location at once. In conclusion, Councillor Stevenson asserted that faith organizations have a huge voice that government will listen to. He urged conference attendees to participate in public meetings and voice their concerns about the personal struggles of so many in our communities and the lack of affordable housing in our region (Church and Affordable Housing Conference 2006).

Councillor Stevenson's anecdote of his 48-hour experience is a tiny snapshot of a city councillor connecting the personal to the political, but, more so, it is a snapshot into the everyday struggle of some who live in the Downtown Eastside (Church and Affordable Housing Conference 2006). I feel that narratives of experience can help ground the macro forces of neo-liberalism into the everyday lived experiences of communities being excluded by the forces of progress. The current provincial policy framework calls for the movement in a new direction by the provision of affordable housing. Even with the call for government action, I argue that the focus on affordable housing initiatives lacks comprehensive funding measures, development incentives, and commitment to include mixed-housing and supportive-housing initiatives in the long-term strategic planning of sustainable housing programs.

My thesis includes a detailed literature review, because I feel that it is important to draw attention to the relationship and the interconnectivity between disciplines and planning practices. When I started my academic studies, there were no opportunities to study geography and anthropology as a joint major. So it has become important to me to unravel each discipline in ways to bring forth intersecting points of reason and practice to explore the emergence of anthropology and planning as a combined research strategy—one that challenges each discipline to view knowledge in alternative ways that help to empower communities within development processes.

The Role of Government and Community in Sustainability

I would like to draw a comparison between the current British Columbia provincial framework and geographers Keith Hoggart and Steven Henderson's study of the policy implications and provision of low-income housing in the rural countryside of England (2005, 181). Hoggart and Henderson assert that their study is not calling for a reversal of housing policies, but rather a shift in political will to carry priorities through (ibid.). They feel that the business-as-usual approach to the development of affordable housing aids the continuation of oppressive logic within policies that exclude access to opportunity by many individuals and communities (ibid.). The Hoggart and Henderson study clearly indicates that the United Kingdom government position emphasizes both social and environmental sustainability in the planning of affordable housing and that the government plays an instrumental role in ensuring that mixed housing is being maintained through sustainable patterns of development (2005, 183).

However, as Hoggart and Henderson show in their study, it is not just a matter of government rhetoric and the number of units being built. What is required is the shifting of expectations by housing associations and local authorities as to what types of affordable housing programs are being allocated and the location of new units (ibid., 193). In conclusion, Hoggart and Henderson show that despite the UK government's stated objective to provide socially mixed housing, the dominant rhetoric and world views of the stakeholders involved in providing social housing programs work against the intended outcomes and continue to reproduce pockets of exclusion (ibid.). As I reflect on

Hoggart and Henderson's study and the opinions of the political leaders in BC, I feel that it becomes crucial to investigate and incorporate the grassroots level reaction into my analysis about the current housing needs in the Lower Mainland.

For many, implementing sustainability at the local level is an optimum entry point to initiate sustainable development and attitude change toward improving human–environment relationships (Houghton 2005, 1). The characteristics of place and varying constructions of sustainability exist and compete at a local level, within structures of society, and through the actions of individuals and groups. Thus, I feel that individual, group, and community power can be successfully mobilized through narratives of local experience to bring forth silenced or marginal perspectives within planning processes and transformative change to exclusionary development outcomes.

Neo-liberal Forces Superseding Public Space and Community

Historically, maintaining a balance between market-driven practices and the common societal good has remained a challenge. The struggle to balance the market and society is exemplified by T. Marshall's argument of the 1930s and 1940s economies emerging as an object of rule directed through calculation, control, and technical expertise (Hart 2004). A current example of this is how neo-liberal forces have created the rights of multinational corporations to supersede the notion of public space, the sphere of democratic control, and citizen participation at multiple levels (Pieterse and Kahn 2003). Current mainstream political and economic policies and actions have limited the role of government in maintaining a social welfare system and access to public services, thus creating further constraints on the ability for civil society to counteract the debilitating effects of globalization and dominant social structures (ibid.).

Even with the constraints placed on civil society, a realm of "dynamic, self-determining communities" emerges through political mobilization to become a forceful presence in the movement to deconstruct dominant political frameworks (ibid.). Geographer Gillian Hart argues that neo-liberal values have shaped conditions of entrepreneurship within non-governmental organizations and multilateral agencies (ibid.). The responsibility is being passed from government to the community to provide

essential services through the mobilization of self-management practices, identity construction, and collective allegiances (Rose 1999, 176). Neo-liberal policies are creating double binds by eroding people's access to services, while simultaneously creating resistance opportunities through awareness building and calls for action by individuals and groups to challenge and participate in the public realm of decision making (Miraftab 2004). Through self-determination and re-definition, communities and community-generated organizations are challenging the existing structures of power to question and shift resource allocation and decision-making authority within planning and development processes (ibid.).

Theoretical Perspectives

As I write these words, I stop to think and feel how these words, theories, and systems I am describing and analyzing work within myself. I believe this is the point of self-reflection that I require in order to process how human connection is so vital in my life, my ontological perspective, my research strategies, and my work practices. The connections I describe bring forth the third space within my work. In the field, in the classroom, in my home, and in my community, I see connections made, the discussions raised, and the multiple voices that shape the power of perceptions, interactions, and outcomes that provide the fuel for sustaining our lives. We have become a society so dependent on reaching outward that we have forgotten how to gently touch the human connection from within. We have become the "outsider" to ourselves. I think back to colonial anthropology, engaging the outsider and the other, and defining individuals based upon complex analytical analysis that was wrought with Eurocentric values that often neglected to reach within the common good or the element of connection that is available within our social, cultural, and environmental spaces. As we have inherited these dominant and systematic values, I fear that we have brought them forward, perhaps renaming the values or disguising them as laws, regulations, education, and political systems. However, at the root, they are none the less the same Eurocentric values that were used to polarize communities and isolate individuals from feeling and thinking independently.

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How does anthropology differ now? How does community planning seek to reshape itself beyond dominant binaries and traditionally dominate values? I see these dynamics play out in my everyday interactions within the construction industry, in the classroom, and in my communities. I do not recognize the processes of community as linear or defined by dominant or rigid methods but rather a dance of worldviews, pushing and collaborating with one another and transcending the borders of the dominant. Where do we create spaces within community that are open to multiple perspectives, where dominant players are not threatened by alternative views? This is easier said than done.

As I watch the buildings go up and our workers travel from site to site, I do not see the stereotypical images of the construction worker or the rigid confines of an academic research site. I see individuals who are building our communities brick by brick, board by board. I see individuals who are creative and complex, who work hard every day, who seek outside of their 40-plus hours of labour a week for a space to express themselves in community, at home, or through individual pursuits. This is my work community. For years, I have tried to understand how being a construction worker's daughter has shaped me. I tried to do everything I could to work outside of the industry, but it keeps pulling me back in. It's a curse, I thought to myself, a bloody and sweaty curse that I have inherited from generations of men in my family. This industry is no place for a woman, I have heard. Why should I know about the tensile strength of concrete, the rate of pour, or how to manage a construction project?

Like my co-workers, the construction industry provides a living for my children and myself and is an industry made of hard-working people who have similar needs and hopes to those walking in and out of the skyscrapers of the financial districts of our cities. Perhaps my participation in the construction industry rests upon my inner struggle to understand more about my dad, to finally understand how his construction work environments and the ebbs and flows of the industry have shaped him as a man. Maybe my query is to understand how the cycle of employment and unemployment in the industry constructed our family's migration and dynamics. For a myriad of reasons, I have come full circle to work in the construction industry, to critically unpack the confluence of internal and external factors that generate multiple meanings in physical

and social environments, and to contribute to the sustainability of the communities of my participation.

I feel it is crucial to employ an ontological perspective that views the interconnections between macro processes and local experiences as an ongoing and evolving complex web of social practices, ruling relations, and knowledge-producing activities. The explicit expression of power is not independent of the implicit, as I see them both functioning and intertwining simultaneously in the production and re-production of our social and physical environments. Separating out, quantifying, and compartmentalizing the outward expressions of power from the internalized and ingrained messages of the implicit is not what I seek to gain from my research, because this would only reproduce the very phenomena and social processes that I seek to uncover. Rather, I aim to reveal the ongoing and fluid interconnections between self, the local, the extra-local, and the macro forces that shape the flow of social thought, which governs planning and development processes on a local scale.

I do not have to look beyond myself to gaze at the double recognition of how the knowledge-producing activities I utilize, my work practices, and my researcher position, influence how I frame my research. I wrestle with the double recognition that sociologist William K. Carroll speaks of when he states, "The social critic sees that our world is marked by extreme inequities and injustices, and the knowledge of ourselves and that world is caught up in those very practices and structures of inequality and domination" (Carroll 2004, 2). I work in a male-dominated construction industry connected by a web of traditional, patriarchal values and expert knowledge. I consciously chose to unpack traditional mainstream planning practices through an anthropological lens to explore the vehicle of alternative expressions of community within planning and development projects, only to find that the same dominant forms of knowledge production in planning permeate through the history and mainstream of anthropology, too.

Moreover, the community organization in which I worship and volunteer plays a role not only as my research site, but also as my church community. This makes it ever so relevant and crucial to me to ensure that the community members' voices, visions, and hopes are represented in a way that reflect who they are—that their voices are not

overshadowed by my own interpretations and speak of their own truths, not of an overarching paradigm or systematic set of itemized objectives within a quantified and objective master plan of community design. The narratives of my research flow from a critical interpretive perspective that I continually acknowledge operating throughout my life as an academic researcher, project planner, community member, and social activist. The terrains of my research cannot be objectified as I investigate the politics, challenges, and opportunities of each that have brought forth self-reflection, personal spaces of empowerment, and lastly an ongoing opportunity for transformative change.

To ground my research in exploring the tensions produced by macro forces on local planning processes, I chose to employ a critical interpretive approach. This theoretical perspective seeks to uncover and understand the barriers of social practices, knowledge-producing activities, and inequalities. I feel that the critical interpretive approach is crucial in bringing forth alternative expressions of social action to challenge and unpack development processes that generate exclusionary outcomes. William K. Carroll discusses three critical intellectual endeavours that in each of their respective periods of social history seek to maintain understanding of how socio-political narratives link to dominant structures of power but also have the ability to bring forth empowerment and change (Carroll 2004, 4–6). The critical interpretive approach emerged in 1844 when Frederick Engels generated a critical ethnographic representation of the conditions of oppression faced by many of the working class in England (ibid.). Forty years later, Karl Marx used a similar theoretical perspective to ground his work as an activist intellectual to uncover and give representational voice to the economic demands of French factory workers (ibid.).

This trend became marginalized in the 1920s and 1930s as mainstream sociology sought to gain a respectable place within academic and political realms, thus replacing research methods that focused on improving society with positivist frameworks that sought to maintain position, privilege, and respect within the realms of dominant power (ibid.). The positivist mindset grew with affirming belief that engineering of society was possible through administrative controls, physical design, and dominant forms of societal pressure. Moreover, academics employed positivistic theory and methods to re-shape the

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curriculum of academic programs and influence the professional development of our technical experts (ibid.).

The height of modernism held sway in the post–World War II years from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s and rested firmly within a binary of capitalist thought governed by Western market values (ibid.). Through the period of high modernism, positivist social science theory and rhetoric spread throughout the world and further marginalized activist intellectuals from the production of social research that incorporated multiple perspectives about injustice and inequality (ibid.). Even though positivist social science was a powerful and dominant force during this time, a countermovement of social scientists remained active. C. Wright Mills continued to research and map how the values, practices, and activities of the power elite impinged upon the rights and access of opportunities by the most vulnerable in our societies (ibid.).

The countermovement continued to grow and culminated in the 1960s through social activist and critical inquiry methods employed by academics, grassroots organizations, and coalitions who sought recognition and voice for the alternative (Carroll 2004, 6). The 1960s brought forth a qualitative shift in the awareness and practice of new political actors (ibid.). Engels, Marx, Mills, and the multiple voices of the 1960s brought forth a rich history and grounding of theoretical perspectives that presently resonate with the emergence of critical voice and alternative action. Critical interpretive research strategies generate understanding and change through a progression of critical research strategies that seek to illuminate the implicit, as well as the explicit, expressions of power and domination (ibid.).

The historical roots of the critical interpretive approach I feel ground my desire to generate research to work beyond the binary reproduction of the status quo in order to explore alternative expressions of community building and socio-political frameworks that provide linkages from the personal to the political. I assert that we must move beyond theoretical perspectives that detach and exclude peripheral voices within their analysis. Rather, I support the belief that we should plant ourselves firmly within a researcher position that incorporates into our theoretical perspectives Carroll's three critical edges of social inquiry: oppositional analysis (positioning oneself within the

terrain of critical social movements), radical analysis (grasping a deeper meaning of the systematic bases of challenges we face), and a strategy of subversion (working beyond commonly held assumptions to make room for alternative action) (2004, 3). I feel this supports the call for planning to embrace and provide room for community voice and diverse interests within planning and development processes.

Carroll asserts that "in a socially unjust world, knowledge of the social that does not challenge injustice is likely to play a role in reproducing it" (Carroll 2004, 3). Contrary to Carroll's perspective, many anthropologists do not want their role to be political, as they view advocacy as a personal choice rather than an institutional imperative (Gledhill 2000, 215). Although, looking back throughout anthropological history, the problematic nature of colonial anthropology was the theoretical premise that academic knowledge was to claim objectivity and that anthropologists should avoid taking a stance by remaining neutral. However, these silences of neutrality often reduce questions of subjective power into an objective domain of research inquiry and exclusionary outcomes (ibid.). With this in mind, I am framing my research within three theoretical strategies: processual analysis, institutional ethnography, and community-based action research. These combined strategies provide varying entry points along the spectrum of alternative critical social theory to illuminate the silences and resist reproducing exclusionary outcomes by grounding the praxis of community research within theoretical analysis.

Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith develops her critique of sociology's role in the process of ruling through an analysis of how institutions and professional discourses exclude the standpoint of persons living and acting in the everyday world (Grahame 2004). By applying a critical interpretive approach and incorporating institutional ethnography, I can begin to uncover the texts produced through the varying discourses that govern and direct the planning process. Furthermore, through the theoretical application of critical anthropology and post-positivist planning theories, representational space for the diverse meanings of power, place, and identity generate within participatory planning and development processes.

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The employment of the critical interpretive approach aids in identifying how individuals at a community level react and become impacted by neo-liberal policies and the political use of sustainability rhetoric. Through processual analysis and self-reflexivity, I am able to identify how I, a researcher and technical worker, balance the tension between the distinct and representational spaces of my daily work and avoid reproducing the very binaries that I seek to deconstruct within my research. I feel that the theoretical analysis within my research does not delineate distinctive boundaries of analysis; rather the linkages are best uncovered at the borderlands and intersections of the contested terrain of my research fields. As I seek to uncover the political, subjective, and partisan texts through the interactions, events, and information involved in my research, the political becomes personal. Thus, the personal becomes grounded in the broadened understanding of how critical anthropology theory can bring power to the voices at the margins and challenge the hegemonic discourses of the construction and development industries that reproduce exclusionary housing policies, programs, and outcomes.

Methodological Considerations

My research is both exploratory and descriptive. To provide an in-depth analysis of the multiple perspectives, relationships between stakeholders, and tensions produced through the planning of a construction project, I have utilized processual analysis, community-based action research, and institutional ethnography principles as applied through participant observation, interviews, and critical discourse analysis.

Smith employs institutional ethnography as a research strategy to tap into the expertise of individuals working and living within their everyday lives to provide methods for individuals to make their working experiences accountable to themselves (Campbell 2004 as cited in Carroll 2004, 207). I feel that Smith's approach allows the opportunity for individuals bound within ruling relations to explore the limitations, challenges, and opportunities that surround them within the social processes in which they are participating. I, too, began my research with a set of possible questions and through my job experience, academic course work, fieldwork, and research have been

able to formulate how my worlds of profession and academia collide, connect, and facilitate one another in the production and re-production of knowledge.

Carroll defines "multiple realities as being part of the necessary messiness of action research" (2004, 336), which generates competing narratives of reality. I would not be able to account for the messiness of ordinary life nor the outcome of competing development discourses with only one research strategy; therefore, I incorporated elements of three strategies. Through participant observation, discourse analysis, and ethnographic interviews, I was able to explore and document the tensions that arose between neo-liberal forces and the goals of sustainability, which often alienate communities and individuals from having a voice in the decision making and policy outcomes from a macro to a micro scale.

Limitations of Study

My thesis is not an exhaustive study of the subject. It offers only a partial and qualitative glimpse at how community organizations and a few individuals are choosing to express their perspectives. I want to explore how they voice and mobilize their concerns into actions that are addressing the social inequalities being produced from the construction boom, rising real estate values, and neo-liberal values of our region. In BC, a widening gap exists between those who are privileged to access essential services such as housing, health care, supportive services, and education and those who are not. I seek to uncover the tension created between the gentrification and re-development of our region and the goals and definition of sustainability at a community level. My study only covers the pre-planning of a construction project. Because of time limitations, my fieldwork does not offer a longitudinal perspective of a construction project from beginning to end. Through the short months of fieldwork, I have been able to observe how the macro forces of government, as well as the politics of place and identity, shape community and the social and physical landscapes of our urban settings. In my study, the processes of community action and planning are revealed rather than end results.

Outline of Chapters

In Chapter 1, I present a review of anthropology, geography, planning, and sustainability literature about community planning, community participation, and sustainable-development practices in relation to housing provision and neo-liberal policies for affordable housing in Vancouver. I highlight the perspectives of those working within the fields of anthropology, planning, and sustainability to reflect the importance of working beyond traditional disciplines and technical boundaries with community individuals in addressing the housing needs in our province, as well as our long-term goals of sustainable development.

In Chapter 2, I address the theoretical foundations that I utilized in this study. I discuss the theoretical spaces of planning and design processes and illustrate how through an action-oriented process, alternative theoretical strategies can be applied to uncover and facilitate political and transformative action within communities and translate technical knowledge into community sustainability practices.

In Chapter 3, I review the methodologies I incorporated into my research. I discuss the principles of institutional ethnography, processual analysis, and critical discourse analysis, as well as how I employed a triangulation of research methods, including participant observation, interviews, and discourse analysis. I also discuss how anthropology provides a vehicle for the formation of alternative research strategies within community planning and design processes.

In Chapter 4, I focus on the data generated from the interviews of the research participants from the church community and from the conferences I attended. I reflect on my experience of sharing the interview transcripts with the participants who I interviewed and how the data generated illuminates the research questions posed in this study. I also complete an examination of the government, professional, and community-generated documents that offer competing discourses that shape the decision making and outcomes of the pre-construction planning processes.

In Chapter 5, I provide findings from my research and work with the construction industry, an academic planner, and an architect who focuses on sustainable design. I highlight these perspectives to uncover how their experiences and practices interact and

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affect my research findings from the church community, thus illuminating how community-generated ideas and planning processes influence sustainable development at a local level.

In Chapter 6, I present my research conclusions, including my arguments for the incorporation of anthropological research strategies in community-based action research and planning processes. I discuss the implications of neo-liberal frameworks, the double binds of non-profit organizations to serve communities, and the hope generated by individuals and communities for personal action in the sustainability of our region. I also discuss the future applications of my research that emerge as collective action to bring forth the changes required to generate sound economic, social, environmental, and physical sustainability outcomes within our communities.

Chapter 1:
Deconstructing Power, One Pew at a Time

A Glance at Community Processes

It was a December morning at 7:00 a.m. The rain was pouring down as I drove across Vancouver to reach the church. I pulled up in my car in time to observe, one by one, the construction crew climbing out of their vehicles and preparing for the day's work. I was surprised to see the superintendent. He was present and ready to lend a helping hand. The construction company had offered its services, free of charge, to disassemble the heavy fir and oak pews in the church sanctuary. One of the members of the church's visioning committee arrived to open the doors. She also brought beautiful straw Christmas ornaments that she hung in the glass windows as the deconstruction process began. The sounds of the electric screw guns and the tapping of the lumber resonated throughout the sanctuary.

Community comes in many forms—some large, some small. It was interesting to watch the units of people intersecting through the same physical space at different points of entry from work, school, and worship. I felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude as I saw the nexus of volunteers come together from the community, business, and school sectors. I realized then that the ability to create a community of support was not just an ideal, but also an actual process, unfolding before my eyes. The purpose of the deconstruction process was to create a space with increased physical and social accessibility for the communities served and nurtured by the church. However, the physical manifestation of removing the pews also had a very symbolic meaning, as it was a concrete example of the traditional structure of power and authority of the church being transformed through physical space. As the construction crew was diligently working, amid the rhythm of hammers tapping and wood pounding, we were deconstructing power, one pew at a time.

As I helped to clear bits of hardware and wood, I could not help wondering about all of the memories held by the pews. Baptisms, weddings, funerals, Sunday services— those everyday rituals and special events that Renalto Rosaldo describes as providing

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meaning to our social processes and built environments (Rosaldo 1989). As Rosaldo states, "culture and ritual are positioned within special events, as well as daily activities" and "appear as places where a number of distinct social processes intersect" (Rosaldo 1989, 17 and 20). For some, the pews meant everything that was traditional and comfortable about church; for others, they meant a barrier to inclusion. The contested meanings of physical space bring a rich contestation of social meaning.

It was 9:30 a.m., the crew took their morning break, and church staff and members filed in to welcome the crew and join them for a coffee. I began to explain the architectural history of the church and relayed that a large portion of the building had been constructed by volunteer labour. During the break, there were pauses in the conversation, and I could hear the sounds of the children from the preschool downstairs echoing through the sanctuary. I then heard the back door opening and someone else entering the stage of this evolving social process. It was one of our elderly church members coming to join the conversation. He told me about the church-sponsored community bus trip he had recently participated in to go carpet bowling. Another couple stopped by to reminisce about all of the changes that have happened at the church. They expressed apprehension about the pews coming down. Our minister and her partner came by and commented on the possibilities that this new space would provide.

Multiple meanings were being generated for the same physical space. I thought to myself, now this is anthropology—this is what I want to do my thesis about. The events of the day further illuminated my passions: (1) understanding the complex web of relations between social processes and built environments and how they are empowered, transformed, and sustained through community action and (2) understanding how to create pathways of respect and room for difference within alternative planning and design processes that work beyond the social reproduction of exclusion.

Knowledge as Power, Power as Action

I believe that we can move toward community sustainability through deliberate actions that enhance our definition of expert to include a broad range of multi-disciplinary, community, government, and private sector input. A crucial element would

be continuous reflection upon the fact that we are both instruments and expressive agents of power within our social and built environments. Power configurations and outcomes congeal as structuralized forces or institutionalized power, by which social actors exercise in the political-economic realm of development (McGuirk 2005). The outcomes and process of these power configurations then manifest through the allocation and manipulation of resources and are exemplified by developers who make decisions based on what the market will bear, who then transform our physical spaces to meet their objectives. They are also exemplified by local government planners operating within certain fiscal practices and policy frameworks that guide their decisions, which impact development and social outcomes (ibid.). Through these examples, geographer Pauline McGuirk argues that the reification of knowledge, power, and the role of social actors in planning processes perpetuate traditional roles of authority, neo-liberal planning practices, and decision making that produce fixed power configurations (ibid.).

Dorothy Smith's institutional ethnography approach can be shown to support McGuirk's position. Smith seeks to ground her inquiry in the empirical investigation of power linkages in local settings and within organizations. She uses this method to demonstrate how power linkages are generated outside the local level through a web of ruling relations operating among government, administration, and academic institutions (Grahame 2004, 184). Smith organizes her inquiry from a local-level entry point, positing the everyday world as problematic (ibid.). A series of questions is designed to clarify the organization of everyday world events and to provide a pathway to determine how external power linkages penetrate local events (ibid.). Traditionally, sociologists have applied their analyses to the local through external points of entry such as academic theories, governmental policy analysis, or institutional frameworks. However, Smith argues that the complex web of ruling relations between the local and macro forces is more transparent by starting from the local level, rather than from external points of entry that often reproduce the very sources of power that the researcher seeks to uncover through their analysis (ibid.). Therefore, from this entry point, Smith is able to demonstrate the experiences of the local as connected to and affected by macro-level power linkages.

The key to creating transformation within fixed systems of power is to seek understanding of how social actors are engaged in performance within the realm of development processes (McGuirk 2005). Furthermore, McGuirk challenges us to view the myriad of networked interactions created through governance models as a position that differs from traditionally defined structural forces, rigidly located within individual and institutional forms of power (ibid.). It is crucial to utilize a research approach to understand the systems of power and the roles of actors and resources within the reification of traditional forms of knowledge and authoritative outcomes. This promotes dialogue to further understand the relational, practical, and emergent character of the social and natural world (Carroll 2004, 114).

Dialogue gives voice to subaltern groups and community members wishing to challenge the local outcomes of neo-liberal globalization, exclusionary development practices, and entrenched systems of power. Furthermore, the collective dialogue gives the researcher the opportunity to uncover the relations of entrenched power that are not always evident at the surface level (ibid.). South African geographer Jennifer Houghton asserts that society and place "are integrally linked in localities" (2005, 419), thus making key actors of individuals and groups within a society and within the transformative change of development and community sustainability practices. I believe we can make the collective choice to express creative power with a variety of social expressions and built forms to challenge the alienation and destruction created under dominant norms and forms of power. Through a call for the collaboration of resources, voices, actors, and socially conscious dialogue, we can open up the possibilities of newly defined and expressed forms of sustainable development projects.

While seeking to understand the interactions of local networks of social actors involved in the development process, I feel it is necessary to view the current development actions and narratives as both product and process carried forward from a densely bound history. It is a history of Eurocentric, industrial bourgeoisie and top-down social engineering configured through the research and practice of sociology, anthropology, planning, and the realm of development experts. As Carroll asserts, "In the policy networks that surround and permeate the neo-liberal state, sociologists are

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heavily outnumbered by economists, efficiency experts, and risk-management consultants, and others whose worldviews incline them towards market driven politics" (2004, 223). Alternative viewpoints and the role of community in mobilizing opposition to neo-liberal forces in political and development processes are critical for effective change. This is apparent by alternative development opportunities within the occupation of invented spaces of citizenship through grassroots and nongovernmental organizations (Miraftab 2004). Through these initiatives, organizations are directly confronting the authorities' dominant rhetoric of oppression in a bid to promote larger societal change and resistance to dominant power relations (ibid.).

The power of the macro-level politics of the market dominates the local on many levels and continually creates challenges to participation by non-profit organizations and private sector companies in the provision of affordable housing in Vancouver. The tension exists between intentions and actions, creating a dichotomy of desire to participate in alternative practices of development within a reality of constraints. In addition, the current climate of construction market demands overrides the practicality and profitability of construction companies' contribution to the development of affordable housing, at a time when market housing and mega-project development are at all-time highs in BC.

Uncovering the Historical Dichotomies of Development

Until the 1960s, top-down initiated projects served to eradicate difference and to erase multiple histories, context, and culture from the social and physical landscapes of cities (Sandercock 2003). In resistance to top-down planning practices, urban planner Paul Davidoff sought to uncover how the mantra of technically generated planning and economic organization could be challenged through the call for distributive justice and social advocacy (Davidoff 1965). Davidoff advocated for planners' engagement in political processes (those that held the interest of individuals, groups, and organizations) as pivotal in relation to government demands on community within development projects (ibid.). Urban planner Sherry Arnstein supported Davidoff's call for participatory planning through facilitating citizen participation and the redistribution of power to those

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being restricted from economic, social, and political decision-making processes (Arnstein 1969).

Through the efforts of planners like Arnstein and Davidoff, as well as the political climate of the post–Vietnam War period, a diversity of planning positions arose, attributing to the development of process-oriented planning theory, including social planning and advocacy planning (Allmendinger 2002). Praxis-oriented strategies also arose in this period as social theorists began to utilize inquiry as a vehicle of action to voice community concerns and to explore the realm of modernity and the existing power dualities in development processes (Allmendinger 2001; Carroll 2004). Because of this shift in social inquiry, Phillip Allmendinger (2001) believes that pressures increased on planners to recognize the plural positions and values within social planning processes, thus challenging the hegemonic, authoritative discourse of the times.

Historically, top-down planning initiatives focused on the functional development of cities, large-scale projects, and state-directed management (Moe and Wilkie 1998). In recent years, the new urbanist movement has re-imaged and continued top-down planning practices marketed through the disguise and rhetoric of sustainability (Sandercock 2003). New urbanist movements claim to seek equitable development outcomes; however, they continue to protect primarily private sector funding by imposing master-designed developments on communities, which then often manifest denial of difference, diversity, accessibility, and social equity (ibid.). Often, community members are included in consultation opportunities to provide limited input into development decisions, but overall, the goals and decisions of the development processes rest with the developers and funding agents of the projects.

The power and politics of community require critical analysis of the various intersecting discourses of community development. As pointed out by David Lyons, political actors often cite utopian ideologies of community to justify their own interests, all the while producing consequences that exploit and further marginalize communities' part in the visioning processes of political actions and development (Lyons 1984). It does take energy and commitment to work through the conflicting interests of the participants and organizations involved in collaborative processes, in order to ensure that

community interests are not overpowered (Packer, Spence, and Beare 2002). Building on this challenge, Yvonne Rydin and Mark Pennington scrutinize public participation in collaborative planning (2000). They deem it a collective-action problem that may lead toward policy failure unless social-capital building strategies are utilized to renegotiate collective-action perimeters to address conflict resolution, problem solving, cooperation, and power sharing (ibid.). They assert that effective participation by all public sectors is hindered by three main categories: (1) selective participation by the most vocal and well-organized sectors of community groups, (2) the assumption that all ineffective collaborative planning processes lie within policy values and institutional norms that oppose public participation, and (3) occurrences of policy failure, resulting in a lack of interest, disempowerment, or community frustration when their voices have not been heard in the process (ibid.).

