# Inclusive Cities: The Quest for Participatory Planning in a Cultural Mosaic

BY

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# THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

# **FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

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# **Abstract**

There is significant discussion in planning theory regarding the need for a respect for diversity in Canadian society. Despite this discussion there remains a lack of information available to guide planners toward more inclusive practice. This paper explores how to translate theories of diversity into practice for the field of participatory planning.

A qualitative research strategy was employed, including a literature review and interviews based upon a single case study. The case study examined is a participatory planning and design process undertaken by the University of Winnipeg toward the development of its campus and community development plan. Through the participatory process, the University of Winnipeg attempted to involve members of the diverse campus community as well as residents and business leaders in the ethnically and economically diverse neighbourhoods that surround the university.

The paper provides a discussion of lessons learned and considerations when undertaking participatory planning process with a diverse public. Lessons learned include, *location matters*, *time is limited*, *language is important*, *difference cannot be brushed aside*, *personal relationships are key*, *and outreach and reevaluation are continuously necessary*.

Suggestions for future research are outlined in the final chapter. The documentation of the work of practicing planners and urban designers when engaging a diverse public is encouraged.

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## 1.0 Introduction

In the ideal democratic city, the walls have fallen...the vision is one of tolerance and diversity, shared values and complexity, not all for one, but the many for the all (Beauregard, R. & Body-Genrot, S, 2005, p.14)

#### 1.1 Introduction

Richard Sennet (1994) said that cities are places of human settlement where strangers can meet. Others muse of cities being social arenas where living, working and playing intersect. Some describe cities as messy places filled with conflict and resolution; of tribulations giving life and vitality to the city that can never be fully contained (Amin, Massey, & Thrift, 2000; Sandercock, 1998, 2003; Jacobs 1961). These romantic notions of the city form a utopian vision of what the city can be, if their residents are given room to flourish.

Nowhere is the struggle for the full recognition of its diverse residents more fully illustrated than in the modern multicultural city. Canada, in particular has undergone a transformation within the last twenty to thirty years whereby the major urban centres have become epicenters of multiculturalism. In 2001 Canada's foreign-born population reached its highest level in 70 years, reaching 18.4% of the total population (Andrew, 2004). This new immigrant population comes from increasingly diverse backgrounds, varying in concentration between and within the regions of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2001). As well, according to the 2001 census Canada's Aboriginal populations are on the rise, with a significant youth population (Statistics Canada 2001b). Currently, Aboriginal

communities comprise 4.4% of the total Canadian population, up from 3.8% in 1996 (Statistics Canada 2001b).

These, of course are merely the ethno-cultural differences that are present within our communities, they do not address the other changes and diversity of households and lifestyles that continuously occur. This actuality of a diverse nation has an impact upon the field of planning as well as the shape and form of urban centres. What is provided or needed, as well how services are delivered within the urban space, shifts and are altered by the presence of a variety of ethnicities, religions and lifestyles living within a shared geography.

Despite this growing diversity and Canada's federal commitment to multiculturalism, our cities seemingly lack full and equal representation in the shaping and guiding of our communities. We have created a mainstream discourse that purports to value diversity, yet the tangible results are still questionable. We need to move beyond 'why' cultural diversification to 'what, and how' (Dang, 2003). For the debate and celebration of difference to be embraced and move forward, planners need to take their place in the development of cities of engagement.

#### 1.2 Problem Statement

Within literature and anecdotally, there is significant discussion of Canadian cities becoming increasingly multicultural. This indicates recognition, in theory, that our diversity needs to be respected and harnessed for the realization of vibrant and

inclusive cities. At the same time, citizen engagement or participation is recognized as crucial to ensure policies and development projects are reflective of and accepted by constituents. This creates a dynamic whereby planners are charged with finding ever more creative measures to ensure participation is feasible for all in the community. Despite this discussion there remains a lack of information available to guide practicing planners toward more inclusive planning.

This leaves a central research question unanswered; how do we translate the theories of diversity into practice? To this end, the research explores the following key questions.

- 1. What methods or techniques are employed by planners and/or urban designers to engage citizens across cultural differences?
- 2. What are the limitations and successes of these methods?
- 3. What lessons can be drawn for the wider field of planning?

#### 1.3 Objectives

Even a cursory scan of the contemporary composition of Canada reveals that we are a diverse nation. Add to that a review of the literature which illustrates the value in respecting diversity and states that meaningful participation is essential to the success of any planning project, and yet with this knowledge there is still a lingering question; NOW WHAT? What do we do about it? How do we respond? Therein lies the central objective of this research; to understand how to translate theories of diversity into practice.

To begin, this research looks at the literature to provide context in multicultural theory, and moves on to examine planning with diversity and participatory planning techniques, as discussed in the literature. The review of these themes within the literature provides some insight into the tools and techniques employed by planners when engaging a diverse public.

The second phase of the research includes a closer look at the techniques of planners and designers working to engage a diverse public in the process of planning and design. This portion of the research includes interviews with leaders and participants in a participatory design process with the University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Corporation (UWCRC) toward the development of a Campus and Community Development plan. The purpose of this case study was to discover the successes and limitations of the process, as well as discover potential lessons to be drawn for the field of planning.

# 1.4 Biases

From the outset it needs to be clear that I do not have personal experience with living as a 'cultural minority'. As a young white female raised in a predominately Anglo-Saxon town, my early experiences did not reflect the diversity of Canada. Though I have since lived in and amongst diverse populations my identity as a member of the cultural majority has prevented me from fully experiencing the reality faced by new Canadians and other minorities in Canada. As a result, the lens from which I view the world may be seen as a hindrance for this project; as not fully understanding the experiences of those I purport to study. However, this

very criticism points to the need for this research project. As planners we need to develop this competency, no matter the cultural background we bring to the table. In any case, I am aware of the biases and worldviews that I hold, and continue to examine those that may arise or lay hidden. I hope to utilize my 'outsider' perspective in a positive way, seeking to maintain an open mind and learning from those I study.

#### 1.5 Limitations

As is the case with most research projects, time and financial resources placed restrictions upon this research study. These limitations reduced the amount of time and depth from which the case study could be examined. In particular, the research was unable to access community members who, though they were aware of the participatory design process hosted by the UWCRC, chose not to take part. This would have required significant canvassing of the community, which was beyond the time available to this researcher. As a result of these limitations some of the questions set out in the design of this research could not be answered to it's fullest. These limitations are discussed further in the concluding chapter.

In addition, given the distance the researcher was from the case study at the time of the fieldwork, some interviews had to be conducted over the telephone. This was also due to limited time and financial resources.

### 1.6 Significance of Proposed Research

Having the tools to respond and work effectively in diverse communities is a crucial aspect for practicing planners in our modern urban centres. In order for there to be meaningful participation in the shaping and guiding of our cities, planners must have the ability to successfully steer through difference.

Discovering and examining methods and techniques utilized by planners and urban designers who have had experience facilitating participation in diverse communities will provide guidance and lessons towards a 'best practice' framework.

Recognizing that each community will have a unique demographic that is inevitably in flux, this research does not provide a 'how-to' manual but rather a guiding framework of best practices. This practicum attempts to push beyond a theory of and respect for difference, towards a more solid understanding of what it means to work with difference. This understanding is crucial for planners and community members who strive toward an inclusive society. It is hoped that the knowledge gained through this practicum will aid in the development of processes that will begin to effectively translate design and development knowledge across language and culture. The ultimate vision is one where our cities begin to represent and resemble the rich tapestry that inhabits their borders.

# 1.7 Organization of Practicum

This paper is organized into seven chapters. Following the introduction, chapter two outlines the research methods employed for this practicum. It outlines the rationale for the qualitative interviews undertaken as well the analysis conducted.

Chapter three explores the available literature relevant to this research. It begins by exploring the concept of multiculturalism, its pitfalls as well as the emerging discourse on post-multiculturalism. The review goes on to examine communication and dialogue in planning through the dominant planning theory of collaborative planning. From here the review moves towards more practical ends through the exploration of participatory planning literature. It follows this section up with a discussion of the practice of planning in multicultural communities.

Finally, it concludes by tying these sections together and discussing some of the challenges faced by practicing planners when working with diverse publics.

The description of the case study is laid out in chapter four. This chapter provides the reader with an understanding of the planning and design process that led to the Campus and Community Development Plan. In addition, background and demographic information for the University of Winnipeg and the surrounding neighbourhoods are discussed.

Chapters five and six provide an analysis of the case study and lessons learned for the field of planning. Chapter five provides a review of the interview findings and a discussion of key themes. Chapter six discusses several lessons drawn from the literature and case study for practicing planners working in ever-growing multicultural communities.

The final chapter provides a summary of the research. The concluding chapter discusses some of the limitations of the research and offers suggestions for future research.

# 2.0 Research Methods

This study is intended to delve deeper into a subject that has received some previous attention. For this reason, qualitative research was determined to be the best orientation or approach. Janesick (2004) explains qualitative work as holistic, attempting to "understand the whole picture of the social context under study" (p. 7). Miles and Huberman (1994) note that qualitative data focuses upon people's lived experiences and connects these individual meanings and perspectives to the wider social world (p. 10).

Given the aims of this research to understand more fully how to translate the theories of diversity into practice, interviews were determined as the most effective research instrument. Semi-structured interviews, in particular allow for the exploration of personal thoughts and experiences of the participant, while the interviewer provides direction. Zeisel (1984) adds that interviews in particular allow for an in-depth examination of a situation, from the perspective of the interviewee. In addition, interviews enable the researcher to fill in the gaps of knowledge and dig in deeper to investigate complex issues, as well as explore a variety of experiences and opinions (Dunn, 2000).

#### 2.1 Data Collection

In order to answer the research questions outlined in the introduction of this thesis, the research involved multiple stages. The first stage consisted of a

literature review followed by primary data collection derived from two different sets of interviews.

The literature review focuses on examining various theories and perspectives in the context of participatory planning theory in diverse communities. These perspectives are summarized and considered for the development of lessons and guidance to be utilized for more effective participatory methods in diverse communities. The literature review also provides a basis to inform the interview questions.

The interviews focus on a single case study from Winnipeg. The exploration of this case study allows for an in-depth look at a specific process designed to engage a diverse community in the planning and design of a neighbourhood redevelopment plan. Taking this closer look through the involvement of various stakeholders in the research study allows multiple perspectives to emerge (Slim and Thompson, 1995). The aim of this case study research was to discover how well these techniques are or could be applied to participatory planning at the neighbourhood level in Canadian cities.

The first step of this case study was to interview university officials and consultants who led the participation process. This set of interviewees included two lead consultants as well as two members of the planning and design committee who, by virtue of their role in the university, bridged the leadership and

participant roles. They were included in this set of interviews based upon their identification as leaders more so than participants in the process. The intent of this set of interviews was multiple. First it examined how conscious these university officials and consultants were of cultural and other differences that may have influenced the participation process. It also explored what if any techniques were utilized to engage across these differences, as well, whether the participation process was able to address conflicting viewpoints and/or values between and among university officials and consultants and the participants. Finally, the interviews examined any efforts to ensure participants possessed the necessary capacity to take part in an informed and equitable manner.

Interviews with the participants in the University of Winnipeg Campus and Community Development Plan centred on their experiences with the participatory planning and design process. Participants included five members of the planning and design committee as well as three identified participants who took part only in the large public charette, referred to as the 'collective design process'. Areas of inquiry focused upon participants' feelings about the public participation process as well as their ability to participate; impressions on the representative nature of the event; and finally, a discussion about the cultural relativity of the public participation process.

The combination of interviews with leading university officials and consultants as well as participants in the participatory planning and design process provided

multiple perspectives for this case study. The findings from the interviews were examined in the context of the literature to better understand the dynamics of participatory planning in diverse communities.

Before each interview participants were required to sign an informed consent form, explaining the purpose of the research and asking for permission to audio-record the session. The form also indicated that the information collected through the interviews will be treated anonymously and securely stored. Each interview was approximately one hour in length.

