

Emergent Paradigms and Experiential Perspectives: Towards Place Responsive Planning in Nunavut

By

Erik Børre Nilsen

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

**Department of City Planning
Faculty of Architecture
University of Manitoba**

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**The Faculty of Graduate Studies
500 University Centre, University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3T 2N2**

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, there has been a trend towards devolution in governance. This trend presents particular promise for Northern and Aboriginal residents, many of whom have intensified their appeals for self-determination, arguing that existing governance structures do not adequately accommodate their unique needs and interests. As planning is inextricably linked to governance, the discipline inevitably assists in facilitating or restricting the development of devolved governance forms. For Northern and Aboriginal residents, therefore, the direction of planning practice warrants serious consideration.

This thesis situates the present position of planning in the North, in view of determining how the discipline can assist in structuring more place relevant and culturally sensitive governance forms in Nunavut. The study traces the paradigmatic development of the discipline to discuss how conventional, rational planning theories have generally failed to engender place relevant policy. Emergent viewpoints on place are then explored and aligned with transformative planning theories in an attempt to offer new perspectives on place sensitive social policy construction.

This study draws on the experiential perspectives of Northern practitioners to further situate the position of planning in Nunavut. The empirical research focuses on connecting planning theory to practice, merging emergent conceptual viewpoints with the analysis of existing planning infrastructures.

The thesis concludes that Northern planners are well situated to assist in structuring more place relevant and culturally sensitive governance forms. A series of recommendations is provided as a tool to guide practitioners in their efforts to help develop those forms.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	I
TABLE OF CONTENTS	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
 1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	 1
1.1 PREFACE	1
1.2 BACKGROUND	2
1.3 ISSUE STATEMENT	3
1.4 OBJECTIVES	3
1.5 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS	5
1.6 LIMITATIONS.....	6
1.7 BIASES.....	7
 2.0 PARADIGMS IN THE CONTEXT OF PLANNING	 9
2.1 THE PARADIGMATIC LENS: INTRODUCTION TO AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK	9
2.1.1 <i>Applying the Paradigm Conception to the Study of Planning</i>	10
2.1.2 <i>Paradigm as Policy Approach</i>	11
2.1.3 <i>The Significance of Paradigmatic Development</i>	12
2.2 PARADIGMS IN NORTHERN AND ABORIGINAL PLANNING.....	13
2.2.1 <i>The Case of Paradigmatic Indeterminacy</i>	13
2.2.2 <i>Northern Conceptualisations: Implications for Policy Frameworks and Planning Agendas</i>	14
2.2.3 <i>Conventional Northern Conceptualisations: Critiques</i>	17
2.2.4 <i>Interpreting Critiques: Paradigmatic Implications</i>	18
2.2.5 <i>Contemporary Northern Conceptualisations and Paradigmatic Tension</i>	21
2.3 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF PLACE: RETHINKING NORTHERN CONCEPTUALISATIONS	22
2.3.1 <i>Planning For Multiplex Places</i>	22
2.3.2 <i>Nonplace Conceptualisations and Strategic Placemaking</i>	26
2.3.3 <i>Restructuring Planning Systems: The Development of Deliberative Space</i>	28
2.3.4 <i>Connecting Praxis to Multiplex: Planning Informed by Complexity Theory</i>	31
2.3.5 <i>The Planner Revisited: Perspectives on Institutional Development</i>	34
 3.0 RESEARCH TACTICS	 38
3.1 THE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW.....	38
3.2 RATIONALE FOR QUALITATIVE, FOCUSED INTERVIEWS	39
3.3 INTERVIEW PROCESS.....	40
3.3.1 <i>Selecting Respondents</i>	40
3.3.2 <i>Development of the Interview Guide</i>	42
3.3.3 <i>Conducting Interviews</i>	43
3.4 ANALYSING QUALITATIVE DATA.....	44
3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	45

4.0 THE SITUATION OF PLANNING: EMERGENT PARADIGMS AND EXPERIENTIAL PERSPECTIVES.....	47
4.1 THEME 1: FRIENDSHIPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NETWORK POWER.....	49
4.1.1 Theme Contextualisation.....	49
4.1.2 Discussion.....	49
4.1.3 Interpretive Summary.....	55
4.2 THEME 2: LANGUAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERACTIVE POLICY DIALOGUES.....	56
4.2.1 Theme Contextualisation.....	56
4.2.2 Discussion.....	57
4.2.3 Interpretive Summary.....	59
4.3 THEME 3: CONTROL VERSUS CONTOUR – ENGAGEMENT ISSUES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE.....	61
4.3.1 Theme Contextualisation.....	61
4.3.2 Discussion.....	62
4.3.3 Interpretive Summary.....	68
4.4 THEME 4: TRAINING AND EDUCATION – CORE COMPETENCIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE.....	70
4.4.1 Issue Contextualisation.....	70
4.4.2 Discussion.....	70
4.4.3 Interpretive Summary.....	74
 5.0 CONCLUSION: TOWARDS PLACE RESPONSIVE PLANNING.....	 76
5.1 THE PLACE OF PLANNING.....	76
5.2 COMPLEXITY THEORY: IMPLICATIONS FOR SPATIAL PLANNING.....	77
5.3 EMERGENT PARADIGMS AND EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURES: ASSESSING CONNECTIONS.....	79
5.3.1 Prospects: Utilising Network Power in Emerging Paradigms.....	79
5.3.2 Constraints: The Persistence of Paradigmatic Indeterminacy.....	81
5.3.2.1 Language.....	81
5.3.2.2 Understanding Collaborative Process: Constituents & Common Stakeholders.....	81
5.3.2.3 Understanding Collaborative Process: Practitioners.....	83
5.3.3 Discussion.....	83
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	85
5.4.1 Recommendations for Northern Planners.....	85
5.4.1.1 Think of People, Then Places.....	85
5.4.1.2 Find Purpose in Existing Friendships and Develop Friendships with Purpose.....	85
5.4.1.3 Practice Critical Self-Reflection.....	86
5.4.2 Recommendations for Planning Agencies.....	86
5.4.2.1 Provide Practitioners with Networking Opportunities.....	86
5.4.2.2 Provide Constituents with Networking Opportunities.....	87
5.4.3 Recommendations for Planning Education.....	87
5.4.3.1 Develop a Multiplex Focus.....	87
5.4.3.2 Explore Specialised Training Opportunities.....	87
5.5 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	88
 6.0 APPENDIX A: RESEARCH INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	 89
7.0 APPENDIX B: UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA ETHICS APPROVAL.....	92
8.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	94

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Dr. Ian Skelton for his mentorship throughout the course of my planning education, and for his direction in the writing of this thesis. He has contributed significantly to both my personal and professional development.

I would also like to thank Dr. Jill Oakes and Tom Yauk for acting as Committee members. Their experiential knowledge and critical insights were instrumental in the development of this thesis.

I thank the Faculty members and instructors at the University of Manitoba who have helped shaped the direction of my planning education, especially Dr. Ian Wight, Dr. Sheri Blake, Dr. Rae Bridgman, and Dr. David Van Vliet.

I am especially indebted to Robert Connelly and Nunavut's Department of Sustainable Development, and to the Northern Scientific Training Program, for providing me with the opportunity to work and conduct research in Nunavut. This thesis was in large part a product of my Northern experiences. To that end, I am also indebted to my friends in Nunavut for accepting me into their communities.

Thanks also to Dr. Wayne Davies for compelling me to pursue a planning education, and for teaching me the value of a good dictionary, among other things.

Thanks finally to my friends for putting up with me throughout the course of this project. This thesis is dedicated to my parents, for their support and encouragement in all of my endeavours.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preface

Inspiration can be drawn from the most trivial of instances. Indeed, this thesis was inspired by such an instance. Specifically, one occurring in the Arctic Circle, on what could be described as a typical but entirely random Nunavut summer day.

In 2000, I was afforded the opportunity to work alongside a remote Northern community on a grassroots development initiative. Though the initiative did not carry an explicit directive, it was designed to build community capacity in view of local empowerment. As an intern and neophyte planner tasked with co-facilitating the initiative, I was admittedly somewhat uncertain as to how to approach the position. My first week at work was basically spent contemplating the internship objectives. Then I was invited to go on a caribou hunting excursion.

I was out on the land with several locals when one of the group's two all-terrain vehicles suffered a breakdown. The hamlet from which we had departed was not in viewing sight. I was a little unnerved, to say the least. My anxieties not giving way to the calm demeanour of the group, I inquired suggestively, "Is anybody going to take the other ATV back to town, to find somebody with some expertise to fix this?". My query seemingly fell upon deaf ears. The group was too fixated on ameliorating the situation. In a matter of minutes the vehicle was repaired, at which point one of the locals addressed me with a subdued pride, "You'll find we're quite a resourceful people. We just need a few tools and we can manage after that". At that instance, I was provided

with both a framework for the community development initiative, and a perspective from which to approach a thesis on Northern and Aboriginal planning.

1.2 Background

There is growing concern in the planning discipline with regards to the democratic deficit, a term used to describe the conceptual cleft existing between the state (or other regulatory decision making bodies) and civil society. Interest in the democratic deficit has arisen as existing governance forms, in their modernist and rationalistic approaches, have not managed to ensure widespread social equity in the public sphere. Presumably, the planning discipline is geared to supporting the interests of people and places. Therefore, there is mounting conjecture that social policy construction must be malleable, meaning it must be made more responsive to the citizens for whom, and places for which, it is intended to serve. In view of this supposition, theorists have recently built a progressive discourse on communicative and participatory governance. It is argued that social policy construction may best be approached through the active engagement of civil society itself.

In accordance with recent perspectives on participatory governance, Northern and Aboriginal policy and planning frameworks have come under particular scrutiny. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Canada:1996) set a benchmark in communicating that remote Northern communities, long subject to a history of paternalistic policy, must be afforded opportunities to manage their own social, economic, and political development. As planning is intrinsically linked to governance, the profession has, from a procedural standpoint, found itself well-situated to address the

democratic deficit in Aboriginal contexts. However, as the North has been inundated with rationalistic planning schemes, there are few place focused precedents in participatory governance that planners may draw upon.

1.3 Issue Statement

The planning discipline is at the interface of a paradigmatic transition. The rationalist-comprehensive paradigm that has carried professional practice for several decades is now increasingly giving way to models of communicative, collaborative action. As these new paradigms supplant those of eras past, it becomes necessary to evaluate how the profession is responding to both the emergence of new paradigms, and to the coexistence of what are divergent, often theoretically contradicting conceptual frameworks.

The paradigmatic tensions evident in the planning discipline have found a playing field in Canada's Northern, and characteristically Aboriginal, communities. Practitioners, frequently bound by convention to rationalistic planning exercises, have begun to experiment with communicative, collaborative models. These models presumably present a progressive course for planning. Yet, if the potential of emergent paradigms is to be realised, it is imperative that the planning discipline's infrastructures correspond with its conceptual frameworks.

1.4 Objectives

The principal objective of this study is to situate the present position of planning in the North, in view of determining how the discipline can assist in structuring more place-relevant and culturally sensitive governance forms in Nunavut. This objective is

accomplished by way of an investigation of relevant contemporary literature, and through original empirical work with Northern practitioners.

The literature review situates the present position of planning within the discipline's broader paradigmatic development. The review begins by developing a working definition of the paradigm conception for the purposes of the study. It then moves to trace the paradigmatic development of planning, with an explicit focus on Northern and Aboriginal themes. This second component includes a critical analysis of preceding practices, which assists the study in exploring and contextualising the forms that planning has taken over the course of time. Finally, the literature review turns to examining contemporary planning theory to characterise the nature of emergent paradigms in the discipline. This final component brings to light emergent perspectives on governance, particularly in view of communicative action and complexity theories, and the institutional perspective. The literature review effectively sets the framework of analysis for the empirical research.

The empirical component of this study builds on themes developed in the literature review, particularly those associated with emergent institutional concepts. The empirical research incorporates the experiential perspectives of practitioners in the attempt to situate the position of planning from an explicit Nunavut viewpoint, acknowledging the limitations noted below. Further, the empirical research provides a template from which the study makes an assessment as to the extent to which Northern practitioners are

attuned to, or poised to embrace, emergent perspectives on and opportunities in institutional development.

The literature review and empirical research collectively provide for a comprehensive characterisation and examination of Northern and Aboriginal planning theory and practice. The literature review sets the parameters for an analysis of paradigmatic development from a decidedly theoretical perspective. The empirical research focuses more specifically on connecting planning theory to practice, merging emergent conceptual viewpoints with the analysis of existing planning infrastructures.

1.5 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into five chapters.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the subject matter discussed in the thesis. The chapter includes a contextual background, an issue statement, an outline of research objectives, and brief commentary on research limitations and biases.

Chapter 2 features the results of the literature review, which functions to set the framework of analysis for the empirical component of this study. The literature review situates the present position of the planning discipline by conceptually mapping its paradigmatic development. The chapter explores the theoretical foundations of planning practice in Northern and Aboriginal contexts, using both historical and contemporary points of reference. It further characterises the nature of emergent paradigms, with discussion centred on governance topics.

Chapter 3 explains the research tactics used in the empirical component of this study. The chapter discusses the rationale for the research instrument employed, namely, the qualitative interview. It further describes data collection and analysis techniques. A statement on research instrument limitations is also included.

Chapter 4 details the results of the empirical research methodology outlined in the preceding chapter. The findings are presented thematically in accordance with key concepts arising from the research interviews. The chapter is organised such that each theme is accompanied by a *theme contextualisation* which frames concepts explored in the literature review; a *discussion* incorporating inputs from interview respondents; and a brief *interpretive summary* of discussion key-points.

Chapter 5 synthesises the study's findings, as it links concepts explored in the literature review to themes examined in the empirical research. Specifically, the chapter discusses the extent to which emergent paradigms connect with the existing range of planning infrastructures presently functioning in the North. The chapter then moves to make a statement on how the discipline can assist in structuring more place-relevant and culturally-sensitive governance forms, as expressed through a series of recommendations for Northern planning research and practice.

1.6 Limitations

The scope of analysis of this thesis is limited geographically. The study frequently makes statements and generalisations that are presumed to encompass the entire sphere of Northern planning and policy development. However, it must be noted that insights

derived from the empirical research were provided by practitioners presently employed in the Territory of Nunavut. While Northern planning agencies across Canada are compelled to address and manage similar issues, insights conveyed through the empirical research are undoubtedly influenced by unique geographical situations.

This study is also limited to the extent that the research is conducted by a researcher from a dominant social position attempting to understand planning across cultures. A more detailed account of this limitation is provided in Chapter 3, where research tactics are explained.

It is also worth noting that the scope of Nunavut-specific planning literature is particularly limited. The study does not stray from contemporary convention in drawing homologies between Nunavut and the North more generally, however unique Nunavut may be.

1.7 Biases

This study is premised upon the assumption that the planning discipline is presently at a point of paradigmatic transition. As the study takes such a position, there is an inherent bias in the manner in which the research is approached. Namely, planning theory and practice are discussed as being affiliated with precedent, contemporary, or emergent eras in the discipline. On the one hand, perceiving planning as organised into paradigmatic stages presents a convenient means of tracing the development of the discipline. On the other, there is debate as to whether or not planning can be catalogued on a continuum as such.

