

**POWER AND THE VÉLORUTION:  
CYCLING ADVOCACY, SOCIAL NETWORKING  
AND GRASSROOTS CHANGE IN WINNIPEG, MB**

By

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## ABSTRACT

Bike to the Future is an Active Transportation advocacy organization in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Since its incorporation in 2007, active transportation attitudes, policies, funding, and infrastructure have improved substantially in the city. Many successes have been attributed to this organization, representatives of which are now considered to be the Winnipeg experts in cycling infrastructure and policy creation. This thesis explores how people who use (or want to use) a comparatively marginalized traffic form empowered themselves and spurred on positive changes to cycling policy and infrastructure.

The literature review offers a larger context for the importance of power analysis, collaborative planning and the work of Bike to the Future. This provides an overview of power discussions in planning discourse, and connects heterarchical power structures to collaborative planning theory and strategic networking.

Research for this project involved a case study of the work of Bike to the Future. Four different research methods were employed during different stages of research, including media and literature searches (of news sources, blogs, and planning literature), a case study, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation.

The work of Bike to the Future has also shown that influence can be strengthened when different power resources—powers of knowledge, speech, place, and political and market powers – are used. The value of using different power structures, hierarchical and heterarchical, is highlighted. To be most effective, this study suggests all structures and resources must be used cooperatively and collaboratively.

Four conclusions have been made that seek to explain Bike to the Future's successes:

1. **Strong leaders** came together for one specific reason.
2. These people came together at the **right time**
3. **Good methods** (those of cooperation, collaboration and networking) were used.
4. **Good tools** (such as creative communication strategies and participatory forums) helped convey the message

Because of its ability to engage wide audiences, recognize interdependence, and connect the different types of knowledge and expertise, Bike to the Future can be understood as a collaborative success. Although at the time of this study, this organization was susceptible to volunteer schedules and burnout, its networking potential and networking power was strong. These will continue to be major assets in the evolution of this organization.

Lessons learned from this research process may be useful for many other groups seeking to expand their influence in decision-making realms and on multiple fronts.

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## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to citizens who work collaboratively to promote health and equity.

Remembering Tim Hunt, one of Bike to the Future's founders.

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Cities change in unpredictable ways. Efforts to steer them in one direction or another, by property developers, business owners, residents, politicians, social movements, and the city-building professions themselves, inevitably meet with resistance and become a struggle. We might call this the struggle to define and shape the good city. That struggle takes place in city council chambers and newspapers; in banks and boardrooms; in bars and cafes; on the street and in school. It is a struggle to shape and protect and improve places, to expand or contract accepted notions of belonging, to advance new or defend old notions of environmental care.... Consequently everyone has a stake in the city and how it is changing, and many people have theories about who has the power to do what, and just who are the real movers and shakers.

- Leonie Sandercock  
(*Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities  
in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, p. 157)

## A Winnipeg Cycling Chronology

1993

- Winnipeg Bike Facilities Study completed by Marr Consulting: included an inventory of bicycle facilities in Winnipeg and identified opportunities and priorities for new facilities development (Marr Consulting).

1994

- Plan 2010 public consultations
- First Bike map – 20,000 copies moved in 10 years

1999

- Bike maps and bike routes created for PanAm Games

2000/2001

- Proposal for a cycling study delivered and redelivered to City Hall with no results

2005

- Natural Cycle, a worker co-op opened its doors

2006

- May – Several cyclists arrested after undercover police involvement on a Critical Mass Ride. A small portion of the skirmish is caught on videotape and can be found on YouTube.
- June – Two city councilors join critical mass ride to help dispel potential tensions
- July – Police ticket some participants and allege assaults on officers. Cyclists state officers used excessive force to physically remove people from bicycles (CBC).
- September 6 – First SPIN ride – with official parade permits – organized, beginning at Assiniboine Park. (CBC)
- September 20 – First Winnipeg cyclists’ forum, under the name of Bike to the Future, held at the University of Winnipeg’s Bulman Centre. Participatory process led to the completion of a report outlining cyclists’ priorities, which was delivered by bicycle to the City and the Province.
- September – The Bike Dump, a biking organization that helps people fix their bikes at little or no cost, opens its doors
- October – Cyclists grade municipal candidates on their visions for cycling in Winnipeg. Bike to the Future is named “The most effective lobby group” by the Winnipeg Free Press during the election (Bike to the Future).

2007

- Winnipeg Transit Bike and Bus program launched; bike racks are put on most route 60 buses
- February – Bike to the Future is incorporated.
- July – City of Winnipeg creates Active Transportation Coordinator position and hires Kevin Nixon
- October – second annual Winnipeg cyclists’ forum

## 2008

- Community groups formed in cooperation with One Green City
- Active Transportation Action Plan adopted by the City of Winnipeg. This document outlines plans for three separate networks; pathways for novice cyclists, on-road active transportation corridors for more advanced cyclists, and sidewalks for pedestrians.
- June – first annual Bike to Work Day. The City of Winnipeg is the sole governmental sponsor.
- June – first Sharrows in Winnipeg – stencils (no line) on three major streets in Winnipeg
- October – Third annual Winnipeg cyclists' forum, introduced by Mayor Sam Katz, and featuring a panel discussion with high-ranking input from Winnipeg Police Force, the City of Winnipeg, the Province of Manitoba, and Manitoba Public Insurance
- Some bike lanes painted downtown

## 2009

- April 29 – New Bike Map, result of collaboration between environmental groups and active transportation groups, unveiled (Winnipeg Free Press)
- May – Provincial Active Transportation Advisory Committee formed
- May – Ciclovía committee forms to plan an annual cycling event (or events) involving lane closures on one of Winnipeg's main streets, Broadway Avenue.
- June – More bike lanes painted (or repainted) downtown
- June 19 – Second annual Bike to Work Day
- June 24 – Active Transportation groups and Winnipeg's Rapid Transit Coalition gather to inform the public about the Gap in Active transportation access to proposed Rapid Transit route.
- Summer – Winnipeg transit expands its Bike and Bus program, and launches pilot project with bike lockers at Osborne Junction and St. Vital Shopping Centre (City of Winnipeg)
- Winnipeg trails Association has 27 trails in Winnipeg, and is continuing to work with partners to connect trails to each other.
- September 11 – Stimulus funding announcement of \$20 Million for cycling infrastructure; both trails and on-road infrastructure included on list of priority projects.
- September 13 – Winnipeg's first Ciclovía involves lane closures on the North Side of Broadway, enabling a safe cycling route all the way from The Forks to the Assiniboine Park.

# 1 Chapter One: Introduction

This project explores implications of power in planning, and how one collection of citizens has used networking power to influence decision makers. Concepts of power and power relations are important parts of planning discourse, especially those seeking to include marginalized voices. Many of these voices have traditionally been ignored, but steps are being taken to balance situations where certain voices have been ignored or passed over.

Planning conversations surrounding transportation feature specific mainstream and marginalized voices. In North America, streets, highways, and traffic acts have historically, and to this day, been built to accommodate the most popular form of vehicle – the motorcar. This accommodation has, of course, allowed more cars to accumulate on the streets, contributing to congestion and pollution. In addition, this accommodation has caused less prominent or powerful traffic forms to be forgotten, or addressed in dangerous or inconvenient ways.

In many cities, citizens and citizen groups are struggling to promote the bicycle as a legitimate form of transportation, but the needs of this growing constituency have frequently been ignored or forgotten. This may be because there are far less bicycles than cars on the road, or it may be because cyclists have not organized to make their requests. Because of recent environmental and health crises, however, planners and policy-makers alike appear to be increasingly eager to encourage this mode of transportation. This suggests the bicycle as a form of transportation is ‘mainstreaming’, and social uptake of cycling is on the rise.

This case study explores how a Winnipeg advocacy group, Bike to the Future, has

made its voice heard and claimed decision-making power by networking, organizing, and working together with other active transportation organizations toward a common goal. This goal involves the creation of infrastructure and policy to make cycling a feasible and legitimate form of transportation year-round. Changes happen through conversations with policy makers, public education, and social networking. Although work towards this goal is a very slow process, Bike to the Future continues to play a role in infrastructure and policy changes.

This project is important because it connects concepts of power, power imbalance, self-empowerment and social networking to current situations that cyclists face. It also acknowledges power dynamics and the role of social networking in planning. It is hoped that analysis of these dynamics in transportation sectors may help balance power to give cyclists a stronger voice. More generally, however, understanding the value of power and social networking can help other marginalized groups understand their situation, and to work together towards positive change.

## **1.1 Problem Statement**

### **1.1.1 World circumstances**

The last decades of globalization have seen revolutions in communications technology and transportation that have, in general, changed the way many people operate worldwide. These changes, however, have been accompanied by specific issues, which include an increased gap between the rich and the poor, climate change and, more recently, a global recession.

In the middle of these far-reaching effects of globalization, counter-movements are emerging, offering local solutions to pressing issues such as climate change or

economic crises. These local movements and local solutions are highlighted in planning literature Douglass and Friedmann (1998, 1) assert local-level actions are the source of political imagination, which asserts a “right to human flourishing.”

### 1.1.2 **Planning implications**

Many movements celebrating local initiatives are becoming highly visible, through initiatives such as farmers’ markets, “buy local” campaigns, and fair trade campaigns. The work of planners and policy makers is also evolving. Examples of this evolution include mandates for community participation by governments, devolution of services, and movements towards more collaborative forms of planning theory and practice.

Increased and localized forms of participation carry the questions “participation by whom” and “participation for whom”? This presence or absence of specific voices, and the vocal nature of participants creates very real chances for continued marginalization. This emerging diversity of voices in planning is accompanied by power dynamics, which should not be ignored. As Healey (1997) writes, power lies in more than just possession or dispossession of resources. The power involved with social relationships, whether visible or invisible, must also be considered (p. 112).

### 1.1.3 **Power struggles**

Many people who have traditionally been disempowered are working to be heard, and speak up against discrimination and marginalization. Popular movements include empowerment struggles by women, aboriginal peoples, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and other-oriented (LGBT\*) persons, persons with disabilities, and youth.

These struggles continue to challenge the status quo, and continue to question the roots of discrimination.

Struggles that challenge the status quo, however, also exist on different terms. For example, conflicts can occur within communities (between richer and poorer neighbourhoods), workplaces (between white and blue-collar employees), and regions (between rural and urban spaces). These struggles have been addressed through actions such as civil disobedience, creative resistance, marches, letter writing and public awareness campaigns, community events, strikes, and the formation of community coalitions and unions. These initiatives, and ones similar to them, all share the same goal: people want to be heard, and they want positive responses from those who make decisions.

#### **1.1.4 Power and the bicycle**

Another voice-finding initiative occurs on the road. Every day, many different vehicles travel through Canada's cities, including buses, cars, motorcycles, trucks, bicycles and in some provinces, Low Speed Electric Vehicles. The most common of these vehicles, of course, is the automobile. Roads must be built to standards facilitating automobile movement and can also withstand trucks with heavy loads. In the process planning for the "majority" of on-road vehicles, however, the needs of cyclists have been largely ignored, and recent generations of cyclists have witnessed the creation of road infrastructure that does not adequately or safely address their transportation needs.

This creates a few issues. First, there is a physical power imbalance between motor vehicles and the non-motor bicycle. As Perry writes, "most cyclists prefer not mixing with motor vehicles that are 10 to 50 times their size, 20 to 100 times their weight, move

at two to seven times their speed, and make noise and pollutants” (Perry, 1995, 247). In addition, the safety equipment and requirements for motor vehicles far exceed the helmet-and-bell suggestions offered by safe cycling campaigns. Even though experienced cyclists may be able to keep up with urban traffic, the bicycle driver remains many times more vulnerable than someone in a car. One piece of graffiti in New York summed up this vulnerability, claiming: “The bicycle wins if it does not lose, the automobile loses if it does not win” (Perry, 1995, 311).

A second issue is the sheer amount of motor vehicle drivers who use the road. The last 50 years have seen exponential increases in motor traffic and technologies, unpredictable a century ago. This can be summed up in an 1899 publication of *The Literary Digest*, which claimed: “The ordinary horseless carriage [motorcar] is at present a luxury for the wealthy, and although its price will probably fall in the future, it will never, of course, come into as common use as the bicycle” (Perry, 1995, 311).

This is no longer the case. As the motorcar’s popularity has eclipsed that of the bicycle, motorists have become a “majority voice,” encouraging car culture and leading to animosity between cyclists and motorists. This “majority voice” is summed up by one character’s experience (and ensuing consequences!) in Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows*:

...As if in a dream he found himself, somehow, seated in the driver’s seat...and...all sense of right and wrong, all fear of obvious consequences, seemed temporarily suspended. He increased his pace, and as the car devoured the street and leapt forth on the highroad through the open country, he was only conscious that he was Toad once more.... Toad the terror, the traffic-queller.... The miles were eaten up under him as he sped he knew not whither, fulfilling his instincts, living his hours, reckless of what might come to him (Grahame, 1966).



Paradigm shifts balancing needs of both motorists and cyclists, however, may slowly be occurring. In Grahame's words again, there are many who are acknowledging current traffic excesses and trying to rebalance traffic modes:

'You knew it must come to this, sooner or later, Toad', the Badger explained severely. 'You've disregarded all the warnings we've given you...and you're getting us animals a bad name in the district by your furious driving and your smashes and your rows...Independence is all very well, but we animals never allow our friends to make fools of themselves beyond a certain limit; and that limit you've reached.' (Grahame 1966, 110)

In light of the limits humanity has encountered, as well as climate change issues and concerns about the health and obesity levels of North Americans, the bicycle may be re-emerging as a more celebrated and legitimate form of transportation. Awareness of climate change and health factors, combined with increased interests in and demands for public participation in planning issues, may be helping to create a positive policy environment for cycling advocates. In many North American cities, increased attention to (and funding for) cycling infrastructure has led to increased amounts of bicycle traffic, which plays a role in environmental care, personal health, and the reduction of road congestion.

#### **1.1.5 Beyond the bicycle**

It appears many policy makers and planners may now see (or are beginning to see) the bicycle as a more legitimate form of transportation. A question, however, remains: how have citizens with marginalized voices mobilized to promote policy change? Many outside circumstances, like environmental and health crises in the case of cyclists, have undoubtedly played a role. Decades of advocacy and knowledge-sharing between community groups may also be significant.

This question, and its potential answers, suggests there is a larger issue at work, one applicable to more than just active transportation advocacy. Increasing social roles of volunteer organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been accompanied by increased demand on the part of citizens for consultation and involvement in planning issues. Because of this, it is important to explore how citizen involvement shapes planning, and how people can make their voices heard in the midst of competing philosophies and power struggles.

Douglass and Friedmann speak about citizen involvement in planning, calling it “the politics of civil society”. They state it is emancipatory in two senses; first, through the politics of civil society, trust, reciprocity, and dialogue can be built. Second, this politics seeks to legitimize multiple voices through active decision-making and political empowerment (Douglass and Friedmann, 1998, 33).

This thesis, then, is not only about cycling issues. Rather, it explores the concept of political empowerment, and how a collection of community groups has empowered itself. The lessons learned from their work can be applied and adapted to many different situations.

## **1.2 Key Research Questions**

This research has been focuses on four key research questions, which are as follows:

1. How has the concept of power figured in planning literature?
2. How have different types of power affected power-claiming and change-making processes? More specifically, how has the use of power on the part of Bike to the Future facilitated power-claiming for citizens and cyclists?

3. What lessons about power in planning can be learned and applied from the Winnipeg active transportation advocacy context?

### **1.3 Imperatives**

The following “Imperatives” relate to what may be considered necessary or unavoidable activities, or things in which all able people *should* take part. These imperatives are meant to familiarize readers with this thesis' main points. They are also meant to convince readers to think about and act on these imperatives. For the purposes of this project, three imperatives are listed. These imperatives are for power analysis, cooperation and collaboration, and cycling.

#### **1.3.1 For power analysis**

Power relations are sewn into the fabric of every day life. Healey (2006) acknowledges the complexity of interpersonal and intergroup relationships, and the inequalities existing in all social realms. These inequalities involve not only possession and/or income disparities, but also social relationships. Power over social relationships may include the ability to define social norms or values, which may be deeply ingrained in our ways of thinking (Healey, 2006, 112).

The power dynamics facing both citizen and professional planners cannot be ignored by those who either benefit from or are affected by power imbalances. It is therefore beneficial for all who affect and are affected by power relations to understand the relations of power woven into planning processes. If this is done, Forester writes that planners “can improve the quality of their analyses and empower citizen and community action” (Forester, 1989, 27). This is necessary because, according to Forester, “[w]hether

or not power corrupts, the lack of power surely frustrates” (Forester, 1989, 27).

Understanding power, then, may help reduce frustration, challenge inequities, and enable more positive processes.

### **1.3.2 For cooperation and collaboration**

A second imperative is the need for cooperation and collaboration between individuals and groups. Although the positive aspects of collaboration cannot be denied, collaborative work is not merely platitudes and kind language. As Healey writes, collaboration involves no simple recipe, but is rather a “site of contestation and struggle” (Healey, 2006, 320) where the intellectual and experiential knowledge of participants are tested through theory and practice.

This struggle, however, produces strength. When people with limited resources join together, the resulting collaboration can produce synergetic, efficient and mutually beneficial outcomes. As Agger and Löfgren write, the collaborative process “creates trust, new relations and interpersonal networks, and in the end, enhances a higher degree of social, intellectual and political capital” (Agger and Löfgren, 2008, 147-148). The social, intellectual and political capital created through these processes helps build capacity in community groups, and enables these groups to better fulfill their mandate.

### **1.3.3 For cycling and the vélorution**

As this project’s case study involves an active transportation advocacy group, a third imperative involves bicycle use. The health and environmental benefits for cycling cannot be argued, which is why bicycle use *should* be adopted by more people. However, certain demographics such as the very young, the very old, or differently-abled persons

may not be able to use a bicycle for various reasons. Because of this fact, this imperative begins with the acknowledgement of the bicycle as a legitimate form of transportation currently marginalized by most other traffic forms. Therefore, it is possible to participate in this “imperative” while still being physically unable to ride.

Although this project is connected to the work of active transportation organizations, and although cycling is named here as an “imperative,” it is important to echo Hurst’s words:

“The bicycle is not going to solve our energy problems. The bicycle is not going to make [us] independent of foreign oil. And [we are] not going to morph into a nation of bicyclists...The first thing we need is for people to be realistic” (Hurst, 2009, 4).

What is important, however, is addition to being realistic, one must also be imaginative.

Although it is no panacea, the bicycle is a good start. Cycling is an environmentally friendly and healthy form of transportation. This basic knowledge, combined with an appreciation for fresh air and slower lives, has caused some people to imagine how increased bicycle use can contribute to individual and social health. Slowly, people’s minds and muscles may get used to this form of transport.

The term “vélorution” drives and celebrates these societal shifts of “minds and muscles”, which are beginning to recognize the bicycle as a legitimate form of transportation. The earliest found usage of this term dates back to the tenth anniversary of Montréal’s *Le Monde à Bicyclette* in 1985. An article entitled “Ten years of Vélorution” was written by Claire Morissette, and printed in this group’s newsletter (Perry, 1995, 308). Currently, some people use this term to describe the pro-bicycle movement. It is also used in the title of different bike shops, organizations, and bloggers worldwide.

Despite the cycling community's minority or fringe voice, Wray outlines certain aspects currently favouring bike advocates and helping to facilitate this *vélorution*. First, bike advocates are found everywhere; they are dispersed geographically, which allows them to influence more political actors. Second, these advocates put a lot of energy into organizing and expanding their local groups.

Third, when one considers federal, provincial or municipal infrastructure spending, cyclists are not asking for much. Fourth, although there is a powerful lobby interested in the maintenance of automobile infrastructure, even those who dislike cycling may have a reason to advocate for cycling infrastructure. If cycling networks are created, they will not have to share road space if there are dedicated places for these vehicles.

Finally, the 'ethical imperative' for cycling should not be forgotten. As Wray writes,

“the collective and individual advantages of biking are such that it is difficult to imagine a legislator opposing increased support for biking based on the merits. The other side of this coin, but equally important, is that a legislator rarely gets into trouble supporting bike growth” (Wray, 2008, 108-109).

## **1.4 Organisation of the Thesis**

### **1.4.1 Introduction**

The first chapter of this thesis is an introduction to the issues of power in planning, and to the ideas of marginalization in community planning. One particular group whose voices may be being ignored is comprised of citizens who need to, or choose to, use their bicycle as a form of transportation. Key research questions and the “ethical imperatives” for power analysis, collaboration and cycling have been outlined. Included in the introduction is a description of major groups and events mentioned throughout this thesis, as well as a detailed timeline documenting significant cycling events and advocacy in Winnipeg.

## **1.5 Literature**

The second chapter of this thesis is a literature review and analysis, which consists of three parts. The first part is a general discussion of power dynamics, power struggles, and power imbalances found in planning fields. A second part focuses on the growing planning discourse on social networking and networking power.

### **1.5.1 Methodology and research strategy**

The third chapter outlines the research methods applied during this project, which include a case study, semi-structured interviews, a literature search, and participant observation. The majority of research involves a case study of Bike to the Future in Winnipeg, MB. Bike to the Future is a cycling advocacy group working to make Winnipeg more accessible to cyclists of all skill levels. Citizens have been advocating for cycling issues for years, but since the formation of Bike to the Future in 2006 and its incorporation in 2007, much has changed. Both city and provincial governments have stepped up and increased infrastructure budgets, staffing, and regulations to make Winnipeg a more bike-friendly place. Although changes must still occur, Bike to the Future has helped advocate for the completion of an “Active Transportation Plan,” along with increased funding for different routes and trails throughout the city.

This case study explores power resources and structures in action, and documents how this organization has worked with other individuals and groups to encourage positive change in cycling funding, infrastructure, and active transportation policies in Winnipeg.

This case study also highlights different groups helping to raise the profile of cycling in Winnipeg. In addition, it discusses the methods used to increase networking power capabilities. These methods will be compared with different forms of planning-

power outlined in the literature review. Lessons and challenges for planning will also be drawn from this case study.

## **1.6 Biases, Assumptions and Limitations**

### **1.6.1 Biases**

As research progressed, the following biases were identified:

1. A first bias is personal, and stems from two years of cycle-commuting down Pembina Highway, one of Winnipeg's major traffic corridors. This has influenced personal thoughts about power, and personal feelings of voicelessness. This commute (and other experiences with motorists and motor vehicles) has fuelled desires to encourage planning that allows *all* methods of on-road transportation to coexist.
2. Personal involvement with Winnipeg's cycling community has inspired this particular case study. Volunteer involvements include work done as the secretary and membership co-coordinator of the Bike to the Future's Board of Directors. Although this involvement could, in other circumstances, be considered a conflict of interest, it was not considered by the thesis committee to be a threat to research. This is because the research was not concerned with evaluating Bike to the Future in particular, but was concerned with social networking, and how many different groups can use this tool to be more effective. In fact, existing involvements with Bike to the Future and other members of Winnipeg's cycling community greatly aided research; interview participants were easily contacted, and everyone contacted for an interview agreed to participate. As one participant noted,



I think it's really important that you're doing this, because nobody, as far as I know, has studied this and it's this amazing phenomenon, and we're just kind of astounded and curious as to how it happened and I think it's really important to document it because it's part of the history. And it's a good example of organizing. So good on you (Interview 10).

3. A third bias considers collaboration to be a positive way to achieve mutually beneficial ends. Although many goals can be achieved through competitive or aggressive means, these conversations have been omitted from this thesis.