#### 2.2 Analysis

The interviews were transcribed soon after taking place to ensure reliability.

Initial analysis of the interviews were based upon participant and leader groups and analyzed in these separate groupings.

Guided by Miles and Huberman (1994), the transcripts were read through several times and notes made of new ideas and developing themes that emerged across sessions of data analysis. The first reading was conducted at the literal level with subsequent readings at an interpretive level (Mason, 2000).

Through the readings, transcripts were coded based upon the areas of inquiry.

This coding process resulted in the development of categories and themes.

Once the categories and themes were established within each group, a cross-

examination and comparison of the two interview sets were analyzed in light of the literature review.

# 3.0 Literature Review

## 3.1 (Post) Multicultural Theory

In recent years leading planning theorists have been calling for a more diversified approach to planning theory. Leonie Sandercock (1998, 2003) in particular has brought the issue of multicultural planning to the forefront. She has argued that culture must be a category of analysis within planning theory. Developing this central category of analysis is crucial to the quest for social justice and the embrace of diversity. Primarily the argument made by Sandercock and others is that the rational model utilized by planners "universalizes a particular white, male, European experience…" (Beauregard, 1998, p. 98) and thereby oppresses and marginalizes citizens that do not meet this criteria or description.

These arguments have grown out of a theory of multiculturalism as well as a reality of multiculturalism in Canada. To provide context, this section briefly explores the roots of multicultural theory in planning and considers the emerging discussion of a new way to think about planning with diversity, a sort of 'post-multiculturalism'. Later sections will take a closer look at urban planning experiences in multicultural communities.

### 3.11 Springboard for a Paradigm Shift

The belief in and movement towards a more open and diverse planning practice finds its roots in post-modern and post-colonial schools of thought (Burayidi, 2000). Post-colonial scholars have revealed the effects of discrimination and the

politics of race, while post-modern scholars claim society to be fragmented and particularistic; as such there cannot be any normative attributes or values ascribed to all societies.

It is from these schools of thought that multiculturalism has derived its foundations. At its crux, multicultural theory is the discussion of cultural diversity with a stated goal of the plurality of cultures co-existing. It was born out of a realization that following a model of 'colour-blind' does not allow for real equality that ignoring differences in culture or race does not create a situation of cooperation, but instead one of homogeneity (Barry, 2002). Advocates of a multicultural perspective in theory believe that race is everywhere, that it is central to all issues in particular personality development (Barry 2002; Mier, 1994; hooks, 2000; Sandercock, 1998). In effect, the issue of diversity has to be addressed because not doing so would neglect the variety of ideas that are present within a region or nation, thereby silencing those outside of the mainstream. For this reason, it is argued that other ways of knowing and other ways of living must be considered in public debate. The alternative of maintaining homogeneous policies and standards leaves out a variety of people and experiences and is thus only half of the story (Sandercock, 1998, 2000; Dang, 2003).

In the planning profession, multicultural theory challenges planners to pay attention to "how culture impacts, and is in turn impacted by, planning practices"

(Burayidi, 2000, p. 44). It claims to favour no worldview and respects the notion that people have formed their own ways of knowing through different life experiences and spaces. It proposes that any evaluation of policy be considered in light of each specific circumstance.

Regardless of its virtues, some believe that multicultural theory needs to be revisited. Essentially, there are two main concerns: first that multicultural theory allows other forms of discrimination to go unchecked; and second that it prevents true dialogue from occurring in society. It is argued that multicultural policies promote tolerance of diversity but that this is limited to cultural diversity (Huey, 2003; Fraser, 1997). Ultimately multiculturalism can lead to a situation of privileging and in essence run counter to the aims of social justice (Huey, 2003, Bannerji, 2000).

Huey (2003) cites a case in Richmond, BC. In this situation, neighbourhood residents resisted the movement of a recovery home for individuals with drug and alcohol and drug addictions into a middle class residential neighbourhood.

Residents complained to city hall, staged protests and created petitions to have the home moved to another location. Despite this resistance, the home was located in the neighbourhood. Although the protests held similar NIMBY qualities and citations of property values and safety concerns, Huey (2003) notes cultural opposition distinguished this situation. The neighbourhood has a large Chinese-Canadian immigrant population, which was evoked in relation to the resistance.

The opposition to locating the recovery house in the neighbourhood was framed in terms of cultural values.

Huey (2003) states the discourse surrounding the dispute was framed in terms of a "series of justifications for excluding others from full participation in civic life. These justifications are variously offered under the banners of 'multiculturalism', 'democratic values', and 'respect for tradition' among others" (p.370). It is argued that this essentially privileges the claims of cultural minorities over those in the lower class, pitting them against each other. Huey argues therefore social issues that are framed solely as cultural ones, effectively preventing a real discussion of social justice in equity; allowing for discrimination to occur with the defense being cultural relativity (Huey, 2003).

This criticism can be extended to the wider conceptualization of postmodernism. Stein and Harper (2005) note that postmodernism's prescription for a paradigm shift can be just as universalistic as modernism's. Specifically, that the quest for pluralism can unintentionally prevent viewpoints such as liberal democratic ones from emerging, thus preventing all discussion, or opinion beyond that which purportedly allows for 'other ways of knowing'.

In addition, it is pointed out that multicultural policies in fact contribute to an 'institutionalization of ethnic diversity'. This in essence leads to the formation of

ethnic elite who are said to be representative of their communities (Ugo, Uitemark, & van Houtum, 2004). This downplays the diversity present within ethnic groups and over-emphasizes differences between cultures (Ugo, Uitemark, & van Houtum, 2004). It is claimed that those in the hegemonic advantage essentially dictate what is and what is not a legitimate identity. This thereby structures civil society in their image; "at the same time their ethnic identities are recognized, their subordinate and isolated position is confirmed and consolidated" (Ugo, Uitemark, & van Houtum, 2004, p.6).

To illustrate this reality, Arbor (1999) points to human-interest stories in the news that often mark people by their culture. Discussing a story of a Christmas celebration in Australia, a newspaper included a picture of an Australian born girl of Chinese descent. The story was meant to depict a variety of cultures celebrating together a festive, western holiday. The picture however, marked the girl as Chinese, as somehow different. She also came to represent all Chinese in Australia. "The very history and meaning of the concept of multiculturalism has become distorted to suggest a new and frightening `cultural separatism'" (Arbor, 1999). As such, multiculturalism limits people's identity by not allowing for more fluid and multiple notions of identity to develop or evolve. Its main downfall is that it does not allow for recognition of the many other ways in which people form their identities, such as age, gender, education, class, etc. In reality these factors cross ethnic lines and create a situation of plurality even within one ethnic group, and similarities across different ethnic groups (Amin, 2002, p.977).

The second main concern with multiculturalism is that a lack of dialogue across cultures inadvertently occurs as a result of the focus on difference. Huey (2003) notes that multiculturalism, as practiced in Canada is, "rooted in a politics of difference based solely on oppositional definitions" and thus tends to "increase intolerance, largely because no room is left for dialogue" (p.11). This stems from the above discussion regarding the downplaying of inter-cultural difference and over emphasizing differences between cultures. While recognizing the difference within people and cultures may allow for an expression of diversity, it can also create a situation where identity politics are promoted. Mainly, it is said when policies and public discussions concentrate on difference so highly they run the risk of continuing the idea of the 'other', thus dividing people. Ultimately, the discourse of multiculturalism and the identity politics based upon it has created a situation of difference where the only commonality readily accepted is our humanity (Huey, 2003; Buruyadi, 2000; Fraser, 1997, Young, 1999). In addition, the relativity of identity politics can lead to further division and entrenchment if both groups see their positions arising from fundamental identity – as an 'essential truth' (Huey, 2003). Sadly, the attempt to recognize and celebrate difference may end up stifling dialogue and thus no position or worldview is understood nor respected by those on the 'outside'.

In the end, discussions of multiculturalism are about those in positions of power; about how those in the hegemonic advantage define themselves and set expectations of thought and behaviour and how the 'other' is viewed in relation.

Specifically, it is argued that the hegemonic advantage tends to view those outside the mainstream as fixed in culture and mark them by standards designed by the elite (Amin, 2002; Arbor, 1999). Similarly, Sandercock (2003) maintains that fragmentation occurs due to efforts to suppress or exclude individuals in the process of engagement. It is not from too much diversity; rather it is based in a struggle to maintain hegemony.

Ultimately, criticisms of multiculturalism are that it is limiting and allows for exclusionary practices to continue. It runs the risk of pulling communities apart. With its focus on differences, multiculturalism fails to consider how to reconcile this separation beyond recognizing it. Subsequently it has left society fragmented.

As a response to these concerns several authors have emerged to advocate for a reconstruction of our fragmented, post-modern society. This is further discussed in the following section.

#### 3.12 A Reconstruction: Post-Multiculturalism

The challenge put forth by planners and others in the arena of post-multiculturalism is the promotion of diversity, while still maintaining a level of community. As such, we are at a place beyond multiculturalism, and we must begin to operate in a space of 'post-multiculturalism'. Along with other theorists, Sandercock (2003) has begun to reconsider the impact of multiculturalism and

recognize its pitfalls in practice. In particular, is the consideration that there is a potential for multiculturalism to prevent true dialogue from existing by focusing so closely on difference. This can result in people feeling unable to communicate with one another and in essence dividing people. Although on the surface it may appear as though multiculturalism has increased the acceptance of other cultures, it can also be argued that the connection between cultures has not been emphasized nor promoted (Dang, 2003). This is the starting point for a post-multiculturalist agenda; that is, holding on to the basic principles of multiculturalism, such as respect for difference and allowing for different ways of being, while also promoting intercultural dialogue (Sandercock, 2003; Dang, 2003).

Stein and Harper (2005) believe that in a pluralistic society there must be room for a liberal democratic viewpoint, that all cultures must accommodate each other. They value the role of collective identity, but argue that collective rights need to be tempered by individual freedom. There is a notion that we need to push beyond the oppressive, exclusive systems that are present in all societies, that respecting difference is not enough (Dang, 2003). For this reason Stein and Harper (2005) believe that for a society to truly respect diversity and maintain a progressive momentum internal as well external perspectives must be welcome. Dang (2003) argues "all communities are considered works in progress for the collective achievements of social justice and the liberation of individual expression" (p.51). He also notes the need to move beyond discussions of

multiculturalism to the social responsibility and action of society. Essentially there is a growing impatience to move beyond critique to reconstruction.

At its core, post-multiculturalist literature "seeks to recognize cultural diversity but at the same time tries to move beyond traditional multiculturalism by emphasizing the multifaceted and dynamic nature of cultural identifications" (Ugo, R, Uitemark, J. & van Houtum, H. 2004, p.6). As facilitators of urban process, it is incumbent upon planners to integrate this fragmented theory into an inclusive practice.

### 3.2 Collaborative Planning: Communication and Dialogue

Planning theory has progressively made a shift from a modernist planning school of prescription and expert knowledge as rational and somehow infallible, to post-modernist planning with knowledge viewed as relative and malleable. This is a movement from a rational model that presumes universal knowledge and values, to one that values 'other ways of knowing'. It is a movement towards a planning model that "puts values at the heart of the planning process" (Khakee, 1999, p.371). As Sandercock (1999) writes this shift begins with recognition that an increasingly diverse public requires a planning practice in which,

communication skills, including openness, empathy, and skillful and attentive listening are crucial; in which we are alert to and respect class, gender and ethnic differences in ways of knowing, and actively try to learn and practice those ways in order to foster a more democratic and inclusive planning. It involves learning to work with diverse communities, rather than speaking for them (p. 14).

With this shift to a more post-modern style of planning theory, collaborative planning has emerged as the dominant paradigm in theory, if not yet in practice.