I believe that Rydin and Pennington provide a solid argument that community planning and development processes have multiple entry points that bring about conflict and unrest in development processes. Therefore, I agree with Pennington's argument that power configuration failures and collaborative planning challenges cannot be blamed solely on macro-level forces, but rather must be addressed as a continuum of events at all levels, requiring careful, critical, and ongoing reflection throughout the planning process—including at the community level.

The Power of Rhetoric

As a component of the ongoing reflection on planning processes, it is necessary to consider the power dynamics of knowledge production in community research, community development, and academic settings. Through structured realities of reified power within the realms of development and academic institutions, the rhetoric of development (or dominant discourse) is reproduced at the cost of excluding community voices that ground the realities of homelessness and poverty and call for affordable housing solutions in our region. Foucault reminds us "that normative realities underpin hierarchies, and hence even powerful actors (their roles, functions, and patterns of conduct) are subject to them" (Rossi 2004). This leads me to a question of my own: am I

reproducing a normative reality and rational reasoning through my analysis of the literature already written on development, planning, and anthropology? Perhaps, but as Foucault refuses to adopt the role of the "universal intellectual" who speaks on behalf of justice, humanity, and universal interests, so do I (ibid., 228).

I believe that allowing the trained academic or intellectual to be the dominant or only voice of normative standards within education or development processes limits opportunities for the wealth of community knowledge to unfold within the myriad of networks that ground the power of place with local experience. When community knowledge is excluded from research and development processes, it becomes subjected to unintended or overlooked consequences. Dominant discourse then governs our thoughts and actions—through our assumptions of the other, or the assumption of dominant interests as being best served by a unilateral approach to power, and most destructively, through our fears. By following this path, we neglect opportunities to see the intertwined relationships of power and social structure from several different entry points, thus making it important to remind ourselves that we are both instrument and subject of power (Rees 2003, 64).

With this in mind, I believe it is necessary to challenge the discourse primarily, rather than its subjects through multi-positioned and intersecting points of reason (Rosaldo 1989, xi). It is crucial, also, to challenge ourselves, and to reflect continuously on how we—academic anthropologists and intellectuals in training—make or reproduce relationships of power through knowledge production. In summary, perhaps Sandercock describes the silencing ability of dominant discourse best: "In choosing to tell some stories rather than others, a professional identity is shaped, invested with meaning and then defended" (1998, 16). This, she argues, creates silenced histories and outcomes of exclusion (ibid.).

Moving Toward a Public Anthropology

Anthropological theory and methods serve as useful, necessary tools to recover the silenced histories of communities. Place memories evolve from our social experiences, pathways, and borderland crossings of our social encounters in the physical

dwellings of home, work, and public space. However, the multiple voices of the history of, and between, these spaces are seldom captured in all of their complexity in planning processes. Edward Casey's community-based approach of including and capturing a myriad of voices in public history draws its strength from the desire for shared authority (Casey as cited in Hayden 1995) or, as Michael Frisch calls it, a "dialogic history" that "gives power to communities to define their own collective pasts" (Frisch as cited in Casey 1995, 48). It follows that it is the ethical and social responsibility of the planner and anthropologist to represent and participate in community in culturally relevant and sensitive ways. By doing so, we can strive to foster an inclusive representation that captures diversity represented through power, place, and identity. By applying planning and anthropology methods that embrace social and ethical responsibility, we can aid in the provision of a catalyst for deeper understanding and dialectical change to empower individuals and communities (Carroll 2006).

Making Room for Alternative Perspectives

How is the power of knowledge shared and distributed in public processes? The power of knowledge reproduces socially instrumental and expressive patterns of power that function on micro to macro levels in our homes, workplaces, and public spheres. Renato Rosaldo points out that uncomfortable situations arise when challenging existing power dynamics of actors that have always had a dominant position (1989, xi). Tension is a by-product of democratic decision-making processes, when individuals who have dominated the discourse of the past are challenged to share authority in the present, to make room for difference, and to allow reflection upon alternative perspectives within group discussions (ibid., xi–xii).

Stuart Rees echoes Rosaldo's belief by stating that democratic and peace-making processes should begin by challenging the current curriculum taught in universities and other educational settings (Rees 2003). He also questions the dominant norms of the university, believing that the transformations of unequal power relationships through language and action are "keys to peace with justice" that give room to create spaces that challenge convention (ibid.). I do not believe that complex questions around creating a

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learning environment, development practices, or workplace culture based on solidarity and empowerment are easily answered. However, as Rees points out, the political process begins with individuals generating a personal understanding of their lived experiences and perceiving how they link to, and intertwine with, international concerns (ibid.). Grounding the personal to the political and the local to the global, thus creating the opportunity for the praxis of mutual development from the micro to macro level based on the ideals of emancipatory knowledge and empathetic understanding for others: perhaps this is where thought becomes action, even "alternative" action.

Beyond the Market Spheres of Neo-liberalism

State and economic forces suppress alternative expressions, thus socially reproducing and co-modifying dominant, dogmatic knowledge of development by means of exploitation, legitimization, and justification. Friedmann and Habermas agree that market and state are highly influential social, political, and cultural forces (Friedmann 1992, 7; Habermas as cited in Pusey 1987, 195). Furthermore, Habermas explains that these historically rooted forces of production are not solely the state and the market, but are "clearly rooted in the endogenous growth of human knowledge" (Pusey 1987, 196). With Friedmann and Habermas's arguments in mind, we can begin to see that the formulation of alternative strategies to the forces of state and market is reliant upon the awareness of the emancipatory potential of knowledge systems to challenge institutionalized power and class structure through knowledge-constitutive interests and actions (Pusey 1987, 196, 202, 203, and 205).

Communicative action, as defined by Habermas, is derived from culture (Pusey 1987, 196). Accordingly, culture is action, and that in rational form is "communicative action" because it is something that subjects enact in thought and deed (Haas 2004). Communicative action is expressed in the spaces between civil society and the state where citizens can debate issues of common concern (ibid.). Habermas suggests two ways that support communicative action: (1) access to information about the actions of the government and (2) opportunities for citizen engagement in public deliberation processes (e.g., roundtable discussions, forums, or voluntary civic organizations) (ibid.,

179). Moreover, Haas supports the concept that many or multiple publics should be brought together so that, in bearing upon one another, groups avoid enclaves of difference that tend to arise and decrease the possibility for tensions between various social groups to be addressed (ibid.).

Iris Marion Young agrees with the theory of the public sphere but feels that Habermas neglects to recognize the internal barriers, limited opportunities, and power inequalities that impede the ability of certain community voices to contribute to public decision-making processes (ibid.). I believe Young's discussion of internal barriers in group settings and decision-making processes merits consideration from multiple positions, because it is the implicit and internal group connections of power and identity that also have the ability to empower or disempower public process. Therefore, I support Young's call to promote modes of interaction that decrease internal and external power barriers to decision-making processes. This leads me to my next question: how do we create an environment for development and planning that is supportive of Young's proposed modes of interaction?

Anthropologies of Development: Creating Room for Change

I believe we can create safe, accessible environments that provide social and physical sustainability for the evolution of democratic processes. This process begins with challenging our own fears. A key area of interest for me is exploring how we can begin working beyond our fears to build pathways of understanding for multiple points of view to be shared, challenged, and transformed into physical and social spaces built upon democratic initiatives. Our physical spaces are often designed through the architect or developer's vision for the end user; but what if those spaces were designed and built based on a collective process among the community of end users, construction companies, and design professionals? If these processes were collective, would they better reflect the ability of our built environments to foster social process and sustain community, thus in turn creating space for us to envision how, as individuals, we too have a role in sustaining our communities?

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I propose that our respectful connection to humanity and our natural environment is also necessary for community sustainability, because I believe that global change begins with individual action. By increasing our personal understanding, we begin to see that knowledge of peace and justice is not the territory of technical experts alone; rather, it is a set of values that should be embedded in everyone's heart and mind (Rees, 2005). Stuart Rees states that "the task of building civil personal relationships and a civil society depends on fostering alternatives to dominating ways of expressing power" (ibid. 2003, 51).

John Friedmann's call for "empowerment through alternative development" supports this position (1992). Friedmann states that, historically, alternative models of development have evolved through a collective vehicle of social actors that have challenged the power of the status quo (ibid.). These include the 1960s movements for peace, women's rights, and ecological preservation (ibid.), although, as Friedmann points out, actual development will always be the historical outcome of the ideological and political conflicts of people with profit-centered development practices (ibid.). However, he asserts that spaces that are disempowering also have the potential to empower through alternative development practices that challenge social practices and the multiple levels of structural power that traditionally limit access to resources and the power of autonomous decision-making (ibid.). Therefore, it is necessary to provide both a historical and a critical analysis of the anthropologies of development through a variety of multi-positioned social actors, not just through the voice of the academically trained anthropologist or planner. Am I talking my way out of a future job as an anthropologist or urban planner in a position of privilege and future power over the communities I envision myself working with? I hope so.

Anthropology Applied

Renato Rosaldo states, "Processual analysis resists frameworks that claim a monopoly on truth" (1989, 93). Processual analysis emphasizes that culture requires study from a number of perspectives and that these perspectives should not be combined into a unified summation but rather represented as different entry points (ibid.).

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Although processual analysis is criticized for lacking scientific rigour, I see it as a method that builds a foundation to open doors into the mundane or everyday events that may be overlooked during research. In conjunction with institutional ethnography and critical sociology, this method of inquiry provides a multi-dimensional insight into the everyday world as problematic.

Social scientists Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner provide an alternative to the classic norms of social research by employing processual analysis in their work. Turner used case histories as a foundational element in his research (ibid., 94). My research shows that Rosaldo, Geertz, and Turner's work with processual analysis can also be supported by the work of architect Christopher Alexander et al. (1968). His team employs the pattern language approach, which works beyond traditional, systematic architectural design methodologies to include voice and input from the communities of end users in the planning and design of built spaces (ibid.). The pattern language approach and newly adopted integrative design approach realign power dynamics and create insurgent space for voice and dialogue to be listened to and acknowledged within planning and design processes (Alexander et al. 1968; Kuhn 1999; and International Initiative for a Sustainable Built Environment 2007). The application of pattern languages requires a paradigm shift from product-driven to process-oriented planning and design (Kuhn 1999). Planning and design shifts from the central power of planners, designers, and funding agents to a community initiative powered through the representation of multiple perspectives. These approaches redistribute top-down power from design and planning professionals to a model of power shared among professionals, mainstream community members, and individuals who tend to be excluded from economic, social, or political processes.

Often, development planning labelled as a community initiative claims that consideration has been made to the pertinent dimensions of the community through its assessment processes; but really, these processes frequently only allow specific individuals to benefit and/or to administer the program. As Renato Rosaldo states, "When people leave a decision-making room and one hears that a consensus was reached, remember to ask: Who was in the room when the decision was made?" (Rosaldo 1989,

xii). Rosaldo's quote reminds me of planning through tokenism, the process that gives the powerless initial opportunities to voice their interests and concerns (Arnstein 1995, 364). However, without continued, consistent dialogue among all parties, the reproduction of excluded zones of power and contested terrain continues (ibid.).

Insurgent Planning Practices: Bridging Borders

An alternative to tokenism is the recognition of insurgent planning practices that provide new spaces of citizenship for acknowledgement, respect, and support (Holston 1998). The sites of insurgent citizenship recognize the fault lines, or as Rosaldo (1989, 149) defines them, the borderlands or border crossings where identities and culture intersect and create meaning and lived experiences that often go unheard or silenced by dominant discourse. Rosaldo points out that some border crossings involve literal immigration, whereas others may seem more migratory and make it difficult to categorize within a homogeneous community (ibid.). For example, consider the European Roma, people who, as David Sibley states, "are commonly represented as discrepant or transgress and do not fit easily into the usual categorizations of the excluded" (1998). Sibley adds that "even liberal formulations of community are exclusionary and cannot accommodate groups who reject mainstream values" or "remain ethnically invisible;" therefore, ethnographic research on peripheral minorities should acknowledge spaces of difference and fluid notions of space rather than bounded notions of community (ibid.). Benhabib (1992, 159), as cited in Sibley, states that working with the concrete other rather than the generalized other requires that one view everyone as an individual with a concrete history and identity (1998). I believe Sibley and Benhabib's arguments are important when considering multiple and fluid interests within a community space. I believe that this also requires looking beyond oneself through a process of self-reflection and by striving to create, as defined by Etzioni, "habits of the heart" that recognize that self-interest and monetary gain do not effectively function as the nexus of sustainability to foster human contact and community spaces (2004, 124). By looking beyond self-interests and monetary value, the roles and definitions of community sustainability are accessible and nurtured at several different entry points on a personal

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and local level through intersections of time, space, identity, and power. As Rosaldo argues, knowledge is positioned, partial, and partisan (Bogardus 2002; Rosaldo 1993), thus bringing insight into the research position that knowledge-producing activities create a myriad of unfolding circumstances and-events that, through critical analysis, unravel the junctions of power and position (Rosaldo 1989).

The relationship between knowledge-producing activities and built environment outcomes requires reflection on shared histories of the in-between and out-on-the-fringe positions of exclusion and marginalization within realms of dominant discourse in institutions, public spaces, and private domains. Knowledge, thought, and action weave threads of history, ritual, and tradition that shape our social and built environments. When working with multi-positioned and multi-cultural communities, one must accept and acknowledge the presence of a variety of knowledge(s), experiences, and histories that are reflective of the kaleidoscope of needs represented within a community, program, or building. I believe that the incorporation of critical anthropology research strategies, insurgent planning practices, and integrative design processes provide tools to ensure that insurgent spaces of citizenship are incorporated and central to the discussions within the planning and development of community spaces. We must acknowledge the power of place as a vernacular expression of identity, social history, and urban development that intertwines with the conscious and unconscious terrain of the production of knowledge, our individual and community experiences, and our shared built environments (Hayden 1995). Built design is a powerful expression of the past, present, and future through the visual, social, and physical representation of humanity that remains an evolving but consistent thread throughout time and space (ibid.).

Fostering Sustainability

Julian Agyeman defines sustainability as "the need to ensure a better quality of life for all, now and into the future, in a just and equitable manner, whilst living within the limits of supporting ecosystems" (2003, 157). When reflecting upon Agyeman's definition of sustainability, the reality of the state of our environment comes to mind. Ecological theologian Sallie McFague states, "Global warming is becoming up-close-

and-personal" as she reports that nine of the Earth's warmest years in recorded history have been since 1986 and 1999, which is creating more frequent and extreme weather patterns and events, such as flooding, droughts, tornadoes, and hurricanes (2001, 206). McFague asserts, "A cold, hard look at the individualistic market model's impact on human life is required," as the market has failed us and our planet (ibid., 207). Therefore, she calls for an alternative model that centres ecological reformation into our life practices. The picture of reality emerging from the sciences (cosmology, evolutionary biology, and ecology) when seeking to provide a framework for fostering sustainability is one of community and relationships, not individuals and objects (ibid., 207).

This new emerging understanding is linking the diversity, richness, infinite interconnections of all forms of life, and the environments that sustain and provide shelter within these ecosystems. The ecological model is not a division of science and religion; rather, it is based on mutual understanding that humans are not given power over nature. We are dependent upon nature and responsible for it (ibid., 208). I also feel McFague's position encourages academics to cross disciplinary boundaries to work together toward an ecological model that is sustaining to the balance of all of our communities, whether human or not. Therefore, ecological reformation seeks to work beyond values of material wealth to vision abundance through a call for environmental and social justice action based on basic principles that nurture and sustain balance in community and nature (ibid.).

Agyeman and Bob Evans argue that an environmental justice paradox is evident in the UK as many people see environmental justice as someone else's problem and not their own (2004, 157). I agree with Agyeman and Evans that indeed a paradox does exist between people's perceptions, ownership, and actions that generate disconnect to fuel and sustain the neo-liberal commitment to privilege lean government, privatization, and deregulation (Routledge 2003, 334). As Paul Routledge argues, emerging global economic systems are characterized by an absence of boundaries that are "both everywhere and nowhere a non-place" (ibid.), which even embeds itself within our personal attitudes of living, buying, participating, and guiding of our actions within our homes, communities, and nations. Thus, location, position, and place are becoming

central to the understanding of our globally saturated and fragmented spaces, but also to our alternative actions.

Planner Richard Cowell and geographer Susan Owens state, "Planning is deemed by many to have a key role in the quest for sustainable development" (2006, 403). However, they argue that planning systems are bound by broader scales of state power and still rely heavily on technical and instrumental application rather than "argumentative or political" elements of change (ibid., 404). Therefore, they call for a temporal and spatial restructuring of planning that encompasses "opportunity structures" of access for different interests, political representation, and policy determination within its processes (ibid., 404). The ability for community action and opportunity structures to support change reflects within psychologists Sam Kaner and Eileen Palmer's thesis that organizations and businesses should take notice of the ability of grassroots organizations to achieve their goals through process and developing strong, resilient communities (Shaffer and Anundsen 1993). Through their research, they conclude that communities that have a clear mission centred around the members' needs, values, and lifestyles tend to be integrated in the organization's purpose to structure and function through each task being dedicated to its overall vision (ibid., 115). This is interesting, because if the structure focuses on the organization's mission, and the mission is social justice as in the UC congregation with which I completed my fieldwork, then I feel it has the direct ability to counteract the debilitating impact of the multi-layered political constraints placed on the community.

Moreover, authors Carolyn R. Shaffer and Kristin Anundsen (1993, 114) argue that growing awareness by businesses of the impact of global connectedness is forcing corporations to think about systems, patterns, interrelationships, and interdependencies much more than the cause and effect. But is this new trend challenging the spaces of exclusion and privilege, or is it merely contributing to the continued and creative means to facilitate the progress of neo-liberal values? I believe in order to continue challenging the facilitation of neo-liberal values, it requires critical discussion and community-based action research to generate ongoing reflection and action to incorporate multiple views and positions within development processes. In conclusion, I argue for the use of

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anthropological research strategies to open the entry points of critical discussion for mainstream planning and sustainable business practices to regard the deep diversity and differences of our communities' social and built environments of our urban landscapes.

Chapter 2:
The Theoretical Space of Sustaining Community

"Community-based research data is urgently needed to help service and housing providers, program planners, and policy-makers create effective interventions," states Jim Frankish, associate director of the Institute of Health Promotion Research (Thompson 2003). Frankish describes homelessness as a complex, diverse issue, wherein persons with disabilities, seniors, single parents, and children increasingly make up the growing demographic of the Greater Vancouver Regional District's homeless (ibid.). The reasons for homelessness are also changing with the shift of related pressures, such as cuts to health care, which in turn create revolving doors of ill health and surging emergency health care costs, and the lack of social and affordable housing, including supportive long-term housing that provides health support services to the community's most vulnerable.

Alice Sundberg, co-chair of the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and executive director of the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, addressed the Church and Affordable Housing Conference on October 14, 2006, in Vancouver on the "Three Ways to Home" research completed in 2000 with contributions from 40 community organization members and from all levels of government (Church and Affordable Housing Conference 2006). The research goals were to identify gaps and priorities in programs designed to address homelessness concerning affordable housing, support services, and adequate income. The conclusions gathered by this research and Sundberg's ongoing work show that the dire housing need in Vancouver is reflected in increased rates of poverty, competitive housing market conditions, growing numbers of people paying 50–80% of their income on rent or mortgage (126,500 individuals or 56,000 households in the GVRD, according to 2001 statistics), and the inadequate supply of social and affordable housing (ibid.). The Lower Mainland's 2006 Homeless Count took a census of people who had been homeless for longer than one year. Sundberg concludes that the senior citizens' homelessness rate accounted for 9% of the total homeless population and increased by 235% from 51 seniors in 2002 to 171 seniors in 2006 (ibid.).

With statistics so grim, where do we begin to generate the voice of concern that grounds the needs, cultures, and resources of the people in a community response, to challenge the pressures of policy, discourse, and market-driven principles creating such deep divisions in our neighbourhoods? We can start by utilizing a theoretical research framework to ground the concerns of the individuals impacted by the housing crisis in the Lower Mainland to incorporate community voices and provide linkages between the concrete lived experiences of individuals and policy formation at multiple levels of government to facilitate critical dialogue for community empowerment and transformative change.

**Primary Research Site: The Evolving Space, Place, and Identity
of Southeast Vancouver**

My primary research site is within my own heartland, in my work with my church located in southeast Vancouver. The history of southeast Vancouver results from a multitude of processes. It took just four generations to transform natural bush and forestland into one of the more densely populated, bustling areas of the Lower Mainland (City of Vancouver Archives 1958). Southeast Vancouver has always been a working-class neighbourhood, built on the dreams and backs of immigrant workers through the years (ibid.).

The earliest settlers came in 1860, and the main economy was fishing, farming, and raising livestock (ibid.). In the 1900s, a housing boom in Vancouver pushed people into the southeast side to seek affordable housing. The rapid increase in settlement during this era turned the semi-rural landscape of southeast Vancouver into an urban area (Curran 1996). In 1928, records show that no other municipality had as many homeowners as did south Vancouver (John Oliver High School Archives 1986). The post-war years brought a second wave of European immigrants into the area, mostly Germans, Italians, and Portuguese. The third wave of immigration, between 1971 and 1981, included German, Chinese, Portuguese, Hindu, Parsee, Sikh, Fijian, and Muslim populations (Davis 1997). Currently, southeast Vancouver is predominantly a working-class area, home to many new immigrants, with thriving corridors of multiethnic

merchants, restaurants, and services catering to the growing number of Asian and Southeast Asian residents in the area. Due to increased housing prices throughout Greater Vancouver, the proximity to Downtown Vancouver, and increased condominium development, the area has also become a neighbourhood of choice for trendy young professionals to live in.

The Spaces of Production: Processual Analysis

I arrived at the church for my afternoon meeting. I rang the bell at the back entrance and was greeted with a smile and a pleasant hello by the church administrator. The door sounds like a rhythmic scale as it opens and shuts—a sound repeated over and over again, as the many people enter and exit each day: visitors, community members, participants, and organization volunteers who rent the building. Today, I was there to attend a sub-committee meeting for the vision and planning committee of the church. I came hoping to observe the process but soon realized that I was very much a part of that process. Wondering how to balance my roles as church member, academic researcher, and volunteer on the committee, I was a bit apprehensive about the overlap and questioned my own ability to observe, collect, and analyze data that I had helped to prepare. Entering the meeting room, I was greeted by a fellow committee member, who has several years of experience in the planning and volunteer management of affordable housing and UC partnerships. I looked forward to working with all of the committee members and learning from their years of experience. Since our other committee member was not present that day, we began our meeting. We were discussing the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) grant that we were preparing to apply for, as well as a City of Vancouver Request for Zoning Reconsideration.

My fellow committee member and I sat down at the same side of the table to review the application forms and information that we had gathered for the process. The church's community advocate walked into the room, and she climbed up onto a double stack of chairs pushed up against the wall beside us. She joined in our informal discussion as we asked for her input into our grant application process. Flipping the design process from consultant to community: I really felt that happening when we were

discussing the grant application with the community advocate sitting with us. We explained that we were beginning the grant application for seed funding to research the feasibility of the construction of a new building that would better facilitate the social programs offered in the church building. It almost seemed that I could see the visions of a new space reflected in her smile as she spoke about possible uses for a new building. She also seemed positive about the letters of support she could acquire from the numerous agencies that use our building for their programs, or from groups who refer their participants to UC for assistance.

However, her facial expression and demeanour changed as she started to describe the social, spiritual, and economic needs of some of the many people who utilize the programs and agencies from which she would be seeking letters of support for the grant. Uncrossing her legs, she sat up straighter as she spoke about the increasing number of street people she is beginning to notice in the area and how this indicates to her the rapid increase in poverty and dire need for safe and affordable housing in the city. "What is it going to take?" my fellow committee member asked. "What is it going to take to increase the number of people who attend and participate in our community?" He added,

> *We have had two excellent supply ministers, and the numbers have still gone down over the year. Will a new building that is sorely needed for so many services that are provided outside of Sunday worship to the general community be the answer? If the funding is not coming from Sunday donations, where does it come from for the operating costs? The construction costs are doable, between the land value and market housing, but I just don't know about the other.*

Is this the entry point of faith—trusting in what may be, instead of what is, the projected rather than the tangible? I know that this committee meeting was my own point of entry as an academic researcher and required continuous self-reflection about my identity, power, and position in the production of the knowledge-based activities in which I was involved. While my employment in the construction industry and this planning process are also part of my research, most importantly, giving back to the community that has given so much to my family and me is an integral part of my participation. As I observed the community advocate's expressions when discussing the number of social service agencies that turn people away when asked for assistance, due to a lack of funding and to the fact that so many of the same people are already being referred to her

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for assistance, I pondered her words. I know there is a need for the services she provides, but I wonder, where is the governmental, community, and financial support for these services?

It was also interesting that my fellow committee member referred to me as a technical grant writer instead of a fellow committee or community member. Does this label me as a technical expert if I am providing these services as a community volunteer? Where is my position of power as an academic researcher within this process? As I sat down to complete my first set of field notes, I realized that I was not only observing a planning process from multiple entry points, but that I, too, am entering my own research from several different positions. I realized that a tension would exist that I had to identify. Although unsure how I was going to separate the different facets of my lived experience from being a researcher, I soon realized that it was crucial for me to employ self-reflection and a conscientious understanding of the research process in order to provide room for voice and difference in the production of my research project.

Positioning the Application of Anthropological Theory

To theoretically ground my research position and interests, I chose to employ three research strategies: processual analysis, institutional ethnography, and community-based action research.

Processual analysis challenges systems thinking by resisting frameworks centred on one monolithic or monopolizing theoretical premise. It embraces and requires the study of culture from various perspectives and includes the ethnographer's perspective, too (Rosaldo 1985, 93). Its strength lies in its ability to bring into light the "perspectives from the shadows" that are often slighted or excluded in traditional theoretical representations (ibid.). As Gayatri Spivak suggests, "No one form can tell the whole truth;" rather, we must provide research that allows the narration of the third person to emerge and to be heard (as cited in Fortun 2001, 368). I envision this process as a continuous dialogue, creating stories between and among actions, actors, and events. I feel that the dynamic facets of the everyday lived experience and ritual, when studied through processual analysis, uncover the multiplicity of embedded discourses that operate

simultaneously throughout time and space. Thus, the prism of truths emerges not as one overarching theory, but as zones of inquiry that challenge dominant discourse from the fringe, borderlands, and blurred zones of creative cultural production (Rosaldo 1985, 208–9).

In *Critical Strategies for Social Research,* sociologist William K. Carroll outlines C. Wright Mills's call for the cultivation of intellectual craftsmanship in critical inquiry in order to overthrow the grand theories and quantification of social experience that obtained positivist goals of prediction and control of human behaviour. Mills describes how these positivist outcomes were derived from systems of entrenched power and bureaucratized social science that "reduce sociologists from engaged intellectuals addressing 'the public' to technicians serving 'powerful clients'" (Mills 1959, 102 as quoted in Carroll 2004, 49). Mills notes that the intellectual craftsperson does not separate lived experience from work, but rather integrates the personal with his or her work experiences, which the researcher then incorporates with ongoing self-reflection. This ontological perspective brings forth understanding of people as both "historical and social actors" (ibid.).

Mills's call for critical inquiry complements the ontology of processual analysis and Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith's utilization of institutional ethnography to focus on local-level, concrete experiences to better understand how broader realms of ruling relations influence and connect with the everyday worlds of individuals (Grahame 2004, 184). Institutional ethnography sets out three main tasks: (1) addressing the ideological values and practices that create accountability in the institution, (2) focusing on unpaid and volunteer work, as well as paid work, and (3) investigating how a local work organization operates within, or as part of, a broader set of social relations (ibid.). The active subject's presence is restored in the discovery process by providing the standpoint of an individual's everyday world representations through the analysis of documents and texts. Implementing this research strategy, she posits multiple points of entry to engage the critical inquiry into the everyday worlds that are impacted by institutionalized spaces of ruling relations.

For example, Smith's research "Schooling of Children and the Single Parent" begins with her personal experience as a single parent whose parenting status is used as a label by the teachers, administrators, and discourses produced in the school system to explain her child's academic performance (Grahame 2004, 185). She uses her personal example not as an autobiography, but as an entry point or a means to ground her study in the realm of mothering practices. Smith focuses on the unpaid work processes and traditional role of mothers and how, although occurring in separate social spaces, they are viewed by educators as being complementary to that of the teachers in the school system. She then establishes how the professional discourses of educators produce verbal and written texts, as well as policies and practices, that often reproduce middle-class ideologies and mainstream interpretations of "status quo" mothering. Thus, Smith demonstrates through her personal anecdote and research findings that single parenting contradicts the dominant institutional discourses of schools, government, and society, which claim to define the ideologies and outcomes of the role and function of parenting school-aged children (ibid.).