### 1.6.2 Assumptions

The following assumptions have been identified:

1. Although the case study and some of the literature in this thesis has focused on an active transportation advocacy group, it is assumed much of this research can apply to other coalitions and community groups. For example, while thesis research was being conducted, another involvement included work with a group consisting of representatives from many different organizations working with aging populations. As this group worked together to make analytical and political advances, many similar principles were applied.

2. Research was conducted with a particular hypothesis in mind: it was assumed social networking has played a large role in the successes of Bike to the Future, and the collaboration between active transportation groups has helped cyclists gain a voice in Winnipeg's decision making circles.

3. It is assumed Bike to the Future has had an impact on cycling policy and infrastructure creation in Winnipeg. This assumption stems from all the changes made after Bike to the Future was formed, including the creation of an active transportation coordinator position, City support for Bike to Work Day, City budget increases for active transportation, and the creation of sharrows (a bike stencil with no white line sending a message to motor vehicles that the road is shared by both motor vehicle and bikes) and bike lanes around Winnipeg.

4. At the same time, it is also assumed much legwork had already been completed by the time Bike to the Future was created. The work of cycling advocates is not new: many people have been working for decades to increase cycling infrastructure, and their research, expertise, and tenacity has helped new generations of advocates strategize, plan, and work for change.

5. Similarly, it is assumed Bike to the Future is not alone in its efforts. Many other organizations contributed to this work. As one interview participant observed: “Every one of the people that’s involved comes from somewhere else. We all work for someone else. Bike to the Future is just the umbrella group” (Interview 6).

6. Finally, it is assumed that current use of motorcars is problematic. This is described throughout these pages as the *car culture problématique*. This phrase is adapted from the Club of Rome’s “World Problématique,” which is a concept describing the world’s environmental, political, social, technological, psychological and cultural problems (Club

of Rome). In this thesis, then, the *car culture problématique* refers to the spectrum of environmental, political, social, technological, psychological and cultural problems associated with car culture. This *problématique* is a multifaceted and worldwide problem in desperate need of creative attention, and is the expression of a complex mixture of cultural attitudes, behavior and desires (Root, 1996) associated with lower occupancy, private motorized vehicle usage.

## **1.7 Limitations**

The limitations of this research are as follows:

1. Perhaps the most urgent and important limitation in this thesis is the limitation of language. The word “marginalization” has been used, which is a word with much concern and baggage. Throughout history, many groups have been discriminated against because of their gender, skin colour, country of origin, sexual orientation, or religion. The struggles of these groups are continuing and heartbreaking, and there is still much ground to cover in our collective work against discrimination. By naming the plight of cyclists as a situation of “marginalization,” cyclists’ struggles are not being equated with the longstanding and sometimes ancient struggles of certain people groups. This phrase is used simply to state that minority voices are present wherever people are present, and all types of marginalization should be acknowledged and worked against.

2. The conclusions and lessons learned emerge from one case study, in one Canadian city. Although the power-claiming methods used in Winnipeg’s active transportation community can be considered a success story, postmodern plurality will not allow for “blanket applicability” of research. Although many principles and lessons learned may be

transferable to different situations, creative solutions, unique to each collection of community groups, must always be sought out.

3. This research is also limited in scope: only twelve interviews were conducted.

Although many of these interviews were with key informants, there were still many more experts who could have added knowledge to this research.

4. The focus of this project was largely limited to one factor, social networking. Not all factors contributing to Bike to the Future's success were explored in-depth. For example, there are a number of strong, diplomatic and vocal leaders in Winnipeg's cycling community, and it is not known how the work of these individuals has affected decision makers.

5. This research is also limited in its depth of power analysis: although one marginalized voice (of cyclists) is highlighted, research did not adequately highlight the experiences of other marginalized voices. For example, most people interviewed could be considered as 'middle class.' It was difficult to find women, LGBT\*, visible minorities who are strongly involved in Winnipeg's cycling community. For a deeper power analysis method found outside planning circles explaining different levels, spaces, and forms of power, please see Gaventa's (2006) Power Cube model, referenced in the bibliography of this thesis.

## **1.8 Significant Groups and Events**

The following groups and events connect to the history of Bike to the Future, and of cycling advocacy in Winnipeg and across North America. These groups and events are mentioned throughout this thesis, and provide significant background information for the reader. Although only a few organizations are described in this section, many other groups and individuals have worked diligently to promote cycle transportation in Winnipeg. All the groups, businesses, and organizations considered significant by interview participants have been compiled and are included in Appendix A.

### 1.8.1 **Cycling groups in Canada and beyond**

Cycling advocacy across North America is not a new phenomenon. Many cycling groups have been advocating for safer biking circumstances for decades. These groups continue to use a variety of methods to get their voices heard. Most of the groups below are from the Canadian context, although one U.S. city experiencing winter weather is also celebrated. Groups include:

1. **Edmonton Bicycle Commuters (EBC)** – This membership-based group has existed since 1980. It seeks to “support the bicycle as a healthy and ecologically sound mode of everyday urban travel” ([edmontonbikes.ca](http://edmontonbikes.ca)). This is done through education, advocacy, and a number of programs dedicated to making cycling easier and more cost effective. One of their initiatives has involved the creation of a do-it-yourself-with-help bike repair shop in a central city location.

2. **Halifax Cycling Coalition** – This member-based group is dedicated to changing the circumstances discouraging bicycle use, which includes inadequate cycling facilities, and a lack of education for both cyclists and motorists ([cyclehalifax.ca](http://cyclehalifax.ca)). The HCC had its first public meeting in November of 2007 (Revolution Solution), and it is now over 200 members strong (Knox, 2009)

3. **Toronto Cyclists' Union** – This member-based group works with citizens, community groups, bike shops and the City to ensure cycling is considered a legitimate, accessible, and safe means of transportation ([bikeunion.to](http://bikeunion.to)). This union was formed in 2008, is run by a board and management team, and now employs an executive director.

Another membership-based Toronto cycling group is the Toronto Bicycling Network (TBN), which organizes regular rides and education events. The TBN is run by a board of directors, and puts out a regular event-and-educational newsletter ([tbn.ca](http://tbn.ca)).

4. **Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition** – The VACC was established in 1998, and it is working “to make cycling an integral part of the transportation culture in the Lower Mainland” ([vacc.bc.ca](http://vacc.bc.ca)). This member-based coalition has chapters all over the Lower Mainland, and is working to educate and advocate through web communication and skills programs. Their focus is on public education, networking amongst cycling groups, and facilitating communication between cyclists, government, and other stakeholders. Wider values of the VACC embrace multiple approaches to cycling, multiple forms of transportation, and the health and environmental benefits of the bicycle.

**5. Chicago Active Transportation Alliance** - The ATA, formerly known as the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, has existed for nearly 25 years. Recently, this name was changed to reflect an expanded mission, work and vision. The ATA is a “non-profit advocacy organization that works to improve conditions for bicycling, walking and transit and engage people in healthy and active ways to get around.” Their work involves education, advocacy, and consultation about active transportation in the Chicago area ([activetrans.org](http://activetrans.org)). The ATA has a board of directors and a staff team of planners, designers, community workers, educators, administrators and communications advisors.

### 1.8.2 Significant Winnipeg Groups

#### **Bike to the Future**

Bike to the Future is a cycling advocacy organization in Winnipeg, MB and its work forms a large part of this thesis’ case study. A few events and initiatives occurred under this name in 2006. One of these events was a fall cycling forum designed to gather citizen input on cycling issues. This was planned after an intense cycling summer, where a number of forceful or violent incidents occurred during the Critical Mass rides. Bike to the Future was incorporated in February 2007, and has continued to promote cycling as a legitimate form of transportation. It does this by planning events, participating in provincial and city committees, holding monthly meetings, and encouraging cycling initiatives.

Bike to the Future is “a voluntary, inclusive group of concerned citizens working to make cycling in Winnipeg a safe, enjoyable, accessible and convenient transportation choice year-round.” This organization envisions “a city where cycling is embraced as the preferred mode of transportation, where cycling is integrated into urban design and

planning, and where Winnipeg is recognized as a leader in cycling infrastructure and programs (Bike to the Future, 2009).

### **Manitoba Cycling Association, Recreation and Transportation Committee**

The Manitoba Cycling Association (MCA) was incorporated in 1980 and its mandate is to support all aspects of cycling excellence for Manitobans across all levels and ages. Employees and volunteers connected with the MCA coordinate races and events, and ensure that this sport receives the attention and funding that is needed. The provincial racing team is also coordinated out of this organization.

The MCA, however, has also formed a Recreation and Transportation Committee, which promotes “the joy of safe cycling as a healthy and environmentally-responsible form of leisure-time fun and transportation” (MCA, 2009). This committee has existed since 1996 and continues work to make Manitoba a more cycle-friendly place.

This committee helped put together the 1999 cyclists’ map, and also contributed to the creation of bike routes between venues for the 1999 PanAm games. It was around this year that an email discussion list, called the Winnipeg City Bicyclist was set up by this committee. This ran until 2005. Representatives from the Recreation and Transportation committee also made presentations on behalf of MCA to the City of Winnipeg during the creation of Plan Winnipeg in 2000.

The MCA’s Recreation and Transportation committee continues to work both independently and with Bike to the Future for safe and connected routes throughout Winnipeg. One recent initiative includes a postcard campaign, where postcards were created to raise awareness of the needs of Winnipeg’s cyclists (MCA, 2009).



## **Winnipeg Trails Association**

The Winnipeg Trails Association is a coalition of trail users and volunteer trail builders working to accelerate trail connectivity in Winnipeg. These trails are primarily pathways separated from vehicular traffic and wind through river riparian zones, urban forests, and open fields, and along abandoned rail beds. This association includes over 40 different partners and organizations.

The Winnipeg Trails Association has been active since 2002. Part time staff and volunteers continue to fundraise and advocate for connected trails in Winnipeg. Connecting these trails in an urban environment often involves the use of on-road infrastructure. Because of this the Winnipeg Trails Association works closely with groups advocating for safe and efficient commuter routes to provide the necessary trail connections.

In 2008, this organization won the Reh-Fit Centre and Province of Manitoba's Healthy Living Award for its work on encouraging healthy active living in Manitoba. This group continues to raise funds, build more trails, and connect with press sources on these initiatives.

## **One Green City**

One Green City is a project that began in June 2006. This project is a creative mapping website put together by Anders Swanson. One Green City hopes to “create a first-class, comprehensive network of bikeways spanning all of Winnipeg.” Anders has compiled a list of ‘best practices’ from other cities. This website, [onegreencity.com](http://onegreencity.com), also includes a discussion forum, maps indicating existing and proposed cycling infrastructure in

Winnipeg, and links to the neighbourhood cycling groups scattered throughout Winnipeg.

In addition to the maps, the formation of neighbourhood cycling groups has been perhaps one of the most significant recent contributors to Winnipeg cycling advocacy. In 2007, Anders received a \$1000 United Way grant for snacks and meeting space, which helped in the formation of two groups: the North Winnipeg Commuter Cyclists and the West Central Commuter Cyclists. These citizen groups, alongside similar counterparts developed for every area of the city, contributed maps and designs which helped create the foundation for the City of Winnipeg's proposed Active Transportation Network.

The infrastructure on the proposed network is slowly being built - aided by a multi-million dollar annual budget. The groups continue to oversee the implementation of their ideas, attract new members in an open, public format and work towards making cycling more viable in their own communities.

### **Critical Mass**

Critical mass rides are held in cities across the world, typically around 5 pm on the last Friday of every month. Participants in this leaderless celebration ride down streets en masse, and work towards legitimizing the bicycle's transportation role by claiming: "we don't block traffic, we *are* traffic." Different reasons why people participate include "celebrating self-propelled transport, drawing attention to the links between cars as transportation and resource wars, reclaiming rightful space on the road, calling for more support for alternative transportation", and "fun!" (Critical Mass Winnipeg).

Because these rides are typically leaderless, there is not one specific authority on these occurrences. One participant in the interviews conducted for this project described Critical Mass this way:

It doesn't have a board of directors, it doesn't have specific demands, people come to it for all kinds of different reasons and all it is, is a group of cyclists biking together...and it kind of incorporates tons of different facets of cycling. Some people just like to be on bikes, some people have more of an anti-war or peace movement reason that they're doing it, other people want to promote more cycling infrastructure... but it's still really political and meaningful and important...It's also totally non-hierarchical. There are no leaders; everyone's just kind of a participant in this way. There was never an organized group but I love doing it, they were really festive, they were really fun, people would wear costumes, it was really enjoyable.

### 1.8.3 Significant Events

Descriptions of the following significant events were drawn from press research and interview data. These events have been pivotal in the formation and evolution of Bike to the Future, and have been listed in chronological order.

#### **Critical Mass rides of 2006**

Critical Mass rides have been happening in Winnipeg since the mid-90s, according to one interview participant. The ride on May 26, 2006, however, incurred a number of arrests as well as allegations of excessive police force. Some of the conflict was recorded and is currently posted on YouTube, where one can watch the scuffle, and listen to participants draw others' attention to undercover police officers.

This event drew significant press and public attention, and spurred lively debate. At the following month's ride on June 29, two City Councilors rode with Critical Mass to indicate their support. About 500-600 cyclists were present, and a Google Group post

from Councilor Jenny Gerbasi stated, “Congratulations to everyone for having a respectful and peaceful and massive ride! I have to say I really enjoyed it...thanks to everyone for getting out an effective message and increasing awareness about cycling.” (Google Groups, 2006).

Problems occurred again, however, during the July 28 ride. One blogger (of Tear It Down) took photos of police officers waiting to ticket participants after they left the escorted ride. This sparked more cyclist discontent.

This discontent, however, helped throw advocacy efforts into high gear. Local Blogger Robert Galston put it this way: “if it wasn't for Critical Mass and their "clashes with police", the issue of cycling would never have entered the public consciousness this summer, [and] City Hall would be even further than it is from doing anything about Active Transportation studies” (the Rise and Sprawl).

### **SPIN Ride**

After these incendiary Critical Mass events, a ride with marshals, leaders, and a police escort was planned by a group from local bike shops. The organizers of this event, called the SPIN Ride, sought to ‘dispel the negative publicity’ facing cyclists earlier in summer. This ride occurred on September 7, 2006 and around 500 cyclists rode from the Assiniboine Park to Winnipeg’s City Hall. A second SPIN ride happened, with the help of the Winnipeg Trails Association, in Winnipeg’s south end later on in fall.

Although this group’s methods were different from those of Critical Mass, the message remained similar; citizens wanted the mayor to ‘get in gear’, and provide safe and connected routes and paths for cycle transportation (Canadian Broadcasting

Corporation, 2006).

### **Bike to the Future's annual Fall Forum**

After this intense focus on cycling in the summer of 2006, another group of cyclists organized a forum, entitled Bike to the Future, on September 20. Over 100 cyclists came together to discuss, in a participatory manner, their vision for cycling in Winnipeg. This event was held at the University of Winnipeg's Bulman Centre, and featured facilitated small groups, a funny skit, and a few speakers. Volunteers compiled the information and recommendations generated during this event into a report. This was delivered by bicycle to City Hall and the Provincial Legislature, via Winnipeg's current road infrastructure.

Bike to the Future was incorporated a few months after this event, and the Fall Cyclists' Forum has become a staple event. Each year is slightly different, but the most important parts of this gathering involve information-sharing by cyclists, and the compilation of a report which is passed on to decision makers.

### **Bike to Work Day**

Just over one year after Bike to the Future's incorporation, citizens of Winnipeg had already seen significant changes in the 'cycling climate,' which included (among other things) the hiring of an Active Transportation Coordinator, the creation of an Active Transportation plan in cooperation with the numerous community cycling groups, and an increased City Active Transportation budget. Diplomatic relationships with the City had also begun to solidify, and Bike to Work Day exemplified this cooperation.

A team of City and non-profit organizational representatives organized and promoted this celebration, which happened on June 20, 2008 and included a free pancake breakfast at The Forks for participants. Citizens were encouraged to register for this event, which sought to ‘celebrate the bicycle as a safe, fun and healthy mode of transportation’ (Bike to Work Day Winnipeg, 2009).

A second Bike to Work Day, held on June 19, 2009, suggests this collaborative event between volunteers, the City of Winnipeg, and other sponsors, will be an annual celebration.

### **Ciclovía**

Ciclovía is the Spanish term for “Bike way,” and this event began in Bogotá, Colombia. In this city, major roads are blocked off every Sunday, and people have the opportunity to walk, bike, run, and enjoy outdoor fitness classes on streets normally used primarily for motor vehicle traffic ([downtownwinnipegbiz.com](http://downtownwinnipegbiz.com)). Winnipeg’s first Ciclovía, held on September 13, 2009 was a fun and busy event, where the entire north side of a major street (Broadway Avenue) was closed, and filled with a farmers’ market, artisan booths, community tables, and food vendors. Lane closures on other streets, coupled with a few regular Sunday street closures, allowed participants to connect to two different tourist attractions, The Forks and the Assiniboine Park, via active transportation. These two locations are about 10 kilometres apart.

This event was spearheaded by the Downtown Winnipeg Biz, but involved the work of many different parties, including Bike to the Future, One Green City, the

Downtown Watch, many private sponsors, and dozens of volunteers. The organizing committee intends to repeat the Ciclovía event a few times in the summer of 2010.

### **Stimulus funding announcement**

On the afternoon of Friday September 11, 2009, the federal, provincial and city governments announced \$20 million in funding for bikeways and bike paths in Winnipeg. Accompanying this announcement is the identification of 37 specific roads and routes ([winnipegfreepress.com](http://winnipegfreepress.com)), the completion of which will be, according to a letter of thanks written on behalf of Bike to the Future, a “huge step towards the creation of a much-needed network of bikeways in Winnipeg” ([biketothefuture.org](http://biketothefuture.org)).

At the time of writing, no concrete strategies had been introduced to turn the funding announcement into concrete (or crushed limestone) reality, although expertise and support have been offered by Bike to the Future ([biketothefuture.org](http://biketothefuture.org)).

## **2 Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The following literature review consists of two parts meant to provide context for the different methods used by Bike to the Future to make their voices heard. The first part outlines the concept of power as it is found in planning literature. A framework has been formed which categorizes writings on the many different ways in which power can be analyzed, wielded, used and spoken about. The second part of the literature review unpacks the concept of heterarchical and networking powers, which are also referred to in the framework. These powers are connected to collaborative planning theories and networking strategies.

### **2.2 Part I: Power in Planning**

Power is an elusive concept. It is held individually, collectively, and can (among other things) be wielded, delegated, assumed, enforced, encountered, faced, corrupted and collected. In his 1989 publication of *Planning in the Face of Power*, Forester observes if planners understand how power and power dynamics work within planning processes, they can improve the quality of their analyses by empowering community members to be involved in the processes affecting them (Forester, 2004). Nine years after this statement was made, Friedmann also called attention to what was “perhaps the biggest problem” in planning theory and comprehension. This is, he claims, “our ambivalence about power,” permeating throughout all major schools of planning thought, including rational, communicative and action-oriented paradigms (Flyvbjerg, 2002). Research in subsequent years apparently did little to address both Friedmann and Forester’s power-concerns,



because in 2006, Moulaert and Cabaret again brought into light the almost complete absence of the role of power relations in network analysis, and the consequences of ‘overlooking power relations’ in planning (Moulaert and Cabaret, 2006).

Power must be factored into planning conversations and theories, as its continued invisibility may serve to stealthily co-opt planning processes, promoting continued imbalances and hindering important voices from being heard. The following pages delve into the question of how different types of power and power relations affect and inform planning processes. The issues city planners encounter today are plentiful, and the power dynamics involved are therefore often difficult to identify.

This thesis will begin with a discussion of different planning theorists’ definitions of power. Following this, two types of power (under the umbrella of power *structures* and power resources, as named by the author) will be discussed. These two types of power and their corresponding analyses have emerged from a literature review of books and journal articles addressing issues of power in planning. Most authors use slightly different definitions of power, approach it from a unique perspective, and frame its influence in many different ways; therefore, it seemed necessary to synthesize research in a categorical manner.

Power resources are nebulous phenomena, but can be thought of as the actions, processes, or concepts through which much power is exercised. Research on power themes in planning circles has encountered five relatively consistent types, which include the power of knowledge and language, market power, political power, and the power of place. However, although power can move through each of these resources, they must not be considered as neutral channels. Each of these is also socially constructed and should

therefore be implicated in power analysis. Because of this, it may be difficult to determine when and whether these resources are channeling power, and when they are the result of power relations. Regardless, each of these resources will be explained, and attention will be paid to the planning implications and/or critiques involved with each category.

Power *structures*, on the other hand, involve specific ways in which power is exercised. They are often connected to a certain entity, person or group of people, and are therefore easier to name and understand. The first structure put forth under this category is hierarchical power. In the planning world, traditional rational and comprehensive planners use this structure of power, conferring expertise and knowledge upon others in a top-down fashion. A second structure, however, changes power's pyramidal shape into a more horizontal form. Heterarchical power, then, is embodied by grass roots approaches, where collective action and collaborative planning form webs of networks. These networks, and the resulting relationships formed, empower and enable groups in their power-searches. Heterarchical power is defined by Smismans (2008) as a more horizontal form of governance that involves many actors, including representatives from public and private arenas, and "all relevant stakeholders" (Smismans, 2008, 874).

The above structures and resources can be connected together through Giddens' theory of structuration. This concept reminds readers that social systems, and in this case, both power structures and power resources, are social constructs and simultaneously form and are formed by social interaction. Through social interaction, people and structures remain mutually dependent on each other (Cassell, 1993, 122).

This review of power in planning literature will be followed by a discussion of the changing role of planners today, and how power can be found, facilitated, and expanded. Of course, limitations always exist. The first limitation involves issues of categorization and synthesis, as there are always countless ways of bringing information together in one cohesive bundle. With every synthesis attempt, one becomes subject to risks of polarization and ‘either/or’ mentalities. Because of this, the following section suggests merely one of many interpretations and syntheses of power in planning fields. Second, the perceived boundaries between power resources and power structures are often blurred; therefore the reader can and should make connections within and between different resources and structures of power. Because of these connections, individuals, networks and relationships (and their functions in the aforementioned resources and structures) should not be seen as independent of the wider forces, structures, or types of power influencing their lives (Hillier, 2002). Finally, biases exist that favour participatory and collaborative planning theories and methods seeking to even out power imbalances through empowerment and community involvement. It assumes that in many cases, power is not a limited resource and can therefore be simultaneously held by many. The above biases provide a people-centred framework for power analysis and, along with the work of many current theorists, seek to remove myths of objectivity long present in planning circles.

### **2.2.1 Defining power**

Because of the many ways in which power is exercised, it is essential to provide a definition, or at least a discussion surrounding its many definitions. Many of these definitions involving power in planning are informed by experiences in planning practice

as well as philosophical explorations, and the writings of Foucault and Habermas in particular.

Two philosophical strains of thought frame much planning discourse on power issues. In *Shadows of Power*, Hillier discusses power-definitions from both Foucault and Habermas. The latter defines power as the “ability to prevent other individuals or groups from realizing their interests” (Hillier, 2002). Habermas’ solution to existing power imbalances clearly lies largely in action. Here, Habermas celebrates theories of communicative action, where both speech and mutual understanding are acquired through discourse and mutual trust (Habermas, 1974, 3). According to Habermas, then, power preventing people from carrying out their interests can be addressed through speech and communication.