This form of planning theory begins with the premise that knowledge does not have an objective existence. It cannot be 'discovered', but instead is fluid, socially constructed and interactive (Healy, 1997). It also recognizes that multiple forms of knowledge exist, from professional to layperson and from scientific to emotional. Each embodies a different perspective of value to the practicing planner. It also makes the claim that we cannot presuppose there to be a 'public interest' for planners to work towards or defend. As such, collaborative planning challenges planners to become more aware of the experiences and interests various stakeholders bring to the table, as well as ways in which these are expressed. In this way, planners are searching to achieve more effective two-way communication with the public (Hillier, 1998).

A major component of collaborative planning is discursive analysis, which stems from Habermasian communicative action (Murray, M & Murtagh, B, 2004). Habermas advocates for procedural democracy based upon deliberative politics. Participants are theoretically treated as equal and decision makers are expected to communicate with citizens (Hillier, 1998). Taking from the ideas of Habermas, Patsy Healy (1992, 1997) makes the case for communicative action as a basis for a new planning theory. In this theory, continuous dialogue and debate is placed at a premium in order to reinstall democracy in planning. It is argued that for there to be any assurance that homogenous and dominant forces do not continue to unilaterally shape the direction of cities, room must be made for dialogue and debate about the vision and dreams of our cities. This is a

continuous dialogue, with no real end point. As such, Healy (1992) argues planning needs to slow down to allow for the messiness of communication, discussion, and participation.

Within communicative action, planning processes are expected to give voice to all interested parties. In a planning participation process nothing is considered off agenda, and no claim can be dismissed until it has been explored. Healy (1992) does acknowledge that this wide-open agenda and stakeholder diversity will inevitably result in many divergent viewpoints and may create conflict. Hillier (1998) reiterates this point and observes that the current reality has "led to participants talking past each other rather than negotiating with each other. Difference has lead to polarization and entrenched positions of opposition" (Hillier, 1998, p. 15). To move past this both Hillier (1998) and Healy (1992, 1997) argue there needs to be a commitment to a planning process that allows for the understanding of these various viewpoints as well as recognition of common ground. As such communicative action "focuses on searching for achievable levels of mutual understanding for the purposes in hand, while retaining awareness of that which is not understood" (Healy, 1992, p.154).

It is at this point where communicative planning diverges from Habermasian communicative action (Healy, 1992). Contrary to Habermas' assertion that communication or dialogue can result in mutual and sustained understanding, Healy (1992) believes that we can only hope to have a temporal understanding

and ability to 'make sense together' for a given time or issue. She claims that communication and dialogue will not necessarily result in an ultimate mutual understanding of each other, but rather we can only hope to have continuous dialogue and effort towards that end. There is a recognition that differences within which we are communicating are about more than social or economic differences, but are in "systems of meaning" (Healy, 1992, p.152). As such, Healy argues that although we may shift our ideas and learn from one another, there cannot be a long-standing consensus on how we view the world but "merely a temporary accommodation of different, and differently adapting, perceptions" (Healy, 1992, p.152). In this way the driving force behind communicative action is to "work out what rules or codes of conduct we can agree we need, to allow us to live together but differently in shared environments" (Healy, 1992, p.156).

Communicative planning is about more than dialogue and communication, but is about actively constructing new understandings, with a belief in the transformative power found in ideas and language (Healy, 1992). It is about collective reasoning; that is 'doing something' or acting in the world through engagement in debate and dialogue. In this planning theory, communication is viewed as a form of action, and its form and content is important in its ability to affect people (Innes, 1998). In this way the process is as important, if not more so than the decision made or outcome arrived at (Innes, 1998). As well, communicative planning stresses a need for continuous movement towards

critique and demystification, creating the possibility of transforming power relations (Healy, 1992). This theory also views communication as playing an integral role in planning, as it is an interactive process with technical analysis as only one form of discourse. Ultimately, in collaborative/communicative planning the role of stories or narrative is towards informing action, as such value is placed on narrative and telling stories in combination with analysis (Healy, 1992).

Yet while communicative planning is rooted in a post-modern sentiment, in its quest for action it attempts to reclaim a commonality from the fragmented society, to move from critique to reconstruction. Healy (1997) states, "the challenge for public life in our present times is how to reconcile the individuation of cultural identity with recognition of commonality between individuals with different frames of reference, as well as different interests, in ways which do not trap us in modes of thought and practice which suppress our individual capacity to flourish" (p.44). Healy (1997) does recognize that this position is utopian if merely because there will always be those in positions of power. However, she does advocate for the construction of an evaluation system that has the capability of judging that which opens up room for diversity and that which narrows it.

Stemming from these ideas, but moving beyond to look more critically at power relations, John Forester (1999) proposes 'critical pragmatism.' This theory is 'critical' because it is concerned with ethics and justification "added to

pragmatism, which is concerned with practical action, history and change" (p. 207). Basically Forester argues that the notion of 'critical pragmatism' is vital in multicultural communities based upon its focus on ethics and justice, combined with practical action. Forester (1999) pushes for a movement beyond deconstruction. He suggests the need to move beyond the proclamation that power corrupts; instead we should work towards reconstruction. Forester (1998) claims that in a pluralist society we need to maintain an open dialogue and make room for mutual accommodation. This is done with a hope to discover public learning and reach some form of consensus.

Several critiques have emerged regarding collaborative planning theories, particularly in the vein of responding to diversity. Hillier (1998) finds that Habermas' communicative action does not take into account how some differences may be irreconcilable. She argues that the desire for a procedural justice treats different people by the same standard, which can inherently be unequal. Rahder and Milgrom (2004) also maintain that communicative action, as well as Foresters' critical pragmatism emphasis on deliberation both focus too heavily on western notions of rationality. They maintain that this conception contains universal assumptions about the nature of reason and rationality; that the concentration on a procedural justice and the roots of liberal justice is a western notion. This concentration essentially neglects different rationalities and differences in institutional power. Benhabib (1996) also questions the neutrality

of procedural justice, arguing that it presupposes and privileges an individualistic way of life.

Hillier (1998) adds to these two major challenges with the deliberative vein of collaborative planning. The first is centred upon the length of process, which she claims could result in loss of interest among participants. In addition it may not be possible to reach consensus or even compromise over some contentious issues. Essentially, procedurally just, communicative procedures involve a trade-off between efficiency and common ownership.

Secondly, there are inevitable inequities of power (actual and perceived) in a participation process. For example, participatory planning processes often use a 'common language' (English) and using participation 'rituals' (written submissions, public meetings), with which not everyone is comfortable. Hillier (1998) fears that the discursive method advocated by communicative planning could further this level of inequities.

Critics ultimately claim that communicative planning theory has opened up the issue of voice but argue that it has inadequately addressed the issue of intercultural relations (Rahder & Milgrom, 2004). Similarly, Sandercock (2003) believes that one of the major holes within collaborative/communicative planning has been the lack of "recognition of the need for a language and a process of

emotional involvement, of embodiment, of allowing the whole person to be present in negotiations and deliberations" (pp. 19).

Hillier (1998) argues for a relativized justice which moves beyond the idealized justice of Rawls and Habermas (beyond their concept of the generalized other) to acknowledge "the differences among participants and grounds justice in the discourses, identities, and values of actual communities" (p.16). In his notion of diversification, Dang (2003) makes similar arguments. He calls for the opening up of dialogue so that local discourse reflects the diversity of all residents.

Hillier (1998) also finds that Rawls (1993) revised work around procedural justice may provide a starting point for thinking about abstract principles of diversity. It acknowledges that pluralism is a permanent feature of our society. Rather than seeking to find consensus it finds those areas where points overlap, where participants can agree whatever their divergent viewpoints (Hillier, 1998).

Within the literature regarding communication and dialogue in planning, there appears to be consensus that its presence is crucial in the face of a diverse public interest. Dispute still remains, however, regarding how much accommodation needs to be made for a diverse public. Is dialogue sufficient, or is there a need for a more considerable upheaval and reconstruction of power relations? Certainly, a convincing argument is made that communication and

dialogue can only be open and free if power relations are reexamined. This is a reality that needs to be considered in planning practice.

#### 3.3 Engagement in the Diverse City

The attention to collaborative planning in theory has translated into practice as a renewed interest in public participation. This interest and conceptualization has evolved from one that views public participation as a method used to fend against public resistance, to a technique that is a part of community building (Innes, 1997; Jackson, 2001). Similarly, the discussion of inclusive cities inevitably leads to one of participation in civic life. These two converging perspectives combine in this section. This discussion has several components. One is the consideration of what it means to be a citizen, primarily addressed in the theoretical realm. The other relates more to the meaning of participation and levels of its authenticity. Both of these elements are considered in this section.

### 3.31 Rights to the City

The benefits of participation have been explored and documented by several authors (Sanoff, 2000; Sarkission et al, 1999; Wates, 2000). Sanoff (2000) summarizes these benefits from three perspectives: from the standpoint of the community or social environment, from the participant and from the professional. From a wider social perspective, public participation results in greater meeting of social needs and increasingly effective utilization of resources. From a user or participant's perspective public participation leads to an increased sense of

having influence over decision making processes and an increased awareness of the consequences of decisions. For the professional, public participation provides more relevant, up to date community information, which can enable efficient decision-making without limiting creativity (Sanoff, 2000).

A participation process alone cannot realize these benefits. For this to occur, a transparent decision making process is necessary so that the outcomes arrived at can be understood by participants. The potential impact of decisions should be made apparent (Sanoff, 2000). The process must also materialize into a form that can be witnessed by participants. Having the ability to see their contributions to the city represented concretely in its form, may lead to diverse groups participating in civic affairs and future planning exercises (Milgrom and Rahder, 2004). Without this materialization, cynicism may set in and reduce community member's inclination to participate again. This does not mean, however, that ideas of everyone need to be accepted wholesale. Often participants will accept a decision if they feel the participation process was fair and they had opportunity to contribute to the debate. They will also accept some 'losses' if they feel a decision benefits some members of the community. Essentially, they need to see 'opponents' or 'winners' as part of the community (Moore, 1986; Syme, Macpherson and Seligman, 1991)

These benefits of participation appear to be recognized by those promoting inclusive cities. In fact, many authors argue the foundation for a strong

democracy is found in active citizen engagement in community affairs. The ability of all citizens to fully participate in the making of their city is a requirement for a society built upon social inclusion (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2003; Amin, Massey, & Thrift, 2000; Sandercock). Amin et al (2000) frames this as permitting individuals to have 'rights to the city'. This is described as providing individuals with access to the means necessary to develop capabilities to participate in the shaping of their communities. This gives citizens the tools and opportunities to participate. Amin et al (2000) claims, "without these rights we are left with only the traditional politics of prescription and elite designation. This is a politics without creativity and innovation that flows from social empowerment and participation" (p. 38).

Amin et al (2000) goes on to say that for true inclusiveness there "needs to be a strategy for urban democracy that seeks to empower individuals and groups across the social spectrum and feels comfortable with reconstruction of cities as a plural and open-ended process" (p. vi). This is recognition of the need to create an active citizenship that is able to claim rights to the city and belief that this is necessary for true democracy built upon a notion of common citizenship. This requires an opportunity to participate, as well as the cultivation of will and basic foundations to empower and enable true participation.

Douglas and Friedman (1998) acknowledge this reality and go further to discuss the need for planners to recognize the diversity of citizens and work to empower

the participation of these diverse residents in the shaping and guiding of our cities. The challenge, as noted by Beaugard and Body-Genrot (2005) is to provide citizen representation in the development of cities while identities of people and places are in flux. As such, the authors feel that in order to nurture the development of a city there must be full citizenship where people are moved to, and have the capacity to, actively engage. Acknowledging this diversity of community, Healy (1998) promotes public participation as enabling the creation of space where fragmented communities can come together to seek common ground. She sees the collective processes as building the capacity of communities to debate the multiple qualities of 'place' and the diverse way these are experienced (p. 1778).