Some theorists contest that planning has never developed paradigmatically, in the conventional sense of the conception (Garcia, 1993:2). Yet others argue that the discipline has already progressed through several stages of paradigmatic development, and suggest that planning has experienced a paradigm crisis (Galloway and Mahayni, 1977). This thesis acknowledges that the study of planning paradigms may force the issue with respect to paradigmatic classifications. However, the issue is addressed at the outset of the study, where a working definition of the paradigm conception is established.

Paradigmatic issues aside, this study carries another bias in that the research assumes that Northern planning is necessarily an exercise in Aboriginal planning. Certainly, this is not always reflective of case scenarios. For example, in the Yukon Territory, only 23 percent of the population identify themselves as Aboriginal (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2003). However, in the Northwest Territories, this figure stands at 50 percent, and in the Territory of Nunavut, where research interview respondents were recruited, 85 percent of the population is Aboriginal. This thesis takes a place focused approach to the study of planning, and statements conveyed are intended to reflect the situation of the North itself as a unique place entity. Yet given the latter two population figures, it is difficult to deny the Aboriginal presence in the Northern Canadian context, particularly Nunavut.

Finally, this study assumes that planning practitioners are outsiders, meaning they are not rooted in the places for which they are planning. It follows that planners have limited understandings of place inasmuch as they lack contextual and local knowledge of particular place entities.

2.0 PARADIGMS IN THE CONTEXT OF PLANNING

2.1 The Paradigmatic Lens: Introduction to an Analytical Framework

This literature review is premised upon the assumption that contemporary trends in the planning discipline may best be understood in view of the discipline's historical development. This notion follows the logic that, if contemporary movements or practices in planning are to be observed and assessed, they should be considered in conjunction with those of precedent periods. As Polsby (1984) intimates, it is difficult to recognise or evaluate changes in professional spheres if there is no comparative basis or grounds upon which those evaluations can be made.

Inasmuch as this literature review seeks to be informed by the planning discipline's historical development, it draws upon Thomas Kuhn's (1962) work for constructing an analytical framework. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn employs a paradigmatic approach for expounding on the historical development of scientific disciplines. He asserts that the behaviours of scientific communities are dictated by the worldviews, or paradigms, through which those communities perceive phenomena; and further, that *changes* in the behaviours of scientific communities relate to the changing conceptions of realities held by those communities (Galloway and Mahayni, 1977:64). It is when the planning discipline is perceived as a scientific community that Kuhn's work connects with the study at hand. Developments in planning can be observed in relation to the paradigms that have directed professional practices over the course of time.

The paradigmatic model of development serves as a convenient means of mapping the activities of professional disciplines alongside the prevailing fundamental assumptions of particular eras. When brought into critical examination, paradigms may operate to contextualise professional practices. It is the contextualising function of paradigmatic analyses that are of importance to this particular study.

2.1.1 Applying the Paradigm Conception to the Study of Planning

There are dangers inherent in applying Kuhnian terminology to studies external to the philosophy of science, such as planning (Taylor, 1998:158). The most obvious of these would be misinterpreting Kuhn's essential hypotheses. However, as his ideas have circulated throughout academia, many disciplines have moved to interpret Kuhn for their own pedagogical purposes. The bodies of political science, sociology, and history, for example, have all engaged in discourses on Kuhnian notions of paradigmatic development. These disciplines have frequently redefined or modified the paradigm conception to illuminate the methodological issues confronting their professional practices (Heyl, 1975:63).

In planning, too, there have been numerous efforts made to relate Kuhn to the discipline (Camhis, 1979; Galloway and Mahayni, 1977; Garcia, 1993; Innes, 1995). What is evident from planning and other disciplines is that the study of paradigmatic development need not be restricted to the philosophy of science. Kuhn has provided interdisciplinary studies with both a language and a method for perceiving professional practices (Heyl, 1975:67). While caution must certainly be exercised when bringing Kuhn into studies outside his immediate area of analytical concern, this should not discourage other

disciplines from integrating paradigmatic themes into their own analyses. Planning academics, therefore, can fashion interpretations of the paradigm conception to suit their needs, in an effort to attain a heightened understanding of their own discipline (Taylor, 1998:158).

2.1.2 Paradigm as Policy Approach

A recurrent theme in the literature involving paradigmatic analyses is that paradigms may be considered analogous to policy approaches. In this light, the paradigm conception is associated more with normative values than it is with the development of meta-theoretical frameworks (Pieterse, 1998:356). That is to say that the paradigm concept is interpreted in the broad and general sense of an 'intellectual framework' (Pieterse, 1998:356), one that is intimately linked to political agendas and practices. This stands somewhat in contrast to Kuhn's more explicit description of paradigm as an explanatory framework defining the activities of scientific communities. Still, from an analytical standpoint, the paradigm as policy approach concept associates with Kuhn. It is ultimately concerned with exploring transitions or changes in thought and practice over the course of time.

There is literature suggesting that there are homologies between policy communities and scientific communities, such as those examined by Kuhn (Howlett, 1994; Weaver, 1996; Pieterse, 1998). This literature points to the notion that policy communities tend to develop common epistemes guiding decision making, and that these epistemes transform through time. Further still, it is implied that social learning is an integral component of these epistemological transformations.

Howlett (1994:632) contends that fundamental long-term policy changes originate in the changes of the underlying beliefs and attitudes towards the nature of social issues. The *process* of change in these underlying social beliefs, then, is where the concept of social learning relates to paradigmatic development. The formulation of new policy approaches is considered learning because these approaches, presumably, reflect a general increase in the knowledge a community has about particular policy issues (Howlett, 1994:632). It follows that this new, learned knowledge is reflective of the emergence of new paradigms in the policy arena.

At root in the preceding discussion is the notion that fundamental changes in social beliefs (which ultimately nurture transformations in policy approaches) follow a staged-sequential process (Howlett, 1994:632). That is, different policy approaches emerge as intellectual frameworks usurp or replace one another. From an analytical perspective, the model of paradigmatic development has appeal as a useful archetype for understanding changes in the nature of social beliefs, and therefore too, changes in policy approaches (Howlett, 1994). This is because the model provides a platform from which it is possible to examine the nature of emergent epistemes in view of existing or preceding ones.

2.1.3 The Significance of Paradigmatic Development

As will be discussed in the following chapter, there is evidence to suggest that the planning discipline is presently amidst a paradigmatic transition. The prevailing 'conceptual boxes' (Roberts, 2000) from within which practitioners have fashioned research and practice are altering, giving way to the emergence of new guiding policy frameworks, or paradigms, as this study has identified them.

As the epistemes underlying the planning discipline transform, undoubtedly, so too should its infrastructures, if indeed they are to operate in harmony with emergent policy frameworks. An awareness of paradigmatic development in planning is therefore essential. It provides a window through which it is possible to observe how planning infrastructures 'fit' with existing and emerging intellectual frameworks. And further, it yields insight into how infrastructures may be modified, such that they can become more responsive to the evolving conceptual boxes guiding the discipline.

2.2 Paradigms in Northern and Aboriginal Planning

2.2.1 The Case of Paradigmatic Indeterminacy

It can be argued that planning is presently at a point of paradigmatic transition, or as Garcia (1993) terms it, indeterminacy. This notion is evidenced to the extent that Northern and Aboriginal planning doctrines are being challenged with mounting frequency. Practitioners and academics alike have, in recent years, developed new ways of conceptualising First Nations' issues (Weaver, 1996:495). As a result, the discipline has been thrust into a discourse on the viability of its existing operating principles. Paradigmatic tension lingers insofar as conventional practices are being treated with circumspection, in light of new and emerging perspectives on Northern and Aboriginal development.

An overt indication that planning has reached a stage of paradigmatic indeterminacy is that public policy frameworks have increasingly come under debate. The discussion emanating from this debate has essentially taken two forms. On the one hand, there has emerged a body of literature critically appraising existing or recent policy approaches in

Northern and Aboriginal planning, shedding light on 'what is' and 'what has been' in the discipline. On the other, a theoretical discourse has been initiated on planning frameworks, organised with an eye to the future. Here, the focus has rested with statements on 'what planning should be', and 'how it can get there', so to speak. This literature review is interested in analysing both of the aforementioned dialogues. That is because the two collectively yield insight into the nature of the current paradigmatic transition in planning, and further still, the essence of emerging paradigms.

2.2.2 Northern Conceptualisations: Implications for Policy Frameworks and Planning Agendas

Schmidt (2000) indicates that perceptions of the North vary, and that how the North is interpreted ultimately sets the parameters for policy development. In recent years, planning has come across conceptions of Northern Canada that vary from those that the discipline has traditionally acknowledged, understood, and operated according to. As the discipline has moved to recognise and respect these alternative conceptions of the North, it has been compelled to begin a process of rethinking its fundamental policy approaches.

The planning discipline has typically perceived the North in physical or geographic terms, and in strict reference to the region's expansive natural resource base (Armstrong, 1978; Page, 1986; Young, 1995; Robertson, 1999). Inasmuch as this hinterland conception has prevailed, policy has been both centred on resource exploitation and focused explicitly on economic growth. Indeed, there is an extensive body of literature linking the Northern frontier conceptualisation to the discipline's continued fixation on extending the modern industrial system, and its supporting institutions, into the North

(Pell and Wismer, 1987; Young, 1995; Myers, 1996). This literature calls attention to the Southern origins and orientation of conventional Northern development policy.

In contrast to the aforementioned is the homeland conceptualisation. This is the interpretation of the North typically upheld by Northern residents, and more particularly, though not exclusively, Aboriginals (Schmidt, 2000). The homeland conception differs substantively from the hinterland perception. That is because its interpretation correlates more with human or social than physical aspects of the Northern environment.

The homeland conception associates with a pervasive regional consciousness existent in the North, one that operates to define the environment in relation to the people that occupy it (Delaney, 1995:5). This regional consciousness both engenders and supports a holistic understanding of the Northern context. As indicated by Schmidt (2000:338), First Nations frequently perceive the North as, "a home; a place to make a living; a place that is welcoming and familiar; and a place that must be respectfully nurtured". Similar perspectives of the North, submitted by Aboriginals, are conveyed through the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Canada:RCAP, 1996). These accounts collectively demonstrate that First Nations commonly perceive the North in both personal and broader social terms.

Schmidt (2000:338) further suggests that the homeland conceptualisation is a product of culture and ethnicity. This position accentuates the notion that Northern residents and Aboriginals are inherently prone to conceive the North in a manner dissimilar to those

who are not. Nonetheless, as Aboriginal and Northern grievances have surfaced in the mainstream, the planning discipline has been compelled to attain a heightened awareness, if not understanding, of the homeland conception.

Recognition of the homeland conceptualisation has been, in part, a result of Aboriginal resistance to hinterland focused, mega-project development. Academics do credit a number of benchmark government-issued reports for communicating First Nations issues¹ and bringing Native perspectives to the fore (Wolfe, 1989; Weaver, 1996). However, there can be no denying the impact that Aboriginal opposition to hinterland development has had on the discipline. Most notably, it has instigated a discourse on topics such as land claims, environmental regulation, economic development, and energy development (Rees, 1987; Gerein, et al., 1989; Myers and Forrest, 2000), placing Aboriginals central to the discourse, and bringing recognition to First Nations' inherent stakeholder rights in Northern development. The identification of Aboriginals as principal stakeholders has had important ramifications. In particular, it has served to challenge the discipline's conventional interpretation and understanding of the Northern context, thereby setting a template for critical analysis. Effectively, the discipline has been forced to confront the fact that the North is, "not only about geography, but about the people who live there" (Delaney, 1995:5).

¹For example, Weaver (1996) credits both the Penner Report (1983) on Indian self-government and the Coolican (1985) Report on comprehensive land claims for setting new standards in conveying First Nations perspectives. Wolfe (1989) views the Hawthorne Report (1967) and Northern Affairs' (1980) *Indian Conditions* as instrumental in relaying First Nations issues.

2.2.3 Conventional Northern Conceptualisations: Critiques

As academics have become more cognisant of homeland conceptualisations, they have sharpened their critiques of hinterland focused policy platforms. In particular, criticism has been directed from those who condemn the framework for its inherent support of assimilation (Young, 1995; Myers, 2000); those who complain the framework nurtures dependency relationships (Usher, 1982; Ross and Usher, 1986; Elias, 1995); and those who contend the framework often oversteps the essence of socio-cultural activity in the North (Berger, 1985; Lonner, 1986; Wismer, 1996).

Implicit in the foregoing critiques is the notion that planning has not necessarily operated in the best interests of Northern inhabitants. The literature supports this contention. Schmidt (2000), for example, reasons that the discipline has defined the North in such a manner as to facilitate a policy structure that neglects the needs of Northern residents. Further, Rees (1987:112) denounces planning for its embrace of hinterland conceptions. He insists that the conceptions impose artificial limits on the range of policy choices available, ensuring that planning serves private as opposed to broader public interests. The implication here is that principal stakeholders have not been recognised because the North has been too narrowly perceived in planning arenas.

Academics concur that the discipline has been hindered by its inability to comprehensively identify stakeholders. Duerden (1992:223) is critical of the fact that planners have generally failed to articulate a coherent view of the appropriate interests to be served in Northern development. Similarly, Myers and Forrest (2000:143) criticise the

discipline for its 'lopsided' understanding of development, implying that Northern policy has rarely been fashioned in reference to Northern inhabitants.

Evidently, interpretations of the North have implications for the manner in which policy is constructed, and further still, for whom that policy is ultimately intended to serve. It is clear that Northern residents have not necessarily benefited from conventional planning strategies because conceptualisations of the North have not operated to identify them as principal stakeholders. In support of this concept, Rees (1988:59) argues that just because a policy is directed at Northern development, it does not guarantee that the policy is serving Northern objectives or interests. Academics have therefore called for the planning discipline to rework its interpretations of the North, and within this context, to redefine the concept of development accordingly (Myers, 2000).

2.2.4 Interpreting Critiques: Paradigmatic Implications

Critiques of the hinterland conception are grounded in the conviction that the conception has generally failed to propagate a comprehensive view of, and approach to, development. As outlined previously, the discipline has, through its embrace of conventional Northern conceptualisations, often overstepped important socio-cultural factors or issues in policy formulation. Gunatilleke provides insight into why this has occurred. He posits that:

The reluctance of current development thinking to engage in a discussion of these issues ultimately has its roots in a system of cognition, a structure of knowledge which is partial and incomplete (Gunatilleke, 1979:4).

Gunatilleke makes reference to the Western scientific tradition as a system of understanding, and he, like others, is critical of its application in the planning arena.

