RECLAIMING LHEIDLI:
TOWARDS INDIGENOUS PLANNING IN PRINCE GEORGE

by

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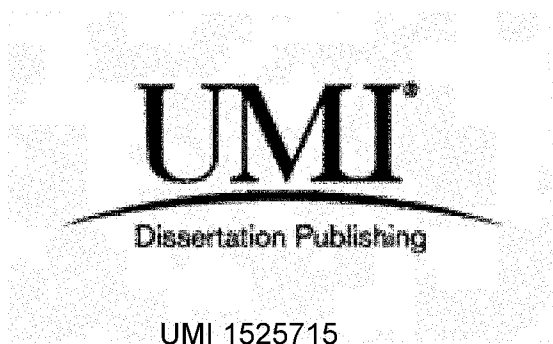
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ABSTRACT

The objective of this thesis is to contribute to the emerging context of Indigenous planning, recognizing that it is both a theoretical framework and professional practice of resistance to historical colonial planning and the production of place/space relationships. Specifically my thesis employs an Indigenous research framework, whereby the participants are experts, respect for relationships is foremost and contribution to social change is part of the design (Smith, 1999). Through the use of Photovoice (Castleden & Garvin, 2008; Wang & Burris, 1997) as a participatory research framework of qualitative inquiry, participants examine place/space relationships between Lheidli T'enneh Nation Members and Lheidli (the now City of Prince George) in the specific contexts of (1) the colonial hegemony that has erased Lheidli history and (2) the wider neglect of planning policy in not meaningfully engaging with urban Aboriginal communities. Ultimately my thesis does not transcend Western research methods; rather, it creates a political challenge to the Western model of the planning process by acknowledging an Indigenous planning methodology that is accountable to Indigenous communities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Goals, Context, and Overview of the Research

Here I am again, writing this thesis. I have been here before, but now I realize that my personal, professional, and academic understandings have changed incredibly over the last decade, and I feel confident in what I have to say. Many people have written that their thesis or dissertation was a journey, and I completely identify with that. In some ways my thesis has been an albatross around my neck, and yet in others it has been an opportunity to define myself as an Indigenous woman and Indigenous professional, and to etch out a space in the academy that I feel proud to call my own. I believe that this journey took exactly as long as it needed to take — although I have joked in the past that it was perhaps the most expensive gym membership ever.

Twelve years ago my mentor, Mike Evans at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), invited me to apply to the University of Alberta to begin a Masters in cultural anthropology. From 1997–2000, I had worked for him as a research assistant, and he generously acknowledged me as a co-author on two publications. Both were oral history projects initiated and propelled by the Prince George Métis Elders Society. The first publication, *What it is to be a Métis* (Evans, Gareau, Nielson, Krebs & Standeven 1999), was a series of interviews gathered by students in the anthropology department at UNBC and *textualized* by Mike Evans. This project had strict ethical guidelines that truly considered the desires of the community and addressed the complexity of voice. It was my first experience in an actual community-based research project. As part of my role, I worked directly for the Elders and even accompanied them to Lac Sainte Anne on a pilgrimage. It was amazing to see the Elders'

reaction when the book was released in 1999. There was incredible pride in the book, and the community-based or participatory research methodology of the project continues to shape my academic and professional work today.

What it is to be a Métis also had an impact on my identity. My grandfather was an Indian, and let me be clear, we did not announce it in a way that showed pride. We whispered it, like something you hide. I never really knew him because my mother was deeply affected by his legacy of family violence. Working for the Elders made me see two things: (1) that there is pride in being a mixed-blood Aboriginal woman; and (2) there are multiple dimensions to the concept of identity. Forever etched in my mind is my experience of sitting around the Métis Elders office, making tiny hide drums to sell at the Friendship Centre craft fair. One of the Elders broke her conversation (she was speaking in Cree) turned to me and whispered, "we never did this Indian stuff when I was a kid." In that moment I realized that the politics of identity are complex and that the effects of colonization run deep.

The second publication, *A Brief History of the Short Life of the Island Cache,* was also an oral history project initiated by the Métis Elders Society (Evans & Krebs, 2004). The story of the Cache really resonates with me as a planner and part-time academic; it was the story of an Aboriginal community, both in the physical and cultural sense, that was marginalized by the local government of the day. The Cache had a short life as a low-income rental area in Prince George, first for forestry workers from Saskatchewan, and later for Cree and Métis people from the Prairie Provinces as well as immigrant workers. It was disbanded in 1972. But long before it was the Island Cache, it was Fort George IR No. 1, and before settler language came into play, it was Lheidli.

In 2004 I was hired by the Lheidli T'enneh Nation to complete a land use plan. Lheidli T'enneh is one of the now forty First Nations operating under the Framework Agreement for First Nation Land Management. This means that the Lheidli T'enneh Nation has opted out of the 25% of the *Indian Act* that deals with the management of reserve lands in Canada and is able to create their own laws for the environmental protection and land use of their four reserves.

The absolute requirements for the plan were that it be community-driven, since it had to be voted on for approval at the general band council election of 2005 in order for it to be accepted by Lheidli governance. The plan also needed to be accessible to the membership. At that time I had about four years of experience working as a planner. This was largely physical planning, working with an engineer and forecasting physical infrastructure needs by analyzing population projections. Regardless of the project, I had taken the participatory framework I learned from working with Mike Evans and applied it everywhere — in places an engineer would never think to do so. As a result the plan was passed, and I was hired to complete several more projects for Lheidli T'enneh.

While working for Lheidli T'enneh, I had two profound realizations. First, I discovered that the pre-colonial community of *Lheidli* was the site of confluence of the Nechako and Fraser Rivers, which essentially covered all of downtown Prince George. Second, I was practicing an Indigenous planning methodology. Elder Ron Seymour opened my eyes to the history of Lheidli. He showed me through his own research at the provincial archives and local resources that the City of Prince George had made numerous attempts to write over the history of Lheidli and its peoples. He explained to me one day that *Lheidli* is the site of the confluence of the rivers and

that *T'enneh* means *people from*. He brought in Lheidli Elders that had been living in town to tell me their stories and show me photos of the city excavating a Lheidli Cemetery and the human remains that were unearthed.

It was at this time that I made a change in my thesis. Rather than looking at the recent marginalization of the urban Aboriginal population in Prince George by local government, I would go back further, to Fort George IR No. 1. In part, I made this change because Indigenous protocol necessitates it; once I knew the history of Lheidli I couldn't ignore my relationships and deep respect for the Lheidli T'enneh members and it compelled to me to seek their guidance and ownership over the project. The other part of this shift was because I believe the effacement of Lheidli history and presence over the years has contributed to the wider effacement of all Indigenous peoples in Prince George.

1.1 Thesis Goals

The intent of this thesis is to contribute to the emerging context of Indigenous planning, recognizing that it is both a theoretical framework and professional practice of resistance to historical colonial planning and knowledge production of place/space relationships. Specifically my thesis employs an Indigenous research framework to examine place/space relationships between Lheidli T'enneh Nation Members and Lheidli (the now City of Prince George) in the specific contexts of (1) the colonial hegemony that has erased Lheidli history and (2) the wider neglect of planning policy in not meaningfully engaging with urban Aboriginal communities. Included in this discussion are the issues of multiplicity of community, as well as the temporality of Indigenous knowledge. In total six individuals participated in the research through

photovoice essays, a method which asks participants to document their relationships with space and place with photographs, and then reflect on their meaning.

This thesis explores the urban Aboriginal experience and how it relates to the academic discourse and praxis within planning (encompassing both professional practice and theoretical frameworks). I contend that there is an Indigenous planning methodology akin to an Indigenous research methodology that unifies both knowledge systems and methods (Kovach, 2009). This research also comes from the recommendations made by Evelyn Peters (2002, 2005) who suggests that the models in looking at urban Aboriginal communities should be unique to Aboriginal peoples and must be performed through: (1) the acknowledgement of the historical presence of Aboriginal people in urban spaces; (2) the geographic location of urban Aboriginal communities and wider processes such as planning, zoning, institutions, and social service delivery agencies; (3) posing of the question, "what is community?" and understanding that urbanity is secondary to community; and (4) providing space for urban Aboriginal people (communities) to share stories about their experiences.

The context of this research is the site of Lheidli, now City of Prince George, and how Lheidli T'enneh Members connect with their history, the physical development of the city, and how the city engages with its Aboriginal residents when planning for services. My thesis does not transcend Western research methods; rather, it creates a political challenge to the Western model of the planning process by acknowledging an Indigenous planning methodology that is accountable to Indigenous communities. My own reflexivity is as much a part of this process as the research itself, since according to Kovach "reflexivity is the researcher's own self-reflection

in the meaning-making process" (2009, p. 32). Where I situate myself in this research and my work as a planner is thus part and parcel of the Indigenous planning process.

This thesis does not prescribe a set of actions that will act as a guide for professional planners. Nor is the thesis exhaustive in exploring the role of Indigenous planning and relationships between Indigenous community and local governments. Instead, it works to dismantle assumptions around the concept of community for both the theory and praxis of planning, inside and outside the academy.

Part of my rationale for this research is that I believe that the experience of the members of Lheidli on their ancestral homelands is analogous to the experience of urban Aboriginal communities in Canada, their relationship with the urban landscape, and the policies that impact this relationship. This is an experience that needs to be shared, a dialogue of change[1] that needs to occur, and at the very least an opportunity to explore the concept of Indigenous planning as a resistance to the ways in which planning is currently done *for* Aboriginal people in both urban and rural environments (Matunga, 2013; Peters, 2005).

1.2 A Note About Language

At this point it is important to understand my references to Aboriginal identity; throughout this thesis I employ the term *Indigenous* to include all Indigenous people regardless of legislated identity or place of origin. Sometimes included in this reference is the theoretical framework of Indigenous studies, into which this thesis fits. In addition, in some places I refer specifically to First Nation peoples; this is done to distinguish the reserve land base of First Nations in Canada

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[1] In this case, dialogue of change refers to Paulo Freire's (1970) notion of dialogue as communication that understands and validates the ways in which people view, or name the world, conscientization. Truly respecting differences and making room for other ways of knowing and being is part of dialogue; without it, communication does not happen.

and the planning models that are specific to reserve lands. Finally in the discourse around Indigenous people in the urban landscape, I often use the term *Aboriginal*. Under *the Constitution Act of 1982* the term *Aboriginal* refers to Indian, Inuit, or Métis peoples. Like Berg, Evans and Fuller (2007) suggest, "within the racialized politics of both identity and place in Canada, non-Aboriginal understandings of the term have tended to cohere around a fairly limited range of more or less hegemonic meanings" (p. 399). Regardless of nomenclature, the ideas of *identity* and *community* have multiple dimensions and are often "contested in various times and places" (Berg, Evans & Fuller, 2007, p. 339).

Also throughout my discussion, I will employ the Indigenous name *Lheidli* to reference a movement from colonial Prince George to a pre- and decolonial imagining. When I refer to *Prince George* it will be to mark the colonial power and agenda that has existed for over a century — and still exists. In changing the language of place, my intention is to join other Indigenous academics and activists to "describe a symbolic strategy for shaping a desirable future, not an existing reality" (Battiste, 2000, p. xix).

1.3 Overview of the Thesis

In the following six chapters, I present a literature review, my methodology, a brief history of Lheidli T'enneh, an analysis of my research results and conclude with a discussion of my findings.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature and theoretical history of Indigenous planning. Here I outline the early history of mainstream planning and identify it as authoritarian and expert-driven, much like planning for First Nations in Canada has been, and often still is. This chapter also explores the planning paradigms that both influenced and made space for the

concept of Indigenous planning. From an Indigenous planning perspective, I then draw on the history of planning for reserve communities and suggest that the current Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AANDC) model of comprehensive community planning (CCP) is not necessarily an Indigenous planning model and that other models such as the Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management provide a process with which to start decolonizing the relationship between First Nations and their land. Finally I posit myself as a practitioner and Aboriginal woman within the concept of Indigenous planning.

Chapter Three presents the methodological framework for my research, which is an Indigenous research methodology grounded in participatory and empowerment research that is specific to Lheidli T'enneh. I discuss how participatory research is about social action and, like Indigenous planning, works to transform social inequities — in this case the colonial reality of Prince George. I give an overview of my data collection method, which was based on Wang and Burris' (1997) concept of photovoice, where research participants take photographs and then are asked to choose a limited number of photos and to discuss their reasons behind the selections. In this chapter, I also detail how following Lheidli T'enneh methodological protocol, a steering committee of Lheidli T'enneh members aided in the design of the research project, including determining who should participate, what questions should be used to guide photography, and how the results of the project should be communicated.

Chapter Four details a written history of Lheidli from 1892 through to present time. Without treaty rights, the Lheidli T'enneh were relegated to the Fort George Indian Reserve No. 1, a 1366-acre reserve established in 1892 (a mere fraction of their traditional territory), which encompassed most of what has become downtown Prince George. In 1908 it became the focus

of a vicious land dispute between the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, local developers, and the Lheidli T'enneh. Five years later the Fort George Indian Reserve No. 1 was sold, and the Lheidli families were given seven months notice to leave. This chapter provides important context to the stories presented in the subsequent chapter.

Perhaps the most exciting part of this project is presented in Chapter Five, the results chapter. Here I put forth the four emergent themes of the research. First, the theme of sadness, both for Indigenous people living downtown and the neglect of the Lheidli Cemetery (located in Fort George park). Second, the City of Prince George's lack of meaningful engagement with Lheidli T'enneh. Third, the idea of reclaiming and renaming places in Prince George to reflect Lheidli names in the consciousness of mainstream society. Fourth, that there is not one singular urban Aboriginal community, but rather multiple Aboriginal communities within the city.

In Chapter Six I tie my research results to the theory and practice of Indigenous planning, discussing how the spatial discourse of mainstream Prince George, including the city's planning department, has persistently worked to efface Lheidli from the space of what is now the City of Prince George. This attempt to erase Lheidli T'enneh and other Indigenous peoples from the urban space has caused deep wounds; these wounds must be salved through meaningful engagement with the multiple Indigenous communities living in the City of Prince George.

Finally, I conclude the thesis by linking narrative in the construction of spatial identity to the decolonization of planning discourse and practice in Lheidli/the City of Prince George.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review: Decolonizing Planning

2.1 Introduction

Indigenous planning has a long history. For as long as there has been a colonial agenda to control the lives of Indigenous people there has been a resistance to it. According to Matunga (2013) "the primary aim of Indigenous Planning is to improve the lives and environments of Indigenous peoples" (p. 27). This is not done by grafting Eurocentric planning theory onto Indigenous communities, but through recognition of the value of Indigenous planning as a tool for community transformation (Matunga, 2013).

Planning itself is a modernist construction that viewed the application of scientific principles to human society as contributing to the greater good (Fishman, 2012; Scott, 2012). However, this modern planning ultimately reflected an instrumental view of the world and was a tool of white male hegemony.

Mainstream planning began to open space for the multiplicity of views, intersubjective reasoning, and the specificity of a community's political reality and interests in the latter part of the twentieth century, to accommodate the reaction and critique of those communities whose interests were being ignored. Indigenous planning grows out of the intersection of this reaction to the planning paradigm, the nascent recognition of the importance of Indigenous knowledge, political demands from Indigenous people for sovereignty over their own communities, and the work of a growing number of Indigenous academics, planners, and their non-Indigenous allies. This movement was recognized globally with the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

People and nationally throughout various levels of policy and governance, including the Canadian Institute of Planners, of which I am a registered member.

This literature review examines how these complex exchanges have led to the theory and practice of Indigenous planning. Understanding Indigenous Planning was integral to my decision to undertake this research, and to utilize photovoice as a data collection method. This chapter is also intended to demonstrate my knowledge of the literature that has informed my academic life to date. To be sure, I have read a lot of peer-reviewed journals and waded through too many books to count, but it is important to understand that my thesis is also about Indigenous knowledge, and how it is valued or de-valued in the context of planning in Prince George, British Columbia.

Margaret Kovach (2009) writes that as Indigenous scholars, it is fundamentally important to understand our relationship to tribal knowledges and how we position that relationship in the academy. Like Kovach, I am not a knowledge holder — rather my role has been as a medium, as a vehicle for communication and action. In other words, the way in which I approach research and my professional practice recognizes the paramountcy of Indigenous knowledge and works to shift the power inequity in mainstream institutions via theory and praxis.

How can I demonstrate the invaluable teachings that come via narrative? I would argue that the oral history and Indigenous knowledge of Lheidli members — through work on this thesis, and through the relationships that exist outside of it as well — have impacted me equally, if not more, than theorists in the field. Marie Battiste (2000) talks about the concept of a literature review within Indigenous research and says that:

In the European (or Eurocentric) knowledge system, the purpose of a literature review is to analyze critically a segment of a published topic. Indigenous knowledge comprises the complex set of technologies developed and sustained by Indigenous civilizations. Often oral and symbolic, it is transmitted through the structure of Indigenous languages and passed on to the next generation through modeling, practice, and animation, rather than through the written word. In the context of Indigenous knowledge, therefore, a literature review is an oxymoron because Indigenous knowledge is typically embedded in the cumulative experiences and teachings of Indigenous peoples rather than in a library. The second point is that conducting a literature review on Indigenous knowledge implies that Eurocentric research can reveal an understanding of Indigenous knowledge. The problem with this approach is that Indigenous knowledge does not mirror classic Eurocentric orders of life. It is a knowledge system in its own right with its own internal consistency and ways of knowing, and there are limits to how far it can be comprehended from a Eurocentric point of view (p. 2).

It is important to point out the way in which cumulative experiences shape Indigenous knowledge, because the foundation of this thesis and my work writ large comes from my life experiences as an *urban Aboriginal* and from my professional experiences as an Indigenous planner. As such, this literature review will draw on my knowledge and experience to contribute to the body of work now shaping Indigenous planning. I begin by giving an overview of modern planning theory and its principal criticisms. I then move to a discussion of post-rationalist planning, including advocacy planning, communicative action, and the postmodern critique of planning. Finally, I offer a partial genealogy of Indigenous planning, highlighting its main components, including an example of an Indigenous planning process from my own professional experience.