Foucault, on the other hand, sees power as more of a general ‘matrix’ of intentional force relations. These relations permeate through all of society and are carried out very purposefully (Hillier, 2002, 49). In this definition, power is more difficult to pinpoint and equally difficult to address. More extreme interpretations of Foucault’s definition claim he has elevated power to assume a privileged status, where it becomes the lens through which all concepts and language are understood (Stein and Harper, 2003). Although this may be a legitimate critique, Foucault has succeeded in expanding action-oriented definitions of power to honor its complexities and its prevalence in many interactions.

Foucault’s contribution to understanding power is in providing a positive theory, whereas Habermas seems to be more solution-oriented, leaning towards normative interpretations of how power should be addressed. Foucault can be critiqued for his emphasis on the overarching influence of power in all relationships. Conversely,

Habermas is critiqued for placing too-high expectations on communication, and more specifically his “ideal speech” situation, where everyone speaks comprehensibly, truthfully, sincerely and legitimately (Hillier, 2002). According to Habermas, however, a situation like this can be anticipated but not realized (Habermas, 1970, 372).

inappropriate in and of itself. In his view, these definitions should be connected together

As one enters planning realms, power definitions tend to become less complex, focusing, like Habermas, on action-related terms. In a practical how-to volume, Minieri and Getsos define power as the “ability to act and make things happen” (Minieri and Getsos, 2004). Here, power is held within a person or group of people. Although it identifies with action-oriented aspects of Habermas’ definition, Minieri and Getsos take a more positive approach, where power is an ability to make something happen, as opposed to the ability to prevent an action. Although this may largely be a semantic issue, it may also reflect each author’s predispositions regarding positive or negative potentials of power.

Some authors define power as an ability found within a person or group, but this is not always the case. The title of Forester’s book *Planning in the Face of Power* suggests it is an entity external to planning; an entity against (or ‘in the face of’) which planners work. (Yiftachel et al., 2001). Forester’s perspective enables one to conclude that power is found both within and outside of any given person or group.

Maginn senses the confusion surrounding power definitions, and takes the necessary both/and approach. He acknowledges the influence of both Foucault and Habermas by mentioning the lack of clarity regarding whether power is the ability to influence outcomes, or whether it is more of a process. (Maginn, 2004). Other theorists

(such as Hillier and Yiftachel et al.) are also attempting to synthesize both descriptive and normative power-definitions. In doing so, they combine the work of Foucault and Habermas to create definitions of power acknowledging its prevalence within and between networks, simultaneously seeing it as an external force, able to be countered through communication, organization, and empowering actions.

The above frame of reference attempts to synthesize the work of Habermas and Foucault, viewing power both as an ability to achieve desired ends as well as a force existing within societal structures both within and outside of a given entity, person or group of people. This definition of power provides a lens through which one can analyze and critique planning. With this “powered” framework of reference, planning practice can be observed and analyzed as a set of institutions, practices, and discourses imbued with power relations (Yiftachel et al., 2001).

### 2.2.2 Power Resources

The following types of powers (held by knowledge, language, the market, politics, and place) are labeled *power resources* because of the way in which power works through them. This phrase is borrowed from Giddens (1984), who defines resources as “media through which power is exercised” (p. 15) as a “routine element” (ibid.) of social interaction and social structures. As these resources channel power in many ways, there are difficulties involved with describing their present or potential influences. These influences are often attached to a specific person or group (ie someone who *holds* knowledge) but they can exist relatively autonomously, for example, when referring to the power *of the* market or to Bacon’s statement that knowledge *is* power. It must be stated, however, that these resources are not neutral channels, as they are socially

constructed structures that can also be the result of exercised power. Giddens (1984) makes this clear when he states that resources are “structured properties of social systems” (p. 15) that influence and are influenced by people (“knowledgeable agents”) as they interact.

Regardless, it is in these power resources where one encounters what Yiftachel et al. (2001) observe in the title Forester’s book – often external forces, *against* which, *with* which, or *in the face of* which planners must work. These resources can also be used to gain or claim power. There are undoubtedly more types of power resources, but the following five are ones often repeated in planning literature surrounding power discourses.

#### 2.2.2.1 Power of Knowledge

The first two resources relate to ideas of *knowledge* and *language*. Due to their wide scope, both hold within themselves potential for uptake in all areas of society in a variety of ways, not only in traditionally power-full realms. The capacities of these resources exist both within and outside of people and communities.

In order for its real meaning to emerge, Bacon’s “Knowledge is Power” statement must be understood in wider terms than common usage might dictate. Colloquial understandings might relate knowledge-power to the power of the ‘expert’, or to those who have received a formal education. The type of knowledge held in these circumstances may be exclusive to others, and the expert may therefore be elevated in her/his prestige and influence. As Foucault (1975) states, power and knowledge both form and are informed by one another; no power exists without knowledge, and no knowledge that is not made by power relations.

Although this type of knowledge-power exerts great influence (in planning circles as well as in other societal realms), there is more to Bacon's assertion that "Knowledge is Power." Flyvbjerg sums up the power of knowledge extremely well, noting its functions both as a 'power over' method, but also as a tool held by many, often unwillingly.

[I]n my practical work I had seen, on one hand, that knowledge can be so important that people in powerful positions find it worth their while to repress it. On the other hand, I had also seen examples of knowledge being so weak that this repression actually succeeded. I had seen knowledge being marginalized by power and power producing the knowledge that served its purposes best. I concluded that knowledge about the phenomena that decide whether economic, social, geographic, or other knowledge gets to count as important is at least as important as that knowledge itself. If you are not knowledgeable about the former, you cannot be effective with the latter (Flyvbjerg, 2002, 354).

In Flyvbjerg's opinion, the power of knowledge does not necessarily rest in the idea of what one knows, but rather in the *awareness* of the scope of knowledge one inherently holds. How this knowledge is utilized is also important. If one realizes knowledge about her/his neighbourhood or neighbours, or any other circumstance "gets to count" as true knowledge and is therefore important, there is much potential to use this knowledge-power to benefit communities. Friere emphasizes this as well. In his educative efforts, he noticed oppressed peoples are aware of ingrained power imbalances. This awareness causes self-distrust, and a failure to realize one's own innate knowledge stemming from being in the world and in relationship (Friere, 2001).

A potential role for planners in this knowledge-gathering situation is put forth by Hillier. If knowledge engenders power, then strategies of working with, against, or 'in the face of' power should involve the acquisition of knowledge. This brings to light possibilities of knowledge-collecting through networking and organization, through some form of what Boulding terms 'integrative power' (1989, 110).



### 2.2.2.2 Power of Language

The power of knowledge goes hand in hand with the power of *language* or communication. Acquisition (or realization) of knowledge is facilitated through communication; through the spoken or written word. Although the realization of one's own knowledge may be in and of itself empowering, the power of language is needed to exercise and give expression to this knowledge. Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, a revolutionary leader of Mexico's Zapatista movement, has emphasized the importance of spoken words, and how small "echoes" create larger and more resonant voices.

An echo of our smallness, of the local and particular, which reverberates in an echo of our own greatness...

An echo that recognizes the existence of the other and does not overpower or attempt to silence it.

An echo that takes its place and speaks its own voice, yet speaks the voice of the other...

An echo that turns itself into many voices, into a network of voices that, before Power's deafness, opts to speak for itself, knowing itself to be one and many...recognizing itself as diverse in the tones and levels of voices forming it... (Subcomandante Marcos, 1996)

Images of a faint echo, growing in magnitude as the number of voices contributing to it increase, are an inspiration to those who have traditionally found themselves powerless. Marcos' 'echo' imagery suggests there is a way in which power can be garnered within many different circles. Here voices join together to speak individually and yet collectively, without drowning out the voices of others. Friere's concept of naming, and therefore changing power-less situations complements the above 'echo' imagery. In his view, the very act of verbalizing a situation is revolutionary. "To speak a true word", or to 'name' a situation, "is to transform the world" (Friere, 2001, 87). This is revolutionary because the externalization, or naming of one's circumstances

immediately demands response and then a post-response re-naming. In this way, action and reflection (language and knowledge) continue to elicit action and, ideally, garner power.

Planners must, therefore, be aware of powers associated with language and communication. As language is the principle agent through which thinking and communication about planning occurs (Hillier, 2002), it is important planners learn not only to speak and share ideas, but to listen to and interpret the communicative intents of the people with whom they are working. De Souza Briggs notes, according to Innes, planning theorists are increasingly seeing planning as a communicative activity where planners interact and are engaged with community, politics, and public decision making. He continues to quote Innes' argument, where planners constantly talk and interact (DeSouza Briggs, 1998). This may seem like an obvious statement, but to acknowledge language as a way of exercising power (ibid.) is important. This idea holds Foucaultian influence, as he considered all language-oriented situations to be an act of power (Stein and Harper, 2003).

Friedmann also emphasizes the power of language, quoting Arendt's statement that politics are actualized through language, for "violence itself is incapable of speech" (Friedmann, 2002). Marginalization or subjugation (no matter how subtle) is a violent act, but it can be worked against. The spoken or written word gives voice to inherent knowledge, releasing its power and increasing the participatory potentials of all.

Of course, communication is always a difficult issue. Just as one can never truly experience Habermas' 'ideal speech' situation because of human shortcomings, the acquisition of communicative and linguistic power will always be difficult. Language has

its limitations, and expression is most often a daunting task, especially for those who are simultaneously discovering knowledge and voice.

Powers of knowledge and language are important power resources because they are potentially accessible to, and constructible by all people. Although difficulties with these resources exist, they are nevertheless discussed in much planning literature as effective methods in participatory planning and development processes. The following two power resources (powers of the market and politics), however, are less attainable and more elusive. Because they are traditionally associated with hegemonic, win-lose and top-down situations, they have potential to hinder or curb the aforementioned speech and knowledge processes. The structural characteristics of these resources is acknowledged but will not be discussed; instead, attention will be paid to how they facilitate the exercise of power relations.

### 2.2.2.3 Market Power

Perhaps the most frequently mentioned power in planning literature since the neo-liberal turn in the 1980s is the power of the *market*. To emphasize its scope, Bentley quotes former Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, who served five terms in office (finishing in 1993) and was generally liked by inhabitants of the city proper because of his tendency to put resources towards Detroit's downtown. "Those are the rules and I'm going by the goddam rules. This suicidal outthrust competition among the states has got to stop but until it does, I mean to compete. It's too bad we have a system where dog eats dog and the devil takes the hindmost. But I'm tired of taking the hindmost" (Bentley, 1999, 70). Here, a mayor who was obviously concerned about the social and economic situation of

his shrinking city acknowledged the invisible 'rules' dictating the power of market economy and the dominance of capital.

Logan and Molotch assert capital's dominant role, saying in most planning literature, there is rarely disagreement with a 'growth is good' hypothesis. Their reference to the historical "Growth Machine" calls it a major force in US urban development (Logan and Molotch, 1987). Although the idea of continued growth may be unsustainable, much social or political behaviour does not run counter to it.

Bentley asserts that the inherent conflicts and contradictions found within the capital accumulation cycle, and pressures of continued exponential growth, cause it to be constantly under threats of collapse. It is in the self-interest of those who benefit from this system to reproduce the rules and resources keeping it in tact (Bentley, 1999).

Allmedinger (2002) agrees with Bentley, stating all planning (along with other state mechanisms) is hinged upon an overarching interest in capital, and its growth and continuance is top priority. It is because of this beneficiary self-interest that planning may not have any form of public interest or the 'greater good' in mind. Although it is carried out by human actions, the power of the market seems to take on a life of its own, placing capital gain above more human-centred issues.

The role of planners in this situation is tricky. Planners may be enmeshed with the market's power; maintaining, rather than critiquing current systems, indifferent to questions about the beneficiaries from this power. For example, Booher and Innes (2002) quote David Harvey, who contended planning education has been primarily devoted to promoting values ensuring the field of planning can maintain capitalist structures (Booher and Innes, 2002).

This is not always the case, however. Hillier, for example, proposes a more positive view planning's role. Instead of seeing planners as 'maintenance workers' within capitalist systems, she cites Fischler's hypothesis, and celebrates planning intervention as a method addressing economic vulnerabilities and imbalances despite, and *in the face of* marketplace power (Hillier, 2002). This view calls planners to confront instead of conform to powers contributing to inequity and marginalization.

#### 2.2.2.4 Political Power

A fourth power frequently mentioned in planning literature is *political* power. Although it is strongly connected to market powers through legislation and economic pursuits, it must also be mentioned separately. The most obvious form of political power is centralized governmental power, found in multiple levels of society (city-wide, provincial, federal, etc). Kleniewski (2002) notes shifts in some cities' politics (i.e. moves in decision making from council members to strong mayors) have often laid groundwork for a political machine, perhaps related to the 'growth machine' discussed above. Kleniewsky associates this political machine with corruption (Kleniewski, 2002). This apparent removal of more collective decision-making power, and the resulting centralized actions could perhaps be the reason why voting and other forms of local political participation is, according to Kleniewski, at a low ebb (ibid.). If there is no trust in the decisions made by those involved in political processes, there will be no trust in the ideas of democratic participation in governance processes.

The waning of citizen power and participation in seemingly democratic societies contrasts greatly with what Fairfield calls an 'older conception of democracy.' In this idealized situation, the liberty and well-being of citizens hinges on social equality, where

people are aware of, and mobilized to exercise, their rights and duties as citizens. In this older view, a democratic society would not be one enabling mobility between classes, but instead would be entirely classless (Fairfield, 2003). In this conception, political power is held and exercised by citizens. Pluralist views of the state are similar, purporting political power to be essentially neutral in its governing functions, independent of any class interests (if classes exist). In this view, class lines are constantly crossed as citizens form alliances relating to particular issues about which they feel strongly (Saunders, 1981). The above views of democracy and state roles, however, may be compared to Habermas' 'ideal speech' situation, where this 'ideal democracy' may never be realized, due to political structures and the different powers working against increased citizen participation.

These idealized views clearly do not take into consideration the dynamics of external power, how it is held or withheld, and what forces help shape different power-situations. In the above perceptions, there exist at least two bold assumptions. First, it is assumed citizens will organize and act in and of themselves, and second, it is expected they will be taken seriously by those with ruling power. Maginn contests the validity of this second assumption by reminding readers that government policy-makers tend to view the power exerted by communities as legitimate only if this exertion is a formal part of planning processes. In other words, citizen power would only be successful if 'endowed' to communities by top-down processes as opposed to 'claimed' by grass-roots organizational efforts (Maginn, 2004).

Political power is truly a complicated power agent, because in many cases it is wielded and hoarded in "power over" situations. At the same time, significant lip service

is given to democratic ideals celebrating citizen engagement and participation in political spheres. Because of this, planners' roles in such situations are awkward and difficult to define. They are left with the daunting task of creating situations designed to engage and empower people who are used to being powerless. In addition, they must balance conceptions of state authority (and the state's tendency to 'endow' power in participatory processes) with powers claimed through grass roots efforts. Mediating these conflicting views of democracy and participation is no small task.

#### 2.2.2.5 Power of Place

Both political power and the power of the market are highly conceptual power resources. A final agent mentioned in planning literature, *place*, highlights the powers held by specific spaces, found in architecture, urban design, and numerous other areas such as how a city is organized. The power found in place and spaces calls attention to the importance of placement and structure in planning processes. Although this is perhaps the least mentioned power agent in planning literature, it is an intriguing subject receiving significant indirect references. Therefore, it must be discussed.

Micro levels of the power of place are relatively easy to understand. The special structure of a space (like the doors, windows, and walls of a room) and its relationship to the rest of a building, street, and city carries within it powers to permit and refuse (Bentley, 1999). For example, doors permit and walls refuse entry or exit. Likewise entire buildings or neighbourhoods can be welcoming spaces or centres that, by their construction, suggest access is limited only to those who hold power. A typical City Hall is a perfect example. Although the architecture of many impressive buildings may intend to reflect (or give the impression of) a city's power and success, there may be other

power-implications at work. The amount of entrances, navigational (dis)ease, and the building's placement within a city may all contribute to the powers these spaces exude.

The power of place, however, can and should be expanded beyond architecture to include how cities and regions are built. Williams notes a clear relationship between the way space is planned and used and how easily it can be accessed for services and facilities (Williams, 2005). Where services and facilities are placed within cities addresses the heart of certain power dynamics. If a community centre is built in one neighbourhood instead of another, or if roads are constructed without incorporating infrastructure for non-motor transport, spatial powers are exerted. From here, there arise questions regarding who retains and who loses power. Issues regarding who can access particular spaces, and who is valued in planning processes are also important.

Again, in spatial power situations there is much for planners to consider. How can spaces be planned to minimize the inevitable power differentials, and how can the built form be arranged to be an empowering space? There is no obvious solution, but one must consider the potentials held by other power resources (knowledge and voice, politics) to address emerging imbalances.

Imbalance is clearly an overarching issue when one discusses power in planning. The aforementioned power resources (powers of knowledge and language, market and politics, and the power of place) are all part of unpredictable, intimidating and complex societal networks. It is therefore necessary to be aware of, and able to name, the many different power-potentials (and hindrances to power) existing in planning circles.



### 2.2.3 Power Structures

The above power resources are different entities through which power moves, and are related to definitions of power as a process. Power structures, on the other hand, correspond with definitions positing power as a way to achieve desired ends, or hinder others from achieving certain ends. As was previously mentioned, power structures relate to the way in which power is used by a certain entity, person or group of people, which makes them easier to identify than the above power resources. Here, ways in which powers are sought out, pursued, held, and used for individual or collective gain are encountered.

However, neither power method is in and of itself negative. As Giddens notes, structure is both enabling and constraining, and is as much dependent on people (agents) and people are dependent on it (Cassell, 1993, 122). In addition, Giddens reminds us that even the most disruptive modes of social change involve structures, therefore they can be seen not as barriers to action, but invaluable to its production (Cassell, 1993, 123). Actions involving different power structures have potential to inspire and legislate political and social change (like the Civil Rights movement) and encourage collective action and work towards positive ends. Conversely, they can foster negative situations in which hegemonic advantages are flaunted, people are marginalized and oppressive behaviours are maintained. Although there are inevitably more ways of exercising power, the two discussed here seemed most prevalent in planning literature. These correspond to what are labeled here as *hierarchical* and *heterarchical* powers.

### 2.2.3.1 Hierarchical Power

The first type of method is *hierarchical* power. Although it is not always the case, this method is typically associated with top-down, ‘power-over’ situations. As Kleniewski states, the policies and directions in most cities are often devised and set by a small number of influential people, who are often wealthy and well-connected within professional and political circles (Kleniewski, 2002). This power of the elite is hierarchical power in action, where hegemonic behaviour allows a few specific actors to retain their decision-making and legislation privileges. The existence of top-down power processes, however, may not entirely override the interests of those who are “governed” or “planned for”. Often, what are assumed to be the “best interests” of the people are genuinely considered. What is largely ignored, however, are the possibilities for participation and engagement, which are generally absent in hierarchical power situations.

In addition to this, however, Elliott and McCrone suggest deeper and even more harmful results may emerge from such a dominative structure of power. Efforts to acquire and sustain ‘domination’ involve cultural as well as economic forms of appropriation (Elliott and McCrone, 1981). This could involve extending cultural influence so others must conform to it in order to claim a voice in planning or governing situations. Anglo-European colonial influence has been particularly successful at this. Additionally, economic systems exert a large influence in this hierarchical model. What is surprising is that many of these appropriations take place under firm beliefs that the best interests of the general population are represented.

Traditional rational decision making in planning, in its extreme individuality, is at great risk of repeating mistakes of appropriation for the sake of a 'greater good. Here is encountered a top-down decision making tool where decisions for many are made by just a few people; planners who hold and hoard 'expert' knowledge. The utilitarian idea that the majority of society can benefit from hierarchical power situations is often cited in rational planning literature. One person's rational decision, however, no matter how altruistic in intent, is still removed from the common rational choices of any group that is planned "for" (Alexander, 1992). Under rational decision-making processes, planning is considered completely independent of the "object" (or people) to which it is applied (Galloway and Mahayni, 1977). This is dangerous, as this assumption ignores the complexities of power as it pertains to planning.

Models of comprehensive planning have also utilized hierarchical power structures. Through this process, planners design for what they determine the city's future space and activity needs to be (Galloway and Mahayni, 1977). Here, one small group of people assumes to know the best course of action for the collective whole, and because of their prestigious position, are able to continue with their visions.

Planning literature has become increasingly critical of pure forms of rational decision-making and comprehensive planning. DeSouza Briggs reminds readers of the critiques of comprehensive planning, which question whether rational planning can work "for" the diverse interests of any given community under the guise of objectivity. These critiques have existed for decades (DeSouza Briggs, 1998). Perhaps the most poignant power-oriented critique of these two planning theories, however, is provided by Hillier. In her view, the idea of what constitutes the 'general public' (those who are being

planned *for*), is an oppressive and objectifying idea seeking to homogenize human beings, and therefore reducing diversity (Hillier, 2002). Her critique of hierarchical power situations, which she refers to as “disciplinary power”, suggest top-down power processes (like discipline in schools and prisons) cause individuals to conform to a certain idea of ‘normality.’ This often reduces “gender, ethnic and other characteristics to the phallogentric anglo, middle-class male” (Hillier, 2002). This reduction serves to make people manageable for power purposes. Such ‘manageability’ is related to planning processes, as social structures (often involving disciplinary power, as mentioned above) have trained those who are governed to trust those who hold ‘official’ power. Because of this, many actions or legislations remain unquestioned. In addition, processes that could be improved upon remain mediocre.

Hierarchical power works most often through the power resources of the market, politics and space and, correspondingly, the people and groups who hold power in these particular resources. For example, much of the power held in local governments rests on the capacity of bureaucrats to shape the flow of consumer goods and services (ie decide where essential amenities will be located), and determine who will benefit from city funds (Elliott and McCrone, 1981). In this situation, the need to maintain market power prompts particular legislations regarding where and how goods and services are allocated. Hierarchical power, however, also utilizes powers of knowledge and language, through advocacy, manipulation, and the utilization of technical, social, and intellectual expertise. Again, despite the negative connotations connected with hierarchical power, its positive contributions, like its efficiency and in some cases, its practicality, must be acknowledged.

### 2.2.3.2 Heterarchical and networking powers

As can be seen above, hierarchical power is a very functional and very real force that must be critiqued and worked with in both political and planning realms. It is with the many critiques of this previous model in mind that this second type of power structure is mentioned. As a more horizontal or web-like structure, *Heterarchical and networking* powers stand in the face of traditional top-down political and planning processes, utilizing many different means and actors to achieve desired ends. Here, grass roots and interrelational approaches celebrate collective action and collaborative planning. In their discussion of network power and collaborative planning, Booher and Innes (2002) quote from the Tao Te Ching:

Nothing under Heaven is softer or weaker than water.  
And yet nothing is better  
For attacking what is hard and strong,  
Because of its immutability

The defeat of the hard by the soft,  
The defeat of the strong by the weak –  
This is known to all under heaven  
Yet no one is able to practice it.  
—Lao Tzu (1990)

This idea exemplifies heterarchical powers, as what might seem like a relatively powerless entity in small quantities (water) can become a magnificent force. Similarly, when gathered together, people who feel powerless can become stronger together.

To emphasize this idea, Kraushaar quotes Westergaard and Resler, saying power is to be found more in uneventful routine than in conscious and active exercises of will (Kraushaar, 1981). During these “uneventful routines”, many grass roots planning efforts are launched by normal people (DeSouza Briggs, 1998). The relationships emerging from

commonplace interactions form the basis of heterarchical power structures.