Connecting the personal to the political is pivotal with social researcher William K. Carroll (2006, 232) as he recognizes that we are currently living in a world full of political contentions and social justice struggles over the distribution of resources, recognition, and/or ecological well-being. Therefore, to avoid replicating the historical production of sociology that in the past secured market and dominant ruling relations, Carroll urges us to recognize the crucial need and opportunity to embrace alternative research strategies that provide voice and recognition to the subaltern perspectives of community (ibid., 234). He argues for the implementation of Marx's concept of the power of the revealed truth to work as a catalyst for social self-understanding and transformative, dialectical change (ibid., 235).

Community-based action research links theory and practice by focusing on producing knowledge that is valuable to participants, while at the same time empowering and mobilizing people for community action. Carroll embraces community-based action research as a strategy "to understand the world in order to participate in its transformation" (2006, 242). Pivotal to the strategy is using critique and empowerment

as tools to ensure that research moves beyond the reproduction of social regulation and entrenchment of power. The community-based action research strategy combines the ontology of Marx's dialectic reasoning of social reality, which is comprised of temporal and spatial dimensions, with institutional ethnography to explore the ideologies, outcomes, and extra-local complexities of these social relations.

Grounded in Marxist theory, community-based action research provides a framework of understanding that individual lived experiences are composed of an "ensemble of social relations" ever subject to critique and reconstruction (ibid., 234). Community-based action research has three fundamental values: full participation by the community, a dialogical educational process, and the provision of a space and/or means of taking action for change (ibid., 241). This strategy is an effective means for social researchers and activists to address injustices in our society by providing a dialectic method to ask questions rather than to provide answers about the relational, conflictual, and ever-changing character of the realm of social life (ibid., 236).

Further readings show there are barriers to the effectiveness of community-based action research in settings with limited opportunities for communicative exchange. Without opportunities for continuous reflection on and commitment to the empowering value of the community-based action research strategy, it has the devastating potential, as Carroll argues, to be "an instrument for the ruling relations, not a catalyst of democratization" (2006, 242). Thus, Carroll asserts that community-based action research is most effective in settings where communicative action is in practice, whereas in settings driven by ruling relations, institutional ethnography is often the more useful strategy. Building on this comparison, researcher Kim Fortun states, "Direct political engagement must speak in a language sensible within the very institutions being challenged" (2001, 176). In alignment with Fortun's perspective, Carroll calls for the possibility of synthesizing community-based action research with institutional ethnography in an effort to combine the ontological and epistemological strengths of each strategy (2006). He asserts that this synthesis will create research that is both grounded and empowering for political action and analysis (ibid.). In summary, the synthesis of multiple theories allows the researcher to enter the mental spaces that are knowledge

producing both in the terrain of dominant discourse and in the spaces of alternative action.

The Spaces of Neo-liberal Discourse: The Processual Current

On a broader scope, my church committee meeting provided a glimpse into the power of multiple-level intersections of neo-liberal discourse that shapes social and physical spaces. According to Anglican Archbishop Andrew Hutchison, federal and provincial government budget cuts to affordable housing programs have continually deepened since the 1980s, creating our current affordable housing crisis in Greater Vancouver (2006). One outcome of the current policy shift of the BC provincial Liberal government coupled with neo-liberal policies and practices in other realms of society is pressure on non-profit organizations to provide services that the government is no longer funding, thus forcing these same organizations to create a local-level community of support with limited funding (ibid.). Hutchison notes that citizens of all backgrounds and faiths are trying to help those who are most vulnerable through volunteer services, such as food banks, community suppers, community outreach, and affordable housing programs (ibid.). However, he adds that it will require the collaborative responsibility of the business, government, and community sectors to work together to address poverty and homelessness in sustainable ways (ibid.).

The UC community that I am observing is an example of the committed action of faith organizations to address poverty and homelessness concerns. Presently, they are putting forth an effort to address the social and spiritual needs of the low-income, disabled, and elderly individuals who access services through their church. Some of the programs they offer include community outreach and advocacy services, a free weekly community supper, an emergency food pantry, a community garden, emergency bus tickets, clothing drives, hamper programs, and several other social activities for the community. The organization is generating a collective response to the barriers to social justice produced by political and neo-liberal frameworks operating within our region, province, and federal government.

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Through an intentional effort, they are creating a position of socially just mission and outreach, including the consideration of building a physical environment that will facilitate their collective goals of support to the community and individuals in southeast Vancouver. The church is creating action and resistance to the power of the interlocking web of neo-liberalized space, which expands far beyond the local scale and the everyday experiences of those who enter and exit the church building each week in hope of assistance to ease their current situations. However, as theorists point out, neo-liberal discourses and frameworks grow and adapt even in the most challenging of circumstances and infiltrate spaces of resistance from the outside and from within.

The Theoretical Spaces of Neo-liberalism

Geographers Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell outline the history, politics, and theory behind neo-liberalism and its definition of the function of space (2002). They trace three major social shifts that contributed to the evolving dominance of neo-liberalism. First, the 1970s were distinguished by an intellectual movement of economists to reinstate free-market thinking, transforming the social and economic "fabric of the cities" (Peck et al. 2002; Wilson 2004). The macroeconomic crisis of the 1970s also imposed a shift in the economic and social spatial relations of urban centres (Wilson 2004). Second, the 1980s brought forth an era of neo-liberal conviction politics through deregulation, marketization, and the advance of opportunity rights over social entitlements and were marked by the leadership of UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and US President Ronald Reagan (Peck et al. 2002). Third, the Thatcher/Reagan era produced institutional and political limits and was followed by a reconstituted form of "roll out" neo-liberalism in the 1990s through government re-regulation and intervention policies led by US President Bill Clinton and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair (ibid.). The neo-liberal programs of the 1990s intended to offer support to those excluded by the policies of the previous decade. Neo-liberalism shifted, changed, and strengthened through the course of these events, with a heightened ability to adapt in varying spaces (ibid.). Peck and Tickell compare neo-liberalism to an organism or bacterium that multiplies and strengthens through adversity and change due to a keen ability to adapt

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and reproduce through dominant discourse, political policy, and social values that focus on market principles and individual interests (ibid.).

Peck and Tickell argue that the "processual conception" of neo-liberalism is an "out there" and "in here" phenomenon and creates uneven and dispersed patterns of process that infiltrate both explicit and implicit expressions of power through a vast array of physical, social, and economic spaces on multiple levels (2002). Neo-liberalism is founded on market principles, often expressed as a state of nature, which in turn engenders a self-actualizing quality in alignment with dominant discourses of social and economic power (ibid., 383). However, the authors discourage thinking of neo-liberalism as a monolithic worldview or an all-encompassing set of politics, as in sociologist Pierre Bourdieau's description of neo-liberalism as a static, naturalized, and external force (ibid.). Rather, Peck and Tickell propose a theoretical perspective that recognizes that neo-liberal practices and values shift and change as they produce and reproduce through institutional forms and political action (ibid.).

Urban neo-liberalism functions as an evolving process, scarcely resembling the top-down socially engineered programs and projects of the past, but rather functioning as a series of differentiated, processual constitutions operating through various points of social, political, and institutional frameworks (Wilson 2004, 772). Neo-liberalized spatial relations have replaced the stable government frameworks of extra-local support of the past. Rather, neo-liberal policies and practices place value on the competition for scarce resources, thus requiring non-profit organizations to enter partnerships and/or competitive environments to survive and function (Peck and Tickell 2002).

One example is the Grand Central Partnership in New York City, an effort by the Manhattan business community and municipality to encourage revitalization and continued business development in the area by using property taxes to fund building renovations, and community development initiatives to attract local and global investment (Katz 1998). The Grand Central Partnership includes funding to support St. Agnes Church in its provision of outreach services to the area's homeless. These initiatives and projects are earmarked as "revitalization," but at the same time they function to objectify marginalized, homeless, and excluded individuals by keeping them

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away and invisible from the paths and spaces frequented by tourists, investors, and residents (ibid.).

Furthermore, the shift to social-capital discourse and partnership-based policy development for urban regeneration and social welfare increases pressure on local volunteer and faith-based organizations. These organizations are not only pressured to serve the needs of struggling community members, but simultaneously and inadvertently to support the neo-liberal agenda by providing services that the government is no longer willing to fund (Katz 1998; Peck and Tickell 2002). Scholar Cindi Katz argues that the neo-liberal socio-spatial agenda is generated through the massive government dis-investment in social spending (1998). However, the government decision makers do not take into full account that many of those vulnerable people they deem invisible and not worth investing in are in their present circumstances due to reasons beyond personal choice, such as employment restructuring, limited affordable housing, or de-institutionalization (ibid.). This demonstrates a lack of social responsibility and/or ability to take action on the parts of multiple levels of government, business, and community, as well as the eroded powers of localized or bottom-up political action to resist and create effective change in the face of the ever-present forces of neo-liberalism that rest within and around these local spaces (ibid.). How we begin to challenge the double binds of contemporary activism is crucial in understanding how multiple levels and linkages of power begin to infiltrate through the explicit and implicit spaces of power, place and identity.

Thus, let us begin by unravelling the theoretical terrain of spatial relations with community planning as they provide both the instrument and setting for the double bind. Public and municipal planning activities inherit both a social and technological history that define the cultural, political, and built spaces of our cities (Hayden 1995). French Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre emphasizes the importance of space within social reproduction as he explores its use to limit the economic and political rights of groups, as well as to deny individuals access to certain urban spaces by various forms of systematic discrimination (Hayden 1985; Johnston et al. 2000, 684). Lefebvre proposed the concept of spatiality to describe socially produced space that encompasses both mental and

material space. Lefebvre's spatial interpretations are criticized by scholars such as Blum and Nast for being masculine in description and rendering the feminine as "passive or invisible spaces" of inquiry (Blum and Nast 1996 as cited in Johnston et al. 2000, 684). Nevertheless, his representation does allow one to examine space as political terrain that contributes to the deep divisions that split the urban world (Hayden 1995, 27).

Delores Hayden concludes that there is a "political life within ordinary buildings," constructed in the production of space (Hayden 1995). Thus, these spaces can be analyzed in light of the historical power struggles of the planning, design, construction, use, and demolition of typical buildings (ibid., 30). Buildings are a warehouse of data that help to uncover the conditions, relationships, and currents of urban life, to provide meaning and understanding to the power of place (ibid.). Power can oftentimes operate from the top down through the expression of regulation over the built environment, which "illuminates a larger urban economy through the political use of design" (ibid., 30). A building is, perhaps to some, a mundane expression of the built environment and everyday life; but for me, a building is an interesting entry point to the ritual and social fabric of cultural production. My research suggests that the social, political, and spatial relations created by built forms can be most effectively explored through community-based action research, a framework that utilizes institutional ethnography strategies to link the processual analysis of the "power of stories and experiences of place," with broader macro-economic and political networks of power.

The Terrain of Planning Theory: An Anthropological Gaze

The following are notes from the 2006 Church and Affordable Housing Conference:

- *Jonathan Bird, co-chair of the conference and staff member of City in Focus, opened the session by commenting that, almost two years ago, a dedicated group of community service providers had met with a vision to bring faith organizations from every denomination together, to join in: discussion to inform, to collaborate, and to promote partnership and cooperation in addressing the needs of the homeless for affordable housing in the province of British Columbia.*

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- *Keynote speaker Libby Davies, MP-Vancouver East, began her address by noting that the 14,000 single-room occupancies in the city's Downtown Eastside in the 1970s had rapidly decreased to 6,000 units in 2006.*

- *Keynote speaker Greg Paul, executive director of Sanctuary Ministries, founded Sanctuary, a Christian ministry dedicated to establishing a holistic, inclusive, and healthy community that welcomes individuals who are homeless, involved in prostitution, or suffering with addictions or AIDS, among other challenges. The Toronto-based congregation counts 50 committed and consistent worshippers; however, members consider their 600–800 program participants to be part of the church. Paul said that he challenged his evangelical community to challenge themselves, to look beyond their traditional stance on public morality and to envision compassion with people's circumstances and struggles. The goals were to (1) speak with a public voice, (2) do together what we could not do alone, and (3) prepare a common language to clarify, and create a lexicon of, what they wanted to say to the public, government, and business community about the social and housing needs of the people. They developed a manifesto that compassionately spoke from the "day-to-day" engagement with the people they work beside in their missions. Paul challenged us as an audience to think about language and discourse and, as an exercise, to reflect on these questions: Why do we talk about homelessness and the alternative as providing housing? Why not "homing" or "home" as the alternative to homelessness? He added that "home" includes many more things than just shelter—it means security, comfort, and support.*

The excerpts above are "snapshots of texts and personal stories" representing multiple experiences and perspectives offered in discussion that day—a discussion that offered an entry point of faith in the possibilities of transformative change and alternative ontological perspectives. One purpose of the event was to give a spark of hope, commitment and collective power to the transformative actions required to bring about changes in policy and provision of affordable housing in the Vancouver and surrounding areas of the Lower Mainland. The day's events were a collective experience interspersed with dialogue and conversation that challenged attendees to embrace a multiplicity of perspectives spanning religious affiliation, gender, race, orientation, and socio-economic status (Gomez-Pena 1993 as cited in Sandercock 1998, 121).

While views of multiplicity validate everyday experiences, the diversity of knowledge(s) and voices can bring forth action through a variety of communication media (Sandercock 1998, 121). We move in and out of our shifting identities through a realm of spatial relations in our families, work, community spaces, and through a

multitude of lived experiences captured between the spaces of locality and self, which through stories can help describe ways of being that we can relate to and share as a group (Revill 1993, 137). We all have the ability to tap into diverse knowledge(s), backgrounds, and experiences. The challenge lies in the choice and open willingness to access these tools by reflecting and connecting with ourselves and the communities wherein we live, participate, and work.

Psychologists Fine, Weis, Weseen, and Wong assert that in past and present social research, the distant relationship between researcher and subject obscured texts in order to protect privilege, secure distance, and generate contradictions (2000, 108). Their research delves into the requirements and responsibilities of all social researchers to move beyond traditional theoretical premises and to represent the consequences of poverty without socially reproducing the rhetoric of state policy that tends to exclude, humiliate, and distance working-class men and women (ibid.). The authors state that their research could have focused on seeking connections of common ground, shared language, and parallel experiences that could provide a notion of community as an unproblematic, geographic space of shared experience (ibid., 111).

However, they soon realized that their theoretical and political positions, as well as the stories that were told by their research participants, had uncovered a "matrix of difference" that spanned generation and gender (ibid.). Therefore, they implemented a research strategy that was both self-reflective and critically conscious of the power, obligations, and responsibilities of social research (ibid.). They did so to aid in generating a research document that would help to transform public consciousness through stories and analysis that would re-frame the victim-blaming mantras of the 1990s (ibid.). Their research focused on low-income communities—those whose voices are seldom listened to in circles of political debate. The authors state, "We sought, further, to place these voices at the centre of national debates about social policy rather than at the margin, where they currently stand" (Fine et al. 2000, 110). Similarly, geographer Geraldine Pratt asserts that in order to retain diverse and vital communities, we need to engage with each other politically, to make connections, and to de-colonize the ordering of power relations in our communities (2004).

The process of community building reveals the differences as well as the fragments of identity that tend to polarize communities. While the acceptance of others who seem different promotes tolerance for social and cultural diversity, consideration of how the social space of inclusion is defined in a community should also be made. Geographer Jerry Frug outlines three different types of community: (1) a heterogeneous community may contribute to misunderstandings through the exclusive application of its own cultural norms; (2) extreme heterogeneity can generate communication barriers and resentment; whereas (3) moderate heterogeneity promotes tolerance to diversity and develops conditions conducive to mutual learning and trust (1996, 1061). When we connect with communities of difference, ask questions, and reflect on the responses, we begin to decrease the barriers against communication and inclusion. I believe we can then begin to build communities based on principles of moderate heterogeneity that actively encourage public and mental spaces that will embrace difference through dialogue, story, and debate.

Planner Barbara Eckstein supports the use of story to unfold competing narratives of past, present, and future that inform and affect decision-making processes, arguing that storytelling is crucial in exploring and providing a sustainable urban future (2003, 14). The environment of diverse space may not always represent common interests or goals and will often entwine with a continuous flow of power dynamics. However, by creating spaces of respect and openness in research settings, planning processes, and community activities, I would argue that intersecting points of reason are created within theory and practice, enabling us to appreciate and recognize our differences on terms that are more equitable.

The Intersecting Points of Planning and Anthropology

Top-down planning initiatives, as well as planning processes that incorporate collective action, have both power and ability to create zones of exclusivity within social and built environments. Holston identifies these spaces as "zones of new racism" (1998), while Jane Jacobs notes that often the most powerful and dominant voices in development supersede the "interests of the common" and predominate in the decision-

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making outcomes of planning processes (1992). The proximity of political difference within community generates boundaries that often reinforce dominant voices within the process to keep the others in their place and distant from the process of inclusive decision-making outcomes (Craug 1998). However, by openly acknowledging our differences, we will begin to understand each other and ourselves more clearly (Rosaldo 1993). I support collaborative processes that recognize, acknowledge, and then address the power struggles and the production of difference that they generate. I believe these processes will foster a more realistic view of community, which will then facilitate further understanding of the multi-dimensional needs and aspects of community and sustainability requirements in our diverse social and built environments (Arnstein 1969; Holston 1998; McCann 2002; Miraftab 2004).

Where do the points of community planning and anthropological theory intersect? Are they competing bodies of knowledge, or can they complement and deepen understanding within each discipline? Are anthropological theory and methods too time consuming and too detailed to assist in the conceptual and technical aspects of planning? These are some of the questions that I ask myself as I sift through the theoretical texts in both fields, in preparation for exploring the relationship between planning and anthropology.

Anthropologists George E. Marcus and Michael M.J. Fischer explain a central concern in theoretical reflection: that any problems of description become problems of representation, which then form the basis of theoretical inspiration for interpretation in many disciplines (Marcus et al. 1999, 9). This is not to say that there should be a return to the Parsonian era of hegemonic frameworks that encompassed positivist research across disciplines through the homogenizing of research strategies with rigidly defined parameters, analysis, and directed research outcomes to justify dominant rhetoric (ibid.). In contrast, I contend that we can recognize, through cross-discipline academic research and collaborative efforts, that our world is changing—often more rapidly than we perceive. Theories, frameworks, and hypotheses arise for virtually every phenomenon known to human inquiry. We have relied on and applied principles of predictability, control, and objectification to increase progress, wealth, supremacy, and domination over

human lives, built environments and our natural surroundings. Traditional science has produced many "false certainties" with its embedded language, discourse, and practices that contribute to shaping dominant values (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). Moreover, we are producing societies geared towards end results, progress, and material wealth. Through neo-liberal provisions and market-driven consumerism, we are creating communities whose members disconnect from their own humanity at the cost of production.

Anthropologists Marcus and Fischer propose a theoretical perspective that links large-scale political and economic processes, spanning different locales, through ethnographic representation. They argue that ethnographic studies help to reveal the processes and activities of dispersed groups or individuals "...whose actions have mutual, often unintended consequences for each other," as they are connected to and influenced by the ideologies and practices of markets and major institutions (Marcus et al. 1999, 91). Their proposed research strategy pushes beyond traditional community site-specific research by combining ethnography with other analytic techniques to construct an analysis that links the everyday with macro political and economic forces. My own research suggests that institutional ethnography, complemented by the principles of community-based action research and processual analysis, also helps to provide a toolkit to uncover the everyday events and actions of individuals that link to the local and macro processes that inform planning decisions and outcomes.

Planners often focus on quantitative statistics, maps, and computer-generated models to explore and define community planning parameters and goals, while stories from the plan producers and end users are often lost in translation from social experience to quantitative, measurable form (Eckstein 2003, 14–15). Even when community storytelling is considered in the planning process, planners frequently convert stories into "lists of facts or neutral chronicles" that seldom include the emotional stories of individuals who continue to be marginalized or silenced in planning and development projects (ibid., 16). Sandercock argues that silenced narratives of socially and physically excluded communities exist in policy and planning processes because of oppression, marginalization, and the globalizing forces of culture, migration, and economics (1998). Through the employment of research strategies like processual analysis, social analysts

have the ability to move the dialogue about the politics of difference of these cultural borderlands to a central place within the research process (Rosaldo 1995), thus offering the community planning discipline a new way of seeing, knowing, and representing community spaces and of challenging technical and dominant stories of urban space that reproduce social exclusion (Sandercock 1998).

Spaces that recognize and make room for alternative expressions of development may also tend to produce feelings of perceived threat or conditions of fear by dominant discourse and powers that do not readily favour creative strategies to support emancipation and growth in organizational, social, and cultural realms (Friedmann 1992). John Friedmann concludes that the politics of alternative development require citizen participation to maintain and execute development projects that are socially, economically, and environmentally equitable and viable (ibid.). Dominant powers threatened by alternative development strategies often invest energy in maintaining control strategies to stabilize and protect their interests, which then reduces opportunities for alternative expressions of power to exist within development projects, thus, making it crucial to combine planning methods with creative, diverse strategies to challenge the debilitating forces of neo-liberalism, dominant social structures, and the negative impact they produce on the sustainability of community spaces (Landry 2000). Increasingly, public political pressures are expressing the need for local government to incorporate alternative local governance models that focus on community empowerment and participation initiatives (Campbell and Marshall 2003). The effectiveness of collaborative planning and collective action potentially offers multiple entry points of power and identity to analyze and incorporate the diverse needs and desires of community within planning and design processes.

Planning theorist Vanessa Watson asserts, "Despite some recent shifts in planning theory, the mainstream position in much of planning practices assumes—explicitly or implicitly—that there can be a set of universal values which informs ethical judgements" (2006, 39). She identifies these assumptions as having outcomes expressed through effective planning solutions such as new urbanism models, gated villages, competitive city strategies, and public service privatization without regard to the deep differences that

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exist within communities and urban spaces (ibid.). Planning processes that value process over product, argues Watson, are useful in challenging neo-liberalism's active promotion of market rationality (ibid., 42). Thus, it becomes important to enter into a process of reflection about the deepening differences that exist in community and in the meeting rooms of collaborative planning processes that generate power differences seldom acknowledged as critical to the outcomes of policy and planning processes (ibid.). Through not challenging the power dynamics and neglecting the outcomes of these processes, she claims, the new morality of neo-liberalism that asserts market rationality becomes the norm in attitude and practice (ibid.).

Watson calls for just planning and policy practices to generate forms of social and political organization that minimize the exploitation of labour, confront the politics of marginalization in a non-paternalistic way, create strategies to empower rather than deprive the oppressed of opportunities for self-expression, and foster sensitivity to issues of cultural imperialism in planning and design processes (ibid., 45). The shift in planning then takes a critical view of the conclusions of public debate and planning decisions, which will maintain recognition of the perspectives of many differently situated people (ibid., 44). I believe that anthropology research strategies complement this new shift in planning by recognizing the power of difference and representation that influence the development, use, and consequences produced through the built and social spaces of our urban landscapes.

Translating Technical Knowledge into Collaborative Space

Interdisciplinary understanding and application of planning and anthropological theory can unpack the socio-spatial relations of power and neo-liberalism. Stories of community and sustainability, gathered through ethnographic process, provide anthropologists, community development professionals, planners, and academics access to, and understanding of, the impact on individuals' lives impacted by neo-liberal forces. They also facilitate a respectful continuation of just planning and policy practices. This is supported by geographer Eugene McCann's position that in order to generate sustainable social and physical environments, alternative frameworks are required to

allow for critical discussion and the inclusive representation of processual, spatial, and political elements of development decision-making processes (2002).

Defining identity and reinforcing dominant interests are tangible expressions of power and place within built environments that produce barriers of politics, investment capital, physical space alterations, and reified rhetoric that maintain the power and position of dominant interests in physical design projects (Dubrow 1998). The politics of claiming and representing the connections between place and identity enmesh with defining whose sense of place is more powerful or expressive (Rose 1995). An example of the relationship between power and the politics of place is outlined by Jane Jacobs's analysis of the opposing agendas of the Spitalfield Market Redevelopment Project's planners, government, architects, and interest groups involved in the process (1996). She writes that the various interest groups in the process needed to move beyond the competitive cycle of production and consumption to a common ground of collaborative planning that equally regarded the competing viewpoints of all of the stakeholders involved in the process (ibid.). As demonstrated in the Spitalfield Project, it is evident we need to move beyond the womb stage of identity politics to the practice of coalition politics (Sandercock 1998). This new stage will require self-reflective and respectful participation and will actively recognize and represent the diverse socio-cultural and political interests and growing coalitions of voices who are actively striving toward sustainable transformation within our communities' economic, social, political and physical spaces.

Oftentimes, seeking diverse representation in the planning and design processes of built environments is more easily theorized than practiced (Sandercock 1998). Sociologists Anthony M. Orum and Xiangming Chen deem that architects hold the most power over the nature, definition, and outcome of places through the design of built environments (2003). This is supported by William H. Lucy's position that architects and engineers are most comfortable with site-specific planning projects that have clear boundaries, often limiting their consideration of the meaning-making processes of place within the broader scope of social, economic, political, and geographic phenomena that

directly impact on end use and communities for whom they are designing the buildings (1994, 9).

I can confirm some of Orum and Chen's argument from my own day-to-day work as a project planner, as I often sift through binders of site instructions and requests for information that function as texts of communication between the technical consultants and construction companies assigned to the project (Orum et al. 2003). The binders function as a communication channel that translates technical knowledge into field application, but I often wonder whether the binders would be so plentifully stocked with clarifications, justifications, and changes if the communication had been direct and collaborative among the owners, community, consultants, and the construction companies during the pre-planning phases of the project.

Therefore, I propose that a better strategy that incorporates elements of the patterned language or integrative design approaches that realign the power dynamics of planning and design processes be used to allow insurgent spaces for community voices and dialogue to be heard and incorporated into the desired outcomes. Planning and design processes shift from the central power of technical experts to share information and exchange with construction company representatives and the community of end users. This strategy was used in the pattern language approach as applied to the Britannia Community Centre Project (Dill et al. 1972) and the Swiss Case Study of Collaborative Planning in Environmental Management (Junker and Buchecker 2002). Community members in both projects had active roles in discussing, defining, and planning the built environments that they would be utilizing. Acknowledging power dynamics and outcomes is a part of this process, and thus the technical experts have some responsibility to ensure that multiple stakeholders and local and diverse knowledge(s) and experiences are not only considered, but also implemented in the design, building, and maintenance phases of development projects.

Drawing It All Together, the Sphere of Theoretical Spaces

The ontological premises of community-based action research, institutional ethnography and processual analysis echo the call for a shift in planning theory that

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makes room for difference and acknowledges change and power as pivotal in the production of space. Furthermore, these theories challenge critical anthropological theorists to embrace both theory and practice by providing room for community participation, room for representations of lived experiences with inquiry into the individual and community impact from ruling relations and power on the micro to macro scale, and room for the role of transformative action in the realm of research. Increasing public pressures are also communicating the necessity for local government to incorporate local governance models that focus on community empowerment and participation initiatives (Campbell and Marshall 2003). In summary, I believe that the application of anthropological theory and praxis uncovers the subtleties and nuances of individuals' lived experiences through ethnographic methods that account for the simultaneous interplay of the implicit and explicit meanings of place, power, and identity that provide multi-dimensional representation and theoretical analysis of our community's needs and sustainable socio-economy within planning and design processes.

The accelerating cascade of global economic and neo-liberal forces is reshaping our collective unconscious, replacing core values with values of profit, production, and end results (Berry, Conkling, and Ray 1997). The stories of our communities are rapidly being replaced with those generated through global consumer marketing strategies. We are creating a borderless world, but at the same time, we are generating cultural fault lines at the cost of human connectedness (Berry et al. 1997). I embrace the process to create connection on an individual, interpersonal, community, and global level. Through the creation of space for respectful dialogue, we can begin to process questions of disconnection and power-laden values that disenfranchise individuals throughout the world. To begin to ask the questions, individuals require opportunities to have their voices heard, their identities represented, and their meanings of place expressed in a respectful space. The mirror of difference can be replaced with a mirror of understanding through an action-oriented process, incorporating alternative theoretical strategies with practical experience that can empower ground-up political and transformative action.

Chapter 3:
Putting Methods into Perspective: The Emergence of Anthro-Planning?

As I sit and look out my window toward the mountains, I see a bright, sunny day. I feel clarity ebbing and flowing as I wrestle with the question of how to succinctly, in three sentences or less, describe my methods and motivation to study a community-generated planning process in a church organization. I feel the answer to these questions begins with my birth and transcends through the generations before me who helped shape who I am: my political positions, my political struggles, and my interests as a researcher and community member. Anthropologists David G. Bromley and Lewis F. Carter state that many of the contributors to their book about anthropological fieldwork in religious settings identify their research motivations as "journeys that had begun long before they had been aware of the path they were walking" (Bromley and Carter 2001, 30). I wrestle with a spatial and temporal palette I have not solely orchestrated alone, but created from a kaleidoscope of social experiences, family patterns, and transcending processes.

What is the entry point that defines my research? I close my eyes and hear the whine of the saw, the pounding of the hammer, and the roar of a concrete truck. As I reflect on the sounds of construction, they fade into the structure of the many buildings and processes that represent my cognitive map of experiences that shape the subject of my writing. Now, to the observer, the structure surrounding these sounds may seem starkly grey to the eye, as the hardened pillars of concrete walls and layers of slab are poured, and grey it is. It is in the grey that the in-between spaces lie—the points of intersecting power, identity, and place that juxtapose and converge into the social processes that are both expressive agents and subjects of power as they define and become defined through the structure and function of the building's presence. It is within these spaces, I feel, that anthropology meets construction and planning and represents the intersecting terrains of my research.