2.2 Modernist Planning

Before I begin to unpack Indigenous planning, I think it necessary to understand the roots of planning as a discipline and profession. According to Fainstein and Campbell (2003), modern

planning emerged in the early twentieth century as a response to the problems of the nineteenth century industrialized city. At the time, the major issues were centralized factories, unfit and squalid living conditions of the factory workers, disjointed roadways and transportation corridors, and the lack of agricultural and leisure spaces. Ebenezer Howard and his Garden City movement proposed the creation of symmetrical Garden Cities arranged in a circle around a large Centre City (Fishman, 2012). Services to the cities were provided by a canal system, linking each of the cities and its occupants to the various town centres, as well as the agricultural and garden spaces (Fishman, 2012).

Howard's Garden City movement (and the cities he founded) influenced planning for several decades and became one of the most influential planning theories of the twentieth century (Fishman, 2012). It is essential to recognize Howard's contribution to the planning discipline and to note that the City of Prince George was planned using Howard's principles (Llewellyn, 1999). According to Fishman, like many theorists of the day, Howard believed in the Victorian concept of building a utopia through the application of science, and that through his own imagination and by changing the built form he "would embody the values of his society in a workable plan, and thus direct social change with his prophetic leadership" (2012, p. 37).

Howard's modern planning theories sought to alleviate the disparity felt by the working class through the engineering of space to promote collective cooperation both in terms of infrastructure and cultural accomplishments. Howard had elaborate methodologies for the procurement of land through philanthropic individuals that would revert ownership back to the community (Fishman, 2012). Howard's Garden City plans had a tremendous impact on

planning; however, they were entirely grounded in White, Eurocentric hegemony and the belief in a *common good* engineered by people in power.

According to Scott, in the 1920s planning theorists such as Le Corbusier began to emerge in a movement he terms "high modernism" (2012, p. 55). Scott defines high modernism as an almost tyrannical belief in scientific rationalism and the power of technology, popular in Western Europe and North America from the mid-nineteenth century until World War I. Key to the foundation of high modernism was the Western concept of the supremacy of linear progress, most notably scientific expansion and commercial production, paired with the belief of the primacy of a rational, engineered design of society and a mastery over nature. As Scott points out, the temporal aspect of high modernism is almost entirely focused on the future; the past is seen as "an impediment, a history that must be transcended" (2012, p. 61). In like manner, high modernism also sought to abolish politics as it sullied the societal solutions created by those in power (Scott, 2012).

Scott also suggests that during the twentieth century, both revolution and colonialism were most hospitable to high modernist planning due to the disposition of power. With respect to colonialism, Scott points out that colonial regimes have often been the sites of extensive social engineering. More specifically, "the authoritarian power inherent in colonial rule [has] encouraged ambitious schemes to remake native societies" (2012, p. 63).

Modernist planning is rational, exclusive, and arguably ignorant of the complexity of societal dynamics and space/place relationships. Early modernist and high modernist planners believed that by planning cities and economies based on rational principles, society could be engineered to evolve into an urban utopia. Early planning theorists and practitioners were

consumed with the ideology of "build it better" (Fishman, 2012). However, modernist planning is not a thing of the distant past; we need only to look at the housing and infrastructure development on any Indian reserve in Canada to see that it is alive and well.

The residual film of modernism still clinging to planning today is the concept that planners plan for the *greater good*, gradually working toward improved societal conditions.

2.3 Democratizing Planning

In the 1960s and 1970s, advocacy planning materialized as a major movement in response to civil unrest in American society (Brooks, 2002). In 1965, Paul Davidoff questioned the concept of the value neutrality of the planner and instead called for planners to "not only make explicit the values underlying his or her prescription for a course of action but [to] also *affirm* them" (Brooks, 2002, p. 109). Davidoff was mainly a physical planner and did not break from rational planning; rather, he suggested that "plural plans" be created to express and advocate for a group's values and objectives (Brooks, 2012). Not surprisingly, marginalized groups took exception to Davidoff's suggestion that their voice be filtered through urban planners. Michael Brooks (2002) discusses his experience at the first (and last) Annual Advocacy Planning Conference in 1970, held in New York City:

> The message communicated by the stage-stormers, most of them affiliated with New York Neighborhood groups, was approximately this: "Advocacy has become the plaything of white middle-class professionals who receive sizable salaries for their efforts. We don't need their help, and we resent their patronizing behavior. The money spent on advocacy would serve our needs much more directly if it were simply given to us; we are capable of developing our own plans and strategies, and we can certainly speak for ourselves. If you planners are really serious about doing something for the poor and minorities, go root out racism where it operates most virulently—in the affluent, segregated suburbs" (pp. 113–114).

Advocacy planning was short-lived as a planning practice, but the one major contribution it made to the profession was to push planners to be self-reflexive about their values and give up the concept of a unitary public interest (Brooks, 2002, p. 117; Fainstein & Campbell, 2012).

Communicative Action

According to Brooks (2002) one of the largest contributions of post-rationalist planning theorists was the concept of communicative action. The main tenant of communication action theory is the idea that "planning communications are not just exchanges of words," but rather they reflect institutional and political power relationships (Brooks, 2002, p. 121). Perhaps one of the most recognized communicative action theorist is John Forester (Brooks, 2002). Building on Davidoff's notion of the value-laden planner, John Forester says that planners work largely in democratic and deeply capitalist spaces, which leaves some people independent and others powerless.

In his innovative book, *Planning in the Face of Power,* Forester (1989) suggests that planning has an alternative vocation, one that incorporates cross-cultural communication and looks at the issues of power and voice. He acknowledges the structure of social action, particularly the concept of dialogue within planning, and is one of the best examples of the communicative action movement in planning. Forester suggests that "mutual understanding depends on the satisfaction" of four criteria: "comprehensibility, sincerity, legitimacy and accuracy or truth" (1989, p. 144). But his suggestion is to look for a common language rather than working toward a shared understanding, such as that expressed in Paulo Freire's (1970) concept of *real dialogue*. For Freire, real dialogue refers to the idea that dialogue is the

encounter between people that wish to name it in the context of power and oppression. A real dialogue is the action necessary to transform the world and can only exist between those who wish to create understanding, not simply convey thought.

Although Forester's (1989) discussion of communicative action falls short in addressing all the tenets of Indigenous planning, I would suggest that it is part of the resistance-planning framework in which Indigenous planning posits itself. Forester dedicates a chapter to the education and pedagogy of planners and asks instructors and students to examine class, gender, environment, and global economies as part of a future for planning theory — exactly what Hingangaroa Smith (2000) suggests Indigenous scholars need to do with respect to the production of knowledge.

Ultimately, communicative action is a paradigm in planning that further embeds planning theory and practice in the specificities of community and resists the modern ideals of the rational and value-free planner. Communicative action is centred on multiplicity of voice, intersubjective reasoning, and on "how the context of a community's politics and social circumstances shape" planning practice (Fainstein & Campbell, 2003, p. 172; see also Brooks 2002).

Postmodern Critique

In the 1970s planning theory shifted from modern to postmodern with the critique of feminist and postcolonial thinkers. Feminist theorists such as Leonie Sandercock point to the hegemony of male-centred thought and planning praxis. Marsha Ritzdorf (1996) asserts that "Feminist thought rejects the facile explanation that theory can be or is 'neutral,' and thus rejects the suppression of differences" (pp. 445–446). Whether gender is mentioned explicitly or not, a set

of values underlies the feminist framework of inquiry. Ritzdorf describes these values as being concerned with:

> (1) the position that women are exploited, oppressed or devalued by society; (2) an interest on the part of the feminist thinker in changing the conditions of women's lives; and (3) the assertion that traditional, still dominant theory, research and practice ignore or justify inappropriate and/or exploitive treatment of women (1996, p. 446).

Leonie Sandercock and Ann Forsyth (1992) propose that feminist theory in planning contributes particularly in the five areas of "spatial, economic, and social relationships; language and communication; epistemology and methodology; ethics; and the nature of the public domain" (p. 49). Further, they suggest that the history of planning should be re-written to incorporate gender as an analysis, and that doing so would produce a whole new set of questions about the history of planning theory and practice (Sandercock & Forsyth, 1992). Most importantly, although women have suffered at the hands of male-centred planning, they have had a role and made numerous unacknowledged contributions (Sandercock & Forsyth, 1992). Similar to Matunga (2013) who suggests that Indigenous planning has been going on outside of the "gaze of colonial enterprise," much feminist planning work has gone unnoticed (p. 30).

More recently, Leonie Sandercock (2004) suggests that "planning is an unfinished social project whose task is managing our coexistence in the shared spaces of the cities and neighbourhoods in such a way as to enrich human life and work for social, cultural and environmental justice" (p. 134). This is very much in line with an Indigenous planning framework. Sandercock asks planners if there is such a thing as a planning vision for the twenty-first century, one that moves away from the regulatory planning of the twentieth century and looks to "an emerging imagination" for planning theory and praxis (2004). Sandercock suggests

that there is a twenty-first century planning imagination featuring four key themes: political, audacious, creative, and therapeutic (2004, p. 134). In discussing her concept of the therapeutic aspect of a twenty-first century planning imagination, Sandercock looks to the process of sharing experiences and working through differences as a therapeutic and transformative process. She suggests that the term *therapeutic* is "an acknowledgement that many planning disputes are about relationships, and therefore emotions, rather than conflicts over resources" (Sandercock, 2004, p. 139). Much as therapy helps individuals to grow and transform, so too can community and social transformation occur through therapeutic planning (Sandercock, 2004).

In the same way that feminist values open a debate on the presentation of voice, namely the absence of female voice, the project of Indigeneity challenges the assumptions made by Eurocentric thought and the absence of Indigenous values in the production of knowledge and the praxis of theory.[2] Indigenous epistemologies have been somewhat validated through the postmodern and postcolonial critique of modernist assumptions in the academy; however, Indigenous epistemologies are "often rendered invisible methodologically" because of a lack of understanding of the ways in which place shapes understanding (Kovach, 2009, p. 42).

2.4 Indigenizing Planning

Margaret Kovach (2009) writes that the "reproduction of colonial relationships persists inside institutional centres" and manifests itself largely through "Western-based policies and

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[2] According to Smith (1999) the concept of Indigeneity "centres a politics of indigenous identity and indigenous cultural action" (p. 146). Central to Indigeneity is the right of Indigenous people to govern themselves and their own affairs, including things as seemingly disparate as the provision of human services and the production of knowledge and pedagogy. I would add to this planning and physical services.

practices" (p. 28). With respect to the Western construct of planning, John Forester (1989) suggests that:

> Planning theory is what planners need when they get stuck; another way to formulate a problem, a way to anticipate outcomes, a source of reminders about what is important, a way of paying attention that provides direction, strategy and coherence (p. 137).

Indigenous planning is about change; it is about the process of decolonizing the place and space relationships of Indigenous people and ensuring that Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies are put into planning practice now and in the future. I highlight here the concept of multiple Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies because, as Kovach says, "so much of Indigenous ways of knowing is internal, personal and experiential, creating one standardized, externalized framework for Indigenous research is nearly impossible, and inevitably heartbreaking for Indigenous people" (2009, p. 43).

Tenets of communicative action and postmodern critiques are central to many aspects of Indigenous planning. However, what we now term Indigenous planning was by no means the result of academic discourses on the importance of decentralizing planning. Rather, it is the result of a complex set of interactions between Indigenous people, professional planners, Indian Affairs policies and requirements, and validation by the courts both in recognizing oral history as a record to mark Indigenous historical land tenure and use, and the requirements of resource development companies to consult with First Nations to determine the impacts of development on traditional uses.

This section traces a partial genealogy of Indigenous planning, describes the central tenets of Indigenous planning, and includes an example of an Indigenous planning process from my own professional experience. My overall goal is to present an alternative way of working

within the Western construct of planning and to shift the way in which we historicize and normalize the urban landscape in order to reflect Indigenous values for the land and the Indigenous peoples that live there. Ideally, my goal is to open the language of planning to validate the theoretical concept of Indigeneity and recognize Indigenous planning as "a parallel tradition with its own history, focus, goals and approach" (Matunga, 2013, p. 31).

Assimilation Planning

Since 1876, when the *Indian Act* was legislated, the federal government has controlled almost every aspect of First Nations people's lives, including the management of reserve lands, resources, and money (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada [AANDC], 2011). The Department of Indian Affairs (now known as Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada) has had an overt agenda to assimilate and civilize *the Indian*.[3] Of course, this includes how Indigenous people in Canada plan and develop their communities. Like the high modernist era in planning, the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) took an authoritarian approach to planning communities on reserve. There were (and still are) standardized formulas based on the cost of services, remoteness indicators, housing monies, and so on. These formulas were plugged into development plans made by engineers, often with little or no consultation with the community, nor recognition for the traditional definitions of house, family, conception of the good, or places to live.

To understand the lineage of Indigenous planning, one must first understand that the federal government's fiduciary obligation for physical community services applies only on reserve lands. Evelyn Peters (2005) acknowledges that there are "Planning theorists who have

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[3] For a good view of the Indian Act policies and theoretical frameworks that drove them from 1880–1932 see *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* by E. Brian Titley.

incorporated discussions of Aboriginal rights into the planning literature," but they are largely

concerned with the "context of reserve and rural Aboriginal community planning and land

management" (p. 330). As such, when looking back to planning frameworks for First Nations

people in Canada, they tend to focus almost exclusively on the reserve land base.

For the last thirty years, planning for reserve communities was largely done via the

physical development plan (PDP) or *community physical development plan*. Almost exclusively

prepared by engineers, the purpose of the PDP was to identify "spatial areas of the community

in which physical development of a specific nature is planned, or will be allowed to take place"

(INAC, 1988, p. 2). The guideline document that INAC produced in 1988 stipulated that the PDP

would "serve to focus the community and its leaders on well-planned and communicated

development alternatives and allow for community participation on where, how, when and

what development is planned to take place" (p. 2). However, the more than forty PDPs I have

read included very little engagement with the community. By and large, the process was to

meet with Chief and Council and work to expand physical services. For some companies, PDPs

were produced from a master template, such that the names of Nations from previous PDPs

were sometimes left in error. Nevertheless, the physical development plan actually marked a

transition from entirely top-down processes in that First Nations could determine who did their

planning and development.

In 2001, I started my first planning job with a small, local engineering company. The

principal of that company had been an engineer for Indian Affairs prior to the devolution of its

regional office in Prince George. He had a lengthy relationship with the Capital Projects

department at Indian Affairs and was adept at both applying for contracts and constructing

capital projects on reserve. These projects were for what we planners term *hard services* consisting of roads, water supply, wastewater, ground works, and servicing for subdivision, waste removal, and most recently planning itself. I was hired at a time when the company was shifting to include planning in their menu of services. This shift was sparked when one of the client Nations wanted someone to engage the community to comprehensively plan the development of their main reserve community. This particular Nation had money to spend on community engagement and planning, and my employer at the time saw community planning as an opportunity to broaden his business.

At the time I thought I was somewhat revolutionary in my approach: I actually had meetings with community members and talked about more than their water and sewer systems. We incorporated the Nation's language, and often I used the budget to write proposals for community development initiatives that were prioritized by the community. In other words, I didn't question the planning framework; I simply used the budget to do a lot more than meet the terms of reference for a physical development plan. In reality, the physical development plan was still prepared and submitted by an engineering firm who then prepared a feasibility study to upgrade or develop new infrastructure. Largely, the PDP framework was consultant-driven and focused solely on the physical aspects of community.

Outside Expert Planning

Currently there is a new process for planning on reserve called *comprehensive community planning* (CCP) (AANDC, 2013). I have been aware of this new framework since 2004, as I was the project manager for one of the pilot projects contributing to its inception. The written history of it is as follows: in 2007 the First Nations Infrastructure Fund (FNIF) was created. The

Infrastructure Fund was designed to give First Nations the opportunity to explore infrastructure and program development within a more holistic framework. The FNIF had a five-year mandate with an operating budget of $127.3 million federally, and out of that federal budget five million dollars was allocated to British Columbia. For the first two years of the FNIF program there were four categories of funding: (1) Infrastructure Fund Planning and Skills Development; (2) Solid Waste Management; (3) Roads and Bridges; and (4) Energy Systems. In 2009 FNIF accessed an additional $107.6 million to increase the total FNIF contributions envelope to $234.9 million, with BC's total share at $26.5 million. Also in 2009, connectivity was added to the existing infrastructure categories. FNIF was scheduled to cease on March 31, 2013, but a few Nations have carry-over into the current fiscal year.

CCP plans have been funded through the FNIF and in 2008 when I met with the Strategic Planning Branch in regards to a CCP I was working on and asked "why is planning being so heavily funded," their response was that five million dollars might only build a bridge or a few schools, but it would fund a lot of plans. To date there have been ninety-two CCP projects in British Columbia (AANDC, 2013).

In many ways CCP is being touted as a best-practice example of Indigenous planning. The University of British Columbia has a graduate program in planning that specializes in the CCP process. However, I have a number of misgivings about the process, which is why I located it after the physical development plan in the lineage of Indigenous planning. To be sure, CCP marks a tremendous shift in planning for First Nations and their reserve lands, and there are some very important foci, specifically about the necessity of community engagement and even ownership. CCP posits itself as a holistic framework intent on garnering intense community

participation to examine seven key areas of community including: (1) Governance; (2) Land Management; (3) Health; (4) Infrastructure; (5) Culture; (6) Social; and (7) Economy. There are multiple tools to assist communities in their planning (AANDC, 2010b). What is missing from comprehensive community planning are the resources for implementation.

AANDC wants any CCP to be sustainable within the community through the efforts of a *planning champion* that will take the lead to move the plan forward (AANDC, 2010b). But this champion may not be an employee and most likely will not have the resources to bring it to fruition unless Council deems it necessary. AANDC offers a list of possible revenue streams for various components of a CCP, but largely it is about the Nation using their own revenue streams, treaty-related measures, or through seeking funding outside of AANDC. Community mobilization fails when the change they've identified through a CCP has no resources for implementation. The movement of a Nation solely managed and funded by AANDC, to a self-sufficient, strategic government with successful economic ventures is a long process. Without community-based knowledge transfer and community development initiatives, the majority of Nations will not see transformation.