In heterarchical processes, no single person holds power; it must instead be shared between many actors who, through networking and communication, work together to achieve their goals. Foucault's view of power reflects this, where power circulates not from the 'centre' or 'periphery' of society, but through individuals in a more horizontal or web-like manner (Allen, 1996). This process links people together, and power is discovered and utilized.

Two major planning theories centred on the web-relational type of power are collaborative planning and ideas of network power. These focus on the power found within relational processes, and will be discussed in more detail in the latter half of this chapter. In addition, power is garnered as communities change their views of planning processes. Instead of fixating on 'needs' or 'deficiencies' and planning from a position of power, different community assets can be built upon (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). In this way, planning is viewed in terms of community potentials rather than problems warranting a singular type of 'solution.'

First is encountered the idea of collaborative planning. Here, lateral communication plays a major part in planning processes. Allmedinger outlines three major thinkers who have contributed to the development of this theory, which include not only Habermas and Foucault, but also Giddens. In Allmedinger's opinion, Habermas questions traditional forms of rationality and celebrates other ways of knowing and thinking. Foucault's writings, as was discussed previously, cause readers to think about the role of power relations in society. Finally, Giddens examines the web of interrelations existing in society, and the ways in which we relate within these webs (Allmedinger,

2002). Through these interrelations, webs of relationships are built, forming the basis for more participatory planning methods.

A similar theory framing heterarchical power types is the idea of network planning, which emerges from collaboration within and between individuals, agencies, and businesses. This type of power stems from the shared meanings developed as people organize around common tasks. (Booher and Innes, 2002). In their opinion, the power growing from these shared meanings fosters interdependence, and is therefore not the result of unequal relationships between different people. Instead, power from relational networks is shared jointly between all parties, enabling them to accomplish otherwise impossible things. This ability to improve choices available to all participants in the network is perhaps the most important aspect of this power (Ibid.). Network planning can emerge from any number of circumstances; as was mentioned before, the everyday experiences of people – common communicative patterns and circumstances – determine whether or not people will organize and take collective action (Kraushaar, 1981).

One of the major critiques surrounding network theory (and, it can be assumed, collaborative theories) is their analysis of “real world” interaction dynamics. Although theories involving relational webs are extremely valuable to planning processes, these webs do not exist independent of other power structures and resources. They are, rather, implanted within larger institutional structures and systems (Moulaert and Cabaret, 2006). Participants and planners alike operate within a system in which hierarchical powers still control much of the powers emerging from heterarchical initiatives.

In addition, the power of communication pivotal to relational power types must also be subjected to ‘real world’ critiques. This pertains to Habermas’ ‘ideal speech’

situation, where truth, sincerity, legitimacy and comprehensibility are celebrated (Allmedinger, 2002). Habermas himself admitted that this situation does not exist in liberal democratic societies, and it might never be able to exist (Ibid). If community members rely on the power of language to build network webs, it must be done with enough wisdom to account for misunderstandings and poor communication, which will undoubtedly hinder organizational abilities.

Both collaborative processes, as well as the processes associated with network theories rely heavily on the power resources of knowledge and language. Types of knowledge used, however, do not necessarily stem from expertise in particular areas, but rather through collective discovery of voice. Marcos' echo is reminiscent of a connected and relational web acknowledging the existence of other voices and does not overpower or attempt to silence it. In this web, all voices speak and all voices can be heard. (Hillier, 2002).

Despite their many critiques and shortcomings, both heterarchical powers and hierarchical powers have particular societal functions enabling, enhancing, or conversely crippling planning and/or legislative efforts. Maginn brings this to light, mentioning that the government (and its hierarchical power) has begun to see the importance of heterarchical powers, and has advocated for local communities to become more involved within urban regeneration policies (Maginn, 2004). Even though this points to the dangers of top-down 'legitimizing' of what already may be legitimate relational power-claiming processes, this governmental concern suggests the influence of heterarchical power structures is growing.



#### 2.2.4 Planning power, planning action

Although different planning implications of the above power resources and structures have been mentioned, it is necessary to examine a few issues not covered in the above analysis. This final section, then, pertains to questions of planners' roles in different power situations. Because power issues are (or should be) in the forefront of planners' minds, one particular question is proposed to aid professional and citizen planners involved in planning processes. This threefold question asks how citizen and professional planners can *find*, *facilitate*, and *expand* power to its (and their) best potentials. No answers will be given, but discourse on this issue will nevertheless be examined.

First is encountered the problem of how power can be found. Jewson and MacGregor (1997) highlight growing concerns about social exclusion, which in their eyes is a new name for the old problem of poverty. Economic gaps between rich and poor continue to grow, further marginalizing those who do not benefit from market powers. At the same time, detachment from social and political participation, as well as from the labour market, is on the rise. Many different communities are removed from each other economically, racially, socially, and spatially (Jewson and MacGregor, 1997). In these situations, one encounters what Amartya Sen labels "unfreedoms." This term refers to any indicator preventing freedoms of choice, such as the neighbourhood one lives in, the streets one walks on, or the necessities one must have in order to survive. (Samuels, 2005). Yiftachel et al. see these increasing disparities emerging partly as a result of planning and planners who have in some way legitimized these actions. This is what they refer to as the 'dark side' of planning (Yiftachel et al., 2001). This dark side hides the particular negative effects of market, political and spatial powers.

At the same time, Maginn asserts community power is often stronger than believed (Maginn, 2004), and Hillier agrees, claiming citizens are becoming increasingly active in expressing their dissent. Their actions are not as passive political or economic consumers, but as involved citizens who are willing to challenge the systems and institutions wielding hierarchical power in their lives (Hillier, 2002). Jewson and MacGregor's views of declining political participation, and Hillier's optimism regarding increasing citizen involvement can, perhaps, be explained by exploring how citizens define and express involvement today. Pockets of power may be emerging despite, and in the midst (or 'face') of, a general increase of social and economic 'unfreedoms'.

Although one acknowledges the coexistence of heaviness and hope in those who may traditionally be deemed as powerless, the question of how power is found remains elusive. The acquisition of knowledge (ie. widening one's understanding of the scope of peoples' knowledge), as well as collaboration and communication, is paramount in this process. Douglass says this very succinctly: "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will" (In Minieri and Getsos, 2007). To name and demand what is needed is truly a power-finding process.

How this 'naming and demanding' is facilitated, however, is also extremely important. Power roles in planning processes are necessarily complex, where both planners and people being planned for (or with) have potential to feel powerless. Moulaert and Caberet (2006) talk about Forester's approach to power positions in planning, where he notes the responsibility planners have to counter misinformation, and level imbalances to promote democratic methods of communication and decision making. This is related to Hillier's comment where in every situation, planners must adjust

planning ‘toolkits’ (or mindsets) to the fluid needs and challenges of society. (Hillier, 2002). Responsibility is also placed on the planner to ‘empower’ the communities or representatives with whom s/he is working.

The facilitation of power balancing, then, involves ideas of empowerment. Although this word has not been mentioned much in the previous discussion, its influence is implicit in many of the aforementioned examples. When speaking of empowerment, however, it is necessary to make distinctions between the different types that range from individual to community empowerments (Rocha, 1997). The ideal planning situation involves empowerment of participants, where voices are found, heard and genuinely listened to. This is referred to by Rocha as “Embedded Individual Empowerment”. In many cases, it also involves political community empowerment, where networks are formed and institutional change becomes possible (ibid.).

When one looks at ideas of power-balancing, visions of a value-neutral or objective planner must be discarded, as every planner carries her or his own biases, based on different events and experiences. These biases obstruct and affect any claims to objectivity (Friedmann in Allmedinger 2002), and they should be named rather than ignored. DeSouza Briggs agrees, emphasizing Innes’ idea of the role of the planner not as one who claims to be an objective expert, exerting or carrying power. Rather, the planner’s role seeks more to sense and balance power (DeSouza Briggs, 1998).

Even if a planner is proficient in sensing and balancing power situations through facilitation, mediation, or other forms of communication and negotiation, powers held by the ‘official’ planner must not be overlooked. S/he remains a trained ‘expert’ who carries responsibilities to balance power-full and power-less situations. At the same time,

different authors observe it is often difficult to get political leaders to act on the information shared by planners. Likewise, they may be asked to work on projects they do not support, which causes a conflict between personal integrity and career endeavours. (Booher and Innes, 2003). Planning is undeniably a long, frustrating, and most often tense process of communication and dialogue, where power waxes and wanes depending on the many networks and hierarchies contributing to the process.

A third part of the above question addresses how power in planning can be expanded to include more powerholders. This is also a mystery, which must be re-discovered in each planning situation. One solution may lie in personal interpretations of how power can be utilized. Here, power need not be thought of as a limited resource. Heterarchical ways of expressing power exemplify this idea, as power is shared between stakeholders; its growth, then, feeds and is fed by the corresponding expansion of personal networks. With this method, no one wields power, but all hold it. If a group or community perceives and treats power as an unlimited resource, it will expand amongst all members.

In addition to perception-changes, when discussing how power can be expanded, it is also helpful to turn to Friedmann's idea of action. Not unlike Friere, who calls us to speak a true word and therefore transform the world (Friere, 2001), so Friedmann challenges us to act, and therefore set something new into the world (Friedmann, 2002). A call to "newness" is never unwelcome, and any movement geared towards positive power-expansion is a welcome act.

### 2.2.5 Part I summary

Recently, the issue of power has moved more to the forefront in planning thought, largely because planners' roles are shifting; they need increasingly to sense and facilitate rather than dictate planning processes. This is accompanied by the growth of collaborative planning and consensus building methods and theories (Booher and Innes, 2003). The above pages have attempted to synthesize a lot of contributions from the growing discourse surrounding planning and power dynamics. This is a broad and far-reaching topic requiring more research and insight.

What have been named *power structures* and *power resources* reflect, to certain extents, Maginn's observation about the confusion amongst planners regarding whether power is the ability to achieve (or at least influence) outcomes, or whether it is more process oriented, residing within societal structures (Maginn, 2004). It seems that it is both, which calls for continued power analysis and critique.

Power resources are elusive concepts, through which people exert their powers. Within this category are found the powers of knowledge and language, two interrelated concepts. Here, communities come to the realization of the scope of their knowledge (conventional or unconventional) through discourse and language. This knowledge is named through language and communication, which, in turn, provides new ways for communities to know the world and, in turn, re-name their new situation. Also in this category are powers of the market, politics, and place. These three resources tend to be less accessible to local communities. Market, political, and even spatial powers often influence each other in attempts to ensure continued growth of the market, which is a power highly cautioned against in much planning literature. More often than not, this

focus on capital incurs detrimental effects on traditionally more powerless segments of the population.

Power structures are easier to pinpoint, as they involve how people or organizations influence outcomes of decision-making processes. Here exist hierarchical powers, which are top-down structures generally associated with political, market and often spatial powers. A second method of power, however – heterarchical – sees power as more of an unlimited resource to be shared within and amongst the webs of networks built through communication and strengthened by citizen participation. It also celebrates the knowledge-contributions of a wide scope of participants in planning processes.

Concerns with spatial arrangements, inequalities and power differentials on local levels should be sensed, named, and addressed, but it is also necessary to widen one's scope to include social, economic and political structures and power struggles in wider society as well (Elliott and McCrone, 1981). Foucaultian claims that power is at work in all levels of society are, then, well warranted. This idea, accompanied by Friedmann's assertion about our 'ambivalence about power' may very well be one of the biggest problems in theorizing and understanding planning today (Flyvbjerg, 2002) continues to call both citizen and professional planners towards deeper power analysis in all planning contexts.

When both citizen and professional planners can name the power dynamics at work, it is important to name both external and internal powers. Planners may face certain power resources and structures, but they also have access to many of these same resources and structures, albeit in different ways. The second part of this literature review

highlights aspects of one power structure, heterarchical or networking power. This power method is connected to literature on collaborative planning and strategic networking.

## **2.3 Part II: Heterarchical and Networking Powers**

### **2.3.1 Background**

In the wake of environmental crises and social change, the world is adapting to new forms of communication, new ways of acting, and new ways of thinking. Planning fields are no different. As professional and citizen planners adapt to changing world circumstances, a new praxis (or new praxes) will emerge. This section focuses on how collaborative planning, social networking, and strategic networking form a new praxis, or a new way of connecting theory and practice. This theory-practice connection reflects a way in which power can be reclaimed and rebalanced by community groups and individuals.

Planners have theorized about how power imbalances can be manifested in different forms of planning practice. These forms include (but are not limited to) collaborative, communicative, radical, insurgent, and equity planning. Of these, collaborative planning is often considered to be most applicable for social networking purposes (in Agger and Löfgren, 2008, 145).

Current world circumstances deepen the need for collaboration. Robins and Kranendonk stress that different actors working in partnership are at the heart of sustainable development rhetoric (in Pfeiffer, 2002, 3). In addition, collaboration to address environmental and socio-economic crises has become part of global movement towards earth care and social welfare. As this collaboration is named, a new form of network is emerging. This type of network is rooted in collaborative processes, but has

adopted a specific focus on sustainability issues. These types of networks are important because with collaborative planning as a starting point, different groups can tailor processes unique to their social interests, conflicts, and geographical locations.

The following pages include three distinct but connected sections related to collaborative planning, social networking, and strategic networking. Because collaborative planning is applicable for social networking purposes, and because it can be considered a “starting point” for further analysis and research, this will form the first section.

While they are important, and can be empowering, standard collaborative planning exercises organized by professional planners may not fully reflect a community or group’s needs. If they wish to make their voices heard and have their needs more fully addressed, some groups may become organized without ‘professional’ help or interference. The second section, then, relates to social networking and the role it plays in collaborative processes. Ideas discussed in the third section connect to this, and involve how groups and individuals use strategic and communicative networking tools for specific purposes.

These three sections are considered under the umbrella of postmodern planning, where both autonomy and interdependence are valued by planners and actors. These may sometimes appear to contradict each other; for example, autonomous struggles for power may conflict with growing interdependencies and alliances (both meaningful and strategic) amongst groups. At second glance, however, the apparent rift between individuality and community may not be as wide as it appears. With this in mind, the following pages explore how Foucault’s notion of an “autonomous plurality” of



resistance can connect with and enhance communicative and interdependent ways of enacting change. These connections are significant, as they represent the places where group interdependence coexists with individual and group autonomy.

### 2.3.2 **Autonomy and interdependence**

Healey (1997) states conflicts are “infused with the power relations” of larger structural forces, which include the promotion of specific social norms and dominant economic orders. (p. 199). These power relations should be addressed in planning theory and practice. Balancing structural or social dynamics, however, is a difficult process.

Allmedinger (2001) states power relations are fragile and uncertain, and to enable change, Foucault called for a plurality of autonomous struggles occurring at grassroots, or microlevels, of society (Best and Kellner in Allmedinger, 2001, 39). This “autonomous plurality” reflects postmodern and fragmented concepts of resistance, and suggests the only way to work against power imbalances is to struggle in a decentred and plural manner (Ibid.).

This idea has been challenged in literature exploring interdependence and interconnection. This literature, like the writings put out by Douglass and Friedmann, celebrates communicative strategies bringing together expert and experiential or personal knowledge (Douglass and Friendmann, 1998, 174). In a quest to find common ground or the perfect form of communication, communicative strategies may, however, fail to appreciate the decentralized and plural nature of power relations (Allmedinger, 2001, 39). Ignoring or seeking to quickly ‘smooth over’ power imbalances could actually perpetuate powerlessness amongst those who do not use standard communicative tools such as academic or political literacy and training.

Is there a way, then, to appreciate the plural and imbalanced nature of power relations while recognizing the interdependence of groups and individuals? And is there a way for different groups to collectively promote change without losing autonomy?

Healey (1997) writes about older ideas of consensus that, to the critic, promote homogeneity. These ideas contrast with current collaborative and power-sharing approaches, which reflect deep understandings of *dissensus*. The *dissensus* approach acknowledges current and past power relations, and allows people to carry differing views while still working towards similar goals (Healey, 1997, 263). Dissensus is defined by Merriam-Webster as merely a “difference of opinion” (Merriam-webster.com) but was explained by Aubert (1963) as being an interest-based and not a value-based disagreement.

The advantage of interest-based disagreements is its allowance for parties to disagree “amicably” and continue to work together because, although their reasons for acting may be different, the underlying values of all actors remain uncompromised (Aubert, 1963, 29). This interest-based understanding of dissensus acknowledges independent power struggles while celebrating communication and interdependence. Working towards change with a dissensus model of communication begins with a heightened understanding of collaborative planning.

### **2.3.3 Collaborative planning**

As was mentioned above, collaborative planning (sometimes called communicative planning) methods are considered by Agger and Löfgren (2008) to be most applicable for social networking purposes, but this type of thinking is just a starting point (Agger and

Löfgren, 2008, 145). This starting point sets a positive theoretical framework for action, but leaves room to incorporate other planning forms, methods and theories.

Collaboration was defined by Gray as “a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their difference and search for solutions extending beyond their own limited vision of what is possible” (In Gray and Wood, 1991, 4). The group synergies involved this definition suggest collective solutions become larger than the sum of each individual’s capability; the creative and practical potential of the whole is wider and deeper than each individual group’s plans. In addition to being synergetic, collaboration can be a very practical and strategic activity. Nathan and Mitroff see it as a result of increased awareness on the part of different actors. This awareness allows for for collective understandings and collective response (In Gray and Wood, 1991, 6).

According to Alexander, collaborative planning undergirded planning theory during the 1990s (Allmedinger, 2001, 123). These theories are still popular today. It has not grown in popularity because of any singular charac, but because of a series of societal shifts and world events. These shifts, according to Allmedinger, have made this type of planning a theoretical (but not necessarily practical) *zeitgeist* of the 1990’s. These shifts include:

- a) social shifts from modernist, individualistic attitudes (perpetuated by Reaganism and Thatcherism), towards more inclusive and “pluralist” attitudes;
- b) the importance of Agenda 21, which was revealed in 1992 at the UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, and this document’s emphasis on grassroots and locally-led

processes. Agenda 21 devotes an entire section to the strengthening the roles of major groups such as women, children and youth, indigenous persons, and farmers (un.org);

c) the vacuum created in response to post-comprehensive-rational planning theories, and the ensuing need to fill this vacuum;

d) identity crises created for planners during the deregulatory approaches of the 1980s, and the need to justify the continuance of this profession (Allmedinger, 2001, 123).

Whether the above reasons reflect social shifts and significant world changes, or whether they are merely a lifeline for a changing profession (as per reason “d”), collaborative planning theories have grown in popularity significantly over the past two decades.

Agger and Löfgren note one of the main claims of collaborative planning is the facilitation of movement beyond the modernist paradigm, particularly where outcomes and evaluation is concerned. Whereas past decades have focused on economic achievements, there may now be movement towards “softer outcomes,” which include the degree of reciprocity and consensus amongst actors, the creation of relational trust and social, intellectual and political capital, and the existence of participant empowerment (Agger and Löfgren. 2008, 147).

These ‘softer outcomes’ reflect Healey’s work on collaborative planning, which acknowledges the many different cultural communities present in most of North America’s cities. This diversity creates potential for conflict, and these conflicts happen between local groups who have both equal and unequal status. Each group and individual is unique, and so are every person’s needs and desired outcomes. Because of this, unique

responses by both citizen and professional planners may be necessary to help balance power and create a more equitable outcome.

Because each situation is distinct, it is tempting to rely completely on “theorizing-in-practice” (Healey, 1997, 93), where people interpret the world strictly according to individual circumstances. Healey (1997) sees this as a potentially dangerous activity, stating this may help keep certain “deep structures of power” (p. 193) unnoticed. For example, an individual may be “acting up” in a community meeting by complaining or dominating the conversation. If this behaviour is addressed only “in-practice” (ibid.), the individual may be admonished and the meeting may continue to run smoothly. But if the deeper social or structural forces encouraging or perpetuating this behaviour are not considered, the participant will continue to feel powerless and unheard. For Healey, collaborative planning must be interactive, interpretive, and respectful, and must happen among diverse communities. During these processes, groups continually evaluate and re-evaluate their decisions and opinions, and together develop new discourse, values, and understandings. Throughout this, participants are encouraged to develop practical outcomes (In Allmedinger, 2001, 124).

Agger and Löfgren (2008) write about collaborative processes and their connections with many democratic principles. These are gleaned from the work of Healey, Hillier, and Innes, and recommend:

- a) all affected groups should be included in the process;
- b) within each group, individuals can express their own opinions
- c) mutual respect is cultivated;
- d) all actors are given the information they need;

e) participants can respond to each others' opinions, and;

f) participants have the power to influence decisions and outcomes. (In Agger and Löfgren. 2008, 147). In the above ways, collaborative planning can contribute positively to community governance.

Just as it is important to understand how collaborative planning can have an affect on community governance, so is it important to explore what circumstances best facilitate a collaborative process or project. According to Logsdon (1991), two main motivating factors for collaboration exist. First, groups must have high stakes in the issue (Logsdon, 1991, 25). This is echoed by Pfeiffer, who states involvement in collaborative processes should include those who connect most strongly to core issues (Pfeiffer, 2003, 172). The second motivation is the degree of perceived interdependence with other groups. These groups may reflect Foucault's notion of an "autonomous plurality," as core goals and values for one party may not be the same as another group's agenda (Logsdon, 1991, 15). Groups may, however, have different areas of influence, and there may be advantages to working together, and therefore a higher degree of interdependence.

Collaborative planning has been celebrated as a starting point for participatory practice. Through collaborative theory and practice, planners and participants can better adapt to planning environments ambivalent, or perhaps even hostile, to community needs. In this way, groups representing diverse opinions may have the ability, even in an unsupportive environment, to come together and create an environment receptive to their ideas. Because of this, an exploration of the role of social networking within and between groups is necessary.

#### 2.3.4 Social networking and the community

One of the main tools used to strengthen both intra and interorganizational collaboration is social networking. According to Gray and Wood, organizations operate within “increasingly complex networks of relationships” (Gray and Wood, 1991, 6), which necessitate increased communication within and between organizations.

Some authors connect with the communicative strategies of Habermas, rather than Foucault’s visions of autonomous struggles. Selsky (1991) boldly states that a community approach to development simply refuses to define organizations as autonomous and self-sufficient. Here, a “community” approach is considered here to be geographically and/or ideologically dependent; stemming from locality or from shared values or goals (Marsden in Selsky, 1991, 93). With community approaches to issues, associations “overlie and interpenetrate one another” and become an integrated network of meaningful relationships (Astley and Fombrun in Selsky, 1991, 93). It is, however, a fluid and intricate network, with no distinct beginning or end, and is therefore difficult to study or address.

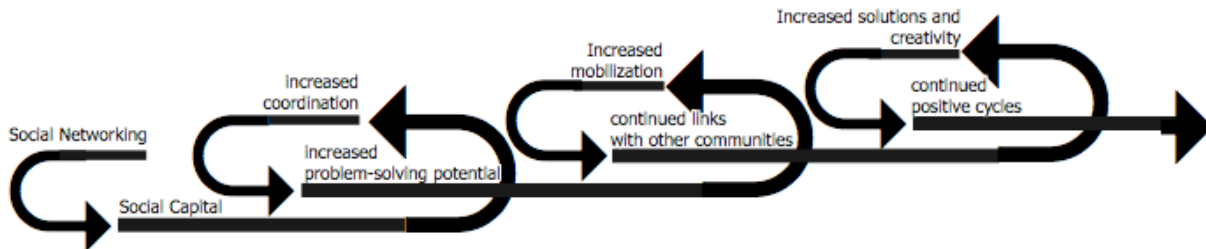
The importance of social networking is outlined in Baerenholdt and Aarsaether’s work, as they link networking to the production of social capital and social assets. These authors note both macro and micro or local-level networks are able to produce social capital (Baerenholdt and Aarsaether, 2002, 151).