The Western scientific tradition has been censured for imposing on professional disciplines reductionist and rationalistic epistemological frameworks (Goulet, 1980; Gamble, 1986; Kuokkanen, 2000). It is contended that such frameworks are limited in their capacity to elicit pluralistic (Davidoff, 1965; Alexander, 1992) and socio-culturally relevant policy (Gamble, 1986; Wolfe, 1989; Sandercock, 1998). Yet such Eurocentric frameworks are those which have traditionally carried professional practice, particularly with respect to First Nations. As Brown (1999:22) indicates, the planning discipline has repeatedly employed, "non-Aboriginal models...to address...and manage Aboriginal environments rationally".

Western scientific rationalism in the discipline has been manifested through expert-based, modernist planning exercises (Brown 1999; Greening and Gonzales, 1999). Therein, practitioners have assumed the role of the technical specialist, addressing planning situations and fashioning policy with reference to a strict, culturally-specific set of professional criteria. This approach, termed ritualistic planning by Boothroyd (1984), does not seek to be informed by local values. To the contrary, the process compromises the tenets of democratic decision making (Healey, 1996; Young, 1995; Greening and Gonzales, 1999).

Inasmuch as ritualistic planning has remained intact, planners have largely disregarded local values or inputs in decision making processes. For this reason, homeland conceptualisations have not been given credence. Precedent and existing epistemological frameworks have neither required nor compelled planners to consider those conceptions. As a result, the North has been inundated with policy lacking what Delaney (1995:13) identifies as context sensitivity.

In the absence of context sensitivity, conventional planning approaches have frequently been deficient of cultural relativity. This is owing to the fact that professional disciplines have operated according to the assumption that the methodologies employed in the South are equally applicable in the North (Brownlee and Delaney, 1997:15; Rees, 1987). Clearly, this is an ethnocentric assumption, one which has its roots in scientific and rationalistic thinking, and one which has been contested vigorously in recent years.

In sum, the critical discourse on Northern conceptualisations is an extension of a more fundamental critique of the planning discipline - namely, that of its allegiance to the Western scientific tradition. It is ultimately this system of cognition which has inhibited the discipline from acknowledging homeland conceptualisations, and obstructed it from constructing policy with respect to a more comprehensive, holistic understanding of the Northern context.

It is worth noting that critical discourses on context sensitivity are not strictly Northern focused. That is to say that the currents of thought informing contemporary Aboriginal

development literature, quite generally, mirror those discussed here. There is no shortage of literature arguing that Aboriginal policy has lacked cultural relativity, principally, because policy frameworks have not been structured to account for local, Aboriginal values or beliefs (Kuokkanen, 2000; De Mello et al., 1994; Lee, 1992; McKay, 1987). It is from this basis that academics view the expression and institutionalisation of Indigenous knowledge and values as imperative in overcoming the ethnocentrism of policy dialogues (Kuokkanen, 2000; Boothroyd, 1992; Copet, 1992; Swiderski, 1990; Lockhart and McCaskill, 1986; Lockhart, 1982).

2.2.5 Contemporary Northern Conceptualisations and Paradigmatic Tension

As outlined previously, recognition of the homeland conceptualisation has instigated a dialogue on the merits of conventional Northern development strategies. This has, in turn, engendered a certain paradigmatic tension in the planning discipline. Policy platforms once considered feasible have come under scrutiny in view of alternative perspectives of the North. This concept has been illustrated through the hinterland versus homeland discourse.

Yet further to this discourse, even more contemporary Northern conceptualisations have exacerbated paradigmatic indeterminacy. This is to the extent that current conceptions have not only recognised Aboriginals as principal stakeholders with inherent rights, but beyond that, they have envisaged them as the primary agents and benefactors of Northern planning and development. These contemporary Northern conceptualisations are owing to the recent growth and sophistication of Northern political institutions, and to the increasing organisational capacity of Aboriginal stakeholder groups (Rees, 1987:113).

These developments, in particular, have been instrumental in facilitating the creation of Nunavut, a political entity whose formalisation embodies the essence of contemporary conceptualisations – namely, Northern and Aboriginal self-governance and self-management.

Robertson (1999:21) remarks that Nunavut is an attempt to create a new institutional “structure and vision for an Inuit homeland”. Guided by the principle of empowerment (Tannis, 1999:24), it is further an effort to reconstruct governance in recognition that mechanistic and rational models are not necessarily suited to the Northern context (Arnakak, 2001:18). The principles underlying the trend towards Northern political devolution parallel those presently informing current conceptualisations. Increasingly, the North is being perceived in reference to its capacity to harbour Aboriginal self-determination.

2.3 The Social Construction of Place: Rethinking Northern Conceptualisations

2.3.1 Planning For Multiplex Places

As the preceding sections have conveyed, policy frameworks and discourses are often inextricably linked to conceptualisations of place. From a Northern perspective, it is clear that planning dialogues have both centred on and emanated from hinterland and homeland conceptions. The discipline has benefited from meditations centred on place focused constructs inasmuch as debates have brought about more informed perspectives on Aboriginal development. Contemporary viewpoints in planning that address topics such as context sensitivity, for example, owe much to place focused discourses and the discipline’s awareness that places are subject to numerous interpretations. Yet

recognition that places carry 'multiple representations' (Madanipour, 2001) can be viewed as having further augmented paradigmatic indeterminacy.

There is a growing body of literature suggesting that places are social constructs (Hillier, 2001; Madanipour, 2001; Graham and Healey, 1999; Vigar et al., 2000; Healey, 1998; Byrne, 1996). That is to say that place entities are perceptual phenomena. Individuals give meaning to particular locations, each within their own social context, and in relation to the experiences of *being* in those social contexts (Healey, 1998). Massey (1993:66) submits that places are "articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings". From this standpoint, the notion of place is largely detached from a physical or object oriented viewpoint of space. As Hillier (2001:97) elaborates, place is a "surface of inscription and identity, offering different meanings to different people".

Taken as a social construct, the concept of place is not straightforward (Healey, 1998). Yet the planning discipline has historically perceived place in a forthright manner. This is a consequence of the discipline's allegiance to the Western scientific tradition. Rationalistic philosophies have implicitly dictated that the discipline support the idea that unitary, unbiased interpretations of places are possible (Graham and Healey, 1999). Western epistemes have thus propagated and supported the development of objectively defined place conceptualisations, which are, ultimately, those underscored by a geographic or physical determinism.

Critiques of geographic determinism in place conceptualisations have contributed to paradigmatic indeterminacy. This is evidenced through the hinterland versus homeland debate, where the planning implications of strictly physical Northern conceptualisations have been scrutinised. Yet, even as the discipline has become more acutely aware of the North's multiple representations, it remains unclear whether the discipline has truly grasped the concept of place.

As this literature review has documented, the planning discipline has progressively come to appreciate more holistic interpretations of the Northern context. The Aboriginal sense of attachment to place, encapsulated through the homeland conceptualisation, has revealed that the North is frequently interpreted in subjective terms. The identification of Aboriginals as stakeholders has called attention to the *human* or social component in Northern contexts. This notion has been further expressed more recently through conceptions of Northern political devolution and Aboriginal self-determination. Evidently, the planning discipline has become cognisant of the fact that purely geographic or physical interpretations of the North are short-sighted. However, this does not necessarily imply that the current breadth of knowledge on Northern conceptualisations resonates with emergent literature on the social construction of place.

Graham and Healey (1999) argue that the planning discipline has both failed to transform conceptualisations of place, and remained unable to reflect in its praxis relational and non-linear meanings of space. Implicit in the foregoing contention is the notion that planning has not completely released itself from the grips of Western scientific

rationalism. It follows, if the discipline's articulation of place entities connected with emergent thinking on the social construction of space, planning would be more attuned to the range of relations transecting places in its place conceptualisations. That is, the discipline would be less fixated on actors within places, and more focused on the networks of social relations that operate to define places (Healey, 1999).

As far as contemporary Northern place conceptualisations are concerned, the tendency has been for planning to focus more explicitly on actors than it has on relational networks. This point is substantiated inasmuch as conceptions have evolved either from homeland discourses, where the North has been defined in view of the relationship between Aboriginals and their environment; or the discipline's recognition and acceptance of Aboriginal stakeholdership, where the North has been defined according to the socio-political aspirations of a people situated in a particular territory. These Northern conceptualisations are not necessarily underlined by a geographic determinism. However, as place dialogues have centred on populations (actors) in a location-specific context, physical geography has in some way remained implicit.

The current state of paradigmatic tension in planning is reflected through the persistence of geographic determinism. Even as the discipline has become more cognisant of the North's multiple representations, and of knowledge in the social construction of place, conceptualisations are continually underscored by linear, non-relational interpretations of place. It is from this basis that academics argue planning must develop place conceptualisations in accordance with the concept of 'multiplex places' (Graham and

Healey, 1999; Healey, 1999), where it is recognised that place cannot simply be singularly or unitarily represented.

The term multiplex highlights how places are defined by the multiple perceptions of place that emanate from social experiences. A focus on multiplex in planning is perceived to be the means by which the discipline can distance itself from geographic determinism, and therefore too, Western scientific rationalism. This is to the extent that multiplex, with its inherent focus on the social construction of place, requires that relational networks and the articulation of place entities comprise the key area of concern in planning and policy discourses.

2.3.2 Nonplace Conceptualisations and Strategic Placemaking

From a multiplex perspective, places cannot be defined strictly according to geography or territoriality because they are derived through social processes. Multiplex implies that place is effectively liberated from any exclusively physical context. Recognition of this concept has given rise to *nonplace* discourses in the social sciences, where place is regarded as being detached from any specific locale (Talen, 2000). This perspective runs counter to conventional thinking about place. Planning, inasmuch as it has allied with Western scientific rationalism, has developed practice in accordance with objectively defined place conceptualisations. The multiplex perspective challenges basic, fundamental assumptions upon which conventional practice is derived. If nonplace conceptions are considered valid, it could easily be presumed that the discipline need not concern itself with place-focused or spatial planning at all. Such is not the case, however.

The discipline has an important role to play in place-focused planning, despite the emergence and growing acceptance of nonplace conceptions. This role is encapsulated through the practice of *strategic placemaking*, where it is assumed that place, as a social construct, an extraspatial phenomenon (Talen, 2000), can be shaped to create a focus for social betterment. As Healey (1999, 1998, 1998b, 1997) indicates, planning can provide the parameters through which conceptions of place may be articulated and used to inform initiatives and responses to change.

Strategic placemaking fits emergent conceptualisations of place inasmuch as the practice conceives place as a process and not as an end state, or artefact (Talen, 2000). Viewed as process, place is something that can be nurtured and reshaped through individual or collective effort. This implies that place is not finite, nor is it necessarily structured. Place, at root, is an interpretation. It is this essential characteristic of place that strategic placemaking seeks to exploit. The practice aims to create shared meanings on place qualities – meanings that can be used to help focus and coordinate the activities of different stakeholders on initiatives of social betterment (Healey, 1998).

Academics posit that emergent place-focused practices in planning should be those centred on accessing and articulating the broad range of place meanings held by varied stakeholders. As Healey (1999:118) suggests, a key role for planning is to, “develop a viewpoint or system of meaning of place qualities and trajectories, in relation to the multiple conceptions of those who co-habit an area”. Developing such a system of meaning on place is important, particularly if planning is to both acknowledge and

manifest in practice stakeholders' views on what places are like, and perhaps more importantly, what they can become like.

Strategic placemaking practices invariably align with spatial policy discourses. As Healey (1999) explains, placemaking articulates a shared language capable of connecting the concrete realities of lived experiences to strategy development. Placemaking enables an organising framework which allows stakeholders to both develop shared meanings on place, and set priorities for action in view of those place conceptualisations. In short, placemaking is an exercise in spatial dialogue that implicitly informs and guides public policy.

2.3.3 Restructuring Planning Systems: The Development of Deliberative Space

Emergent multiplex and nonplace perspectives do not intersect neatly with existing epistemological frameworks. As traditional planning systems have developed narrow, objectively defined parameters for conceiving place, planning has generally disregarded the contextual and experiential nature of place construction. It is from this basis that Healey (1998:6) submits the discipline confronts the difficult but necessary task of re-orienting its conceptions of place, and re-designing the processes through which stakeholders' concerns about place are taken into account.

Planning requires systemic transformations if the discipline is to appropriately connect its practices to strategic placemaking. Such is the position increasingly echoed by academics, who surmise that planning must embrace processes that are collaborative in nature (Graham and Healey, 1999; Healey, 1998, 1998b, 1999; Hwang, 1996; Innes and

Booher, 1999; Madanipour, et al., 2001). That is, processes grounded in interactive dialogue. In recent years, planning theorists have built a rich literature on the concept of interactive dialogue, drawing largely on Habermas' (1984, 1989) theory of communicative action.

According to Habermas, conversational communication is the medium through which cultures, and their institutional structures, are formed and transformed. Implicit in conversation is the exchange of knowledge and the development of shared understanding (Healey, 1999). Communicative action is an ideal type. It is a set of conditions for civil discourse that enables stakeholders to develop emancipatory or critical knowledge. It is this type of knowledge that Habermas believes should inform public policy. That is because critical knowledge is socially derived, and therefore, that knowledge most closely connected to the collective experiences of stakeholders of common jurisdictions. From a point of policy development, Habermas trusts that stakeholders themselves know best how to address social issues, so long as they can collaboratively articulate viewpoints in aim of reaching consensus on policy matters.

There is a clear sense of pragmatism in the theory of communicative action. This is evidenced through Habermas' development of *ideal speech situations* which convey the preferred framework for public conversation. But this does not imply that communicative action associates with rationalist epistemes. Habermas critiques rational-thinking, modernist bureaucracies whose 'one-sided' (Healey, 1999) approaches to conversation discount local and cultural knowledge in policy discourses. In this regard,

communicative action is implicitly concerned with social power relations in the construction of public policy. It is here where contemporary theorists have picked up on the work of Habermas, focusing on the process dynamics of planning practice.

There is a strong sentiment among theorists that planning has not adequately managed to engage stakeholders in policy discourses. That is, the discipline has not developed the infrastructures necessary for nurturing conversational communication. Theorists argue that the discipline should turn to 'inventing democracy' (Healey, 1996). The implication is that planning must embrace participatory processes if it is to overcome the 'one-sided' policy discourses of modernist planning machineries. There is an extensive literature conveying this theme. For Healey (1996), the call for participatory democracy is expressed as requirements for the 'communicative turn' in planning, and similarly for Fisher and Forrester (1993), the 'argumentative turn'. Participation is also frequently discussed in reference to collaborative consensus building (Innes and Booher, 1999; Gruber 1994). And theorists further shed light on the expanding democratic possibilities of planning through role playing and bricolage (Innes and Booher, 1997) and storytelling (Hillier, 2001; Forester, 1993, 1999). Clearly, there is a common conviction among academics that democratic principles can and should underscore planning practice. In this regard, it is contested the discipline must give credence to the collaborative, communicative dimensions of social policy construction.

According to Innes and Booher (1999b), collaborative and interactive dialogue among stakeholders culminates in the development of *deliberative space*. From a point of

placemaking, deliberative space is essential. It comprises the forum from within which stakeholders may express conceptualisations of place, and establish shared meanings and understandings on them. The development of deliberative space is a necessary requisite to the practice of placemaking. It is from this basis that planning has an important role in helping to frame the communicative and interpretive processes through which collective meanings of space are negotiated and articulated (Graham and Healey, 1999; Healey, 1997). Yet, it is doubtful that planning can fully embrace this role under existing epistemological frameworks. As this literature review has demonstrated, they do not openly lend themselves to processes of interpretive place construction.