Finally, Hillier (1998) cautions that limitations in resources, personnel, political will, and local knowledge can result in an institutionalized participation process, whereby planners set rules for participation. She states "these rules, consciously or unconsciously, encourage participation by certain groups and discourage or even prohibit participation by others" (Hillier, 1998, pg. 14)

# 3.32 Participation in Action (Defining Participation)

To create open and inclusive communities we need to do more than talk about the merits of participation. Planners need to build spaces and processes capable of cultivating citizen participation and engagement. To this end, the level, degree

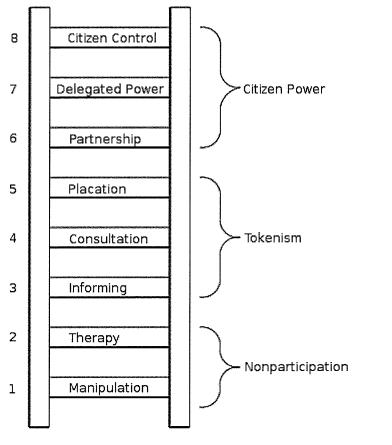
and meaning of participation have become increasingly important in the field of planning.

The rise of citizen participation in North America began in the late 1960s to early 1970s with the increase in urbanization and recognition of the impact of development on citizen's lives (Graham and Phillips, 1998). This rise quickly became usurped and institutionalized throughout the 1980s and early part of the 1990s. It has only been within the last decade or so that there has been renewed pressure to promote and facilitate citizen engagement in community life. This resurgence carries with it a recognition that previous examples of participation have been relatively piecemeal and token (Sanoff, 2000). This lack of true participation has had the unfortunate side effect of producing a cynical population, believing that their voice will not be heard, rendering any movement towards participation ineffectual and therefore meaningless. As a result, the challenge for planners becomes designing participation endeavors that are meaningful, informative and even transformative for those involved.

This challenge to promote real engagement is not new and in fact stems from the seminal work of Sherry Arnstein (1969). In her article, *A Ladder of Citizen Participation* she takes on the task of defining public participation at a time when the term was in vogue, yet with little clear idea of what real participation entailed (Arnstein, 1969). Arnstein identifies three levels of citizen participation ranging from non-participation culminating upwards towards her vision of ultimate

participation: citizen control. The levels of participation are illustrated as rungs on a ladder with the lowest three described as manipulation, the middle three as degrees of tokenism and the final three as degrees of citizen power.

Figure 1: Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation



(Arnstein, 1969)

Although this depiction has been useful, recent scholars have updated and adapted this metaphor to represent a range of participation methods and citizen involvement that occurs within a given project (Sarkission et al, 1999; Wates, 2000). It has become clear that many of the methods involved do blur the lines between required levels of citizen involvement. Wates (2000) points out there

are different levels of participation required or appropriate depending upon the given project or initiative. As well, there often needs to be some level of public information or education to ensure participants have the necessary knowledge and capacity to enable the participation process to be informed and effective. To illustrate this interrelated nature of participation processes, Wates (2000) designed a matrix, which portrays the different levels of participation required at the various stages of a project.

Figure 2: Wate's Participation Matrix

|             |                  | Project Stages |             |               |              |
|-------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
|             |                  | Initiate       | Plan        | Implement     | Maintain     |
| Level of    | Self Help        | Community      | Community   | Community     | Community    |
| Community   | Community        | initiates.     | plans alone | implements    | maintains    |
| Involvement | Control          | action alone   |             | alone         | alone        |
|             | Partnership      | Authorities    |             | Authorities   | Authorities  |
|             | Shared working   | and            |             | and           | and          |
|             | and decision-    | community      |             | community.    | community    |
|             | making           | jointly        |             | jointly       | jointly      |
|             |                  | initiate       |             | implement     | maintain     |
|             |                  | action         |             |               |              |
|             | Consultation     | Authorities    | Authorities | Authorities : | Authorities  |
|             | Authorities ask  | initiate       | plan after  | implement     | maintain     |
|             | community for    | action after   | consulting  | with          | with [1]     |
|             | opinions         | consulting     | community   | community     | community    |
|             |                  | community      |             | consultation  | consultation |
|             | Information      | Authorities    | Authorities | Authorities   | Authorities  |
|             | One way flow of  | initiate       | plan and    | implement     | maintain     |
|             | information      | action         | design      | alone         | alone        |
|             | Public Relations | 100            | alone       |               |              |

(Wates, 2000, p.10)

In this matrix, it becomes clear that there are different starting points and roads through a participation process. However, for true participation to occur, it is argued that the authorities and community must work in partnership to jointly plan and design projects. This is a point also maintained by Sarkissian et al (1999) in

their adaptation of Arnstein's ladder of participation. It shows the highest level of citizen participation as a collaborative process whereby various community stakeholders work together, including residents and professionals or other authorities.

Furthering the discussion, Abele, Graham et al (1998) distinguish between participation and engagement. They state that engagement means a two-way dialogue in which participants and planners or facilitators mutually inform one another. This excludes the token, but widespread practice of public consultation processes. These processes promote one-way dialogue in which government or other professionals are either informing the public or gathering information from the public, without any real engagement in the process, policy or project being developed. Again, as pointed out by Sarkissian et al (1999) and Wates (2000), the act of consultation is at times appropriate, but when speaking of engaging a population on a project, consultation is not enough.

To understand effective engagement requires a zeroing in on and understanding of the techniques of citizen engagement. There are guidebooks and resources available to give ideas and advice on various process and activities designed for a variety of situations where participation would be beneficial. Certainly, the appropriate method will be dependent upon the participants and desired outcomes, but there are elements that need to be considered in any process. As a starting point, Sanoff (2000) believes participation processes need to begin

with the appropriate questions. He identifies these as who, what, where, how and when;

- Who needs to be involved in the process (who are the stakeholders)?
- What needs to be accomplished through the participation process (i.e. to disseminate information, resolve conflict, to generate ideas)?
- Where should this process lead (what is the goal)?
- How should people be involved (what are the appropriate participation methods)?
- When should the participation process take place (at what stage in the project's development)?

(Sanoff, 2000, p. 9).

Answering these questions is intended to determine the objective of the participation process. Once this is clear, an appropriate method can be selected and developed (Sanoff, 2000).

Whichever the method deemed most important there are two elements that are considered crucial to the success of the process (Sanoff, 2000). One is technical assistance, which varies based upon project/issue, but essentially entails providing the necessary tools for participation. The second element, which rests within the scope of this research, is dialogue. This is considered of utmost importance for the success of a participation process (Sanoff, 2000). As mentioned previously by Wates (2000) and Sarkissian et al (1999), the highest and most effective level of citizen participation requires collaboration amongst

'authorities' and 'residents'. Participation rarely occurs without the use of interactive group decision-making. The key is to get people to collaborate effectively. Sanoff (2000) believes that an important aspect of participation is mutual learning; that is, professionals and participants learning together. This requires a movement away from tokenism to provide a *real* space for citizen involvement. It also entails the transferring of knowledge to the community and harnessing of skills by planners through mutual learning and clear communication.

The requirement for open and clear dialogue and communication, is a challenging prospect at the best of times, and even more so when working across culture and language. Recognizing this leads to an understanding of why cross (inter)- cultural communication in the context of public participation is so crucial in diverse communities (Sandercock, 1998, 2000). Within the multicultural city, the need for effective citizenship is raised to a new level. It is about more than hearing the viewpoint of citizens. It raises the questions: What does citizenship mean? Whose city is it and how should it be shaped? This requires more than merely effective communication and knowledge sharing; Diversity necessitates the consideration of deeply held cultural differences.

Planning theory and urban studies literature have provided the basis and understanding that culturally diverse community members require a more active voice in community. Participatory planning literature also makes the claim that

cities benefit from more active citizenry. To enable this, safe spaces for participation to occur need to be created. We also know that planners need to have active communication skills. The question that remains to be answered within participatory planning literature is; what is required for effective participation in cross-cultural settings? Following this, how successful are planners in creating these conditions?

# 3.4 The Multicultural City: Planning with Diversity (Beyond Theory?)

Despite the attention participation in planning has begun to receive in the literature there remains a lack of connection between the need to promote participation in a diverse society and the practical tools available to do so. To identify this, the following section explores the experience of Canadian planners in working with diversity.

Today questions still remain as to whether or not planners are fulfilling the demands of multiculturalism, or more pointedly, what those demands may be. Planners are beginning to wonder if they are able to plan for such a diverse population (Wallace, 2000; Nicholson, 2000; Burstein & Grenier, 2000). Some Canadian planners feel that they do not have the necessary tools to plan for diverse groups of people. In the Ottawa-Carleton region, planners are concerned about whether they have been able to plan for a diverse region when the employees of the department all have similar backgrounds. (Burstein, M and Grenier, S. 2000). Yet with feelings of being unprepared, the planning profession

must find a way to promote voices of the diverse population (Duerden, 1996; Sandercock, 1998).

There is an argument put forth by Canadian planner Quadeer (2000) who believes that in fact, the design of cities is representative of the diverse populations in Canada. He claims that researchers must look at the outcomes of urban design, not the process of planning. In his opinion, individuals may feel they are discriminated against because of a long and confrontational process but the process, he believes, is balanced. This assertion signifies a belief in the universalistic and neutral process of planning.

More commonly, however, articles critique the process of planning in its ability to respond effectively to diversity. Frank Duerden (1996) looks at the case of Canada and First Nations. He believes that First Nations' interests are always being modified to meet the demands of conventional planning (Duerden, 1996). Though many plans in Canada attempt to provide more input and participation by First Nations groups, the result is often a 'plugging' in of First Nations perspectives into standard planning practices. Duerden (1996) argues information provided from the participation process is often abstracted and removed from the context. As a result the participation process is not always reflected in the final outcome. Unfortunately, Duerden (1996) believes that those at the helm do not have the skills or tools to interpret different ways of expression and that the planning process places a lack of value on the lived experiences of people, ultimately resulting in mere tokenism (Duerden, 1996).

Wallace (2000) and Rahder and Milgrom (2004) both look at examples of participatory planning in Toronto. Wallace (2000) looks at two planning processes, one in Markham Ontario and the second in Kensington Market in Toronto. Although the Kensington Market example appeared to provide opportunity and openness for the participation of diverse residents, it still had difficulty reaching all facets of the community. Wallace (2000) concludes that a diverse population requires "structural changes to the process of planning so that diversity may be reflected at the decision-making tables and in the policies and plans created" (p. 208). For Wallace this means a reconstruction of local decision-making with a "recognition that ethno-cultural diversity is already embedded in the social, economic and political construction of the city and is not something that can be adequately addressed through periodic accommodation when tensions arise" (p. 209)

Rahder and Milgrom (2004) examine two separate developments in Toronto and find both fall short of being representative of their diverse residents. The first is a public space at Yonge and Dundas, which the authors contend in reality, is not truly public. They find the Yonge – Dundas Square to be heavily regulated, keeping any public activity away unless the participants have a permit, thereby controlling and limiting the use of a space purported to be in the public domain. In terms of the development process for this project, Rahder and Milgrom (2004) point to a lack of respect for the existing landowners, many of who were immigrant families, through the expropriation of their properties. These were

generally businesses that served lower income residents, traded off for a development designed to attract tourists. Finally, the authors note that this land is now one of many across North America designed to attract tourists, with little to no connection to the local place (Rahder and Milgrom 2004).

The second project Rahder and Milgrom (2004) touch on is the redevelopment of Regent Park. This redevelopment plan did include some consultation processes with a broad range of cultural groups. However Rahder and Milgrom (2004) believe the final plan does not represent these diverse groups. Instead the largest consideration was given to the developers, which the authors feel was to ensure their investment. Rahder and Milgrom (2004) are left to conclude that current planning practice does not respond well to the diversity in their communities.

There is no doubt that there are growing challenges for Canadian planners to grapple with as we become increasingly multicultural. This is a challenge to understand that culture does impact and shape our communities; that it matters in the creation of inclusive communities. As American planner Mier (1994) states, addressing diversity is "the real challenge planners face today if they do not want simply to be the facilitators of social exclusion and economic isolation" (p. 239).