Social capital is defined by Putnam as “features of social organization, such as networks, norms and social trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1995, 121). As this is cultivated within a community, networking inevitably increases the potential for coordination and problem-solving. (Baerenholdt and

Aarsaether, 2002, 154). The social trust built between actors and organizations helps people know each other, and know each others' strengths and abilities. Larger community projects may be possible because other people and organizations have the tools and abilities to work cooperatively.

Coordination and problem-solving help mobilize communities, enabling solutions to specific issues. Laumann, Galaskiewicz and Marsden stress many communities, organized around specific interests or locations, consist of non-hierarchical, network-based linkages (In Selsky, 1991, 93). Figure 1 below is based on Selsky's work, and illustrates the 'positive cycle' emerging through social networking and the continued development of social capital.

**Figure 1.** Positive Cycles of Social Networking



(Adapted by Karin J. Kliewer from:  
Baerenholdt, J. and N. Aarsaether. 2002. Coping strategies, social capital and space. In *European Urban and Regional Studies* 9(2): 151-165, page 154 and  
Selsky, J.W. 1991. Lessons in community development: An activist approach to stimulating interorganizational collaboration. In *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 27(March):91 Page 93)

Not all organizations and individuals, however, may be predisposed towards cooperation and coordination. Competition for limited resources (real or perceived) is still a barrier limiting the development of networking power. Some groups, however,



seem to naturally connect with cooperative styles of work. Steve Waddell of the United States Agency for International Development noted Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) often have a deep understanding about the communities in which they work, because these organizations focus on community values, structures and relationships (in Pfeiffer, 2003, 173). Although this may not be true for every organization, Waddell's observation suggests that the more connected the organization is to any particular community, the more likely it is to be able to work collaboratively.

Social cooperation is, of course, accompanied by cautionary critiques. James Holston writes about a "culture of exclusion" coinciding with rhetoric of universal citizenship and equality (In Liggett, 2009, 102). Often, group decisions are still made according to a "majority rule" format. This may happen because of time or personnel constraints, and although it may feel like the only option, it is important to remain aware of potential consequences of this decision-making method. If more time is available, consensus decision-making methods may be used, but these still must be considered with caution. In these cases, people who will be impacted by these decisions may be excluded, while others may feel uncomfortable voicing their opinions. As Miraftab notes, identity is most often produced in terms of the colonizer (in Liggett, 2009, 103). This means even if they are technically "included," some groups or individuals who do not identify with the dominant discourse may feel like outsiders.

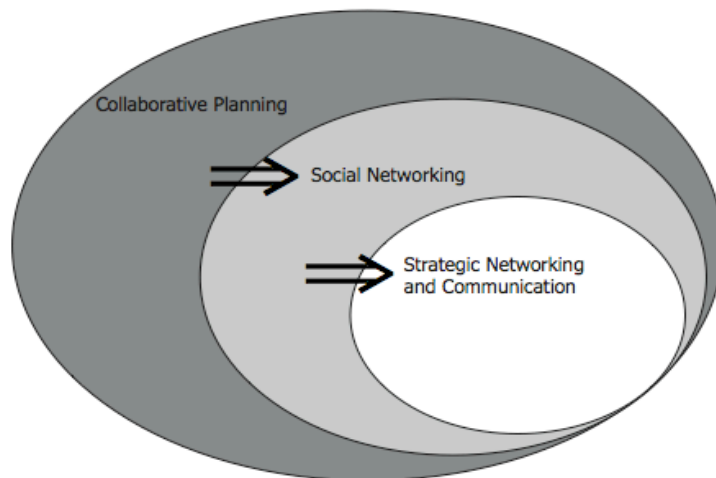
Healey addresses issues of power imbalances in planning, and suggests through communication, opening environments to those who have typically not had a fair share of power (such as women or differently-abled persons), and recognizing the power relations found in everyday life, power bases may slowly be shifted (Healey, 1997, 117-119). The

challenge, however, is overturning forms discrimination while not producing others (Healey, 1997, 118). Although the trust-building process is ongoing and never entirely stable, there is hope; social networking can play an important role in the creation of strategic networks helping to balance power.

### 2.3.5 Strategic networking and communication

Writings on social networks seem to stem from, or be “nested,” within collaborative theories. As figure 2 (below) indicates, a third concept, strategic networking and communication, emerges naturally from social networks.

**Figure 2.** Actions Emerging from Collaborative Planning



Adapted by Karin J. Kliewer, from Mary Dugan’s “Nested Paradigm” in Sullivan, D. and L. Tiff. Eds. 2006. *Handbook of restorative justice: a global perspective* New York, NY: Routledge. p.531.

As was mentioned earlier, this type of network emerges in the wake of environmental concerns and social change, and is centred on sustainability issues.

Pfeiffer has defined these networks as “voluntary, mid- to long-term oriented

cooperations with a polycentric organizational structure in which different actor groups combine their expertise and specific organizational resources try to jointly solve societal problems that are related to a sustainable development” (Pfeiffer, 2003, 85).

Such networks are not new, and are partially manifested in Gray and Wood’s ideas of “collaborative alliances,” Long and Arnold’s “environmental partnerships,” and Hartman and Stafford’s “green alliances” (in Pfeiffer, 2002, 3). These terms all reflect a growing body of literature focusing on cooperation and partnership-building for mutually (and environmentally) beneficial purposes.

Pfeiffer’s 2003 article title, “When soloists form a choir” uses creative imagery to emphasize the strength and synergies emerging from cooperative efforts. An equally applicable metaphor, however, can also be drawn from this title, one considering the difficulties involved with encouraging actors, used to ‘shining’ alone, to work together and think about what is best for the entire group.

One of the key features of sustainability networks is their polycentric or non-hierarchical (and sometimes heterarchical) leadership structure. Although this does not exclude the possibility of a coordinator or communicator (Sydow in Pfeiffer, 2002, 5), there remains much horizontal movement between connected parties.

This horizontal movement necessitates another key feature, perhaps the most important feature of these networks; communication. Networks have complex structures and dynamics, and to draw maximum benefits from collaborative efforts, ways must be found to communicate “effectively, efficiently, and frequently” (Austin in Pfeiffer, 2003, 185). Communication happens externally, to communicate messages to the public or to policy makers. It also happens internally. This internal communication is vital as it helps

build trust and common ground, and helps group members understand each others' values and interests (Pfeiffer, 2003, 185).

The emergence of sustainability networks, and the accompanying literature putting theory into practice may satisfy Foucault's notion of an "autonomous plurality" as well as Habermas' communicative preferences. Pfeiffer (2002) seeks to combine these by approaching communication from the point of view of a "pluralistic, composite actor" (p.10). This perspective takes into account all other actors, and their different goals, which may or may not be in conflict with each other. To balance this autonomy and synergy, she suggests there be "as much integration as possible, [and] as much differentiation as necessary" (Pfeiffer, 2002, 11).

Van Assche (2008) echoes this idea, recognizing society's "functional differentiation" (p. 264) and the resulting uncertainty and complexity associated with planning in such a society. Van Assche, however, also stresses the importance of communication within and between social systems. He adopts Luhmann's view, where social systems are seen as based on communication and not necessarily on actions or actors (VanAssche, 2008, 167).

Whether or not strategic networks reflect an "autonomous plurality" or an integrated and communicative matrix, these networks are ever-changing, evolving to best respond to the groups' needs, and to communicate messages in the most effective way. Sydow (in Pfeiffer, 2003, 183) maintains this process of evolution is vital to network development.

Of course, communication and networking cannot be mentioned without acknowledging the role of social networking tools such as mobile communications, social

media, and online social networking sites. These technologies are linking people, institutions and ideas together in new ways, and are expanding the function of web-based communications (IISD, 2009, 2). Resources such as google groups, facebook flickr, twitter, and popular blogs can spread verbal and visual information to wide networks of people in a very short period of time. These social networking sites enable participants to organize events, provide almost-instant updates, distribute petitions, and locate other people who share similar interests.

The ability of social networking tools to assist individuals and groups to create social change remains to be seen. A report by the International Institute for Sustainable Development states this efficacy depends largely on one's definition of how change is enacted. Advocates of rational democratic governance assert change occurs through planning and government policy-making. By this definition, online social networking would not affect political change (IISD, 2009, 26). Other advocates, however, say change is affected on a variety of societal levels and in a variety of social settings. Social networking, then, helps individuals to influence each others' thought processes and beliefs, and encourages others to take action, thus establishing a foundation for policy change (IISD, 2009, 30).

### **2.3.6 Democratic and planning implications**

Social networking processes incite both celebrative and cautionary insights from current literature. In 1998, Douglass and Friedmann predicted struggles for collective empowerment would continue to fuel political life for the coming millennium (p.2.). These ideas are also reflected in more recent writings. For example, Sandercock (2003) lists six fragments of radical postmodern planning practice, which include emphases on

practical wisdom, people-centred planning, other ways of knowing, community empowerment, multiple publics, and more participatory politics (p. 34).

These “fragments” connect to social networking in a few ways. First, broadened epistemologies (ways of knowing) can be manifested in social networking processes through mutual learning and group interaction. Knowledge is manifested in different ways such as storytelling, logical analysis, and visual symbols (Healey, 1997, 29). Second, the literature body on people-centred planning and planning for multiple publics is growing, and as these methods are utilized, collaboration within and between groups will become more necessary. Finally, growth in political participation requires tools enabling citizens to connect with each other, organize, and get their voices heard by decision makers.

As different types of networking power emerge and gain legitimacy in planning circles, and as social shifts continue to challenge individualistic postmodern philosophies, the role of the planner inevitably changes. The legitimacy of the planner as one who ‘leads’ or ‘decides’ continues to be challenged by those whose knowledge stem from experience or perception. Planners’ roles now require the ability to respond to and incorporate these ways of knowing (Chettiparamb, 2007, 266).

A cautionary critique, however, is found in writings on insurgent planning. Miraftab (2009) suggests inclusive citizenship is a current mantra of neoliberal governance, and can be used as a manipulative political tool. It is, then, the role of insurgent planning to critique the illusion of inclusion and consensus found around the world. To help with this critique, Miraftab suggests planners should not confine their practices only to “sanctioned spaces of participation,” which include NGOs, community

groups, or other formal structures. In this way, innovative oppositional practices emerging from grass roots society will be acknowledged and heard (Miraftab, 2009, 41).

As Miraftab suggests, power can be claimed by both sanctioned and non-sanctioned spaces of participation (ibid.). The lines between these spaces, however, may be blurred. For example, voices emerging from grass roots societies may speak out for years before they are acknowledged as legitimate. In addition, “sanctioned” voices may collaborate with “unsanctioned” ones to gather a wider network of support.

Douglass and Friedmann note an acceptance of both types of voices (within reason) reflects epistemological shifts away from the monopoly on expertise traditionally held by professionals. Instead, there is a growing awareness and legitimization of knowledge stemming from local actors (Douglass and Friedmann, 1998, 175). The ‘conflict of knowledges’ mentioned here calls for a solution. This solution involves a process of mutual learning and the building of relationships through dialogue, reciprocity and mutual respect (Douglass and Friedmann, 1998, 174). To emphasize this, Forester imagines:

*a deliberative democratic politics that recognizes and respects plurality and difference while being no less committed to learning and acting together, a politics that helps us to clarify critically the truth of our possibilities for human betterment, helping us to listen, learn and act – even as we know full well that some people along the way will be lying through their teeth (whether out of fear or out of greed) (In Allmedinger, 2001, 8).*

Engaging in true dialogue, however, may be difficult, depending on existing distributions of power, opportunity and resources. During this process, radical practices may emerge that critique inequalities in very visible ways and work towards structural change and self-empowerment (Douglass and Friedmann, 1998. 176). Allmedinger seems to agree,

stating participative approaches must help challenge and expose existing concentrations of power while encouraging plurality, difference and dissensus. As communities gain or claim independence and trust, power will be exposed, and dissensus will flourish.

### 2.3.7 **Part II summary**

This section has discussed ideas of collaborative planning, social networking and strategic networking for sustainability. Each section emerges from, or is “nested” within the previous one; theory and practice surrounding collaborative planning naturally connects with social networking concepts. These concepts, in turn, can be narrowed down to focus on inter and intra-group communication strategies geared towards one specific purpose.

Critiques centred on power influences and imbalances enable analyses by professional and citizen planners that value both interdependence and autonomy. These critiques also create awareness of the structures and influences that can disable collaboration and positive change.

Current methods of social networking and communication encounter the tension between struggles between autonomy and interdependence. Planners, community groups, and people working for change must heed and respond to this tension. Although it is a challenge, creating space for autonomous actors to collaborate, network, and claim a voice and a right to power can be addressed in creative, communicative and even radical ways.



## **2.4 Literature Review Summary**

The previous pages have outlined two different aspects that connect to this project's research. The first part considers how the concept of power figures into planning literature, and the importance of knowing where power lies, through which resources it moves, and which structures are used to exercise it. The second section of this review focuses on one power structure, heterarchical and networking power, and connects this structure to collaborative planning and strategic networking in citizen groups.

The following case study and analysis in the following chapters of this thesis focus on how one group, representing a traffic demographic whose voice has typically been marginalized, has used multiple resources and methods to claim a voice in decision-making realms. They have done this through practicing the networking, collaboration and communication theories outlined in the previous pages.

## **3 Chapter Three: Research Methods**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Research for this project involved a case study of the work of Bike to the Future. This organization's history is briefly outlined in Section 1.7.1. Although Bike to the Future is an autonomous organization, it does not work alone. Therefore, the work of other active transportation organizations is also celebrated in this case study.

Four different research methods were employed during different stages of research. These include print and literature searches, a case study, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation.

### **3.2 Research Methods**

#### **3.2.1 Literature and archival searches**

##### **3.2.1.1 Targeted literature search**

The research strategies identified for gathering this information involved significant literature searches in a number of different fields. As this is a multidisciplinary thesis, information for the literature review have been drawn from a number of different sources. Publications found in the City Planning library provided a necessary “planners’ perspective” to research. Works and models emerging from the field of Conflict Resolution Studies have provided insights into social mechanisms and multiple definitions of power. Writings about power and social networking were also taken from works in Political Studies, Business and Marketing, and Sociology.

As the project evolved, two specific foci were identified. The first focus involved a literature search on power in planning. As different authors’ definitions of power

emerged, a framework was formed to help categorize these ideas. From this framework, one specific power method was seen to be particularly applicable to this research. This spurred a second and more particular search on what was called “heterarchical” power structures. These structures can be found in collaborative planning and social networking strategies, which were the second focus of the literature search.

### 3.2.1.2 Archival research

According to Yin, within the case study context, archival research can be a very relevant research tool. Records are usually precise and accurate, and can provide a lot of background information that may not otherwise be remembered. The most important role of these records is to augment and support information from other sources (Yin, 2008, 103).

This method provided a local context for primary research. Research included print and online sources such as newspaper articles, letters to the editor, blogs and discussion forums. Most of these sources were locally generated, but the search did extend beyond the Winnipeg context, exploring the social networks existing across Canada or North America.

The exploration of print and online sources, both formal and informal, was intended to familiarize both the reader and the researcher with the different discussions and dynamics existing in Winnipeg. This method also helped “round out” the cycling chronology included in Chapter One of this thesis. Research participants identified many events included in this chronology, but archival research helped solidify specific dates, and identify attitudes and opinions of authors. This research also played a significant role in the analysis and comprehension of local issues and organizations.

### 3.2.2 Case Study

The case study approach to this project used the work of Bike to the Future as an example of how key concepts of the power-in-planning discussion have been utilized.

Work done by this community group was studied through interviews and through a search of press coverage and other data sources.

As this case study describes a phenomenon within its context, it is primarily a descriptive study (Yin 1993). The types of power used by a citizen group are described, and the effects of their networking and advocacy experiences will be analyzed within the context of power and planning. A case study is relevant to this project, as it provides a real-life and practical example, helpful in a number of ways.

First, it enables one to organize and understand multiple forms of existing knowledge. Members of community groups such as Bike to the Future carry with them knowledge stemming from (among other things) experience, struggle, necessity, academic study, and active community involvement. This knowledge is invaluable, and a case study can name and deepen epistemological understanding.

Second, a case study can draw out and legitimize these multiple forms of knowledge. Through interviews, analysis, and through the use of other research methods, this case study explores the idea of *how* community knowledge has been used to the advantage of citizens, and why it has had an important impact in Winnipeg.

Third, a number of “lessons learned” have been drawn out of this study, which can be applicable to practicing professionals as well as community groups. These lessons are applicable to both citizen and professional planners.

### 3.2.2.1 Case study design

This Case Study's design is modeled after Lundberg and Enz's (1993) case study model, which suggests one gain familiarity, recognize symptoms, identify goals, conduct analysis, make a diagnosis, and conduct action planning. The steps taken to adhere to this model are as follows:

a) Gain familiarity with the project. This has been established through personal involvement with Bike to the Future since its incorporation in 2007. This familiarity, however, deepened throughout the research process.

b) Recognize symptoms of an issue. Personal work with Bike to the Future, and personal experience as a cyclist introduced ideas of power in planning, and how this particularly relates to citizens who use the bicycle. In this case, the 'symptoms' were positive; Bike to the Future has gained significant influence over the past few years, and this group seems to be working collaboratively with other interest groups. These groups include not only non-profit active transportation organizations, but also non-profit organizations connected with environmental and health issues, and for-profit organizations working in research or consulting fields. A list of partnering organizations mentioned in interviews can be found in Appendix A.

c) Identify goals. These goals are included in the research questions for this thesis, and can be found in section 1.2.1.

d) Conduct Analysis. Analysis involved much interaction with the transcripts from the semi-structured interviews, as well as a search of press coverage and other relevant print data sources. Chapter Four includes interview analysis which includes a section on how the work of Bike to the Future connects with, or diverges from, the power

analysis framework found in Chapter Two.

e) Make the Diagnosis. This stage overlaps with the analysis section of this thesis (Chapter Four), where the significance and challenges of Bike to the Future are outlined. Further diagnosis can be found in section 5.4, which cites some of the lesson learned from this project.

f) Action Planning. This final stage outlined by Lundberg and Enz is not relevant to this case study, as this particular study describes what an organization is doing. It is not the intention of the author to prescribe or recommend changes for Bike to the Future.

### 3.2.3 **Semi-structured interviews**

This case study was enriched by primary research methods, which included 12 semi-structured interviews with individuals who are currently connected with Bike to the Future, and are involved with other active transportation events and organizations around Winnipeg. Bike to the Future members who have been advocating for cycling-friendly infrastructure and legislation for decades were also be interviewed.

As Kvale (1996) points out, there is no common procedure regarding “how to” conduct interview research. It is, rather, a “craft that, if well carried out, can become an art” (p.13). As was suggested by this author, the interviews were approached with personal knowledge about the interview topic, and a familiarity with the different methodological options available. Kvale (1996) notes interviewers who have special sensitivities to (and knowledge about) a certain topic may be able to produce different statements than those who have little or no foreknowledge or experience. During the interviews, this was found to be an accurate statement.

### 3.2.3.1 Interview process

Each interview was semi-structured, meaning that the participants and interviewer engaged in a meaningful dialogue, and initial questions were modified when necessary. This allowed the freedom to probe into interesting and important ideas emerging from the conversation (Smith and Osborn, 2003). The interview guide can be found in Appendix B.

The semi-structured interview allowed for changes in question styles throughout each interview, as some questions were asked in a number of different ways before they connected with respondents. These interviews also gave the respondents freedom to respond in different ways, with silence, laughter or reflection. As Kvale (1996) points out, much knowledge can be produced through conversation.

Each conversation was recorded with permission of the participant, and lasted anywhere from 20 minutes to about one hour. Locations were arranged according to participants' convenience. Although offices and boardrooms were preferred, if the participant requested a meeting in a café, this request was honoured.

Participants provided insights into the scope of expertise found within different organizations, as well as the history and struggles of cycling advocacy in Winnipeg. In addition, these interviews uncovered ways in which active transportation communities are working cooperatively towards positive change. This change includes encouraging policy changes that accommodate all forms of traffic, and the promoting safe and connected routes and infrastructure positive changes in decision making realms

The aforementioned interviews involved a straightforward ethics review process, as the people interviewed were not considered to be “vulnerable populations.” Phrases

like “power dynamics” or “city planning” were intentionally not used in the questions, as these may have been unknown terms to some. Instead, focus was placed on successes and challenges affecting Winnipeg’s cycling community with the hope that participants would either implicitly or explicitly speak about power dynamics and social networking. Interview analysis indicated that participants did implicitly speak about these dynamics, and many did explicitly mention power imbalances and the significance of the networks with which Bike to the Future is involved.

During interview analysis, certain themes appeared. These were connected to the power framework outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis. As interviews were conducted, a list of circumstances and actions contributing to the success of Bike to the Future also emerged.

### 3.2.3.2 Interview questions

The following includes the rationale for each of the questions asked. The basic interview guide can be found in Appendix B.

#### **1. Why do you bike/why do you think cycling is important?**

This question set the stage for the interview, and helped participants become comfortable with the discussion topic, and with the interviewer as well. It was also designed to gather information on the many different reasons why people are passionately involved with this topic.

#### **2. How long, and in what capacity, have you been involved in cycling advocacy in Winnipeg (or beyond)?**



Participants answering this question provided information on a number of different levels; first, they provided a verbal history of cycling advocacy in Winnipeg, as many initiatives were beyond personal memory. Second, answers to this question indicated specific groups involved with the cycling network. Finally, responses also indicated the amount of energy participants put into specific events or organizations.

### **3. What inspired you to get involved?**

This is also a personal question, designed to encourage participants to speak more about their specific involvements. This “inspiration” could involve certain events or certain people, which contributed to the verbal history and the list of groups connected with the cycling network.

### **4. What are some of the challenges that face Winnipeg's cycling community?**

This is a direct question that sought to approach “power” conversations in a tangible way. By outlining cycling challenges, participants had the opportunity to comment on how they have felt unsafe or unheard. This was also an opportunity to ‘take the pulse’ of participants’ view of the current cycling situation in Winnipeg.

### **5. What are some of the cycling-successes in which you have participated?**

Question five was meant to transition from negative perspectives to more positive ones, and to highlight the good cycling advocacy work in Winnipeg. Repeat responses also contributed to the cycling chronology in Chapter I.

## **6. What made these successful?**

This question was designed to allow participants space to acknowledge the empowering actions of different community groups. It was written in this way to ensure participants spoke about cooperation and collaboration out of their own free will, and not because of a leading question.

## **7. How has your work intersected with that of Bike to the Future?**

Question seven was another indirect lead-in to themes of collaboration and cooperation. This question was also designed to provide a picture of the variety of connections different individuals and groups have with Bike to the Future.

## **8. What are the contributions of Bike to the Future to cycling in Winnipeg?**

This was the first time participants shared their personal opinion without necessarily delving into personal experience. Participants were asked to speak strictly about Bike to the Future. This question was designed to gather information about successes attributed solely to this organization.

## **9. What do you think has made Bike to the Future "catch the attention" of both policy makers and citizens?**

Question nine was also supposed to be as "objective" as possible. Here, participants were encouraged to 'diagnose' the situation, and give their opinion about how Bike to the Future and its contributions were able to gain a foothold in decision making circles.