2.3.4 Connecting Praxis to Multiplex: Planning Informed by Complexity Theory

If planning has a role in framing the communicative processes through which collective meanings of place can be articulated, then practitioners confront the critical task of reforming planning praxis. This is to suggest that planners must better manifest in practice an awareness of relational social dynamics. Thus, a key undertaking for planning in the contemporary era is to develop a viewpoint on praxis that corresponds with emergent nonplace and multiplex perspectives.

If planners critically assess the conceptual parameters from which they approach the construction of spatial policy, then a reformed viewpoint on praxis may evolve. Such is the position upheld by Innes and Booher (1999), who contest that the discipline should reconfigure its practices to ensure multiplex perspectives are integrated into policy discourses. They argue that planners must overcome the conviction that they can control spatial change, and accept the reality that they are better positioned to shape the flow of

processes of change. The implication is that planners should function less as technical specialists, and more as agents of social organisation. Such a shift in the conceptual parameters of praxis has significant implications for place-focused governance. It requires that the discipline distance itself from the hierarchal and centralised, modernist governance structures affiliated with rationalist epistemes; and further, it necessitates that the discipline move to embrace more dispersed, decentralised and participatory governance forms.

Academics suggest that a movement towards participatory governance can be instigated if planners draw on complexity theory to inform praxis (Innes and Booher, 1999; Hwang, 1996). Complexity theory has its roots in the physical sciences, but its principles have recently been incorporated into social science literature. Complexity theory holds that social systems mimic organisms in their adaptive responses to changing environments (Innes and Booher, 1999). It follows that social systems, like organisms, do not behave in a predictable manner. Rather, they function and respond through trial and error, in accordance with information and knowledge gathered through lived experiences. Further, it is posited that organisms increase their adaptive competencies – their learning and innovative capacities – through interactions with like organisms (Innes and Booher, 1999). In short, complexity theory holds that organisms with the most effective environmental adaptations are those best able to collectively accumulate and strategically apply experiential knowledge and resources.

A complexity perspective on praxis suggests that planners have a social organisational role in the development of public policy. Planners frequently lack the contextual knowledge necessary for devising place-relevant policy. As complexity theory stresses, effective environmental adaptations are the applied products of organism interaction. In other words, directed social policy-making (environmental adaptation redefined) necessitates stakeholder collaboration. It is not the position of planners to unilaterally script public policy. To do so would be to undermine the adaptive competencies of stakeholders of common jurisdictions. As Healey submits, governance processes are 'knowledgeable' to the extent that they possess:

The collective capacity to establish arenas for discussion which enable interaction in ways which are sensitive to the cultural differences in ways of thinking and valuing, and ways of communicating (1998b:1540).

Effectively, complexity theory points to the inherent need for policy discourses to centre on the practical, experiential knowledge of stakeholders, as opposed to the more formalised, theoretical knowledge of planners or like professionals. This is because practical knowledge associates with common heuristics. Simply stated, individuals and groups with experiential knowledge of particular place entities are those most readily able to discern, or at least provide insight into, the policy approaches best suited to those places.

Hajer (2001) remarks that it is the task of the planning discipline to facilitate coalition building in a manner that prevents powerful interests from dominating policy debates. This position reiterates the notion that place-focused policy dialogues should be

democratised, and subsequently centred on practical and experiential knowledge. It also alludes to the social organisational role that planners have in policy development. Coalition building is intrinsically linked to complexity theory. As adaptive competencies are heightened through interaction, processes or strategies that facilitate interaction can strengthen environmental adaptation. This concept runs parallel to themes forwarded by Booher and Innes (2000) in their exploration of network power.

Booher and Innes propose that network power is the result of collaborative and interactive planning processes, where communication among individuals, groups, and agencies culminates in the development of innovative adaptive responses to environmental stresses. From a point of policy construction, network power is critical. This is because it connects the experiential knowledge of engaged stakeholders in a meaningful fashion. Booher and Innes (2000) liken network power to a complex adaptive system - it is more capable of learning and adaptation in the face of fragmentation and rapid change than a set of disconnected agents. Social organisation, therefore, is an important consideration in planning. It associates with the type of coalition building necessary for effective environmental adaptation.

2.3.5 The Planner Revisited: Perspectives on Institutional Development

This literature review has shed light on the relationship between place conceptualisations and policy development, particularly in view of emergent multiplex perspectives. It has further forwarded the argument that the planning discipline must endeavour to re-orient its conceptualisations of place, and re-design the processes through which place-focused policy is approached. Three key points can be excised from this discussion. First,

planning has a role in framing the communicative processes through which collective meanings of place can be articulated. Next, planning processes must be democratised to ensure that stakeholders of common jurisdictions can engage in such interpretive discourses on place. Finally, planners must reform praxis with an eye to developing network power, such that stakeholders can collaboratively apply their adaptive competencies in view of place conceptualisations.

The preceding points are bound by the concept that transformative planning approaches can be facilitated. Such approaches are those which challenge the fundamental tenets upon which conventional practice is derived. For Friedmann (1979, 1987), a critic of applied scientific rationalism, transformative planning is grounded in radical practice, which evolves as a product of communicative acts. In a similar vein, Habermas (1984) insinuates that open and critical dialogue can mobilise civil society in challenging established practices – namely, those which overlook or altogether dismiss relational social dynamics in processes of policy construction. Transformative planning approaches are premised upon principles of collaborative dialogue, which, in the civic context, associate with participatory democracy. It is in this regard that contemporary theorists see transformative planning as democratising governance, bringing civil society closer to (or ideally, intertwining it with) the state or other regulatory, decision making bodies. As Healey (1999) alludes, governance can be viewed as public policy-making re-conceptualised as processes of inter-subjective communication in the public sphere.

As transformative planning is facilitated through communicative and participatory actions, planners have an opportunity to assist in structuring relational processes of governance. Building on complexity theory, Booher and Innes (2000) emphasise that planners can play a key role in convening stakeholders and ensuring that planning processes meet the conditions required for network collaboration. Planners must therefore be cognisant of their social organisational function. In transformative approaches, they are relied upon to shape the form and direction of collaborative practice, effectively moulding the processes that allow network power to emerge (Booher and Innes, 2000). In other words, planners are central to the organising process wherein stakeholders interact, develop their adaptive competencies and apply adaptive responses to common, place-focused environmental conditions.

Inasmuch as planners carry a social organisational function, planning practice is necessarily an exercise in the development of institutional capacity. That is, planning or policy construction can be seen as an explicit attempt to build, manage, and maintain inter-personal and inter-organisational networks (Imperial, 1999). Such a position aligns with emergent viewpoints on social structuring dynamics, encapsulated through the *institutional perspective*. As Healey describes:

Ways of seeing and knowing the world, and acting in it, are understood, in an institutional perspective, as constituted in the social relations with others, and, through these relations, as embedded in particular social contexts (1999:113).

The institutional perspective underscores how the construction of knowledge is a social process. It does not perceive institutions in the traditional sense, as organisations or

bureaucracies. Rather, institutions are defined as the structural properties of social systems, the established ways of contextualising social issues (Giddens, 1984). Institutionalism, therefore, is grounded in an interpretive and relational view of social life (Healey, 1999).

In developing institutional capacity, planners actively contribute to strengthening the social processes within which knowledge is constructed. By nature of experiential learning, individuals, groups, and agencies carry particular frames of knowledge, a sort of institutional storage. In accordance with complexity theory, Fukuyama (1995) indicates that this institutional storage can be expanded when citizens are provided with opportunities to interact, to engage in discourses on their particular knowledge frames. The development of institutional capacity therefore coincides with the devolution and democratisation of planning systems. Adaptive competencies of stakeholders are heightened as their communicative forums, or deliberative spaces, converge at various points of governance. This concept ultimately sets the rationale for restructuring planning systems, and re-conceiving the role of planner as social organiser. As Healey remarks:

The argument for collaborative planning lies in its contribution to building an institutional capacity focused on enhancing the ability of place-focused stakeholders to improve their power to 'make a difference' to the qualities of their places (1998b:1541).

3.0 RESEARCH TACTICS

The research tactic employed for this study was qualitative interviewing. The literature review was critical to this research tactic, as it served to inform the design of a methodological strategy, and further functioned to establish a framework of analysis for the empirical component of this study.

3.1 The Qualitative Interview

Interviewing has applicability to a wide variety of social research investigations (Williamson et al., 1977) and there are a multitude of approaches concerning interview methodology. A scan of contemporary social research literature verifies that there are numerous methodological variations for qualitative interviewing (Babbie and Benaquisto, 2002; Neuman, 1997; Kvale, 1996; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Generally speaking, researchers are at liberty to draw upon the methodologies that best suit their intended research objectives.

For the purposes of this study, the applied interview methodology was informed primarily by Zeisel's (1997) *focused interview* approach. According to Zeisel, interviews are an effective means of obtaining information from an individual's subjective experiences. Stated otherwise, the qualitative interview is a tool enabling researchers the ability to explore how individuals interpret particular situations. As Zeisel (1997: 137) elaborates, focused interviews can be used "to find out how people define a concrete situation, what they consider important about it...and how they feel about it". As qualitative interviewing is an effective means of acquiring interpretive information, the research tactic was considered a logical fit for the empirical component of this study.

Zeisel's focused interview approach requires the use of an interview guide, a conceptual map detailing major topics to be explored throughout the course of an interview. Interview guides allow the researcher to conduct interviews with a general plan of inquiry, without confining the researcher or respondent to a rigidly structured question set. According to Zeisel (1997:137), interviews aim to find a correspondence between the researcher's analytic structure and the respondent's interpretive account of structured topics. Zeisel's focused interview approach is not unlike the semi-structured interview strategies outlined by his contemporaries (Babbie and Benaquisto, 2002; Kvale, 1996; Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). The focused interview approach has appeal, however, for its detailed account of probing techniques, which enable the researcher to prompt respondents to elaborate on particular responses.

3.2 Rationale for Qualitative, Focused Interviews

The fundamental objective of the empirical component of this study was to analyse the current situation of Northern planning; and further, within this context, to determine the extent to which Northern planners are attuned to, or poised to embrace, emergent perspectives on and opportunities in institutional development. In order to make such determinations, it was considered necessary to speak to practitioners themselves - they operate on the frontlines of Northern planning and therefore possess first-hand, experiential knowledge of the Northern planning context. Interviewing was considered the best means of excising from planners this experiential knowledge. As Patton (1980:205) verifies, an advantage of qualitative interviewing is that it "provides a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms". Likewise, Crano and Brewer (1986) suggest that the most important basis for

selecting interviews is when the nature of the research issue demands a personal and interactive method of data collection.

The use of focused interviews, as opposed to structured interviews, was particularly important as it permitted flexibility in the research design, which is seen as imperative (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). A flexible research structure allows for respondents to explore unexpected themes or topics. It further enables respondents to shape the direction of content, meaning respondents are provided the opportunity to discuss issues and matters of importance to them, using their own concepts and terminology (Stainback and Stainback, 1988).

A key intention of the empirical component of this study was to access participants' viewpoints on and experiences in the Northern planning context, such that a more informed perspective on institutional development could be obtained. The study did not seek validation of a predetermined hypothesis. It was more concerned with the discovery of concepts than the verification of a theory, so to speak. As such, the interviews operated primarily to retrieve participants' perceptions of and opinions on selected topic areas.

3.3 Interview Process

3.3.1 Selecting Respondents

The selection of interview respondents was made somewhat challenging in that it is common in the North that those working in planning capacities are not necessarily

planners by trade, or accredited by the Canadian Institute of Planners.² Initial efforts were made to locate accredited planners suitable for interviewing. However, as the selection process developed, it became apparent that the researcher would have to accept the relative lack of accredited practitioners as a *reality* of the Northern planning context. From a research perspective, this reality was not perceived as problematic. The aim of the study was to gain a greater understanding of the Northern planning situation. This objective could be achieved by interviewing individuals explicitly involved in Northern planning, be they accredited practitioners or not.

The Nunavut government's Department of Sustainable Development, Kivalliq Region was instrumental in the respondent selection process, as it provided the researcher with the opportunity to attend various local and regional planning proceedings. Attendance at these proceedings proved invaluable, as the researcher was able to network with a number of individuals involved in Northern planning, several of whom later agreed to participate in the study. This networking opportunity likely strengthened the empirical research component inasmuch as the researcher developed a rapport with study participants. The benefits of researcher-participant rapport cannot be understated. As Stainback and Stainback (1988:33) submit, the credibility of qualitative research findings frequently depends upon the extent to which rapport is established. Rapport was also particularly important in fostering a trustworthy relationship with Inuit participants, given the sensitivities involved with non-Aboriginals conducting Aboriginal-focused research (Sejersen, 1999).

² To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there are no available statistics pertaining to the professional designation of Northern planners. This position is premised upon the researcher's own observations, having previously held several planning positions working in Nunavut.

In order to acquire the most comprehensive understanding of the Northern planning landscape, it was considered necessary to ensure that inputs were received from a diversity of respondents. As such, both Aboriginal (Inuit) and non-Aboriginal participants were sought. Furthermore, respondents were actively targeted from local-level (municipal) and regional-level (territorial) planning offices. Ultimately, four respondents were recruited for interviews, with Inuit and non-Aboriginal representation coming from both local- and regional-level planning offices in Nunavut.

3.3.2 Development of the Interview Guide

In accordance with the focused interview approach, an interview guide was developed to set a framework for inquiry. An understanding of developing questions for the purpose of qualitative research was gained through a review of social research literature (Babbie and Benaquisto, 2002; Zeisel, 1997; Kvale, 1996; Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Holstein and Gubrium, 1995; Briggs, 1986). Several drafts of the interview guide were devised, and the researcher's advisory committee provided guidance in finalising the question/topic set.

Due to the nature of qualitative research, it was acknowledged that the interview guide would serve only as a template guiding the research interviews. While efforts were made to ensure respondents discussed thematically related topics, it was understood that participants would not be subjected to a rigidly structured question set. It was also expected that the interview guide would undergo slight modifications throughout the empirical research process. This is not uncommon in qualitative research. As Rubin and

Rubin (1995:47) explain, “the continuous nature of qualitative interviewing means that the questioning is redesigned throughout the project”.

3.3.3 Conducting Interviews

Three of the research interviews were conducted over the telephone, with the remaining interview conducted in-person. Each session ran for the duration of approximately one-hour. Interviews were tape recorded for transcribing purposes, and the researcher was granted permission by the participants to do so. Prior to each session, respondents were informed of both the objectives of the research project, and the conditions for the release of recorded information. Respondents were also informed that they were free to terminate the interview process at any time, without penalty or consequence. Following each interview, an abbreviated transcription was completed in order for the researcher to capture initial impressions and highlights of the sessions.