#### 3.5 Conclusion

The literature on multiculturalism in the urban realm raises many points of discussion for practicing planners and urbanists in general. There is certainly recognition that diverse members of urban centres in the western world are lacking representation in city life. In the planning field in particular, the literature points to the need for planners to find ways in which to be more respectful and inclusive of diverse worldviews.

The current planning literature also notes the need for collaborative planning that puts more of a premium on dialogue. This collaborative planning approach has paid more attention to the necessity of participation for effective planning and design. As a result there has been some discussion in the literature regarding the need for planning processes that enable more effective participation.

In light of the changing demographics of Canadian cities, the combination of these two strands of current planning literature point to the need for a reexamination of participatory planning. Although there is some mention of this need, there is a lack of information to guide planners in how to ensure they are developing participatory techniques that are respectful of these differences.

The case study for this thesis focuses on the work of the University of Winnipeg's Community Renewal Corporation (UWCRC) in the creation of a Campus and Community Development Plan. The plan encompasses the University and its relationship with the surrounding neighbourhood. This case study offers a closer glimpse at an initiative intended to engage diverse residents in a planning and design process.

#### 4.1 Context

The University of Winnipeg is an urban campus, rooted in a lower-income and ethnically diverse downtown area. It is located within the Spence neighbourhood and bounded by the neighbourhoods of West Broadway, Central Park,

Centennial, Colony and Portage-Ellice. These urban neighbourhoods all have distinct features, though diversity of culture and dominance of economically disadvantaged households are common traits. Spence neighbourhood in particular is roughly comprised of one-third individuals who claim Aboriginal identity, one-third who are considered visible minority and one-third are

Caucasian (City of Winnipeg, 2001). In terms of education, the percentage of the population over age 20 with a university degree is much lower than the average for the City of Winnipeg as a whole (5.9% versus 18.3%). In addition, 16.9% of individuals in the neighbourhood have only grade nine education or less. This is more than double the rate for the City as a whole (City of Winnipeg, 2001).

In recent years, the university has begun to explore campus development issues in conjunction with their relationship to the surrounding community. Guided by the direction of President Axworthy, the university has begun to reach out to the community through a dialogue with community leaders and residents. The aim of this outreach has been to discover how the neighbourhood perceives the university, as well as how the institution currently does and in the future could integrate within the neighbourhood context. To explore these issues, individual and group meetings between university officials and neighbourhood representatives as well as residents took place in 2004. These meetings were followed by a series of surveys to discover the impressions of residents on some key relationship issues and development plans held by the university, as well as four public meetings in surrounding neighbourhoods.

Out of these consultations emerged the formation of the University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Corporation (UWCRC) in April 2005. This organization is designed to act as a vehicle for addressing joint concerns in the neighbourhood and an entity for university and neighbourhood partnerships. The existence of this organization also ensures that the process of relationship building will continue beyond the current university administration and community leadership.

#### 4.2 Planning and Design

A first act of the UWCRC was the engagement of a range of communities toward the creation of a master plan for redevelopment of the campus and surrounding

neighbourhood. This was a particularly challenging venture as the definition of who is the 'community' is quite varied. Within the University of Winnipeg, there exists academics, administrators and students all with their own set of priorities. The neighbourhood communities include residents, from various income classes, community organizations, as well as business and professional bodies. Within the University of Winnipeg and neighbourhood communities, there exist incredibly diverse cultural groups. In this context, 'community', a nebulous term to define at the best of times, is even more challenging.

To undertake this process, a planning and design committee was formed in early 2005. The committee consisted of a diversity of professional perspectives with representatives from the University of Winnipeg administration, faculty, students, and foundation; local neighbourhood association; two area Business Improvement Zone representatives; Winnipeg Police; City of Winnipeg: technical advisors from the University of Manitoba city planning and landscape architecture departments and consultants. Prairie Architects Inc., a local architecture firm, as well as Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram Landscape Architecture and Planning led the design process. Other consultants involved in this process included urban design experts Urban Strategies Inc and The Acumen Group, who assisted with the community business analysis. Other consultants who provided advice to the lead consultants include communications and marketing firm McKim Cringan George, and PCL Constructors Canada Inc.

Regular planning and design committee meetings were held to guide the Campus and Community Development Plan. Through monthly meetings, committee members responded to evolving planning and designs direction through interactive dialogue. At these meetings, consultants provided base information and opportunities or suggestions that were vetted and massaged by the steering committee. The committee contributed to the synthesis of conceptual and schematic design and planning ideas.

In addition, input was sought by the consultants through a series of individual meetings held with various university and neighbourhood groups. These included student association and various University of Winnipeg faculties; Spence and West Broadway Neighbourhood Associations; City of Winnipeg Planning and Property Development, Community Services, Public Works, Property Assessment, Transit, and Economic Development departments; Destination Winnipeg, the City of Winnipeg's Economic Development and Tourism agency and the City of Winnipeg Police Crime Prevention division. University groups discussed needs, preferences and space requirements. Neighbourhood associations explored community and university relations and opportunities for community renewal. City of Winnipeg groups discussed land use, transit and other citywide considerations. These individual meetings occurred throughout the Campus and Community Development Plan process.

The major public face of the participation process was the 'collective design process'. The 'collective design process' included two participatory design

charettes open to the general public. The collective design process is one that has been used by Prairie Architects Inc. on several occasions. The process essentially entails responding to a series of images and words set out in a workbook. The workbook is meant to stimulate discussion and provide a record of participants' comments and concerns. Both of the charettes were held in Riddell Hall, the cafeteria at the University of Winnipeg.

The first charette began with light snacks and a presentation of best practices in campus design by Urban Strategies Inc. This presentation was meant to broaden the perspective of participants, sparking ideas and discussion. Following the presentation, participants were asked to respond to a series of questions and identify preferences presented in a workbook. The workbooks included a mixture of sketches and images to which participants responded. This activity was carried out in small groups and formed the basis of the charette process. Areas of exploration included a discussion of the likes and dislikes of the current campus design, university entrances, housing, community connections, green spaces, environmental sustainability, development themes, and university image.

The second charette was primarily a feedback session, presenting the initial sketches and ideas for the Campus and Community Development Plan based upon the first charette and other meetings held by the consultants.

The final Campus and Community Development Plan is yet to be officially released as a result of evolving real estate and development opportunities. The participation process occurred in the fall of 2005. The final plan encompasses

elements such as affordable housing, recreational facilities, safety and design, green space, Aboriginal housing, student facilities, parking and traffic, as well as community economic development opportunities (Institute of Urban Studies, 2005). The UWCRC intends to maintain a continuous dialogue between the university and community about common concerns through regular meetings and periodic forums.

This paper will further explore the process of engagement between this diverse university and neighbourhood, to discover its strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned. It will seek to understand how, if at all, the UWCRC was able to stitch together consultations and engagement processes to represent a diversity of voices in the Campus and Community Development Plan.

# 5.0 Interview Findings

This section outlines the ideas, thoughts and concerns of leaders and participants in the participatory design process for the University of Winnipeg's Campus and Community Development Plan. Leaders included two consultants as well as two university officials who held a leadership and decision-making role. These university officials were also members of the steering committee, though they self-identified as leaders in the Campus and Community Development Plan based upon their additional decision-making role. Participants interviewed included five members of the planning and design steering committee for the Campus and Community Development Plan and three individuals who were only a part of the collective design process.

During the interviews the overall participation process, including the role of the steering committee and the collective design process, were discussed. Areas of inquiry included the role of participation, impression of the participatory process, capacity of participants to participate and a discussion of the cultural relevance of the participatory design process.

## 5.1 Perspective of Leaders

This section discusses the findings from the interviews with the university officials (UC) as well as the lead consultants (C).

# 5.11 The role of participation

The University officials who were among the leaders in the development of the Campus and Community and Development plan clearly see the participatory planning and design process as merely a starting point for continued engagement with the wider university and neighourhood communities. These officials see an important role for engagement of the student and neighbouring communities as the university develops with and into the neighbourhood. The officials discussed the commitment of the President as a driving force behind this renewed outreach into the community.

Our new president is very much in tune with the community, as are all of us that are a part of it (UC1).

One university official describes their view of the participation of the various community members through the collective design process;

There is the design process and consultations. The community was very much a part of the consultations through the charettes. That translates into data that can be used in the design process, but is not necessarily congruent with what the community wants (UC1).

When asked if the participants would be informed of some of the limitations, the respondent indicated this was beyond the scope of their knowledge.

These people are there to look at the broader plan, right. So what you do is sell the plan and then it is up to us to operationalize it (UC1).

One consultant saw this process as limited participation. The respondent describes this;

... a set of design principles were presented to the community. It was very much a selection of design principles and I guess a little bit of massaging of those principles (UC1).

The respondent goes on to say,

It was really a question and answer process that people answered to from their perspective, at that point and time (C1).

Effort is made to continue the dialogue with community members and leaders within the university. One university official noted,

There is nothing like contact and regular talking and dialogue. It is amazing what you learn about your institution and your community when you just sit down and talk. I think it is essential (UC2).

Another official noted that the engagement of community should continue as the University of Winnipeg develops and evolves.

When you develop a campus plan it is only current the day you look at it. The demographics are changing, the needs are changing, enrollment is changing...when you draw that line on that page it is good for that day (UC1).

## 5. 12 Capacity of Participants

The consultants and university officials of the process were asked several questions with regard to the capacity of participants to take part in the participation process. To begin, respondents were asked whether, in the creation of the planning and design process and the collective design process in particular, there was any consideration made to demographics of the

neighbourhood. All did point to previous consultations, public meetings and surveys conducted in the lead up to the formalized participation process. These were used as baseline data from which to begin to understand the neighbourhood, its physical, social and economic dimensions. This data was then used to fill in the content of the design guideline workbooks.

The use of images and of small groups during the collective design process was cited as ways in which the capacity of individuals' to participate in the public event was enhanced.

There were pages and pages of drawings and images, which was really good because you could just react instinctively to images as opposed to long flowery descriptions of something. I think it worked if English was not your first language; it worked if you were shy. There were small groups where people were working in teams (UC2).

In addition, the presentation of best practices to steering committee members at the beginning of the design process and during the public design charette was seen as a way to expand the horizons of participants.

We do that [presentation of best practices] quite frequently because people come with their own preconceptions and they are not experts they have not seen the world. They have not looked at other projects. So it is our job to open people up to where the world is going. I think that helps to broaden the discussion base (C2).

One of the university officials did have questions as to the role of participatory planning and design in developing capacity. In this respondent's view, the building of capacity is more of a community development initiative, whereas the participatory design process was about getting impressions and feedback from

the neighbourhood and university members. In this individual's view, the development of capacity is beyond the scope of participatory planning.

We try and focus the issues and language to the specific capacities of the audience at that point in time. So hopefully we raise them from where they were to some other point in their understanding of the planning process and the design making process but it is by no means comprehensive (C1).

#### 5.13 Cultural Relevance

The University of Winnipeg appears to have a commitment toward creating an open and inclusive environment. This consideration of diversity seems to be quite strong in the consideration of the university's development. In particular, the administration would like to ensure they are responsive to the needs of the Aboriginal and New Canadian communities that make up a large segment of the neighbourhoods surrounding the University of Winnipeg. It is a priority to ensure that the University of Winnipeg becomes a place that is welcome and comfortable for a variety of cultures.

One story, which was told by a participant in the Campus and Community

Development planning process, touched at least two of the leaders in this

process and was kept at the forefront of their work. The story was of a young

Aboriginal man growing up in the neighbourhood and how he would look up at

Wesley Hall and wonder what goes on in that castle. The young man thought, 'it

looks like a really interesting place but it is just not for me'.

The question was asked has anything changed? The answer back was no (C2).

This realization of the University as a foreign place to its neighbours remained with several of the leaders in this process and enhanced their determination to see the campus become an open and inclusive space.

