WHITE PICKET FENCES: WHITENESS, URBAN ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND
HOUSING MARKET DISCRIMINATION IN KELOWNA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

Sheila Elaine Lewis

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Abstract

This thesis analyses hegemonic whiteness as a socio-spatial structure and discursive formation, and the way that whiteness interlocks with other axes of identity, such as class and gender, to affect accessibility to the housing market for urban Aboriginal women in Kelowna, BC, Canada. Twelve participants were recruited and interviewed through the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society. The research methods for this thesis involved discourse analysis of embodied practices (after Kirsten Simonsen). Interviews with Aboriginal women about their experiences in the housing market revealed two clear patterns of gendered, classed, and racialized divisions of urban space. Aboriginal women note that the housing search, and subsequent residence in Kelowna (often as opposed to residence on a local 'Indian Reserve' outside the city), places them in a situation that they define as being under surveillance. Aboriginal women are particularly aware of how they are being watched or monitored by what most of them refer to as the 'mainstream society' in Kelowna, by which they mean white residents of the city. In a similar fashion, Aboriginal women are very clear about the fact that their participation in the housing market is racialized, and they are subject to a number of problematic constructions of their identity when searching for housing. In recounting Aboriginal women's experiences, I attempt to provide an analysis of the classed, gendered, and racialized processes that work in interlocking fashion to produce the white landscape of housing in Kelowna, BC, Canada.

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Finally, I would like to thank all the participants of this study who agreed to meet with me throughout the course of this research. I greatly appreciate the time that they set aside to share their experiences and reflections with me.

This thesis is dedicated to V. Jaidan,

beloved brother adrift

"Nolite Te Bastardes Carborundorum"

Chapter 1: Overview of Primary Focus and Theoretical Underpinning for Research into Whiteness and Urban Aboriginal Women in the Housing Market in Kelowna, British Columbia

1.1 Access to Housing: A Legitimate Concern for Kelowna's Non-White Population

The stimulus for this research project began many years ago in a reflection about single mothers and access to housing, and a rising concern about the difficulties these women faced. I understood through my own experiences as a child of a single mother that the social stigma of being a single mother is often a barrier for accessing adequate housing. As the sole providers for their families, single mothers often have inadequate financial support, and thus, have to choose housing in a location that is isolated or in a neighbourhood that is not family-friendly.

These women are not alone in their need for affordable and desirable housing. Locating and securing affordable housing is a significant concern for an increasing number of Canadians. Especially now, in the current economic downturn, many are finding it difficult to pay mortgages, to enter the housing market, or to secure rental housing. Many cities across Canada are facing an increasing homelessness crisis (Layton, 2000; Bryant, 2003; Falvo, 2003; Hulchanksi, & Porter, 2004). Help from government initiatives that support fair housing is limited. Housing needs that might have been met by construction of affordable living spaces are being ignored.

In a city such as Kelowna, affordable housing is scarce, yet there is a significant population of lower income earners (and unemployed). When I first moved to Kelowna in 2005, it took me four months to find housing that met my budget. Often the advertisements for housing had multiple restrictions that seemed impossible to comply with, such as no pets, no smoking, no children, and no families. I also noticed that the population in Kelowna

appeared predominantly white. I began to wonder what the housing search would be like for an immigrant with children, or for a person of colour. These concerns spurred me to undertake this research project.

I began this research wanting to understand the ways in which whiteness affects access to housing in Kelowna. This general parameter was further narrowed after I read a 2003 study conducted by the Kelowna Urban Aboriginal Group (KUAG). This study concluded that 23% of the total homeless population in Kelowna at the time were urban Aboriginal people, even though they made up less than 3% of the total population of the city (Statistics Canada, 2006). The conclusions reached by the KUAG study were the catalyst that shifted my focus to wanting to understand urban Aboriginal women's experiences in the housing market in Kelowna. I embarked upon my research guided by the question: How do urban Aboriginal[1] women experience housing in Kelowna?

My research question is not an entirely easy question to answer for several reasons. When I began my research, there was already a housing shortage in Kelowna, which meant I had to acknowledge that whiteness might not be the predominant factor limiting urban Aboriginal women in their housing search. Many people in Kelowna, regardless of skin colour or ethnic background, were and are having a difficult experience finding and securing housing that is adequate. In addition, housing in Kelowna is expensive compared to average wages earned by residents of the city. Affordability and employment are significant factors in a housing search.

As a researcher, I had to be prepared that when working with my participants the

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[1] Terms such as First Nations, Aboriginal, Metis, and Native often appear interchangeable within this thesis. In my research, I always use the legal and constitutional term "Aboriginal" that refers to all Indigenous peoples (Indian, Inuit and Métis) in Canada. There are places within this thesis where other terms are used, and they are used either by other reference sources or by the participants in this research. It is not my place or position to correct terminology used by my participants. The others terms used have very defined parameters and histories that would not be accurate for me to use within my discussions. I

answer to my question might not be as straightforward as one might expect. In addition, I had

to acknowledge that the experiences urban Aboriginal women were having in the Kelowna

housing market could be positive. Their experiences of the housing market could be free of

the racial discrimination I suspected was happening in Kelowna's rental market.

1.2 Overview of Critical Theories Informing the Development of this Thesis

My primary discipline is Human Geography, a branch of Geography that is interested

in concepts of space and place. Specifically, Human Geography is "concerned with spatial

differentiation and organization of human activity and its interrelationships with the physical

environment" (Johnston, R., 2000, p.353). In the discipline I have found a resonance with

critical thought by prominent human geographers, in particular those exploring geographies

concerned with the body and with urban space. One of the scholars I have found myself

drawn to is Kirsten Simonsen. My research question developed after reading a chapter

authored by Simonsen (2003) titled, "The embodied city: From bodily practice to urban life".

The chapter led me to think about my research question in experiential terms. The experience

of urban space is an embodied experience and any attempt to close off the body and assume

that it does not inform practices, procedures, and ways of being is limiting and narrow

(Simonsen, 2003).

Human Geography, in its concern with space and place and human interaction,

accepts that there are several socio-political and socio-economic forces at play between the

private and the public. My research attempts to understand the significance of the

experiences that the participants shared during the process of locating and securing adequate

housing. My analysis of these experiences makes primary use of perceptions garnered

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interviewed urban Aboriginal women about their experiences, all of the backgrounds varied.

through critical concepts and theoretical approaches that are commonly articulated within the discipline of Human Geography, specifically critical concepts dealing with hegemony and whiteness, and the theories posited by postcolonial, post-structural, and neo-liberal theorists.