I remember my travels with my parents as a child. As we explored the Caribbean Islands, where my father was working in construction, I remember that we never stayed on the beaten path for very long. I remember driving around the winding roads of an

island in a small red rental car. I can still see the lush green hills and mountains that surrounded us. My father was driving. As we turned a corner, he suddenly braked, and we hit a makeshift peanut stand erected around the bend of the turn. We pulled over to the roadside, and my dad offered the man money for the damages and offered his help to repair his stand. I remember a little girl about my age standing by a shanty constructed of wood and cardboard. She liked the barrettes in my hair, which I shared with her. As my family and I explored the island villages, we observed rows of small shanties and saw people carrying water. I remember my mom gently touching my hand and leaning down to tell me quietly, "Remember what you see, and remember this is not right." What did that mean? She did not go into detail. Nevertheless, discussions of social justice and representations of working people were often topics of conversation with my family. Oh how they loved to talk and debate about current affairs. As a child, I would quietly listen to their critical discussions, observe my surroundings, and form my own independent, and at times, strong-willed thoughts of how I understood the world. I look back on my mom's comment, and I know that it was one of those moments that her comment did not really belong to her, but more so with me.

As I grew up, I, too, began a travelling migration for work. The memory of the islands would often register in my thoughts, and my mom's words would resonate in the places I would see. I wish I could say that I chose to focus on affordable housing and community sustainability, but I often wonder if the path chose me. Through my experiences of working with the Office of Native American Programs in the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, travelling and working in South America, and moving to Vancouver, there runs a consistent thread. No matter where I go, my observations keep leading me back to one critical research query: is the provision of safe, sanitary, and affordable housing one of the cornerstones of healthy communities? On another note, within these very separate and distinct environments that I have observed lies the same social tension of market interests and dominant rhetoric that override the social, economic, and environmental needs and interests of individuals, families, elders, children, and community. Moreover, these tensions manifest outcomes through the barriers and structures of built space.

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As I entered the field, I explored how to position myself within the anthropological methods I had chosen to employ. To gain my personal, academic, and professional bearings in the orchestration and orientation of my research position, I reached for the dialogue brought about through a selection of case stories of fieldwork conducted in religious settings by anthropologists Christel Manning, Nancy Tosh, and Benjamin Zablocki (Bromley and Carter 2001). Manning studies two distinct religious groups concurrently, requiring her to bridge boundaries and constantly reposition herself in two social worlds (ibid.). As I pursue my research, I am also continuously shifting roles among three cultures—those of an academic student, an employee in the construction industry, and a member of the UC community. As I review my field notes, the three worlds I am a part of also represent the varying interests and rhetoric of the stakeholders that I have observed throughout this planning process. I will be questioning the conventional perspectives of the technical professionals involved in construction and planning processes. I can personally attest to the gaps between professional knowledge and "on the ground" experiential knowledge of tradespeople in the construction industry.

On a personal front, I participate in my UC community because of my belief in developing inclusive and diverse communities with multiple meanings and expressions of living. I chose the UC as a place of worship for my children and I because I wanted to provide a spiritual environment that is supportive of our inter-faith background. As a graduate student, I search for the theoretical and methodological strategies that will best represent the research phenomena I am exploring, without re-representing the dominant rhetoric and structures that I am seeking to challenge. My research position generates by weaving in and out of these worlds through my daily experiences.

Researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues that a risk of insider research is that one has to "test" one's own taken-for-granted views about one's community in ethical and respectful ways that are both reflexive and critical (1999, 139). Smith believes that risks of insider research are decreased by applying neutral support structures to ensure that relationships, issues, strategies, and problems can be discussed and/or resolved (ibid.). I believe that it is a processual analysis in itself to reflect upon my researcher position while navigating my experiences as both outsider and insider in the in-between spaces of

the three cultures of my research interests. What is my researcher identity, and how does it shift with the changing events and organizations with which I work? How do I orient myself in my research? I observe multiple intersections in my life that shape who I am and how I position myself in my research. As Manning asserts, it was necessary for her to continuously negotiate the various researcher–group interest conflicts throughout her research process, in order to bridge the boundaries of the secular, academic world with the religious cultures she was studying (Bromley et al. 2001, 16). She states that in negotiating each culture's language, customs, and values, her ability as a researcher to maintain a "critical distance" varied (ibid.).

As an anthropology graduate student, I have chosen to employ anthropological methods in my research instead of traditional planning methods, because I believe that anthropology can help strengthen and challenge status quo planning practices to be more inclusive of the needs of community in construction and development processes. Anthropology methods also allow me as a researcher space for reflection to help navigate between the three realms of my fieldwork: school, work, and community. Three generations of construction-work history are in my blood, infused with male-dominated rhetoric seeping out from the sweat of the generations of working-class men in my family. I am the daughter of a Sicilian construction worker, the granddaughter of a Slavic construction worker, and the first female in my family to work in the predominately male-dominated construction industry. Brick by brick, I witnessed construction work providing a living for my family, providing walls around us for shelter, and often building walls between men and women in my family as justification for patriarchal dominance.

At the same time, my childhood created a rich, grounded experience that I would never trade and is the thread that keeps me working in the industry and with its people. I saw my family challenge systemic barriers to working-class families in long debates around the kitchen table about culture, politics, and labour union bargaining power. My family turned these concerns into political action by participating in our community, linking our dinner table debates with national and international events. From my roots, my researcher position is grounded in my desire to observe the everyday actions of the

communities among which I work. From this position, I can begin to focus on, identify, and unravel the implications of macro forces and market-driven politics on the role, function, and spirit of the organizations and the social and physical spaces where my research participants live, work, and worship. It is a process unfolding.

The qualitative researcher is not an objective, politically neutral observer standing outside the text, as Bruner notes, but a politically and locally situated all-too-human observer of the human condition (Lincoln and Denzin 2000). The observer's position influences observations and texts that are laden with knowledge and power (Rosaldo 1993, xiii). This is supported by anthropologist Ruth Behar, as she writes, "[w]e ask for revelations from others, but we reveal little or nothing of ourselves; we make others vulnerable, but we ourselves remain invulnerable" (Behar 1993, 273). This seems to be a sensitive area for social researchers as they struggle with the question of how to apply and value self-reflection in their work. Qualitative and ethnographic research, as defined by Behar, is a mixture or blur of complexities that cannot be contained by a single label, definition, or genre (ibid., 17). Behar states that as an anthropologist, she feels it is her obligation to give voice to others without being self-indulgent with her own (ibid., 331). However, in reviews of Behar's "The Biography in the Shadow" chapter in *Translated Woman*, there is some criticism that she revealed too much of herself and her "point of view" of her own experiences in relation to her ethnographic account of research participant Esperanza (1993, 35). The question raised is whether she overpowered the representation of Esperanza's experiences with the shadows of her own.

Anthropologist Phillip Salzman discusses the objectives that underlie ethnographic representation as "both conscious and unconscious" threads (1995). The shaping of ethnographic representations derives partially from the cultural background of the researcher and is defined by the relationships between the researcher and research participants and the temporal and spatial factors that condition the process and outcome of research (ibid.). So, to me, it seems that there may always be a shadowed existence of the researcher's position that both influences and rests within the "blurred zones" of a research process; however, it then becomes the researcher's choice whether to reveal his/her position and its dynamics within the research process. Ruth Behar states, "What

we cannot tell ourselves we know, what we have to repress of ourselves in the process of becoming educated, become the 'sanctioned ignorances' of our knowledge" (1993, 340). As Behar explores her ethnographic authority, she reflects on her experience of occupying a borderland place in dominant culture, and in doing so, how it feels when told "...at some point in your life that you didn't have what it takes to be an authority on, an author of, anything" (ibid., 340). To this end, I feel that research positions and methods that vary from the norm shouldn't be devalued for lacking credibility without first acknowledging the dominance of rhetoric both in academia and in the field that these alternatives seek to challenge—rhetoric which shapes both the language and actions of traditional research methodologies.

Researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes about indigenous peoples' experience of academic life and the reproduction of knowledge in schools and society (1999, 29). Smith states, "For indigenous peoples, universities are regarded as rather elite institutions which reproduce themselves through various systems of privilege" (ibid., 129). I feel that the alternative methodological frameworks that Smith reviews in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies* provide an opportunity for researchers to challenge and transform institutional and research frameworks that exclude community voices and a variety of knowledge(s) (ibid.). Smith argues that through the lack of respectful and reflective social research, objectified and power-laden representations of social relations prevail (ibid.). I feel that this goes beyond the halls of academia to reproduce in the field through the professions of technical experts, who have a significant role in the shaping and sustaining of our communities and environment.

When shifting the respect for alternative frameworks and the "voices from the borderlands" to the centre of critical, open, and innovative discussion, I feel that opportunities open for critical analysis of the societal barriers of development and knowledge. It is then that we can access the points of exclusion of individuals from full participation in community decision-making processes and channels to communicate the knowledge they already have (Smith 1999, 150; Rosaldo 1993, 112; Sandercock 1998, 78). Through my research, I hope to give room for alternative views and community

participation through the application of processual analysis, institutional ethnography, and community-based action research.

The Methodology of Processual Analysis

Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo asserts, "Processual analysis resists frameworks that claim a monopoly on truth" (1993, 93) by requiring that multiple perspectives be considered when studying culture. By employing processual analysis, I accessed the daily activities of the many individuals participating in the planning and construction areas where I was also an active researcher and participant. My participation allowed me an entry point as an academic researcher and community member. I was able not only to glance at the "daily rituals" of the communities with whom I was working, but to reflect on my own experiences at the point Rosaldo refers to as "the crossroads where life processes intersect" (ibid., 20).

My research position was both dynamic and intertwined in the terrains of my research as I shifted in and out of the spaces of my own daily activities. However, as Rosaldo points out, the use of personal experience as part of one's research analysis can be easily dismissed as lacking credibility (ibid., 11). In contrast to this criticism, Rosaldo chooses to reflect on his own fieldwork experiences, asserting that "the research topic, the ethnographer's personal account, and the critical analysis of anthropological method...simultaneously encompasses a number of distinguishable processes, no one of which cancels out the other" (ibid., 11). Often, planning, labelled as a community initiative, makes claims that the relationship between the critical dimensions of the project and the relationship to the community are considered, but really these processes often allow only certain individuals to author, to benefit from, or to administer the program. Therefore, I suggest that processual analysis provides opportunity for multiple perspectives from the periphery to move to the centre of research where connections between individuals and broader realms of ruling relations can be illuminated and further explored.

Rosaldo poses a question to his readers: "How valid would we find ethnographic discourse about others if it were used to describe ourselves?" (Rosaldo 1993, 49). He

illustrates this question throughout his book *Culture and Truth,* through processual anecdotes of his own experiences and those of the people he encounters in his life and research (ibid.). Rosaldo asserts that the problem of validity in ethnographic discourse is at a crisis point, as ethnographies of communities often misinterpret and lack exploration or narrative of the soft dynamics that set the tone and rhythm of the everyday lives of the individuals that are being observed (ibid., 49). Rosaldo believes that this point should not be interpreted as an issue of "real truth versus the ethnographic lie," but rather as an opportunity for critical discussion and inclusion of community members' input into the making and re-making of social analyses (ibid., 50). As the ethnographer translates and transforms everyday practices into anthropological writing, Rosaldo posits that "a gap remains between [the] technical idiom of ethnography and the language of the everyday life" (ibid., 51). The gap between technical and community knowledge(s) then yields a methodological tension between understanding culture as a network of informal practices or a tightly controlled and regulated system or a combination of both (ibid., 94). This tension became apparent in my research while exploring the ways in which the complex interactions of market interests, globalization, and privatization of government assets and services place demands and barriers on the processes of community sustainability, community outreach, and the provision of affordable housing in our region (Packer, Spence, and Beare 2002, 316–7).

Researchers Jasmin Packer, Rebecca Spence, and Emma Beare assert that as societies and communities further entangle within the webs of globalized forces, structural violence increases in economic and political hierarchies to privilege the few at the expense of many by limiting equitable access to services, power, and resources (2002, 317). Thus, entry points and methods of how to begin untangling these networks of privilege seem increasingly elusive (ibid., 317). The intersecting hierarchies of power strengthen and reinforce inequality; thus, Packer et al. assert that innovative and creative approaches to minimize, transform, and challenge the debilitating channels of power are required to increase community access to resources and services (ibid.).

In support of their position, Packer, Spence, and Beare describe a partnership model being employed in Australian community-based rural programs (2002). This

model begins with the recognition that different sectors in a community have access to different resources and channels of power; thus, networking among these sectors brings together representatives of each sector to establish links and relationships, to promote the sharing of resources to increase overall capacity to utilize resources, skills, and power (ibid.). Through the acts of information, skill, and power sharing, organizations are able to more effectively challenge the webs of institutional relations that are disempowering, marginalizing, and excluding to individuals (ibid., 317). However, Packer, Spence, and Beare warn that groups within the private sector have exploited the partnership model to gain further access to and power over community. Thus, the utilization of a partnership model in sustainable development should include measures of trust and accountability to ensure effective and responsible initiation (ibid.). As community groups gain more voice and recognition within community development processes, governments are required to share power with communities in decisions concerning allocation of resources and services. This process also furthers the capability to include and engage individuals in the ownership and effectiveness of the programs and outcomes within their own communities.

I feel that the community development case study in Australia demonstrates how the gaps in technical knowledge are identifiable and how research methodologies integrated with the knowledge(s) of community. By identifying the gaps and integrating knowledge from multiple sources, one is able to encompass and embrace the in-between spaces that provide meaning to the interplay of the social relations networks that constitute the cultures and communities in which we work, live, and research. Through incorporation of multiple visions of community and perspectives, I envision ethnographic narratives moving around and within the messiness and layers of social relations, thus increasing the capacity, as Rosaldo suggests, to generate a social space where creativity can flourish (1993, 112). By doing so, we can seek to work beyond a master narrative to generate models that represent multiple stakeholders involved in the process to move beyond dichotomies of the dominated and dominating to a realm that incorporates the politics of the subaltern (ibid. 1995, 136). Thus, we can begin to view sustainability in

practical and realistic terms, rather than as a marketing tool to further the political and monetary gain of a select few within the development realm.

The Methodology of Institutional Ethnography

Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith employs institutional ethnography through research methods that focus on local-level, concrete experiences of individuals in relation to extra-local linkages of power (Grahame 2004). Encouraging the incorporation of the middle voice within processes builds awareness of how a system that one is researching operates within the researcher's critique and how the social actors understand their experiences within the complex social systems in which they are involved (Fortun 2001, 38). Smith employs institutional ethnography as a method that restores "the presence of active subjects who are knowers of their everyday worlds" (2004, 187), thus providing a critical entry point into the multiple forms of coordination between individuals and broader realms of institutional discourse and ruling relations. This strategy illuminates the web of power relations by utilizing experience as data to make the analysis accountable to the everyday lives as encountered by the individuals in the research setting (Campbell 2004, 216). Social relations position and embed within the discourse and action of participants. Therefore, the task of the institutional ethnographer comprises the searching, understanding, and description of connections between the sites of experience and organization (ibid., 211). Campbell argues that experience is not authoritative, but rather, through a series of observations, provides understanding of how individuals' lives are intersected by organizational discourse, while also leading to understanding the "contesting discourses" that sometimes override, silence, or become dominant in social relations (ibid., 216).

Institutional ethnography uses participant observation and document analysis as its primary research methodologies. Documents are not objects of positivist query, but function as entry points into the understanding of the social relations that function in the research setting (Campbell 2004, 207). In conjunction with processual analysis and community-based action research, institutional ethnography provides a methodological strategy to ground understanding in local experiences through a variety of entry points.

However, I have some reservations about institutional ethnography, as I feel it almost tries to snap research into a compartmentalized actor (institution–person interaction) and space–time frame that is manageable to handle, yet on some level, and at the same time, constrains alternative views. The alternative views may object to the course of its argument or may go unrecognized due to the fact that ethnographic interviews are not favoured in this methodology. Critique aside, I recognize the value of institutional ethnography. But I also recognize that it has limiting qualities to my own research, because I would not have been able to gather the in-depth information that I wanted with document analysis and participant observation alone, especially since the planning process changed from a general committee to a sub-committee function. Therefore, I felt it crucial to incorporate interviews as a method to uncover the deeper meanings and tensions existing within my research questions and within the research participant's perspectives.

From my own observations and interviews, the compartmentalization of what and who I am researching is far from being neat and tidy, nor do I accept compartmentalizing my research into the confines of institutional ethnography methodology requirements. The soft dynamics and subtle nuances of the personal interactions I have observed are, too, part of the process. As geographer Doreen Massey points out, "It is space not time that hides consequences from us" (1994). Although I do support elements of the institutional ethnography methodology, I conclude that institutional ethnography is most effective when combined with complementary methods. Therefore, to embrace institutional ethnography as a stand-alone research method seems far too constraining to me. Thus, I have chosen to employ its methodology in conjunction with those of processual analysis and community-based action research.

The Methodology of Community-Based Action Research

In some community research settings, it may be difficult for the ethnographer to gain support from the people he/she researches without also becoming their advocate in the issues that are being researched (Salzman 1995). Salzman adds that ethnographers must guard against the tendency to "go native" and become advocates for their subjects,

because they risk losing credibility (ibid.). In an effort to not reproduce this tendency, I have found that community-based research methods that employ social learning can help prevent researchers from speaking for and overpowering the voices of the community research participants.

Planner Leonie Sandercock asserts that the social learning approach has been a powerful tool in community organizing and planning, as it strives to work with and from the perspective of the participants, directly contrasting advocacy planning models that work on behalf of poor communities (1998, 82). The focus of social learning is on allowing the professional planner a role in working with communities in ways that will empower and "enable communities to do things for themselves" (ibid.). Both community-based research and social learning methods rely on moving "personal/experiential knowledge" to the centre of research, a move that often challenges the premise and position of expert/processed knowledge in what Sandercock refers to as a "crisis of knowing" (ibid., 95). She describes this shift in planning as one from a document-oriented to a transactive relationship between planner and community, in which planning becomes less about what planners know and how they solve problems, and more about opening up debate and allowing for critical discussion of structural inequalities and the distribution of power, opportunity, and resources (ibid., 95–7).

Community-based action research also works with a radical pedagogy that challenges binaries and divisions with its focus on receptive and reciprocal dialogue between scholars and communities (Carroll 2006, 241). Sociologist William K. Carroll states that community-based action research "...recognizes the practical need to create an awareness and capacity among subaltern groups as to how they can liberate themselves" (2006, 241). Through deliberative actions, coalitions are formed, and as Sandercock states, coalition politics contribute to an environment where "forging coalitions...force us to move out of that safe place with our own people, and to build a bridge" (1998, 121). However, as Carroll notes, without consistent commitment to democratic empowerment, action research can become a reproduced form of social control (2006). Therefore, Carroll states that the full participation of the community is crucial in order to democratize knowledge and erode the elitist boundaries of rhetoric that disempower and

disconnect knowledge from action (ibid., 241). Community-based action research methods also allow for the individuals and insider researchers to share in the production of the research knowledge of their communities (ibid., 241–2).

Throughout my research, the organization I was working with was participating in a vision and planning process for building affordable housing. We gathered information through collaborative efforts and multiple sources to assess the housing needs of the area, rezoning requirements, and funding options. Resulting from this and other ongoing research within the organization, a conscious effort continues to challenge current social policies in the province by actively supporting a social justice mission through community outreach and legal advocacy services and continued planning and assessment for the provision of a multi-use building with affordable housing.

As seen in the partnership model employed in the Australian case study by Packer, Spence, and Beare, the disempowering effects of globalization were addressed not merely by forging an overarching partnership agreement, but rather by visioning together, engaging participation, and making conscious, consistent decisions to let go of monolithic control over programs, resources, and services (2002, 325). Packer, Spence and Beare explain how, through mutual recognition, the individuals involved in the partnership employed this process as a pathway to independence and sustainability rather than to outside control. The authors' conclusion states, "Despite differences in organizational cultures, the two partners worked to establish a solid and sustainable relationship" (ibid., 325). I feel that the discourses of sustainability must move far beyond the technical guises of privilege as we face the economic, political, and environmental outcomes of globalization on every local street corner. I also feel that we, the research community, need to move beyond the narrowed perspective of privileged knowledge to embrace and engage the politics of interdisciplinary action and subaltern views within our ethnographic representations of the cultures and communities with which we work.

The Making of an Ethnography: The Application of Methods

Participant Observation

According to social researchers Alan Bryman and James J. Teevan, participant observation and ethnography are often difficult to distinguish, because both use the method of immersing the researcher in a group or culture for an extended period of time (Bryman et al. 2005, 142). Through participant observation, the researcher observes behaviour, listens to and engages in discussions, asks questions, and collects research data. Social scientist Bruce L. Berg states that both qualitative and quantitative researchers strive to maintain a value-neutral position and to observe the world around them as "external investigators" (2001, 140). However, he holds that the external investigator wields a positivist approach that reproduces a "façade of value neutrality" (ibid., 140). By maintaining a façade of neutrality, the researcher may also prevent oneself from examining one's own beliefs and cultural assumptions (ibid., 141). Therefore, many social researchers employ research methodologies that strive for active listening and participation with the individuals in the research setting, thus humanizing the research process to provide opportunity for the participants and researcher to reflect on their own thoughts through the participant observation process (ibid., 140).

Participant observation proved a valuable methodology in the collection of data from my research processes. Participant observation lent perspective to the social practices, dynamics, and actions involved in the meetings between community members and technical experts involved in the collaborative planning process, as well as in the conferences I attended. However, there were also critical ethical issues surrounding the provision of informed consent to the participants in the UC planning meetings. I received pre-approval from the church planning committee to pursue my research proposal based on interest in observing the planning meetings. I provided written information in a consent form about the focus of the study, any implications of participation, information about data collection, and the right for participants to review the transcripts that I have generated from the meeting minutes and interviews. I also made myself available to answer any questions that participants may have had about the collection, analysis, and production of the data in relation to my fieldwork. Furthermore, the planning meetings

were not isolated to one event, but rather were a series of committee and sub-committee meetings, requiring an ongoing process of informing and renegotiating the comfort level and informed consent of new participants at each step of the research.

Interviews

My participant observation provided a clear entry point into my research and generated initial information that I developed into a more formal query through an interview process. I chose to interview individuals both from the organization in which I was a participant and those involved in the planning discipline, construction industry, and community sustainability movements in the Lower Mainland to gain multiple perspectives about my research issues. I initially planned to limit my research to participant observation and discourse analysis. However, when the planning process shifted to a sub-committee function, it limited the number of people participating and required my direct involvement in the work I was to observe. Therefore, it became evident through the analysis of documents and the shift in the planning process that interviewing church personnel and individuals working in the planning, design, and construction fields would help yield the information I was seeking to uncover in my research questions.

My main research questions formed a general framework for a set of open-ended interview questions. I also utilized my participant observation, attendance of research-related conferences, literature review, and discourse analysis activities as points of entry into developing my research questions and discussions with participants about the meaning, relation, and discourses of power and representation within the tension of social processes and built environments in planning and development processes.

I actively acknowledged the power of representation and my research position during the interview processes. With this in mind, I shared the transcripts from my interviews and research processes with the participants to ensure accurate representation of their voices. I also felt doing so helped to include multiple perspectives in the generation of the transcript, acknowledged the transcript as an "active and creative process" (Forbat and Henderson 2005, 115), and helped to address the re-representation

issues in the generation of my data findings. I then employed the data collected from the interviews as part of my data analysis, which helped to support and challenge the discourse that I had analyzed in the technical and organizational documents generated during the research process. The interview guide is included in the appendix of this thesis.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Sociologist William K. Carroll refers to "discourse as much more than printed text but also as a full range of practices, structures, and media that saturate our world and ourselves with meaning" (2004, 225). Carroll explains how researcher Nancy Fraser has utilized discourse to understand four things: (1) how people's social identities are formed and altered over time, (2) how, under conditions of inequality, social groups as collective agents are formed, (3) how discourse can illuminate ways in which cultural hegemony of dominant groups is secured and contested, and (4) how discourse can initiate understanding and action in social change and political practices (Fraser 1997 as cited in Carroll 2004, 225). As Carroll argues, "deconstruction [of texts] can be a powerful tool in the efforts to overthrow dominant ideas" (ibid., 227).

A critical element in research analysis is to discover who makes the decisions in organizations, how these decisions are made, and who controls the decision-making processes (Preece 2002, 23). Social researcher Julia Preece describes the use of discourse analysis in exploring citizenship and governance issues by tracing how power is manifested and communicated through the use of language, behaviour, structural systems, and internalized meanings (Preece 2002, 23). The understanding of power linkages increases through the review of text and institutional systems. The way people interpret multiple meanings from conflicting discourses also directs how people develop their own sense of agency and reified beliefs (ibid.). Thus, it becomes important to look beyond what appears normal and to develop an analytic framework which sees interpretation in relation to context.

I utilized the discourse analysis of policy papers, media coverage, and planning documents to help bring forth more understanding into the multiple dimensions of

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relationships and outcomes in my data findings. I employed my main research questions as a framework for the discourse analysis, thus linking main themes that emerged through the research data, technical planning documents, organizational texts, and media coverage. The discourse analysis method birthed a patterned language of its own as multiple texts intersected, challenged, and at times overpowered the "subaltern" views within the process. A dialogue or conversation emerged through the crossover and comparison of discourse, which provided an entry point for further analysis or a foundation for interview questions. I feel it is in the crossing of boundaries between texts or the in-between spaces of multiple texts that light is shed on paths for discourse analysis to help synthesize multiple research strategies. Doing so, I conclude, allows the researcher to enter the mental and physical spaces of knowledge production in the terrain of dominant discourse, systems of ruling, and the spaces of alternative action.

Bridging Anthropology and Planning on Ethical Grounds

When I began my research, I soon realized that I was exploring not just one area of research dynamics, but three intersecting terrains: work, school, and community. Anthropologist George E. Marcus describes a methodological trend that is emerging, one that moves ethnography from conventional single-site locations to multi-site complex constructions that crosscut dichotomies on a local to global scale (1995, 95). Interdisciplinary research studies are incorporating multi-sited ethnography methods, which test the traditional limits of ethnography, illuminate the power of fieldwork, and offer opportunity to include the perspectives of the subaltern (ibid.). The design of multi-site research centres around paths, threads, or juxtapositions of locations connected through the ethnographer's physical presence and/or connection among research sites that aid in defining the ethnographic argument (ibid., 105). However, this type of ethnography produces representations that often require translation from one cultural idiom or language to another (ibid., 100). My multi-site research sites included multi-level, neo-liberal frameworks, community-level reactions to the neo-liberal tensions produced by market-driven politics, and the community-level reactions to dominant rhetoric within the planning, design, and development of construction projects in the

Lower Mainland. As I travelled among the physical, social, and rhetorical spaces of work, school, and church, I realized that I was transferring experience, knowledge, and inquiry to each site. Thus, it became impossible to isolate my research to only one place, as all three were intersecting pathways to the research questions I was raising about the provision of affordable housing and sustainable planning practices.

Non-academic, practicing anthropologists do research for, communicate with, and may also be paid by the communities that they are providing research services for, which can be compared to the work of planning professionals in many ways. Practicing anthropologists are expected to provide advice based on their research findings; therefore, they are considered service-providing professionals whose recommendations guide actions and decisions. However, there remains an important link between academia and practicing anthropologists. Maintaining a relationship with academic realms of ethics and standards I feel helps to support Renato Rosaldo's caution to ethnographers, namely to refrain from applying their own categories and experiences recklessly to members of another culture (Rosaldo 1993, 10). With this in mind, I ensured that the participants' voices were being represented as accurately as possible by providing them access to transcripts and findings for their review and editing of those portions of the transcripts that represent their voices and positions in the research. The sharing of transcripts also provided opportunities to recognize new categories of constructed knowledge based on local reality and the voices of community.

Through the methodologies I employed, my eyes were continuously opened to my own researcher position in my analysis. For example, as the journey developed, what I had believed initially to be a committee-generated process of technical document authorship soon became a function of a small sub-committee in which I was actively involved and for which I helped to co-author the grant application and correspondence required for the City of Vancouver zoning process. I became acutely aware that this vested my participation as both the author and subjective researcher/observer in this process. I am keenly aware of how easily communities can be misrepresented and used as tokens in political debate to promote certain interests ahead of others at the cost of the community. Therefore, I also communicated and forwarded my findings directly to the

UC community. Through self-reflection, I recognized that the knowledge gained from the research participants, texts, and from myself through my field notes and transcripts is positioned, subjective, and value-laden. Focusing solely on the planning process but neglecting the outcomes of the research project would have also created a set of ethical questions and barriers.