Each interview was conducted using the interview guide (see Appendix A), though not all question categories were given equal weight throughout the research process. Participants were asked to elaborate on particular subjects and issues. As anticipated, the interviews covered thematically related topics, yet the manner in which information was conveyed differed, as participants drew upon their own unique experiences and insights. The focused interviewing strategy was considered effective, as the researcher was provided with information on selected topic areas, while respondents shaped the direction of content.

3.4 Analysing Qualitative Data

A review of current social research literature was conducted for the purpose of understanding techniques in qualitative data analysis. While techniques vary, it is commonly accepted that the analysis of qualitative data entails processes of concept formation, whereby categorical patterns or themes are extracted from the raw data (Babbie and Benaquisto, 2002; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Neuman, 1997; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Concept formation frequently involves *coding*, which Babbie and Benaquisto (2002: 381) define as “the development of concepts and categories in the recognition and ordering of themes”.

For the purposes of this study, Neuman’s (1997) progressive coding approach informed the qualitative data analysis procedure. The approach involves the use of three coding techniques: open, axial, and selective. The coding techniques are used in succession, and as each successive technique is employed, a more complex understanding of raw data is developed. The coding techniques enable the researcher to organise data into dominant categorical themes. They further assist the researcher in developing conceptual linkages across coded categories, leading to an integrated comprehension of organised data.

Neuman’s (1997) *successive approximation* approach to qualitative data analysis also figured in the data analysis strategy. The method involves repeated iterations or cycling through steps towards a final analysis. In short, the approach enables the researcher to develop a complex understanding of raw data, as successive iterations of conceptual categories results in a more informed comprehension of collected data.

3.5 Limitations of the Empirical Research Instrument

A key limitation of the research instrument was that all of the interviews were conducted by the same individual who is pursuing the thesis. This was an important factor inasmuch as the interview moderator had to be particularly wary of his position as researcher. The moderator had to be conscious of his own personal biases within the study, and further had to ensure that these biases did not influence the discussions in a manner that compromised the empirical research objectives. While the moderator made a concerted effort to ensure that his biases did not influence the discussions to fit personal preferences, it is difficult to state with certainty that such was unequivocally the case.

In addition to concerns about biases, there were also cultural considerations regarding the researcher as moderator. The researcher does not speak Inuktitut (the indigenous language in Nunavut), and therefore, discussions with Inuit participants were carried out in English. A translator was not required for the sessions, as all Inuit participants were proficient in the English language. Still, at occasional points in the research interview process, respondents were unfamiliar with terms used by the researcher, and questions sometimes required restructuring to suit language proficiencies and/or cultural terminologies. The degree to which cultural considerations factored in the research is difficult to quantify.

Another limitation of the research instrument was that most of the interviews were conducted over the telephone. This limited the researcher to recording verbal responses in most cases. A challenge was presented inasmuch as qualitative researchers often rely

upon physical prompts or behavioural cues to direct interviews (Crano and Brewer, 1986). This limitation was overcome to a certain extent, however, with the researcher's establishment of rapport, discussed earlier. As a certain familiarity with respondents was developed, the researcher was more attuned to the range of probes required for thorough discussions on selected topic areas.

4.0 THE SITUATION OF PLANNING: EMERGENT PARADIGMS AND EXPERIENTIAL PERSPECTIVES

When the contemporary situation of planning is considered, an awareness of paradigmatic development in the discipline is critical. Such an awareness provides a window through which it is possible to observe how existing planning infrastructures correspond with current and emerging intellectual frameworks. To arrive at informed statements on the present situation of planning – which this study ultimately endeavours to do – a contextual appreciation of the discipline's historical development must be established.

Chapter 2 of this study illustrated in detail how planning has progressively come to reach a stage of paradigmatic indeterminacy. All told, it is clear that the current state of paradigmatic tension in planning subsists on the discipline's reluctance or inability to completely release itself from the grips of Western scientific rationalism. Indeterminacy lingers to the extent that planning has not managed to wholly embrace emergent paradigms; and accordingly, the discipline has not yet appropriately restructured its infrastructures to align with those paradigms.

In the Northern context, the discipline has increasingly grappled with paradigmatic tension as emergent perspectives on place conceptualisation have seeped into spatial policy discourses. These perspectives have challenged a planning and policy framework built on platforms of rationalistic thinking and modernist top-down, bureaucratic implementation. Emergent paradigms are characterised by their focus on process dynamics. They stress that the development of collaborative and interactive dialogues can

assist in democratising governance. Furthermore, these paradigms cast the role of planner not as technical specialist but as social organiser, responsible for intertwining the experiential knowledge of engaged stakeholders with policy discourses.

Planning can be made more place-responsive, and culturally sensitive, if the discipline focuses on structuring communicative and interpretive processes of policy construction. This is the key theme underlying emergent theoretical dialogues. And it is from this premise that the discipline may capitalise upon the potential of institutional development. The conceptual groundwork for a more responsive approach to planning rests within emergent paradigms. It is now necessary to determine how well the discipline is positioned to harness the opportunities these paradigms have made visible.

The following chapter details the results of the empirical research methodology outlined in Chapter 3. The findings are presented thematically in accordance with key concepts arising from the research interviews. The chapter is organised such that each theme is accompanied by a *theme contextualisation* which frames concepts explored in the literature review; a *discussion* incorporating inputs from interview respondents; and a brief *interpretive summary* of discussion key-points.

Four themes are examined: Friendships in the Development of Network Power; Language in the Development of Interactive Policy Dialogues; Control versus Contour – Issues in the Development of Participatory Governance; and finally, Training and Education – Core Competencies in the Development of Participatory Governance.

The themes discussed are not presented in any specific order. That is to say that no one theme should be weighted more heavily than the others. The themes examined have been identified independently, but are meant to be considered concurrently. Indeed, there are conceptual overlaps between the illustrative examples detailed in each of the identified themes. However, independent themes have been derived strictly for analytical purposes. A more holistic interpretation of the research results will be developed in the final chapter of this study.

4.1 Theme 1: Friendships in the Development of Network Power

4.1.1 Theme Contextualisation

In emergent paradigms, the development of network power is seen as imperative. This is because network power associates with the type of coalition building that enables stakeholders of common jurisdictions to collectively accumulate and apply experiential knowledge. As complexity theory stresses, the most effective environmental adaptations are those derived from collaborative and interactive processes. Because network power is born out of collaborative action, it connects strongly with 'environmental adaptation' in the public sphere of social policy making.

4.1.2 Discussion

In the context of Nunavut, it is evident that a foundation of network power is present. This is evidenced through the pervasiveness of social interactions and relationships planners commonly identify as *friendships*. It is through friendships that planners are granted access to the local and experiential knowledge of common stakeholders.

The link between friendships and experiential knowledge was made quite apparent in discussions with Nunavut practitioners. Planners commonly perceive friendships as integral to conversational communication. It is this type of communication that planners find valuable, particularly from a point policy consideration. As one practitioner explained:

On my past experiences throughout Nunavut, when you recognise each other, having introduced each other work-wise or personally, you really start getting friendships. And people start opening themselves. They know you, they talk to you, and then they express their concerns or ideas. A lot of good work is accomplished that way. And I've been fortunate to have gone to each region and gain these friendships.

Another practitioner commented how existing social networks contributed to strengthening the conversational communication of policy discourses, particularly from a remote Northern community context:

It is small communities, and everyone knows each other or is related in some way. Well, there's lots of family ties and it gets really personal. And I think that's an advantage. It's easier to discuss things that way.

Similar sentiments were also echoed by a practitioner who explained that policy discourses are often developed in informal settings with acquaintances:

When you're out visiting in the community and people raise something you get talking about it. But it doesn't feel like work when it happens like that. It just feels like you are having a conversation with friends and family.

When probed to identify a concrete example of how such conversations connected with policy, the respondent provided the following experience:

Whenever I was out visiting our friends and family. Like talking with my friend [name concealed], for example. And knowing she had several kids and was trying to find work but couldn't get a babysitter. So we started

talking about the effects of a daycare. Like if there was a daycare then you would have no problem. Other younger women wouldn't have as many problems trying to find a job, and that kind of thing. And talking about, you know, young women get children so early up North, and that they would have to quit school if there was no daycare. Well, [name concealed] knew there were programs through the Department of Education for high school girls to help them pay for daycare. So it was things like that that sometimes started in the home, like conversations and someone knowing about funding, or someone knowing about different policies or something. And that was one of the things that started out of that, a local daycare society that is still functioning today.

As the preceding example illustrates, planners in Nunavut use conversational communication as a means to inform the construction of public policy. And it appears that practitioners are very much cognisant of the important role that friendships play, particularly with respect to the acquisition of local knowledge. One Inuit practitioner elaborated on friendships, contextualising the response in terms of the advantages of being Inuit and holding a planning position in a Northern community:

I believe that people are more inclined to understand me. I am recognised as being a community member, and I think people relate more easily to me because of that. I'm living in the community. I'm part of the social life. So I get to hear things from community people that, you know, I think some of the Qablunaaq [non-Aboriginal] planners sometimes don't.

The same practitioner did not, however, go so far as to insinuate that non-Aboriginal planners are at a disadvantage when it comes to developing acquaintances and acquiring information. In fact, it was conveyed that planners themselves are responsible for fostering interpersonal connections:

How you live in the community influences how you interact, how you connect with the people. If you make an effort and are recognisable, you can become part of the community.

Practitioners are seemingly attuned to the important role that friendships play in the Northern context. When probed for inputs, all respondents were able to discuss how personal relationships with stakeholders in their constituencies associated with planning practice. And further, respondents were cognisant of the fact that their work is often dependent on the development of interpersonal relationships. This point was perhaps best expressed by an Inuit practitioner, making particular reference to Qablunaaq practitioners employed in the North:

Your work does not just finish at the end of the day. But I think that sometimes Qablunaaq think that is the case. Like, you finished your hours and you can go home and start at it the next day. But that doesn't help you get in touch with the community, to hear what people say and know what their concerns are. It doesn't help you the next day. Because, to be good at this community development stuff, I think you really need to be part of the community, and you need people to see you as that.

As interview respondents conveyed, friendships are a necessary prerequisite to the development of conversational communication, the stylistic dialogue practitioners frequently use to inform the construction of public policy. And it is from conversational communication that network power is typically derived in the Northern context. This latter point is particularly evident in the local or community setting. As the preceding paragraphs have illustrated, planners firmly embedded in their community's social fabric believe they are well-positioned to address planning issues. They see friendships as portals to local knowledge. And planners acknowledge that the accumulation of local knowledge assists them, and their constituents, in structuring relevant public policy. As one practitioner articulated:

To accomplish things you basically need to consult with people, right?
You need to listen to what they want to see happen to the community now,

and for the future. So my work comes from the people. And when you stop and think about it, these people are my friends, my family.

A similar viewpoint was conveyed by another practitioner, when asked to elaborate on the process of local policy initiation and development:

Nothing formal, really. More just recognition and listening to people talk. For myself, I've had so many conversations with friends who just come in and visit. And everyone has certain views on all the issues. So I just try to listen to what people say and respond to that.

It is not only at the local or community level where friendships associate with the development of network power. Intercommunity and interregional relationships also figure importantly in Nunavut planning practice. Planners use these friendships to develop discourses on community and regional issues, wherein planning approaches may be discussed. Workshops, for example, commonly organised by regional planning agencies such as the Department of Sustainable Development, were perceived by respondents to be particularly critical in the development of network power. As one practitioner explained:

I found that my greatest motivator was going out. You know, travelling, attending different courses, workshops, and conferences. I would meet people and make friends there, sometimes friends of family. And it just gave me ideas on how to do things. It really helped me get back with a fresh mind and perspective. To do things differently and maybe better. And also, just to know who to talk to, you know, and where to start.

It is through networking opportunities at the interregional level where planners engage in the type of coalition building that allows them to collectively accumulate experiential knowledge. As interregional friendships are established, planners develop support networks that function to inform their work. As one respondent reflected:

When I was an Economic Development Officer, I would have conferences, and we'd communicate with each other, talk to each other, and ask questions. "Do you have a similar project that our community might be willing to do?". And if they say "Yes", then you'd exchange information. So, it really is supporting each other. No need to reinvent the wheel. If the information is there, you use it.

Another respondent also discussed how practical planning knowledge could be obtained through interregional networks:

My work was often inspired by what some other Economic Development Officer did. Getting information from a Department of Sustainable Development staffer who talked about program funding, for example. I heard that through one of the conferences. And at the workshops, they sometimes have personal development courses going on, so you can talk to people and add on more skills to your person, so you're better capable of doing your job.

The same respondent went on to summarise why interregional networking in the Northern planning context is vital, adding:

That's the thing with the Economic Development Officers. Basically, we're just a bunch of high-school graduates, if that, and we're trying to do all this planning stuff. And there's a lot of expectations out there for you. So to meet people, make friends and other connections, and discuss similar things, that's helpful.

Yet another respondent was more poignant about the critical function of social networking:

To be honest, there wasn't a lot of support for training, as well as for doing the job that I was hired to do from the hamlet. So I was very dependent on other Economic Development Officers in the other communities, and in the other regions. They basically helped me with on-the-job training.

4.1.3 Interpretive Summary

Practitioners interviewed for this study conveyed that there is a foundation of network power existent in Nunavut, and that friendships define the parameters around which network power is derived. It is not clear exactly how practitioners explicitly characterise friendships. However, all respondents described friendships as including developed interpersonal relationships or connections with community members, regional constituents, work colleagues, and also family or extended family members. Face-to-face correspondence was also perceived as critical in the development of friendships.

From a point of planning, practitioners are presently using network power to inform the construction of public policy in two key regards. First, practitioners are using friendships and related family networks to accumulate the experiential knowledge of common stakeholders. Practitioners value friendships in local settings because these connections open interpretive discussions and allow them to *take the pulse of their communities*; to greater comprehend the immediate concerns and issue contexts of their constituents, and to respond to them accordingly. Second, practitioners are using friendships derived at intercommunity or interregional levels to build discourses on policy approaches. Respondents expressed that friendships developed between practitioners are extremely valuable. This is to the extent that friendships allow practitioners to share experiential and practical knowledge, such that they may better prepare to address planning situations in their own constituencies.

In Nunavut, it is event that friendships are currently setting the foundation for coalition building in planning and policy contexts. It is quite clear that this coalition building is occurring both between planners and their constituents, and planners and their colleagues. What is not so readily apparent, however, is the extent to which coalition building is occurring between constituents themselves.

4.2 Theme 2: Language in the Development of Interactive Policy Dialogues

4.2.1 Theme Contextualisation

Emergent paradigms support collaborative approaches to policy development. Such approaches associate with interactive dialogues, wherein common stakeholders use conversational communication to exchange knowledge and develop shared understandings on policy issues. The importance of collaborative and interactive planning design cannot be understated, particularly in light of recent multiplex perspectives. As stakeholders' conceptualisations of and concerns about place become paramount, planning theorists see it as imperative that planning infrastructures correspond with the communicative dimensions of policy development.