**10. How have other cycling or Active Transportation organizations contributed to Winnipeg cycling advocacy? How does their work intersect with Bike to the Future's?**

Question 10 was written to again approach the topic of networking power and Bike to the Future's collaborative successes. It was also designed to gather more names of organizations existing in the cycling advocacy 'network' and to test how far this network reached.

**11. What are some of the challenges facing Bike to the Future/what worries you about this organizations' future?**

This question acknowledged that the work done by Bike to the Future, and by other organization has its struggles and shortcomings. This provided space for participants to critique the organization (if they so desired) and to give their insights on how this organization could strengthen itself.

**12. What is your personal vision for cycling in Winnipeg? How could this vision be realized?**

Question 12 was a lighthearted and fun question. This question, however, was significant because it enhanced personal beliefs about the diversity of the cycling community's needs and goals. These differing visions proved not everyone's vision must be agreed upon before collaboration can happen.

### 3.2.4 Analysis process

As Strauss (1987) writes, the focus of research analysis is not on collecting a mass of information, but on the organization of the countless ideas emerging as a result of the collection and ordering process. Because of the diversity of social settings, projects, individual research styles, etc., there exist no strict rules dictating data analysis (Strauss 1987). Regardless, general guidelines for analysis were necessary, and these were as follows:

Data was analyzed in a cross-sectional manner, because it was important to find common themes throughout all interviews. Although each individual has a unique history/herstory, it was important to discover how these stories and themes fit together, and how each story connects to the work of Bike to the Future or other active transportation organizations. Some common themes were identified before interviews began, and so interview data was tested for these themes, which involved the power framework developed in section two of the literature review. During their interviews, participants mentioned multiple power resources and methods, and these were documented and highlighted within the transcript using different coloured pens.

In addition to this, Glaser and Strauss' concept of "Grounded Theory" was used. This is a coding process identifying categories of analysis as they 'emerge from' the data (Pope and Mays 2003). This cyclical process took initial analyses and fed them into the research, data collection, and theory testing processes. As each interview occurred and was transcribed, themes were recorded and then 'tested' during subsequent interviews.

Pope and Mays (2003) refer to "Grounded Theory" analysis as one that moves fluidly between data and theory. Themes found within the interviews have been "backed

up” by quotes from participants. These themes also address wider issues of power and empowerment. In other words, literal and interpretive data readings have remained intertwined during data analysis.

Interview data was coded according to the methods found within Pope and Mays’ (2003) interpretation of Grounded Theory. This process began with open coding, or an “unrestricted” coding which named general concepts within gathered data. Themes in the first few interviews were ‘tested’ in subsequent interviews, and as new data built upon previous data, open coding continued.

During the ‘axial coding’ phase, lists of different themes were combined, and themes were grouped into similar categories. In this way, relationships between codes were established and named (Pope and Mays, 2003).

Throughout this process, as more abstract and theoretical elements were incorporated (Pope and Mays, 2003), a few central observations (or core categories) emerged. These themes enabled more in-depth analysis of the interviews.

### **3.3 Research Participants**

Two types of participants were included within this research. One involved participant observation, and the other involved interview participants.

#### **3.3.1 Participant observation**

Within the case study context, participant research enables the researcher to perceive reality from the perspective of someone who is “inside” the case study, rather than from one who is removed from it (Yin, 2008, 112).

Jorgensen notes participant observation is most appropriate under the following circumstances:

- the research is concerned with human meanings and interactions from insiders' perspectives;
- the research topic is observable within everyday settings;
- the researcher is able to gain access to appropriate settings and events;
- the research topic is relatively limited in size and location;
- research questions and research topics are appropriate for case study; and
- the research problem can be addressed by qualitative data gathered by observation and other means appropriate to the case study (Jorgensen, 1989, 13).

As participant observation is especially appropriate for descriptive studies, exploratory studies, and studies meant to encourage theoretical interpretation (Jorgensen, 1989, 13), this method fits in with intended outcomes of this project.

One of the largest benefits of participant observation involves the insights into interpersonal behaviour and motives generated during research (Yin, 2008, 102). A weakness, however, is the biases held by the observer. Events may be interpreted or manipulated to fit researchers' hypotheses (Yin, 2008, 102). Observation-research was conducted with this awareness. No section outlines the 'results' of this research method; instead, personal observations have been incorporated into the analysis process.

During (and before) this research, participant observation occurred through participation in Bike to the Future meetings and the annual Fall Forum. Other pro-cycling events were also attended. This provided background and 'insider' knowledge that helped

me connect with participants, and allowed interviews to be more in-depth and meaningful.

### 3.3.2 Key informants

According to Kumar, Stern and Anderson, researchers frequently rely on key informants to provide information on topics on “organization- or relationship-level constructs of interests, such as commitment and power” (Kumar, Stern and Anderson, 1993, 1633).

According to these authors, reliance on key informants is appropriate when the content of the research topic is too in-depth for survey studies. It is also appropriate when specific knowledge about specific topics is needed (Kumar, Stern and Anderson, 1993, 1634).

Although participant bias can be a drawback, the use of still informants is still one of the most popular ways to work with interorganizational relationship research (Kumar, Stern, and Anderson, 1993, 1634).

Key informants were selected two different ways. First, participants who were known to have cycling expertise were contacted. These participants are either currently connected to Bike to the Future or other active transportation groups in and around Winnipeg. Through conversation and interviews, these participants identified other potential participants. This method utilizes the existing social networks of participants, and is known as snowball sampling (Salganik and Heckathorn, 2004).

Because of this sampling method, participants were not randomly selected. Likewise, the interviews cannot be considered to be representative of any population (Kumar, Stern and Anderson, 1993, 1634). These participants are leaders in Winnipeg, but because selection was not random, their statements cannot be claimed to be representative of Winnipeg’s cycling community.

### **3.4 Summary**

Chapter Three outlined the research methods used during this project, which included a case study, targeted literature, resources and archival searches, semi-structured interviews and participant observation. This chapter also provided an overview of the interview analysis process, which framed the observations found in Chapter Four.



## **4 Chapter Four: Analysis**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The following chapter reflects on the research experience, and includes interview results and analysis. These results include participants' comments made about the significance of Bike to the Future. These comments also describe participant's predictions of the challenges this organization will face. Interview analysis consists of two parts. The first part outlines participants' comments connecting with the power framework outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis. The second part includes a set of circumstances and actions contributing to the success of Bike to the Future.

#### **4.1.1 The 'experience'**

This research experience has been a very meaningful process. Personal involvements with Bike to the Future began at the first forum in 2006, and were formalized at its incorporation in 2007. Work with the Board of Directors for Bike to the Future was an inspiration during this incorporation process. It was encouraging to witness significant changes in Winnipeg, and it was exciting to see momentum build around this subject.

As more and more representatives from different groups began to attend BTTF meetings, it became clear that although these groups had differing and sometimes competing interests, they were working together to promote a larger goal. Together they prepared for budget meetings, committee meetings, and presentations. It seemed this collaboration was not necessary commonplace; competition for funding is a strong reality in other cities. As one interview participant observed,

One of the comments that my colleague makes all the time is about a workshop we were at in [another Canadian City], they have the cycling and pedestrian

organizations and there's even different factions of cycling organizations and they're all fighting with each other and there's all these internal dynamics and we've all completely avoided that in Winnipeg.... We're symbiotic. (Interview 11)

Interview participants shared how they connected to Bike to the Future, and how they worked personally and collectively towards a broad goal. It was a privilege to meet with experts in the cycling community and hear them all speak about diplomacy, cooperation, and their desire for more livable and accessible cities.

#### **4.1.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the research process**

The data received from this process was rich, and this topic was important to all participants. One strength of this research is that this subject has been ruminating for a while, and there is plenty of current literature exploring cycling movements in North America. Although literature on power analysis was more difficult to find, it is also present in current discourse. This theoretical background helped frame the research in a meaningful manner.

A second strength emerges from the participants themselves. As was previously mentioned, every single person who was asked to participate in these interviews accepted enthusiastically. People were willing to share information and were excited about this project. They also knew of the unique way in which active transportation organizations have evolved in Winnipeg. It is important to celebrate this and explore it in a significant way.

A weakness involves two types of primary research chosen for this project. Both participant observation and key informant interviews can be subject to particular biases. Because all participants (including the researcher) were entrenched in the subject, and

were very knowledgeable about this subject, there was a strong risk that results might be affected negatively. Many of these biases were set out at the beginning of this thesis. The results below, however, indicate interviewees had a balanced view of both the strengths and challenges facing Bike to the Future and other active transportation organizations in Winnipeg.

A second weakness involves the broadness of this research. It has been difficult to bridge two specific topics. On one hand, it was important to explore why the idea of active transportation was important to participants. Therefore, research was done on why the bicycle is important, and how it has been marginalized through a growing *Car Culture Problématique*. On the other hand, an equally important subject involves power issues and marginalization, and how on group has faced power issues through community collaboration. It was, needless to say, difficult to remain connected both to the concept of collaboration and to the topic around which this collaboration occurred.

## **4.2 Power Analysis**

The following analysis discusses how Bike to the Future and other active transportation organizations have used the power structures and resources, outlined in Chapter Two, to influence change.

### **4.2.1 Power resources**

Power resources, as mentioned in Chapter Two, have been defined as influences attached to a specific person or group, but can also exist autonomously. Power is channeled through these resources, and both citizen and professional planners must work with,

against, or in the face of these forces. The following results indicate how participants' comments connect to the power resources outlined in the literature review

#### 4.2.1.1 Power of Place

The power of place is manifested in the physical ways in which communities are built.

This can exacerbate power imbalances, or keep one from accessing certain places. One participant who was familiar with planning issues observed:

The way that infrastructure is designed often makes cyclists and motorists confront each other, and from the last census we know that 77% of Winnipeggers use single occupancy as their primary mode of transportation; you're butting up against the majority... There's sort of politics to space (Interview 5).

This "politics to space" can be prohibitive to those who feel unsafe or powerless. Another participant noted:

I'm an advocate but honestly I don't bike much myself because I don't think it's safe enough and I'm chicken! I think we have to have safer bike paths for people like me, and more people who would bike but don't because they don't feel safe in traffic (Interview 7).

The above comment creates a distinction between those who act, and those who *would* act under the appropriate circumstances. Fear personal safety, and the safety of loved ones, can be disempowering:

Once you have kids your perspective changes; you have to make sure you live to be able to take care of your kids. Whereas prior to that, when I was traveling the world and cycling in all these strange places, that wasn't sort of a top priority, sort of "whatever happens, happens", it's just you. So I'm not an on-road cyclist, and I have kids and they can't go on the road (Interview 9).

Although it can be disempowering, place also has the ability to empower, and capture the imagination of citizens. Through this power, they can be enabled to envision more livable and more accessible spaces. Many participants mentioned their positive experiences in more bike-friendly cities, from Amsterdam to Katmandu, and from Montréal to

Milwaukee. These experiences hold a special place in one's memory. For example, one participant spoke about how cycling infrastructure in other countries inspired him to think about how cycling can be made more accessible:

Immediately when you get onto the street you realize that things could be way better. I was lucky enough a few years ago to do a tour through Belgium and Germany, and that draws your attention to how good it is elsewhere, and how much better it could be. So wanting to cycle, seeing how it's important for many folks to cycle. If many people cycle, it makes things better for me and for everyone. It makes me want to make that more accessible to everyone, through infrastructure and through more people on bikes (Interview 3).

Another participant observed:

I actually lived in Holland for 5 months and had a bike and it showed me how cycling infrastructure could be way better. And everybody had a bike; business people with their suits on were riding their bikes, and nobody wore helmets because you don't have to; the way the city is designed makes it safe to bike. That was a really formative experience. So when I came back I was always wondering why Winnipeg had *nothing* for commuters (Interview 10).

The power of place has increased strength when one is connected in some way to the history of a place. One participant was aware of the changes to cycling infrastructure in a few U.S. cities, and was encouraged by these changes, which were brought about through advocacy efforts:

And just traveling to other cities and seeing their experience with advocacy, other cities similar to Winnipeg, like Milwaukee or Minneapolis, where you had no bike transportation in the early 90s and by the end of the 90s they had pretty good bike transportation. Pretty good, but not great. But just being able to see the real tangible effects of a group of people was good...(Interview 4)

#### 4.2.1.2 Power of Language

A second power agent is the power of language. Interviews strongly indicated the importance of dialogue, presentations, and diplomacy. For example, one participant noted:

We went to all these meetings and presented to these councilors and basically

educated them on the values of it. I'm glad we did that, it was a grueling process but now in this next round of funding we received – wow, [there is funding for] promotion, education, capital infrastructure. In the six or seven years I've been involved we've never seen a budget like that, never. So that's the biggest stumbling block: getting air time, and educating them. Even though we didn't get more money, the value of educating them, and the media we got, we couldn't *afford* that kind of media! (Interview 9).

Often, bridges are built as soon as dialogue begins. False assumptions or stereotypes may be overturned as soon as people begin to speak. One interviewee related his experience:

I'm a diplomatic guy and people like to listen to me. That works really well in presentations where people are expecting real misfits. I don't think anybody is an idiot, and I think you both need to encourage [each other] (Interview 2).

An interviewee who has had experience with planning processes on municipal levels recounted his experience with a presentation from one of Bike to the Future's directors.

This experience convinced staff members of this organization's expertise.

[W]e had [a Bike to the Future member] give a presentation and it was one of the most engaged staff meetings...I think we had to cut it off after 45 min of questions to move on to other stuff. But we know now that Bike to the Future has this body of technical expertise and can be counted on to respond if we have questions. And then there's this process of gathering data and feedback on active transportation and the future policy, I think Bike to the Future will be an important sounding board (Interview 5).

Language becomes even more powerful when accompanied by awareness of the many people who are supporting these presentations:

Organizing cyclists in a membership forum is important, because you can provide services to members and then say "well, we're speaking on behalf of this many people" and you can show that it's not just a fringe group. I think having a forum once a year to keep in touch with people is a huge accomplishment, especially last year when they got so many high-profile speakers and got funding to do that (Interview 10).

The power of language also provides the opportunity for more informal types of education. Personal behavioural change is a slow process, and much of this happens through one-on-one dialogue.

It was funny because when I was applying for [a] job, during my interview they asked if I would be willing to bike to work and my reaction silently to myself was 'no, I'm not going to ride my bike downtown. I have a bike, but I'm not going to'... but as I met more and more people who do ride their bikes down town, I thought that it would be a great idea because for me more than anything it would be great to be more active, so riding my bike was a great options. So I had to solve all the logistics on that, but I've had a complete 180-degree turnaround on that. (Interview 6)

#### 4.2.1.3 Power of Knowledge

As people speak with each other, formally or informally, knowledge bases grow. Much knowledge, however, already exists in communities and it may be simple to tap into these resources.

There's a lot of people out there...they will give up some time if they know [an initiative is] going somewhere. So how do they contribute? They laid the foundation for the active transportation study. Individual people, sometimes total goof-off people. People might look at you askance and say "this person's planning our city?" But give them a bicycle and give them their own neighbourhood and they don't have to know anything about city planning or engineering, it's very intuitive. And so in that way they've contributed big-time (Interview 2).

As important as it is for planners and those in power to acknowledge this way of knowing, it is equally important for community members themselves to realize their potential contributions. As one participant stated,

And I think you have to come from a place of experience to have the most strength. And I often felt in my other organizing work I was speaking in this awkward way on behalf of others that I had consulted with. Whereas as a cyclist I could say "I'm a cyclist, and this is my experience and we are needing these things as a group." (Interview 10).

Carrying unique forms of knowledge is empowering. This knowledge increases as people come together to work towards a goal. Many different types of talent and knowledge combine, as people help each other. One participant who works with an organization helping people learn how to fix and build bikes observed:

There's some people who aren't even volunteers, who maybe work in a bike shop, who will come in and give workshops for other people on basic, or sometimes more advanced bike repair. There's other people who are comfortable with the internet, will blog and follow what's happening with other planning issues, there's other people...who are involved in almost everything. I don't know if I could stomach meetings with the mayor, but he can and tries to push the cyclists' agenda. Lots of people helping out in whatever ways they can and the different things that come up has really made this possible (Interview 3).

This idea was echoed by another participant, who was impressed by the different talents represented by Bike to the Future's Board of Directors.

I think it's the skill and the energy of the people that are involved. I have to give [a Bike to the Future board member] a lot of credit. There's some very intelligent people that we're dealing with... Put all that intelligence in the same direction and you could probably accomplish a lot, and that's been the case. (Interview 6)

#### 4.2.1.4 Political Power

A fourth agent involves political powers. Many participants spoke about how their work is intertwined with the work of politicians, and how Bike to the Future has cultivated a very diplomatic approach to advocacy. This approach has caught the interest of policy makers and media.

But what made these successful? A lot of hard work by a lot of smart dedicated people who know how to affect political change within the system. I think the people on Bike to the Future know how government works and that made a really big difference. That approach has advantages and disadvantages, but a lot of the successes came about because of this cooperative approach with government. And a really media savvy approach. Doing things like biking a report to a political office or holding a forum where you invite political leaders, I think those were really savvy things that made a difference and were part of the success (Interview 4).

Another participant seemed to agree, noting:

...[T]hey don't make many mistakes. There are other groups that I've worked with in the past that make the mistake of upsetting politicians and being too hard to work with. And it's very hard to change things once they've made that mistake, but they haven't made that mistake in my opinion (Interview 8).

Similarly, it seems important to be able to connect with many different audiences.



Bike to the Future has never been seen as on the fringe, they're taken very seriously by the mainstream politicians, and that's how they have had access to power more so than anybody before (Interview 7).

Despite this current momentum, more than one participant articulated fears about fading interests in cycling issues. For example:

The biggest thing is if the environmental issue falls off the table for the politicians. That's the biggest issue. Otherwise, despite everything, numbers of cyclists have been increasing over the past few years, and it'll still increase, it's just keeping the attention of the politicians is the thing (Interview 1).

Political power, however, does not merely mean one must make the right connections with the right decision makers. Although decision makers hold political power, this power also exists in grassroots and bottom-up movements, which have strength in numbers. As one participant who works with community cycling initiatives stated,

I think the real importance is not so much convincing powerful people to make changes but to keep working within community at the grassroots level; if community bike shops keep growing and the bike dump keeps going strong and other shops crop up and people have more access to bikes, more access to ideas about how you might feel safe doing it, it just feels more like something that people can do and want to do...I think if people can self-organize that's the most important thing (Interview 3).

This same participant, however, acknowledged the need for both bottom-up and top-down action:

The only reason I would emphasize the City stuff is that that might be beyond...it costs a lot of money to pour concrete and you can't necessarily change by-laws as community groups, there are a few things the City can do that people can push for, but I think most of the real work that needs to happen is at the grassroots level, with people trying to provide for themselves and each others' needs (Interview 3).

#### 4.2.1.5 Market Power

Market power was less prevalent in the interviews, but this issue did, indirectly, emerge.

One conversation highlighted networking strategies that included businesses, non-profit organizations, and municipal and provincial departments:

I've had meetings with places like Destination Winnipeg, the CEO of that...sometimes it takes things like that where you get to the people who have influence. So if there's something important, to find that person and the way in which people agree. Take a big organization...and find that person...who is willing to fly the flag for you. It's obviously a very simple and popular idea. Just look for those people if they're there (Interview 2).

An event that increasingly uses private funding is Bike to Work Day. As private businesses become sponsors and “back up” an idea with money or gifts-in-kind, they will increasingly have more input into what happens on this day. As a participant who has had experience with municipal affairs pointed out, “I think one [challenge] is to ensure that you maintain positive relationships with the funders” (Interview 12).

Although the issue of market power was not addressed directly, a real concern of most participants relates to the ability of Bike to the Future to sustain itself. In most peoples' views, the next logical step for this volunteer-run organization is to garner some funds and hire an executive director. Volunteer burnout is a real concern, and the idea of giving time in exchange for a paycheque is a way to address this concern. One participant observed:

[T]he ability of those committed volunteers to do what they are so good at and what has stood the organization in good stead, I imagine that that will become compromised. Usually the next step for organizations in this place is to hire an ED, get some space, and then how much overhead you invest in actually sustaining the organization itself versus how much you want to do what you do, it's tough (Interview 5).

#### 4.2.1.6 Emerging Power – Power of the gathering

As was acknowledged in Chapter Two, many other representations of power exist. The aforementioned resources of place, knowledge, language, and political and market powers are most mentioned in planning literature, but the citizen planners interviewed also identified another important agent. As a ‘critical mass’ of citizens grows, the sheer

amount of voices making specific requests constitutes an important force. This is different from the heterarchical or networking powers. These powers are ways of attaining power, and are discussed below. Here, it seems the organization or gathering itself can have a powerful influence. As one participant put it,

The people we met were so great. Everyone was so constructive and positive and action-oriented and they did what they said they would do in the time period they said they would do it. There was just this pool of people waiting to come together and it happened (Interview 10).

People working with Bike to the Future found cooperative methods to be successful, even though participants hold different philosophies. Another commented:

The biggest thing they've done is that they've brought together the critical mass crowd with the MCA crowd. Before that it was pretty stand-offish between the two groups. There's two different philosophies...So there's always been a big divide between the two and somehow Bike to the Future found a way to bring the two groups together (Interview 1).

Sheer numbers of people, however, may not be enough to hold power. The ability of these citizens to work together for a common goal may be key to this power agent.

Literally, the 'critical mass' has come together to work together on this. And I think that one of our biggest successes and one of the biggest things that has contributed to our success is our ability to work collaboratively and constructively (Interview 11).

The above comments suggest that as the number of people interested in an issue increases, their influence increases correspondingly.

#### **4.2.2 Power Structures**

The previous pages have documented research results, and how they connect with power resources, or some entities through which power is channeled. The following pages will relate how interview results connect with the power structures outlined in Chapter II, which involve specific ways in which power is exercised. These structures were named in

the literature review as heterarchical or networking power, and hierarchical power. As these can be connected to a certain entity, person or group of people, they are therefore easier to name and understand.

#### 4.2.2.1 Heterarchical structures

We put together the constitution...it was a nice cooperative effort; Molly, Anders and myself and some other people. I was probably one of the more straight-laced persons...I'm not a consensus person, I was more of a vote. It was a collaborative effort. (Interview 1)

The above comment outlines a sort of give-and take attitude. This was a theme throughout all interviews. Even though a person may not agree with a specific strategy (like consensus decision-making vs. majority vote), the overarching values may still be shared. As one connects with others who approach issues differently, these relationships become key to cooperation and forward movement. For the sake of a relationship, people may become more willing to compromise and continue work toward a mutual goal.

Themes of compromise and relationship-building, however, are not relegated to intra-organizational discussions and goals. Inter-organizational relationships are equally important and are vital to advocacy success. This may involve very broadly based interests. One interview participant said the success of Bike to the Future's efforts could be attributed to:

Involving seemingly divergent groups around a central idea. In general, a cooperative environment [involving t]he downtown BIZ, and say, anarchist populist movements. What can they agree on. I think that's one of the main things that I might have been extremely adamant about, I think made arguably the biggest difference, it's not focused on the differences between people, but on the places where they have something in common. So to connect trail users with commuter cyclists and to recognize that anywhere anyone goes is transportation and if you're a kid going to get ice cream, you have to get there somewhere, and that counts. I think from the political perspective advocating for commuter cycling, and making sure that definition is broad enough, and that involves everybody (Interview 2).