Indigenous Planning

In November 2006 I completed the *Membership Course for Professional Practitioners* required for me to become a full member of the Planning Institute of BC (PIBC). The three-day course asked students to posit their own practice within the context of historical and current planning theories and practices. At that time I branded myself as an *Aboriginal planner*, meaning that I allied myself with the concept of Indigeneity in recognizing the self-determination of Aboriginal peoples through the control of their own knowledges, land and resources, economic and

community development, including planning. Crucial to being an *Aboriginal planner* was the idea that the community is looked at as a whole, not reduced to its various components. Overall, the exercise was extremely useful, as it allowed me to forge a sense of professionalism and to recognize that I was already practicing as a planner with a set of goals, methods, and theories that are valuable within the profession.

I continued to use the term *Aboriginal planner* until 2010 when I encountered an article by Ted Jojola titled, "Indigenous Planning—An Emerging Context" (2008). In it, Jojola says, "Indigenous planning represents both an approach to community planning and an ideological movement" (2008, p. 42). Primarily Indigenous planning re-formulates planning practice in a way that values Indigenous knowledge and respects cultural identity. Jojola (2008) suggests that Indigenous people have been actively planning for their communities long before colonization, based on the principles of land tenure and stewardship. Jojola distinguishes land tenure models between the "long and sustained patterns of ownership" of Indigenous people and Western regulation of land use, which "balances private property rights and dominant notions of public welfare" (2008, p. 43).[4] Further, Jojola draws the distinction between the Western concept of development planning and the Indigenous values of sustainability, knowledge as tied to past, present and future, and the necessity for balance between humans and non-humans on the land. Ultimately for Jojola (2008), the practice of Indigenous planning is predicated on adhering to land tenure traditions and upholding the unique cultural worldviews of Indigenous communities.

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[4] It should be noted that there are many authors that contribute to the literature of Indigenous Planning, including Chris Anderson, Lisa Hardess, and Libby Porter, but for the purpose of this thesis I focused on those authors that largely defined the philosophical tenants of Indigenous Planning.

This past summer, I received an email announcing a new publication titled, *Reclaiming Indigenous Planning*. Without hesitation, I ordered it. Edited by Walker, Jojola and Natcher (2013) this volume goes deeper into the theory of Indigenous planning and presents case studies where Indigenous planning frameworks are put to practice. As part of this volume Hirini Matunga (2013) states that "Indigenous planning isn't just an armchair theoretical approach or a set of methods and practices, but a political strategy aimed at improving the lives and environments of Indigenous peoples (p. 5). As a planning process Matunga (2013) suggests that Indigenous planning "uses Indigenous (and other) knowledge, both traditional and contemporary, to make decisions highly contextual to the community" and that these decisions must be "located within its worldview, set of beliefs and values system, how it sees itself and its future" (p. 14). Matunga also suggests that if "Indigenous peoples were planned into oppression, equally they can be planned out of it," but that this planning requires adherence to Indigenous knowledge and more than "simply 'grafting' Indigeneity to 'mainstream' planning" (p. 31). Ultimately mainstream planning must "create a conceptual space for Indigenous planning through the acceptance of its legitimacy as a parallel tradition with its own history, focus, goals and approach" (p. 31).

Indigenous Planning Praxis

On February 12, 1996 the Government of Canada (as represented by the Minister of Indian Affairs) and thirteen First Nations, including Lheidli T'enneh, signed the "Framework Agreement on First Nation Land Management" (Indian Affairs and Northern Development [IAND], 1996).[5] The Framework Agreement outlined the requirements for a new land management process,

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[5] One other First Nation was added in December 1997. Since the fourteenth First Nation was added before the FNLMA was enacted, the literature commonly refers to the efforts of the original fourteen signatory First Nations.

where First Nations could opt out of the land-related provisions of the *Indian Act* and have

authority over reserve lands (this represents about 25% of the entire *Indian Act*). The legislation

for the Framework Agreement was introduced in Parliament as Bill C-49, the *First Nations Land*

Management Act (FNLMA), and was enacted and given royal assent on June 17, 1999 (IAND,

1996). The process is now known as the First Nations Land Management Initiative, or FNLMI

(IAND, 1996).

Every First Nation eligible to come under the FNLMA is required to follow the guidelines

set out by the Framework Agreement for the creation and adoption of a land code (IAND,

1996). Once adopted, this land code replaces the land management provisions of the *Indian Act*

and gives the nation law-making power akin to provincial and federal governments (IAND,

1996). It also provides for a community-based process for dispute resolution and matrimonial

real property (IAND, 1996).

One of the most valuable provisions of the FNLMA is that each First Nation is required to

create a community approval process (s. 7 of the Framework Agreement) for the adoption of a

land code (s. 5 of the Framework Agreement) as well as its individual agreement with the

Minister (s. 6 of the Framework Agreement) (IAND, 1996). The community approval process

guarantees the distribution of information regarding the FNLMA to all band members and

requires an approval vote with a minimum base participation of 25% of all eligible voters,

whether on- or off-reserve. The community approval process ensures the participation of the

entire membership and provides an opportunity for informed, community-based decision-

making (IAND, 1996). Ultimately, the community approval process ensures that all decision

making, including planning, is based on the Indigenous values of individual nations. Currently

there are forty nations operating under the FNLMI, and another twenty-eight developing their land codes for approval (First Nations Land Management Resource Centre Inc., 2013).

In order to ensure that First Nations wanting to sign onto the FNLMA have the resources to do so, the Framework Agreement provided for the inclusion of a Lands Advisory Board (LAB) to assist individual First Nations with the development of their land code, addressing land management regulations, environmental assessment polices, and reporting (ss. 38–41 of the Framework Agreement).[6] As an added support, the LAB and the Government of Canada appoints an independent verifier to ensure that the community approval process for the adoption of a land code is done in accordance with the Framework Agreement.

Lheidli T'enneh is one of the original signatory Nations to the Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management and adopted their land code on October 28, 2000 (Lheidli T'enneh Band, 2000). In order to facilitate the functions of the land code and advise Chief and Council on all matters pertaining to band lands, the land code provides for a body of elected band members known as the Lands Authority (LA) (Lheidli T'enneh Band, 2000, ss. 24–26).[7] The Lheidli T'enneh LA works directly with the Lands Advisory Board and oversees the management of band lands as well as the distribution of information between administration and band members. The Lheidli T'enneh Lands Authority is currently composed of five elected eligible band voters that may hold office for a maximum term of four years and one chairperson who is appointed by Council (Lheidli T'enneh Band, 2000, s. 25).

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[6] Section 38 of the Framework Agreement provides that the composition of the Lands Advisory Board must have at least three members from First Nations that have ratified their land code.
[7] To view Lheidli T'enneh's land code and other land laws see: http://www.labrc.com/resources.html

In 2004 I was hired by Lheidli T'enneh to prepare a land use plan in accordance with their land code. It was the second land use plan I had prepared under a land code, and I understood the necessity of meaningful community engagement, not least because the plan required a full membership vote in order to pass. Right from the start Lheidli T'enneh wanted applicants to identify how they incorporate Indigeneity in planning practice. In the interview process the interviewers had two separate sets of questions, one for Aboriginal applicants and one for non-Aboriginal applicants. The question posed to me as an Aboriginal applicant was phrased as "how do you as a planner incorporate the medicine wheel into your planning practice"?

My answer was that I use the medicine wheel within my planning process and as part of project and plan design. In my planning practices the physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental aspects of the medicine wheel are akin to the environmental, economic, social, and cultural phenomena that planning deals with. By ascribing to a medicine wheel planning methodology, I endeavour to examine and draw linkages to all aspects of the community through the understanding that these phenomena are not reduced to their individual parts but factors for consideration when looking at the whole. This is especially true for community-driven processes whereby people will link physical development such as housing with health and empowerment.

Lheidli T'enneh also had a distinct community engagement methodology acceptable to the community. A Land Use Planning Committee (LUPC) comprised of nine band members was appointed to oversee the process. The composition of the Land Use Planning Committee included the five elected members of the Lands Authority with the addition of four other band

members in order to fully represent the families and age demographics of Lheidli, as well as the distribution of the members that live on and off reserve. The LUPC drove the consultation and communication aspects of the plan as well as reviewing my work and determining the information that needed to be included.

I learned many things through the process of the Lheidli T'enneh land use plan. For example, youth were invited to have their own sessions to vision what the community might look in an ideal state. I met with the Elders language group, and they told me stories about sharing, family connections, resistance, anger, and healing. And when it came time to write a discussion about the reserve land base it was decided that the plan would use Lheidli (Carrier dialect) place names instead of the "DIA" names. For example, the main reserve community of Shelley became Khast'an Lhughel.[8]

The act of including youth and renaming the reserves was an act of resistance, and an act of continuance of Lheidli Indigenous knowledge. The Elders taught youth and other community members the correct pronunciations and told them the stories of their meanings. This reinforced Lheidli culture and values connected to the land. In addition, the plan created an opportunity to express this resistance directly to the city and regional district when it was presented to their planning departments in a meeting. Thus the land use plan became a cross-cultural planning discourse, analogous to the intersubjectiveness of communicative action (Forester, 1989).

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[8] Although Ron Seymour told me the stories of the meaning of the names for each of the reserves, he asked me not to explain them within the Land Use Plan. His explanation was simple, that Lheidli names are significant to Lheidli. If outsiders want to know more they can build the relationships with the community necessary for people to feel safe to share their knowledge.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) posits that part of the Indigeneity movement is to reclaim and rename Indigenous identity for people, places, and the landscape. Naming is the political struggle to control meaning and history. As Paulo Friere points out, naming is one of the ways that people make sense of their reality (1970). In the act of oppression, the oppressors reconfigure the world, "transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed to into the one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness" (Friere, 1970, p. 47). When the colonial powers renamed Lheidli — the space of confluence of the Nechako and Fraser rivers — it effectively erased the Lheidli presence and history on the land. The traditional land tenure was removed and the Lheidli community became part of the colonial hegemony of the *Indian problem* (Smith, 1999). By renaming the current land base of Lheidli T'enneh, the nation reconfigured the consciousness of local government and mainstream planning by re-asserting their presence on the land.

My Position in Indigenous Planning

At one point in all this research and self-reflexivity, I started to draw out what I saw as an Indigenous planning framework based on my own experiences and ideal outcomes. For me it encompasses the notion of Indigenous planning, but my emphasis here is on respect for Indigenous knowledge within specific community contexts. This means that ultimately the community has control over the entire process, both in determining the planning questions and the processes to address them. For some people, particularly planning practitioners that are used to *public consultation* this may seem unattainable. But I would like to point out that unlike some other researchers or planners, I don't have any presuppositions about what participatory

research or planning *should* look like; rather, I have seen it in action, and I understand and respect its dynamic and destabilizing nature.

Figure 2.1 – Indigenous Planning Circle

Figure 2.1 is a circle of Indigenous planning. It comes out of my own understanding as a planning practitioner, combined with my exposure to decentralizing planning theories such communicative action, transactive, and advocacy planning, as well as my graduate studies in cultural anthropology at the University of Alberta and my undergraduate and graduate studies in First Nations studies at UNBC. The components in the diagram do not just flow in one direction; rather, they move back and forth and across the circle. The Indigenous Planning Circle, as I have come to call it, has gone through numerous revisions and renamings. For some

time, it existed as a digital template for a circle chart. For some time I had been looking at this figure, and suddenly it reminded me of the back of my drum.

When I identify myself professionally, I use the titles *MCIP* and *RPP*, meaning that I am a member of the Canadian Institute of Planners (MCIP) under its national board, and recognized provincially as a Registered Professional Planner (RPP). These memberships have direct bearing on this thesis. For seven years I was a provisional member of the Planning Institute of BC; I attended the odd local conference and looked to the Institute's offerings of professional development to find something that related to my work. Nothing really pertained to me. The conference workshops that had anything to do with Indigenous planning were often described with language such as "this course will help non-Indigenous planners understand and work with First Nations to plan their communities under INAC policy."

On the suggestion of a colleague, I became a full member earlier this year and was even elected to PIBC Council on the platform of Indigenous planning. As part of my elected role, I have been supported to create a process for PIBC to identify and support an Indigenous planning platform akin to that of the Canadian Institute of Planners. In 2003, The Indigenous Peoples Planning Committee (IPPC) was created within the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP). The IPPC mandate is as follows:

> The IPPC mandate is to support Indigenous community planning knowledge, methods and practice in ways that promote self-reliance, resiliency and respect for culture.
>
> IPPC members work collaboratively to embrace Indigenous planning that is culturally appropriate, community-based, capacity-driven, integrative and sustainable. IPPC promotes Indigenous planning practice by:
>
> Principles

- The IPPC promotes Indigenous planning in ways that:
- Integrate traditional and local knowledge
- Embrace local values and customs
- Honour history and culture
- Support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Build capacity control and inclusion
- Consider previous planning efforts
- Identify and action community priorities
- Generate responsible solutions
- Encourage the participation of Indigenous planners within CIP

To develop a professional organization that advocates for a community development approach based on an Indigenous planning paradigm (CIP, 2013).

This is an exciting time for me as an Indigenous planner.

2.5 Conclusion

On the academic landscape, colonial modes of knowledge are the norm. Indigenous epistemologies have only been recently recognized in the social sciences via postmodern and feminist critiques, and in science through the application of Western resource management regimes that incorporate aspects of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) (Kovach, 2009; Kawagley, 2006). The purpose of this chapter was to outline the theoretical history of mainstream and Indigenous planning and to demonstrate how the practice of Indigenous planning can look. Overall, my intention was to demonstrate the way in which I reflected on planning in the context of Indigeneity and its application to planning. Most importantly I wanted to point out that for Lheidli T'enneh, the community (knowledge holders) instigated Indigenous planning within a *Lheidli T'enneh* methodological framework.

The following chapter will present the methodological framework for my thesis, which is an Indigenous research methodology based in participatory and empowerment research that is

specific to Lheidli T'enneh, and which employs photovoice essays as a method for investigating

space/place narratives among six research participants.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology: An Indigenous Research Framework

3.1 Introduction

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) reminds the researcher that "research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions" (p. 5). Nothing could be truer. As an Indigenous scholar and professional I have been involved in Indigenous community research, planning, as well as policy creation and evaluation for over fifteen years. I realize the potential that each project has to create change and how "the need to tell our stories remains the powerful imperative of a powerful form of resistance" (Smith, 1999, p. 35).

Smith's (1999) commitment to Indigenous methodologies works to decolonize research done by or for Indigenous people. Roxanne Struthers (2001) proposes that non-Indigenous researchers "have a tendency to focus on the negativity and problems rather than the strengths and solutions" (p. 127). In this sense, Western research often furthers the colonial project, maintaining the hegemony of inferiority of Indigenous people in the social hierarchy. This has been my experience, both in the academy, and in the planning profession: We are seen in terms of deficit as compared to the general public.

This chapter outlines my approach to research as an Indigenous scholar and planning practitioner. I begin by describing an Indigenous research framework that takes *empowerment of individuals and communities* as a principal aim of research, and that uses participatory research and capacity assessment models to align the research with the values and goals of the community. In keeping with respect for Indigenous communities, the research process followed

strict protocol. I assembled a steering committee of Lheidli T'enneh members who guided the research design and suggested research participants. The research itself was carried out using the photovoice method, which asks participants to photograph their communities, and then discuss these photos with a researcher; in this case, I conducted open-ended interviews with participants.

3.2 Research Framework

As discussed in the literature review, this thesis challenges planning as a top-down process controlled by *expert* city and regional planners. And as I will detail at greater length in the following chapter, there is a historical truth to the erasure of Fort George IR No. 1 by the City of Prince George's planners and developers. At this point in time, there remains an absence of any history of the Aboriginal communities in Prince George. Smith (1999) suggests:

> History is also about power. In fact history is mostly about power. It is the story
> of the powerful and how they became powerful, and then how they use their
> power to keep them in positions in which they can continue to dominate
> others. It is because of this relationship with power that we have been
> excluded, marginalized and 'Othered.' In this sense history is not important for
> indigenous peoples, because a thousand accounts of the 'truth' will not alter
> the 'fact' that indigenous peoples are still marginal and do not possess the
> power to transform history into justice (p. 34).

In order to break with the academy's long history of collusion with colonial power, the Indigenous research framework mobilized here views research not as the uncovering of objective truths, but as a way toward empowerment of individuals and communities.

Research-as-Empowerment

In his article, "Terms of Empowerment/Exemplars of Prevention: Toward a Theory for Community Psychology," Julian Rappaport (1987) discusses the concept of empowerment with

regards to research theory and practice. He suggests that at the level of research terminology, empowerment is a multilevel construct that includes individuals as well as organizations and communities, and that "it suggests the study of people in context" (Rappaport, 1987, p. 121). The context of empowerment usually refers to a "condition of dominion or authority," which prevents people, organizations, or communities from actualizing control over their affairs (Rappaport, p. 129).

The process of empowerment is the method by which people, organizations, and communities gain influence both personally and at the organizational level through a concern with political power and legal rights (Rappaport, 1987). For example, Robertson and Minkler (1994) propose that for an individual to "join a smoking cessation program and succeed in quitting smoking may be as empowering for that individual as a community action" to ban cigarette advertising from community billboards (p. 302). This suggests that the process of empowerment is a dynamic interrelationship between person, agency, and community.

Research-as-empowerment is part of the Indigenous research agenda (Smith, 1999). As Indigenous researcher Cora Weber-Pillwax (2001) suggests: "I cannot be involved in research and scholarly discourse unless I know that such work will lead to some change out there in that community, in my community" (p. 169). This is a belief that I share. As such, this project has employed a participatory research framework. Most importantly, it employed an already established *Lheidli T'enneh* research methodology. This methodology was developed by the Nation to research and codify Lheidli T'enneh values related to community approval processes, the structure and function of land management regimes, economic development perimeters, social and health priorities for the Nation, and many more research projects related to the

governance and planning of the Nation. Like any university research project, a research problem or topic was presented, the methods for inquiry vetted through both a steering committee that represented each of the main families, as well as elected governance and Elders. The research results were presented in a community forum, or forums with the opportunity for discussion and sometimes even formalized by way of a general election. From my experience, in many ways the communication regarding both research inquiry and results exceeded those standards set by an academic institution.