Hegemony is a term that describes a complex relationship that allows a dominant group to exercise control over a subordinate group. The control is not through visible coercion or use of force, but rather through the compliance of a group that accepts a subordinate status by adopting "cultural, social, and political practices and institutions that are unequal and unjust" (Ley, 2000, p.332). A fuller description of hegemony notes that it is not just that the compliant group accepts unjust hierarchical relations, but that they accept the 'naturalness' of their own subjugation within these relations. Hegemonic social relations constantly evolve as lived systems of meanings and values. In hegemonic social relations, a naturalization and routinization of 'the way things are done' limits the freedoms of, and denies democratic ideals to, the compliant group. In Kelowna, the way 'things are done' often denies urban Aboriginal women access to adequate and affordable housing. The women interviewed for this thesis describe how they experience hegemonic social relations, and then how they try to subvert those same relations. An important conceptual aspect of hegemony is the fact that it allows for such subversion. What I understand from the women's accounting of their experience is that while they sense dominant forces acting on them, they do not explicitly understand that their experience is a consequence of hegemony. The women will speak about feeling like they have to dress, speak, move, and live like the mainstream culture within which they reside. They understand that there is sense of coercion, a sense that if they comply, they will be able to access resources more readily. Yet, there is no direct indication regarding the source of the coercion.

Whiteness studies is concerned with studying people who are identified as white and the social construction of whiteness as a hegemonic normative ideology that is not explicitly acknowledged in white society. Whiteness is the focus of my analysis in this thesis, as it symbolizes or produces normal space, relying on the perception of non-white people as being 'out of place' (Bonnett, 2005). In the case of Kelowna, whiteness has been made the norm, and non-white people have become the focus of public scrutiny because of their visible 'difference'. In many ways, whiteness has become associated with modernity and the middle class. Increasingly situations are not so much about being white, as they are about becoming white through appearance and activities.

In Kelowna, it is not difficult to recognize who is 'out of place' as the population is predominantly white. Visible minorities make up only six percent of the population in Kelowna (Statistics BC, 2006). The population that is visibly not-white is small enough that in a predominantly white community they are unable to go unnoticed in the city. Because of high visibility in the urban landscape, their movement, actions, cultural choices, and activities are more visible than those of the white population. Urban Aboriginal women, especially those who cannot 'pass' as white, find themselves in a precarious position in terms of how they dress, move, rear children, and manage their homes. All of their actions are open to public scrutiny because of the visibility of their bodies in relation to the white population. In part, the marginalization of non-white populations by dominant white groups is a product of colonialism.

Postcolonial theory is concerned with the impact of colonization on both the colonizer and the colonized. Many postcolonial theorists argue against the notion that colonialism is an artefact of the past, positing that it is an ongoing process that continues today (Gregory,

2000, pp.612-13). Postcolonialism is not a celebration of the 'end' of colonialism rather it is

a reminder of the colonial present (Jackson & Jacobs, 1996; Gregory, 2004). The colonial

present is explored through representations and ideologies, through an engagement with post-

structuralism, subaltern studies, and performativity studies.

In Kelowna, the effects of colonization and colonialism continue to be performed in

and through the urban landscape. Part of this effect of colonization and colonialism can be

seen through the separation of the Aboriginal reserves from the city centre. There are several

significant reserves located near Kelowna. Despite their proximity to the city, there is little

evidence within the landscape that points to this particular cohabitation of two groups,

Aboriginal people and white citizens of Kelowna. Instead Kelowna appears to be

predominantly a white community and prevailing historical concepts of Kelowna reinforce

the idea that Kelowna always has been a white community. The landscape is being created

and (re)enforced through a narrative that is not entirely accurate and tells a story of

settlement, perseverance, and ingenuity on the part of white settlers, but says little regarding

the relationship between the Okanagan peoples and white settlers of the area. The lack of

voice regarding the relationship between the white settler population and non-white

populations requires a critical questioning of complex socio-political and socio-economic

relationships in Kelowna.

The best way to describe post-structuralism is that it is a reaction to structuralism.

Structuralism is an approach that attempts to analyse complex systems as having an

interconnected relationship, a coexistence of 'real things' that lie beneath the surface or the

appearance of meaning (Assiter, 1984). Post-structuralist roots are linked to several French

theorists such as Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Delueze, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Julia

Kristeva, Jacques Lacan, and Jean-François Lyotard — some or all of whom may not necessarily self-identify as post-structuralist, yet their work was "influenced by and rejected the formalism of structuralist linguistics and its (at least implicit) epistemological subject" (Pratt, 2000, p.625). The difficulty in defining post-structuralism relates to the movement's resistance to classification or naming because it rejects definitions based on assumptions of absolute truths or meta-narratives about reality. Post-structuralism, as a framework, focuses on meaning, questioning everything to the point of examining the questioning of everything. The focus is on context, readers, cultural norms, and social relations with a strong acknowledgement that there are varieties of perspectives that are multifaceted and even conflicting in their interpretations.

The cultural norms and social relations in Kelowna are multifaceted and conflicting. Post-structuralist theory offers a way to explore beyond the definitions based on assumptions of absolute truths and singular realities to get closer to the experiences of subaltern groups. The participants of this study are politically and socially rendered without agency because of their social status within the community. As a form of a response to their lack of agency, the participants resist their subaltern subject positions by reacting against and subverting the structures in place that create barriers to housing and community in Kelowna. The participants of this research share a perspective that confronts and challenges hegemonic whiteness in Kelowna.

Neo-liberalism is a post-Keynesian theoretical-conceptual-practice movement that favours regulation to support capitalist free markets, as well as re-regulation in favour of capital over labour and the interests of the wealthy over the poor, allowing 'the market' to dictate social and economic well-being. Neo-liberals stress that the most efficient method for

distributing economic and social goods is to allow markets to self-regulate, and discourages government intervention in the process (except to intervene in support of capital). The understanding among supporters of neo-liberalism as a political economic mechanism is that the individual now has greater control over needs and wants. This shift to focus on individual 'choice', in fact, leaves the individual isolated and vulnerable. The withdrawal of the welfare state limits the resources an individual can access to assist with increasing economic inequalities. Ultimately, if the individual is not successful, neo-liberal discourse locates fault in the individual and not in the system. Many scholars (e.g., Bourdieu 1998; 1998a; Chomsky 1999; and Touraine 2001) have criticized neo-liberalism and have begun to use the word in a pejorative sense. These scholars view neo-liberalism as linked to the rise in global capitalism and unfettered consumerism, and dismantling of the welfare state. The effect of neo-liberalism and the emphasis on individual success challenges those who need assistance to achieve personal as well as communal success.