In Nunavut, interactive policy dialogues are currently being derived and employed. As the preceding section conveyed, planners and stakeholders are actively using friendships and related networks to accumulate and apply experiential knowledge. The existence and development of network power in Nunavut verifies that interactive approaches are entrenched in planning infrastructures. It remains unclear, however, how deeply embedded these approaches are or will become. On the one hand, it is difficult to quantify interaction for such a measure. Yet on the other, it is possible to speculate that

the entrenchment and endurance of interactive approaches rests largely on how well practitioners cope with language and related cross-cultural, communication issues.

4.2.2 Discussion

Practitioners interviewed for this study conveyed a consensus conviction that language is a key factor influencing the development of interactive dialogues. Both Inuit and non-Aboriginal planners spoke to the issue of language, particularly with respect to the advancement of *shared understanding* in policy discourses. Non-Aboriginal practitioners were acutely aware of the challenges facing unilingual planners. As one practitioner explained:

It's a difficult work environment. I mean, with the language. There's people either in the community or at the office who only speak Inuktitut, or have a limited understanding of English. So it's difficult for me to just approach them and talk. And if a skilled translator isn't available, which is often the case, I just need somebody around to help out with the conversation. And I don't know how effective that is. I mean, we're having a conversation, but it's difficult to really know if what I'm trying to say is being conveyed.

Another non-Aboriginal practitioner discussed similar challenges:

The struggle is it's hard to get your point across. Like how you're trying to explain something in English, to get it explained to them [constituents] through a translator like you hope it does. And sometimes, they don't quite understand what you're trying to tell them.

When probed to provide a particular situation where language presented a challenge, the same practitioner reflected on experiences in trying to collaboratively develop a community economic development strategy:

We have to have a plan in place for the next fiscal year. And we have to decide, you know, where we want to concentrate our efforts on. The issue right now is, do we want to keep focusing on training people for guiding

in tourism, like we have been?; Or, do we want to change our efforts to start focusing on training for a mine that is expected to open soon? I can't just snap my fingers and make a decision. And I can't just base a decision on what a few people who've visited me are saying. We need to have a community plan, and that's my goal – to sit down and discuss these issues, and have the community come up with a plan. But one factor is communication. Like what I'm trying to say to the people about the plan isn't really being heard. And I feel like I can't get them to understand what their role is in the community, and that they do have an important role. Right now, the communication is fairly poor, but we're working on trying to figure out how to make it better.

As the preceding example illustrates, unilingual non-Aboriginal planners may be prone to encounter communication challenges, which can hinder the development of interactive policy dialogues. Such challenges threaten to weaken processes through which the experiential knowledge of stakeholders is accumulated and actively applied. This is a concept not lost on Inuit planners. Bilingual Aboriginal respondents interviewed expressed a marked awareness of the advantages of Inuktitut proficiency, particularly in reference to conversational communication. As one practitioner elaborated:

When you are a bilingual person, you can talk to them [constituents] in their own language. And it opens up the communication more when you can talk to them in their own language. They can understand clearly. Then that leads to more questions and more talking. It may be a less intimidating way to go about these community development things. When it's possible to speak in both Inuktitut and English, it really opens up the discussions. It really educates the people involved with the community.

Another Inuit practitioner was particularly adamant about the language issue, underlining the importance of effective communication in the Northern context:

To be an Economic Development Officer, in my opinion, you need to speak Inuktitut; there is no way around it. Either that or you try and communicate through a translator all the time. Because that is the language of Nunavut for the majority of the people. And people who work for communities need to speak that language to get things done, to really be effective in their jobs.

Certainly, conversations with respondents revealed that practitioners in Nunavut are cognisant of the important role that language has in the development of interactive policy dialogues. And to this point, practitioners were wary of the future of community-based planning in view of the permeation of the English language throughout the North. As one Inuit practitioner remarked:

I think people will always speak Inuktitut. But there is a lot of erosion in the language that is happening for a variety of reasons. And I really see no plans or specific strategies coming out of the GN [Government of Nunavut] to really maintain, preserve, and advance Inuktitut. The language spoken in the regional offices is English, even amongst many Inuit people. And through the school system, children are speaking English more often. But not so much in the smaller communities, like everything is still Inuktitut. And that's the problem. Like, if the guidance and everything is coming from the regional level in English, the communities might have difficulty understanding that guidance. And even between communities, language can become an issue. So there's a lot of things that need to change if this community development stuff is going to work.

Another Inuit practitioner presented similar concerns for community planning:

Language is already an issue with people. You know, Economic Development Officers and Community Development Officers who aren't able to speak Inuktitut all the time. That's the big thing that people expected when they got Nunavut. It was that everything will be done the Inuit way, and the language will be Inuktitut and that kind of thing. But it's still not happening. So this is something that needs to be addressed, I think.

4.2.3 Interpretive Summary

Both Inuit and non-Aboriginal practitioners interviewed for this study expressed that language is an important factor influencing the development of interactive policy discourses. Inuit practitioners conveyed that their Inuktitut proficiencies assisted in opening the lines of communication between themselves and their constituents, particularly in local and informal settings. Conversely, non-Aboriginal practitioners

articulated that their lack of Inuktitut proficiency presented challenges in collaborative planning design and implementation, due primarily to restricted opportunities for interpersonal communication.

Respondents conveyed that the core issue concerning language in the Northern context relates to the *engagement* of constituents in policy discourses. At present, Inuit practitioners consider themselves well-positioned to engage stakeholders, largely because they perceive their bilingualism as an enabling factor in the development of interactive dialogues, which are premised upon conversational communication. In this regard, Inuit practitioners consider Inuktitut proficiency a requirement for effective communication, especially in remote community settings.

Non-Aboriginal practitioners acknowledge that language issues present challenges in the development of interactive policy discourses. However, none of the non-Aboriginal respondents felt incapable of engaging stakeholders as a result of their unilingualism. The respondents were more prone to consider language issues a reality and challenge, as opposed to a barrier in collaborative planning processes. Furthermore, non-Aboriginal practitioners were cognisant of the fact that they must seek means of improving communication between themselves and their constituents.

Inuit practitioners were also wary of the future of collaborative planning in view of the erosion of the Inuktitut language. In particular, respondents expressed concern for the capacity of remote communities to develop shared understanding in policy discourses

involving larger, more urbanised communities; or those discourses guided by regional or territorial planning agencies. There is concern that remote communities will be alienated from regional or territorial planning discourses as such discourses emanate from larger localities where language erosion is more pronounced.

4.3 Theme 3: Control versus Contour – Engagement Issues in the Development of Participatory Governance

4.3.1 Theme Contextualisation

Emergent paradigms are premised upon participatory forms of governance. Such governance forms set the framework from within which collaborative and interactive approaches to planning may be advanced. From a praxis perspective, the development of place-focused participatory governance requires that planners overcome the conviction that they can control spatial change, and further accept the reality that they are better positioned to shape the flow of processes of change. It follows that praxis considerations concerning participatory governance can be regarded concisely as issues in *control* versus *contour*.

In constructing participatory governance forms, both planners and their constituents must function in synergy. That is, parties engaged in planning processes must be cognisant of, and act in accordance with, clearly articulated roles. Emergent multiplex perspectives stress the importance of relational networks and the social articulation of place entities. Inasmuch as emergent paradigms perceive planning as a largely social process, planning praxis must stress contour over control. On the one hand, this necessitates that practitioners assume a social organisational function, and that they focus principally on

shaping or *outlining* the processes that allow common stakeholders to participate in interactive policy discourses. On the other, a contour-centred praxis requires that constituents be wary of and embrace their roles as engaged stakeholders.

4.3.2 Discussion

Practitioners interviewed for this study provided insight into a number of issues that currently weaken the capability of planners and their constituents to function in synergy. In particular, there are a number of factors working to restrain Northern residents from understanding and accepting their roles as engaged stakeholders. These factors are discussed below.

Practitioners acknowledged that preceding, rationalistic approaches to planning have significantly influenced Northern constituents' perceptions of planning process. Specifically, respondents conveyed that their constituents are somewhat disillusioned by current attempts at collaborative and interactive planning. This disillusionment exists, in part, because modernist planning exercises have not typically solicited the participation of Northern residents. There is a history of non-involvement that practitioners are presently working to overcome. As one Inuit respondent articulated in describing recent efforts to involve communities in policy discourses:

There is a feeling of, well, what people always say. "Why do you bother having a community consultation? You've already decided what you want to do". A feeling of, "Someone has already made the decision, so why bother coming out. You're not going to listen to us anyway". That's not just my feeling. That's a fact. Everybody knows it.

When probed to elaborate on the participation issue, the same respondent expressed further disenchantment with the current organisation of policy discourses:

It is not only how things have happened in the past. Even to this day, it is still being done. For example, the Education Act of Nunavut. The bill had been discussed for three years. And after they [Government of Nunavut] said they had done community consultations with the people of Nunavut, we went on a community consultation trip to Kimmirut, which is about a half-hour flight from Iqaluit. And we found that the people there didn't know anything about the Education Act. That was like, it was *so close* to Iqaluit, where the decisions are being made, and the people were so out of touch on such an important matter. There really needs to be an improvement in the way the government communicates with people, and how they involve them.

While the preceding example may not relate explicitly to planning per se, it nonetheless speaks to issues of participation in policy discourses. And as the example illustrates, there is a certain sense of disenchantment among Northern stakeholders, particularly as exercises in collaborative and interactive planning have been introduced.

Respondents further conveyed that as precedent paradigms persist, constituents are frequently uncertain of the intentions of planners, making the transition to collaborative and interactive planning particularly trying. As one practitioner explained:

It is sometimes difficult to really get people, to get communities involved. Many people seem to think of me as an agent of the government. And they are so used to government people talking down to them. So there's trust issues, I think, because people don't really understand what my job is all about, that I'm here for them.

When probed to elaborate on the relationship between planners and their constituents, the same respondent implied that precedent experiences have shaped contemporary perceptions:

People seem to think that the projects I am working on, trying to get people involved in, are serving some function for the government. They have always thought that government workers have different agendas. And I work for the government. So it is tough for me to get people on the same page with the community issues. It just seems that the communities are not clear on what the purpose of my projects are, that they are actually for the people.

Practitioners conveyed that their constituents feel disconnected from decision making processes. This is a critical issue in the development of participatory governance forms, given that such forms are dependent upon active stakeholder engagement. Yet planning history and precedent aside, there are other factors contributing to the sense of disconnection respondents described.

Practitioners articulated that their constituents are experiencing difficulty in understanding processes of policy development. Northern residents have, in recent years, been introduced to and encouraged to participate in collaborative policy discourses. These discourses have emphasised local involvement in decision making processes. Northern constituents are progressively coming to understand that they have key roles to play in decision making processes. Yet, as respondents expressed, these constituents are frequently unsure of how they can effect change, given that policy is derived not only locally, but regionally and territorially as well.

One practitioner elaborated on how perplexing processes of policy development can be for constituents. Discussion centred on the challenges of engaging citizens locally, in view of regional and territorial policy guidelines:

One of the areas that's a challenge is regional or territorial policies. For example, one issue would be market disruption. Sometimes you repeat yourself in communities, so there is a policy for market disruption. But they [constituents] don't really understand why it is there. Most of them are small populated communities. Policies is one area that is difficult. My last few years, we've been sitting down with conference workshops. We see the policy advisor occasionally, but most of the time we never see them. It's quite difficult to explain to people in the communities that there is policies we have to follow, and that we can't always do what we've discussed together. The policy advisors, we never see them. But they've kind of put the rules in place. So we are looking at two different groups, the communities themselves and the administrative policy advisors. And it is difficult to get people motivated and involved when they've been told they can't do something from someone they rarely see.

Another practitioner also provided insight into the issue of multi-jurisdictional policy development:

One area we have been affected locally by is centralisation [of policies] at the regional level. That's one of the areas that is going in a cycle. It's frustrating that there are policies or mandates to follow. Some areas work, some don't. But it all seems confusing to the people in the communities. And one area is IQ [Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit³]. Some areas don't acknowledge IQ. Between the GN and finance, for example. And the Inuit lifestyle. And policies to relate to that, there doesn't seem to really be any. So some areas, IQ would not be involved with the approach to the regional or territorial level. But this is something that is very important locally, to the people in the communities. To put it all together and make it work at all levels, I think that is where the people are confused. They need to know where and when they can be heard.

The multi-jurisdictional nature of policy development may force misunderstandings about perceived roles in policy discourses. This was a recurrent theme emerging from conversations with practitioners, who conveyed that their constituents often feel alienated from policy discourses constructed at regional or territorial levels.

³ Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit is referred to as Inuit Traditional Knowledge by Arnakak (2001), and the term translates literally as "those that which are long known by Inuit". IQ represents a fundamental governance approach which is intended to include Inuit Traditional Knowledge and the contemporary values of Nunavut's communities.

That residents in Nunavut are prone to feelings of alienation or disconnection from policy discourses stems, perhaps, from a broader conviction that there is a cleft existing between communities and regional or territorial agencies. Respondents conveyed that there is a pervasive sense that policy discourses frequently do not correspond with local or community dynamics. As one practitioner elaborated when probed to discuss a specific example:

We just got a Business Development Policy. One of the areas in that is that the Small Tools Grant will not be applicable to replace tools purchased through the government or other GN departments. But some accessories need to be replaced, like a diamond table, for example. And you ask yourself, those policies, those guys never handled tools. And they seem to be more concerned about being accountable for what they hand out, rather than the person who is affected by it. They don't know the situation of local people, even their financial and family situation. Accessories, those are important for many livelihoods, and people who don't do that for a living might not be able to understand that. So there often seems to be a gap between policy advisors and people in the community, people who are affected by those decisions. That's a gap that needs to be addressed.

Another practitioner spoke to the issue of constituent disconnection, drawing upon experiences in local versus regional policy settings:

There is a certain difference between the people [practitioners] in the community and the regional offices, and even the territory-wide offices. I mean, you're right there in the community and you see people every day, and you know people and talk to them every day. Whereas regional offices are in a different community altogether. So I think that communities really have a better chance to understand things when it's not just coming down from the other [regional and territorial] offices. There's just a greater sense that they know you're familiar with their concerns. It's easier for them to trust you, I think.

The preceding statement speaks to the important function that interpersonal communication may play in ameliorating constituent disconnection. This was a concept

that surfaced in conversations with Northern practitioners. Specifically, that the divide between community and regional or territorial agencies could be bridged through heightened stakeholder interaction. This point was perhaps best expressed by a practitioner who reflected on the successes of one particular regional planning agency:

The Kivalliq region, I think they have a successful approach. They hire mostly local people from that region, people who live in the communities. But they also have a well-planned group where DSD [Department of Sustainable Development] fly to the community. One of the reasons they are quite successful is because they come to the community as a team. They make presentations to Council and the community, and at the same time they deal with files directly with the CDO [Community Development Officer]. That's the main thing. It's a visual evaluation. It is a communication that is face-to-face. And that is very important in these community development matters. The people seem to really respond to that.