Participatory Research

Participatory research stresses the necessity of direct community participation in the entire research process (Castleden & Garvin, 2008; Minkler, 2000; Wallerstein, 1999; Raeburn & Rootman, 1998; Wang & Burris, 1997). Although the methods of data collection may vary from qualitative to quantitative, what is constant in participatory research is the "active involvement of people whose lives are affected by the issue under study in every phase of the project" (Minkler, 2000, p. 192). Moreover, the involvement of the community or agency at the research design level can invoke a strong sense of ownership, contributing to the success of a program, agency, or community (Castleden & Garvin, 2008; Butterfoss, Morrow & Ardythe, 1998).

A principal aim of participatory research is the initiation of social action (Castleden & Garvin, 2008; Simonson & Bushaw, 1993). In this case, the theory of empowerment, was mobilized through a participatory research methodology. That being said, for the purposes of this project, participatory research was a goal in and of itself.

Capacity Assessment Model

Since this project is an Indigenous participatory research endeavour, it is vital to recognize that expertise regarding community strengths and needs, comes directly from the community members themselves (Castleden & Garvin, 2008; Wang & Burris, 1997). Robert Rossman (1995) indicates that needs are essentially value judgments linked to interests, wants, and intentions (see also Kettner, Moroney & Martin, 1990). Further, he suggests that needs are "not created by society but exist apart from" society (Rossman, 1995, p. 136). I disagree with Rossman, especially in reference to the history of Aboriginal community participation in social policy. I would suggest that the need of the Aboriginal community to control social service delivery agencies via Indigenous planning is a direct need stemming from the historical abuses endorsed by Canadian society. It is important that Aboriginal community needs not be framed in a dialogue of deficit statements (such as lowest incomes, lowest level of education completion, etc.), but that they are taken as Indigenous knowledge, as comprehensive methods of reconfiguring and healing the urban experience (Hingangaroa Smith, 2000).

Having said this, I also recognize that the scorn and derision of Aboriginal communities held by the larger community of Prince George residents, influences the city's decision-makers. In order to challenge this issue, I sought to employ the use of a capacity and needs assessment. The capacity assessment model is embedded in a community-based health promotion framework (Sharpe, Greaney, Lee & Royce, 2000; Raphael et al., 1999) that employs a qualitative inquiry approach to highlight both the positive and negative forces that affect the social health of community members (see Raphael et al., 1999; McKnight & Kretzman, 1998; Russell et al., 1996). Built on the foundation of classic needs assessment (see Ervin, 1997;

Copet, 1992; Barnes, 1985) the capacity assessment model asks the research community to identify needs through understanding community strengths and assets (Raphael et al., 1999).

Needs assessments are a powerful tool for social policy planning, allowing for evidence-based decision making, program efficacy in both the planning and evaluative stages, the matching of community needs to program initiatives, and increased accountability (Minkler, 2000). However, I also think it important to counter the outside perception of the community as lacking strengths and assets, and reframe Prince George's urban Aboriginal people as having capacity, power, and a strong sense of themselves within their communities.

3.3 Research Design

This research project mirrors Castleden and Garvin's (2008) research process in that the appropriate local protocols and methodology were followed. In this case, protocol begins with the assembly of a community steering committee that oversaw the project and made decisions about the overall research question(s), who should participate, what kind of communication was necessary, and how the final products will be produced and displayed. Since Prince George is Lheidli T'enneh's traditional territory, and the entire downtown core was once Lheidli's Fort George Indian Reserve No. 1, this research project follows local Indigenous protocol that Lheidli T'enneh be the driving force behind the research question(s) and project. I therefore recruited an eight-member steering committee comprised of Lheidli T'enneh members.

Having worked with the Lheidli T'enneh Nation on issues of domestic violence, matrimonial real property initiatives, and land use and community planning, I knew that the expertise and commitment existed within the community to make this project relevant to the Nation of Lheidli T'enneh, the urban Aboriginal communities of Prince George, and to address

the wider issues of Indigenous planning for urban spaces in Canada. The Lheidli T'enneh Nation has been a forerunner in issues of land management under the First Nations Land Management Act, being one of the first Nations to ratify a land code, which was drafted with extensive on- and off-reserve community participation, and was ratified through a vote of all members. Lheidli T'enneh has also been very active in matching traditional values to land and resource development and community wellness, for both the on- and off-reserve membership.

The Lheidli T'enneh Steering Committee

Having a steering committee from Lheidli T'enneh to make decisions about the research design, ensured that a true Indigenous participatory research endeavour was both the process and product of this project. It also ensured that the recruitment of research participants was fair, ethical, healthy, and followed Indigenous practices based on respect, reciprocation, and knowledge sharing. The steering committee was comprised of the following people: (1) Dolleen Logan; (2) Melody Buzas; (3) Helen Buzas; (4) Elaine Gagnon; (5) Elissa Gagnon; (6) Shirley Wiltermuth; and (7) Nicole Wiltermuth.

From February–April 2011, the steering committee met five times to discuss the project design, including the location of the research (as bounded by the downtown), the number, age, and gender of the participants, recruitment of the participants, remuneration for time and knowledge sharing, and ways to disseminate the information. Steering committee meetings occurred on Sundays at my husband's office boardroom at 2700 Queensway. Interestingly, it is only about one kilometre from the Lheidli Cemetery, and the boardroom looks out over the Fraser River. As per Lheidli protocol, food, coffee, and water were provided at all meetings.

3.4 Data Collection

This research project employed photovoice as a principle tool of data collection, which is a participatory research framework of qualitative inquiry. That being said, it can also be posited as an Indigenous model of research in which the participants are experts, respect for relationships is foremost, and contribution to social change is part of the design (Smith, 1999). In this section, I discuss the concept of photovoice in general, and how this project employed it more specifically. I then detail how, with the help of the steering committee, participants were recruited and guided in their photo-taking, as well as how I went about conducting one-on-one follow-up interviews with each of the participants.

Photovoice

Since Wang and Burris introduced their concept of photovoice in 1997, it has been used in a number of community-based participatory action research projects. In all of these projects, photovoice was used for community empowerment and to document "community assets and concerns, critically discuss the resulting images and communicate with policymakers" (Wang, Morrel-Samuels, Hutchinson, Bell & Pestronk, 2004, p. 911). In 2003, McIntrye employed photovoice to explore how working-class women in Belfast reconfigure their identity and sense of place after thirty years of war and amidst the daily power dynamics of class, gender, and religion. In 2004, Wang, Morrel-Samuels, Hutchinson, Bell, and Pestronk used photovoice to empower citizens of Flint, Michigan to seek and act upon the social and political conditions that contribute to community and personal problems, including youth perceptions of safety. In the Flint example of photovoice, policy makers and local politicians were asked to participate in the research project. This firsthand experience "gave them an innovative tool with which to explore

and improve the programs over which they exert the most influence" (Wang, Morrel-Samuels, Hutchinson, Bell & Pestronk, 2004, p. 913).

In 2007, photovoice was used to engage California youth in an afterschool care program in social action, to make clear the issues in their environment and to bring these issues forward to the policymakers (see Wilson et al., 2007). Finally, Castleden and Garvin (2008) modified photovoice to meet the needs of the Huu-ay-aht First Nation on Vancouver Island. In this example, the researchers were non-Indigenous but recognized that the process of photovoice needed to be modified to acknowledge the historical power imbalances held by researchers, and for it to be accepted by the community (Castleden & Garvin, 2008).

For the purpose of this research I employed Wang and Burris' (1997) concept of photovoice as the primary mode of data collection. Specifically Wang and Burris (1997) define "photovoice as a process whereby people can identify, represent and reflect their community's strengths and concerns through photographic representation" (p. 369). The process of photovoice is relatively straightforward: put simply, research participants are asked to take photographs of their community. Later, participants meet in a focus group or interview setting and are asked to choose a limited number of photos and discuss their reasons behind the selections (Wang & Burris, 1997). Both the photographs and their narratives are incorporated in the final analysis and research dissemination.

In this project once the steering committee was established, the photovoice design process contained four main parts: (1) an introduction to the ethics and mechanics of photography; (2) the taking of photographs; (3) interviews to discuss the photographs; and (4) final review of transcripts and consent from the participants. This project passed a UNBC

Research Ethics Board (REB) approval as per the Tri Council guidelines for research with human subjects.

In most cases, photovoice research is intended to engage policy makers in order to ensure that they are witness to the participants' realities and become active in a dialogue of change (see Castleden & Garvin, 2008; Wang, Morrel-Samuels, Hutchinson, Bell & Pestronk, 2004; Wang & Burris, 1997). For this research project, the steering committee decided that the community's opportunity to see and hear the results of the research superceded engagement with the city's government. As a matter of courtesy, city officials will be invited to a community event to showcase the participants' research. Although this has not happened yet, the space has been paid for and discussions for hosting the event have resumed. By the time I defend this thesis, the showcasing event will have occurred.

Research Participants

Steering committee members put forward names of people they felt might be interested in participating in this project, whom I subsequently approached. Many people took an interest in the project and expressed their willingness to participate, but sometimes the reality of life just didn't permit the time. In the end, six participants informed this research, representing many of the families of Lheidli T'enneh. Five of the six participants were women. That a majority of participants were women did not surprise me at all; in my experience working with Lheidli T'enneh, it is largely women that participate in community development projects. Lheidli's traditional matriarchal system may have been disfigured by the imposition of colonial values, but it has not been dismantled.

Before participants took any photos, they were asked to sign a consent form to participate, which they were given a copy of, and together we reviewed general ethical questions such as (1) What is an acceptable way to approach someone to take his or her picture? (2) Should someone take pictures of other people without their knowledge? (3) What might be the implications of your photography? (4) What would you not take a photograph of? (Wang & Burris, 1997). These questions also served as an ethical framework for the steering committee to consider as part of the overall research design, but they did not limit the authority of the steering committee in decisions around the communication of Indigenous concepts of respect for others and respect for self.

The Lheidli steering committee also drafted a series of questions to help guide research participants in taking their photos. These questions were as follows:

The following questions were developed by the Steering Committee as a guide in case you find yourself stuck about to what to take pictures of.

*There are no right or wrong pictures or responses and you may choose to totally **ignore the questions and tell your own story.***

You don't have to take a ton of pictures, just a few or even one is totally fine.

1. *Is there anywhere or anything that you see or feel in Prince George that connects you to "Lheidli culture" or "Lheidli history"?*

2. *What are the biggest issues you see/feel in your life? Telling your Truth. This could be racism or housing, no money or lack of mention of Lheidli's history in downtown. **Totally up to you!***

3. *Are there places in PG that make you feel happy, sad, calm, safe, proud, scared, free—**REALLY ANY FEELINGS AT ALL!***

The six participants took their photos at various times over a period of eighteen months. This was due in part to what was going on in my own life, and in part what was going on in the participants' lives. Participants were genuinely interested but would often find themselves unable to commit. There were also general issues with communications; some participants did not have a phone or minutes on their phone, or some had a new telephone number.

For the interviews and meetings to review transcripts, we met at various locations around Prince George, including White Spot, Tim Hortons, Books and Company, and in participants' homes. It should also be noted that in some cases I drove the participants to take their photos. In my experience this is all a normal part of an Indigenous research methodology grounded in a participatory research project. Meaning that in building and maintaining relationships there are certain expectations for how people share information, for example food is big part of all community meetings, regardless of the topic. From an Indigenous

perspective it is entirely appropriate to ask research participants to meet in a restaurant or to ensure that there is food provided for the steering committee meetings.

Interviews

I had originally planned on holding focus groups with the participants to elicit narratives about their photographs and the experience of the research project. Focus groups, in addition to identifying immediate needs, also highlight the social, economic, and political forces existing at the community level, which affect the social health of community members (Raphael et al., 1999). By drawing attention to the reasons behind participants' photographs and asking for their narrative of the photos, it was my hope to be able to list the strengths of their Indigenous knowledge and limitations of the community. In my experience as a researcher, focus groups provide a relaxed atmosphere for participants where conversation encourages the relaying of qualitative data to the researcher. Individual participants discuss events, places, and people often through the retelling of stories, which also encourages the jogging of other participants' memories. The focus groups are also a social opportunity for community members to communicate their interests and experiences to each other while participating in a proactive research endeavour where they can guide the outcomes.

However, one of the downfalls with focus groups I identified is that it can silence those people without power, such as youth who will defer their opinions in the presence of Elders. Furthermore, as Castledon and Garvin (2008) noted, sometimes it is necessary to conduct individual interviews simply because of logistics, such as if people have a limited amount of time or lack of childcare or transportation.

In the end, all of the participants were interviewed individually, largely resulting from the logistics of day-to-day life. Reflecting back on this I am glad that participants were interviewed individually, since I see now that the focus group may have made it more difficult for some participants to share openly and honestly, especially in an Indigenous community in which Elders and elder people are deferred to.

Interviews were open-ended, asking participants to select photos and discuss why they took them. I also had specific questions based on the perceived relationship of the City of Prince George to the Lheidli T'enneh Nation. With regards to the interview questions, the steering committee set out a series of themes, based on their responses to the questions of "What do you think is the perception of downtown" and "What would you like to tell city officials"? These original questions came from my experience as a Lheidli youth program volunteer; I knew that the youth had an interest in making a film about the history of Lheidli, and I felt this should be explored. In addition, youth identified the media's construction of downtown Prince George (Lheidli) as continuing to de-value and efface Lheidli in favour of colonial narratives and tropes.

Although the steering committee did not fully edit the interview questions with the same rigour as the research questions, they reviewed the ethics forms at length. Throughout the research project I sent individual requests to steering committee members to seek their input. I should also mention that after each interview, I revisited and revised the question list.

Once the interviews were transcribed, I met once more with each of the participants, reviewed their interview transcript with them, and had them sign a consent form to use their photos and narratives in the research project. In some cases participants were emailed a copy

of their transcript in advance. All participants were given a hard copy of their interview, and the opportunity to either use their name, remain anonymous, or use a pseudonym.

3.5 Conclusion

Standard approaches in both research and planning are predicated on an *expert* intervening in a problem, collecting evidence, and, in the case of planning, working to solve that problem. This has resulted in the disenfranchisement of many communities, and their being left out of decision-making processes that have major impacts on their lives. An Indigenous research framework turns this approach on its head, and starts from the premise that research must work to empower communities and begin with a respectful understanding of the positions and capacity of members of those communities. This chapter has outlined my approach to research, the research design process I have undertaken in tandem with the Lheidli T'enneh steering committee, and how I introduced photovoice as a method for investigating place/space relationships in Indigenous communities.

The following chapter will provide a brief introduction to the history of Lheidli T'enneh, particularly focusing on their relationship with what would become the City of Prince George.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Brief History of Lheidli

4.1 Introduction

According to Statistics Canada (2001), 70% of Aboriginal people in Canada live in an urban environment (see also Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP], 1996, vol. 4).[9] This urban environment is typically one where urban Aboriginal people are less educated, have higher unemployment rates, and lower income levels than non-Aboriginal people (Statistics Canada, 2006; RCAP, 1996, vol. 4; see also Nagler, 1975; Dosman, 1972). This reality, paired with the failure of public policy makers to recognize the urban Aboriginal experience, has fostered the establishment of communities linked through Aboriginal identity but situated in poverty and social obscurity (Hylton, 1999; Nagler, 1975; Cardinal, 1969). Worse still, wider political and policy discussions about the urban Aboriginal community often blame the community "as the sole source of the problem" without taking into consideration the "wider social, economic and policy contexts in which the communities exist" (Smith, 1999, p. 92).

Numerous researchers have recognized that the disregard for Aboriginal control over social policy has contributed to the replication of an urban Aboriginal class culture created in a socially determinate condition of inequality and dependency (Graham, 1999; Hylton, 1999; Smith, 1999; Peters, 1996, 1992; Ryan, 1978; Nagler, 1975; Cardinal, 1969).[10] Peters suggests that this negligence "reflects a long history of government policies which assumed that the

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[9] For Statistics Canada (2006) Aboriginal identity refers to those people who identify with "at least one Aboriginal group, that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or Registered Indian" (para. 2).

[10] For a discussion of the production of class culture see Willis (1977).

eradication of Indian culture was a prerequisite for participation in urban industrial society"

(1992, p. 55). For several decades there has been an attempt to compel urban policy makers to

include Aboriginal communities and governance agencies in social policy design and program

delivery in an effort to recognize the self-determination of Aboriginal cultures (RCAP, 1996, vol.

2) and acknowledge the validity of Indigenous knowledge. In many instances these efforts

continue to be met with disregard and indifference. Such is the case in Prince George.

The urban Aboriginal experience in Prince George exemplifies the experiences described

above. Fourteen and a half (14.5%) of the city's population is Aboriginal (Statistics Canada,

2006), most of whom live in the low-income community originally established through the

Veteran's Land Act (VLA) (Llewellyn, personal communication, 2000). But before written

history, this place was known as Lheidli and is summarized by the Nation as follows:

> We are the *Lheidli T'enneh.* Our name translates as "people from where the
> rivers flow together." According to our history, a large group of our people
> were led by Traditional Chiefs and Medicine People to the confluence of these
> two rivers. These rivers are known as the Nechako and the Fraser.
>
> We traveled throughout our territory, a territory that was once separated into
> *keyohs.* Each *keyoh* was the responsibility of a clan. We hunted and gathered
> throughout our Traditional Territory. We traded with neighboring
> communities. *There were no permanent settlements like we think of them*
> today. Instead, there were seasonal villages and camps along the lakes and
> rivers throughout our territory. Lheidli, the site of present-day Prince George
> was one of these villages. It is clear to us that our ancestors occupied and used
> all of what we know as our Traditional Territory.
>
> This is still true today (as cited in Krebs & Chanter, 2005, p. 11).

This chapter presents a written history of Lheidli from 1892 to present, setting the

context for the stories of space and place imparted by the participants in this research, which

will be detailed in the following chapter.