The prevailing ideology of neo-liberalism is one of the obstacles facing Aboriginal woman as they try to succeed. The discursive focus on the individual succeeding within a neo-liberal state, because of her/his individual efforts and work, results in blaming the individual who is not successful as the source of his/her own failure. In this framework, Aboriginal people often become pathologized or stigmatized as lacking the ability to conform or understand 'modern realities'. In Kelowna, urban Aboriginal people experience discrimination because many white people believe that Aboriginal people are lazy and their bands have money enough to support them.

1.3 Housing: A Fundamental Right

Homelessness is on the rise in Canada. Despite efforts from non-profit organizations, municipalities, and various religious and community organizations, homelessness continues to increase. The response at the federal and provincial level appears to be slow to almost non-existent. My assertion is that all citizens of Canada should have equal and fair access to adequate and suitable housing. In fact, housing should be considered a right for all (Porter, 2004). Every year, in Canada, many homeless or 'under-housed' people die because of exposure to the cold or lack of adequate heating to their homes. In addition, the stress of not being housed puts a strain on the social welfare system, as well as the medical system, which must respond to the repercussions of inadequate and/or unaffordable housing (Drummond, et al., 2004).

The late 1960s and 1970s marked milestones for important protections of security of tenure (Porter, 2004). Ultimately, landlords were forced to go to court if they wished to end tenancy. As much as this legal decision was an important victory, low-income households continue to be at risk. Families that are low-income often have to secure housing through rentals of small motel units that rent on a week-by-week basis. Short-term tenancy situations such as these leave low-income families in vulnerable positions, as they do not have the same protection as other renters who rent on a month-to-month basis. In addition, those tenants who do enjoy legal protection of security of tenure are finding their rights reduced as policies are implemented to provide expeditious eviction for landlords (Porter, 2004). In Canada's current system, the affluent populations have the privilege of adequate housing. Until access to adequate housing is viewed as a basic fundamental human right, low-income and at-risk populations will increasingly face tenuous housing situations.

1.4 Chapter Summaries

I have organized this thesis to work through both the core literature that informed my research and through the themes that the participants of this research identified almost unanimously as barriers to affordable housing in Kelowna. Through this research, I have attempted to understand the ways in which the culture of whiteness inhibits and precludes the ability of visible minorities, specifically urban Aboriginal women, from accessing housing and services in Kelowna and West Kelowna.

The present chapter explains the motivation for this research and discusses some of the disciplinary frameworks and paradigmatic concerns that affect access to housing.

Chapter Two further sets the context with a discussion of the current housing and population situation in Kelowna. This chapter reviews the wider literature regarding housing, population, and the production of negative ideologies about homeless people.

Chapter Three is concerned with whiteness and white studies. There I review literature regarding whiteness and draw on this literature to better understand how the housing market in Kelowna is racialized. I demonstrate how whiteness works in subtle ways to create barriers and limit access to services, community, and adequate, affordable housing.

Chapter Four discusses methodology; I also review my position as a researcher in relationship to my research. I talk about the research structure and the nature of the qualitative research methods I worked with to better understand the experiences of my participants.

Chapter Five discusses the identity politics of housing in Kelowna. The participants in this research often voiced how public perception of their identity often clashed with their

own self-identification. In many cases, the participants found themselves confronted with contradictions that had significant implications for their ability to access housing or participate in the community life of Kelowna.

Chapter Six focuses on the issue of surveillance. Here the participants identify the different ways they experience surveillance in Kelowna, as well as how they internalize that same surveillance. The act of being surveilled significantly changes and limits the way urban Aboriginal women experience the city of Kelowna.

Chapter 2: Housing Matters

Nowhere in Canada's domestic law is there any explicit recognition of the right to adequate housing – not in the twenty-year-old *Constitution Act, 1982*, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, nor in provincial or federal human rights legislation, national, provincial or territorial housing legislation, or federal-provincial agreements.

(Porter, 2004)

2.1 Housing Matters: The Ongoing Debate Regarding Rights and Privileges

Despite the necessity for shelter, few jurisdictions have viewed housing as a right. Instead, housing or shelter is seen as a privilege. In a socio-economic setting, housing as a privilege establishes a distinction between people who have housing and those who do not. Those who are not housed or struggling with securing adequate housing are considered to be deviant and morally irresponsible. An issue resulting from society privileging housing is that some people, particularly marginalized and low-income people, are blamed for not being able to secure adequate housing. Individuals who are seeking affordable housing have to deal with the challenges afforded by low vacancy rates, housing shortages, and economic instability.

The epigraph to this chapter cites Bruce Porter's (2004) observation regarding the absence in Canada of any legal statement explicitly recognizing the right to adequate housing. His statement underlines that housing continues to be considered a privilege in Canadian society. Indeed, reconceptualising housing as a human right, rather than a privilege, could lead to changes in the way individuals and families are able to participate as full members of their community (Porter, 2004). This chapter examines some of the socio-economic factors that make securing adequate housing a challenging prospect.

2.2 Vacancy Rates & Housing Shortages: Housing Challenges Facing Kelowna

The vacancy rate in Kelowna has been largely on a decline for the last nine years and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) predicts that the vacancy rate will remain below 1.0%. The Housing Study conducted by the City of Kelowna for the years 1999 – 2000 found that the vacancy rate at the time held at 4.4% (City of Kelowna, Housing Study, 1999/2000). Since 2004, however, vacancy rates in Kelowna have been under 1.0% and have continued to remain at or below this level as of the last rental market survey in 2008. The CMHC 2007 Rental Market Survey for Kelowna noted increased population growth coupled with declining supply of rental and townhouse units as the reason for the low vacancy rate for the three-year period 2004-2007. Increased migration to Kelowna has exacerbated the housing shortage, with adequate and affordable accommodations becoming increasingly scarce to locate and secure. In 2007, vacancy rates dropped to 0.0% from 0.6% the previous year, only to experience an increase to 0.3% in 2008. (Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006; CMHC, Rental Market Report, 2007; CMHC, Rental Market Report, 2008; CMHC, Rental Market Report, 2008).

Low vacancy rates over the last few years have translated into increased rental prices and CMHC predicts that the rental rates will continue to rise only slightly as the demand for rental units decreases slightly. Increasing rental prices coupled with decreasing availability of rental units provides challenges for low-income wage earners who are attempting to support their families and secure adequate housing. The City of Kelowna has attempted to alleviate the housing situation by making it easier for homeowners to rent out their secondary suites. As well, the City of Kelowna has attempted to provide incentives for developers to create

affordable housing within their developments. However, these incentives have not produced the results that the City anticipated because developers of high-cost homes do not consider construction of affordable housing to be a profitable investment (Drummond, et al., 2004). In addition, there is decreasing support from the Federal and Provincial governments to assist Municipal governments in the creation of more affordable housing. Municipalities such as Kelowna are facing significant challenges as the population increases and housing becomes even scarcer (Province of British Columbia, 2007). For an outsider attempting to relocate to Kelowna, or for a current resident attempting to change residences, the vacancy rates pose a considerable challenge.