Anthropology and Geography: Building Bridges of Action

Geographer Eugene McCann argues that the geographical structures of local urban economies are being reoriented by the restructuring of space, economy, and institutions (McCann 2001, 207). McCann discusses his involvement in a public–private planning initiative in Lexington, Kentucky, and describes the political struggles of discourse and action between planners and interest groups throughout the process. He states that he and his colleagues employed ethnographic methods, including participant observation, to provide first-hand observations that would clarify the meaning and role of the varying interests in the process (ibid., 209). Individuals participated directly in a series of 50 planning meetings; formal and informal interviews were conducted; and document analysis was performed on newspapers and government, corporate, and census documents. McCann linked his local findings to the emerging shift in the planning profession, which has focused on the restructuring and increasing permeability of institutional boundaries of planning through the privatization and outsourcing of planning services and consultants (ibid., 209). He asserts that this shift has widened the definition "of who in society has the qualifications and power to plan" (ibid., 209) and defines the use of ethnographic methodologies as part of the implementation of new collaborative planning techniques (ibid., 215).

Through review of the research methodologies employed by McCann and his colleagues in comparison to the methods that I used in my research, I am confident in proposing that there is a place for anthropology methods in planning, or perhaps even the emergence of anthro-planning—one that also widens the definition of the role and function of anthropology in increasing inclusion of multiple interests and voices within planning and vision processes, as well as in academic research. Through different

disciplines, we arrive at similar methodological standpoints, thus shining light on the multiple perspectives in academic research, in fieldwork, and in planning and development processes.

The anthropological research strategies I employed complement the new shift in planning described by McCann by recognizing power differences in the representation of planning practices that impact the development, use, and consequences produced through the built and social spaces of our urban landscapes (McCann 2001). Interdisciplinary understanding and the combined applications of anthropology and planning methods can help to unpack the socio-spatial relations of power and neo-liberalism to provide room for innovative and creative processes of community sustainability and planning. In summary, I hope that by bridging anthropology and collaborative planning methods, academia will be challenged to increase interdisciplinary discussion and participation in the multi-facets of sustainability discourses.

Chapter 4:
The Sustainable Spirit of Community

I woke up to my alarm and looked out the window of the dormitory at the view of the Presbyterian College Grounds on the McGill University campus in Montreal, Quebec. I was attending a UC conference called Faith in the City. The conference was about generating community sustainability from the margins or membranes of community, about the role of church in community, and about bringing forward the dialogue and actions required to put these ideas into practice. I made my way outside the dormitory to head toward the YWCA building where the conference was and, deciding to experience Montreal public transit, I opted out of a shared cab ride with other conferees. The rainy and windy Montreal day would not deter me from my commitment to decrease my auto dependency while attending a sustainability conference. Ah, I thought, this will be my personal effort to put a commitment to sustainability into action. However, when I got off the first bus to wait for the next bus exchange, it never arrived. Looking at the elapsed time, I began walking the rest of the way, and I walked, and walked, and walked.

In retrospect, I am very grateful I walked, because I saw more of Montreal from that sidewalk than I did during the entire three days of the conference. I saw four periods of architecture just in one block; on each building front, I saw signs and symbols in both French and English; and everywhere, I saw the hustle of people entering and exiting the buildings and making their way up the grand boulevard, just as I was. The expansive cathedrals and a museum of architecture loomed over the community spaces built in between. As I approached the downtown core, the urban landscape was filled with skyscrapers, financial institutions, and the hustle of the morning commute. There were children in Catholic school uniforms and people wrapped up in blankets curled up on the steps of the grand cathedrals. Walking along the boulevard, I observed the full spectrum of the local economy, and the rich mix and diversity of the many peoples who have gathered from all over the world and who call Montreal home. I came to the conference hoping to find some answers to my question about the role of spirituality in sustainability, but I left with much more than an answer to my academic query.

In review, the three primary purposes of my research have been (1) to explore the relationship between the stakeholders (technical experts and community members) involved in the collaborative planning process of a new construction and development process for a community organization, (2) to observe the proposed planning outcomes as they are discussed, decided upon, and achieved during this process, and (3) to identify how collective measures of sustainability of the organization are generated in this process, while also challenged by neo-liberal forces, in the efforts to meet the diverse needs expressed by the organization and surrounding communities.

Finding(s): The Starting Point

UC entered into a vision and planning process to consider the construction and/or redevelopment of their existing building in order to facilitate increases to programs and community outreach currently provided by the organization. During the period of my research, it seemed that the planning process at the church took on a life of its own and a new direction; in other words, a direction not as outlined or anticipated in my prospectus.

At the start of my research, I began with an assumption (that is, an educated guess) based on academic and field experience about some of the possible answers to my research questions. However, it did not take long to realize that the research process itself is layered with just as many levels of power, identity, and place as those I was seeking to uncover in the main research question itself. The following research findings include excerpts from the interviews I conducted, conferences I attended, and discourse analysis that I completed, all of which helped me to unravel the layers of social reality that intertwine in the research itself.

Community Outreach

Community outreach is an integral part of the mission at UC, and the free community meal, offered weekly, is a gathering of communities of need, support, and fellowship. In preparation for the meal, the community outreach worker explains that she first puts out the menu, children's toys, bags of bread, and any other donated items for the community to access. She notes that people start arriving around 4:15 p.m., even though

the meal is not served until 5:30. "I think they enjoy the comradeship with each other," she says. "Before and during the meal, I walk around and meet and greet people. I try to acknowledge everyone and converse with those who want to engage in a conversation. Some indicate that they want to be left alone." When asked about the needs she has seen in the community, the Community Outreach worker states,

> *The need for community—a place where one can come to feel comfortable and welcome, to bring your sorrows or find someone to talk to. A need for an environment where people can come to visit, and not just with staff. The community meal is secondary, and community and interaction is primary. A lot of people's lives are heavy, and I feel it is important to have a place for comradery and lightness. I think food is a huge issue. There are a lot of people struggling to make ends meet. Housing is a huge issue—people moving from awful accommodation to another awful place.*

The community outreach worker I spoke with stated that she came from a very socially active family. Her mom was part of the Status of Women organization, and both of her parents worked for the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation party. She completed her degree in nursing at UBC and has worked in public health; she also taught pediatric nursing. When raising her own family, she was actively involved in parent participation preschools with her own children. Having aging parents live with her, both of whom have dealt with health concerns, helped her become more in tune with seniors' needs, she added. She worked at First United Church in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside for eight years as a visiting minister and community worker in programs for women in housing projects, mental health, seniors, and people living with disabilities. She stated, "It was a very high curve of learning time for me, and the people were great. I learned a lot of just how 'to be.' I learned about myself."

Through the years, she continued to work with the United Church, and a few years ago, she accepted a position at UC as a community outreach and seniors worker. I asked her what social aspects are necessary in creating a supportive environment:

> *When I think of the community meal, people first of all need to feel safe, a place where they are not discriminated against and they are physically safe. I think the environment has to be welcoming so people feel like they have a safe place. Staffing is important; it does not have to be paid staff, but the people in the environment should hold the welcoming philosophy. For example, I feel strongly about not banning people. It is very important to have a non-critical, non-judgmental attitude. I think the leadership has to hold strong to that.*

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She relayed how this philosophy is put into action at the church's weekly community meal:

> *The community meal is the biggest gathering, and the children's area is very well used. There was a significant influence on the social development of both volunteers and participants at the community meal when both the "guests" and congregational volunteers worked side by side to prepare and serve the meal during the summer when Aunt Leah's group were on holiday. It was an adjustment when we went back to using Aunt Leah's. I think that opportunities are good when it is not just us serving the community but being a part of the community. I have had to support some of the community members to be able to let go of their duties in the kitchen when Aunt Leah's youth returned.*

Aunt Leah's Independent Lifeskills Society provides meal preparation and food service training to community youth at various locations in Greater Vancouver. They have been actively involved in providing meals at the church through the years; however, the program does not operate during the summer months, so UC has organized community volunteers to help ensure that the meal is offered throughout the year.

I asked the outreach worker what type of physical space she would envision being supportive to the social processes that she had described:

> *I think for me, it is always a balance of creating a welcoming and warm space, but practical. Providing a clean space can be a challenge. Some of the people that come may have issues with hygiene, so it may be hard on the furniture. Therefore, easily cleaned, yet comfortable furniture is important. The fact that the church's doors are almost always locked is a problem as far as being a welcoming place. I'm not sure how we can change the situation. How can we provide enough safety for those who work here and not have to have so much "lock up"? Presently, a person has to ring the door bell to get in, and at that moment, a certain message is conveyed. I would love this to be a space where people can just come in to sit down and read a newspaper. I think it would be important to have equipment like computers that people could use for practical reasons or even to play solitaire. Many of the rooms where people stay are not pleasant to hang out in. Some of the seniors could come here on a regular basis. We could be a place that is not too far to go to, and a place where the teapot is always on.*

The underlying themes of the community outreach worker's approach seem to focus on hospitality to generate and nurture community. I asked if she felt that the church would be duplicating services already offered in the community. She states, "I was thinking that I would love for us to move away from an emphasis on emergency food to be more of a community place. I struggle with whether we are trying to duplicate." However, she

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states, "The church has the ability to provide programs such as meditation, Bible study, and conversation about spiritual concerns which would not be laid upon people but available to people when they are using the space." When speaking about how these social elements could be incorporated into the physical design of new space, she states,

> We need a large room for a community meal, but most importantly, rooms like this which are comfortable, with appealing flooring, where people could meet in smaller groups. There should be meeting rooms where there could be advocacy group education sessions [e.g., tenancy rights], or parenting groups with a place or room that is equipped with toys for children so they can walk in and know it is for them—maybe glass between rooms so parents can see the kids. Consideration needs to be given to safety, such as two doors so there is more than one route when needed. This could give feelings of safety for both the leadership and people participating.

When asked about the value of volunteerism in the programs that UC offers, she replies,

> I do speak of volunteers, but when I talk about it, it really is congregation members. When we talked about self-reflection, I see it as the consistent inward–outward movement of connecting with your spirit, yourself, and the world, and seeing the world through the understanding of God's eyes. People [volunteers] who are participating in programs need to have the training so they feel comfortable. Non-violent communication training is good....Also, it is important to have the time for group conversation to analyze what is going on, opportunities for debriefing, and try to see situations in the broadest perspective and appreciation. UC is built upon a strong sense of volunteerism and commitment by the members of the congregation, as community outreach and mission are the cornerstones of their faith statement.

I asked her if she sees the need for planners to embrace awareness and collaboration with diverse communities in increasing the understanding of the different social, cultural, and economic needs of communities and, if so, why? She states,

> I think it is important that the spaces that people are in somehow reflect who they are. I was just listening to the radio this morning, and they were talking about whether Indian food [in Vancouver] has been changed to suit the white person's palate. How do we create a space that does not just look like a Caucasian-oriented space? How do our spaces reflect different cultures and abilities? What is the message we are conveying when we put something up on our walls? Or even the type of tea we serve? I became very aware of this at coffee time, and out of a lot of the Chinese who came to tea, one person finally spoke up and asked if there was any Chinese tea. It is only through collaboration with diverse communities that we can learn to understand what their needs truly are. This

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takes the willingness to take the time for collaboration, which can be a long process.

When asking her if she feels that there is more work that needs to be done around these issues in the congregation, she states,

> *Yes, I think a good start happened, but now with changes there is more to be done. It is interesting—I think that a lot of talks went on during the time of amalgamation of the three churches about how to bring different communities together. It almost feels like there needs to be another round of this, maybe the visioning of the building will be this. Maybe it will be important for us to revisit what our values and dreams are.*

The community outreach worker I interviewed recently retired. She was given a beautiful handmade pottery tea set as a parting gift from the UC congregation. Her efforts and commitment to welcoming hospitality are definitely missed by those who worked with and around her. However, her shoes have been filled by the part-time community advocate, who is also an integral and dedicated member of the UC staff and mission for community outreach and social justice.

Community Advocacy

When I asked the UC community advocate about her background and interests that she had acquired prior to accepting the position at the church, she stated,

> *My initial involvement in this area began in 1993; I volunteered at a local rape and crisis shelter. I was involved for ten years—on call, volunteer, and staff. I worked with women needing to apply for welfare and housing. From there, [I held] a contract position with BC Advocacy Centre, completing advocacy for certain groups [e.g., advocate for general access to a telephone]. Now they are very active in changes to the Welfare Act and inconsistent welfare practices. They are working as a flagship for a coalition of groups. Directly from that job, I worked as a legal assistant for a lawyer who was quadriplegic, and I did a lot of her physical work. I applied for this job at the same time the other job ended. I learned a lot more at the women's centre about community advocacy than at PIAC [Public Interest Advocacy Centre].*

When asking her about what she saw as the primary needs of the people with whom she works, she replied,

> *People need to have higher incomes, whether that means raising the welfare rates or minimum wage, and access to affordable housing. People working are finding it hard to pay rent. People just getting by are finding it hard to make it. The*

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frequent services I offer are (1) applications for disability and related benefits, (2) applying and maintaining eligibility for welfare, and (3) housing (which is outgrowing other areas—looking for a place to live or looking for an affordable place to live).

How do you see the outlook for meeting people's housing needs in the Lower Mainland?

I feel the outlook is very grim. The rents are going up and up. There is a legislated rent increase that can be applied each year for between 3 and 4%. If you are paying more than 50% of your income for rent, it can break you. Typical housing occupancy is beyond the size of the family. For example, a single mom with three kids is living in a two-bedroom suite, and the mom is sleeping in the front room. There are 15,000 families on the BC housing list and a 5–7 year waiting list for housing. People who make an effort to obtain affordable housing are making the effort, but sitting on waiting lists.

Are you hopeful this will change?

Strangely enough, I am. If the situation gets much worse, it is going to become intolerable. It will become a shame for the government not only at the international but at the local level. We are shifting from a housing crisis to a housing emergency. It is going to have to be addressed as a human health and child welfare issue.

What is happening with the families?

A lot of people are supplementing their income with charities: food banks, community dinners, trying to make the difference for money that should go into living and food expense. They are living under enormous stress. People are forced to live in housing that will not meet building code, filled with mould, insects, vermin, structurally not sound, and bedrooms without windows. There is a lot of housing that is just not big enough for the family.

I asked her if she feels that she has seen any inclusive movement from government(s):

Not really. I think that the greatest movement is at the municipal level. The impact will be felt first at the city level. Too many people are living on the streets and using streets as bathrooms. Municipalities have the best idea of the reality of these situations but also have the least authority and resources to do anything about it. Most of the money for housing is at the federal level, and that money has been cut. The funds do not come to the province, and at the provincial level, there seems to be an obvious lack of political will. A lot more pressure is being put on federal government from all areas of Canada and being set up [but] perhaps not through [the] province.

What would you like municipal planners to know about the current housing crisis?

Reinforcing what a couple of other groups have been calling for, Affordable Housing Coalition linked to Raise the Rates Association, and on their Web site they quote all of the city bylaws that can be enacted to do repairs and seizure of

property if repairs are not completed. Pivot Legal Society is calling for a moratorium to not knock down any more SROs [single room occupancies]. They estimated that we need 1,000 social housing units built between now and 2010. If not done, the homeless rate will triple. Our last homeless count was at 1,000, and if measures are not enacted, Pivot predicts the rate will triple. The next homeless count will be in 2008 and overseen in the GVRD. In regards to SRO hotels, the city has authority, when the buildings fall into disrepair, to call for repairs or complete the repairs and seize the building for reimbursement of the costs. The city is not using these bylaws. They have the right to take over the building if the owner does not take care of it. If they used this, the city would own a lot of the SROs, and they would be better run....It is astonishing that one of the poorest areas of Canada has one of the highest land values. It is a vicious cycle. Also, all of the funding cuts at the provincial level don't help.

What are the gaps in providing advocacy in southeast Vancouver?

I'm the only advocate in southeast Vancouver. Once you get out of Vancouver, there are hardly any advocates. There is one advocate in New Westminster who gets calls from Maple Ridge. This was part of the rationale to put the office here. In addition to advocacy, we need a housing outreach worker—someone who literally takes people by the hand, to help those who do not have the skills, a clean set of clothes, or experience in filling out housing application forms. I think if someone was doing just that job, it would lessen my client load. Then I would be able to help them with arbitration, and I could give over the housing referrals. Residential tenancy/housing concerns is growing and is at least 25% of my appointments for the last three years; the majority of my work lately has been housing. I have a feeling that I received most of my housing calls in the last quarter of 2006. The number of cases has gone up 9% in 2005, from 8.8% growth in 2004. That is really a pattern. It has grown significantly. When I go on my shift [at another congregation], there are a lot more homeless people. I hear people say all the time, "I need to get inside." I see at least four people during each shift that have housing concerns. It could be a basement suite, SRO—at least it is inside.

How do you do it, if there are so many people coming in that need housing and there are so few options?

Some people are homeless because of choices. They want to stay in Kitsilano, they are not drug-involved; or they were, and they see the Downtown Eastside as a step back. They have a community in Kitsilano and do odd jobs, do binning or bottle collection, and that is their income. There is one person living in a parking garage with the full knowledge of the strata council. They see this as advantageous because there are fewer break-ins; he has electricity, but officially they can't say they allow him there.

Some people have drug issues. In that case, not even a housing outreach worker could help them, because they would be too stoned to look for housing, may fail to

*pay rent, or outrageous behaviour would put them back out on the street. I have
to remind myself that there is a line and that I cannot fix these things or cannot be
responsible for them. I tell people in these situations that the best housing I can
get you is detox and recovery, so you can recover. However, they do not want
detox, they want a roof. I have to make the choice of being effective or becoming
a rescuer [who] would drown myself [trying].*

While discussing the social needs of the community, what elements of a physical space
would help to support the services you provide?

*The space has to be accessible to everyone, ideally on the ground floor. I think
we should have some kind of space near the entrance so that people could have
lockers with locks, and stuff could be safely kept during the day or maybe more
permanently. A place for people to keep papers, clothes or other items, so they
can go around to do odd jobs and know their belongings will be safe. Access to a
telephone with some degree of privacy—one phone could be in a more public
space and another phone with more privacy and with a toll block. A resource
centre with a combination of computer accessibility to complete resumes and e-
mail, and [a store of] resources, pamphlets, and information. Keep phones
separate because of crossover. Washroom facilities and shower facilities—
gender-specific and separate rooms. I think a reception area would be required.
I feel that there should be a multifunctional facility with a reception area to filter
the people into the appropriate areas. I think there should be distinct areas for
the activities in the building. There needs to be an industrial kitchen with an
industrial dishwasher for community meals and functions. We may need a couple
of smaller kitchen areas with sinks.*

*I see two private areas with advocate offices and a supplementary area for
pastoral care or peer counselling—not an office space; it has a couch and coffee
table for those who want to talk about something quite personal. A larger
meeting space for groups, the size of the Fraserview Room, with a sink and
equipment for coffee and tea service. Have a larger, more functional space (like
a church hall) for movie night or a big meeting, or set up for community meals.
We would need a storage room for food donations and a separate area for food
distribution from storage. It can become awkward when a person sees all of the
food stores. A couple of other storage rooms for clothing and housing donations
would be helpful too.*

*One drop-in centre run by Grandview Baptist [Church] rented a house. One
basement area was used for a shower and clothing storage. The main area had a
computer and lounge. They had a kitchen area, and they had a crafts room,
where they kept materials in cupboards. [They had] an office space and another
space for private meetings. I was impressed with the crafts room. I felt it was a
real human approach to answer the needs for self-expression, to be creative, to
receive recognition—the interaction when someone paints a painting or makes a
necklace. Another group, The Kettle Society, has offices upstairs with advocates
and nurse-practitioners. And downstairs they have a meeting room. Nurse-*

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practitioners do basic exams, first aid. I have never worked in the health field, so I cannot go into detail about what the space should look like or if being visited by a nurse-practitioner requires a sterile and private space. In addition, I think it should have a garage or carport to lock up bikes or shopping carts. St Mark's has a cement patio area that people can wheel carts onto and secure off the street.

Grandview had a laundry centre with one washer and dryer. People can get under the radar of homelessness by washing clothes and keeping their hair cut. First United offers foot care, and the Carnegie Centre has hairdressers that come in. Maybe there can be a space that is multifunctional with a separate care room for foot care and hair.

Also a quiet room with no specific religious ties, but a space you can go in and do prayer or meditation, or [a space] with dividers for group meditation, off that room. Maybe there could be a room off the showers for hair cutting, a feature of a large bathroom area. We would probably have to consult with hairdressers, to see what kind of space they would require.

I think it is necessary to have a play area for children while mom can come in to look for housing listings, fill out job applications, or do whatever she wants to do.

If we provide affordable housing, tenants need a separate entrance from the community space. Also, wiring things for the hall to make it multifunctional, with a PA, sound system, PowerPoint, and built-in, multifunctional capacity. Internet set up in computer room, but there is also the issue of networking—staff computers on different networking than community. We would need to keep the network servers separate. Jules, who does all of the IT here, can answer all of these network questions.

There is a lot of talk about sustainability, considering the social, economic, and environmental factors. What is your outlook on this? How do you make a project like this sustainable?

Yes, on one hand it is getting money to build the building, and then we have to find money to run the programs. We have a social contract with the government, and we pay taxes, so some of that could come from grants and those monies that help fund programs. The environmental perspective is to design a building that leaves the smallest footprint. You are designing a building that is more efficient, and there should be ways to get tax benefits and grants for this that will feed into economic sustainability. Socially, if you have a community that is properly housed and properly fed, that is where you have human resources that can help themselves and eventually help each other. By providing affordable housing, we are providing social sustainability. Then our community members can begin to ask, who are our neighbours? and, what do we have to offer them? and, what do they have to offer us? Spiritually, even atheists have a belief system. I think that spiritually, tying into the social and economic through ethical decision making—

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using money wisely, investing, making the decision to offer subsidized housing or market condominiums, using fair trade coffee.

Maybe we should also offer space for a workshop—a place for people to come fix toasters, etc. and a community garden.

I think City in Focus is looking at partnering with other organizations to facilitate communication, assess any overlap and gaps in church-provided services. I think this will help to see if we are overlapping or are we not even intersecting. One of their aims is to create a Red Book of church-based programs. Since then, City in Focus has been talking about incentives for creating more affordable housing by people who build their own homes, to make it attractive to build with an additional basement suite to rent out.

When thinking about the power, place, and identity of multi-stakeholders in planning processes, how do you see the role of community and technical experts?

I think the role of community advocates in interviewing and gathering information at the grassroots level is important. A community advocate could facilitate some of the more articulate and functional members of the community to meet face-to-face with architects, planners, and the committee. I could talk with them prior to this process and provide them with meeting skills, a haircut, and shower. This would be a community development initiative, to give them an "in." Everyone needs a helping hand, and you have to get a taste of it, of housing, to want to preserve it. It is hard if someone has never had one (home) or has lived in a shack that is cockroach infested. I would be willing to facilitate this process to help people accurately reflect the community that they come from and help them be prepared to interact in the environment successfully. What I don't want is the poverty or homeless poster child—that would be destructive.

The community advocate's role and work are well grounded in the day-to-day experiences of the people with whom she works and in the UC mission to provide access to information, resources, and assistance to those who are most vulnerable in the community they serve. She is not afraid to ask the tough questions or to challenge the barriers and frameworks of politics that many of those she works with encounter every day. She is continually faced with the everyday challenges to provide services, support, and advocacy for the area's residents, who have been excluded from access to essential services, such as safe and affordable housing. She not only provides services of support, but she also challenges the UC community members to look beyond their collective efforts to seek ways to further understand and unravel the multiple layers of government and policy actions that are creating resistance and exclusion of services to the people she serves.

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Sociologist Joseph H. Michalski researched housing affordability, social policy, and economic conditions of food bank users in the Toronto area and reports that "...the effect of social assistance rate reductions and housing costs contributed to the economic vulnerability of these already marginalized families and households" (2003, 66). He asserts that welfare transfers and social assistance tends to be well below the Canadian poverty standards, causing many low-income households to depend on alternative strategies to survive (e.g., food banks, informal networks, community meals, and other in-kind supports from charitable or voluntary organizations) (ibid., 67). Michalski further asserts that "in Canada, food banks become one of the increasingly prevalent supplemental strategies....Food banks have become well entrenched as a widespread response to hunger" (Michalski 2003, 67).

During the 1980s and 1990s, a push for fiscal conservatism of the Canadian government at a federal, provincial, and municipal level occurred and was implemented through a systematic decrease of social funding, which generated the requirement for people to supplement public assistance income with charitable organizational support (ibid.). In 1996, federal transfers from the Canada Assistance Plan shifted full control to provincial governments for decision making about where and how much funding to direct to health, education, and social assistance programs (ibid., 68). The question that surfaces for me from Michalski's research and my own is, where are the people of British Columbia, who were most affected by this shift in decision-making authority? Were they included in the policy-making discussions? Were their stories heard, listened to or incorporated in the policy outcomes? I feel that some of the answers become clear when you listen to the day-to-day work experiences of the community advocate with whom I spoke.

A local example of the actions and policy changes of the multiple levels of government that have contributed to the reduction of affordable housing is the closing of SRO units in the Downtown Eastside to make room for market developments based on New Urbanist design principles that generate an image that "sells" Vancouver to the world in 2010. The SRO closures will increase the number of individuals seeking housing and social assistance from non-profit organizations. Through media attention,

housing and homeless advocacy efforts, and the increasing visibility of homelessness in Vancouver, Vancouver Mayor Sam Sullivan has publicly recognized that the City of Vancouver has a responsibility to address these issues. However, local governments are faced with budget constraints, receiving only eight cents from every tax dollar. This revenue is allocated for road, sewer, and water maintenance/improvement, as well as funding for housing, emergency services, libraries, and other community services (Brown 2006). According to the December 8, 2006, CTV report by Rob Brown, Sullivan's goal is to decrease homelessness by 50% by 2010; however, he admits that this is a difficult task without collaborative efforts and funding from other levels of government.

Rich Coleman, BC Housing Minister, feels that the province can help to meet Sullivan's goal through provincial homelessness initiative programs. However, provincial funding is still limited, and coupled with increased construction costs, is forcing non-profit organizations to compete over scarce resources to fund the development of affordable housing. During the Church and Affordability Conference, MLA Jenny Kwan, Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, observed that homelessness is in every community in BC and that it is not just a Vancouver issue. Rent grant supplements do provide some relief; however, as Kwan stated, they exclude help for those on income assistance, singles without children, and the homeless. She stated, "We all have a responsibility to keep government accountable for the basics, and housing is one of these" (Church and Affordable Housing Conference 2006). The role of community and individuals in sustainability varies with spatial and temporal context. The actions of government, community, and individuals in the provision of affordable housing become influenced by political dynamics of power, place, and identity in and beyond the local realm, too.

Coordinating Minister/Supply Minister

Can you share with me how you became involved with the United Church?

> *I was born and raised in the United Church. I have had a lifelong affiliation, with my parents being members. When I was born, our congregation was meeting in a school, and then the congregation built a church behind the school. It was a family connection. I have always been involved in it and through music and*

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working at the national church level. After being a teacher as long as I was, I thought I would like to do something with my last career in life. The timing was right to take the time out to do my master's; after some discerning and talking with church people, I decided what to do. It was a gradual sense of call. I completed [my studies] in May 2006. I served my internship in Northern Alberta in a three-point charge ministry outside of Grand Prairie. The internship happens in the third of four years. It is a very good mixture of scholarship and pastoral ministry.

What brought you to UC?

The way the process works, upon graduation, the church places you in your first charge. I requested that it be somewhere in the Lower Mainland, but they were not able to make a match. The church is a small world; when it was learned that the previous supply minister was leaving Wilson Heights, I got a phone call to finish off the supply period for the end of the minister's maternity leave.

As I spoke with a few people on the search committee, it became apparent to me that their sense of mission was consistent with my own. I felt very comfortable in accepting their invitation. If not, I would not have come. They have a reason existing beyond survival of the institution itself. It is much more than a one-hour-a-week, weddings, funerals, and baptisms type of congregation. They know without their mission, they do not exist.

What do you see as some of the strongest needs out in the surrounding communities that UC serves?

Part of the identity of UC is the advocacy work that is done here. The need is huge and underserved. There are only two advocates in the area, and they are swamped trying to meet people's needs. People are here all the time. It is an open-door place. It is a place to eat, to come, to receive bus tickets or advocacy about legal matters or housing. The meal program is another. There is the whole spiritual and pastoral ministry that goes on for the community at large, but also for ourselves.

In regards to poverty and housing?

It is not my area as a specialty; [our community advocate] is the front-line person for that. We, as a congregation, are addressing the growing issue of poverty and homelessness. We are looking at the implications of development and economic priorities and how government chooses to prioritize things, how the community's values seem to lie. And there are so many people who are overlooked, pushed aside due to development progress, Olympics, things like that.

How has the congregation addressed these issues?

Recently, there was an initiative that was sparked by the children. Our advocate went to [UC's] Family Night and spoke to the children about homelessness. You would not think homelessness would be appropriate to talk about to children. But

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the children really responded to that and the way it was presented. That generated a discussion that carried over into the activities over the next six weeks and culminated in a substantial offering made to the First United Church Mission. It also served to really raise the issue to the level of consciousness with the children and our own community. It was an ongoing initiative. When we do something for one week, our memories are very short, and we forget it and move on. This is something that was visible to us and stayed with us over a long period of time.

Will there be more initiatives like this?

There is always a project under way. The idea of giving out of our abundance is central. This is something that we return to all the time. The idea is that giving toiletry items or items of clothing and even our meal program, these things are not final solutions, but they are Christian responses to the situation that we find ourselves in. We are still asking questions about the system, the causes of poverty and the reasons of homelessness. All of these efforts are along the lines of comfort, feeding, and healing. We try to operate on both of those planes. The United Church has always been a politically motivated institution. It is the largest reformed Protestant denomination in Canada that has always had a history of being politically active, of taking social initiative, of being the voice of protest, where until recently, many Christian denominations saw themselves working removed from the political system. They are really not temporal, they are more along the lines of, "we are only here to earn our way to heaven, and it doesn't have anything to do with me and the premier or MLA." But not the United Church—it has always been a vocal, political player.