4.2 Fort George Indian Reserve No. 1

In 1892, the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) established Fort George Indian Reserve (IR) No. 1 at the confluence of the Nechako and Fraser Rivers (see Figure 4.1 below).[11] The Lheidli people had no treaty rights and were placed there without consultation or consent (R. Seymour, personal communication, 2004). As the main residential site for Lheidli people, IR No. 1 had an area of 1366 acres located in a very small part of the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation (within the now City of Prince George). Following the establishment of IR No. 1, DIA created three other small reserves (Leonard, 1996). At that time the Lheidli Nation had a population of 144 band members, having lost many of their people to European diseases such as smallpox and whooping cough. IR No. 1 remained the main residential community for Lheidli members until their relocation in 1913 to IR No. 2, 24 kilometres north of IR No. 1 on the western shore of the Fraser River (Leonard, 1996, p. 171).

In 1907 the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company (GTPR) announced its intentions to create a route across BC (Leonard, 1996). With this announcement came the advent of real estate speculators, promoters, missionaries, and settler interest to the Fort George Indian Reserve No. 1 (Leonard, 1996). By 1910 land promoters had created two separate town sites bordering the reserve, each marketed "as terminal sites not only for the GTPR but for half a dozen paper railways (Leonard, 1996, p. 167). As shown in Figure 4.1, IR No. 1 was bordered on the north and east by the Nechako and Fraser rivers, on the south by the Hudson's Bay Company and the South Fort George Town site, and on the west by the Fort George Town site.

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[11] There are few references that detail the creation and sale of Fort George Indian Reserve. My main resource for this section is from Frank Leonard's description of the destruction of Indian villages and sacred sites in order for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway to develop their railway line west to Prince Rupert (1996).
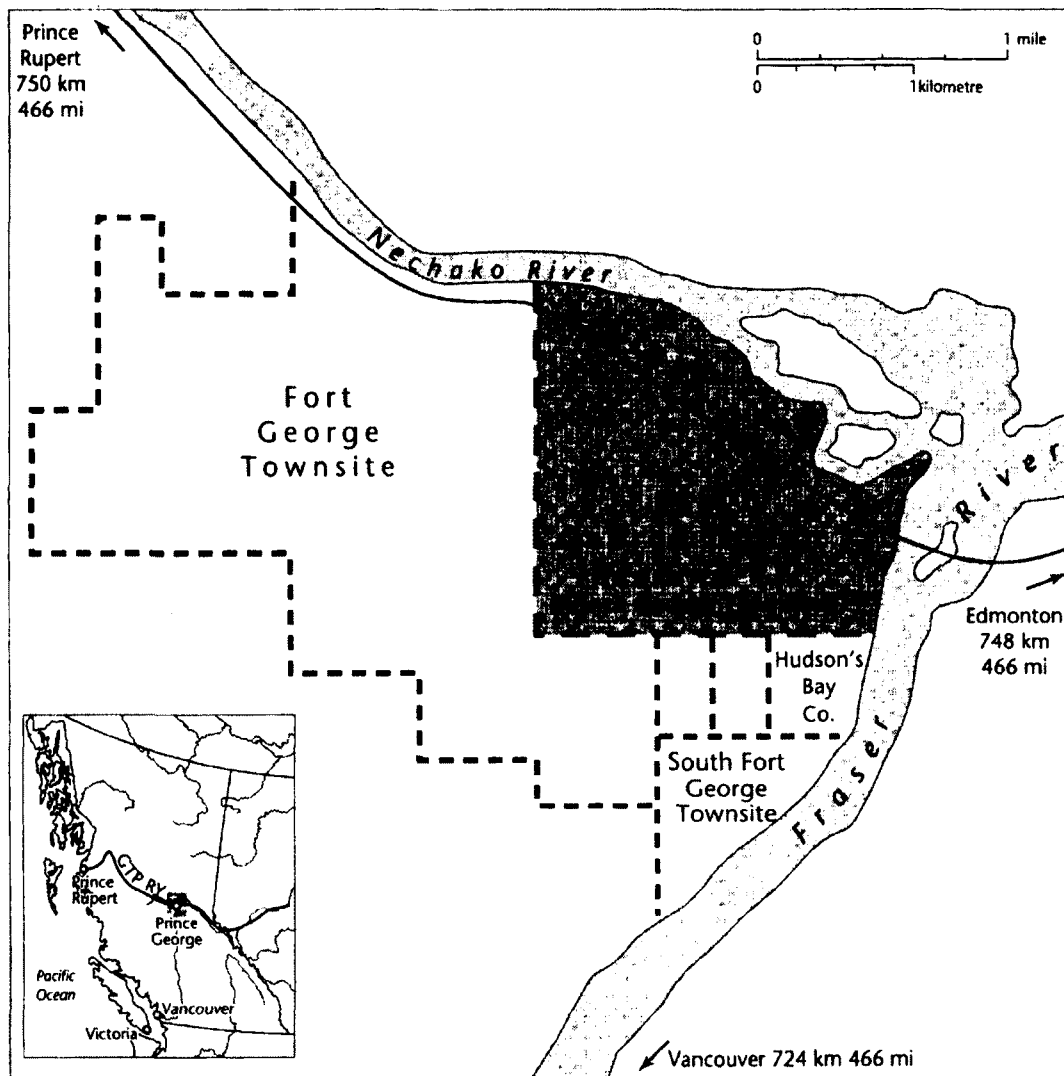
Figure 4.1 – Fort George IR No. 1 and Town Sites c. 1911[12]

For the years between May 1908 and November 1911, IR No. 1 was the subject of a vicious land dispute between the Lheidli T'enneh, the GTPR, the Natural Resources Security Company (NRS), and provincial and federal government officials (Leonard, 1996). Originally the GTPR wanted to use the northern portion of the reserve and the land to the west of it for the development of a train station and residential town site. However, when the owners of the

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[12] Taken from Frank Leonard's (1996) book *A Thousand Blunders: The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and Northern British Columbia* (p.168).

western lots wanted $75.00 per lot, the GTPR made plans to expropriate the reserve under the *Railway Act* (Leonard, 1996). This idea never went ahead because the GTPR lawyers argued it would be difficult to prove that the entire area of the 1366-acre reserve was required for railway purposes (Leonard, 1996). As a result the GTPR tried to purchase the reserve from the Lheidli T'enneh. These negotiations took three and a half years, involved several court proceedings and in the end the GTPR bought IR No. 1 for $125,000 and gave the Lheidli T'enneh seven months to leave the reserve (Leonard, 1996, pp. 175–184). In an effort to speed up the relocation, most of the buildings were burned and the people forced out.

Lheidli T'enneh members believe that the sale of the land was done covertly in a partnership between the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) and the provincial and federal governments (R. Seymour, personal communication, 2004). The supposed sale of IR No. 1 has been the subject of a comprehensive class action for over two decades. The rationale supported by Lheidli Elders states that the contract with the Chief's mark of an "X" (denoting illiteracy) is false, as he was literate and able to sign his own name (R. Seymour, personal communication, 2004).

In 1912, the GTPR hired the planners Brett, Hall & Co. to create a plan of a town site south of the rail line and following the original reserve boundaries (Leonard, 1996; Llewellyn, 1999).[13] Beginning in 1913 the GTPR quickly sold the town site lots (with the exception of the rail line, yard, and the land to the north) to private citizens and merchants.

4.3 The Island Cache

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[13] This plan comprised the present-day downtown core and adjacent subdivisions of Prince George.

In the two decades following World War II, the forestry industry boomed in Prince George, and

the population within the urban areas increased from 4,703 people in 1951 to 25,853 people in

1966 (Llewellyn, 1999, p. 53). Urban development between these years "occurred very quickly

and in a haphazard way with minimal municipal planning and development controls" (Llewellyn,

1999, p. 54; see also Parker, 1965). Such was the case for the lands north of the rail lines

between the confluence of the Nechako and Fraser rivers. Foley, Welsh and Stewart, a

contracting company responsible for the construction of the GTPR line, established the area

north of the tracks as a storage district known as Foley's Cache (Evans & Krebs, 2004).[14] This

area held the first residential development north of the tracks.

It is important to note that Foley's Cache was situated within the former boundaries of

Fort George Indian Reserve No. 1. As my work with Mike Evans (Evans & Krebs, 2004) describes,

the reference to the GTPR activity was eventually dropped, and the name of the area became

known as the Island Cache, or even just the Cache.[15] Since the Cache was not a part of the city

subdivision planned by Brett, Hall & Co., the land was cheap and lacked building codes or

development restrictions. More importantly, the railway and several lumber mills were located

in the Cache, eliminating travel expenses for work. As a result of the cheap land and rent, as

well as the proximity to work, the Cache became the first home for many people migrating to

Prince George.

In the 1950s, most of the people living in the Cache came from Saskatchewan, having

left that province because of the appropriation of the forestry sector by the CCF government

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[14] After the collapse of the GTPR in 1920, the Canadian National Railway absorbed GTPR rail assets and lands, eventually selling the lands north of the rail line privately (see Evans & Krebs, 2004; Leonard, 1996; Llewellyn, 1999).

[15] It is important to note that the reason for the name *Island Cache* is because the area north of the tracks had a channel dividing it. For a discussion of the devolution of the channel see Evans & Krebs (2004).

(Evans & Krebs, 2004). But by the 1960s the landscape was shifting and as people's economic status increased, they moved out of the Cache and into the city, often retaining their homes as rental units.

Throughout the 1960s the demography of the Cache changed and it "became more multicultural as immigrants from Europe moved in and an Aboriginal community formed (Evans & Krebs, 2004, p. 27). Around the same time, the Cache also started building a reputation as an enclave of illicit activity. In his 1965 "Prince George Urban Renewal Study," Desmond Parker noted this about the reputation of the Island Cache:

> As reported crimes occur in the downtown area, the east end and the industrial areas. In the case of bootlegging and some moral offenses, the incidence is predominantly related to the Island Cache which is outside the city [...] Indians feature highly in crimes associated with liquor. They are mostly charged under the Indian Act. Some citizen groups and particularly the legal profession are concerned about the occurring problem of the Indians of the area relative to liquor offenses (pp. 5–22).

4.4 An Urban Aboriginal Neighbourhood

According to Evans and Krebs (2004), by 1970 approximately 60% of the population (approximately 600 people in total) of the Island Cache was Aboriginal (40% Métis and 20% non-status Indians). The multicultural demography of the Cache coupled with the lack of services, substandard housing, and frequent flooding of the area, reinforced the perception of a community that lacked middle-class morals.[16]

Throughout the 1960s, it became commonplace for the community of the Cache to be described in pejorative terms — as a "festering sore" and "a potential breeding ground for

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[16] For an oral account of the general "city" sentiment about the Cache and its residents see Terry Morin's and Garry Doucette's interview in Evans and Krebs, 2004, pp. 37–38, 84.

crime, disease and social disorders" (*Prince George Citizen*, 1969).[17] In the late 1960s the citizens of the Cache created the Island Residents Association (IRA) in an effort to lobby for improvements to physical infrastructure, flood protection, community services, and to combat the general disregard by the citizens and officials of the City of Prince George.

By 1969, the IRA was fighting two fronts: the province and the city. Although the Cache was under provincial jurisdiction, the province refused to take responsibility for the conditions in the Cache. In the spring of 1969, the IRA co-sponsored an Urban Renewal Proposal to demonstrate the community's proactive approach to dealing with the deteriorating conditions in the Cache. The province did not act upon this report. As for the city, plans were underway for the expansion of boundaries to include the Island Cache (Evans & Krebs, 2004; Llewellyn, 1999). It was suggested that this expansion had two purposes: to gain the tax revenue generated by the operating mills (Evans & Krebs, 2004) and to control the *rural slums* located outside city limits (Parker, 1965). It should be noted that these so-called rural slums, or fringe developments housed nearly 50% of the total population of urban Prince George, about 12,000 people (Parker, 1965; Llewellyn, 1999).

In 1970 the city annexed the Island Cache and the community was embroiled in a three-year fight with city officials for improvements to community infrastructure and services. Despite community efforts, in the end the Cache lost. In June of 1972 a spring flood forced many of the residents to evacuate the Island Cache. After the floodwaters receded, the city condemned seventy-five houses in less than a month, declaring them unfit for human habitation. The city demolition of condemned homes began in the fall of that year and

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[17] It should be noted that Parker (1965) in his "Prince George Urban Renewal Study" suggests that the conditions of the Island Cache are no worse than the other fringe developments on the outside of the city (pp. 5–24).

continued until in 1974 when only thirty-nine residences remained (Evans & Krebs, 2004). The intention of the city all along was to buy the land from the residents and re-zone it for industrial purposes.[18] The standard formula for the purchase of these homes consisted of an offer from the city to purchase the land and improvements at a rate of two and a half times the current assessed value (Evans & Krebs, 2004). The biggest problem with the city's offer was that the appraisal post-flood did not match the owner's expectations of pre-flood values. The negotiations for the purchase of land further strained the relationship between city officials and the community of the Cache.

By 1979, the Island Cache was a memory, and the homes and facilities that were once there are now a park and industrial lands. The only physical evidence of the community that once existed there is a few house foundations that can be seen sticking out of the ground within Cottonwood Island Park if one looks closely.

4.5 Migration of the Cache Residents

Although the City has numerous records for the purchase of land and improvements, the migration patterns of the Cache residents were not so detailed. The mayor at the time considered the Cache a "real hang out for all the rubby dubs," a place formerly characterized by mill workers and now populated by "less fortunates and quite a few Métis and Indians [living] there" (Evans & Krebs, 2004, p. 75). It was believed by city administration that the integration and disbursement of the Cache residents into *better* communities would solve the social ills of the community (Parker, 1965). In one anecdotal example the mayor recounts the *success* of this approach:

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[18] For a discussion of the city's intentions in this regard see Evans & Krebs, 2004.

> There was this one old Indian woman [in the Cache] who told me that if I came
> on her property she would shoot me, so we moved her up there with her kids.
> She saw me a few years later and was so happy that the kids got integrated
> with all the white kids and went to school and played with them and she wasn't
> having any problems (Evans & Krebs, 2004, p. 75).

The problem with the city's visions for neighbourhood integration was that the value of the land and improvements for the Cache was far below the value of property within city limits, with the exception of the newly added areas under the *Veterans' Land Act* (VLA) and the Van Bow neighbourhoods.

At the time of Parker's urban renewal study (1965), the recently annexed areas of the *Veterans' Land Act* and the Van Bow neighbourhoods had an average property value between $0 and $1,000 per acre, with the most expensive properties being between $3,000 and $4,000 per acre. In the city, by comparison, the average property was somewhere around $3,000–$8,000 per acre (Parker, 1965, Map 11). Since the VLA had only been added to the city in 1968, development was still semi-rural and appeared to be largely unregulated — just as the Cache had been.

4.6 The Veterans' Land Act

The *Veterans' Land Act* was enacted in 1952 as "an Act to assist war veterans to settle upon the land" (*Veterans' Land Act*, 1952). Specifically, the *Veterans' Land Act* made provisions for the government to acquire lands and improvements so that these could be sold back to veterans at a fixed finance rate of 3.5% per annum over a maximum of thirty years (*Veterans' Land Act*, 1952, ss. 10–11).

In Prince George, district lot (DL) 932 was set aside as lands in fulfilment of the *Veterans' Land Act*. This district lot had been surveyed as part of the original South Fort George Townsite

in 1910, but as previously discussed, because the Fort George Indian Reserve No. 1 lands became the location for downtown Prince George, DL 932 had little value and remained relatively undeveloped until after its incorporation into the city in 1968. Despite the ready availability of this cheap land for veterans, it was still outside of the city limits and had no services, making it a less desirable place for settlement.

After incorporation in 1968, the city records describe the boundaries of DL 932 (the VLA) as a subdivided lot bordered by 20th Ave. in the north, Norwood St. in the east, Monkley Ave. in the south, and Victoria St. in the west (Llewellyn, 1999). Slowly over time the borders of the VLA have shifted so that now the local media describe the boundaries as "roughly bounded by 20th north, Diefenbaker in the south, Norwood in the east, and Upland in the west" (McAlpine, 1998, A9). Perhaps what is most interesting is that the physical space that comprises the VLA has no official city boundaries (Milburn, personal communication, 2004). In other words, the current physicality of the VLA is dependent upon who is defining it. Of course, this speaks to issues of who draws the boundaries of the VLA and why.

With some of the lowest property values in the city, semi-rural living, and close proximity to downtown, many of the Cache residents moved into the VLA. Today the VLA is described in ways similar to the Cache, as a place lacking middle-class morals fraught with crime, social inequity, and "Indians [who] feature highly in crimes" (Parker, 1965, p. 22).

4.7 Conclusion

In the presentation of the written history of Lheidli, I wanted to point out that in the devolution of Lheidli into the City of Prince George there has been a repeated pattern of the erasure of Indigenous people. As presented above, the Island Cache and now the VLA, followed similar

trajectories as Lheidli. Sadly, the tool most often used to remove Indigenous presence and history is mainstream planning. Indeed, it is far too easy to erase people when they are reduced to housing markets or service provision.

There is a need to embrace Indigenous planning as a powerful process that can transform the colonial reality and "improve the lives and environments of Indigenous peoples" (Matunga, 2013, p. 5). In the next chapter, I discuss how participants in this research project, all members of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, navigate the space and place of Lheidli/Prince George.

CHAPTER FIVE
Results: Urban Indigenous Knowledge

5.1 Introduction

The following section presents the results from the photovoice essays and interviews with the six research participants. The participants used the three questions developed by the steering committee to prompt their initial photography, and then participated in an interview to discuss their photographs and the important themes within them. Interviews began with an open-ended question in which participants selected a photo, then were asked to explore why they chose to take the photo, and their thoughts on what it represents for them. Each participant had something different to say about why they chose certain photographs, and what they were trying to demonstrate through the camera. In order to present the narrative here, I have maintained the raw interview transcripts as much as possible, only editing to remove extraneous details.

In textualizing oral narratives, researchers will often present a *profile* of the research participants to give the reader more context, or an opportunity to imbue their own experiences into the narrative. However, I will be allowing the words and pictures of the participants to speak for themselves. Of course, there are a few details that the reader should know about the participants. First, the participants represent a cross section of ages from youth to Elders. Second, each participant possesses their own specific knowledge of Lheidli and their experiences of living on their ancestral lands, both in the rural landscape and in the urban spaces. Third, I should reiterate that the names presented here are not pseudonyms; when

given the option of remaining anonymous, each participant indicated their preference to use their real names.