2.3 Housing Affordability in Kelowna

Availability of affordable housing in a community such as Kelowna is an important social and economic issue. The economy of the community requires a labour force, and that labour force requires space and amenities to carry out day-to-day social reproduction. In the City of Kelowna, where housing affordability has worsened and housing availability, for now, sits below 1.0%, it has become difficult to attract and sustain a labour force; thus, residents (and policy-makers) have become quite concerned about the issue. As of 2006, the number of owner-occupied dwellings in Kelowna was 51,765 and the total number of rented dwellings was 15,225 (Statistics Canada, Census of Population). The average value of an owner-occupied dwelling in 2006 was $390,013. Statistics Canada (2006) predicted that the average affordable starter home prices in 2007 would be:

- $207,867 for a non-strata titled, single ownership dwelling;

- $196,033 for a strata titled dwelling; and,

- $187,100 for a manufactured home (pad rental additional). [2]

These 2007 estimated values for affordability were well under the actual 2006 average value of $390,013 for an owned dwelling in Kelowna.

There is a significant gap between the suggested price of an "affordable" starter home and the actual average price of a home. Low-income wage earners unable to enter the home-ownership market must also deal with the financial reality that higher costs in the housing market generally lead to a rise in rental rates (CMHC, Rental Market Report, 2008).

CMHC (2007) defines Ownership Affordability as "the income level at which home ownership is possible (based on the median income level). The median income in 2005, before taxes, for all census families in Kelowna was $59,087 and for married families was $65,293 (Statistics Canada, Census Profile, 2006). The 2007 median income for a two or more person Kelowna household [was] $63,426" (City of Kelowna, 2007). According to most standard measures of affordability, the median income for Kelowna residents is much lower than what would be necessary to make Kelowna's current house prices "affordable". If the income for an average family household in Kelowna has to be $63,426 for that family to afford housing, then there is a significant gap between what low-income earners can afford in Kelowna and the actual cost of living in Kelowna. The challenge for people who are low-income earners, which according to Statistics Canada (2006) are people spending 55% or more of their income on their shelter, food, and clothing, is that the housing market becomes even more difficult – if not impossible – to enter.

Aboriginal people in Kelowna consistently own less, rent less, and earn less than the rest of the population. In 2006, the number of dwellings owned by Aboriginal people was

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[2] These figures are based on the 2006 Census information, current mortgage, & mortgage insurance rates and adjusted utility, strata & property tax costs. They are updated yearly, using the BC Consumer Price Index. CMHC views affordability

1,675, which is only 3.7% of the total number of dwellings (i.e., 44, 985) owned by the total

population of Kelowna. The number of rented dwellings occupied by Aboriginal people was

1,110, which accounts for 8.8% of the total 12, 600 rented dwellings in Kelowna. The

median earnings for all Aboriginal populations aged 15 years and older in the Kelowna CMA

was $15,452, and the average income for the same population was $22,821; for the rest of the

population of Kelowna, the median earnings for people 15 years and older was $25,134. In

addition, the income for all private Aboriginal households was $50,776; this is 15% less than

the income for all private households in Kelowna (Statistics Canada, 2006). These statistics

confirm the fact that securing adequate housing is more difficult for the Aboriginal

population of Kelowna than for the rest of Kelowna's inhabitants.

2.4 Poverty and Homelessness

A vacancy rate of zero percent makes it almost impossible to find any housing in

Kelowna, especially for low-income earners. Itemized below are the average costs for three

types of accommodation in 2007: bachelor suites, one bedroom apartments/suites, and two

bedroom apartments/suites. For comparison purposes, I have also listed the BC Shelter

Allowances for 2007[3]. From the information presented here, it is apparent that the average

rental costs were not fully met by Shelter Allowances for those on social assistance. In 2009,

the situation has not improved.

Average Rental Accomodation Costs (2007)	$552 (Bachelor)	$682 (1 bedroom)	$817 (2 bedroom)

based on the percentage of gross income spent on housing, which should be no more than 30% of the total gross income.
[3] *Poverty and Homeless Action Team Central Okanagan* (PHATCO) in 2007

Shelter Allowance (April 2007)	$375 (1 person)	$570 (Family of 2)	$700 (family of 4)

When considering the problems regarding accessing affordable housing, it is important to recognize that British Columbia's minimum wage ($8.00/hr since 2003) precludes renters from becoming owners of housing (Atkey & Siggner, 2008). Accordingly, individuals who work forty hours per week at minimum wage will earn $1280.00 per month, before taxes, and will pay 43% of their gross income for renting an average bachelor suite in Kelowna. Based on data in Table 1 (2007), single parents earning minimum wage and having to rent a one or two bedroom apartment to house their families will spend between 53% and 63% of their total income on housing costs. In 2009, these same families saw an even greater percentage of their income be designated for housing, since rental costs have increased but minimum wages have remained static. The minimum wage has not increased since 2003, despite efforts from anti-poverty and anti-homeless advocates to have the wage raised to a level that would be consistent with the actual cost of living.

According to CMHC, part of Core Housing Need criteria is affordability. CMHC estimates that a maximum of 30% of total income should be spent on shelter. In Kelowna, as illustrated above, whether on social assistance or employed in a minimum wage job, an individual spends well over 30% of his/her income on shelter. Low-income individuals are in a difficult position in Kelowna, as they will spend about 43% of their income on housing in a bachelor suite or 53% of their income for a one-bedroom dwelling.

According to 2001 census data for the City of Kelowna, 4,795 households paid 50% or more of their income for housing. These data include 2,930 tenant households

(representing about 23% of all tenant households) and 1,865 homeowners (Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2001). In 2006, Statistics Canada estimated that 22,342 individuals lived in households in Kelowna below the low-income cut-off, and were at risk of becoming homeless (Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006). These data indicate that approximately 13% of the population in Kelowna was at risk of homelessness.

The Poverty Homeless Action Team Central Okanagan (PHATCO) conducted homeless surveys in 2003, 2004, and 2007. In the 2007 survey, 279 people disclosed that they were homeless. The count is lower than in previous years, a fact that PHATCO attributes to a police sweep the night before that caused some of the homeless population to go underground. According to PHATCO's findings, most of the homeless they talked to once had a home in Kelowna. Of the 279 respondents, "51% …reported that they were receiving income assistance, while 27% reported that they were working full time or on a part-time casual basis" (PHATCO, 2007, p.15).