What is the United Church philosophy or framework?

National-level policies have been passed, and a manual exists that governs how our organization runs. There is constant discussion about issues that arise. Each congregation is different and has its unique culture. The idea that the United Church is inclusive is a liberal myth. That is not a popular myth. This congregation has a publication named "The Inclusive," and I hope that will change over time. I have not started speaking about that, but I will. Sometimes, we [the United Church] get ahead of ourselves in praising ourselves—that we are "inclusive" and "progressive." Labels are "pie in the sky." They are poor choices for labels; they are heading in the right direction for what we want to say, but we are not choosing the right words to say, in my humble opinion. I truly believe that there is a church for everyone, and this might not be the place for you.

That is verging on fundamentalism that we are here for everyone—this is good for everyone—but it is not. Every denomination fills a place. I may not subscribe to it, but it has a role to play.

How do we move in this direction?

It takes time and discussion that is carefully and gently managed.

As we see the Vision and Planning Committee meet, do you feel that this committee is moving in a direction that is consistent with the UC mission?

> *It all rests on our identity as missionaries and having a Christian presence. The survival of our church is not a reason to do anything, but rather, how are we able to carry on our function? Maybe we are not. Death is a reality, and we hope that we die well. How can we leave the most life-giving legacy? However, I do not think that will be the direction for this congregation. There are other alternatives, such as, how we can continue to live out our mission?—not how we can guarantee our survival. That is the distinct difference. We can easily slip into a conversation on how we can ensure our survival. Thinking beyond that and toward the alternatives is important in any vision and planning discussion.*
>
> *You will hear people say that we need to grow and, how do we get people to join the church? You do that by witnessing the gospel in a way that is relevant and important. You do not do that by saying, we are dying and we need more people to ensure that we do not. Whom does that appeal to? It is a fundamental difference in self-awareness, an institution, and the body of Christ.*

Would there be anything that you could share with the technical experts involved in the planning and development of a built environment that will serve the needs of the diversity within communities?

> *People involved in this type of planning are used to working with the different stakeholders. The use of space will be identified along the way. It is a process of consulting all of the interested parties. For us, if we build a new church, it is a question of what do we do while we are homeless and how do we house our activities and the groups that share our building and share our life. And where are we going to do it.*

Should we look at the social processes to define how the built environment should come about?

> *How can our home best suit us? Most churches are moving toward multi-use spaces. This meets with great resistance from more traditional voices. They [the spaces] look less like church than what they are used to. The move from pews to chairs is an example that meets with sizable resistance. This is only one aspect. What do we do, and who are we, and what should our house look like? That is what it is about. Quite often, as congregations age, they are stuck in the house that worked for them then but does not work for us now. This is an opportunity to do it the other way.*

The publication "Godspace: Guidelines for Architecture in the United Church of Canada" states that "church" has two meanings: (1) it is a gathered community of faith and (2) it is the building that shelters that community (Architectural Resource Group

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1993, 8). People sometimes carry forward from their experience the spatial

preconceptions of past generations and are unable to reach the point of flexibility where

they learn and develop. They may feel threatened when changes are proposed, not

understanding that a building proposal is an opportunity to set aside that which is

unhelpful and to reshape that which is vital (ibid., 9). Nevertheless, what is vital and who

deems how this is defined and delivered through built design—the technical experts, the

community or both?

What would the environment look like?

*The idea in church planning is to design as flexible a place as you can have. The
old concept of the holy high temple that is only entered on occasion and that has a
certain amount of sacredness about it has to be balanced by the reality that it is a
building with walls, tables, and chairs. These two concepts—one, a practical
physical reality, and the other, sacred and holy—are envisioned with each other.
We are building a holy place. These things are intentional and require us to
reflect on how to make it as multipurpose as possible, and still maintain the
sacred.*

How do you do that?

*You do it carefully. It is about looking at things like the communion table, which
is quite different in reformed tradition. In Roman Catholic or Orthodox churches,
[the table] is represented as an altar, a place of sacrifice, and the Body of Christ
and the Blood of Christ are untouched by anyone but the priest. However, our
communion table is [not only] an altar for communion. It is a table with four
wooden legs, but we do use it for a very sacred purpose. We can use it to put
flowers on or, in choir practice, to put our music on. We are not going to sit on it
because we are tired, or do crafts on it. It is a matter of being—when you are
treating these types of balance between the practical and sacred, it is being
something more than careful. This is the problem when you are building a
church. A school has to be practical and as functional as possible. A church has
to be practical and functional, but this is where people come in contact with God.
Yes, God is everywhere. What we are doing here, we are building the House of
God. It goes far beyond the realms of practicality.*

So do you feel that the technical experts should have some awareness of this?

*You do not need to expect them to be worshipping people, but able to address our
concerns and recognizing our needs when building a House of God. That is the
problem for the people that are anti chairs. Seeing those pews is a significant
part of being a House of God to them.*

"Godspace: Guidelines for Architecture in the United Church of Canada" states,

"It [structure/building] should identify its network of relationships, its function of

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assembly, fellowship, and members' needs for quiet and solitude in the midst of activity and relatedness. The practical expression of these realities will in large measure direct the shape, size, organization, acoustics, and other details of the building. No church structure is theologically silent" (Architectural Resource Group 1993, 8).

Projects do require technical input from planners, architects, and developers, but how important are community voices in the planning processes?

> *It is a process that takes time. The professionals are there to figure out a way to do what they do, based on community initiative. This is our vision, and this is what we identify as being important; and they give us suggestions for what we do with the process. I wouldn't see it as a final say, but give us the perimeters of what we will be doing.*

What do you see as the challenges in regards to funding a new church space?

> *How much revenue can be generated by the space we are building? If building is not feasible, then we continue with the same space and die. But if we are looking at sustainability—not just be, but do—how much will our building generate for us over the long haul?*

In regards to sustainability, how would you define it at a community level?

> *What we were just talking about: money, how much will rental suites generates, will a development company handle the whole project? Economy comes from the root word of house, House of God. Sustainability in terms of use and users is crucial, too. If we disappear, will we be missed? The answer is yes.*

There is a lot of discussion about the triple bottom line of social, economic, and environmental sustainability. How do you see this operating?

> *Environmental, social, and economic—it is all a matter of semantics. You will be around as long as you have something that someone needs. I do not think that there is anything more fundamentally needed by people than worship, the recognition of other people, and the God-sense in our lives. People talk about churches closing, and maybe we will end up worshipping in people's homes, and these buildings will go away. But what won't change is that we were created as worshipping creatures; even if that is in an adequate building or not, well...*

> *There is a congregation near you, Ellesmere [UC], that has died; the building has been sold. They died and resurrected. They are moving up the mountain and will be the United Church presence at Simon Fraser University. We are not attached to the building; our mission continues, and we turn to do something else, and that is to establish a Christian community.*

> *That is a good example, that the building and the [church] are separate entities. The building is sold, and they have three million dollars and can do a lot of mission. The new building will have an office, sanctuary, student lounge, and*

kitchen, which will be around 2,400 square feet. They will have a labyrinth, a cross on the window, and a garden. To some, it may not look like the House of God, but to those whom they are serving, it may be.

Should that be a gentle reminder to our vision process?

We are not in the same place; we are not on our deathbed. Death is not imminent, and it is important that the building should be as functional as possible. [Our proposed project] has the potential to be a small contribution toward serving people who need social housing. If it is going to be market housing, to provide the most sustainability to our mission, we will have to talk about it. It has to be compatible; people need to understand that these are the people we serve, the communities that use the space. It has to be compatible with the neighbours who live here. The amount of housing would be minimal, but the work we could do in our political action is important. If it is social housing or market housing, it is a drop in the bucket. It is about consistency with our theology.

The groups that we house and the type of people that we serve are primary, and that is not an objective process. Some people are frustrated with why this can't happen, but it takes self-reflection and awareness.

How important is self-reflection and awareness?

It is important, but it takes work and a lot of exercise. This is a strong community, with a clear understanding of who it is and where it is going. Who we are is a little bit different today than which we were yesterday. Who we are as a corporate body changes constantly, as gifts are given and taken away. A constant reflection on who we are and what we want to be is required.

It comes back to my initial attraction to enter into relationship with this body [UC], because I really feel that how they see themselves is very important, and I felt that it would be a good place for me to live a while.

An ongoing challenge for non-profit and volunteer organizations is to maintain a fine balance between nurturing community sustainability on one hand, and on the other, implicitly enabling the government's continual avoidance of accountability and responsibility for the provision of essential services (e.g., housing, health care, and education). However, through continuous self-reflection and conscious action, UC continues to challenge the internal and external barriers produced by the double binds within delivering services and living out its mission as a community of faith.

As anthropologist Kim Fortun researched the Bhopal, India, environmental disaster, she observed, "I learned that political organizations, no matter how well intended, are not immune from pressures that sustain the very social processes they seek

to challenge....In all, I learned that social space of contemporary activism is shaped by a brutal double bind" (2001, 174).

From The Wider Church Community

After participating in the Church and Affordable Housing Conference, I also had the opportunity to sit and meet with one of the conference organizers, who also works with City in Focus. I asked him the following questions:

How did you become interested in affordable housing?

I started working in 2002 for Crossroads, a street outreach and community development program through the Grandview Baptist Church in the Commercial Drive area [of Vancouver]. I saw that it was the neighbourhood of choice for individuals moving from the Downtown Eastside. The area has always been a very diverse and tolerant area with a wide socio-economic and ethnic spectrum. This is an area that allows you to "be what you want to be."

I saw the changes by the [BC] Liberal government and the pressures on low-income households and realized that the neighbourhood would be changing radically, and fast. I saw the need to preserve spaces for low-income families. I was responsible for the strategic planning, organization, and launch of the Crossroads program, and I saw that there was a lack in the non-profit and Christian community. We [Christian community] were so focused on crisis management, that we could not take a step back to see the full picture. I wanted to remain in Vancouver after completing studies in Regent College and to focus on the well-being of the city.

City in Focus gave me this opportunity and a way to ground my work through an issue [housing] that (1) affects all neighbourhoods, (2) the Church has an established track record in, and (3) a holistic approach can be applied to by creating partnerships.

In 2004 we sponsored an event called the Network of Urban Workers to provide care for caregivers as well as professional development. 2003 and 2004 were dark times, with the impact of the government changes, and we saw the need to provide a silver lining. We had a panel of four speakers, including Lorne Epp from the Mennonite Housing [group] and Judy Graves, City of Vancouver homeless advocate. From there the planning for the conference took off, to discover a way to engage congregations, for the well-being of the city, with the need to sink roots in their neighbourhoods. We wanted it to be a way to make connections in different ways. We were anticipating 150 participants, printed 210 conference programs, and ended up with 250 attendees.

From the conference, I think we can see that people are eager for action. We wanted a way to excite the younger generations, and I think we had a good age

range attending. In addition, we brought in a mix of resources, including business and financial leaders.

When thinking about the initiative to clean up the streets for the Olympics, if I can turn the emphasis into more permanent housing, I will change hearts and minds, by creating more units. Thinking across denominational and theological lines, how do we nurture these ideas? With limited funding, City in Focus is looking toward creating a Web site that is critical to providing a clearinghouse of information. We are working toward more housing units and increased congregational involvement. City in Focus would like to facilitate this movement through three ways: to talk, pray, and lead. The ultimate goal is to change church culture and property.

Does this support the shift of worship and the role of churches?

Anglicans and the United Church are visibly wrestling with these questions. I think it takes building on strengths and coming back together in God's name by encountering God and the poor, and not just the economic poor. To shift from the idea that it is not us/them, professional/client, saved/unsaved, but a common humanity that calls us to be human, to address the demons we cannot conquer on our own—salvation is dependent on togetherness. This asks us to be different from what we are. Traditional church is not adequate for the society of today.

The anthropological concept of church, in a city and urban context, has definitive political and social forces that shape us as humans. There is a definite anthropological impact of the built environment on people. In terms of housing, it asks us to think about how we can be self-conscious of built form and how it encourages and discourages community. Virtual communities or communities of interest have value but not community. Young people are leaving churches, because they are in need of a different community or encounter with God than what our current churches are offering. Young people are opting for significant volunteerism rather than church involvement; they want to enact and explore faith through their hands more than their heads. Therefore, affordable housing on church property is asking for an integrative lifestyle.

How do you get the message through to private companies, developers, and government to help invest in affordable housing?

I know at the conference, I mentioned that the day was not about politics, and Libby Davies mentioned that it is about politics. I reflected on what she said, and there is truth in what she said. What do we mean by a liveable city, by well-being, welfare? I feel that we need to underscore the human side, tell stories, and then follow up with well-crafted business plans. Social advocates are good storytellers, but not so good at business. It really is cross-cultural communication.

There is a basic assumption in our culture, especially in the marketplace and in political offices with power, that the market can answer all things. There is no

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business plan to "business as usual." It is important to adopt a neutral tone as an advocate. I see this with conservative politicians rather than liberal politicians; if one comes on too strongly and the rhetoric becomes high-pitched or strident, one is written off and not attended to.

That is why people who are not aligned with one side or the other can present the numbers and facts and acknowledge that they do not line up. For the sake of argument, if the government cannot afford to do more, [neutral advocates] can acknowledge that it is not enough but ask how we can partner to do better. Intermediary organizations, such as the United Way or City in Focus, are independent organizations that can bring non-profit leaders, business people, and politicians into the same room to bring information to the table. We need active resistance, people who can sting people in the butt. However, there is also a need for a different approach that advocates are not belittled for.

Therefore, it is important to be very clear in what we are asking for by researching the person you are approaching and seeing what you do that touches their lives, to help establish a mutual relationship. I think real estate and development professionals get it, but they do not know how they fit. If someone could approach them, then they will begin to see they have a role, to sit with these people to create synergy.

City in Focus would like to have one or two leaders from each sector agree to be partners for a pilot project; we could build on from there.

Some people do not agree that you can build low-cost housing for profit; however, you can generate a modest return in exchange for social value with a return of 5–10% by using private capital to build it, and the city or a non-profit organization to manage it, and with a 10–30-year lease. This could be offered for new construction—potential is higher for conversion—or applying strategic buying of low-rent apartments to preserve them from being gentrified and re-built into market condos. It would require non-profit organizations and private interests who are willing to partner: for example, putting land in trust, offering a break in taxes and development fees, density bonuses for new construction, and fast-track rezoning. In addition, we need to put some teeth into the initiatives by dispersing the housing throughout the city.

Eric Steadman completed a presentation about socially responsible investing (SRI) and sustainable finance at the Faith in the City Conference in Montreal (Faith in the City Conference 2007). Steadman is a former Wall Street investment consultant who has started a Toronto-based socially responsible investment-consulting firm. He feels sustainable SRIs are a tool to maintain just and sustainable investment relationships through recognizing diversity, democratic participation, equitable access to resources, and fair employment opportunities. Faith-based investment is based on the following

core values: faith-based strategies to challenge corporations to have just and right relations, inclusion, accountability, welcome diversity, environment protection, social equity, worker rights, and equitable access to health and capital allocation. He states that congregations can move toward practical measures that support economic justice by (1) thinking about where and how their money is invested, (2) how we spend our money on a daily basis, and (3) sustainable purchasing. Steadman promotes healthy community by shopping and living on a local level. He also supports and calls for reform to our national pension plan that would allow for a 1% investment of the plan to fund Canada-wide affordable housing initiatives.

How do you see the multiple levels of power, identity, and place in planning processes intersecting and influencing community and development outcomes?

It is important to service the assumptions in the room and to provide opportunities for reconciliation and truth. City in Focus prefers maintaining a low profile. We are not interested in accruing power, except for those who do not have it. I think it should be a signal to us to do better with the power that we have and strive toward creating processes where the rich and the poor are mutually considered.

I am from a lower-middle-class background, and I understand relative poverty. We look down the ladder and think they just need to try harder. I think it is very important to have opportunities for people to tell their tale. I feel that this has to go to a more meditative process, where the participants reflect on the values in the room. How you get business people to slow down, I do not know, or `struggling people to a point where they are free enough to speak, I do not know.

I think it also requires planners who work with a scientific discipline to acknowledge the mystical. For example, with regards to churches, how would they be able to define and measure churches that are based on monastic principles? I think about the Benedictine model and the Celtic models that date to the 700s and 800s and 1100–1200s of the Middle Ages, and their focus on charism, by trying to get back to what is good. The monastic community preserved artefacts of culture and learning, while the surrounding communities functioned as economic units. They strove toward developing sustaining communities through praying and worshipping in community, living a lifestyle balanced between work and play; the Celtics integrated spirituality into their daily lives. Other examples of this are the Mennonites, Anabaptists, and the Orthodox. The Orthodox feels that our humanity is bound up with the ground that we stand on. These beliefs stem from the understanding that connection comes from the Creator and that we are mutually created.

I also feel that we require an inter-generational transmission of values. For example, by involving students in these processes with a mentor, but also by providing them opportunities to make a significant contribution. I prefer mixed housing for these reasons, because integrating and transmitting knowledge and values is essential for sustaining community.

Do you feel that sustainability will be embraced by the private sector as a critical path to planning and development through a triple bottom line [social, economic, and environment], or would it be a quadruple bottom line to include social, economic, environment, and spiritual elements of community?

You could say yes, but splitting off spirit as a fourth dimension, I don't believe so. Businesses have split spirit away from their operations. Some of the Asian approaches appreciate the more meditative and integrative approaches to business and do the Zen before they sign their name. I feel that the triple bottom line is a nice way to do accounting, but it is an accounting method.

Do you feel that neo-liberal values supersede the sustainability requirements of community in planning and development projects?

Yes, but the dynamic has more to do with the personalities rather than the politics involved.

Document Analysis

As I was reviewing the City of Vancouver Vision Plan for the area we are working in, the United Church "Godspace" document, and the field notes unfolding from the UC planning process to generate a request for zoning consideration to the City of Vancouver, I realized that there were similarities and differences emerging that represent diversity, vision, and the power of knowledge to represent and be transformed into the tangible expression of community. Knowledge creates symbolic and tangible representations of social and built environments tightly linked with the power of place, identity, and thought. As each space and process shape through knowledge-producing activities, meaning and power develop through discourse and action. The Vancouver vision plan for the area states, "Many of VFK's [Victoria, Fraserview, and Killarney] neighbourhoods have unique local identities and a strong sense of community" (2002, 2). The document also asserts that "community residents should have greater, and more

timely, input into decisions about changes in their community including the provision of City facilities and services" (ibid.).

The "Godspace" document reads, "The point of decision will be reached slowly, areas of diversity must be openly acknowledged. Only when an answer is clear to all should the congregation, referring to its mission statement, affirm a need to build" (Architectural Resource Group 1993, 9). This point resonated with me on several levels. The statement challenges traditional or mainstream architectural and planning values, such as New Urbanist models based on ideals such as "build the community and the people will come." Rather the "Godspace" document seems to be process and people focused. "Godspace" is a collaboratively researched and authored document by a group of architects who are actively involved in the United Church.

Then, within the summary of UC's rezoning proposal submitted to the City of Vancouver:

> *The goal of the zoning proposal and proposed construction project is to address the three biggest needs of our communities that we serve—poverty, loneliness, and hunger—through researching the possibilities of creating a physical and social space that will help facilitate our community to actively strive towards sustaining inclusivity, social justice, community advocacy and outreach programs to the areas we serve.*

I am starting to see the pattern emerge, namely, how process is supporting mandate, mission, and community vision through the contribution and interest of the individuals contributing to the process, and who share alternative views from the mainstream or traditional views of technical experts that often dominate building and development processes. As I reviewed all three documents, it was clear that our proposed project fit into the Housing Demonstration Project requirements outlined by the City of Vancouver, which states, "a project must demonstrate new housing form in the neighbourhood, improved affordability, and a degree of neighbourhood support" (55). Nonetheless, it is interesting to see how the project is being assessed and shaped by three varying visions— the vision of "Godspace," the vision statement of the City of Vancouver, and the working vision of the planning committee and sub-committee, who are preparing the request. The questions that it brought to light are (1) how the translation and comparison of these three documents constitutes power-laden fields of knowledge, (2) whether these statements

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support one another or will compete against one another, and (3) whether it matters, upon the outcome of the process, who holds the power to communicate these visions.

Jane Jacobs researched the Spitalfields Market area of East London. She argues that the Spitalfields Market development project was politically weighted by competing visions (1996). The visions were representative of developers, who see the economic potential of the area; conservationists, who recognize the glory of the area by preserving its history; and the Leftist political movement, which feels it represents the present hardships, joys, and realities of the working-class and immigrant families in the area (ibid.). Jacobs's research compares to the vision statements that I analyzed for my research. The City of Vancouver statement represents the planning and development ethos of the municipality. The United Church's technical document represents the church's historical and cultural representation of built environments, and the vision communicated in the UC proposal to the City of Vancouver strives to recognize the struggles and hardships of the communities the church supports. Jacobs argues that each stakeholder wanted to transform the Spitalfields Market area into a thriving and sustaining area; however, redevelopment plans were contradictory to local area values and rested primarily on the interests of capital (ibid., 206). In contrast to the redevelopment plans, Jacobs states that the Leftists valued a past with a complex intersection of industry, race, and trade: "a way of life, as opposed to a built form. A living history as opposed to a conserved history" (ibid., 206).

The Spitalfields Market controversy clearly fuelled a conflict of differently empowered pasts and discourses (Jacobs 1996). Each party was operating with a vision and a desire to protect their individual interests. But whose way of seeing is the right view, and whose representation will best support the past, present, and future interests of residents, buildings, and surrounding social, environmental, physical, and spiritual environments? I support an integrative design or planning approach that reflects upon the sustainability of an area from multiple perspectives and levels. Each group has a vision and history that supports and influences the value of an area considered for redevelopment. However, each also has the power and the ability to reinforce barriers of exclusion and opposition to that of the collective good. Therefore, I feel that the

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collaboration of multiple interests through ethnographic methods, such as story, conversation, artistic representations of community, grassroots awareness projects, and inclusive and intergenerational dialogue will help to decrease the power inequalities and deepen the diverse understanding and place-meaning practices among stakeholders, vision statements, and institutional frameworks that represent a complex web of ruling relations.

Bridging the Fieldwork: The Practical, Sacred, and Common Ground

On a personal level, I was concerned about how I was going to shift gears when the process that I outlined in my research proposal was no longer a general committee function but rather a sub-committee function. However, I reflected on the "Godspace" document and reminded myself that indeed it is a "slower process" than production-oriented planning when the community is actively involved in decision making that is traditionally completed by technical experts. I reminded myself of architects like Christopher Alexander, whose concept of "patterned languages" demonstrated the incorporation of a multitude of social experiences and meanings into the design of a unified and multi-use built environment (Alexander, Ishikawa, and Silverstein 1968). As it states in "Godspace," "Changes should not be made on a personal basis of personal tastes or of majority votes without due study" (Architectural Resource Group 1993). The guidelines of "Godspace" also say that the underlying theological issues of planning and development processes deserve attention, reflection, and informed decision making (ibid., 9). With these thoughts in mind, I recognized that the sub-committee would be only one phase of an ongoing dialogue and planning process within the organization.

Feminist planner Leonie Sandercock asserts her call to rewrite planning history to include not only the "founding fathers of planning" but also the "founding mothers and excluded communities" (1998, 5), to document a shared social history and social planning practices that acknowledge and respect a multitude of knowledge(s) and perspectives. As I summarize the points of my chapter, I recognize that a multitude of voices were incorporated from the communities and church culture with which I was working; yet I only wish I had had the time and space to incorporate more. As you see,

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the research process, for me, took on a life of its own—as it wound along pathways I had intuited were there, but also diverged into new, unknown areas of thought and action that brought both increased self-awareness and fresh directions to the planning process in which I was participating. None of these were compartmentalized or separate entities, but rather were connected and interrelated through place, identity, and power relations that expanded beyond local context to extra-local linkages of institutional frameworks, embedded rhetoric, political policy, and development outcomes that impact the past, present, and future generations of community to nurture sustainability in all of our ecosystems. The insurgent voices of UC and the wider church community represent the needs, struggles, and hopes for transformation that the research participants envision as key in the planning process and discussions surrounding the provision of affordable housing.

The research strategies I incorporated had begun to infuse the very way I entered the variety of research spaces I experienced—meeting rooms, conference settings, documents. The texts became living histories, representing the many faces, places, and gaps in the stakeholders' interests, which had also influenced the project's outcomes. To separate and compartmentalize the research strategies and findings would be to fragment the process and myself as a whole. My hope is that the findings chapter unfolds as a process itself, incorporating the elements of processual analysis, institutional ethnography, and community-based action research as fluid components to explore the language(s), discourse, policies, practices, and actions that represent the power of place, identity, and position within community-generated planning processes. I believe the processual components of my research reflect the "insurgent spaces or fault lines" between state-held rules or practices and the unheard voices of marginalized, unrepresented society (Holsten 1998).

From the findings, the conclusions will emerge as I strive to bring together the voices of the church community with the representative voices from the planning, construction, and design fields. For now, I will summarize the findings of this chapter to be representative of the local UC community, as well as from the voices of individuals of the wider church community, who are committed to participating in city-, provincial-,

and federal-level affordable housing initiatives for change. I hope that the findings presented shed light on the spectrum of dialogue and relationship of social processes and political influences that shape the planning and development of our built environments. The findings are representative of my exploration into the UC community and wider church community's thoughts and actions concerning affordable housing in the Lower Mainland. I feel that we are all positioned politically, encountering and perceiving reality through a subjective lens. It may seem odd to end a research findings chapter with questions, but I ask you to reflect on these: What shapes our discourses, policies, and blueprints of our social and built environments? Is it the questions that we ask, or those we fail to ask? What is the impact of our failure to spend time connecting as individuals and communities, or to recognize the value of local resources in light of the fragmented outcomes and pressures of social life?

Chapter 5:
Bridging Community with the Technical Realm of Planning and Development

From the information gathered through the general committee and sub-committee research process, my fellow sub-committee members and I incorporated our findings in the Zoning Reconsideration Request for the City of Vancouver. From discussions with the City of Vancouver Planning Department and a construction manager, the sub-committee decided to pursue meeting the criteria set forth for a Housing Demonstration Project, which requires the project to be unique to the community, to provide housing, as well as have space deemed for community access and use. Through the research phase, as a sub-committee, we assessed the housing needs, rezoning requirements, green building principles/benefits, and funding options. Three architects submitted a letter of interest in designing the project. The architects toured the building and met with the community outreach worker to discuss the social processes and programs at UC.

The sub-committee also presented its research findings to the general vision and planning committee meeting for further discussion and direction. Securing funding for the project remains a priority, as well as the submission of the CMHC Seed Funding for the study of project feasibility. The process met with opposition by some of the general committee members due to their concern that funding a construction project was well beyond the financial means of the church. Questions were raised about being able to sustain the current programs regardless of considering the funding of a new construction project. The sub-committee reported that the CMHC Seed Funding grant was a research grant that would help guide us in answering the feasibility questions brought forward by the community and committee. I felt that the questions about funding were viable and required asking. Our sub-committee welcomed the challenge to generate alternative perspectives and increased awareness of the resources available to meet the needs and address the financial concerns. It was the decision of the general committee to delegate our sub-committee to complete the initial research and zoning proposal. However, I feel that for the remainder of the process, it will remain a general committee, council, and congregation-oriented process, which requires creative networking with community

organizations, community-minded architects and developers, and the commitment to work beyond the double binds of market-driven interests and the harsh realities of the financial constraints faced by the organization.

From Community to Construction: The Design Process from the Ground Up

I feel that a move from the representation of the community to the technical expert's role must acknowledge the steps between community visioning and the technical deliverance of a physical structure to the end users. How the community vision translates from technical drawings into the construction process is an important component. Therefore, I believe that construction companies play an integral role in the cross-cultural communication required when looking at the sustainability goals of construction and development projects. The construction community is built upon the translation of technical documents into the application of practical knowledge to produce a built form, which is often accounted and re-accounted through storytelling about the happenings of the site, the adversity of working with time, labour, material, and environment challenges, on-the-spot troubleshooting, and the gaps between technical vision and construction application.

The ability to translate the technical into the practical is a skill that I have admired in my father for years as he utilized his trades and project planning skills in many other areas of his life. His work stories were often shared around the table with my brother, uncles, and male cousins, who themselves were construction workers and contractors. I remember as a child weaving in between the circles of my mom and aunties and overhearing the "trades talk" of my dad and his counterparts. The storytelling process is one of my favourite parts of my workday, as many of the people I work with will reminisce about the humorous or challenging parts of their careers. The storytelling brings forth a common ground in the construction community, which generates a pathway for the cross-application of practical wisdom and the sharing of decision-making authority between technical experts and construction workers. I feel if given voice, their stories can also bring strength to the understanding of project communication gaps and sustainable construction goals, and re-account the project history during the building

process. There is a shared wisdom built and cultivated between tradespeople and construction managers that adds social value to the life cycle of a project, too. I feel this practical wisdom of construction workers and their ability to rise above adversity and challenge requires a place within the landscape of voices represented in the planning and design of built environments to foster a full spectrum of accountable and just sustainability practices in the planning and development of our community's social and physical spaces.