Another participant commented on the strength of the relational web connecting Bike to the Future with other active transportation groups:

I think there's a lot of knowledge sharing that goes back and forth. It's almost as if we're one. It's hard to know where Bike to the Future starts, and Anders [from One Green City] starts, and sometimes Winnipeg Trails Association, where they go. It's pretty seamless, actually. It's kind of good because we have multiple presences but we're sort of thinking as one mind, on various committees and things. We should not forget the Manitoba Cycling Association, it's usually included in these things as well (Interview 1).

Other participants broadened this web to include and environmental healthy living organizations, noting the importance of “drawing on support from a number of environmental groups, or recreational trails groups, [or] transportation-oriented groups... Being cooperative and collaborative has been really helpful” (Interview 4).

Even if organizations are not strongly connected to each other, one participant observed it was still important to keep in mind the common goal of each group. He said “We don't have a really strong relationship with [Bike to the Future], but we do support each other” (Interview 3).

The importance of mutual support was mentioned frequently. Some, like the quotation above, cited ideological reasons for mutual support. Another reason, however, may just involve efficiency. In non-profit or volunteer organizations, time is of utmost importance, and one strategy may be to support other efforts instead of creating one's own.

[W]hen I first got involved with Bike to the Future, they were doing what we were trying to do [with another initiative], and they were much more effective. So lending them support made our work a lot less onerous. There's no sense doing what they're doing; supporting them was the best move (Interview 6).

Whether they are used for efficiency or ideological reasons, cooperation and networking

are important strategies within and between groups who want to get their voices heard. These strategies, however, are also important when negotiating with decision-makers, who may not necessarily share similar interests. Examples of cooperation and networking with decision makers can be found in Bike to the Future's diplomatic efforts.

On Thursday's meeting there was the comment made by [a Bike to the Future member], stating that our strength is that we work very well with all of these other groups and we always work constructively with the city and we always say "this is what we want" and it's not full of angst. We back our statements up with clear fact and that has given us a reputation of being reputable; we're able to be trusted because we don't lie and we work constructively and we just want to work with them to make this better for everybody (Interview 11).

#### 4.2.2.2 Hierarchical structures

Although heterarchical powers seemed to be most prevalent in the interviews, there was evidence of hierarchical powers at work within Bike to the Future and the other organizations connected to it. Strong individuals have emerged, who are diplomatic, knowledgeable, and insightful. Many of these individuals were named over and over again by participants. Some of these individuals were themselves interview participants, and they seemed to know when to work cooperatively and when to act individually. One participant observed:

There's one thing that's interesting from a power dynamics thing...I'm in a weird situation because very early in the project I got picked to be on [a committee with influence], and in a hierarchical political environment, the closer you are to the boss...the reason I am sort of forced to work as hard as I do is that I am the only one in the position that I am in, and I'm also forced to make quick decisions on things. I try to make sure that decisions are consensus-based but they aren't always. I think it's very important that if someone has a creative idea and they want to go forward, it's important to realize that the person doing the work has the say. If you're willing to do the work, be honest about who you're speaking on behalf of (Interview 2).

### 4.3 Analysis: A “Recipe”

This section synthesizes the above results, and combines them with personal observations about Bike to the Future’s work. Four conclusions can be made about the work of Bike to the Future, and the active transportation organizations connected to this group. Together they make up a ‘recipe’ of how this group was successful. These conclusions are:

1. **Strong leaders** came together for one specific reason.
2. These people came together at the **right time**.
3. **Good methods** (those of cooperation, collaboration and networking) were used.
4. **Good tools** (such as creative communication strategies and participatory forums) helped convey their message.

Multiple power resources and power structures were used communicate a message to policy makers and the general public. This was particularly evident in one event, Bike to Work Day, which has brought together advocates, citizens and policy makers. This section will also include observations suggesting why this event was successful.

#### 4.3.1 “They’re not that hard to find”: Strong Leaders

A first conclusion is that strong leaders came together to work on behalf of cyclists and pedestrians. When asked what had contributed to the success of cycling advocacy in Winnipeg, many participants confirmed a number of committed people who have worked tirelessly to promote cycling as a legitimate form of transportation. A few individuals and organizations were named throughout all interviews, and these people were seen as being particularly influential because they work diligently. Other individuals, however, were

seen as having expertise in certain areas, and they were also seen as vital to Bike to the Future's cycling successes. One participant observed:

There's some key people who have just doggedly kept on it, like One Green City, and having the support of the Eco-Network and [Resource Conservation Manitoba] staff coming on their off time to meetings to coach and shepherd things through. And there's a lot of other key volunteers who have a lot of organizing experience or maybe work for government for their paid work, and their expertise has been helpful (Interview 10).

When asked about cycling successes, another participant gave credit to

A lot of hard work by a lot of smart dedicated people who know how to affect political change within the system. I think the people on Bike to the Future know how government works and that made a really big difference (Interview 4).

And lately there have been a few people, maybe the right people at the right time...who are definitely tenacious. Definitely the right people at the right time (Interview 1).

In addition to the tenacious work of some very dedicated leaders, participants also acknowledged the work of grassroots actors, who may not have as powerful a voice, but who contribute to the large numbers of citizens who would like to see more cycling and pedestrian infrastructure.

I'm probably going to end up harping on the whole grassroots thing, but I think people contributing in whatever way they're best able to... Lots of people helping out in whatever ways they can and the different things that come up has really made this possible (Interview 3).

#### 4.3.2 "Easy Advocacy": The right time

As was stated above, successful changes involves strong leaders; those who carry expertise, and those who are willing to share whatever talents they have. These people, however must still be mobilized and guided. A second observation about Bike to the Future's success involves the people who came together at the right time. Mobilization is simpler when multiple circumstances coalesce to make the work of advocates easier."



One participant spoke about this, mentioning health issues and the availability of funding for green initiatives:

Nothing lasts forever, but right now we are in the exact perfect storm. We have fat kids, we have [a] polluted environment, there was a lot of money flowing and there still is a lot of money flowing. Trails and bike paths are sort of an “apple pie” kind of thing when you’re talking about swine flu, or the economy. But still, the increased awareness of the environment and health were the start of it, and there’s a lot of money; now of course it’s changed a bit, but it hasn’t been this good in years! (Interview 9)

Some of the key players in this storm are climate change concerns, and different movements to mitigate some of the harms done to the earth.

I think it’s been a real combination of things. It’s interesting to see what forces have coalesced to make it happen. I tend to think that the timing is right, with this focus in the media on global climate change, that cycling is able to come into the mainstream. I don’t want to be pessimistic, but because it’s trendy...that’s played a big role in legitimizing it and bringing it into the mainstream in terms of policy makers (Interview 4).

In addition to climate change crises, another large factor contributing to a greater legitimization of active transportation is the current world economic recession, and other world events causing the price of gasoline to be more volatile. As another participant observed,

Probably the biggest boost we ever had was when gas reached \$1.42/litre. It certainly for me was an issue...I was actually thinking for the first time about what it cost to fill our cars. And then you think “well, I was saving money when I was riding my bike to work,” and it affected a lot of other people, and it could have over a long course of time, priced some people out of their cars. And then you think, what’s the next logical thing, well I can get around on my bike, and I can save money this way (Interview 6).

Of course, there has been no single driver to this storm; there has also been a lot of positive political attention:

I think that the media attention around the Critical Mass got [the issue of cycling transportation] into peoples’ perspective. And I think it’s an excellent example of reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions especially with Manitoba’s commitment to Kyoto, it’s important. And Health benefits, those two combined,

plus being presented as not one political party's cause; every party or every perspective can see the benefits of it. And just being constructed in a positive enthusiastic relatively non-threatening way; we're not going to start being aggressive, we just want a place to ride our bikes (Interview 10).

I think it was citizens coming together and speaking very effectively; they did their research, they did their homework and did a very effective job of advocacy, probably the most effective job I've seen in my 10 years here. I've seen lots of people trying to advocate for things. But it wasn't just one factor, it was all those things; the timing...the pressure on this council for canceling rapid transit and making other bad environmental choices, the climate change crisis, the idea that certain councilors care about cycling and want to come across positively on something. It's never just one thing, one silver bullet; it's just that the timing was right, the environment was right for it to take hold, and people were like "we all want to be at the head of the parade" because the parade's coming! ...[E]veryone wants to stand beside a bicycle; it's kind of good to be a cycling advocate in that environment! (Interview 7)

As this last comment indicated, cycling is growing in popularity, and is somehow becoming "mainstreamed," meaning citizens who use this form of transport may no longer be considered to rest at the fringes of society. The marginalized voice of cyclists is beginning to be heard.

#### **4.3.3 Networking, collaboration and cooperation: good methods**

Strong leaders at the right time, however, may not make much of a difference if they are competing for funds, volunteers, and other resources. A third observation about the work of Bike to the Future is about the individuals working with this group, who have made considerable efforts to work cooperatively instead of competitively.

One of the strengths of Bike to the Future is that we've been able to work together with these groups and they've been willing to work together with us and that we really make an effort to stay collaborative. One of the comments that my colleague makes all the time is about a workshop we were at in Toronto they have the cycling and pedestrian organizations and there's even different factions of cycling organizations and they're all fighting with each other and there's all these internal dynamics and we've all completely avoided that in Winnipeg. I don't know if that's coming, or if that's something that we are going to be able to avoid because the people are actually looking out for the greater good, I don't know. I

think the other organizations and Bike to the Future are very mutually supportive. We're symbiotic...(Interview 11)

So I was one member [of the Bike to Work Day Committee], and we were a bunch, and so we all tried to make decisions on the event collaboratively. We all had slightly different perspectives...and we all understood that we were there and had different views as to why we were doing this and they were all acknowledged and we could move on, and that's about it (Interview 12).

In addition to working positively with other Active Transportation groups, members of Bike to the Future have made efforts to connect positively with decision makers.

By being a visible voice, I think the role of Bike to the Future is changing and gaining legitimacy with decision makers. That's opening the door to have someone...or a few representatives on the Active Transportation Advisory Committee. So it's building positive relationships that brings opportunity, that helps make positive change. That's what I think the role is (Interview 12).

When one person or group speaks, people may listen, but when many groups speak up and say essentially the same thing from different perspectives, their voices are difficult to ignore. This makes the contributions of every group connected with Bike to the Future invaluable in the legitimacy-gaining process. As one participant stated,

They've all come together and spoken as a united voice, and we saw that back in November and December. We had all these organizations come together and give their perspectives and for me it was very enlightening because you go to meetings and hear bits and pieces from each organization and you understand the fit. But to hear someone get up from each organization, like the Heart and Stroke foundation, why it's important to them. Everyone has a different perspective...it was brilliant, just understanding and working together as a unit to increase awareness and education (Interview 9).

#### **4.3.4 Empowerment and participation: good tools**

Strong leaders, at the right time used cooperative and collaborative methods to get their voice heard. A fourth observation involves the tools used by Bike to the Future, which have also contributed to their influence. These tools are utilized while working together with other groups, but are also used to engage the wider public.

Agger and Löfgren suggest certain concepts are important parts of the democratic process. These concepts of access, inclusion, participation, and public deliberation (Agger and Löfgren, 2008) have been present in the way Bike to the Future operates and solicits public input. This is most exemplified in the annual cycling forum hosted by this organization.

I think making cycling advocacy accessible through having a forum that's fun, provides child-minding, is located downtown on bus and bike routes, has bike parking (Interview 5).

I really enjoyed the first, and maybe the first two fall forums they did. It's really good to get discussions going around that stuff. But I wish that could happen more than just once in a year...It'd be nice if the grassroots folks could be involved as much as possible, and kept as much up-to-date as possible...(Interview 3)

Organizing cyclists in a membership forum is important, because you can provide services to members and then say "well, we're speaking on behalf of this many people" and you can show that it's not just a fringe group. I think having a forum once a year to keep in touch with people is a huge accomplishment, especially last year when they got so many high-profile speakers and got funding to do that (Interview 10).

A second way in which the wider public has been involved has been through community commuter groups, which began through the work of One Green City. Although these groups are not subsidiaries of Bike to the Future, some representatives attend monthly meetings, where their work is celebrated and supported. These smaller groups have empowered themselves to work for grassroots change in their own communities. As was quoted earlier, these groups:

...laid the foundation for the Active Transportation study. Individual people, sometimes total goof-off people. People might look at you askance and say "this person's planning our city?" But give them a bicycle and give them their own neighbourhood and they don't have to know anything about city planning or engineering, it's very intuitive. And so in that way they've contributed big-time (Interview 2).

Another participant who is involved with one of the community cycling groups

highlighted his involvements in the following way:

I'm sort of more inclined to get involved with something that seems like it is going to make a difference. I'm more inclined to do things with WC3 [or West Central Commuter Cyclists], it's sort of an immediate sense of accomplishment, the impact is more noticeable (Interview 5).

Through seeking as much public input as possible, and through supporting citizen engagement initiatives, Bike to the Future uses participatory tools to increase democratic participation.

#### 4.3.5 A catalyzing event: **Bike to Work Day**

Even strong leaders, at the right time, who use good methods and good tools to promote their cause, may need an occasional “kick start” to keep them energized and moving. For the past two years, it seems as if this energizer is Bike to Work Day Winnipeg. This event is a collaborative effort between Bike to the Future, municipal government, other active transportation organizations, ecological organizations, and private sponsors.

Interview participants believed this event has had a large role to play in the ‘mainstreaming’ of bicycle transportation in Winnipeg. Many interview participants spoke about Bike to Work Day as one of the successes with which they have been involved. One person summarized it this way:

It was a really fun day. What was fun about it was cycling to work and seeing people on the street... You see people crossing a bridge, and they're waving at you and they're giving out food, and the sun was shining and then you all get together and you meet at the Forks and it was this inaugural event and there was this excitement in the air that wasn't about cycling necessarily, it was about bringing communities together and doing something that was completely enjoyable. AND it was the first time I cycled over the Maryland Bridge on the road. So that was a big deal for me (Interview 12).

This participant mentioned a number of significant things about this event. First, it helped her get on the road, and helped her become more comfortable with her transportation

mode. Second, it celebrated the enjoyment stemming from riding one's bike, and from meeting together as a community of citizens who would like to see the viability of cycle commuting increased. This same participant also spoke about the way in which this event was organized and advertised:

It was not adversarial...it's a gentle way of trying to promote an alternate mode of transportation. And it was just engaging in the giveaways, the media leading up to it, in the why we want to do this and all the messages around it made it successful. The media coverage made it successful... And getting a bunch of the decision makers out on their bikes also made it successful. And another thing that made it successful was the idea and the enthusiasm from Bike to the Future. Because that was really the nucleus of where the work happened. It was the City that funded it, but the enthusiasm from that group, because that's where the idea originated (Interview 12).

In addition to being a collaborative effort promoting cycling in Winnipeg, the quotation above suggests Bike to Work Day is also an example of the many power resources and power structures at work. The power of language was used through media attention, and the power of knowledge was present in the organizational prowess found in the organizing committee.

Political powers were exemplified through diplomatic efforts to obtain City support. These were also seen as decision makers took to their bikes to promote cycle commuting. The power of place was very present with the participant as she experienced the community atmosphere at the pancake breakfast, and as she felt comfortable on a bridge (normally an intimidating choke point for bicycles) for the first time. Finally, both hierarchical and heterarchical power structures were present, through City funding and support, and through the networking and organizing efforts of Bike to the Future.

Although this is not mentioned in the above quote, market power also played a role, as private sponsorship was needed to secure enough funding to make this day

happen. During Bike to Work Day 2009, the power of the gathering (a power agent not present in the literature review framework, but present in the interviews) was exemplified in the “Bike Waves” riding downtown from four different suburban areas of Winnipeg. At four specific places, or “Oases,” commuter cyclists were encouraged to gather together. These cyclists then rode downtown together. This enabled more novice cyclists to feel safer, because this group of cyclists was more visible than just one person.

Bike to Work Day is a collaborative effort that has existed for two successful years. The challenges for this event, however, are similar to those of Bike to the Future. Many dedicated volunteers have put much effort and energy into this annual event, and there are concerns about volunteer burnout. In addition, increased advertising in 2009 saw slight decreases in registration, which is also a concern. Although more people may be commuting on bicycle on a regular basis, as was suggested by one of the participants, there may not be interest in one specific day where cycle commuters can celebrate together.

#### **4.4 Analysis: Significance and Challenges**

This final Analysis section outlines interview participants’ ideas of the successes and significance of Bike to the Future. In addition, it discusses some of the challenges participants think Bike to the Future is facing or will face.

##### **4.4.1 Significance**

First, Bike to the Future has brought together a community of citizens who are working for better active transportation infrastructure. In some cases, these people were already working for change, and in other cases, this organization’s formation catalyzed people

who were concerned, but did not know where to begin.

It creates a place, it edifies an idea. Edifies a community, it's a recognition that it exists, it's a force to be reckoned with, there's something there. It doesn't matter what it's called or what it does or anything, it's just that it exists that makes it really important (Interview 2).

Well there was a need and I think that there's a lot of people who have been doing some cycling advocacy in the city for a long time but they haven't been coordinated. And Bike to the Future has provided a forum, an open space for them to come and work as part of a larger organization. And the organization is bigger than the people that are involved and has its own reputation and its own clout and there's a lot of energy that people put into Bike to the Future. The people that are involved at the core are super passionate about it. I would probably not be there if it wasn't for the people. Not because I don't see the need, but the work that I do is to enable them to do the advocacy that they're doing. That's how I see this role (Interview 10).

Second, interview participants thought Bike to the Future has provided significant community leadership, and credited it for providing a space where different organizations and people can join together under an overarching goal. All participating organizations have their distinct mandate, but they realize that supporting this wider vision helps them achieve their goals as well.

I know our board and our members see Bike to the Future as the leader in this area, and providing support to the leaders is what we see as the most effective way of doing business. We don't have to reinvent the wheel, Bike to the Future has done that (Interview 6).

[Bike to the Future is important for] providing a single point of contact, and the most cohesive voice for cycling. Representing the community in a formal way at budget meetings, council meetings, making presentations to municipal and provincial governments. The strength there is having committee members who have enough flexibility in their life to be able to devote time to do that, which I presume one of your questions will deal with challenges and I think that's one coming up for the organization (Interview 5).

But I think one of the biggest successes is working with all these other groups now. We've got a great network, that's huge, so that's a great success. I don't feel like I'm doing it on my own anymore. So that's a success; raising money's a success; raising awareness is a success (Interview 9).

Third, Bike to the Future has the ability to communicate in a strong, creative, and yet not



intimidating manner. Many interview participants mentioned the organization's name as an asset. Others spoke about the non-confrontational and fun way in which this organization plans events, and gathers and shares information.

Timely press releases, having some fun with it, like the name Bike to the Future is fun in itself, doing things like theatre at the forums, even just the forum itself as an event, those are media-catching things in itself. Like biking with the policy document [to City Hall]. Coming up with specific policies...I think Bike to the Future has been great, whenever they are communicating, to be specific about what they want (Interview 4).

Well the name [has helped Bike to the Future catch people's attention. Also] legitimate spokespeople who while they are passionate are not zealots. And I think, I don't know if there is a cohesive communication or marketing strategy. Whether or not there is, there's a reliable presence at meaningful events. I think this has positioned the organization as an authority, like there's something serious about this (Interview 5).

[T]hey don't make many mistakes. There are other groups that I've worked with in the past that make the mistake of upsetting politicians and being too hard to work with. And it's very hard to change things once they've made that mistake, but they haven't made that mistake in my opinion (Interview 8).

I think making cycling advocacy accessible through having a forum that's fun, provides child-minding, is located downtown on bus and bike routes, has bike parking. And a website that is easy to use and is informative. And openness generally, like if I felt like I had more time I could show up at meetings, I know that the invitation's there (Interview 5).

#### 4.4.2 Challenges

1. A first challenge identified by interview participants is a wider struggle connected to Winnipeg's Car Culture. It is a continuing challenge to gain legitimacy with populations who do not see the bicycle as a form of transportation.

I think a big [challenge] is a majority of the population not really thinking that bikes should be on the street. Even when people aren't opposed to cycling and cyclists...I think the general attitude is that streets are for cars and human-powered transportation should just be on a different type of roadway...In that sense I think that one of the biggest barriers is the general attitude that streets are for cars, whether it's the traffic engineer or the person who is frustrated because they think they should be going faster. Just the other day there were some kids

crossing the street with their bikes and this guy lays on the horn and there's this sense of entitlement. I think that is going to be a big barrier in the long term. That's a cultural challenge (Interview 4).

I think that the biggest issue is, from an outsider's point of view, that issues that affect cyclists really affect a fringe segment of our populations, that commuter cyclists are really crazy, and so the public perception is "if there's so few of them, why does it matter?" That's something we need to get over and that's rapidly happening. There's more and more people using commuter cycling as a form of transportation and recreation. And they're not all nuts, you know? (Interview 6)

The other is that I think there might be a tension between advocacy and being co-opted. I think right now is one of those tension points. The IKEA thing is one such example. I can see it from both sides. I know that Bike to the Future wanted to really lay down the law regarding bike parking and the rightness or wrongness of that aside, the decision was 'do we speak against this, or do we try to work during the design phase to come up with an integrated design? Like are we a part of the process or are we an advocate outside of the process? (Interview 5)

2. A second challenge also connects with wider societal issues. As is the case in all cities, those who advocate for policy changes are dependent on decision-makers. Bike to the Future operates in a city where cycling is making its way onto the agendas of City Council, but this change happens slowly. Once City Council makes its decisions, countless other departments must understand active transportation concepts to put forth creative solutions that will benefit citizens.

[There is a] seasonal decision-making schedule. The best cycling weather, as far as everybody is concerned, all the councilors and the mayor and everybody is off. They make all their planning, decisions, just before the winter, so there's this sense of impending doom....If everybody was in their shorts, having an iced tea, sitting around a picnic table, talking about what to spend money on, it'd be a no-brainer I think. There would be tons of bridges for bikes and pedestrians I think, and all kinds of things....The fact that the decision-makers in general are not cyclists, that's difficult because [cycling is] simple to understand but you have to do it to understand (Interview 2).

If you get the politicians to understand it, what you need now is to get the transportation engineers to understand it. Because this is a whole new world...to develop a quality Active Transportation solution, not a patchwork solution. So the

expertise, the City expertise for transportation engineers, we need to grow that. [Another challenge is] the City's whole approach to the environment, and to sustainability. Now we've had this whole sustainability forum that came up, which is lovely, but we'll see what happens because it all costs money and it's all priorities (Interview 9).

3. A third challenge is related to the working relationships formed with decision-makers.

Some participants wondered if current diplomatic efforts were beginning to fail, and were worried about maintaining the positive relationships they had built. One participant voiced concerns in this way:

I worry about whether we will end up being confrontational if the agenda doesn't move at the speed that we want it to move at. I think we've done a very good job of being quietly critical when things don't go our way.... But if we don't have any success at that level, how are we going to get it? Do we take ourselves down to a lower common denominator if we don't succeed, are we going to turn off the politicians as opposed to hold hands with them? I worry about that....But you do want to be forceful enough to say, you know if you don't really do what we're advocating for you to do, we need to sort of "out" them on this issue. I'm worried about how we do that (Interview 6).

And I wonder whether a history of confrontation is something that.... I don't know how real it is, but needing to manage how the community and BTTF is perceived, whether they are a thorn in the side or an ally for better development, things like that. It's subtle and relatively minor, but it could be more significant in the future (Interview 5).

4. A fourth challenge is also a social challenge. Many organizations struggle with social marketing and citizen engagement on large scales.