What is more important to note is that a significant portion of the homeless population in Kelowna is comprised of Aboriginal people, people of colour, and other minoritized people. As of 2006 population counts, the Aboriginal population for Kelowna CMA accounts for approximately 3.8% of the total population. However, according to PHATCO homeless surveys, urban Aboriginal people comprise approximately 24% of the homeless population. Aboriginal people are significantly over-represented among the homeless population. More notable is the fact that the disparity appears to strike the urban Aboriginal population more so than any other minoritized group.

2.5 Anti-Homeless Sentiments

Homelessness, in public discourse, is often referred to as "the homeless problem"

(Kawash, 1998, p.320). This phrase can be used to imply that the homeless person or population is the cause of their homelessness. Labelling persons as "homeless" and as part of "the homeless problem" works to undermine any real sense of responsibility on the part of society to solve the problem. As a consequence of pathologizing the person who is homeless, the discussion regarding how to address the increasing rate of homelessness becomes about 'the problem' people and how to control 'them'. The struggle in the public discourse — to which homeless people are rarely invited to contribute — becomes about how to protect the public from the homeless. Efforts such as "bum-proofing" bus shelters (through, for example, installation of rounded benches that homeless people fall off when they try to sleep on them), removing shopping carts (which hold whatever possessions homeless people have), putting homeless people in jail, or even fining squeegee kids, demonstrate an attempt to control the homeless body.

Values-based discussions generate public dialogue about the social significance of the average citizen's appearance as a means to define who belongs in the public space and who does not. The 'clean and tidy' body is viewed as belonging in the urban landscape and the 'dirty and unkempt' body is seen as undesirable. Razack (2002) stresses the importance of the visual assessment of one's character through his/her appearance — whether that appearance is through clothing and cleanliness or through skin colour and ethnic clothing. Razack (2002) contextualizes Kawash's (1998) argument regarding the body as a basis for assessing the value of a citizen:

> …it is through this body that we know who is a citizen and who is not. Through its presence as a material body that occupies space, but as one that is consistently denied space through a series of violent evictions, the homeless body confirms what and who

must be contained in order to secure society. The war on the homeless, evident in so

many cities in the last few years (including the passage of restrictions on sleeping in

public space, on begging, "bum-proof" bus shelters, and restrictions on "squeegee

kids" in public space), must be seen as "the production of an abject body against

which the public body of the citizen can stand. (Kawash, 1998 in Razack, 2002, p.10).

In the public mind, the homeless body is often linked to the urban Aboriginal body. Paul

Letkemann (2004) uses the term "urban nomad" to describe First Nations urban migration. In

his research he notes how, based upon appearance, urban Aboriginal people are often

incorrectly considered to be homeless.

Urban Aboriginal people who are identified as street people are often viewed as

victims of culture loss (and as a result of that loss, a host of other subsequent afflictions such

as alcoholism or drug addiction). As will be discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, many of

the participants in this research note how they are linked to the homeless population through

appearance. Often adjectives such as "filthy" and "dirty" are used by the participants to

describe the way they feel they are characterized in (white) public discourse. The

characterization of the body as clean or as dirty is a method used to discern whose body

belongs in public space and whose body needs to be controlled in public space (Kawash,

1998; Razack, 2002).

Canadians, in general, believe that they live in a country that provides social and

economic equality and supports rights to adequate housing. In reality, the country has failed

dismally to live up to this ideal. Hundreds of people die each winter in Canada because of

lack of housing (Porter, 2004). "About 30,000 individuals use shelters for the homeless in the

City of Toronto every year, including more than 6,000 children" (Porter 2004, p.69). The

situation for Aboriginal people is even worse. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal People describes reservation housing as "intolerable" (Porter, 2004). In 2001, one-third (33%) of the total Aboriginal population lived in CMAs and 21% lived in small urban areas (Graham Peters, 2002). The situation for the Aboriginal population is compounded by an increased migration to the city where affordable housing and employment is challenging to access. The presence of Aboriginal people in urban areas is increasing in significant ways. They are entering the urban area seeking better housing, better access to social services, and better employment.

Statistics Canada notes that in 2006 59% of urban Aboriginal people lived in CMAs and 41% of the urban Aboriginal population lived in areas smaller than the CMAs (Statistics Canada, 2008). Affordability and availability of housing is especially poignant and pertinent for the urban Aboriginal population. Their presence is increasing in the urban landscape despite the challenges they face attempting to become part of the communities they are joining. Ideally, their presence should be welcomed like anyone else who chooses to live and participate in the community of Kelowna. However, the presence of urban Aboriginal people is not always welcomed. The oppression and dislocation of Aboriginal people in Canada are significant contextual pieces for the discussion about the struggle with housing that constitutes the research focus of this thesis. What is important to remember when reflecting upon the struggle that Aboriginal people have experienced in Canada is the violence that was done to them. The cultural and physical violence (Hanselmann, 2001; Skelton, 2002; Letkemann, 2004; Razack, 2004) has profound and far-reaching effects on ways of living and choice-making. More to the point, this kind of violence has been both invisible to the dominant white population and effective at keeping Aboriginal people out of the urban

landscape until well after 1960 (Roy, 1989). In the urban landscape, Aboriginal people are made to feel as foreigners, almost as though Aboriginal people are immigrants in their own country. The alienation experienced because of exclusion, violence, and relocation changes the way urban Aboriginal people are able to or even allowed to navigate the urban landscape and access housing.

In 2001 the Kelowna Urban Aboriginal Planning Group (KUAPG) conducted a poll of homeless persons in Kelowna. The KUAPG's poll (2003) found 360 people to be homeless, and of those 360 people, 123 were Aboriginal. Another poll, conducted in April of 2007, revealed that the number of urban Aboriginal homeless people continues to be disproportionately high, at 24% of the population surveyed (PHATCO, 2007). Aboriginal people currently comprise approximately 6% of the urban population in Kelowna (Statistics Canada, 2006). Housing researchers Graham (2001), Porter (2004), and Hulchanski (2004) have recognized that finding adequate and affordable housing is one of the most important steps towards Aboriginal people feeling more a part of the community. Often, urban Aboriginal people are unable to secure long-term housing, either because they are not seeking long-term housing or they lack the income and/or the resources to access housing (Obomsawin, 1988; Skelton.I, 2002). As a result of not having an actual postal address, people are not eligible for social assistance. In addition, an address is needed for acquiring identification and social insurance numbers, both of which are required by most employers. The situation alienates many Aboriginal people from the rest of the population. Housing is an integral component to a sense of belonging and an ability to support oneself and family in a society organised along bureaucratic-rational grounds.