Certainly there was some debate about how to incorporate, as we were developing the campus development plan, an environment that was welcoming to the Aboriginal community and also to an environment that was welcoming and easy to understand if English was not your first language (UC2).

In addition to this awareness, University officials appear to maintain an open relationship with the student body with every attempt made to ensure the campus is an inclusive environment. This open relationship with the students allowed for further realization of the needs of the student community that otherwise may have not been considered. One example was the way in which this university official addressed concerns of the gay, lesbian and transgender community in the university.

We had an individual come to speak to me off record afterwards and said, there is one community you are missing, the gay and lesbian and transgender community. Yeah okay so what issues are we not touching? She said 'accessibility'. I said 'we are making everything accessible' and she said 'no, you are not. Do you understand what accessibility means to a trans-gendered person'? I said 'no, tell me'. A male to female does not want to go into a male washroom and will not be accepted in a female washroom. So we need facilities to go, just like Muslims need a place to pray, to wash their feet. So here we are talking about including stakeholders and considering a plan and not considering something that is critical to these peoples personal wellbeing and we just did not think of it (UC1).

The respondent goes on to discuss how these concerns have been addressed.

So now we have put a program together. We had one of our designers come back and said we will just have trans-gendered washrooms and I said that is a good start, but then you will have every redneck and voyeur

looking to see who is going in there. Why don't we take the handicapped signs off the washrooms and put accessible and the word would be out that if you are disabled or you are male or female you have unisex washrooms, it would not matter. If you were uncomfortable going to the male or female washroom this was a place for you. That has been approved. You know we think we are smart but when you invite people in and include them you create an environment where they are intrinsically motivated to participate, they do not feel threatened when they come up and say I am trans-gendered and I am not comfortable using the washroom (UC1).

This is certainly a powerful example, and yet it happened 'off record' and outside of the formal participation process. This individual felt comfortable approaching the university official as a result of their personal relationship. In terms of how open the formal participatory design process was, it was noted that individuals who are from different cultural backgrounds might not have been able to adequately participate in the collective design process.

We have a large Aboriginal population and other cultures and they are not familiar with our culture. You know it is fine for us, who are maybe more educated, to take part in the charettes. You know they understand it is a consultation but do not understand why (UC1).

It is unknown how many other concerns related to culture may have lay hidden as a result of individuals feeling uncomfortable or unwelcome to share.

Despite the realization that educational levels and cultural backgrounds may impact participation, the individual did not feel the need to adjust the process to ensure it was inclusive. When asked if there were any considerations of different methods or techniques for different cultural groups, the answer was,

No because if you did that you would be marginalizing them. Everyone has to be treated the same (UC1).

The inclusiveness of the process was the cause of some concern for one of the lead consultants, who seemed to question the appropriateness of the language and level of complexity of the public design charette.

In this case do you feel that the language and the process were appropriate given the composition of the neighbourhood? (Interviewer)

I have mixed feelings about that. Let's just leave it there (C1).

The need to ensure appropriate language is identified by another consultant.

You really have to be careful with the language that you use; that it is of an appropriate level and that it conveys information in language that is appropriate to the population you are talking with. That just requires some work at the front end with knowledgeable people in the community to refine that language and the content (C2).

This consultant did feel that the collective design process utilized a process that is able to bridge cultural and educational differences.

I think this is a collective design process that breaks down a lot of barriers with cultures. We have done this in Inuit communities where I do not speak Inuit but the images spoke for themselves and people were able to work with their own community to address what the issues are... We went in there with no preconceptions. In the Aboriginal community we use it a lot and it is something that is appreciated because it becomes theirs. It is not an outsiders, it is not a white guys. One of the real reasons we do it so that we are downloading our biases and preconceptions as architects and putting it back on to people who are going to use it or going to be involved. It is important that the people that are there, they take ownership. We divest ourselves as a professional. As an outsider we are pushing that out and we are working with the preferences. That is what we design to. If anybody criticizes our direction, we will say we are operating from what we heard. Usually there is not dissent (C2).

Finally, despite recognition by the university officials and consultants of the diversity of the neighbourhood, no one could identify any tensions as a result of cultural diversity during the participatory design process, including the steering

committee meetings and the collective design process. This raises the question of whether the process was so well designed it smoothed over any differences, or if the participatory design process lacked the representation of the university and neighbourhood's diversity? The lack of representation during the collective design process was touched on by one leader, and was attributed to the fact the neighbourhood has a high number of economically disadvantaged households.

If you are talking about well to do or middle class communities it is easier to get people out. If you are talking about disenfranchised communities of lower social economic status like ours, I mean people have 3 jobs and there are issues that make it really difficult for them to participate (UC2),

## **5.2 Perspective of Participants**

This section discusses the findings from interviews with the participants in the Campus and Community Development Plan process. The participants interviewed include five members from the steering committee (SC) who were also involved with the collective design process as well as three individuals who were participants in the collective design process only (P).

#### 5.21 Impressions on Participation

There was wide spread agreement amongst the participants, those on the steering committee, as well as those who only took part in the collective design process, that the participatory process was a positive experience. All participants felt the components they were involved with were designed in such a way that they felt welcome to take part. Participants of the collective design process discussed the openness of the facilitators and the power of images as

creating a comfortable atmosphere and stimulating conversation during the collective design process. The images included previous work completed by the facilitators, a presentation by a consultant from Urban Strategies Inc of other urban university campuses, as well as those utilized in the workbooks during the design charette.

The lead architect is a very friendly, approachable person. So were the other ones that were along as well. I did feel comfortable; especially when they had a model present there. It is not the finalized design by any means but at least it gives a little bit of an idea. Also the PowerPoint and all that were really clear and well explained (SC5).

Several comments centred upon the collective design process. In particular, the use of small break out groups was cited as creating a comfortable atmosphere, which allowed for greater discussion.

I think the forums were well-organized and broken into different components that allowed smaller groups to participate and get better ideas. It allowed everyone to hear other people's ideas. It was pretty good actually (SC1).

Along with the small groups, the workbook exercise was cited as a positive element.

It was fun with working and brainstorming with other people around the table. I think it was structured really well with the booklet. It gave us enough direction without it being too constrained (P1).

We had these workbooks to go through and I thought they were really good and they gave us the opportunity to go through the books and give our ideas and impression (P2).

Concerns about the collective design process centered primarily upon what the input from that event really meant and how it would be used in the final plan.

Many were uncertain about the participatory value of the public charette. For example, although participants felt that the workbook was well designed overall, several felt that the questions were quite leading and taking them to a predetermined conclusion.

There was few times when people around the table were like, 'but I don't even agree with the question.' That came up from more than one person around the table (P1).

One steering committee member went so far to muse that this may have been merely a photo op for the University.

Do you want to have a photo-op of the university meeting with the community? That seems something totally different than meaningfully having an open mind and really wanting to meet with the community. It is possible this was the case (SC4).

Most participants attributed this uncertainty about the participatory value of the collective design process to a lack of follow up to the public design charette and uncertainty as to what the final plan would entail, or even what was to come of the plan.

There were a lot of ideas that came forward and you could list those in the left hand column and on the right hand this was achieved and this was integrated and for those that weren't, why. We talked about a bunch of ideas and for whatever reason they did not all make the final plan. It would have been good to have a nice summary of this...I just think this provides more value in terms of decision-making and how the university makes decisions (SC1).

Other frequently expressed sentiments signaled a lack of continuous information flow and engagement in the design of the process for those who only took part in the collective design process.

You don't know if anything you said made a difference and you are giving them the most precious thing you have, which is your time (SC2).

A couple of participants however did not seem to be concerned about the level of participation gained through the collective design process. In their view the process was merely an information-gathering event; that the University was simply communicating what its vision was for future design and development.

It was an information-based kind of thing. I can't say I particularly enjoyed it. It was informative (P3).

One participant noted that there was some confusion as to the definition of participation. In this person's view the event was more about consultation and less about participation, though it did seem that the UWCRC board was not clear on the distinction.

It was not clearly articulated what one meant by participation. I think there was always a sense that some people felt that the consultants were not going far enough in that regard. They probably were not (SC3).

## 5.22 Participants: Capacity to Participate

When participants were asked if they felt prepared to contribute to the participatory design process, they initially expressed that they were well prepared. However, as the conversation progressed further, several participants expressed concerns as to their own capacity to contribute to the conversation.

I am not a planner so most of it was trying to get a sense of how the campus will best serve students. It is hard to go into those meetings with out an architecture background or planning (P1).

Others, though they themselves felt prepared to participate effectively, wondered if other participants without their educational background would have been so prepared.

It was my observation that quite a number of people participating did not know how architects do what they do. Therefore, when the architects were wanting to have a conversation about what overall design principles or values should guide this and what we want to communicate, others in the group were concerned about 'will there be windows on this side of this building' or 'will my office be on the ground floor'? That is micro-level designing which is way down on the design tree... I felt that I had sufficient knowledge to participate effectively, but I came into the process with that knowledge (SC2).

When asked if there was any way in which the facilitators furthered their own or others' capacity to participate, the use of images and small groups in the collective design process were again identified.

I think they did an excellent job in utilizing graphics and CAD technology and using pictures and ideas from different campuses and areas in North America. I think imagery is always the most effective way to convey information and stimulate ideas (SC1).

Several participants did identify ways in which capacity could have been increased. Primarily, it was felt that more front-end education on the design process would have been helpful for many of the participants to ensure meaningful participation. It was felt that furthering participants' understanding of the design process would ensure that participants had a starting point from which to contribute. It would also ensure that all participants held similar levels of knowledge.

They were working very much at a birds-eye view and I think some participants did not get that and might have been able to participate more effectively in the process had it been front-ended with a bit of discussion of how architects do their work (SC2).

#### 5.23 Cultural Relevance

Similar to the interviews with consultants and university officials in the participatory design process, this theme was the most difficult to tease out from the participant interviews. Despite the recognition of the diversity of both the campus and surrounding neighbourhood, most participants were not able to identify the prevalence of any tensions as a result of cultural difference during the steering committee meetings or the collective design process. Some attributed this to the openness of the facilitators and their experience working with various ethnic groups and Aboriginal peoples in particular. What could not be overlooked, however, was the limited representation of ethno-cultural groups during the collective design process and representation on the steering committee.

It was very clear from the participants' perspective that the individuals who partook in collective design process were not representative of the neighbourhood or university campus. It was acknowledged by the participants that the planning and design committee was fairly representative, with individuals from various segments of the population. The public design charette, however, was not representative of the neighbourhood or university campus.

It tended to be white, pre-dominantly well educated. Pretty good gender split but not real representative of Winnipeg as a whole. This particular neighbourhood has a considerable First Nations demographic and those folks were represented almost not at all (SC2).

It was widely acknowledged that the participants at the collective design process were predominately 'white' and in the 'mainstream culture'. Notably one participant stated that this is,

...usually the case with those types of events (P2).

Although a few respondents attributed this to the 'normal' difficulties with public participation, many were troubled by the skewed representation from the student body and wider communities.

It was unfortunate that we did not have more people to give input because we could have entered more ideas (SC5).

Nearly all the participants acknowledged that the facilitators and university officials had done a decent job in advertising the public event. However, questions were raised as to whether that was enough given the communities they were trying to attract.

They could have went out and solicited more input. I know that they had gone to a few areas prior to this process. They did a survey and did get a good idea of what people were looking for in the surrounding areas but it would have been good to get more live input from people. It was just so unbalanced. It was mostly students and others who were involved in some other way already (SC5).

Several participants were able to identify some of the barriers to participation for marginalized and cultural minority groups. Predominately, participants discussed the location of the charette for the collective design process at the university as a likely barrier for many members in the neighbourhood. It was noted that the

university is seen as a place outside of the experience of many in the neighbourhood and often quite intimidating. One respondent noted that,

There is some reluctance on the part of the community to participate in anything from the university. I think they are perhaps two different worlds (P3).