A Construction Field Perspective

I had the opportunity to speak with a construction company owner from the Lower Mainland about current trends, history, and his outlook on construction and sustainability. We sat at my kitchen table one Sunday morning; it seemed to be the only time we could find to have a 45-minute conversation, due to the growing demands and time constraints of our workweek brought on by the booming construction industry in the Lower Mainland and BC. My daughter was the timekeeper and kept us both on schedule. He was on his way to the Okanagan Valley to start his workweek overseeing the construction of a new bridge. He recently branched out to develop his own construction company with a core crew of employees and tradespeople who have worked with him for years. You may also see that the influences of his career path began long before he entered his academic training as a construction manager. I asked him the following questions:

Will you share with me why and how you became interested in the construction field?

Diversity and challenge. As you know, family background, too.

What is your work/educational background, and how do you feel it relates to your current position?

I grew up with my father's construction influence; he was a partner in a masonry contract business. I also took the construction management program at BCIT.

Can you tell me a little about the vision for your construction company?

I always said I would never do this with my own money. But, I had to put together a business plan and had to think about what I would do. The year I did that, it was my most successful year, and I made the most money I ever did. But then I

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got involved in a mansion in Washington—a project too good to be true. In order to do that project, I had to be an employee, not a sole proprietor. I dropped the whole business thing and went back to being an employee on a profit-sharing program. Now it is different—we are set up as a company. I think we still have to work within our means. That was the mistake that [a company he worked with] made, that they grew too big, too fast. I do not want to lose control. My vision is to grow, but I do not want to get rich too quick. It is not me, but us, who need to make it successful.

From your years of experience, have you experienced a shift in attitudes in the construction industry?

Yes, definitely, when I started in 1982, people were still on a high, it was a good business. It dried up right after that. We lived off the profits for over five years. A big organization could make a living on hardly any projects out there. The trend kept continuing, and construction companies were sinking or shutting down divisions. I was working for an operation that had three major divisions—heavy civil, building, and industrial. One division was surviving, but the others were failing. I was the youngest person in the group; they closed their divisions but kept me. I was very flexible and eager to take on responsibility. However, still we were not making money, just surviving. In today's trend, people are making too much money, taking on all the jobs, not knowing what to do. It is a completely different world since 1982. Not even close.

Do you think the current construction trend will be a boom–bust or will it sustain?

No, there are enough infrastructure projects that it will sustain the city. We may see a slowdown in residential development. However, we have water and transportation problems. I do not think we will see an end to the growth of Vancouver. Everyone blames the Olympics, but there is so much that needs to be done.

What factors do you attribute to this shift?

In Canada, the East Coast has slowed down and has helped us to attract workers. If the East Coast were as busy as we are, we would be in trouble. The Alberta tar sands are a different development—not a community; it pivots around a world economy rather than community.

Do you see the need for planners to embrace awareness or collaboration with diverse communities (including the business community) in increasing the understanding in meeting the social, cultural, and economic needs of communities, and why?

I see the need for it, yes. Especially with the foreign content. Look how many people are here investing in Vancouver from around the world. Many have limited awareness or concern. Often, these investors blast up so many units to make money—their culture is the way they are. However, I wonder if they consider the cultural needs here in Vancouver. I think it is about different

definitions of development. Zoning and council bodies need to embrace these realities and generate awareness. The business community, not so much, we are just a community in itself. The business community is a closed community and can take care of their own needs. Foreign money does not go into infrastructure upgrades.

I recently attended a conference in regards to the Church and affordable housing. Several speakers commented on the fact that there is a housing crisis in the Lower Mainland. Do you feel that there is a housing crisis?

I do not really follow it, but the lack of affordable housing is forcing people to move out to Chilliwack and Abbotsford.

What do you see as the role of private corporations and entities in the development of partnerships with non-profit organizations and faith organizations? What are the challenges, opportunities, and struggles of this?

I think there are opportunities when the market slows down. However, right now, no one has the time that it takes, and there are a lot of good people out there that would gladly help. Nevertheless, we have not come to grips with what is happening in the construction industry. To organize something like that is a time-consuming job, and a construction company would not be paid for it unless you are the developer yourself.

Do you feel that construction for the upcoming Olympics and market housing is superseding the need to provide affordable housing in the Lower Mainland?

Yes, because the focus is not on it in the Lower Mainland. People are too preoccupied, and for now, it will suffer. The slowdown will occur, but not drastic as people think. It will not come to a screeching halt.

Do you think that private companies could work with or as a community development corporation in collaborative planning processes to address the housing needs of the area?

For-profit organizations, if they have people that are interested in this kind of thing. You would be hard-pressed to find a group, at this time, to walk away from the projects that are being developed at the moment to concentrate on affordable housing turnkey operations [design, build, and turn over to the community]. Just as providing a service, perhaps finance, build and lease back to the government— profits go to the developer and the organization. There would have to be some agreement with the split. I do not think you are going to find a contractor—no risk, little return. In today's market, you would have a tough time finding anyone who is interested. Five years ago, many people would take it on, to survive. This is a time-sensitive market, and we really have to take advantage of the economy. This would be something that we would do in our spare time. Not everyone has a heart in the industry. Oftentimes a private company would not get involved with a

community in collaboration with a planning process. They will not invest any
money beyond a specific project.

How do you see the multiple levels of power, identity, and place within planning

processes intersecting and influencing construction, community, and development

outcomes?

> *Construction companies really do not get involved in planning processes;*
> *construction and developers are always looking to make a buck. There has to be*
> *a profit to be generated to make it feasible. When things were real tough, mid-*
> *90s, when the unions were still strong but were struggling, VLC, Greystone*
> *[Carpenter's Union] invested in the real estate market: they gave all the*
> *contracts to the union contractors, trying to build residential high-rise projects.*
> *It kept the unions working, but at a high price. These units were concentrated*
> *around the SkyTrain stations; however, the costs superseded the value of the real*
> *estate. Developers lost; the carpenters lost their pension and became worth 60*
> *cents on the dollar. The logic was, "Let's use our own money to keep the unions*
> *surviving." A union is a private entity, and this was an example of trying to do*
> *good for their brothers. The buildings cost way too much to build, and the labour*
> *rates were a part of that.*

Have you experienced communication gaps between technical experts in planning and

construction projects? If so, to what do you attribute this?

> *Financial constraints. Nobody wants to spend the money to pay the technical*
> *experts, [so] they go where the money is. Some decisions cannot be made by*
> *construction companies and require technical input. There is money to be made*
> *out there. They would be there out of pride. There are people who care, until the*
> *dollar drags them away.*

What management tools or processes have you seen utilized or would you feel would be

beneficial in the planning and construction management projects to lessen these gaps?

> *Looking at the economic environment itself. The initial agreements need to be*
> *clearer with what involvement is required. The planning of the drawings are*
> *preliminary time commitments, and commitment needs to be there for the entire*
> *project. This will cost you x amount of dollars, and be prepared to pay this. They*
> *have to be involved in the planning and pre-planning processes.*

How would you define sustainability at a community level?

> *I look at it on a strictly an environmental note. On every construction project,*
> *you are taking away the environment of every project. For everything you*
> *destroy, you need to make up for it somewhere else. It makes me aware of how*
> *we are destroying Mother Nature. Economic and social—foreign [globalizing*
> *capital] investment has taken over. As a contractor, thinking more about the*

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environmental impacts. All of these things combined do not do much for looking after society.

What do you feel are the main objectives and sustainability goals within planning and development processes of construction projects?

> *The shift toward LEED; thinking about environmental impacts. Especially when I think about the pump stations we build. Hydro is putting up ugly plants in the middle of the community and destroying the community landscape. I think it may be doing that kind of work, to think about what it is doing to the community. Why not do something less obvious?*

How would you describe the relationship between technical experts and the construction company representatives in construction projects?

> *I always try to have good communication with the technical consultants, to try to get them on my side. Let them get on a personal level where I can sit down and feel comfortable. They are focused on what their expertise is and do not give a shit about what the other guy is. Interpersonal connection is important to establish. I think the biggest asset is to allow people to warm up to you and hopefully have compassion.*

Do you feel that sustainability will be embraced by the private sector as a critical path to planning and development, or will it require increased zoning, regulations, and by-laws to encourage their acceptance and support of a "triple bottom line" or social, environmental, and economic equity within communities?

> *I think it will require zoning and regulations. It will not happen on good faith. In smaller areas and smaller towns, people are proud of their communities. Sustainability, they may not have heard of it, but they live it. In a rapidly growing metropolis, it is different.*

Do you feel that neo-liberal or market values supersede the sustainability requirements of community in planning and development projects?

> *They do right now, but I think that this will change. Everyone needs to get back down to earth; no one saw this coming. We have to make time. Our children are all about recycling, what we never used to do. When you watch National Geographic shows, you see what is happening. As private corporations, we do have a part to play. How do you enforce it? Everyone needs to participate. However, companies are out to make money. More public-minded or public corporations have funds set forth for sustainability, but smaller companies do not.*

Throughout our conversation, I observed the evident tension that exists between the pressures of market competition and the ability to put sustainable construction practices into action. In the development landscape of the Lower Mainland, varying

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degrees of resources, opportunities, and business ethos operate, giving rise to a struggle between settling the interests of stakeholders and job security for our corporate lawyers. How do those smaller companies compete, that want to contribute to and generate sustainable development?

BC's construction industry is experiencing one of the busiest boom periods in its history. Fuelled by market politics, the construction culture is changing, and multiple definitions of progress are emerging. Corporate investors and policy makers are making decisions based on the prevailing dominant interests affecting the construction industry both directly and indirectly. The June 28, 2006, edition of the *Vancouver Sun* reported that $91.6 billion worth of mega-projects was scheduled for construction in BC (Penner 2006). Reports indicate that capital investment in construction projects is generating and cycling millions of dollars through our provincial economy.

Two workers standing side-by-side can be completing similar jobs, but they are paid different wages due to the high demand for workers, lack of wage equality policies, and the influx of out-of-country workers. Time and budget constraints are limiting participation by technical experts in the design management of projects. There are pressures on construction managers and field applicators to produce with scarce resources due to inter-trade scheduling restrictions and shortages of labour and materials. The pressures induced by the current market are creating barriers that are driving up costs for construction companies and housing providers. But when these providers are non-profit organizations that already operate on restricted budgets, the goal of providing affordable housing within a realistic budget, and with limited government funding, can seem like a daunting task that is impacted by multiple intersections of social, economic, and cultural challenges.

A Planner's Perspective

I attended the 2006 World Planners Congress, held in conjunction with the World Urban Forum in Vancouver. I had the opportunity to listen to planner Norman Krumholz's presentation about the need for planners to embrace a deeper understanding of the sociological and anthropological elements of the communities for which they are

planning (World Planners Congress 2006). Krumholz's presentation touched on three primary points: (1) there seems to be very little uniformity in planning across the United States, because the planning process is focused mainly at local and autonomous levels; (2) many US cities are electing progressive mayors, some of whom are recognizing and taking actions in their municipal jurisdictions based on the Kyoto Protocol; some are also increasing minimum wages and looking at sustainable development, while, simultaneously, the federal authorities decline to do so; and (3) there is a huge need for "equity planning" and for planning professionals who recognize the need for both the social and economic consequences of equity planning in their communities (ibid.). Equity planning calls for an attempt to break the cycle of poverty by introducing more "lease-to-own" programs. I know that Krumholz's presentation was about American planning, but I feel some of his points make a very useful comparison to what is currently occurring in the construction and development sector in BC. I had the opportunity to meet with Professor Krumholz after his presentation, and he granted me the following e-mail interview in the fall of 2006:

Will you share with me why you wanted to become a planner?

> *I read a good deal about planning (esp. Mumford, Gans and Davidoff) and decided it would be an exciting and useful career. For more details, see* Making Equity Planning Work *by me and John Forester.*

From your years of professional and academic experience as a planner, have you experienced shifting in the discipline of planning?

> *Yes. Planners now think of themselves more as managers of planning services than planners, which implies a certain boldness and a larger vision.*

If so, what factors do you attribute to this shift?

> *Perhaps it is part of the rising trend of conservatism in the U.S.A.*

Do you see the need for planners to embrace awareness or collaboration with disciplines such as sociology and anthropology to increase understanding in meeting the social, cultural, and economic needs of communities, and if so, why?

> *Absolutely. Even the most physical of planners must understand their work impacts on human beings.*

During your presentation at the World Planners Congress in Vancouver, you spoke of the Community Development Corporations' (CDC) role in collaborative planning processes

and how they are key economic engines in empowering the poor and working class; could you please elaborate on this point?

> *In many American cities, the CDCs are producing all or most of the affordable housing and developing various projects in the most dis-invested of neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods would get little or no investment except for the work of the CDCs. CDCs also build social capital in many places.*

How do you see the multiple levels of power, identity, and place within planning processes intersecting and influencing community and development outcomes?

> *In the United States, the business community or "growth coalition" generally leads and politicians respond. "Equity" or "advocacy" planning provides an alternative path that helps shape outcomes more in favour of the powerless.*

How would you define sustainability at a community level?

> *Sustainability is the ability of certain plans and physical and social arrangements to survive over long periods of time. I do not believe it is sustainable if one sector of the population has all the power and all the wealth and other sectors have nothing.*

What do you feel are the main objectives and sustainability goals of a community collaborative planning process?

> *An arrangement in which all sectors of the community have enough political participation, power and resources to be content, or the opportunity to peacefully seek to improve their situation.*

How would you describe the relationship between technical experts and community members in planning processes?

> *Depending on the individuals involved, it could be cold or cordial. I believe that most American planners at this time are very open to community participation and would welcome participation. Indeed, many planners I know complain that they cannot elicit citizen participation because the outcomes of their plans are too indistinct and too far distant in the future, so that the citizens can't tell how their interests are affected.*

Do you feel that there are communication and visioning gaps between technical experts and community members in planning processes, and if so, why? and how does this influence the communities that the developments or programs are being planned for?

> *There are often gaps between experts and community members because of training, time and interests. Planners, after all, are paid to work full time on these issues; citizens have lots of other things to do.*

If so, have you seen the communication and visioning gaps impact planning processes and what tools have you used as a planner to lessen these gaps to identify the collective measures of sustainability expressed by the community and technical experts involved in the planning process?

> *The only way to correct for these imbalances is to spend lots and lots of time getting the community up to speed. The experts have to learn how to talk to black and Hispanic or Asian people in storefronts and church basements.*

Do you feel that sustainability will be embraced by the private sector as a critical path to planning and development or will it require increased zoning, regulations, and by-laws to encourage their acceptance and support of a "triple bottom line" or social, environmental, and economic equity within communities?

> *I am sure sustainability will be embraced by the private sector as soon as it is sufficiently profitable. This may involve subsidies and changes in regulations.*

Do you feel that neo-liberal values supersede the sustainability requirements of community in planning and development projects?

> *No. I feel that the needs of low- or moderate-income members of the community should have top priority.*

It was interesting to hear the similarity of responses from the construction company owner and the planner, both of whom see regulation as a key instrument in the shift of attitudes on the part of the private sector toward embracing sustainable business and development practices. Are regulatory measures simply a market-driven, technical solution to a complex, all-encompassing social challenge that ensures profitability as the outcome? I feel that an ongoing tension exists within the balance of market interests with the common good—a challenge for planners throughout time. Perhaps, with ongoing dialogue, there can be equitable distribution of profit and resources.

A key initial step to this movement is Professor Krumholz's position that there is the need for planners to embrace the social experiences and values of the communities they plan for as integral to the implementation of holistic planning efforts. His suggestion for experts to learn how to talk to people in storefronts and church basements is worth recognizing as an entry point into the viability of incorporating research methods that recognize the local voices within planning processes, as demonstrated by the research finding representations with the church community from my fieldwork.

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Krumholz also describes the concern of some planners about communities interpreting plans as "too indistinct" or "distant;" my counterproposal is to employ a combination of ethnographic methods such as storytelling, community action-based research, dialogue, art, or other communication forms, to provide linkages between the community and planners that would translate the technical documents into the concrete. I argue that moving the abstract to the concrete breathes life into planning processes to make room for a variety of knowledge(s), experiences, and dialogue, thus promoting dialogue about the challenges and barriers that exist, which then could be included in policy principle, public action, and the spirit of change to ground institutional structures and discourse with the "concrete realities" of the individuals they impact the most.

An Architect's Perspective

I was sitting at my desk at work, glancing (only momentarily) at the view out my window of Burnaby Mountain. I was focused on calculating and quantifying job costs (time, material, and labour) for a project that I was working on when the phone rang. On the other end, I heard a quiet and polite "hello, it's Roberto." I met Roberto Chiotti at the Faith in the City Conference in Montreal. He is a leading Canadian architect who is dedicated to the design of sustainable buildings and worship spaces based upon eco-theological principles. He is also committed to increasing awareness among design professionals, faith communities, and the general public about the challenges and opportunities of sustainable design and development. He and his firm were awarded the architectural contract for St. Gabriel's Catholic Church in Toronto, Ontario, which has received Gold LEED certification. LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a nationally accepted rating system for the design, construction, and operation of high performance "green buildings" of every type and at every phase of the life cycle of the development project (US Green Building Council 2007). LEED emphasizes a "whole-building approach" to sustainability by focusing on five key elements of human and environmental health, including sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, material selection, and indoor environmental quality (ibid.).

Chiotti was following up with me on a discussion that we had had about the role of construction companies in meeting LEED project certification objectives and my desire to facilitate awareness programs within construction companies about their participation in these planning and construction processes. Chiotti states that currently there remains a huge gap between the design and construction communities on many sites over the understanding and application of LEED standards. He commented that it is difficult at times for architects and green-building professionals to convince trades at every level about their role in sustainable construction practices, because they are used to working in the same way as they have done for the past 50 years. He comments that we (humans) are the only species that produce waste that cannot be absorbed back into the ecosystem.

When applying this to construction sites, we can safely estimate that one in five of the total wastes of the life cycle of a project are produced during the construction phase. Construction waste recycling efforts are given LEED points, and twelve of the necessary LEED credits for a project are directly related to the performance by construction companies on site to meet LEED and sustainability requirements. When speaking with Chiotti about the overall challenges of sustainability, he said that although he feels strongly that children are part of the solution, he has observed that youth are so wrapped up in the virtual reality of technology that they are losing beneficial social skills necessary for the collaborative processes that are instrumental in sustainable and integrative design processes. He notes that this is an important component of the complexity of our sustainability challenges and hopes that sociologists and anthropologists are addressing these issues to help provide insight into this social trend.

On a design and construction level, Chiotti favours an integrated design process that nurtures a collaborative approach among architects, engineers, construction managers, and tradespeople to allow for greater accessibility to the pre-project planning, project design, and construction processes. He feels that if all of the stakeholders and participants can "buy in" to the shared values and sustainable outcomes at the beginning of the project, it will decrease the amount of work that will have to be altered or redone and increase communication between all of those actively involved in the construction

process. Chiotti states that construction managers, who come in at the beginning of these processes, can provide insight into the nuances of project planning, scheduling, and approved materials knowledge that often become major issues in project delivery. He feels also that this would decrease the time spent by construction companies challenging architects and engineers about the extra work left out of the drawings and specifications, which adds up to extra costs and budget overruns for the customer.

Shaffer and Anundsen state, "...awareness is one thing, action's another" (1993, 114), as they assert that activist models should be managed carefully and consciously. Business organizations are developing more interest in innovative approaches that incorporate an activist model of collaboration and reflection, as in the integrative design process (ibid.). I agree with Chiotti about the benefit of generating an integrative design process that incorporates the knowledge, experience, and participation of construction companies from the beginning of a project. As I mentioned in an earlier chapter, the binders of requests for information and site instructions can become endless journals of "back-and-forth timely communication" of questions and clarification that often represent project delays and misunderstanding between architects or engineers and construction companies. By generating a more collaborative approach, cooperative relations and mutual understanding can be nurtured, which in turn will help to address the needs of the community of end users or clients, and additionally produce economic benefit while decreasing environmental impacts and budgetary and project scheduling constraints. After our conversation and my opportunity to listen to his presentations at the Faith in the City Conference, I rediscovered my hope and faith that there are design professionals willing to break the mould of traditional authority to allow access and voice by community members, construction companies, and multiple stakeholders in the planning, design, and construction phases of a project.

Looking Beyond Tradition: Making Room for Sustainability

When reviewing the interview excerpts from the members of the church, construction, planning, and design communities, I see a flow of information and action that integrates and creates its own story—one of diversity, experience, challenge,

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concern, and hope for the sustainability of the complex web of our ecosystems. Planners Julian Agyeman and Bob Evans explain, "Environmental justice is both a vocabulary for political opportunity, mobilization and action, and a policy principle to guide public decision making" (2004, 155). As I observed the voices come together through conferences, meetings, community spaces, and interviews, I continually recognized the value of anthropology—not only to unpack the political, social, economic, environmental, and cultural barriers that disconnect the individual and community from policy outcomes and neo-liberal values, but also to give space to the hopes and visions of the subaltern.

Sustainability centres upon the principle of balance among social justice, equity, and environmental stewardship (Agyeman and Evans 2004). However, we must move beyond discourse alone to challenge and charge "sustainability" to function as more than a catchy phrase, a marketing concept, or an accounting method, but rather to encompass consistent, just, and accountable actions in our communities, businesses, educational institutions, governments, and global networks of power and information. As the church minister said in our interview, referring to the planning and design of a church building, "It is a matter of being—when you are treating these types of balance between the practical and sacred." This statement refers to not only the design of church spaces, but also to implementing creative strategies and ways of being that support and nurture our ecosystems now and into the future. One part of the unpacking of the ideologies and values of neo-liberalism begins by asking each other and ourselves the tough questions in respectful ways and by grounding our experiences in the practical and sacred. What are the messages we are conveying to one another? Are they of indifference or are they of hope?

Space is being bound into multi-level networks that shape and influence our actions on a local scale (Routledge 2003, 336). This is apparent at UC through the networks of information, action, and support that flow within the building to function as a nexus of community services and support. The web of support expands beyond the boundaries of the physical building to the networks of activists, organizations, and political players who are advocating for social justice and affordable housing. Perhaps

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part of this networking is a response to the external pressures that UC and many other non-profit organizations face in the delivery and funding of their programs within the current economic and political climate. The networks develop as the needs and vitality of community are systematically pressured and reconstructed to fit the neo-liberal vision of present and future progress with sustained presence within a web of deregulated, globalized processes of power.

Anthropologist Robert E. Brimhall and urban affairs and public policy professor Stanley E. Hyland cite the processes of globalization in assaults on neighbourhoods, asserting that community life has changed dramatically through ecological processes that favour decentralization, global restructuring, new urbanist-centred development practices, and neighbourhood disinvestment that spawns racist and classist divisions (Brimhall et al. 2005, 125). Shifting provincial funding from programs of support for the well-being and health of individuals, families, and communities to initiate mega-projects for construction is indeed increasing economic prosperity in our province, but at what social cost? Whose vested interests are prospering, and how is this being distributed among the general population? The voices of individuals and the collective, who are being excluded and marginalized from equal access to opportunities and basic resources, are calling out for mainstream society to recognize the histories, forces, and politics that are reshaping and fragmenting our local places.

We do not merely write history, we create it. The processes of progress are silencing and socially and physically reshaping our communities. Is history repeating itself, and how do we author change? It is detrimental to believe that multiple histories are represented fairly with one voice or one policy, nor can complex community processes and policies be framed with one agenda. By listening, reflecting upon, and mutually authoring the experiences, pressures, challenges, and joys that we all encounter, we can construct the stories of sustainability that are positioned through time, space, and locale and that can contribute to the networking of community action against global economic restructuring that is impeding the rights of so many on a local level.

As Agyeman and Evans remind us, historically, a surge of environmental injustice began on an extra-local scale in 1492 with the Columbus explorations and continued

through to the 1980s with minimal resistance or regulatory control (2004, 156). The researchers cite a landmark study published by the United Church of Christ in 1987 titled "Toxic wastes and race in the United States" that showed how certain communities of colour were at disproportionate risk from commercial toxic waste disposal and generation (ibid.). The study, later confirmed by further academic studies, revealed that increased awareness and political action around issues of environmental racism is effective to bring forth positive change. The transformation came from the combined efforts of grassroots activism by the church organization and a 1992 published article by Lavelle and Coyle in the *National Law Journal* concerning unequal protection and enforcement of environmental law in the United States (ibid.). From these actions, a full-fledged environmental justice movement emerged that united religious groups, civil rights groups, tenants' rights associations, farm workers, academics, professional not-for-profits, and labour unions in a grassroots, multi-ethnic movement that called for discussion and action around "just and sustainable" environmental and social justice principles and practices (ibid.). This is a useful example of four sectors of community—church, local community, academia, and the legal system—uniting to challenge systemic barriers of oppression, violence, and discrimination.

When I spoke to the community outreach worker about the planning for the church building, she commented that when the amalgamation of three congregations occurred in the UC community, that dialogue occurred to bring the different communities together. She also feels more dialogue is required and is hopeful that the current visioning of the building would regenerate this process. As she said, "Maybe it will be important for us to revisit what our values and dreams are." For me, this highlights a key point of the integral role—not just on a local community level, but on a networked and global level, too—that dialogue and visioning can play in combining diverse interests and identities to challenge neo-liberalism. I feel when the diverse interests, challenges and needs are identified through collaborative visioning processes; it brings forth pathways and entry into strategies that can realistically nurture the sustainability of our ecosystems through our community, business, government, and planning realms at every level (Routledge 2003, 335). It is the community-generated movements of intergenerational,

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multi-ethnic, cross-disciplinary, multi-interest histories and local grassroots initiatives that empower individuals to seek transforming action and voice to work beyond the paradoxes of environmental justice to generate a collective response that is grounded by making "the personal a political action."

How do we bring these ideas forward from theory to action, and how do we implement research strategies that will increase awareness and generate empowerment without enabling neo-liberal agendas to prosper and further silence community members? Anthropology researchers Stanley E. Hyland and Robert E. Brimhall conclude that it is critically important to work with community-based organizations and residents in both the research design and the execution of studies of community change and community building to generate the possibility of policy alternatives (Hyland et al. 2005, 126).

Will my research findings that incorporate dialogue, ethnographic methods, and a diverse array of knowledge(s) be the ultimate truth or master narrative of building community? I truly hope not. Will it make space for the celebration of community and for insurgent voices to be heard, and will it generate challenges or questions about the impact of dominant beliefs, discourse, and personal agency on the function and sustainability of community? I hope, through collaboration with the communities I worked with, this research has stimulated some interest in the process and viability of anthropology methods and action research as a means to work toward practical outcomes in collaborative visioning and planning processes. I hope that it helps to create spaces to reflect on our ecological purposes on Earth and provides room for alternative frameworks for different ways of generating collective action in community through social process and built design. Without the combination of research strategies to look beyond technical outcomes, the multiplicity of social issues may be ignored and/or the rhetoric of sustainability simply used by private and government sectors to account for and justify the status quo. As the City in Focus advocate remarks, "I feel that the triple bottom line is a nice way to do accounting, but it is an accounting method."

Modernization supporters see collaborative planning processes as imposing hardship and burden on economic growth and competitiveness and would rather see more flexible planning regimes initiated with less community-centred control over leading-

edge and high-tech sectors (Cowell et al. 2006, 407). I see their argument as having bearing, since development fees, development permit processes, and community-generated processes are timely and costly both to developers and to the community of end users. When speaking to the architect, Roberto Chiotti, he mentioned that the LEED certification process costs could range up to $100,000 just for commissioning, modelling, application fees, and certification. This creates social cost and access implications for non-profit organizations and mid-size development companies that do not have the budgets to fund the certification costs associated with sustainability projects. These are also realistic facts that contribute to the barriers to providing cost-effective, timely, affordable housing in BC—barriers also requiring dialogue in the realm of sustainability rhetoric. As a wide network of community activists, academics, and community organizations can attest, the need to incorporate multiple and realistic perspectives in sustainable development is crucial to bring forth realistic dialogue about the benefits and challenges of sustainability to work beyond a monolithic or modernized conception of progress.

I suggest that planning within frameworks that encompass a wide range of peoples, places, and communities can draw out the contested boundaries, identities, and spaces that hinder community building, inclusive representation, and sustainable development. Community building and the creation of inclusive space are not easy tasks. As discussed in my interview with the minister of UC, this takes carefully managed dialogue. There may be resistance to change, along with fears of loss of identity, when proposals of construction and development are presented in and to a community. However, I find that exclusivity, on the other hand, may protect the comfort of the status quo with gentrification efforts that further exclude the marginalized and those most in need in our communities—or in other words, planning that places us one step closer to sustaining third-world countries within pockets of privileged industrialized nations. Change can seem monumental and overwhelming to some who have depended on stability and the homogeneity of interests to maintain privilege and comfort; however, community building is a necessary and beneficial process that incorporates the realities of the complex social systems that make up the fabric of our urban spaces (Frug 1996).