Aboriginal people settling in major Canadian cities frequently encounter obstacles in securing housing in the private rental market (CMHC 1996, 1997, 2002, 2005; Hanselmann, 2001; Skelton, I., 2002). Close to 70% of all Aboriginal people live off reserve, and nearly 51% live in cities and towns (Statistics Canada, Community Profiles, 2001, 2006). In Canada's major urban areas, most of the relatively young Aboriginal population face increasing numbers of challenges, including lack of access to affordable and adequate housing (Obomsawin, 1988; Walker, 2003, 2006).

Policies concerning the funding of shelters and affordable housing, as well as subsidies and support payments for housing, are continually shifting. As Skaburskis and Mok (2000) note, "Governments across North America are eliminating subsidy programs that have been increasing the supply of low-rent housing…[t]he changes have been made without the research on the long-run consequences of withdrawing government support" (p.193). The withdrawal of government support is directly related to the adoption of neoliberal economic policies. Federal and Provincial governments have adopted neoliberalism and shifted to neoliberal politics. The shift from Keynesian economics to Neoliberal economics showed a favouring of free-market systems and deregulation of services and industry (Peck & Tickell, 2002). The Keynesian approach to citizenship as a right in itself has changed to the neoliberal approach to citizenship as a consumption right. In other words, those who are able to pay for citizenship 'goods' are able to be full citizens; those who cannot must put up with only partial citizenship rights (Peck & Tickell, 2002). Advocates of this new system claimed that free trade, flexible labour, and active individualism would change society for the better. As a result of the emphasis on generating economic growth by encouraging competitive markets and entrepreneurial activities (Larner, 2009), several social programs, such as funding for

affordable and subsidized housing, began to dwindle and eventually disappear. Since 1975, the federal and provincial governments have been slowly moving away from providing housing subsidies. The removal of subsidies from rental housing has had a profound effect on low-income individuals and families. Developers have no economic incentive to generate more affordable housing and the subsidized housing that exists is quickly falling into disrepair. This lack of affordable housing and the subsequent lack of subsidies to generate more affordable housing have isolated low-income people from their communities.

By relying on 'the market' to generate social and economic solutions to housing provision, many low-income individuals and families are forced to live without adequate housing; even more insidiously, this reliance displaces the responsibility for solutions. In this respect, Andrejs, Skaburskis, and Mok (2000, p.193) posit that:

> Federal and provincial policy makers appear willing to deceive themselves into believing that markets…can solve the housing problems that are created by poverty. The belief in market-made solutions for social problems is made more attractive by the recognition that poverty is a very expensive problem to fix. The belief is made even more attractive by the wish for an invisible hand that can wave away the problems. At least, wave away the responsibility, the blame and the shame.

Once more, federal policy discourse places the onus on the individual to find a way out of poverty and a subsequent way into affordable housing. In addition, the assumption that federal policy discourse creates is that an individual or family struggling with poverty and housing is at fault for not utilizing the training programs offered. This argument locates fault in the individual and removes responsibility from the community and government policies.

Government programs directed at helping individuals and families change their

housing circumstances make assumptions about people struggling with poverty. Individuals who are viewed as 'hard-to-house' often confront government programs and challenge the assumptions that the program, if used, is curative (Lenk, 2003). Lack of public education about addictions, aging, and sexuality are part of the problem. Many staff members who work within government programs meant to assist people, lack skills or understanding of the broad range of issues that create barriers for 'hard-to-house' individuals. In addition, the creation of community connections for certain types of tenants, such as young people or people with mental illness, is lacking in the programming. Moreover, most of the programs are often defeated by "gaps in the health care support system, and the chronic underfunding of social housing and related services by all levels of governments" (Lenk, 2003, p.3).

Lenk (2003, p.4) suggests "policies within housing programs need to specifically address the stigma and isolation of tenants and seek creative ways to connect them to the community". Lack of training, socio-economic gaps, and persistent underfunding all generate a discourse about people living in poverty, namely that there is something wrong with them (but not with the system). In this way, people who are marginal and struggle with housing affordability become the unspoken foil by which "normal" is defined. Individuals and families with stable incomes and stable housing are considered normal and those with low-wages and unstable housing situations are viewed as abnormal.

The shift in government policy and funding away from affordable rental housing is a trend that has a thirty-year history. By the end of the 1960s, most Canadians were well-housed (Smith, 1983, p.59). Rental housing starts made up 47% of the housing starts in the late 1960s (Smith, 1983, p.60). At the time, governments were interested in fostering housing supply: this changed in the 1970s. New forms of government intervention arose and

the emphasis became about home ownership. The private rental market began to decline as individuals and families tended to buy into the housing market (Smith, 1981, p.340; Hulchanski, 1998, p.247). The introduction of strata title allowing rental properties to be converted into condominiums also contributed to the decline of the rental inventory. Ultimately, beginning in the 1970s, the rental market has been decaying, while the cost of living has continued to rise in relation to incomes, making it more difficult for individuals and families to enter the housing market. When the government was heavily invested in affordable housing, most Canadians experienced adequate housing. If this had not changed in the 1970s, most urban centres would not be facing the challenges they are today. Included in these challenges are the significant challenges minorities and Aboriginal people are faced with in trying to access adequate and affordable housing.

The shift in government attention away from affordable rental housing has had a profound effect on people in communities such as Kelowna. Low-income people are suffering from low wages, inadequate income-assistance, and high housing costs. The impact is significant for single parents because of the obvious limitation of having only one income. The situation for single parents is worsened by other policy shifts that affect their income, most notably in the funding provided through social assistance to single parents. Single parents are considered employable, under social service guidelines, by the time their youngest child turns three years old (Day et al., 2005). In addition, in 2002 "welfare rates for single mothers were reduced for the first time in twenty years" (Day et al., 2005). The result was that now, single parents have the extra burdens of finding daycare and negotiating the complex subsidy rules surrounding daycare provision. If the age limit for subsidy had remained at age seven, a single parent could access the more plentiful and accessible after-

school care system.

As a response to the situation, the Kelowna municipal government attempted to deal with the housing situation. As part of Community Planning Initiatives, the City of Kelowna has created council-appointed and community-based housing committees to address a range of issues. One issue that has been examined is the rezoning of secondary suites in Kelowna. If the city can make it easier for homeowners to convert their homes to have a legal secondary suite, this would open up more rental spaces within the city. Currently, the city has developed "an overlay type of zoning which has the capacity to allow suites through a cheaper, expedited process in nearly all of [their] residential and agricultural zones (Province of British Columbia, 2007). In addition, the City of Kelowna has used its own land and even leased "land at below market rates (Province of British Columbia, 2007).