This individual goes on to suggest,

I suppose if they would not have had it at the university to begin with; if they had a meeting for the general community at a different place that might have worked better (P3).

Several participants also noted the language barriers that may have been present for many in the neighbourhood.

I know language is a barrier in the west-end community so being able to communicate in their language and engage in their mother tongue is an important sign of respect (SC1).

Beyond the barriers posed for individuals with English as an additional language, it was clearly articulated by several participants that the collective design process might not have been accessible for individuals with lower levels of education.

I understood it. I am not sure whether others in the community would have. It may not have been appropriate for others in the community (P3).

In relation to the participation of students, one participant stated that often people do not take the time to understand what students may be trying to articulate. She noted that often students may not be as polished in their delivery and do not have the breadth of experience behind them, which often leads to the dismissal of their ideas. This participant feels that the culture of 'higher ups' needs to change before any meaningful participation can take place. In this participants'

view, decision-makers need to learn to understand other ways of communication and value its input.

There is not a lot of openness with using participation as a learning experience for students. There is not a lot of patience and recognition that sometimes students will say things that do not make sense or maybe they do make sense if you are just open to listening to it and trying to get a sense of what they are actually trying to say. There is not always openness to students (SC4).

At the end of the interview, one participant claimed that having one large public participatory charette for the collective design process might have been a flaw.

In hindsight, going into community-specific groups that need to be talked to and doing little workshops before this one big workshop would have been more appropriate...the larger group settings are tough particularly with such a mixed group of people (SC3).

#### 5.3 Discussion

The University of Winnipeg went beyond the typical steps in developing a campus plan to engage the members of the university community as well as their neighbours. This is part of a commitment from the President of the University of Winnipeg and university officials to create an inclusive environment by engaging members of their internal and external communities. The interviews with university officials involved in the plan development, the lead consultants and participants reveal several key issues with the participatory planning and design process, with a particular focus upon the collective design process. Three themes are highlighted in this discussion, including the *depth of participation*, *public representation* and *power relations*.

The first theme of depth of participation refers to capacity as well as role of the participants in the creation of the Campus and Community Development Plan. There was little indication from the university officials or consultants that they believed the development of participant capacity was a necessary component of the participatory planning process. They describe capacity building as beyond the scope of participatory planning. Yet, the literature on participatory planning makes it clear that the most successful participatory processes strive to develop local skill and talent (Wates 2000; Sanoff, 2000). The development of these skills and talents not only enables more effective participation, it leaves a lasting legacy in the community. Given the role of the University of Winnipeg as a learning institution, this would have been a particularly valuable opportunity.

The meaning of participation did not seem to be clear to the lead university officials or participants in the participatory design process. One consultant indicated that in their view the collective design process started too far down the line for meaningful participation to occur. In the view of several participants interviewed, the collective design process was predominately an information gathering exercise. Several collective design participants, as well as steering committee members, also questioned the value of their participation. They were particularly uncertain about how decisions would be made or how their input would be incorporated into the final plan. Though several steering committee members felt that this was to be expected, theorists such as Henry Sanoff

(2000), advocate transparent decision-making, as a necessary element to successful participation.

According to Wate's (2000) participation matrix, the processes that lead to the Campus and Community Development Plan did contain some elements of participation. The formation of a steering committee during the planning stages gave opportunity for partnership to develop between university and neighbourhood communities and the consultants. However the lack of attention to developing capacity and transparent decision-making relegated this steering committee to more of a consultative role. The participants in the collective design process were simply consulted with no formation of a partnership attempted.

The second theme discussed is 'public' representation. This relates to who was represented in the 'public' participation process. It also discusses the ways in which multiple publics were accommodated in this process.

The University of Winnipeg did attempt to involve various members of the university and wider Winnipeg community in the creation of the Campus and Community Development Plan. The planning and design steering committee allowed for consistent input and feedback on the Campus and Community Development Plan. This committee maintained representation from a wide variety of individuals including those within the university establishment, professionals with technical expertise, community residents, as well as the

business community and service providers. However, despite the diversity of professional experience, the steering committee did not represent the composition of the neighbourhood or university. Of the 19 members on the steering committee, there were only three individuals with Aboriginal ancestry and no new Canadians. As well, all individuals on the committee were either working in a professional capacity or were pursuing formal post-secondary education. This is in distinct contrast to a neighbourhood with a diversity of ethnic backgrounds, including a mix of new Canadians and Aboriginal peoples as well as individuals with limited formal education. This presence of the elite 'representatives' of Aboriginal communities is discussed and critiqued in the literature related to multiculturalism (Ugo, R, Uitemark, J. & van Houtum, H. 2004; Amin, 2002; Abor, 1999). Ugo et al (2004) describe this as a process of ethnic 'institutionalization'. This reliance on the elite leaves out the other notions on which individuals form their identity, including gender, class and education.

Although there is a commitment from the University of Winnipeg and sensitivity to cultural differences, effort to interpret or incorporate 'other ways of knowing' into the Campus and Community Development Plan were not apparent. One steering committee participant referred to an inability or unwillingness to interpret communication that is outside of the discourse of the mainstream, educated class. This was discussed in relation to students and given the limited representation of ethno-culturally diverse groups it cannot be stated with certainty that this would have been extended to cultural differences. During the interviews,

however, when asked about areas such as cultural issues, capacity building and modifications to the process, neither the consultants nor the lead university officials discussed any of their own efforts to ensure they were cognizant of cultural differences and able to understand other ways of communicating. Instead, when discussing capacity building, one of the consultants indicated it was their job to instruct participants on 'where the world is going'. This was stated without consideration of the world experiences that participants were able to give to the process, or how the consultants may learn from participants. This perspective on relationship is in opposition to the shift in planning theory, which limits the role of the expert and values everyday knowledge. It also neglects the potential for two-way exchange of knowledge between participant and consultant (Sandercock, 2003; Hillier, 1998; Healy, 1992, 1997). This perspective may relate to why some participants in the collective design process felt that the public charette was more about selling the project than gathering real input from the participants.

There also appeared to be limited consideration given to how the process could be modified in order to ensure it was respectful and comfortable for individuals of other cultures. For one university official in particular, such a consideration was viewed as a process of marginalization. In this individual's view, everyone would need to be treated the same through any participation process and as a result difference had to be glossed over. This misses the fundamental claim of 'post-multicultural' literature that recognition of diversity does not necessarily require a

separation of people, but can signify respect. Although it most certainly requires a fine balance, this respect for diversity may allow for learning and practicing new ways of expressing oneself. Achieving this balance will enable intercultural dialogue to occur more readily (Sandercock, 2003).

The third theme relates to power relations. This appears to be a significant factor between the university and its student population, as well as between the university and neighbourhood residents. It was stated on several occasions by steering committee members and participants in the collective design event, that for many neighbourhood residents the university was outside of their experience. Knowing this, it is not surprising there would be reluctance on behalf of neighbourhood residents to attend a forum at the university. This power differential did not appear to be very well recognized by the consultants or university officials in the participatory design process. The tension between the university and surrounding neighbourhoods appeared to be overlooked or minimized during the collective design process.

Added to the location of the collective design event was the formal nature of both the steering committee structure and the collective design process. For the participation process to engage all segments of the population, more than a commitment to communication and knowledge sharing is necessary. As outlined in the literature, attention must be paid to underlying power imbalances. These can be reduced or exasperated by the design of a participation process.

Addressing these power imbalances often requires a re-conception of the form of a process, particularly language used (Hiller, 1998; Benhabib, 1996; Healy, 1997). Despite assertions by one of the university officials that to treat everyone the same was to treat everyone equally, ignoring the various ways in which people relate to the world can inadvertently lead to exclusion.

# **Lessons Learned**

This participatory planning process was undertaken by an urban university to engage its community members and those of the neighbouring communities. This focused project provides several lessons for the wider field of planning to consider when engaging diverse community members. As the discussions in the interviews did primarily focus upon the collective design process, the majority of these lessons are drawn from this aspect of the process.

The selection of steering committee members did ensure that there was wide spread expertise at the table when developing the Campus and Community Development Plan. To further expand the amount of input on the plan and reach out to those that are often not at the table, an open invitation was made to university and neighbourhood residents and other stakeholders to take part in the collective design process. Yet, despite this open invitation, the collective design process was not well represented by community or university members.

This lack of representation indicates it is not enough to send out the invitation to diverse community members and expect wide and diverse participation; more must be considered. Throughout the interviews, the consultants, university officials and participants, provided several suggestions on how the process could have been improved to enable further participation. Some of these lessons can be generalized for any participatory event, regardless of the cultural or other

diversifying factors of the group. They are nonetheless important to consider.

This section discusses some of these lessons.

### Location Matters

Participatory planning guidebooks cite the importance of location in the creation of a comfortable and welcoming environment. This is particularly true for marginalized groups. The University of Winnipeg's invitation to university, neighbourhood residents and other stakeholders to participate in the collective design process was done to open the university to the neighbourhood. Although this was with the best of intentions, the university is viewed by many in the neighbourhoods as an intimidating space and outside of their daily experience. This will likely not change until the residents begin to see some tangible examples of the university opening itself to the neighbourhoods.

Understanding this, illustrates the need to reconsider issues of location, timing and existing tensions when beginning any new participatory design process with diverse community members. The location needs to be on neutral ground and in a space that is comfortable for the specific community that one is working with. Paying attention to location shows a respect for the importance of space and need for individuals to feel safe and comfortable to fully participate.

#### • Time is limited

A second consideration is respect for participants' time. Although it may be a great idea in theory to have several participatory design events, the reality of

being able to engage many individuals over the long term may not be feasible.

This is magnified when working in economically disadvantaged communities and communities where they may feel, as new Canadians that they do not have a place at the decision-making table.

Timing refers to more than just the how long and how often participation is sought from individuals and groups. It also signals a consideration of whether or not the initial stages of the engagement process could occur at an existing event. This requires planning and design officials to find ways to fit into existing community events; to bend their time rather than expect others to bend theirs. Alternatively, finding ways to incorporate a community celebration as part of the participatory design process is more likely a way to entice community members not otherwise engaged to take part in a participatory design process.

## Language is important

This includes a consideration of having interpreters available to assist individuals whose first language many not be English, as well as a review of the appropriateness of word choice and structure for individuals who many have a lower level of education.

### Difference cannot be brushed aside

Though it is noble to hold a participatory design event and gather together diverse community members for an open exchange of ideas, in practice it may

not be so simple. Several participants felt that it may have been more effective to hold an initial set of participatory design charettes in culturally specific community groups and at community centres in the neighborhoods and university campus. Following these initial charettes a follow-up session could be held with the entire community. It was felt that these smaller settings may enable individuals to feel comfortable before taking part in a larger session.

Differences in cultural norms and manners need to be considered. This is particularly true when trying to reach new Canadians or Aboriginal peoples who may have varying levels of comfort with regard to speaking out in public.

# Personal Relationships are Key

The development of personal relationships are key to the success of a participatory design process, particularly when working with various groups that are not normally in contact. This value of personal relationships and trust was demonstrated in the willingness of a student to discuss with one of the university officials the need to recognize the special needs of the transgender community. This is an incredibly important aspect of participatory planning and not easy to accomplish. Consideration needs to be made regarding who facilitates or engages communities. This is particularly important for those communities who are marginalized in order to find someone can be trusted by these communities. This is not an easy task to accomplish, as the tension between the University of Winnipeg and its neighbours reveals that relationships cannot be built merely on propinguity. A long-term goal of the University of Winnipeg, however, is to

develop these relationships with their neighbours. The University of Winnipeg is beginning this process through hiring a community liaison. This liaison maintains an open door to ensure ongoing dialogue between the university and their neighbours.

## Outreach and reevaluation

The university is making strides in their attempts to embrace and welcome diverse members of their communities in joint planning and development concerns. However, to have a continuous engagement of all members of the community, individuals must see the value in their participation. There also needs to be a continuous information flow for individuals who have taken part in participatory planning and design processes on the plan progression and eventually some tangible results.