There are several emergent themes captured both in the photography and narratives. I have organized this chapter to reflect these themes and to present some of the photographs and narratives that were offered by the participants in their interviews. I begin by presenting the most prominent theme, that of sadness, followed by the second principle theme, surrounding criticism of how the City of Prince George historically and currently engages with the government and members of Lheidli T'enneh. Next, I introduce the theme of reclaiming and renaming space; and finally, I present the theme of "there is no single Aboriginal community."

5.2 Sadness

Sadness was one of the most prevalent emotions running through the photos and interviews. This sadness stretched across time and space, from sadness for the members of Lheidli and other First Nations who live on the streets of downtown Prince George, to sadness for the disrespect shown to Lheidli members buried in Ts'unk'ut, the cemetery located on Lheidli's Indian Reserve No. 1A, which most Prince George residents consider to be part of Fort George Park.

Sadness For People Living Downtown

Many participants took photos of downtown Prince George, and all of the participants expressed a deep sadness or hurt for the Indigenous people living on downtown streets. In similar ways, participants identified the impacts of colonization, such as residential school and severe oppression, as the roots of homelessness. Regina Toth explains:

It is really sad to be downtown. I do everything I can to avoid it, and only go down when I actually need something or if I have a meeting. And, it is not that I feel unsafe, it is just that a sorry feeling watching Prince George be the catchment for homeless people. It is not that I am against homeless people; it is just really hard and sad to see them. It is nice that there are actual businesses and groups that are looking after them. But how did it get that way? What could be done? I don't know, sad.

Jackie John also talks about how difficult it is seeing people on the street:

I feel a lot of people down there, that some people like are from our band but are living kind of shitty lives. It's like really upsetting because they are like so close to home on reserve and they are still living out walking around pretty much. It's hard seeing people on the street, like I know there are a lot of shelters and everything but really it's hard to explain...

Figure 5.1 – "Photograph of Downtown" by Jackie John

In "Photograph of Downtown" (Figure 5.1), Jackie did a great job of being ethically responsible and not including any people in the photo. But I am very aware of this space, the southwest tip

of Third Avenue, across the street from the courthouse and amidst numerous human service agencies, including the Fire Pit. Both Frank Frederick and Kenora Stewart talked about their experiences working there. As Frank said:

Figure 5.2 – "The Fire Pit" by Frank Frederick

Every time I go by that place I, always um, I hurt for them, especially the street people. Because they are not there because they want to be there. They are there because of alcohol and drugs. The majority of them were residential school survivors. And they are hurting and they had nowhere to turn to, so they stayed in the streets. And if you listen to them, they have some *dandy* stories. You know right away why they are the way they are. Right off the bat you figure it out. Because they went through a hard time, now they are just about to the end of their life and that is where they are, hanging out on the street. I feel sorry for them.

For Kenora Stewart, a profound sadness comes from mainstream society's erasure of Indigenous people from downtown. This is a theme that her family continues to deal with. She took this photo of a small alcove on Third Avenue, near my family's favourite restaurant. That

alcove has new meaning for me now.

Figure 5.3 – "Photograph of her Uncle's Last Space" by Kenora Stewart

Kenora: The Native people, First Nations people and some of the real hillbillies [laugh] would go there all the time — they would drink there. They still do. And they'd sleep on those benches. My uncle, because of residential school, he never could handle it and he became a major drunk. All the time, all day, every day. He was very aggressive. I didn't like him. But he was still my uncle though. And he was sick, so he went to the clinic; he got kicked out of the clinic. So he kept on drinking. That second bench in, that is the one he laid down and died on. And nobody saw it, and he was there for a day or so before anybody knew he was dead.

Lisa: So he was like the drunk Indian that everybody just walks by?

Kenora: That is the drunk Indian in the myth that all our people are like that.

In Prince George, as in all of Canada, there is a long history of the media perpetuating

the colonial narrative of the *drunk Indian* or *bum Indian*. These media narratives play a large

role in the negation of Lheidli's history and the negative perception of downtown, especially in

shaping people's sensibilities about safety. Some participants linked their own stories of

sadness to the media's perpetuation of negative stereotypes around Indigenous people.

> Regina Toth: And it was pretty bad in the old days, before the mid-eighties. Whoever that editor was, I thought was terrible. Just blatantly putting something really derogatory in there. And if there ever happened to be a good news story about an Aboriginal person or something about a local Aboriginal nation, they would have to put another story beside it like "Aboriginal person gets arrested." They just couldn't help themselves. And that is pretty well a prevalent attitude; that if given the chance that is the way people would be because that policy comes down from hundreds of years of Indian policy and people feel that they have to hate Indians.

Frank Frederick sees the media as betraying their own role in informing the public about social

issues:

> The media doesn't really, how would you say it, don't go down there and take pictures. They don't see why a certain person is like that. They don't tell stories or anything on these poor people. They don't even go to The Fire Pit to see why it was ever set up. They don't ask any questions. Yet that is the biggest congregation of all the street people. They know nothing about them. They are just a bum and that's it.

Sadness for the Neglect of and Lack of Respect for the Lheidli Cemetery

Another strong current running through both photos and interviews was sadness for the

neglect of the Lheidli Cemetery, and the general lack of respect for the cemetery by the

mainstream community.

The Lheidli Cemetery is an actual Indian Reserve (IR) with a land base of 0.9 hectares

(2.3 acres).[19] It is named IR No. 1A by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

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[19] The following information is taken directly from the Lheidli T'enneh land use plan (see Krebs & Chanter, 2005): "The original Fort George IR #1 was established in 1892 at the confluence of the Fraser and Nechako River. At that time IR#1 consisted of 553 ha (1366 ac). This area included what is now the present-day downtown core of the City of Prince George.

When this reserve was 'sold' to the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway (GTPR) in 1913, it was agreed that the cemetery consisting of 0.913 ha (2.3 ac) out of the original reserve would be returned to the Band as a reserve. The GTPR transferred the cemetery land (Block Z Plan B 3575 (LTO) Plan BC, 644 CLSR) to the (then) Department of

(AANDC) and Ts'unk'ut by the Lheidli Elders (Lheidli T'enneh as cited by Krebs & Chanter, 2005).

Since the erasure of Lheidli in 1913, the area has been disturbed numerous times — in fact there has been a total change in the topography of the land. Major disturbances to the site range from the development of a golf course, numerous excavations — including the bulldozing of a number of graves into the adjacent Fraser River — a homestead, and finally the construction of the current Fort George Park and the Exploration Place (a children's museum). All of these disruptions have occurred under the stewardship of the planning department at the City of Prince George. Regina Toth describes how the cemetery came to be in its current form, and its connection to her own family's recent past:

> The Indian agent and the church arranged that the band would be allowed to have their remains in that parcel. And it wasn't even considered at that time until there was protest on the archives because the graves were bulldozed into the river. Then there were some protests about it. It was allowed that two acres, or one hectare was allowed back. Where those markers are probably wasn't the original spots of the graves are. I knew back then [as a child] that it was my history. Back then there weren't those little signs that showed that it was the original village, because that is fairly new, in the late nineties, so that wasn't there before. There was no sign indicating that there was an actual reserve or cemetery there. So I don't know if my friends who I was hanging out with and playing with in the park as a kid would have known it. I probably wouldn't have explained a lot to them except for saying that newer relatives were buried there. Just in the recent history, my aunt, who is Lyle's mom, and my grandfather. That is important because that is what remains of the two acres form what used to be thirteen hundred acres.

Indian Affairs (DIA), but DIA failed to transfer this lot to BC in 1938 when the province transferred all Indian Reserves to Canada under Order in Council 1036. This oversight was not identified until the Lheidli T'enneh Band Land Code was being finalized in 2000. An Order in Council was approved in early 2005 has now finalized this reserve designation and therefore the cemetery is formally designated as Indian Reserve.

Ts'unk'ut is physically located within the present boundaries of the City of Prince George's Fort George Park near to the Exploration Place museum. The burial ground is located within the northern portion of Ts'unk'ut and has approximately 27 existing marked and unmarked graves. Ts'unk'ut is an active cemetery and there is the potential to accommodate additional graves within the existing cemetery plan.

Primarily the cemetery has cultural and heritage value as the original burial ground for Lheidli people who lived at the confluence of the Nechako and Fraser Rivers. Due to the cemetery's physical location within Fort George Park, Ts'unk'ut has the potential to increase its profile within the City of Prince George and Region."

In April 2005, a human bone popped up through one of the asphalt walkways in Fort George Park. From the original examination, it was determined that it did not belong to someone who was recently deceased. At the time, I was working for Lheidli T'enneh in the Lands Department and was asked to sit in on negotiations between Lheidli T'enneh Elders, the Exploration Place, and the City of Prince George. From the meetings I was tasked with the preparation of a proposal in order to fund a strategic plan for the future of Ts'unk'ut. This excerpt was taken directly from a proposal I submitted:

> The discovery of this human bone, jutting up out of the ground, is taken as a sign by many of the Elders and Members of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation that this issue must be dealt with. The Band is ready to move forward. In the words of a member, they want to "get it done once and for all; put it to rest." This project is born out of a collective desire of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation to put their ancestors to rest. With the support and partnership of the City of Prince George and The Exploration Place, the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation hopes to complete this project in four phases: Strategic Plan, Physical Groundwork, Archival Equipment Upgrades, and Education (Proposal submitted to the Vancouver Foundation, 2005).

Unfortunately, the proposal was not successful, largely due to the fact that our proposed goals didn't match any of the proposal calls at the time.

Elissa Gagnon, who has a degree in anthropology, actually worked for the excavation team in 2005:

> The company I worked for before excavated that, or part of that, and you know, just how many remains and bones are scattered throughout that area, and nobody knows that kind of thing. But I do, so it's kind of disturbing that maybe even Lheidli people don't even know so it's kind of sad that it's happened this way and it is all kind of hush hush type of thing, and so this is the only area that's represented of Lheidli T'enneh so that's why I took the photo of that. [...] and it's so small it's a small little...Like it hasn't been updated in so many years, like, anything. It's almost like, its almost like it has been forgotten kind of thing.
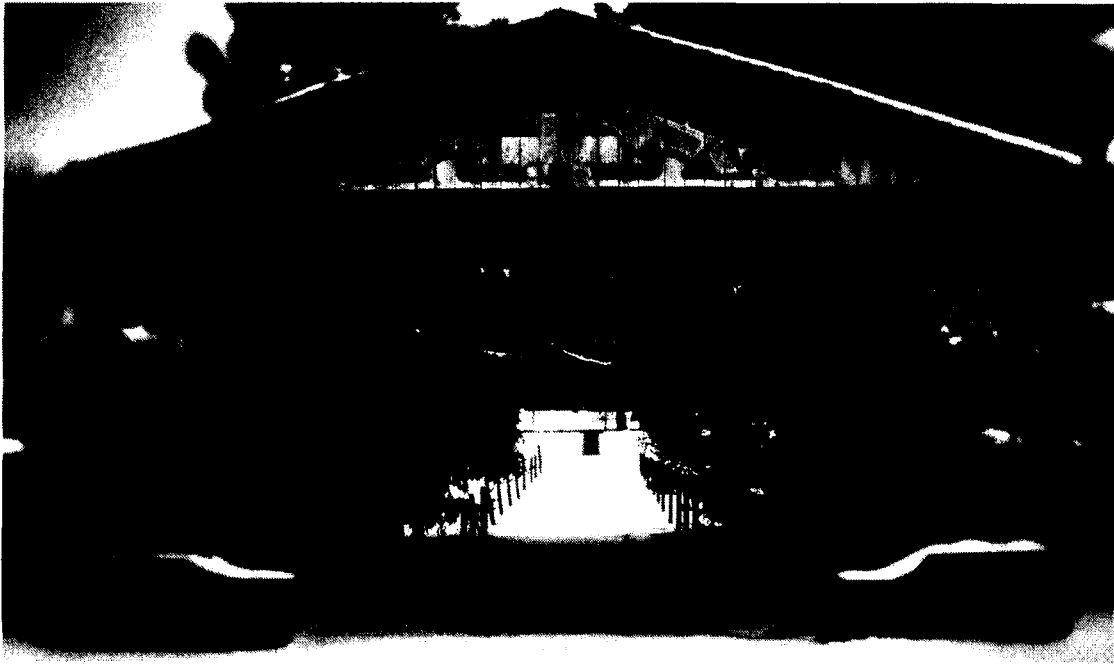
Figure 5.4 – "Entrance to Ts'unk'ut" by Elissa Gagnon

Figure 5.5 – "Entrance to Ts'unk'ut" by Regina Toth

There are numerous stories about the cemetery and how non-Lheidli people have little to no understanding of both the cultural significance to the community and the sanctity of the cemetery as the resting place for recent and ancient ancestors. Kenora Stewart recounted a confrontation she had with some visitors to the Lheidli Cemetery:

> Kenora: People were wandering in there at the circle and they were looking at the gravestones, and they noticed some on the ground. And there was this couple and they were lying down and they were kissing and being lovey-dovey and I said, "Do you know this is a Lheidli T'enneh graveyard?"
>
> "What is that?"
>
> "It is the native band from here, and I'm Lheidli T'enneh and this is our graveyard."
>
> "Well there are no gravestones here."
>
> "Yes there is, you are beside one."
>
> "That is ok then."
>
> "No, it isn't. I'd appreciate it if you got up and either showed respect, or leave."
>
> "Well we can come in here if we want."
>
> And I said, "No, you can't. This is private property. We leave it open for people to come in and view it and understand some of these things. It has a little write up that you can read."
>
> "Well we are going to stay here and sun ourselves."
>
> "I would appreciate if you'd get up and leave."
>
> "Why would we do that?"
>
> "Because you are on my mother's grave."
>
> "What?"
>
> "You are on mother's grave and I want you to leave!" So they got up and left.

Frank Frederick also shared his sadness at the disrespect shown to the cemetery by non-Lheidli residents, and the lack of care and upkeep for its structures:

> So I have a hard time when I go to the park because I see people playing with frisbees there, kids running around with no respect whatsoever. I don't think the City has the respect for our people there and our gravesite. And look at our gate! Our gate has really deteriorated, run down. Hard to open, hard to close. There is no signage saying "Stay off" or "Have respect for our cemetery." There is no history written. No plaques, nothing there.

Figure 5.6 – "Picture of Ts'un'kut" by Frank Frederick

Elissa Gagnon shared a story that links her sadness over the cemetery to the city's callous disrespect for Indigenous people:

> And what my Granny just said is that, um, when they buried my Uncle Gilbert, they didn't put a headstone in right away, they had to get it made and all that. Then they had to put it in and my Grandpa had taken photos and then looked at the photos and said, "no, like the headstone is supposed to be over here" and the City was like, "no it's supposed to be right there" and blah blah blah. And so they went to talk to the curator at the museum and analyze the photos

and he said, "No it's supposed to be where they had said." And it's supposed to be right there so the City finally apologized and you know it was their mistake...

In the centre of the cemetery is an area that contains the remains of the headstones that were bulldozed into the river. They were placed in concrete and a dedication with a cenotaph was placed in the centre.

Figure 5.7 – "Ts'un'kut Cenotaph" by Regina Toth

Elissa Gagnon: It says a little thing of "with my people who are called by my name who humble themselves and pray and speak my faith and turn from their wicked ways and I will steer from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land." So and it says on the top "Clan Unknown."

5.3 The City of Prince George's Engagement with Lheidli T'enneh

As part of the interview questions, I asked the participants, "Do you think the City of Prince George meaningfully engages with Lheidli T'enneh?" While some did believe that the city was

beginning to show improvement in its relations with Lheidli T'enneh, all of the participants felt

that current and past engagement efforts by the city were not meaningful. As Regina Toth

explained:

> No, not meaningfully. There is involvement and invitations, but that is all it is. Business people get involved and also are invited to civic functions. I'd say more so in the last few candidates for mayor positions that there has been involvement. Up to the last four. But previous to that there is nothing. Nonexistent. It's always there. Knowing that it's the territory that is yours. And the decision-making or rule-making is made by other people. That is the hard part. That whole meaningful involvement really should be there.

Frank Frederick sees this as a reason to mobilize:

> I think we have to put our foot down and start really engaging with the city, regional district. This is what we want; this is how we want to do it. We're not going to be dictated to on our land. We want to be respected the way we are supposed to be. We don't want to be just a little band up the river. We want it to be known that we are a strong, proud nation. Well organized, everything like that. We can bring that respect back. If you ask the Elders, fifty, sixty years ago Lheidli was — we were the richest, most well respected band in the whole district. We don't have that designation now.

Regina Toth discusses Prince George's failings within the wider provincial context:

> First Nations also need to remember that they are a *third* level government. And that is it. They [the city] get their orders from the province. And also, First Nations have other laws that trump provincial and federal laws. And that totally trumps a municipality. And I know I see other municipalities like Delta, and Nanaimo, they are the worst in this whole entire province with not getting along with their neighbours. So in a way Prince George is better. They have been a model for some of the protocols. It has got to be more than the protocols. But at least they have a protocol, where those other two they just can't do it. I think that getting back to the counterparts, because in a way, even though Lheidli has the federal legislation, they still mirror a lot of the local government policies and legislation and how things are implemented. So each can learn from each other.

Kaitlin John tied the lack of engagement to the lack of knowledge of the Lheidli Cemetery:

Not really I think that there should be more, not enough people know about it. Yeah. Not a lot of people know. Like Fort George Park, probably not a lot of people know that the graveyard is actually there.

Finally, Kenora Stewart references the canoe carved earlier this year by Lheidli T'enneh members Robert and Edie Frederick . The canoe is now housed at City Hall and although it affirms an Indigenous presence in Prince George it is still missing the specific history of Lheidli.

It tells a presence. But it doesn't incorporate Lheidli. It just shows that it's a canoe, and that a Lheidli member built it. No "where is Lheidli? What is Lheidli? Who is Lheidli?" You know?