As the statement above suggests, planning agencies, particularly those which are not locally rooted, can address constituent disconnection by making concerted efforts to heighten stakeholder involvement and understanding. Indeed, respondents were cognisant of the fact that policy discourses presently suffer because communities do not fully comprehend the nature of collaborative planning processes. Respondents contested that planning agencies must place an onus upon themselves to better educate their constituents about processes of policy development. As one practitioner stated:

I think there are issues with the ways in which Inuit are consulted. I don't think it's done properly. It needs to be more personal. There needs to be a better procedure in place to try and educate people, to entice them to participate. There really needs to be a real initiative taken place to really fire things up, to get people aware and interested, to give them a reason to bother showing up. People doing the planning need to be aware of this. And also after the consultation, to have kind of like an after-care system, where you let the community know, "We consulted with you, and this happened because of it", or, "We were unable to do what you said because of such and such". Just to let people know that they can't give up right

from the start before they've even tried anything. That's been going on for too long. This is something that really needs to be addressed by those leading these community development initiatives.

Another practitioner presented similar comments:

I think there needs to be more emphasis on enticing people. And part of that is educating people, making a real effort to talk to them. That's something that would really have a big impact. Just talk about, "This is what we're proposing, this is what the government wants to do". That would make it easier to get communities going. You know, to discuss, "This is how it's going to affect our community; this is how it's going to affect us. So how do we feel about that, what can we do about that?". They're probably needs to be more emphasis on just announcing that there's a community meeting on this subject, at this hour, at this location, etcetera. I think there would be a bigger turn-outs that way. I'm trying to say that there needs to be a pre-conference consultation. There needs to be a warm-up almost.

4.3.3 Interpretive Summary

Interview respondents expressed that there are certain impediments to the development of more participatory forms of governance in Nunavut. In particular, there are a number of factors working to restrain constituents from understanding and accepting their roles as engaged stakeholders in communicative planning exercises. As a result, practitioners reckon that the North has witnessed only incremental movements towards participatory governance, despite recent efforts directed at reducing democratic deficits.

Practitioners conveyed that their constituents feel disconnected from policy discourses. This sense of disconnection is largely the result of two key factors. First, the North's history of subjection to rationalistic planning exercises has engendered in its residents a sense of disenchantment with processes of policy construction. In short, Northern constituents are still coming to grips with the notion that they have a legitimate voice in public affairs. Furthermore, preceding planning approaches have made it difficult for

practitioners to solicit the participation of constituents for purposes of collaborative planning. Constituents are conditioned to perceiving planners as government agents or bureaucrats rather than social organisers. Consequently, practitioners have experienced challenges in fostering constructive relationships with their constituents.

Multi-jurisdictional policy development is the second factor contributing to constituent disconnection. Contemporary efforts to enhance participatory governance have taken a characteristically grassroots form, with focus directed at local-level engagement. Northern residents have progressively come to participate in community-centred policy discourses. Yet, there are a number of policy discourses that occur at the regional or territorial level. The multi-jurisdictional nature of policy development may force misunderstandings about perceived roles in policy discourses. Practitioners conveyed that their constituents have at times felt alienated from regional or territorial policy dialogues. This stems from the position that Northern residents are often unsure as to who will receive their inputs, and exactly how those inputs will be received. In short, there is evidence suggesting that Northern constituents have experienced difficulty in comprehending the multi-jurisdictional nature of policy development.

In speaking to the issue of citizen engagement, practitioners unanimously agreed that there is an onus upon planning agencies to better educate their constituents about processes of collaborative planning. This requires that citizens acquire an understanding of their own empowering capacities, meaning they become cognisant of their roles as engaged stakeholders in multi-jurisdictional contexts. Education, as respondents

perceived it – as an ongoing practice in communication, both initiated and maintained by planning agencies – could assist in enlightening and engaging citizens. This is to the extent that constituents may become wary of progressions occurring in particular policy discourses through continued interaction with planning agencies.

4.4 Theme 4: Training and Education – Core Competencies in the Development of Participatory Governance

4.4.1 Issue Contextualisation

Emergent paradigms underscore how social policy construction should be the result of communicative and interpretive processes. Such processes associate with participatory governance because they provide for stakeholders to be active participants in decision making arenas. As the preceding section expressed, the development of participatory governance forms requires that constituents be wary of their roles as engaged stakeholders. Yet participatory governance is equally dependent upon planning agencies to set the framework from within which constituents can assume roles as active and engaged parties. This implies that planners must ensure their praxis is premised upon outlining or shaping the processes that allow common stakeholders to participate in interactive policy discourses. A contour-centred praxis, therefore, necessitates that planners themselves be cognisant of their social organisational function.

4.4.2 Discussion

Practitioners interviewed for this study expressed optimism with respect to the future of collaborative and interactive planning in the Nunavut. However, when probed to discuss future challenges regarding the transition to participatory governance forms, respondents unanimously pointed to education and training. In particular, respondents perceived the

success of collaborative planning as dependent upon how adequately the North is professionally positioned to develop participatory governance forms.

A common theme emerging from discussions with practitioners was that the North is deficient of individuals knowledgeable in principles and practices of community development. As one respondent discussed:

There is always people wanting to see change. I find that there are a lot of people that really want to see change, see things happening. They are tired of waiting around. But they are not sure where to go, or get the support. Like, DSD is great but I find that the regional government is very, well, they're not very community based. The hamlets are the ones that are out there in the frontlines, they're the ones that talk to people. But they don't always have the necessary skills to carry out the work that needs to be done.

Another practitioner presented similar comments:

There are people wanting to work on this stuff [community development]. They have great ideas but they just don't have the knowledge and skills to really be effective. You know, like bookkeeping, managing, and organising, those kinds of things. It seems that they just can't comprehend putting it all together right now. Maybe because this is all new to them, and to the communities. I'm not sure. But it is certainly an issue.

Yet another practitioner concurred that there is a rather limited understanding of community development practice in the North:

This is all new to me. And when I started here it was difficult. I've found that nobody here knows that much about my job, or what I'm supposed to do. I understand that it is different for all of the communities. But I think that people in my position there are facing similar difficulties too.

The preceding comments point to the notion that training and education of individuals for the purposes of community development is critical. Respondents addressed the issue directly:

I'm talking right out of experience here. Training and educating community and economic development people is important, but also a big challenge. There's a lot of turnover. Some people will take other positions, or move to different communities. It is the hope that when you train somebody for local level development, even if they do move, they can take that experience with them. But that is not always the case. So there just seems to be a shortage of knowledgeable people.

Another respondent had similar remarks on training and education:

One of the big issues is having trained people. There just doesn't seem to be enough people who really understand how to go about this community development stuff. So it is a matter of trying to get people trained, and getting the right training done. But all this is happening all at once, and there's a lot of things that need to be done in a short time frame. So we certainly have challenges to get things moving.

It is important to note that all respondents recognised that individuals occupying planning positions in Nunavut are not necessarily planners by trade. Indeed, all respondents acknowledged that they had little to no specific education in planning or community development when they initially entered the field. Yet, practitioners did not perceive the lack of professional designation or accreditation as an explicit hindrance to planning or development work. Rather, it was conveyed that education issues could be addressed and overcome through adequate field training. As one practitioner explained:

There aren't a whole lot of people who know everything about community development. But I don't think you need to. You just need some tools to get going. You just need some training so you have the proper tools to know how to start things up, to help get others involved too.

Another practitioner further discussed the training issue, reflecting on personal experiences:

My education didn't really train me for this position, but that's not to say I haven't been trained to do this job. There's so much to learn. But you can pick that up from talking to people. You know, like at conferences or workshops. Or even people like [name concealed] at DSD. I'll talk to

him quite often when I have questions. And he's been involved with this for a while so I trust his response, his support in just getting me started on things.

Respondents acknowledged that training could assist individuals in preparing to manage planning or public policy matters. But they also suggested that the movement towards collaborative planning, in particular, required the appropriate *type* of training. Practitioners were cognisant of the fact that planning positions in the North are multi-faceted, meaning individuals are expected to perform a variety of tasks. Some practitioners were therefore critical of receiving training tailored to the administrative aspects of development. As one respondent articulated:

I have three jobs in my position. And one of them is lands administrator. I've had to learn quite a lot just to do the job. And it is very, well, it's all about enforcing by-laws and that sort of thing. I don't feel like I'm being constructive doing those things. Whereas the economic development side of it, the applications and proposals bore the crap out of me, to be honest. And all the planning is so exciting and I feel like I'm really trying to make a difference, really trying to have a say, you know, to try and make things happen the way that people desire. But there's not a lot of time to do those things when you are expected to focus on all the administrative stuff, the things they basically train you to do when you first start at it.

Another practitioner reiterated similar sentiments in reflecting upon training received for a development position:

I understand that there are certain rules, guidelines that need to be followed. But I think there's too much focus on the policy side of things. Especially now that I've been involved with this. I just know that at some point, you really need to look closer at the community aspects.

As the preceding comments illustrate, individuals involved in Northern planning or development frequently find themselves in a precarious position. They feel compelled to apply their training in, and maintain a commitment to, the administrative aspects of their

position. At the same time, practitioners believe that their energies in the field could be better utilised. As one respondent summarised:

It's one of those fulfilling positions, where you can be properly knowledgeable about the Inuit culture and really try and make a difference; where you can be given the tools to make that difference. Because everyone is into the whole idea of community empowerment, so it's supposed to be the communities making changes and making planning and all that stuff. But it really all comes down to the person in the development position. In that position, you can do absolutely nothing but waste your time with application forms and that kind of thing; or you can really do something and try your best to help the community that you live in.

4.4.3 Interpretive Summary

The development of participatory governance forms is, in part, dependent upon how effectively planning agencies set a framework from within which constituents can assume roles as active stakeholders. It follows that planners must fashion praxis with an eye to shaping the processes that allow stakeholders to participate in policy discourses. This requires that planners be cognisant of their own social organisational functions. In speaking with practitioners, it is evident that Northern planning agencies face numerous challenges in facilitating the transition to participatory governance. These challenges relate principally to the development of core competencies in social policy and development practitioners.

Practitioners were adamant that training and education are pressing issues in Nunavut. At present, there is uncertainty with respect to the extent to which Northern communities carry the human resource capacity necessary to initiate collaborative planning exercises. This relates primarily to the concern that practitioners do not possess the core

competencies required for planning work; and that planning agencies are, in some instances, not adequately preparing their practitioners to manage that work.

Practitioners do not perceive the lack of planning or development education as a hindrance to Northern practice. However, they do see issues inherent in the manner in which planning and policy work is carried out. Practitioners conveyed that training and practice models are centred too specifically on administrative labour. They feel that within existing occupational structures, practitioners cannot focus explicitly on the social organisational aspects of planning practice, nor can they refine their core competencies to manage those aspects. Clearly, this has implications for the development of participatory governance. If practitioners themselves cannot fully develop praxis in view of social organisation, they may encounter difficulties in framing comprehensive interactive policy discourses.

5.0 CONCLUSION: TOWARDS PLACE RESPONSIVE PLANNING

5.1 The Place of Planning

There is a pressing need for the planning discipline to critically evaluate the manner in which it conceives places. This is to the extent that planning and policy frameworks are intrinsically linked to interpretations of place. There are clear indications that precedent and existing place constructs in the discipline have not adequately managed to facilitate widespread social equity, meaning policies have frequently lacked place relevance. In the Northern context, in particular, commentators suggest that planning approaches have been characteristically deficient of place sensitivities. Yet this should not serve as a signal to the discipline that spatial planning efforts be abandoned altogether. On the contrary: the development of place relevant policy *requires* a platform of spatial planning. This is because place constructs provide a necessary point of convergence for place focused planning and policy discourses.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the planning discipline must reform its processes of place conceptualisation. This statement is derived in view of emergent multiplex perspectives, which suggest that places are perceptual phenomena. That is, places are social constructs, defined interpretively by individuals and groups who cohabit particular spaces. Inasmuch as places are perceptual phenomena, planning agencies should not unilaterally undertake place conceptualisation. Any explicit attempts to do so would result in place constructs and associated policy agendas that are equally contrived and superficial. Hence, emergent multiplex perspectives specify that place

conceptualisation is a social process, and not an exercise that any planning agency can or should independently embark upon.

Multiplex perspectives imply that spatial planning is a communicative endeavour grounded in collaborative and interactive dialogue. To this end, planning is an exercise in social organisation. Planners facilitate the development of deliberative spaces, assisting common stakeholders in collectively negotiating concerns about place. It is through such negotiating processes that place conceptualisations may be articulated, and furthermore, wherein common stakeholders can develop priorities for action in view of those place conceptualisations. From a multiplex perspective, spatial planning is made relevant because policy discourses emanate from common stakeholders' experiential encounters with, and knowledge of, place. The planning discipline, therefore, must position itself to help frame the communicative and interpretive processes through which collective meanings of place can be articulated.

5.2 Complexity Theory: Implications for Spatial Planning

As planning has a role in framing communicative processes of placemaking, planners should resist deriving place constructs. Practitioners need to overcome the conviction that they can control spatial change, and further accept that they are better situated to shape the flow of processes of change. Effectively, practitioners must shift the conceptual parameters from which they approach praxis. This requires that the discipline distance itself from the centralised, modernist governance structures of rationalist practice, and move to embrace more dispersed, participatory governance forms.

As place construction is a social process, it follows that planners lack the contextual knowledge necessary for devising place relevant policy. (Practitioners carry a limited understanding of particular place entities, given they possess only one or a few interpretations of a multitude of place conceptualisations). The rationale for participatory governance thus rests with the acknowledgement that common stakeholders themselves know best how to address social policy. Such stakeholders, after all, are those individuals and groups who possess experiential knowledge of particular place entities; and accordingly, they are those most readily able to provide insight into the policy approaches best suited to such places. Indeed, emergent perspectives on environmental adaptation, conveyed through complexity theory, stress a similar rationale for participatory governance. Complexity theory insinuates that common stakeholders are quite capable of deriving place relevant policy, so long as they can collectively accumulate and strategically apply experiential knowledge and resources. Complexity perspectives reject modernist and rationalistic governance forms. This is because such forms undermine the adaptive competencies of common stakeholders by denying them access to collaborative and interactive forums.

Inasmuch as complexity theory supports the democratisation of governance forms, it aligns with a framework of planning praxis that is centred on engaging common stakeholders in policy discourses. Practitioners can exact a key role in convening stakeholders, and ensuring planning processes allow such stakeholders to develop their adaptive competencies. From a complexity perspective, planners are relied upon to shape the form of collaborative practice, ensuring network power is manifest in policy

discourses. There is a presumed correlation between the place relevance of policy and the strength of stakeholder collaboration. Therefore, the development and application of network power is critical: so much so, that place-focused policy construction can be seen as an explicit attempt by planners to cultivate institutional capacity. In emergent paradigms, planners function to build, manage, and maintain interpersonal and interorganisational stakeholder networks.

5.3 Emergent Paradigms and Existing Infrastructures: Assessing Connections

Emergent paradigms are encapsulated through the institutional perspective. To assess the current situation of Northern planning, it is therefore appropriate to inquire as to the extent to which planning agencies and practitioners are attuned to, or poised to embrace, perspectives on and opportunities in institutional development. This study evaluates connections between emergent paradigms and existing infrastructures by weighing prospects and constraints in the framework of institutional development.