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Community life is far beyond ordinary; there is a necessary messiness to it, combining the voices, experiences, and aspirations of many individuals, bound and connected through varied scales of time, place, and space. There is evidence for this view in the community outreach worker's wish for time and resources for self-reflection by community volunteers, those who provide outreach and service during the weekly community meal at UC. As the supply minister pointed out, "A constant reflection of who we are and what we want to be is required." By connecting with our own beliefs and fears, I believe that we can use the opportunity to reflect on preconceived notions of the other that contribute to the exclusion, marginalization, and even the romanticizing of people's active participation in community. Individuals and communities invest a myriad of experiences and interests in development projects that can both contribute to, and hinder, the benefit of public process. My conclusion is that this tension, when carefully managed, can inject energy, spirit, and understanding into the challenges, opportunities, and messiness of community life—a crucial element in the diversity that sustains our environments and challenges the devastating and inevitable outcomes of market-driven politics on the ecoscapes of our communities.

Chapter 6:
Challenges, Opportunities and Alternatives

Frameworks for Transformative Action

As my research process ends, I am realizing that it marks only the beginning of an ongoing flow of information, processes, and relationships that will continue to unfold and change through and beyond the planning process. The process unfolded in my work environment and in the spaces of my academic participation—all of which transcend the politics of place and identity on multiple levels. Even as I begin to write my conclusions and integrate my research findings into an academic research document, it is only partially representative of the complexities and ongoing processes of dialogue and action—a process that I envision functioning as a living text of the stories of community sustainability that will take shape and evolve long after I dot my last sentence with a period or question mark. As I write about the community-based action research that I participated in, the processes I observed will also continue with the people who so graciously and willingly shared their thoughts and wisdom with me. Their everyday actions of commitment and faith in the realm of community building, play an integral and unique role within the planning, design, construction, and local communities.

Change is inevitable, and development processes are not free of challenge, but within the spaces of community research, I feel a hope is restored for the ability to work beyond difference and power imbalance to strive toward the generation of transformative change and just and ethical sustainability outcomes. Even with a snapshot of time captured within the pages of my text, the processes, stakeholders, and interests of the people represented in this research live on, just as the many people I worked with and interviewed are grounded to the value of self-reflection, participation, political awareness, and their role in creating opportunities for sustainability through their work, neighbourhoods, and larger communities. My research process also helped me to become acutely aware of the representation of community-based action research findings and their potential political implications to research communities.

I suggest community-based action research requires constant and ongoing reflection by the researcher, within the textual representations that we prepare as academics, and by the readership of our documents. Within this process of reflection by researcher, research participant, and audience, a process of empathy, understanding, and increased awareness can evolve. The in-between spaces of planning and development, researcher reflections, and the messiness of ordinary life are worth incorporating at every level of discourse. I believe that it is this shared awareness and acknowledgement that will bring forth dialogue about the collective challenges generated by neo-liberal policy and the impact of its outcomes on maintaining social, economic, and physical sustainability within our community spaces.

I assert that the represented spaces within my research are the areas where hope is and can be generated, where multiple definitions of sustainability can become operationalized, and where shared accountability and accessibility will guide us to conscious action to bring forth change and empowerment within our communities. Is this easily done? No. Does this process depend on creating a "utopia-based" vision of community? No. Rather, I believe that community-based action research provides the entry points of understanding into planning and development processes that value community through a social lens referred to as architectural entopia. Architectural entopia is not reflective of utopian ideals that tend to have a static vision based on a certain prescribed set of rules presumed to enhance life or support the organization's vision (Gifford 2002, 503). Rather, architectural entopia refers to the flexibility that is necessary and involved in the creation of a community-generated setting that seeks to promote understanding of the multiple needs and the fulfilment of human potential (ibid.). This understanding aims to support the cognitive, social, and perceptual needs of the community members throughout the life cycle of a project, including the planning and development processes, as well as the transition to the end use of the built environment (ibid.).

Sustainable environments reflect a shift of values and change of attitudes toward prioritizing ways of life that are in balance with the current state of renewable resources and of interrelated networks within our ecosystems and biosphere. Therefore, sustainable

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environmental planning focuses on generating practices that seek balance in relationship to built, social, and natural environments through collaborative participation of various stakeholders in information gathering and decision-making processes at all levels of community, corporations, institutions, and government (McDonach and Yaneske 2002). Architectural entopia can be achieved through the implementation of the integrative design process that takes into account multiple perspectives to ground the understanding of the importance of maintaining an environmental, social, and physical balance within community development projects (http://greenbuilding.ca 2007). This process does not break the life cycle of a project into "isolated components" but rather views a construction and development project as a system of interrelated components and relationships which values green building practices as a central framework to achieve physical, environmental, and social balance.

The integrative design process incorporates all of the stakeholders—technical consultants, construction companies, and community representatives in the initial planning and design phases of a project. There are more meetings initiated at the beginning; however, when the project enters into the construction phase, the number of required meetings decreases because so many of the issues and concerns have been addressed at the initial stage of the process (ibid.). This approach provides more access to opportunities of participation, increases accountability by all parties, and increases participation, which in the end, equals added value–cost savings, scheduled targets met, and sustainability objectives achieved. Nadav Nalin reports for the Green Source "that in an integrated process, the team works as a collective to understand and develop all aspects of the design, which can then emerge organically, with the full benefit of each expert's input" (Green Source.construction.com 2007). He adds that while each team member plays an essential role, in effective integrated design processes, the best ideas often emerge when participants cross over the usual boundaries. Nalin concludes that a group focused, engaged, and thinking together can create solutions that no individual could produce alone (ibid.).

Community-based action research strategies complement and add value to integrative design processes that incorporate all of the stakeholders in the initial planning

and design process to incorporate multiple meanings and lived experiences. Combining these strategies will provide an alternative framework that functions to meet the green building requirements as they evolve and change through the collaborative planning throughout the life cycle of a project. I often incorporate community-based action research strategies into the management and facilitation of collaborative meetings on site. This process encourages the voices of construction workers to be heard, recognized and incorporated into the actions of sustainability, which also prepares them to have a more active role and voice in the design and construction phases of a project.

Collaborative planning and construction practices are central in increasing communication, achieving sustainability goals, and nurturing the relationships developed between individuals involved in defining the social processes and built environment of a construction and development project. These processes help to define routes of interaction, serve the needs of community, and help individuals make "sense" of their surroundings and their relation to one another. The value of collaborative processes in the workforce also helps to connect individuals' experiences and actions to the world around them. William K. Carroll states, "The world's majority now live, or soon will live, in difficult economic and environmental times" (Carroll 2004, 32). He goes on to argue that by the end of the twenty-first century, social institutions will continue to face increasing and inexorable pressures to either conform or will be replaced by corporate capitalism frameworks (ibid.).

Neo-liberalism values competition over scarce resources, market-driven thinking as a framework to prosper, and values dominant discourse in many forms to maintain power. As I have discussed, neo-liberalism creates uneven and dispersed patterns of process that infiltrate through a vast array of physical, social, and economic spaces (Peck and Tickell 2002, 383). Neo-liberal frameworks are not providing humanity with just and sustainable societies; therefore, with growing concern and awareness of these devastating outcomes, more than 30,000 grassroots social movements are taking shape and action to challenge the commodification and devastation of communities around the world (Carroll 2004, 33). As billionaire investor George Soros states, "We can have a market economy, but we cannot have a market society" (Soros 1998 as cited in Carroll

2004, 32). Soros argues that market rationale tends to reduce everything—humans and land—into commodities (ibid.). He understands and values the function of the market, but in addition to markets, he feels that we require institutions that serve the social goals of political freedom and social justice (ibid.).

However, I argue that there also needs to be support for the social institutions that are striving to provide services to sustain healthy communities. As the construction company owner I interviewed discussed, market-driven business practices, global investment, competition, Olympic mega-projects, and infrastructure upgrades have increased pressure on construction companies to compete for more profitable projects, while overlooking projects like affordable housing that in slower times they would bid on just to survive. Therefore, I have drawn the conclusion that the desire to contribute to the sustainability of community is often superseded by production-driven, market principles to survive in competitive environments. This produces outcomes of exclusion and lack of accessibility to basic services by our community's most vulnerable individuals. Even if the intention is there by many to act sustainably, the force of the market often influences and impinges upon the best of intentions. The market-driven tension contributes to the layers of challenge for non-profit organizations to generate funding, participate in the delivery of affordable housing, and live out their mission of community service and support.

Carroll asserts that business and political leaders, as well as academic experts, have accepted that capitalism is the inevitable economic system for all of the world's countries (Carroll 2004, 33). However, without a more egalitarian global society, capitalism will also struggle to survive (Soros as cited in Carroll 2004, 32). The trend of globalizing capitalism is creating massive environmental devastation due to (1) the lack of just and sustainable business practices, (2) the lack of policy that makes realistic links to sustainable action, and (3) the lack of systems of accountability that seek to balance economic, social, and environmental factors on multiple levels. Therefore, when I ask the question about what progress looks like in the construction and development of our Lower Mainland, I see that it becomes associated with the cost of market-driven practices that lack sustainability measures, which are stripping away the basic conditions necessary

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for survival of many individuals in our region (Carroll 2004, 32–33). The environmental and social degradation of our communities is not just happening on a local level; it is dispersing through a web of structured political and economic systems that are changing the face of our globe. As Carroll asserts, humans are not just connected through a biosphere, we are also linked through a global web of structured social relations comprised of more than six billion people living in families and communities (Carroll 2004, 33).

I feel connecting social justice with sound economic principles is integral to the sustainability of the network of individuals, families, and communities of our world. We are no longer living as isolated nation-states; we are rapidly becoming connected through technology, media, and popular culture. As we become increasingly interconnected globally, we may also be limiting our focus and actions on the local level. Retaining value, effort, and commitment by individuals in the investment of healthy community and the challenge of social injustice becomes a real issue in our own back yard and our region's neighbourhoods, but also throughout the world.

I support the power of story to connect our individual lives with those around us—with our families, loved ones, neighbours, and community at every level. From the stories that are gathered, we can find pathways of common ground, we can relate to our neighbour's struggle, and we can support one another in the effort to support and nurture healthy community. The stories of community and sustainability that value process over production, that work beyond token collaboration and are gathered through ethnographic methods, provide anthropologists, community development professionals, planners, and cross-disciplinary academics access and understanding of how on a daily basis, individuals are impacted by neo-liberal forces. The sharing of stories gives voice to the initiation and implementation of community-based strategies to challenge the marginalizing outcomes of neo-liberal policy and development.

My research was exploratory and I hope brings forth understanding into the need for critical discussion, public participation, and inclusive representation within community needs assessment, project planning, and the design phases of a project. I feel that my research has shown how anthropology methods can help to identify collective

economic, social, and environmental sustainability goals, as well as provide entry into the analysis of social processes that define, inform, and transform multiple meanings and uses of physical space. I also hope that the bridging of anthropology and planning methods will challenge academia to increase interdisciplinary discussion and participation of the multiple facets of sustainability discourse.

I assert that community input is crucial to ground the policy decisions, funding measures, construction, and sustainability outcomes within the context of the present and future needs of affordable housing in BC. My research is not the beginning, nor do I hope the end, of the exploration of the role of anthropology in sustainable planning and construction management. However, the challenge remains of how we can generate cross-cultural communication between academia, the construction industry, policy makers, and communities of end users. Engaging in collaborative discussion within planning and development decision-making processes will bring forth deeper understanding into the challenges and opportunities of living, working, and committing to an environment that nurtures our collective sustainability. There is a continual need to embrace different ways of knowing and spaces for self-reflection within academia, the field, and community about the planning and design of our physical spaces to bravely address how our built environments are reproducing power imbalances and exclusionary outcomes. Discussion and reflection are both beneficial and crucial processes if we intend to recognize, make room, nurture, and sustain the rich diversity and difference that provide opportunity structures and creative pathways for our communities to thrive (Sandercock 1999, 12).

Kitty Lunn, founder, executive director, and dancer of Infinity Dance Theatre as quoted in Keyan Tomaselli's article" The United States and the West: What about the rest? The internalization of struggle and the need for global solidarity" addressed a convention audience with these words:

> As we celebrate the valuable work that's going on here..., I am reminded that
> what we're all striving to achieve here is that it doesn't make a difference whether
> opportunity is denied because of your ethnicity or your skin colour, or because of
> your age or gender or disability. It is that all discrimination is exactly the same—
> it is the denial of opportunity....We find, when we begin to peel back all of those
> layers, that we human beings are so much more alike than we are different. It is a

universal thing; we have the same needs, want and desire to love and to be loved (1999, 107).

I believe that the spirit of community is both an opportunity and process that is sustained beyond the physical perimeters and conditions of place—it is the power of the human spirit to connect on an individual, family, community, and extra-local level. The application of anthropology helps to realign our collective interests and connect to the belief that local activism will generate transformative and effective change.

Cultural and media studies professor Keyan Tomaselli states he was astonished by students in a classroom, who were mostly mature activists, as they re-accounted their actions in movements across the world rather than in movements on a local or national scale (1999). He states "none are engaged in challenging repression at home" (ibid., 108). Many of his students asserted that there was no point to pursue local activism, because national and local hegemony was too strong, and it was more successful working with the victims of US imperialism (ibid.). Tomaselli asserts that domination is not a one-way process and it's successes depend on countries' national investment and growth strategies, state and domestic capital, and the strategies of how local firms appropriate international capital for their own objectives (ibid., 109). The author argues that the results become an uneasy balance of power between the various international and national stakeholders, which plays out on a local level, which I feel can be compared to the multi-tiered impact of government budget cuts and increasing pressures of private development interests that are pushing aside opportunities to provide affordable housing options in BC. However, Tomaselli states, "A public media governed by a critical citizenry can negotiate spaces for building local public spheres" (1999, 110). Tomaselli calls for incorporating strategic intellectual resources to advise individuals on "how to research, write, and develop policies that protect and enhance the local in relation to the global" and work with communities and individuals not only in less developed countries, but also in industrialized countries, too (ibid., 110). He concludes that this engagement becomes the principle of change and is an advancement that requires a number of mirrors to be held up to see how our actions affect both the barriers and outcomes of global solidarity.

He calls for intellectuals to consider these elements: (1) to re-think "at the level of academy, publication for the sake of careerism" or those who charge market-related rates for public lectures, which entrench in social and class hierarchies in their everyday social and academic practices, (2) the need for activists to link their research to praxis or theory into action, (3) to encourage progressive organizations to build capacity, direction, and strategy through self-reflexivity, accountability, and critical discursivity, and (4) the recognition that the local periphery is never fully isolated from the global. Tomaselli concludes that these academic principles "build on the ways in which local and concrete conditions relate to wider concerns" (ibid., 113). The principles that Tomaselli argues for can be applied beyond academia and in several different realms within community, political decision-making circles, and corporate environments and are supported by my research (ibid.).

Tomaselli's views can also be supported by geographers Timothy Beatley and Kristy Manning as they promote an active role by communities to engage in strategic, forward-looking approaches to economic activity (Beatley et al. 1997, 137). The encouragement of communities to participate in the local control of development patterns generates proactive participation by multiple stakeholders in the planning and allocation of a community's physical, social, and natural assets, thus promoting a healthy environment, a sound economy, and lively communities (ibid.). Alternative frameworks of development and business principles based on political awareness of the interconnectivity of process, relationships, and policy at multiple levels embrace the opportunity to move beyond the rhetoric of sustainability to proactive actions. The move beyond rhetoric to action helps to develop a network of pathways for increased understanding, conscious effort, and committed action by individuals in all walks of life to take into account their role in sustainability, thus connecting the personal to the political and the local to the global.

This process begins by connecting within ourselves, by delving into the layers of social forces that help to shape our lived experiences, to challenge our fears, and to provide pathways of reflection into our individual and collective ability to work beyond the alienation of consumerism and market rationale. When doing so, we open up

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opportunities to embrace the "possibilities" of societal goals that strive to maintain balance within the economic, social, and environmental spaces of our communities and nation-states. In conclusion, I suggest we can no longer afford to operate within isolated or privileged knowledge systems; we must acknowledge our interconnectivity at every level.

As I uncovered the multiple layers of neo-liberalized space, the challenge became how to understand this process beyond just observing it and to begin to understand how to apply the knowledge of competing discourses into actions of sustainability at a community level. This happened when I asked the research participants to define sustainability. I received multiple answers from the individuals I interviewed, not one response the same as the other. However, a common theme exists within the responses by the research participants, and that is that each individual has consciously reflected on their ability or desire to put their definition of sustainability into action in unique ways on a personal, community, or local level by grounding it in relation to their personal experience.

Throughout my research process, even with the grim statistics and sustainability challenges faced by the community workers, construction company owner, planning academic, and architect, there remained a sense of awareness and hope that things will change and the needs of our communities and environment will become central in our daily efforts at work, school, and home. Some encouraged government action and regulatory control, some envisioned community process centred around just and ethical principles, but each response represented increasing awareness of the ability for individual action to make a significant contribution toward the ability for human agency to bring forth sustainable and transformative change. Even though neo-liberalism is a creative, ongoing processual current that influences our lives on a multitude of political scales, it is the combination of the multiple perspectives, definitions of sustainability and a sense of hope by the individuals I observed and spoke with that have the ability to spark change within the web of ruling relations.

I conclude that the ongoing tension between dominant discourse and alternative action are both continual and evolving processes. I also have hope that through networks

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of information, relationships, and committed action, the academic, business, construction, non-profit, and religious communities that I work with will have the collective energy and will to provide creative opportunities of dialogue and action to build, grow, heal, and sustain our environments. Through the spirit of community and collective actions, we have the ability to work through and beyond the social and physical barriers of exclusion, the double binds that hinder implementing knowledge into social action. I conclude that through "faith in action," communities have and will continue to transform the tensions of neo-liberal values, politics of identity, and market-driven policies into community-generated processes of sustainability.

Examples of the spirit of community in action are everywhere in the church, the community, the construction industry, and academic classrooms that provide opportunity for dialogue and collaborative learning that I have researched and participated in. With these reasons in mind, I would like to propose that we consider that in addition to social, economic, and environmental factors, the spirit of community be acknowledged as an integral pillar to the sustainability of our ecosystems. Through the incorporation and deliverance of just and ethical planning, creative coalition-building opportunities, and research strategies that strive to empower the communities we work with, I feel change will be brought forth through patience in process and committed action through praxis. *I believe this is where spirit meets matter!*

Future Applications of My Research

It was a challenging opportunity for me to navigate the in-between spaces of the three realms of my research position and learn to work and grow as an individual in all three. I began to realize the cross-application of the knowledge I was gaining in all three communities of work, academic, and community participation. Thus, I hope that the future applications of my research will bring forth opportunity, challenge, and direction in the call to embrace interdisciplinary efforts, community knowledge, and alternative frameworks of activism and development that strive toward sustainable strategies to promote and support healthy communities. Therefore, I bring forward for consideration the following future applications of my research:

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To Embrace Different Ways of Knowing

To bridge anthropology and planning methods through the utilization of ethnographic methods that help define, inform, and transform multiple meanings and uses of physical space into the representation of the multiple facets of community, sustainability discourse, and development.

To Broaden Our Thinking of Development Beyond the Status Quo

To encourage "us" (academics, technical experts, construction and development professionals, and community members) to work beyond rigid boundaries of accepted mainstream discourse, institutional cultures, purified notions of community, and social pressures to courageously embrace difference as an integral component of education, planning, research, and community development processes.

To Value the Collaboration of Knowledge(s)

To create respect for insurgent spaces of community voices to be heard, recognized, and valued as knowledge(s) that have real bearing on the project and sustainability outcomes of our communities.

To Support the Value of Integrated Design Processes

To incorporate the social experiences of community members, technical consultants, and construction companies into the "patterned languages" of physical design, construction, planning outcomes, and funding requirements.

To Support Effective Change for Long-Term Sustainability

To support the shift from top-down, market-driven planning agendas to embrace process-oriented, sustainability-focused planning that puts forth the ecological needs of our community (social, physical, environment, political, and spiritual) into the centre of research and work practices to move beyond cause-and-effect deliverance of product-driven development projects.

To Acknowledge That Research Is a Continual Learning Process

As researchers, we have the ability to impact and contribute to communities in significant ways. Thus, the incorporation of self-reflection into the role and relationship of the

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researcher and the community is an integral component to community-based action research that strives beyond the reproduction of rigid boundaries.

Conclusions

The UC community continues to generate a collective response through an active position centred on social justice, mission, and outreach to counteract the barriers produced by political and neo-liberal frameworks currently operating within our region, province, and federal government. The networks of information and support that UC operates with and through to provide community services and support to their programs expands beyond the boundaries of their physical building to the networks of activists, organizations, and political players, who are advocating for social justice and affordable housing. Perhaps part of this is in response to the external pressures that UC and many other non-profit organizations face with the deliverance and funding of their programs within the current economic and political climate. As I conclude my study, I recognize that UC is challenged with a series of double binds, some generated from the external forces of political and economic variables at a local, provincial, federal, and global level, but also pressures from within the internal structure of its organization through operating policies and procedures, the evolving development of social practices, and the interconnection of actions guided through stories of collective experience, religious identity, and committed mission as a community of faith. The double bind of the awareness and intent to deliver services of support creates both a web of challenge and opportunity.

This phenomenon is not only isolated to the non-profit organization of my research site, but also functions within the spaces of the construction, development, and corporate sectors that I work in. Oftentimes, the rhetoric of community is a strategy used to generate interest and support in projects marketed to serve the common good. However, the acknowledgement of these community ideals are often transformed and superseded by market-driven policy and pathways of profitability, which produce marketing strategies, exclusionary outcomes, and master-planned physical environments and, in the end, serve the neo-liberal economic engines of private interests and our global

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economy. The challenge remains to instil sustainable business practices that value relationships over bottom-line accounting, as well as translate the social value of community development projects into socio-economic terms that are understandable by business. Perhaps the challenge lies within our business environments to understand success and profit to include much more than economic return. But where do we begin to place our acknowledgement of sustainability into actions that value the importance of economic prosperity to include equity, fairness, and respect for diversity which limits the costs to the health and sustainability of humanity and our environment (Carroll 2004, 32)?

We are designing and generating beautiful and innovative built space in our city and region; however, look closer and walk with me into the 'in-between spaces'—the alleys, the sidewalks, and around the corner of these grand developments. These are the spaces of communities going unnoticed and unheard in the discussions and definitions of liveable and sustainable urban form. We may have one of the most liveable regions in the world, but we also have a housing crisis, increasing homelessness rate, and the deterioration of the health and well-being of our most vulnerable citizens. The lived experiences and daily struggles of the individuals within these spaces are also the stories of sustainability—yes, they are—because they represent the reality and outcome of boardroom decisions, academic training programs, and social policy formation. We must make room for their voices and their stories of community to generate development narratives that recognize difference, that seek to challenge exclusionary outcomes, and that strive to maintain social, economic, and environmental equity.

At the stark intersection of technical design and community experience lie the communication gaps I sought to uncover in my research. However, within these gaps, I also vision a glimmer of hope and creativity as I feel that the strategies that we choose to utilize in our classrooms, boardrooms, meeting rooms, and design processes have the ability to transform traditional forms of authority and power. The transformations occur through collaborative process to generate opportunity for individuals to participate who in the past have been restricted access, discounted, or discriminated against in development projects. I conclude that within these gaps lies the opportunity for public

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anthropology to be applied to increase the awareness, collaboration, and transformative change required to challenge dominant research strategies, discourse, and exclusionary practices to bring forth the needs and voices of the periphery as a central focal point within our discussions and decision-making processes. We all have the ability to be a part of the change, to generate alternative spaces of expression, and to participate in alternative frameworks of development (Friedmann 1992). Through the spaces of collaborative planning and alternative action, we can bring forth practical and realistic sustainability solutions for the well-being of our communities. We can find common ground to connect the abstract of policy and theory into the every day lived experiences of individuals to nurture a sound and sustainable economy and provide pathways for a regenerative and healthy environment. Thank you for walking with me.

I would like to leave you with one closing thought: "In addition to scale, spatial perspective matters. Do not look down on the city from the skyscrapers, say Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs and de Certeau; interpret from the sidewalk. The same space will be a different place" (as quoted by Barbara Eckstein 2003, 29).

Appendices

Appendix 1:
Interview Guide

1. What is your role in the planning process?

2. Whose interests do you represent within this planning process?

3. How would you describe the planning process that we are participating in?

4. How do the varying interests represented within the planning process differ from your own position?

5. Have you been involved in collaborative planning processes before, and if yes, when?

6. How do you see the community's needs and interests being represented within this planning process?

7. Do you feel that there are any gaps within the planning process that should be addressed?

8. Do you feel that the decision-making processes during these meetings reflect the objectives of the process?

9. In regards to what was discussed at the meeting, I would like to ask clarification on your position within the points that were raised during our discussion pertaining to the planning of the proposed construction project.

10. [A question pertaining to the specific item of discussion that requires clarification of a point of reference or decision that was made during the planning meeting.]

Appendix 2:
Consent Form 2

Informed Consent By Participants In A Research Study About Collaborative Planning Processes.

Investigator Name: DenaKae Beno

Investigator Deparment: Sociology/Anthropology

Hello, my name is DenaKae Beno, I am a Simon Fraser University Graduate Student enrolled in the Sociology/Anthropology Department. The University and I, who will be conducting this research study subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of participants. This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research participants.

Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about the responsibilities of researchers, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics by email at hweinber@sfu.ca or phone at 604-268-6593.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Risks to the participant, third parties or society: There are limited risks involved in the research study. However, information documented from the planning process could be used by stakeholders or readers of the published material for various political reasons and could lead to misrepresentation of the information generated in this planning process. Therefore, participants will be given the opportunity to review transcripts generated from the planning meetings to ensure their views have been accurately represented prior to publishing any research data. Also, the anonymity of participants and confidentiality of the information generated during these meetings will be upheld by myself as a researcher. Names of participants will not be published in the research findings and the church will be identified only by an acronym. No third party or outside agency will be granted permission to access any of the research data without direct permission from the Wilson Heights United Church planning committee.

The benefit of the study about collaborative planning processes to the development of new knowledge, includes: The opportunity to explore how collaborative planning processes between technical experts and input from community members is a viable

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component of ensuring that construction and development processes address the needs of the community.

Through permission of the UC Vision and Planning Committee, I am pursuing my research on collaborative planning processes. I will be observing the meetings that will be conducted for this process, as well as, completing document analysis of meeting minutes, church archive information, and technically generated documents that relate to the planning process.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time. I also understand that I may register any complaint with the Director of the Office of Research Ethics or the researcher named above or with the Chair, Director or Dean of the Department, School or Faculty as shown below.

Sociology/Anthropology Department Chair: Jane Pulkingham

8888 University Way, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia V5A 1S6 Canada

_____ Yes _____ Initial

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion by contacting: DenaKae Beno

_____ Yes _____ Initial

I have been informed that the research will be confidential

_____ Yes _____ Initial

I have been given Form 4: Participant's Feedback and asked to complete the form. I understand that the completion of this form is optional and not a requirement of the research study.

_____ Yes _____ Initial

I understand the risks and contributions of my participation in this study and agree to participate.

_____
Participant Last Name

_____
Participant First Name

_____
Participant Contact Information

_____
Participant Signature

Witness

_____

Date

Appendix 3:
Glossary

architectural entopia Is not reflective of utopian ideals that tend to have a static vision based on a certain set of rules that are presumed to enhance life or a certain architecture that will support the organization's vision. Rather, architectural entopia in this research refers to the flexibility involved in the creation of a community-generated planning process that promotes the fulfilment of human potential and community-initiated goals within the planning, design, and development processes (Gifford 2002, 503).

community Is an ambiguous and multi-faceted concept. However, for the purpose of this intended research, community is defined as the members of the church, construction, planning, and design communities that I completed my research with, as well as the surrounding community of individuals of southeast Vancouver that are served by the church.

community participants of UC The term member is not exclusive to the members with transferred or full membership standing in the United Church or UC congregation. Rather, the term includes anyone who attends and participates in the UC congregation through a variety of services, activities, or volunteer positions.

LEED Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

pattern languages Refers to a structural method devised by architect Christopher Alexander to describe and incorporate multiple expressions of place within a built environment design for a particular domain. This method is characterized by (1) noticing and naming common needs or challenges within the design process of a building by the community of end users, (2) describing the most effective solutions for meeting the stated goals or vision, and (3) helping the designer to move from pathways of social experience to the integration of these concepts into the physical design of a building that meets the complex and diverse needs of the community it is intended for.

sustainable environments Reflect a shift and change of attitudes toward prioritizing ways of life that are in balance with the current state of renewable resources of the ecosystem and biosphere. Therefore, sustainable environmental planning focuses on creating a better understanding of the nature of this balance in relationship to built, social, and natural environments through the information and decision-making processes at all levels (McDonach and Yaneske 2002).

UC The acronym used for the church community in which I completed my fieldwork.

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Conferences Attended

Church and Affordable Housing. October 14, 2006. Vancouver, BC.
- Excerpt from speech by Jonathan Bird, co-chair of the Church and Affordable Housing Conference
- Excerpt from speech by Libby Davies, MP-Vancouver East
- Excerpt from speech by Jenny Kwan, MLA-Vancouver-Mount Pleasant
- Excerpt from speech by Greg Paul, executive director of Sanctuary Ministries
- Excerpt from speech by Tim Stevenson, City of Vancouver councillor
- Excerpt from speech by Alice Sundberg, co-chair of the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness and executive director of the BC Non-Profit Housing Association

Faith In The City. May 17–19, 2007. Montreal, QC.
- Excerpt from presentation by Eric Steadman, socially responsible investing

World Planners Congress. June 17–20, 2006. Vancouver, BC.
- Excerpt from presentation by Norman Krumholz, planner