5.4 Reclaiming and Renaming Place

Hirini Matunga (2013) discusses the importance of Indigenous place names as part of the recovery and revitalization of traditional knowledge. He suggests that an Indigenous planning framework must "retain its placed-based, spatial orientation, [and] ancestral land is 'merely' the fulcrum around which all other aspects" of community pivot (Matunga, 2013, p. 19). In 2004 when I began working on the Lheidli T'enneh land use plan, elder Ron Seymour worked with the Lheidli language group to rename the existing reserve lands as well as some of the significant sites in Lheidli. When the land use plan had been adopted in March 2005, it was presented to the planning departments of both the Regional District of Fraser Fort George and the City of Prince George. It was an interesting experiment in sharing; some of the non-Lheidli members of these departments were open and receptive, and they put the effort in to try to learn the pronunciations, while others were stymied by fear of embarrassment or simply disinterest. Regardless, the land use plan marked something important: the documented reclaiming of the Lheidli names for Lheidli lands.

In all six interviews, the participants identified that there needs to be more opportunity

to write the history of Lheidli and to incorporate it meaningfully within mainstream life. Kaitlin

John explains:

> You go to other towns and [...] Like they'll know the story "Oh these people are from here" and this and that — they come here [...] I would tell them that the city used to be our territory, like our community or whatever. We are not gone, like just because we are not here, we are out of town — I guess I would tell them something like that.

Figure 5.7 – "Our Ancestors Walked Here" by Elissa Gagnon

One of the most evocative of Elissa Gagnon's photos was of the banks of the Fraser,

looking toward the confluence with the Nechako. As she says, Lheidli *is* this place:

> So that's why I took a picture that way and then taking it this way you know it's like our ancestors going down, representing all the embankments of Fort George you know up the trails they may have followed up and down towards

the Nechako and up the Nechako kind of thing. A representation of the meaning of Lheidli T'enneh you know where the two rivers meet. This is more of a dramatic view; it's more like the dark side kind of thing. But you know I think a lot of people don't really know that as well. You know Lheidli T'enneh is all they know [...] It should all be, in my opinion it should all be classified as Lheidli T'enneh ground. Still have the park there, but having it recognized as Lheidli T'enneh instead of just that little portion.

A number of participants had recommendations for reclaiming space that centred on concrete changes in policy and improved communications with the mainstream. Kenora Stewart brought up the importance of public recognition of Lheidli through signage:

The first thing is signs. When you're coming into Prince George, into the territory first: "Welcome to Lheidli T'enneh Traditional Territory." And a little guest stop where you pull in and there would be a board saying what Lheidli is. Who they are, where they are, where they come from. Maybe a couple of pictures. Like they do in a park. Like out in Bear Lake. Then, when you're coming into Prince George, "Welcome to Lheidli T'enneh." Maybe have a tourism place, have Lheidli tourism. Where you pull in and camp and stuff. And a whole building with our museum pieces, our pictures and video of Lheidli T'enneh history, present, future. Things we've done, how we interact. How we've assimilated and interacted and coming together with our heritage, bringing it back to our children. That would be a big impact.

Frank Frederick underlined the importance of educating both Lheidli and non-Lheidli residents about the history of the sale and move a century ago, and how this has impacted Lheidli:

Number one, I'd make sure that the history of our people is well documented. Not only in a library, but everywhere. What our people are about, who we are. There is no identification of Lheidli, nothing. You see the odd picture now and then, that is about it. I'd make sure that our people are well known. Give them a history of the sale, what happened with that big sale in 1912. How we were moved, and burnt out, and all of that stuff. Make sure that the non-native people, not only in Prince George but all over, know what happened. And why our people are in the state we are in now, living up in Shelley with no resources whatsoever. And our kids, they don't know what happened, and why we are the way we are. They don't even know who we are. There is no history of our people and that has to be done. In the real near future. Somebody has to take

that role on. Once our baby boomers are all dead, that's it, Lheidli is gone. Our history, language, everything is gone.

Regina Toth focused on linking a consultative process with Lheidli T'enneh members to a Lheidli-run communications department:

> I would set up a specific working group, that are representative of the community. Like other committees that we have worked with before. That is the most successful and acceptable to that band. That is a good cross-reference of capturing all of the families' input and involvement. But having a head person who would champion what that project should do and make it a long term consultative progress, in its best practices, up to a year's worth of work and allowing a year for implementation. So minimum of two years' worth of involvement with it. And it would be a long term, and not only for this band, I think all the bands need, is to have a communications department. And that they'd be in charge of doing all those ideas that the community members come up with. Because they could build upon that. And the unlimited budget would include TV, print ads, like *all* the different media that could be used, including social media. Actually having someone who is experienced in social media because that could be the best tool ever for this new generation.

5.5 There is No Single Aboriginal Community

When I began this project many years ago, I believed in the idea that there was one urban Aboriginal community in Prince George mobilized around places like the Friendship Centre and Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS). However, through this research endeavour I have come to recognize that there are multiple urban Aboriginal communities in Lheidli, all of whom are engaged and mobilized at different levels with different governance. When asked the question, "Do you think there is an urban Aboriginal community in Prince George?" all of the participants answered "No."

Frank Frederick explains how some of the institutions that I previously believed to be central to an urban Aboriginal community in Prince George in fact alienate many people, and how some of the newer initiatives are moving in the wrong direction:

Nope. I'll be truthful, there isn't. The only thing I see that is urban there is the Métis housing. That is just for a small number of people. But our street people, there is nothing down there for them. There is no Indian Centre, except the Friendship Centre. I think most of the people don't go there, the Elders don't go there because it used to be a courthouse, they have bad memories of that. The only support that is open now is The Firepit and St. Vincent De Paul and that's it. Prince George better wake up. There is no housing, there is nothing. They always talk about it now and then, about putting up housing for the street people. They make an old bar on Second Avenue a home for street people. What are they going to do in an old bar?

A number of participants brought up a feeling of being slighted by other First Nations who have offices or service provision centres in Prince George. Elissa Gagnon discusses the multiplicity of urban Aboriginal communities in Prince George, and the difficulty in seeing other First Nations having a higher profile than Lheidli:

> The only thing like in Prince George, the only thing I really hear about is Carrier Sekani, there seems to be more prominence in Prince George rather than Lheidli T'enneh. I mean my office is right there almost right across from it and that's all I hear about on the news and on Facebook, there is nothing about Lheidli at all. Their voice is never heard, yet other clans or bands are more prominent and voiced out within Prince George. Seems to be the hub for every other nation except Lheidli T'enneh. I don't know if it's because we been oppressed for a long time that people don't know how to really say what they want to say kind of thing.

Kaitlin John's comments make it clear that she defines herself as Lheidli T'enneh, not "urban Aboriginal": "Whenever I do see other bands, it's like at the ball tournaments and stuff like that. Never really as a community, I guess…"

As Regina Toth explains, other First Nations with satellite offices in Prince George sometimes overstep their bounds:

> Not really. No, it is kind of haphazard. People might say it's the hood, but that is not really an urban Aboriginal community. And then, some people might say that it is the Friendship Centre, but that is just a building and their programs. I don't think that there really is a community. And there really should be. At least a Lheidli paramount to it. Because over the years, because of the satellite

offices that are in Prince George, and also the head offices of the local tribal councils because they are next to the population and services. And they forget that there is an actual community here, even though they know better. And they have infringed on Lheidli many, many times. Many times Lheidli has to write them letters to say "don't get carried away with doing something like this, you are still on Lheidli territory, and you should know better." And there has been major fights over that because they are here and forget the rules. There should be more of a Lheidli presence and I guess maybe they just forget to, like everybody else.

In the interviews, three of the participants made a point of stating that the *Veteran's Land Act* (VLA or *the hood*) does not represent an urban Aboriginal community, even though it holds the largest population of Aboriginal people in Prince George. In 2007 I did a series of profiles based on the 2006 Statistics Canada data for several of the electoral districts within the boundary of the VLA (Statistics Canada, 2006). It has the lowest levels of income and school completion, and the highest rates of unemployment in the city. It is a neighbourhood grounded in disparity, an urban Aboriginal ghetto. [20]

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[20] In stating that there is not one Aboriginal Community in Prince George, it puts forward the issue of how to identify the Aboriginal Communities in Prince George, and more specifically, how are they defined, and mobilized? While these are important questions, particularly to the practice of planning, they are outside of the scope of this thesis.

Figure 5.8 – "The Hood" by Kaitlin John

Lisa: So why'd you take a picture of your hood?

Kaitlin John: 'Cause I don't like it. I think it's one of the bad parts of town. One day we went grocery shopping at like, on a Sunday, it was lunch time and we were coming back in the car, and there was people like fighting on the side of the frickin' corner of the street, and some guy was like went pee, and you could tell that they were drunk. And when I brought Bailee to the store like, an hour later and there was people drinkin' at the playground [...] and messing around. But down there it's like another, like another rez in town kinda thing. Like that's how rough it is sometimes.

Elissa Gagnon expressed a sadness about the VLA, and explains that a concentration of

Aboriginal people doesn't constitute a community: "They may be placed in one area but I

wouldn't see that as community. I know it's so sad, they [the city] should, it makes me mad kind

of thing."

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter relayed the words and photographs resulting from the photovoice essay in which six members of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation participated. Four main themes emerged. The first, and most prominent, theme was that of *sadness*, both for Aboriginal people living in downtown Prince George, and for the way the mainstream residents of Prince George and the city's leadership disrespect Ts'unk'ut, the Lheidli T'enneh cemetery located on Indian Reserve No. 1A — what most residents consider a part of Fort George Park. The second principal theme from the photos and interviews was the way the City of Prince George engages with the government and members of Lheidli T'enneh. All participants criticized the city's historical and current approach to Lheidli and its members. Third, and partly in response to the city's lack of engagement, participants brought up the importance of reclaiming and renaming space. A final prominent theme that emerged from the photovoice interviews was the multiplicity of urban Aboriginal communities. This experience, and what some participants saw as encroachment on Lheidli by other First Nations, belies the mainstream conception of a somehow monolithic urban Aboriginal community.

In the next chapter, I reflect on the photovoice essays of the research participants, particularly how they work into the theory and practice of planning, and how they challenged my own long-held assumptions gleaned from the academy and from my professional planning experience.

CHAPTER SIX

Discussion: Colonial Ideologies of Place

6.1 Introduction

Many academic fields attempt to address the ways in which humans occupy, create, define, and even dismantle space, but most begin from the same basic theoretical axiom: space is mediated through social construction. It is only through discourses of space that we are able to understand the "construction and re-construction of social space" (Cooper, 1999, p. 377). In other words, discourses of space are what position processes of historical change in relation to contemporary configurations (Cooper, 1999; Stewart, 1996).

As noted by Cooper, spatial discourses "and the ideologies they manifest help constitute social reality including the human environment, and shape cultural change and experience of place" (1999, p. 377). Said otherwise, the study of spatial discourse gives us an understanding of the social production of space, of community, and arguably of identity (Cooper, 1999; Stewart, 1996). Rotenberg (1993) argues that discourse provides entry into the topic of the "historical emergence of spatial meaning in relation to change in the built environment" (p. xiv). As people participate in the discourse, they act on their understanding to shape their experience of the places where they live. Through spatial discourses, people elaborate ideologies of place, which leads them to think and act in certain ways (Cooper, 1999, p. 378).

The spatial discourse of mainstream Prince George is fundamentally about the hegemony of settler history. Colonial narratives continue to efface Lheidli history and Indigenous presence through either total disregard, or by perpetuating the stereotypes of the undesirable Indian problems of illicit activity, drunkenness, laziness, etc. This chapter details my

own interpretations of the themes that resulted from the research participants' narratives and photographs, touching on the ways in which Lheidli history and Indigenous presence can be incorporated into mainstream Prince George's imagining. I begin by addressing the deep and sustained injuries that colonial erasure has inflicted on Lheidli T'enneh members. I then discuss the role of the City of Prince George in this erasure, how public displays of respect through re-incorporation of Indigenous names can begin to decolonize the space of Lheidli/Prince George, and end with a discussion of the multiplicity of Aboriginal communities, a fact belied by the discourse and practice of planning.

6.2 The Deep Wounds of Erasure

The most prevalent and strongest emotional response expressed by all participants was the theme of sadness. This sadness stretched across time and space, from sadness for the members of Lheidli and other First Nations who live on the streets of downtown Prince George, to sadness for the disrespect shown to Lheidli members buried in Ts'unk'ut, the cemetery located on Lheidli's Indian Reserve No. 1A, which most Prince George residents consider to be part of Fort George Park.

All of the participants recognize that the Indigenous people living on the streets are not there by choice; many of them are survivors of residential school or victims of other forms of colonial oppression, without the resources to heal their trauma. Drugs and alcohol factor into this discussion as well. In my own family, it is not uncommon for my husband to return from a trip downtown and remark on seeing a cousin or former classmate of Lejac Residential School now living on the street. For Lheidli members, the sadness is twofold. First, the ancestral homeland of a once proud and strong nation is a catchment for those people who remain "the

most marginalized, oppressed and poverty-stricken of communities" in Prince George (Matunga, 2013, p. 30). Second, all of the participants described in some way or another the fact that they feel tremendous pain for the way in which street people are ignored by mainstream society or depicted as dangerous by the media.

This same sadness continues through the discussion of Lheidli Cemetery or Ts'unk'ut. As stated previously, since the erasure of Fort George IR No.1 in 1913, the area has been disturbed numerous times, all under the purview of the planning department of the City of Prince George — including the bulldozing of graves, the construction of a golf course, and the present location of Fort George Park and the Exploration Place. There is a deep wound in regards to the cemetery that still exists for Lheidli T'enneh members, because of the blatant agenda of the city to rid itself of the history of Lheidli. As one participant suggested, how would the mainstream citizens of Prince George feel if someone bulldozed their ancestors' graves? Indeed, it is a heinous offence to intentionally disrupt a gravesite.

Moreover, the participants framed the general public's penchant to play or sunbathe in the cemetery as perpetuating the disrespect of Lheidli people by the city. There is no signage denoting the fact that it is an active cemetery at any of the park entrances. In fact, as a frequent visitor to the park and playground, I can confirm that there is no signage anywhere denoting the fact that (1) the park was once Lheidli; and (2) that there is an active cemetery there.

6.3 The City of Prince George's Role in Indigenous Planning

All of the participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the city's lack of meaningful engagement with the Lheidli T'enneh Nation. Two of the participants who previously sat on Lheidli T'enneh Council, identified that although the city extends invitations to events, much

more needs to be done on a government-to-government basis. Ryan Walker (2008) suggests that municipalities often reference the fact that they are not equipped to deal legislatively or fiscally with Aboriginal governance or service provision as the biggest obstacle to engaging with Aboriginal governance. However, he suggests that despite legitimate concerns about provincial and federal governments offloading responsibilities, municipalities are in a good position to respond, given that

> Municipalities can often be more responsive and creative than other levels of government despite their fewer financial resources because, among other things, they had a tighter staff complement (who know what one another are doing), and officials and politicians live and maintain personal connections as a whole Council within the close and tangible scale where they govern (Walker, 2008, p. 28).

This project is about the place and space relationship of Lheidli T'enneh members to Lheidli, as it exists now as the City of Prince George. In order for this relationship to be positive, the city will have to be proactive in acknowledging its role in the history of Lheidli and be open to meaningful engagement. The city's role in Indigenous planning must be "grounded in the Indigenous community of interest and a commitment to historical redress and recovery of these communities" (Matunga, 2013, p. 31).

6.4 Making Indigenous Space

David Perry (2003) argues that we should think of planning not as *making plans* but instead as *making space*. He suggests that planning is the tension between *the lived space and the abstract space in society*. This resonates with Kathleen Stewart's (1996) notion of culture:

> Culture as seen through its productive forms and means of mediation, is not, then, reducible to a fixed body of social value and belief or a direct precipitant of lived experience in the world but grows into a space on the side of the road where stories weighted with sociality take on a life of their own (p. 21).

This text reflects very well the concept of history as expressed through oral traditions that are shaped by shared events, kinship, and the worldview of peoples within a geographical and cultural space. Stewart (1996) looks at the dynamic nature of oral traditions, and how they are representative of people's mythical and traditional frameworks over time, not fixed in space. These narratives live through the people that relate to them, taking on their own space and meaning outside of the teller. In the process of representation Kathleen Stewart asks us to imagine "how representation might not represent its 'objects' with the closure of information gleaned, code decoded, or explanation dis-covered but might become instead a literal, graphic mimesis that re-presents in order to re-member and provoke" (1996, p. 20).

Here is the movement from ethnographic representation to re-presentation, the understanding that the occupation of a space of understanding is short-lived, but that gazing back onto this space creates a moment of understanding in time. Stewart (1996) refers to the process of re-presentation as the "space on the side of road" which "narrativizes social and moral orders and makes a text not just an object of knowledge but the very place where social code is continually dissolved and reconstructed" (p. 38).

For Lheidli T'enneh members, the oral narratives of the history of Lheidli need to be continued in the collective memory of the membership and incorporated into the consciousness of mainstream Prince George as a form of cultural continuity and self-determination. In part, this can be done through the renaming of places significant to Lheidli. As stated previously, according to Hirini Matunga (2013) the reclamation and re-presentation of Indigenous place names is part of the recovery and revitalization of traditional knowledge and a constitutive aspect of Indigenous planning.

6.5 A Multiplicity of Aboriginal Communities

One of the specific results, and perhaps the most important lesson for me, was the startling realization that there is not a singular urban Aboriginal community in Prince George. In fact, there are a multiplicity of Indigenous communities residing in Lheidli. All of these communities are negotiating relationships with each other, and with the various service providers, and numerous political and government institutions.

As I mentioned earlier, I have an academic legacy whose foundation is built on participatory action research (PAR) with Indigenous communities. For a long time I have been working under the idea of a single urban Aboriginal community. This idea is reflected in research and planning alike, which uncritically produces populations out of diverse communities, based solely on geography and Aboriginal identity. I guess I thought we all checked our identity at the city limits and became part of a pan-Indian stew (see Peters 2000, 2002, 2005). Of course I recognized differences in ethnicity, such as Métis versus Carrier versus Nisga'a, but somehow I imagined in my mind that we all belonged to some larger community.