5.3.1 Prospects: Utilising Network Power in Emerging Paradigms

There is an incredibly advanced level of network power existent in Nunavut. This network power is manifest in the social interactions and relationships practitioners commonly identify as friendships. Planning agencies presently draw on network power to inform the construction of public policy in two key regards. First, practitioners use friendships to open interpretive discussions. Such discussions assist planning agencies in accumulating and applying the experiential knowledge of common stakeholders. Second, practitioners use friendships derived at intercommunity and interregional levels to construct discourses on policy approaches. These discourses, centred on local knowledge

and expressive of experiential learning, enable planning agencies to better prepare to manage planning situations in their own constituencies.

The foundation of network power existent in Nunavut exhibits that planning agencies are well-positioned to capitalise upon opportunities in institutional development. This is to the extent that practitioners are cognisant of the important role that interpersonal relationships can play in policy development. And to this point, planning agencies have already initiated coalition building exercises in view of both developing and enhancing interactive policy discourses. The collaborative forums necessary for participatory governance have already started to surface in the Northern context.

Practitioners are actively structuring deliberative spaces, though it is difficult to state with certainty that they are *always* consciously aware of the fact that they are doing so. Inuit respondents, in particular, did not outright indicate that their communicative and interactive approaches to policy are premeditated. That is to say that the development of participatory governance in Nunavut may be an extension of a distinctively Inuit cultural ethic of cooperative action, termed *aajiiqatigiingniq*. According to Arnakak (2001:18), *aajiiqatigiingniq* is “the Inuktitut way of decision making – through conference, one might say”. As *aajiiqatigiingniq* is premised upon consensus building in network contexts, Nunavut, with its predominantly Inuit population, may be naturally situated to embrace collaborative planning and governance forms.

5.3.2 Constraints: The Persistence of Paradigmatic Indeterminacy

5.3.2.1 Language

Collaborative and interactive approaches to planning and policy development are essentially dependent upon conversational communication. In multicultural contexts, such as Nunavut, language may factor in, impeding the development of conversational communication. This is to the extent that language differences can serve to restrict opportunities for interpersonal communication, both between practitioners and stakeholders, and amongst stakeholders themselves.

In certain respects, practitioners are attuned to emergent perspectives on institutional development. This is evidenced through their awareness that language can either hinder or enhance the engagement of, and interaction amongst, stakeholders in local, intercommunity, or interregional policy discourses. But apart from exhibiting such awareness, practitioners have yet to develop a framework for conceptualising structural responses to the language issue. In the absence of such a framework, the transition to participatory governance forms may prove problematic.

5.3.2.2 Understanding Collaborative Process: Constituents & Common Stakeholders

Participatory governance forms require the engagement of common stakeholders. For such stakeholders to effectively partake in collaborative planning exercises, they must be cognisant of their capacity to contribute to building place-focused policy discourses. That is, stakeholders must acquire an understanding of their roles as active and engaged parties.

At present, planning agencies in Nunavut are grappling with the issue of stakeholder engagement. They are wary that there is a certain disconnection between their constituents and policy discourses. Practitioners are also mindful of the influencing factors giving rise to this disconnection. In view of these factors, respondents interviewed for this study expressed that there is an onus upon planning agencies to better educate *the public* about its roles and responsibilities in participatory governance contexts. Interestingly, however, practitioners failed to elaborate how *they themselves* could contribute to bridging gaps in constituent disconnection.

Practitioners expressed that constituents must better prepare to participate in governance arenas. Yet by the same token, they did not expound on how planning agencies could assist in those preparations; namely, by articulating to the public their roles in facilitating collaborative discourses. In partaking in the latter exercise, planning agencies might very well ameliorate aspects of constituent disconnection by addressing the conceptions - or perhaps, misconceptions - constituents have of planning agencies.⁴ Paradoxically, practitioners are so concerned with constituent disengagement that they are not focusing on their own capabilities in enhancing participatory governance forms. Certainly, such contracted thinking can serve to impede the transition to emergent paradigms. But this is not to say that emergent paradigms cannot be embraced. Planning agencies, and even planning educators, for example, can play an important role in teaching practitioners the value and necessity of critical self-reflection.

⁴ Recall, a key theme emerging from research interviews was that disconnection has developed, in part, because constituents are conditioned to perceiving planners as government agents rather than social organizers.

5.3.2.3 Understanding Collaborative Process: Practitioners

Inasmuch as constituents must be wary of their roles as active and engaged stakeholders, so too must practitioners be cognisant of their responsibilities as social organisers in collaborative planning approaches. If the transition to participatory governance forms is to be realised, it is critical that planning agencies set the framework from within which such a transition may occur. In emergent paradigms, planners are relied upon to develop a contour-centred praxis, meaning they must mould infrastructures that facilitate stakeholder interaction.

Nunavut faces important human resource issues. At present, there is uncertainty with respect to the extent to which Northern communities carry the capacity necessary to comprehensively engage in collaborative planning exercises. In short, there are concerns that practitioners do not possess the core competencies required for planning work. If practitioners do not fully comprehend the nature of collaborative practice, the transition to participatory governance forms will be a difficult one.

5.3.3 Discussion

When inquiring as to whether or not Northern planners and planning agencies are attuned to, or poised to embrace, emergent perspectives on and opportunities in institutional development, it is difficult to arrive at an explicit 'yes' or 'no' response. The sphere of Northern planning is equally intricate and complex, particularly given the present state of paradigmatic indeterminacy. Therefore, to arrive at such a definitive determination would be to do an injustice to the fundamental issues presently facing the discipline. That said,

it is still possible to make informed statements as to the extent to which Northern planning agencies appear to be prepared to embrace emergent paradigms.

The existence and continued progression of network power in Nunavut presents an overt indication that practitioners are poised to embrace opportunities in institutional development. Planning agencies have already initiated collaborative and interactive planning efforts; and planners themselves seem acutely aware of the opportunities and constraints that they are facing, and may continue to face, in further developing those efforts. Furthermore, there are indications that the transition to participatory governance may be facilitated by existing Inuit cultural ethics operating in Nunavut. In these two key regards, planners and planning agencies are well-situated to capitalise upon the potential of emergent paradigms.

Despite recent progressions in the planning discipline, the transition to participatory governance will not be an effortless one. That is to say that planners and planning agencies must work deliberately to overcome the fundamental assumptions of preceding eras, those which have impeded the development of collaborative planning design. Indeed, even as progressive approaches to spatial policy are being explored, the remnants of rationalist paradigms remain interspersed throughout contemporary governance contexts. To wit, practitioners are presently engaged in the arduous process of restructuring infrastructures to correspond with emergent paradigms. The fact that they are actively doing so, however, indicates that democratic deficits are being addressed, and that the development of a more place responsive planning framework is well underway.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations may assist planners, planning agencies, and the planning discipline more generally in continuing to facilitate the transition to emergent paradigms in the Northern context.

5.4.1 Recommendations for Northern Planners

5.4.1.1 Think of People, Then Places

If place relevant policy frameworks are to be structured, then it is necessary for practitioners to embrace multiplex perspectives. The tendency in spatial planning has been for practitioners to conceive places with detachment. Such tendencies may be overcome if planners begin thinking about how people can help change places, as opposed to thinking about how changing places can help people.

5.4.1.2 Find Purpose in Existing Friendships and Develop Friendships with Purpose

It is imperative that Northern practitioners be cognisant of both the important role that friendships play in the development of network power, and the manner in which network power contributes to building participatory governance forms.

Practitioners would be well-advised to consider how their existing friendships can assist them in enhancing planning praxis; and further, how the development of future friendships can do likewise. This is not to say that practitioners should engage in friendships purely for the function of planning. Rather, it is a statement that friendships can function importantly in planning.

5.4.1.3 Practice Critical Self-Reflection

To assist in facilitating the transition to emergent paradigms, practitioners should critically reflect upon how their actions are contributing to developing participatory governance forms. There may be a tendency for planners to focus too explicitly on external factors impeding the transition to emergent paradigms, without having first considered their own role and position in the broader paradigmatic picture.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Planning Agencies

The following recommendations are directed not so much at practitioners themselves, but at planning agencies that oversee, organise, and help facilitate the activities of these practitioners. In the Nunavut context, the regional Department of Sustainable Development comes to mind as the type of agency these recommendations are provided for.

5.4.2.1 Provide Practitioners with Networking Opportunities

The link between friendships and the development of network power has been well documented throughout this study. Planning agencies can assist practitioners in building network power by providing them with opportunities to develop interactive discourses, particularly at the intercommunity and interregional level. As respondents conveyed throughout the research interviews, such networking opportunities can prove invaluable in enhancing planning practice, as they enable planners to accumulate and share experiential knowledge.

5.4.2.2 Provide Constituents with Networking Opportunities

As planning agencies can assist in helping practitioners develop network power, they can do likewise for constituents. To this end, planning agencies would be well-advised to assist constituents in developing intercommunity and interregional friendships through forums such as conferences and workshops. Indeed, constituents will require interactive forums if they are to identify common stakeholder groups, and begin constructing interactive policy discourses in view of those groups. By providing constituents with networking opportunities, planning agencies may engage constituents in processes of place construction, and further, make them cognisant of their own empowering capacities.

5.4.3 Recommendations for Planning Education

5.4.3.1 Develop a Multiplex Focus

If planning is to distance itself from rationalistic practice, it is necessary that practitioners entering the field be cognisant of multiplex perspectives. Planning educators should seek to develop a multiplex focus in their core curricula, one which conveys how spatial planning is intrinsically linked to the social construction of place. Practitioners may be better prepared to manage their social organisational functions if they grasp emergent viewpoints in place conceptualisation.

5.4.3.2 Explore Specialised Training Opportunities

As practitioners conveyed throughout the research interviews, Nunavut faces important human resource issues, especially in training and education. In view of these issues, academic institutions should explore specialised training opportunities for Northern and

Aboriginal planners. Such opportunities may take the form of satellite training facilities, focused workshop sessions, or creative certification programs. Accordingly, specialised training initiatives may, and likely should, require coordination between Northern planning agencies and universities or other academic institutions. Partnerships in planning education could serve to ease training burdens on Northern planning agencies, and further assist those agencies in recruiting practitioners and preparing them for field work.

5.5 Directions for Future Research

As planning is at a point of paradigmatic indeterminacy, it will be imperative to the pedagogy of Northern planning that researchers monitor progressions in participatory governance. Collaborative planning is in its formative stages in the Northern context, yet planning agencies and practitioners are experimenting with its principles with mounting frequency. Only with close monitoring can the discipline be certain it is truly embracing emergent paradigms, and likewise distancing itself from Western scientific rationalism.

There is also a pressing need for more Northern specific planning research, quite generally. At present, it seems Northern researchers are compelled to examine literature that is thematically related to, yet contextually disparate from, study topics. A greater understanding of developments in the Northern planning sphere may be achieved if researchers are able to cross-reference each other, and build upon more narrowly structured discourses.

6.0 APPENDIX A: RESEARCH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Section I: Personal and Contextual Questions

Question 1

Please tell me about your experiences living and working in the North.

Potential Probes

How long have you lived here?

Where did you live before?

How long have you been working in your present position?

How long have you practiced as a planner?

Do you have a background as a planner, academic or otherwise?

Other than English, do you speak or write in any languages commonly used by residents of Northern communities?

Is your academic and/or work background similar to that of other planners you have come into contact with in the North?

Section II: The North & Place Entities

Question 1

Now I would like you to describe a typical work-week in your planning office.

Potential Probes

Who do you generally find yourself talking to?

Why do you regularly communicate with those particular individuals?

Why does so much of your work at this office appear to focus on that particular task or objective?

Question 2

Do you think that the planning issues you deal with in your hamlet are similar to those of other hamlets in the North? Explain.

Potential Probes

Can you think of any issues people from your hamlet are particularly concerned about?

Why does your hamlet deal with these issues?

Why is it that other hamlets do not deal with these issues?

Why do you think that people in both your office and hamlet are concerned about that?

Do you see the work of all planners in the North as being the same?

Question 3

What individuals, groups, or organizations do you believe have an interest or stake in planning in the North?

Potential Probes

Who is usually most concerned about the work you do at your office?

Do Northern community members ever voice their concerns about the work that you do?

Why do you think these people have such an interest?

Please tell me about individuals from your community. Do you sense that there are particular issues they are concerned about?

Do people in your hamlet let you know that they are concerned? If yes, how so? If no, why do you think that is?

Do you think the various stakeholders that you have identified view the role of planning and planners similarly? Explain.

Section III: Institutional Development in the North

Question 1

Previously, you identified some stakeholders in Northern planning. I'd like to talk to you about communication between these individuals and groups. In what ways does communication take place amongst these stakeholders?

Potential Probes

What type of interaction exists?

Do you consider this effective communication?

Are there ways in which you believe interaction could be made more effective?

Question 2

Do you think that your planning department should seek inputs on planning issues from the stakeholders you have identified?

Potential Probes

Do you find that getting input on planning issues from stakeholders is easy or difficult?

What makes getting input on planning issues from stakeholders easier?

What makes getting input more difficult?

Question 3

What do you believe are, or would be, the best forums/ways for continuing or enhancing communication between your planning office and the stakeholders that you have identified?

Potential Probes

When do you feel most comfortable talking about planning to people who are not necessarily planners?

In what circumstances do you typically feel you are planning with the concerns of hamlet residents in mind?

Can you think of a situation in which certain individuals or groups objected to some of the work carried out in your office? Explain.

Under what circumstances do you feel most confident about carrying out a particular planning strategy?

How do people normally contact you when they are concerned about a particular planning issue?

Question 4

Have you noticed any changes recently in how your planning office approaches planning situations or strategies? If yes, what are those changes? If no, do you think it should make those changes?

Potential Probes

What are some of the more recent projects you have worked on? Has the work on these projects been different from that which you have normally done at the office?

Are you generally pleased with the way in which your office is approaching planning issues? Why or why not?

How do you see your work at this office changing in future years?

How do you see your work staying the same?

Question 5

How would you contrast lifestyles in the North to lifestyles in the South?

Potential Probes

What do you see as being some of the key differences between Northern and Southern living?

Did you find that these differences were made immediately obvious to you when you first moved and starting living here?

Can you think of any significant similarities?

Question 6

Do you think that working as a planner in the North is, or would be, different from working as a planner in the South? Explain.

Potential Probes

Can you identify any particular issues or circumstances that you believe make planning in the North unique, as compared to planning in the South?

Do you think you have anything in common with planners from the South?

What work have you done here that you don't think you would have had to do in the South?

7.0 APPENDIX B: UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA ETHICS APPROVAL



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

OFFICE OF
RESEARCH SERVICES

ORS
244 Engineering Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-8418
Fax (204) 261-0325
www.unimnitoiba.ca/vpresearch/ors

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

18 April 2002

TO: Erik Nilsen (Advisor I. Skelton)
Principal Investigator

FROM: Wayne Taylor, Chair
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: Protocol #J2001:085
"Institutional Development and Planning in the Northern Canadian
Context"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

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