That's the other challenge, to get our message out to the public to call their elected officials and tell them what they want. I don't think people realize how much impact a bunch of people getting together can have. When you look at what percentage votes....that 20 or 30 per cent really have a big influence on what happens! (Interview 9)

I had just thought of the general apathy in society. I think everyone is passionate about some things but there's very few people who are politically motivated or that know how to make their voices heard at a civic level (Interview 11).

5. A fifth challenge is less reflective of political climates, and focus more on organizational climates. For example, Bike to the Future is a volunteer organization relying heavily on its volunteers. Currently, there is a lot of energy and momentum surrounding this topic, but many participants voiced fears that members and volunteers will eventually lose interest or energy, and cease to be involved.

The thing is, what happens when that becomes an institution, and how do they ask people to get involved, because we're going nowhere if you don't get involved. How do you keep it fresh in that sense. But the concerns are way less than the actual positives, because there are so many things that have been formalized as part of cooperating groups (Interview 2).

Well, as they become the single voice....[I worry about] the ability of those committed volunteers to do what they are so good at and what has stood the organization in good stead, I imagine that that will become compromised (Interview 5).

I worry....about the change in leadership because we are not always going to be the same people in the same roles. We don't really have time to be invested in the same way as we sometimes are. I worry about burnout...(Interview 11)

6. A sixth challenge involves how organizations can continue to do their work while expanding their web of relationships with all potential stakeholders. As Bike to the Future gains legitimacy and a voice, there are always risks that some voices who contribute, or who would contribute to this organization could be alienated. Although this alienation may not compromise organizational influence, it is important to acknowledge existing power dynamics despite inclusive efforts like consensus decision-making and participatory meeting formats.

I like it when people can agree, but when people don't agree it's nice when they can come together and still respect each others' points of view. Dissensus, more than consensus, where if you didn't agree you could do whatever you want, as long as it didn't affect others in a negative way. There is always this friction between individual and collectives. That's tough (Interview 3).

Lack of a coherent voice is something that Bike to the Future has gone a long way to resolve, but I still think we still have a hard time trying to speak for all cyclists. And I don't know if that's the end goal or a reasonable goal but there's a perception amongst some people that as a commuter organization, Bike to the Future speaks mostly for people who wear colourful windbreakers and have panniers. And I wonder if connecting with the average family on their Saturday afternoon outing is an important next challenge. Especially when you hear that every route is an active transportation route, it's like a part of a vision of a future city. You know, trying to draw people together, even if you can't speak for them, trying to include them in your constituency somehow (Interview 5).

There's definitely some groups that are missing, the voices of some people that are missing from the Bike to the Future table. We're all white and middle class, mostly men. Most of us are between 30 and 50 so that 20-year age range. There's a lot of [Type] A personalities, a lot of very strong personalities. There's no aboriginal voice, there's no voice of colour, there's no youth voice, there's not really even a senior voice. I think that we don't lose those people in our conversations because of Anders, his connections to the community groups, and I work with youth. And I think that we think about that as part of the advocacy that we do (Interview 11).

The quote above acknowledges certain demographics, representatives of which are currently not participating in Bike to the Future. This suggests power analysis, and a discussion on power dynamics and participation within the organization may be warranted.

#### **4.5 Summary**

The previous pages have outlined interview results and analysis. Comments from participants connected to the power framework outlined in the literature review, and these comments helped deepen understanding about how Bike to the Future has worked together with other organizations to promote active transportation infrastructure in Winnipeg.

Further analysis of these interviews resulted in four observations: Bike to the Future's success can be attributed to a combination of strong leaders, great timing, collaborative means, and participatory and empowering methods of information-gathering and communication.

## **5 Chapter Five: Conclusions**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter Five summarizes research, and includes recommendations and lessons learned from the experience of Bike to the Future. Also included in this chapter are questions for further research and concluding statements.

### **5.2 Literature Review**

The literature review consists of two parts, both of which provide background reasoning and a theoretical base for the methods used by Bike to the Future to make their voices heard. These two parts also answer the research question about how power has figured into planning literature, outlined in Chapter One of this thesis. To do this, the first part discusses major representation of power in planning literature. Although the power resources discussed are themselves structural in nature, they are also defined as non-neutral entities *through which* power is channeled. These include the power of language, knowledge, place, and political and market powers. Power structures involve specific ways in which power is exercised, and these are hierarchical and heterarchical or networking powers.

The second part of the literature review unpacks the concept of heterarchical and networking structures, and connects these structures to collaborative planning theory and strategic networking. Discussions of the ‘nested’ diagram indicate how collaboration influences social networking, which influences strategic networking and communication. This second part also outlines seemingly competitive values of autonomy and interdependence, and the power struggles facing many groups.

### **5.3 Research Findings and Analysis**

Research for this project involved press and media searches to uncover cycling histories in Winnipeg, as well as participant observation and semi-structured interviews with key informants. This information was analyzed and compiled into a case study, which discussed how Bike to the Future has used heterarchical and networking powers to gain influence in decision-making realms. Results were arranged to reflect the second research question outlined in Chapter One of this thesis. This question asks how power has affected change-making processes, and how Bike to the Future has facilitated voice-finding for citizens and cyclists.

Research suggested that Bike to the Future has gained a name and has gained influence with Winnipeg's decision-makers, but it has only been able to do so through the work of dedicated individuals and passionate community groups, who have chosen to support each other and/or work collaboratively with each other, despite their individual mandates and autonomous existence.

These groups have come together and agreed on an overarching message: citizens want safe and connected cycling infrastructure, both on and off the road, so transportation options and general quality of life can increase. Such infrastructure could help make people healthier, reduce congestion, decrease road wear, and increase travel enjoyment. Because of this wide mandate, many different groups have been able to support diplomatic efforts and requests for on- and off-road active transportation infrastructure.

### **5.4 Recommendations and Lessons Learned**

Although Bike to the Future has a specific vision involving the creation of cycling infrastructure and the promotion of the bicycle as a legitimate form of transportation, the



following lessons centre on planning and the work of community groups. Because of this, they are applicable to other audiences. These lessons and recommendations, taught through the collaborative work of Bike to the Future and other active transportation organizations, acknowledge the value and work of both diplomatic efforts and countercultural movements. They also answer a final research question outlined in Chapter One, regarding what lessons can be learned about power in planning. The first three explicitly address power dynamics, whereas power analysis is more implicit in the remaining lessons.

### **1. Foster both individual leadership and collaborative efforts**

The collaborative work of Bike to the Future and other active transportation organizations features power structures of both hierarchical and heterarchical or networking power. Although many may be suspicious of top-down power structures, these structures are not inherently bad. The work of two individuals, who are often the sole spokespeople for their organizations, were both mentioned by most interview participants. These two may use hierarchical power structures, but they do so in a way that acknowledges others and seeks out cooperative and collaborative opportunities.

I would owe our political success to [two individuals]. They're not representative of Bike to the Future necessarily, but they're at the front of the pack in terms of building those bridges for us. At a city level for sure, and I would owe our provincial success in part to Anders [Swanson, of One Green City and Janice [Lukes, from the Winnipeg Trails Association] but I think Bike to the Future, like Jeremy [Hull from the Provincial Committee] or Mark [Cohoe from the City Committee], could take a bit more credit for that.... (Interview 11).

The leadership provided by these individuals is clearly valuable. This value, however, is expanded and heightened through collaboration with other individual leaders and organizations.

## **2. Compromise and be diplomatic**

Lesson four drew the reader's attention to the disappointments that inevitably occurring during advocacy efforts. Compromise and flexibility are necessary to maintain energy levels when one's work is ignored. During these times, representatives from Bike to the Future have continued to make personal connections, and continued to state their concerns in a non-threatening and authoritative manner. One participant recalled an early presentation given by one of Bike to the Future's founders:

I remember when Molly [McCracken, co-founder of Bike to the Future] came to a Public Works meeting, and was very complimentary to the City and politicians...they want to be told what they're doing right. And that was said. Molly raised it very well, she said 'when you have a diamond lane as a designated bus lane but also it's designated for cyclists as well, often the largest vehicle doesn't want to travel on the road with the smallest vehicle, or the smallest vehicle doesn't want to travel with the largest'. And the way she said it, not like 'we can't believe this is what you're doing' and that helped (Interview 12).

The issue of diplomacy has been discussed at meetings, and members continue to agree that Bike to the Future's role is to maintain relationships with policy and decision makers.

## **3. Both “sanctioned” and “unsanctioned” actions and initiatives have a role to play.**

The above paragraphs outline the importance of diplomacy and compromise, which are socially acceptable or “sanctioned” methods used by groups or individuals to get their voices heard. One idea emerging during interviews, however, surrounded the role played by more “unsanctioned” methods used by some. The term “Critical Mass” was mentioned 48 times in 12 interviews. Most of these participants mentioned the unconventional demonstration methods of Critical Mass, and linked the cycling controversies and events

of 2006 with the formation of Bike to the Future. Without this work, Bike to the Future may not have had as much influence as it does today. Some comments about how the unconventional attention-getting techniques of Critical Mass spurred the formation of Bike to the Future are as follows:

So I guess it was mainly the critical mass crowd that started it, but then lots of Manitoba Cycling Association members followed... (Interview 1)

I think Critical Mass had a lot to do with it because it shows that people are adamant enough that those people who are not willing to be diplomatic about the truth are going to do something about it anyways if you don't start acting (Interview 2).

Bike to the Future indirectly formed out of Critical Mass. So I think this was really important because it brought cycling to the forefront and opened the way for a lot of other things to happen (Interview 3).

Maybe it's just the timing but it seemed like Bike to the Future came out of these critical mass events. If that's the case then I think it played an important role (Interview 4).

...Bike to the Future really came from the Critical Mass...so you wouldn't want to go back to the CM mentality (Interview 6)

But specifically the whole cycling advocacy really started...with the critical mass people. It was really controversial...And then after that, out of that, came the Bike to the Future movement ...And since then I believe the City's taken a lot of different steps and I think that advocacy has been really effective (Interview 7).

I think that the media attention around the Critical Mass got it into peoples' perspective (Interview 10).

Although some interview participants were clearly uncomfortable with the “unsanctioned” methods of Critical Mass, this collection of cyclists did play a significant role in Bike to the Future's work. One is reminded of Miraftab's comments on insurgent planning. She suggests planners look beyond the “sanctioned spaces of participation” to include innovative methods and practices from grass roots actors (Miraftab, 2009, 41).

#### **4. Engage multiple groups, and work toward a broad collective goal**

The many groups (outlined in Appendix A) mentioned by the interview participants indicate the “web” of connections around active transportation advocacy in Winnipeg is wide. As was stated previously, each of these organizations is autonomous, and has their distinct mandate, whether it is focused on health, sport, recreation, transportation, creative imagination, or ecology. The collective goal informally established by these organizations, however, is to promote safe and connected cycling infrastructure in Winnipeg. Each of these organizations joins and contributes to initiatives according to their abilities and interest level. The contributions of these groups create powerful synergy. As one participant noted,

There’s nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come...and the time is now for Active Transportation in Winnipeg and I think that Bike to the Future helped to catalyze that but is also a result of that. So it’s hard to say what successes are attributable to Bike to the Future because I don’t think Bike to the Future would be as successful without Resource Conservation Manitoba, without Winnipeg Trails Association, without One Green City, without the community cycling groups that One Green City put together, and Natural Cycle (Interview 11).

#### **5. Seek “galvanizing” events and opportunities and diverge when necessary:**

As was mentioned in Lesson 2 above, each organization joins initiatives according to their abilities and level of connection to the event. Certain events and initiatives involving Bike to the Future, such as Bike to Work Day and the creation of the 2008 Cycling Map, have involved many diverse partners. Others have involved fewer partners. This corresponds with Pfeiffer (2002)’s guideline for the “optimal degree of integration” for balancing autonomy and synergy is “as much integration as possible, as much differentiation as necessary” (Pfeiffer, 2002, 11).

These integrative opportunities, however, must be approached with caution. Miraftab speaks about insurgent planning, and warns that celebration of collaborative processes must still remain critical about the complexities facing ideals of inclusion and social change (Miraftab, 2009, 39). Even positive processes are still subject to power dynamics, and these must be named and worked against.

## **6. Get your voices heard as early as possible**

Like many other advocacy organizations, Bike to the Future has had both successes and disappointments. A most recent example occurred during the unveiling of the Rapid Transit plans for Winnipeg. As plans were unveiled, Bike to the Future participants in City and Provincial committees discovered a major gap in access points to the active transportation infrastructure included in this project.

These representatives took action, writing letters, speaking with leaders in this project, but plans were already in motion. This was a valuable lesson, which other groups have already learned. Randy Neufeld, Chief Strategy Officer for the Active Transportation Alliance in Chicago, Illinois, states:

Policy success...is maximized by institutionalizing the idea of biking in the planning process. Wherever possible, it is essential for a bike voice to be heard from the beginning, so that biking is incorporated into the vision of the policy. When biking advocacy enters the process at a later stage, it inevitably creates problems for the planners (Wray, 2008, 119).

In this frustrating Winnipeg circumstance, advocates decided to learn from this disappointing experience. As one participant stated,

It's easy to get frustrated...but that's just throwing a temper tantrum, it's not taking a step back and taking a deep breath and saying, "ok we lost that battle but we're still in the war..." It's like Anders [Swanson from One Green City] said, if your neighbour is building a deck and he's got all the materials and all the plans and he's been working on it for two years and you're like "I don't like your

deck,” he’s going to be like “well, I’m ready to build it next weekend so \*\*\*\* off.” But then next time, your neighbour might come and say “hey, I’m going to build a shed, let’s find something that works for both of us. Now they know we’re there and we have energy and want to give input, and we know these things. You already see that a little bit, when people are coming to us. But like with anything, the proof will be in the pudding... (Interview 11)

## **7. Remember that change usually happens slowly.**

The patient and diligent work of Bike to the Future and other cycling advocates has had an effect, but there is still a long way to go to make Winnipeg a cycling city. Cycle commuters may have, and may still seem to be on the margins of transportation and transportation planning. Many cyclists may like this unique role, but a public acceptance of cycle transport is important. As one interview participant stated,

One of the other things, besides the environment being on a lot of people’s minds, maybe cycling is being more mainstreamed, and maybe cyclists aren’t seen as the oddballs that they used to be seen as (Interview 1).

This particular participant has been working patiently for more than a decade on cycling advocacy issues. Although concrete results may be few and far between, it is important to remember that, despite its slow speed, change can happen.

## **8. Stir peoples’ creative imagination and have fun!**

Even before Bike to the Future was formed, cycling advocates have been creative, and had fun with statements and events. Critical Mass events often have a celebratory feel; people are encouraged to dress up. The SPIN rides of 2006 were also parade-like and festive. More recently, the mapping work of One Green City has sparked the imagination of many Winnipeggers, and has creatively shown the public how cycling infrastructure could be incorporated into major routes.

In addition to this, the three annual cycling forums have featured a cycling skit incorporating characters from the popular “Back to the Future” movies, and the reports emerging from these forums have been biked to the doors of City Hall and the Provincial Legislature. These and other creative initiatives may have caused City Councilor Jenny Gerbasi to call Bike to the Future “perhaps the most successful community lobby group in memory.” These initiatives may also help keep spirits high when one’s requests are ignored, or when change does not happen quickly enough.

### **9. Plan for change – Engage in Succession Planning**

One of the challenges on the forefront of many interview participants’ minds reflected their concerns for the longevity of Bike to the Future and its work. Many talented people have been working diligently since 2006 (or before), often in addition to full-time employment. A volunteer-run organization is only as strong as its volunteers, and so it is necessary to plan for a time when energy and people-power may cease. Participants commented:

You’ve got a lot of people doing a lot of work, and for various reasons people burn out or they have to give it up. Are we empowering people who want to get involved quickly enough that they are interested and get challenged? Succession planning, if it’s done right, continues the growth of an organization, if it’s not we risk extinction (Interview 6).

I worry about succession planning, about the change in leadership because we are not always going to be the same people in the same roles. We don’t really have time to be invested in the same way as we sometimes are. I worry about burnout (Interview 11)

The risk of extinction is real for volunteer-run organizations. Although there is still much momentum for cycling advocacy in Winnipeg, it is important to plan for volunteer turnover, and for changes in the amount of work that can be accomplished.

## 5.5 Future Research Questions

The following questions have emerged during planning, research, and analysis stages of this project. They are as follows:

1. When looking at the power dynamics and general construction of Bike to the Future, one realizes this organization consists of members who are predominantly white, younger or middle aged, middle class, and male. Cyclists may have a marginalized voice in planning, but it can be assumed members of this organization are not typically part of any other marginalized groups. How has this affected the efficacy of this organization, and how does the advocacy work of similarly constructed organizations contrast with the work of other organizations consisting of people who have traditionally been denied a decision-making voice?
2. Similarly, is there a link between those who participate in consultations and those who benefit from public input? Whose voices are removed from cycling advocacy conversations? How can the voices of other marginalized populations better contribute to this conversation?
3. In Section 3.5.1, one interview participant spoke about the prevalence of competition and different organizational factions in other cities. In Winnipeg, it seems as if active transportation groups have generally avoided this type of competition and have instead chosen to work collaboratively. Is cooperation



amongst different groups unique to Winnipeg, and what are the circumstances influencing this process?

4. Although it did not show up in during the interview process (because of the interview questions or because of the topic itself), an emerging area of study involves the organizational capabilities and potential of online social networking. Blogs, social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, and simple tools such as email list serves can reach increasingly wider audiences. What do these tools have to contribute to community planning and activism? At the same time, how do these tools contribute to the continued marginalization of specific demographics?
5. This project focused on how citizens were using networking powers to influence government actors and those holding political power. Given the market powers held by the automobile industry and other lobby groups, how can citizens influence changes in the marketplace and in economic realms? Similarly, how can they garner media attention, and use communications powers to their advantage?
6. On page 109, powers of the gathering were mentioned as being a unique power agent, distinct from heterarchical power structures. Here, power is held within a gathered group of citizens. How can existing theories on collaboration, power analysis, and collective behaviours be combined to form a new, insightful and emergent theory on group dynamics and collaboration? An example of one such

work is Roschelle and Teasley's works on shared knowledge and problem solving.

## **5.6 Final Summary**

The work of Bike to the Future has shown that influence can be strengthened when all power types—powers of knowledge, language, place, and political and market powers – are used. Both power structures, hierarchical and heterarchical or networking powers, are also assets.

Bike to the Future and other environmental and active transportation organizations connected to its mandate have shown that to be most effective, these resources and structures must be used cooperatively and collaboratively. Ownership over initiatives can be shared; the most important thing is that all groups work to promote a shared vision, one wide enough to capture multiple interests. Healey's description of collaborative processes seems to describe the current work of this organization. She says these processes:

...should be recognized by the involvement of multiple actors in new combinations and new arenas. They come together through recognizing mutual dependencies. They are prepared to be power-equalising within their working practices, granting mutual respect and listening to their participants. They draw on and mix together experiential and 'localised' knowledge, with systematized scientific and technical knowledge. They generate knowledge and power by collective learning and by mobilizing attention, and hence have the capacity to innovate. (Healey, 2006, 332).

Because of its ability to engage wide audiences, recognize interdependence, and connect the different types of knowledge and expertise, Bike to the Future can be held as a positive example of collaborative processes. Even though this organization is susceptible to volunteer schedules and burnout, its networking potential and networking powers are strong. These will continue to be assets to this organization's evolution.

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## 7 Appendices

### 7.1 Appendix A: Partnerships and contributing groups

Many individuals or groups were identified during the interviews as having a meaningful connection to cycling advocacy in Winnipeg. These have been:

- The Bike Dump
- Destination Winnipeg
- Downtown Business Improvement Zone (BIZ)
- Climate Change Connection
- City of Winnipeg (Active Transportation Advisory Committee, Council)
- Critical Mass
- John Buhler
- Manitoba Cycling Association
- Manitoba Eco-Network
- Manitoba Naturalists' Society
- Manitoba Public Insurance
- Marr Consulting
- Mountain Equipment Co-op
- Natural Cycle
- North Winnipeg Commuter Cyclists
- One Green City
- Orioles Bike Cage
- Physical Activity Coalition of MB
- Prologica Research
- Resource Conservation Manitoba
- Running Room
- Sanctoral Cycle (CMU bike co-op)
- Stewardship groups of the 27 recreational trails in Winnipeg
- Susan Freig and Associates
- SPIN ride organizers
- University of Manitoba bike co-op
- The United Way
- West Central Commuter Cyclists
- Winnipeg Rapid Transit Coalition
- Winnipeg Trails Association

## 7.2 Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

### Interview Guide; Questions and notes

1. Why do you bike/why do you think cycling is important?
2. How long, and in what capacity, have you been involved in cycling advocacy in Winnipeg (or beyond)?
3. What inspired you to get involved?
4. What are some of the challenges that face Winnipeg's cycling community?
5. What are some of the cycling-successes in which you have participated?
6. What made these successful?
7. How has your work intersected with that of Bike to the Future?
8. What are the contributions of Bike to the Future to cycling in Winnipeg?
9. What do you think has made Bike to the Future "catch the attention" of both policy makers and citizens?
10. How have other cycling or Active Transportation organizations contributed to Winnipeg cycling advocacy? How does their work intersect with Bike to the Future's?
11. What are some of the challenges facing Bike to the Future/what worries you about this organizations' future?
12. What is your personal vision for cycling in Winnipeg? How could this vision be realized?

### 7.3 Appendix C: Informed Consent Forms

#### Statement of Informed Consent – provided on University of Manitoba Letterhead

Thank you for participating in this interview! I am grateful that you were willing to help out with this research. The following form is a consent form that I will ask you to sign. It describes research I am conducting as part of my Master's thesis through the University of Manitoba's department of City Planning. This includes the necessary paragraphs (written in 9 pt. bold) from the University of Manitoba's Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board.

**This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.**

The purpose of this research is to explore in-depth the history and accomplishments of Bike to the Future (BTFF). This interview is part of a series of interviews (fourteen or less) with identical questions. It will consist of a conversation that relates to who you are, why are involved with BTFF, and what you think are this organization's accomplishments. These interviews will be analyzed and incorporated into my Master's thesis as well as any articles or presentations that may result from this project. **I will leave my contact information at the bottom of this page. If you wish to access the results of this study, or read a summary of your comments, please email or call me.**

This one-time interview will take less than one hour of your time and, with your permission, I will record it with a tape recorder and transcribe it after our conversation. **If permission is not granted, I will take handwritten notes.** After this is done, the tape will be erased. **The transcribed interviews, handwritten notes, and all data stored on my computer will be erased once the project has been completed.** Benefits include the satisfaction that you have helped with research pertaining to what we believe is an important event. Risks associated with this research are equal to everyday risks associated with crossing the street, consuming food and/or drink in a restaurant, etc.

Your confidentiality is important. When writing my Major Degree Project, I will not use your name or title, and at no point and time will I tell anyone that you were one of the people interviewed. Whether or not you choose to tell anyone about the interview, and/or whom you choose to tell is strictly your decision. Despite these efforts at confidentiality, your involvements and affiliations might make you recognizable by some.

**Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.**

My name is Karin Kliewer, my email address is [Kjkliewer@gmail.com](mailto:Kjkliewer@gmail.com), and my phone number is (204) 414.8878. My advisor is Rae Bridgman. She can be reached at [bridgman@cc.umanitoba.ca](mailto:bridgman@cc.umanitoba.ca), (204) 474.7179 (phone) or (204) 474.7532 (fax). Margaret Bowman, the Human Ethics Coordinator of the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board can be reached at [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca), (204) 474.7122 (phone) or (204) 269.7173.

**This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca). A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.**

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Participant's Signature

Date

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Researcher's Signature