Respecting Multiple Aboriginal Experiences

Indigenous planning suggests that we need to be open to this multiplicity of Indigenous communities and experiences, recognizing that this is part of the resistance to the frankly racist assumption that there exists a single, unitary Aboriginal community. My former boss Mary Teegee at Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, once told the province that "just because you stick a feather in it, don't think that it works here."

Throughout my research, I persistently asked the question, "Do you think there is a wider Aboriginal community in Prince George?" and the answer was always an emphatic "No."

In a discussion about the 2006 census statistics of the number of Aboriginal people in the VLA, research participant Elissa said that "they may be placed in one area but I wouldn't see that as a community." Kaitlin offered that in her experience, "whenever I do see [people from] other bands, it's like at the ball tournaments and stuff like that. Never really as a community I guess."

How can the so-called *urban Aboriginal community* be part of the planning process when the accepted definitions come from the people in power who have no comprehension of Indigeneity? This means that researchers, policy makers, and planners need to recognize that the concept of a single Aboriginal community is simply wrong (see also Berg, Evans & Fuller, 2007). There is diversity and multiplicity of voice within the populations of Indigenous peoples in any space.

Moreover, for several decades there has been an attempt to compel urban planners and policy makers to include Aboriginal communities in policy design and social program delivery, in order to recognize the self-determination of Aboriginal cultures (RCAP, 1996, vol. 2). Largely these efforts are still working within the hegemony of a single Aboriginal community. How then do we make space for multiple communities?

Even attempts to rename place or create signage that denotes territory and culture, continue to be met with disregard and indifference. Peters (1992) suggests that this negligence "reflects a long history of government policies which assumed that the eradication of Indian culture was a prerequisite for participation in urban industrial society" (p. 55).

Aboriginal Community as a Colonial Construct

Berg, Evans, and Fuller (2007) describe their experience of trying to develop a large participatory action research project in the Okanagan focused on understanding barriers to

access to conventional health and social services for urban Aboriginal people. Ultimately they came to realize that the concept of Aboriginal community is a construct created and enforced by colonial structures and perpetuated by white researchers (Berg, Evans & Fuller, 2007). It is seemingly neat and tidy to deal with one Aboriginal community, rather than accepting and respecting multiple communities with varying protocols and agendas.

As Evans, Anderson, Dietrich, Bourassa, Logan, Berg & Devolder (2012) describe, the "definitions of community are contextually dependant on the social location of the person doing the defining" (p. 59). Most researchers or policy makers understand community as fixed in place as the "non-Aboriginal imagining of Aboriginality" (Berg, Evans & Fuller, 2007, p. 399). This is especially true when dealing with the concept of Aboriginal community, largely defined by their reserve lands. These definitions of community and place are problematic in that they reproduce the colonial hegemony of reserves as being the only places where Aboriginal people belong, making their presence in urban areas incongruous to the still-dominant colonial imagination (Evans et al., 2012). Yet the colonial partitioning of Aboriginal peoples through reserve lands and status cards as a way of defining *community,* has seeped into the academy and all other streams of public policy and service delivery. With respect to research and service provision, the often-competing interests of different Aboriginal communities makes it easier for service providers to look to the AANDC-supported definitions of Aboriginal community "since it represents the effects of more than a century of official government recognition" and often contains the funding necessary to support research or policy endeavours (Evans, et al., 2012, p. 61).

So why wasn't this multiplicity of community, and its effacement by quotidian colonial practices, obvious to me? Early on in my research on the temporal re-presentation of the VLA, I looked to Willis' (1977) discussion of class cultures. Class culture is an identity that is reproduced through the context of "personal and collective volition" (Willis, 1977, p. 2). In the case of the VLA, I thought that a community connection was forged by the identity of toughness and independence of residents of VLA, as represented in their naming it *the hood*, while outsiders call it the *violent living area*.

Willis suggests that class cultures are created "concretely in determinate conditions and in particular oppositions" (1977, p. 59). For the VLA, *hood* culture might have been created out of the neglect and indifference from the local governance structures. The history of relocation of many of the families from Lheidli and the Island Cache, as well as the blatant disregard for the community's physical and social health, enabled the space for the creation and reproduction of hood culture. Now I see that it is much more than that: it is part of the colonial agenda to plan Indigenous people into oppression, and the present reality of the VLA is a direct result of colonial hegemony in planning (Matunga, 2013).

6.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to provide my own thoughts and reflections on the emergent themes of the research participants' photovoice essays. Fundamentally, I believe that the narratives of Lheidli are a necessary element of reclaiming and re-presenting Lheidli history in the current imagining of colonial Prince George. Of special importance for Indigenous planning is the recognition of the history and current realities of the Indigenous people within the urban

landscape. This means recognizing the multiple Aboriginal communities occupying the same urban spaces and incorporating respect for this multiplicity into all aspects of the planning process, and it means putting the effort in to move away from the planning processes that have been complicit in the brutal colonial practices of governance in Canada.

In the next and final chapter, I conclude the thesis by examining the implications of this research for further research into Indigenous planning and for the prospect of indigenizing planning within the City of Prince George more specifically.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion: Decolonizing Planning in Prince George

Social policy applies to a wide range of human service programs including health, justice, education, employment, and social services. These programs attempt to alleviate social problems such as poverty, suicide, crime, youth crime, substance abuse, inadequate housing, and family degeneration. In the planning world we refer to them as *soft services*, which are largely determined by a city's social planning department. With regards to Aboriginal social policy in Canada, there has been a tragic history of social programs created by all levels of government and imposed upon the Aboriginal population (Waldram, Herring & Young, 1995). There is an ongoing move to shift the control of social programs to Aboriginal service delivery agencies where Aboriginal peoples not only provide the services but also develop and evaluate their own social policy. This shift could mean many things for Aboriginal communities, including cultural revitalization, political mobilization, and empowerment.

This transfer of control has been largely due to the recognition that Canada's systematic assault on Aboriginal cultures has resulted in the social collapse of Aboriginal communities (Hylton, 1999), and that perhaps the only way to heal is to create a balance of power for Indigenous people. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) has acknowledged this reality and recommended the transfer of social program delivery to Aboriginal agencies in an effort to restore Aboriginal cultures and self-determination. However, this movement is slow.

As I stated in the beginning of this thesis, the objective of my research is to contribute to the emerging context of Indigenous planning, recognizing that it is both a theoretical framework and professional practice of resistance to historical colonial planning and knowledge

production of place/space relationships. Specifically, my research employed an Indigenous research framework to examine relationships between Lheidli T'enneh Nation members and Lheidli (the now City of Prince George). These relationships are situated within the context of colonialism and in how Lheidli T'enneh members connect with their history and the erasure of their presence through the planning and development of the city.

As part of this thesis I have presented the literature that has informed my understanding of mainstream planning, advocacy planning, and Indigenous planning, including an exploration of how my personal experiences as an urban Aboriginal, and professional experiences as an Indigenous planner, have been foundational in how I approach research as decolonization. As discussed in my review of methodology, the Indigenous research framework deployed in this thesis is premised on the belief that research must work to empower communities through participatory research, and the recognition that knowledge about community strengths and needs, by community members themselves, are the source of expertise. To this end, and with the guidance of my Lheidli T'enneh steering committee, I introduced photovoice as a method for investigating place/space narratives among my six research participants. In presenting a written history of the tenuous relationship between Lheidli T'enneh First Nation and the now City of Prince George, I then set the stage for the telling of my research participants' stories. Through the photographs and oral interviews of research participants, four emergent themes were identified: (1) sadness for the members of Lheidli and other First Nations who live on the streets of downtown Prince George and sadness for the disrespect shown to Lheidli members buried in Ts'unk'ut, the Lheidli Cemetery; (2) criticism of how the City of Prince George historically and currently engages with the

government and members of Lheidli T'enneh; (3) the need for more opportunity to reclaim and rename Lheidli spaces; and (4) recognition that there are multiple urban Aboriginal communities in Lheidli. In discussing these themes, I argued for the necessity of re-presenting and meaningfully incorporating Lheidli history into current colonial Prince George life, with particular attention to the multiple Aboriginal communities occupying the same urban spaces and the need for incorporating this multiplicity into all aspects of the planning process.

By way of conclusion, I link the importance of narrative in the construction of spatial identity, to the decolonization of planning discourse and practice in Lheidli/the City of Prince George.

7.1 Narrative and Spatial Discourse in Colonial Prince George

In his discussion of spatial discourses and social boundaries Mathew Cooper asks us to distinguish spatial discourses that are *transcendental* from those that are *humanistic* (1999, p. 379). He suggests that transcendental discourses "ground their analysis and prescriptions in allegedly universal and immutable characteristics of the world," whereas humanistic discourses ground their spatial discourses in "human characteristics, needs, [and] aspirations," despite how they are conceived (Cooper, 1999, p. 379). Regardless of whether a spatial discourse is transcendental or humanistic, there is always a master narrative at work when presenting the locatedness (sociality) of space. What Cooper and others (Appadurai, 1996; Stewart, 1996; Haraway, 1988) ask us to do is identify the formulation of a master spatial narrative — be it transcendental or humanistic — and, more importantly, determine who employs it and why.

From Cooper's (1999) perspective, humanistic spatial discourses provide a framework for understanding the relationship between the organization of space and cultural meaning.

More often than not humanistic spatial discourses ground their perspectives in an analysis of society and culture. It is within humanistic discourse that most urban planning takes its directive to map out the intersection of human *needs*, and how the physical environment can serve those needs. The issue at hand is thus who defines the humanistic need, and who speaks for this narrative.

This research project has demonstrated that the mainstream spatial narrative of Prince George is rooted in colonial values, and that the mechanism largely responsible for enforcing this master narrative is planning. For me, the most poignant element of this project was listening to the participants talk about their relationship to Lheidli, as it currently exists as the City of Prince George. I came to understand for the first time how *definite* the erasure of Lheidli from the colonial memory really is, and how much of that erasure was facilitated by the planning department of the city.

Resisting Colonial Hegemony Through Indigenous Narrative

Greg Sarris (1993) writes, "in whatever form or manner we deal with oral texts, whether orally or literally, we continue their life in very specific ways" (p. 46). In 2005, Evelyn Crocker completed a Master's thesis focusing on the narratives of Lheidli elder Margaret Gagnon as a resistance to colonial hegemony.[21] In her discussion of Margaret Gagnon, Crocker (2005) states that Margaret possesses own her pedagogy, and that drawing "one's own conclusion is inevitable; this concept is the underlying philosophy at the very foundation of understanding oral traditions" (p. 39). In other words, elder Margaret Gagnon has specific teachings that she

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[21] Crocker is also Elissa Gagnon's great-great grandmother.

lives by, teachings that have relevance regardless of whether someone is a cultural insider or outsider (Crocker, 2005, p. 39). Crocker (2005) paraphrases these teachings:

> She lives by the wisdom of her Granny; she heeds the Old Chief who warned her that the almighty dollar was going to become the God of all people. She lives by the principle of looking after the land, looking after her family and not chasing money (p. 127).

For Crocker the lessons of Margaret's stories live way beyond her thesis. Most importantly Crocker (2005) suggests that oral stories "have repeatedly initiated the awakening of social action around the world" (p. 33). I take this to mean that fundamentally, Indigenous narrative is resistance to colonial hegemony.

In wanting the Lheidli T'enneh participants to use their photographs as a mimesis to invoke their emotional and intellectual response to Lheidli, and to its erasure from mainstream history, my hope is that like Margaret's stories, their narratives and photos will make a change in the lives of everyone who hears them. At the very least, I hope that they may contribute to the construction of an alternative history of this place known as Prince George.

7.2 Indigenizing Planning in Prince George

Through the narratives of the participants, this research has uncovered specific themes that may act as a baseline of initiatives for Indigenous planning to occur in Prince George. Perhaps the starting point for this would be the narratives and photos themselves as a means to resist the spatial discourses employed by the city. As Sandercock (2004) proposes, a therapeutic approach to the urban conflict of colonial planning in Prince George needs to be employed. She suggests that "when planning disputes are entangled in such emotional and symbolic, as well as material, battles there is a need for a language and process of emotional involvement and

resolution" (p. 139). In offering a perspective into Lheidli history, as well as an emotional response to the city as it exists now, the narratives of the research participants as presented here may be of help.

In order to commit to Indigenous planning, it is crucial to define the spatial discourse in any space, in an effort to identify hegemony and transform it. This is done by working with Aboriginal communities to determine an acceptable methodology for engagement. In this regard, this thesis has demonstrated that (1) Indigenous research works; and (2) that there is an Indigenous research methodology distinct to Lheidli T'enneh. Importantly, this does not exclude the multiplicity of Aboriginal communities in Prince George. As Kenora Stewart recognized:

> I think that we [Lheidli T'enneh] should be first and foremost. But, I think all Aboriginals should be recognized because people from all around the surrounding area have been coming to Prince George since before the Fort was built. We used to interchange and we used to trade and visit and stuff and we've got families in other communities all over. I think it would be unfair not to include them.

Indigenous Knowledge in the Urban Landscape

As I began reading the interview transcripts for this thesis, I realized that I had overlooked something significant in my professional and scholarly career to date: the application of Indigenous knowledge to the urban space of Lheidli. If we allow for traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) to be fluid and dynamic for ancestral bush land and resources (see Menzies, 2006), why then do we not allow Indigenous knowledge to be applied to the urban landscape? In the discourse around TEK, Indigenous knowledge typically only applies to ancestral lands as they were. But what about when those lands are completely effaced, and over this palimpsest, a city emerges? Where does Indigenous knowledge sit then? And are there any models that lean toward it, or examples that validate Indigenous knowledge within planning?

Further, what would the City of Prince George look like if Lheidli T'enneh were able to indigenize planning in the city, to have a say over the physical development of space and community development for service provision? There are internal community knowledges that, if mobilized, could greatly improve the lives of many residents of Prince George. But these knowledges have no voice within current planning practice.

Ecologist and environmentalists have us believe that traditional ecological knowledge only applies to the rural landscape and to moose habitat and wildlife management policies. But if researchers across disciplines were to recognize that Indigenous knowledge is flexible and adaptive, why then are we not mobilizing traditional Indigenous knowledge in the urban context and within the planning process? Indigenous people have always been planning their space and place relationships — that is why we are still alive today. Arguably contemporary urban Indigenous knowledge is about the negotiation of survival, the continuation of relationships between individuals, community, the nation, and non-Indigenous residents, and also about cultural continuity and praxis. Cities across the country could benefit greatly by incorporating these knowledges in the planning of service delivery, physical infrastructure, and improving relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents.

7.3 Role of Theory and Practice in Indigenous Planning

Indigenous planning is about changing the colonial hegemony and socio-political realities of Aboriginal people in Canada. Paramount to this change is the understanding that Indigenous knowledge and self-determination sit at the centre of Indigenous planning. I am constantly reminded by the work of other Indigenous researchers that this thesis is intended to be a resistance to mainstream planning and contribute to the body of work that identifies and

utilizes Indigenous research methodologies. Shawn Wilson (2001) points out that as Indigenous

researchers, there are some questions that we need to ask ourselves when evaluating our own

research:

> One is: What is my role as a researcher, and what are my obligations? You then
> have to ask yourself: Does this method allow me to fulfill my obligations in my
> role? Further, does this method help to build a relationship between myself as
> a researcher and my research topic? Does it build respectful relationships with
> the other participants in the research? (p. 178).

Continually positing myself in my research has empowered me to create an academic

and professional identity that I feel rooted in, and in which I take tremendous pride. It has also

reinforced my understanding of the power of Indigenous research as a method of

transformation (Battiste, 2000; Kovach, 2009). However, trust and faith also form a part of my

understanding of the nature of Indigenous research. For without faith in Indigeneity I cannot

trust in the idea that it has the power to decolonize or transform relationships.

In thinking about the linkage between planning theory and practice, I subscribe to

Campbell and Fainstein's (2003) notion that as planners we use theory to (1) establish and

evaluate the contexts in which we plan; and (2) work toward incorporating or even achieving

our theoretical suppositions. Most theories are not measurable in that they do not have

prescriptions or tools; rather, their value is seen as intrinsic within the discipline. This intrinsic

value is necessary for planning both as a discipline and as a profession such that we can

acknowledge change and identify our goals — such as where we have come from, and where

we are going. In my view, the role of theory in planning is to create a forum "for both

professional and intellectual self-reflection" (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003, p. 3). In other words,

theory acts as a framework from which I can hang my professional identity and define my

planning practices. For me, the theory of Indigenous planning is my professional framework, and I believe that Indigenous planning can be the mechanism with which to bridge mainstream planning and Indigeneity.

As an academic discipline and professional practice, planning is often consumed with the notion of a theory-practice gap; planning theory doesn't always translate into practice (Rydin, 2007; Alexander, 2010). If I utilize an Indigenous research methodology or theory of knowledge construction, then I assume that I need to define for myself what my practice will look like. For example, as Kovach (2009) suggests, we need to be up to the work that it takes to define what our practice looks like for us. Planning theorists tend to first define what is going on in other fields — either in science or social science — and then say, "by analogy this is the same in planning." I think that we can do this with Indigenous planning, first by looking at what researchers like Ryan Walker and Evelyn Peters have to say about the specific ways to practice planning in relation to Indigeneity (Walker & Peters, 2005; Walker, 2008) then by matching it to other Indigenous research methodologies that support Indigenous planning. We can then push decolonization forward in both our theorizing and our work in the field.

7.4 The Survivance of Lheidli

In closing, I would like to recall the story of the human bone that popped out of the asphalt of a trail in Fort George Park on April 6, 2005. Just as this bone refused to stay hidden, the numerous efforts to erase Lheidli, and Indigenous people across Canada, have been unsuccessful. Our unique identities, our ways of living in the world, and our knowledges continue to pop up, sometimes presenting an inconvenience to the colonial authorities, sometimes presenting more fundamental challenges.

In that moment, the City of Prince George was presented with an opportunity to re-engage Lheidli T'enneh, as well as the numerous other Indigenous communities, in their plans. Unfortunately, they did not respond to this invitation. There will, however, be more in the future. And as Indigenous planning begins to make space for itself in academic circles and planning departments, I would like to believe that future invitations will not be so callously disregarded.

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