Another issue that Kelowna has attempted to address is the 'Not in My Back Yard' (NIMBY) syndrome. The city has included policies that "encourage developers to involve the community early in the development application process (Province of British Columbia, 2007). The City of Kelowna conducted an Internet survey about affordable housing to find out "what people can afford, who rents and who can buy" (Smith, 2006). Although **the** effort on the part of the City of Kelowna was admirable, the Internet survey assumed that everyone could easily afford a computer as well as Internet service. Consequently, findings are biased because they tend to exclude low-income parents who cannot afford Internet access. Thus, the survey is limited in making any definitive conclusions about personal housing in Kelowna. Even at the municipal level there are assumptions made about people who are in need of affordable housing. The people who are left out of this survey are the ones who, because of low wages and high rents, have lost their homes, or have never been able to

properly find appropriate housing to begin with.

Discussions about challenges facing low-income housing are necessary because of the North American fascination with attaching particular values to individuals and their homes. Ever since the emphasis has been on assisting people to get into the housing market and become homeowners, social value has been placed on ownership while renting has been disparaged (Smith, 1981). Homeowners are viewed as maintaining the status quo and conforming to hegemonic ideals of gender, class, and family (Perry, 2003). Those who sign up for affordable rental housing are marked as deviant and unable to make proper use of resources (Curley, 2005). Moreover, people who are homeless are often ignored and deemed unable to be part of the greater community (Kawash, 1998). Policy discussions and research into the needs of people in poverty exacerbate the public perception and stigma around the issue of affordability (Curley, 2005). Policy makers and governments assume that people in poverty are not utilizing the programs properly in order to escape poverty (Kawash, 1998). The discourse filters down to the community and municipal level where small efforts are made to help those in poverty and affordable housing, yet the help does not extend enough to actually assess what is happening to prevent people from maintaining and securing affordable housing. If housing was not a privilege, but a right, as Porter (2004) suggests it should be, then perhaps the discourse would look different.

Chapter 3: Spacing and Placing Whiteness

British Columbia must be kept white…
we have the right to say that our own kind and colour shall enjoy the fruits of our labour.

(Richard McBride, 1912 as cited in Roy, 1989, p.229)

3.1 The Embedding of "Whiteness" as Acceptable Social Norm in British Columbia: An Historical Overview

The primary focus of this thesis is the experience of urban Aboriginal women attempting to enter the rental housing market in Kelowna. The emphasis is on the urban Aboriginal experience because I believe that whiteness, the culture of whiteness, continues to exist in Kelowna. For most of the participants of this research, whiteness is the greatest barrier urban Aboriginal women face in the housing market. In the epigraph to this chapter I cited Richard McBride who was the Premier of British Columbia in 1903. His sentiment that "British Columbia must be kept white" was, at the time, the attitude shared by early white settlers of British Columbia. This sentiment set the course for the white Canadians' reaction toward outsiders who were not of white European ancestry (Roy, 1989).

Various non-white immigrant groups suffered multiple offences based on their skin colour. For instance, Chinese and Japanese men, who were brought in as cheap labour, were challenged by the continual opposition to their wanting to bring their spouses to British Columbia and to their attempting to settle in the province. In addition, during World War Two, many of the Japanese in British Columbia were sent to internment camps, despite being Canadian citizens (Royal BC Museum, 2002). Finally, Aboriginal people were moved to reserves and a pass system was put into place that prevented them from entering urban centres and/or accessing the same resources as other British Columbians (Harris, 1997; Roy,

1989). These are just three examples of how space in British Columbia was made and maintained as white space. Over time, British Columbia has become an ethnically diverse province, yet there continues to be a resistance to the presence of non-white people.

This chapter examines the nature of whiteness, the establishment of whiteness, and the ways in which whiteness has been, and continues to be, maintained in Kelowna. The foundational thesis in this examination is that while the establishment of whiteness may have been deliberate, the continued maintenance of white culture is an unconscious practice. Many in the community simply accept the assumptions of white superiority and values as natural. However, I believe that the maintenance of white culture is not maliciously motivated, instead it is an unconscious and normalized perception of how life is lived in the urban centre of Kelowna, British Columbia. It is precisely this ingrained bias that creates difficulty for those who are not white to live "normal" lives within this community.

3.2 White is More Than a Colour: The Political and Social Ramifications of White Culture

Whiteness is more than appearance; whiteness is an attribute of Canadian culture that complicates knowledge of biology, culture, and social distinctions (Bonnett, 2005). The social impacts of the cultural and social distinctions of whiteness are that being white is taken-for-granted and that whiteness is often not recognized as a racial categorization. This privileged view afforded white people did not happen overnight, the process is rooted in historical events (Suchet, 2007). In British Columbia, this history can be traced back to the early settlement of the province (Barman, 1996; Harris, 1997, 2002; Roy, 1989). Early British Columbian white settlers faced the challenge of securing an identity that reflected their values within the landscape. The assertion by McBride, that "British Columbia must be

kept white" arose from white settlers' fears that they would not be able to establish a 'familiar' white way of living in the midst of increasing Asian immigration (Roy, 1989, p.229). Racism was endemic among white settlers, who felt they were superior. Fear of loss of their privileged position of whiteness was thus a context in which white racism was expressed. Historians (e.g., Huttenback, 1976; Ward, 1978) posit that white British settlers considered their race superior to other races, primarily non-white cultures. The superiority that white British settlers felt enabled a sense of entitlement. Non-white cultures were viewed as a threat to the building of white settlement in British Columbia.

Establishing a dominant white culture affects the way that non-white people and cultures experience living in British Columbia. When a non-white person is valued only for his/her labour, that individual will experience a profound sense of marginalization. Many of the research participants attributed their feeling of being excluded from what one called 'mainstream' society. Some were frustrated that they were not able to conform to the demands of the white mainstream culture; others stressed their unwillingness to relinquish their culture in order to conform to 'mainstream' values.