To ensure the process is inclusive over the long term, continuous evaluation of the demographics of the community one is working with is necessary. Effort must be made to identify and recruit groups not represented in the planning and design of the event.

# 7.0 Conclusion

The driving question behind this research has been how can planners translate themes of diversity into practice? How can the divergent viewpoints of culturally diverse residents construct a neighbourhood plan or urban design? The three guiding questions have been:

- 1. What methods or techniques are employed by planners and/or urban designers to engage citizens across cultural differences?
- 2. What are the limitations and successes of these methods?
- 3. What lessons can be drawn for the wider field of planning?

To answer these questions a combination of literature review and in-depth interviews based upon a case study were employed.

Although there was effort on behalf of the University of Winnipeg, this case study had limited engagement of its diverse population in the participatory design process, particularly the collective design process. This limited engagement does make it difficult to fully answer the first question in this thesis. A wider examination of the practices of planners and urban designers would need to be taken beyond this case study to fully understand or answer the breadth of methods and techniques used in diverse settings. The current planning literature, however, does detail some of the work undertaken by practicing planners seeking to engage their citizens. Based upon the review of literature and this case study, it does appear that the theory of diversity is further advanced than the practice.

The case study examined had several limitations in their approach to engaging their diverse population. From this case study and the review of the literature it appears that in order to garner participation from culturally diverse community members, a new conception of participatory planning is needed. Despite their sensitivity to cultural diversity, particularly Aboriginal cultures, the university officials and consultants who led the planning and design process examined in this case study were unsuccessful in gaining participation of diverse community members in their collective design process and had limited ethno-cultural representation on the steering committee. The tools and techniques used, such as images, and small group discussions are useful when working with individuals whose first language may not be English. They are only worthwhile, however, if we are able to get people through the door. The limited representation, particularly in the collective design phase, indicates there was a likely flaw in the design of the process.

Lessons learned based upon this case study in combination with a review of literature, are outlined in the previous chapter. These lessons indicate that the typical process of public meeting and formal design charettes are not the most effective ways to engage a diverse population. This is particularly true when dealing with a population that is marginalized due to culture and/or economics. As noted by one participant 'there is no draft to compel participation', but perhaps we can find ways to make the process more relevant and appealing.

At the end of this research, some fundamental questions remain. In a country with cities as diverse as Canada, how can we ensure accommodation of difference has been enabled? As planners, are we equipped to make these accommodations? Even more fundamentally, do we understand how to listen to diverse voices? These are major questions with which planners need to continually grapple in our diverse cities.

#### 7.1 Limitations of the Research

This research contained several limitations, which hamper its findings. To begin, the research would most certainly have been enriched through a greater number of interviews with individuals on the planning and design steering committee. In addition, the discussions with steering committee members tended to focus on the public charette, which embodied the collective design process. These interviews only skimmed the surface of the experiences for participants on the steering committee. This focus on the collective design process may have been a result of its perceived relevance for participants and thus became the focus of the interviews. Regardless, it would have been beneficial for the interviewer to explore the steering committee experience further through greater probing during the interview process.

More crucially, this case study examined a participation process, which, although attempted to involve a diversity of cultures and groups, was not successful in engaging wide representation. As a result the analysis was focused more so on

limitations than successes. Although the combination of literature review and analysis of the interviews, did allow for a discussion of lessons learned, the findings are significantly limited do to the limited nature of the case study.

## 7.2 Future Research

The field of participatory planning would benefit from further in-depth case studies that document the work of planners working with diverse groups. Comparative studies of participatory planning processes with diverse groups with a particular focus on the methods, tools and techniques used would provide a base from which to build a best practice framework or tool-kit. This includes indepth interviews with planners or urban designers who have significant experience undertaking participatory planning and design processes with diverse groups. Interviews with these key informants should focus upon their impressions on successful process as well as lessons they have learned. In these case studies, a particular focus should also be paid to undertaking indepth interviews with individuals who are often underrepresented in participatory events, to understand barriers to their participation. This would include new immigrants and individuals from lower-economic and educational levels. The completion of such research would provide a greater picture of how to engage a diverse group of participants.

Although this research focused upon the process of engaging diverse community members, a greater study of the products and policies that emerge from working

with diverse community members would also be useful. It is clear that the physical manifestation as a result of participatory planning and design processes are necessary in order for individuals to feel their participation was worthwhile and their perspectives validated. Further study on how diverse groups are involved in the implementation stages of projects or policies would enhance learning in the participatory planning field.

# **Appendix 1: Case Study Introduction letter**

My name is Amy Jordan. I am a master of city planning student at the University of Manitoba. As part of my degree requirements, I am completing a master's thesis.

For this thesis, I am interested in learning about how planners and other community leaders can work more effectively in diverse communities, particularly across culture. The intent of this research is to take a closer look at the techniques of planners and designers when working to engage a diverse public in the process of planning and design. The goal of this research is to push beyond a theory of and respect for difference, towards a more solid understanding of what it means to work with difference.

I understand that you (participated in/lead/facilitated) a participation process for the University of Winnipeg's campus and community plan. I am interested in looking at this process as a case study of a participation process in a diverse community. As part of this research I would like to have the opportunity to interview you and learn from your experiences. In order to gain a full picture of the successes and limitations of participatory planning techniques when engaging across difference, as well as to draw potential lessons for practicing planners, your participation, as well as others involved with this process is essential.

It is anticipated that this will be a one-time interview, lasting approximately one hour in length.

If you are willing to participate in this process, please email me at amy.jordan@xxxxx or call 204-xxx- xxxx and leave a message for Amy Jordan.

Thank you and I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Amy Jordan

Researcher: Amy Jordan

Graduate Student, Department of City Planning

University of Manitoba

**Telephone**: 1-xxx-xxxx (home phone number)

1-204-xxx-xxxx (local number)

**Email:** amy.jordan@xxxxxx

This research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB). 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. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

# **Appendix 2: Consent Form**

**Research Project Title:** Inclusive Cities: the Quest for Participatory Planning in Winnipeg's West End

Researcher(s): Amy Jordan

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.

# **Purpose and Description of Research**

The intent of this research is to take a closer look at the techniques of planners and designers when working to engage a diverse public in the process of planning and design. The goal of this research is to push beyond a theory of and respect for diversity, towards a more solid understanding of what it means to work with difference. In order to gain a full picture of the successes and limitations of participatory planning techniques when engaging across difference, as well as to draw potential lessons for practicing planners, the research will include interviews with participants and facilitators in a participation process to learn from their experiences. A second stage of the research includes interviews with key informants in order to provide feedback and comment on the participation process undertaken in the case study.

It is anticipated that your participation will be a one-time interview, lasting approximately one hour in length.

#### Research Process

With your permission, the interview will be audio- taped in order to assist in the assembly and analysis of data. The identity of individuals participating in this study will not be revealed in any publication of this research and care will be taken during data gathering and write up, to ensure views expressed will not be attributed to any individual. Direct quotes may be used in publications, but no names or other identifying information will accompany the quote. Only the researcher of this project will review the audio and digital files. The files will be stored in a secure location in the private home of the researcher and will be destroyed following the completion of the study. The transcripts will be shredded and the digital records will be over taped.

If desired, a free copy of the final paper will be made available by contacting the researcher. There will be no form of remuneration for participation in this project.

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.

Researcher: Amy Jordan

**Graduate Student, Department of City Planning** 

**University of Manitoba** 

**Telephone**: 1-xxx-xxx-xxxx (home phone number)

1-204-xxx-xxxx (local number)

**Email:** amy.jordan@xxxx

This research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB). 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. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

| off for all or any part of the interview).                       |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| ☐ I would like to be notified when the fin contact information). | al paper is available (please add |
|  |                                   |
| Participant's name (printed)                                     |                                   |
| Participant's Signature  | Date                              |
| Researcher and/or Delegates name (printed)                       |                                   |
| Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature                           | Date                              |

# Appendix 3: Interview Questions for Leaders/Facilitators of the University of Winnipeg's Campus and Community Plan

My name is Amy Jordan and I am a master of city planning student at the University of Manitoba. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview with me.

- This interview is part of the research I am conducting to complete my thesis Inclusive Cities: the Quest for Participatory Planning in Winnipeg's West End.
- If it is all right with you, I would like to record this session (yes/no). The digital files and any transcriptions will be used only by me, will be kept in a safe and secure place and will be destroyed upon completion of this project.
- Any identifying information will be aggregated to protect your privacy.
- If you feel that there are questions that you cannot answer for any reason, do not hesitate to indicate this to me and we will proceed to the following question.

I am going to ask you some questions about your involvement with the University of Winnipeg's Campus and Community Plan. I will start with some general information about your involvement in the process and then some specific questions about the work and dynamics of the process.

- 1. During the Campus and Community Planning process, what components were you involved in? Please describe.
- 2. Please describe the steps you took to prepare for the participation process. (i.e. background exploration on the neighbourhood, consideration of activities for the charettes etc).
- 3. Were the neighbourhood dynamics identified prior to the participation process (i.e. ethno-cultural mix, income and education levels)?
  - If yes, were these considered in the preparation of the process? If so please describe how this was incorporated into the participation process.
- 4. Were there any sensitivities due to culture or other differences that needed to be addressed during the process?
  - o How were these addressed?
  - How, if at all, did the exploration into the neighbourhood (reference answer to question 2) help prepare you for these considerations?
- 5. Please describe what, if any techniques you used to develop participant capacity (to strengthen participants' knowledge and ability to participate).

- 6. Did you make adaptations to the process as it went forward?
  - If yes, please describe and explain why these adaptations were made.
- 7. Are there different approaches you use when working with a range of ethnic groups? (this may include techniques you used during this process and some you may have used in previous processes)
- 8. What affect do you feel diversity had upon this particular process? (can be culture, economic, age)
- 9. Overall, how successful do you feel the participation process was in eliciting community participation? Please explain and describe what indicates this success (or lack of) to you.
- 10. Broadly speaking, what did you learn from this particular process that you could apply to similar projects in the future?

# Appendix 4: Interview Questions for Participants of the University of Winnipeg's Campus and Community Plan

My name is Amy Jordan and I am a master of city planning student at the University of Manitoba. Thank you for agreeing to this interview with me.

- This interview is part of the research I am conducting to complete my thesis Inclusive Cities: the Quest for Participatory Planning in Winnipeg's West End.
- If it is all right with you, I would like to record this session (yes/no). The digital files and any transcriptions will be used only by me, will be kept in a safe and secure place and will be destroyed upon completion of this project.
- Any identifying information will be removed to protect your confidentiality.
- If you feel that there are questions that you cannot answer for any reason, do not hesitate to indicate this to me and we will proceed to the following question.

I am going to ask you some questions about your participation in the University of Winnipeg's Community and University Plan. I will start with some general information about your involvement in the process and then some more specific questions. This interview is intended to examine the participation process in no way should be seen as an evaluation of your own performance or participation.

### Involvement

- 1. How did you become involved with the campus and community plan? (Probe: were you recruited? Did you volunteer? Are you part of an organization?)
- 2. Please describe the aspects/processes you were involved with.
- 3. In your view, how representative were the participants of the university and neighbourhood?

## **Process**

- 4. Do you feel the process was designed in a way that made you to feel welcome and able to participate? Please explain.
- 5. Do you feel you had the appropriate level of knowledge and skill to participate effectively?
- 6. Were there any methods, processes or techniques the facilitators used to further your capacity to participate (to strengthen your knowledge and participation)? If so, please explain.

- 7. Are there any aspects of the process you particularly enjoyed?
- 8. Any aspects that you disliked?
- 9. Can you describe any conflicts or issues that occurred through the participation process (between participants or facilitators and participants)?
- 10. How were these conflicts addressed?
- 11. Can you describe any ways in which the process could have been improved to enable further engagement?
- 12. Any further comments, thoughts or ideas you would like to share with regard to the participation process?

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