I am an Aboriginal person who appears to be white; I pass as a white person. This poses a host of ethical and philosophical concerns for me, many of which are too complex for me to review here. Suffice it to say that because of my appearance as an apparently white researcher, there are particular considerations I have to address about my position and the power relationships I enter with respect to my research. Because of my appearance and my position as a researcher affiliated with a large university, my relationship with my participants is not an equal relationship[4]. Although, I am explicit about my undertaking of

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[4] My family background is Aboriginal, however, my appearance is white, therefore I will never fully understand the ways in which my 'colour' or 'appearance' privilege the 'quality' or 'condition' of my life. I will never be subjected to the kinds of

researching whiteness and the impact that whiteness has on urban Aboriginal women's

experience in the housing market in Kelowna, I am not removed from responsibility of white

privilege and the implications this privilege has in relation to ongoing colonialism. My

positionality affects the outcome of my research and I must be cognizant of my white

privilege. Peggy McIntosh (1988) helps remind me of my privilege when she notes that it is

important to think about her position as a white researcher and how that privileged her and

her work. McIntosh (1988) "think[s] whites are carefully taught not to recognize white

privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege". As a result of this lack of

critical reflection, McIntosh chose a task to uncover the ways in which being white afforded

her particular taken-for-granted privileges. She articulated fifty ways in which her white

status afforded her particular kinds of privilege, though she is rarely, if ever, forced to reflect

upon her identity as white. McIntosh concluded that she is free to consider her daily activities

as having no relationship to the colour of her skin; whereas, visible minorities are continually

confronted with barriers that have a direct relationship to the colour of their skin.

The colour of skin becomes a way of determining who belongs to the dominant

culture and who does not. The visibility of skin colour of an individual or a group has

significant implications in regards to a sense of entitlement and use of land. This kind of

delineation has impacts on the way space and place are imagined and used. Space making

becomes entrenched in the national heritage story of white settler societies (Razack, 2004).

Researchers have defined white settler societies as the establishment of "European [states] on

non-European soil" (Razack, 2004, p.1). In their effort to colonize the land, Europeans

systematically disposed of indigenous populations (Harris, 2002; Roy, 1989). As time passes,

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discrimination or violence that people who are not-white are subjected to. My colour or lack of colour automatically changes
my experiences in my culture, before my ability or personality is even addressed.

a social hierarchy structured by racial terms is fostered. White settler societies are also characterized by their national myths, which claim white people came first and they are responsible for the development of the land. Indigenous people and their culture are often framed as non-existent (through the trope of *terra nullius* or 'empty lands'), dead, or assimilated (Razack, 2004). It is through the national myth of settlement that settlers "become the original inhabitants and the group most entitled to the fruits of citizenship" (Razack, p.2).

Whiteness has a long and established history, one that is implicitly written into the imperial and colonial efforts of European exploration and settlement. Much of the recorded history concerns dates, places, and the ways in which place and space were conquered, or, in other words, how white people conquered non-white people. I use the term 'conquered' loosely because, in many cases, 'conquering' was the result of famine and/or disease, which made it easy for colonists to (re)settle[5] lands in the image of Europe. In addition, much of the 'conquering' was (re)told as settlement and exploration efforts by the colonizers. As a result of the national story of conquering and settling an unsettled land, the immigrant population naturalized ideas and paradigms that valued the attribute of being white without ever acknowledging whiteness. It is important, however, to recognize the power of whiteness. As Frankenburg (1993) points out, "[w]hite people are "raced," just as men are "gendered." And in a social context where white people have too often viewed themselves as non-racial or racially neutral, it is crucial to look at the "racialness" of white experience" (p.1). The 'white experience' is indirectly spoken about through historical stories of (re)settlement. The

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[5] Drawing on Cole Harris (1997) I use the word '(re)settle' because the land was already settled by First Peoples. In a failure to adequately interrogate their own terminology, much of the historical literature implicitly suggests that settlement began when Europeans arrived, especially in North America, Australia and New Zealand. This is because they never refer to indigenous settlement as 'settlement', but instead use this term exclusively to refer to European (and other forms of) settlement.

experience is not racialized as white. Yet, groups that share historical perspectives with the 'white experience' such as the Chinese, Japanese and Aboriginal are frequently raced. As a result of the not talking about the (re)settlement as a white racial settlement, white people remain invisible as a group.

An unconscious privilege is conferred upon those who appear white, in a similar fashion as male authority is privileged (McIntosh, 1988; Frankenburg, 1993; Razack, 2004). Even within the category of white, there are groups who appear white, but who are considered apart from 'appropriate' white culture. For example, the term 'white trash' is one of the categories that are considered less than desirable among white culture. 'White trash' serves to reinforce (middle) classed values of whiteness at the expense of people of lower socio-economic status. Whiteness is two-sided in its exclusionary practices: first, appearance is integral to a sense of a belonging and second, entitlement and class position create hierarchies within whiteness.

Scholars who attempt to illustrate the ways that whiteness privileges, challenge entitlement and hierarchies (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; McIntosh, 1988; Dalton, 2002; Sefa Dei et al., 2004; Winant, 2004; Bonnet, 2005). One scholar in particular, Peggy McIntosh (1988), lists the ways in which she notes the colour of her skin affords her particular privileges not conferred upon people who are non-white. She is able to see media and entertainment filled with people of her own race. When stories of her national history are told, she can be guaranteed she will see and hear stories of people of her own race making history. She is confident when she goes shopping she will not be harassed or followed based on her skin colour. In addition, she can be assured if she needs legal or medical help, the colour of her skin will not affect the way she will be treated. McIntosh lists the various ways

that her skin colour allows her to do certain activities or have access to certain resources that she takes for granted and that others, who are not-white, cannot take for granted.

McIntosh illustrates convincingly the ways in which whiteness is the assumed template for normal behaviour and status. She demonstrates how privilege is invisible to most white people and that a conscious effort is needed to see how whiteness privileges. Reflection is difficult because whiteness is the silent, omnipresent, and tacit norm. Melanie Suchet (2007, p.3) states: "Whiteness dominates through normalizing itself and constantly mutates while always maintaining supremacy … white power reproduces itself and can never be separated from privilege". The mutations Suchet refers to arise in relation to the notion that white people are 'just' people. The assumptions that can be derived from the sentiment among whites that white people are 'just' people, is that people of other colours are not 'regular' people, they are something else, something out of the ordinary. Dyer (1997) further elaborates that "[in] their placing [white] as norm they seem not to be represented to themselves as whites but as people who are variously gendered, classed, sexualized and abled…they're just the human race" (p.3). So not only is whiteness continually (re)produced through media, popular entertainment, literature, institutions, and public discourse, there is also a resistance to acknowledging whiteness as a racial category. Instead there appears to be a motivation to maintain the notion that white people are like everyone else. Post-colonial theorists are working toward unpacking and unravelling the self-ascribed power of whiteness. Frantz Fanon's two books *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) are examples of initial research and discussion that sparked what is now referred to as Postcolonial Studies. This research and discussion began exploring literature about the ways in which the 'other' is often exoticised,

catergorised, and historicised in the imagination of Westerners. Fanon and Said present arguments that unpack practices, especially colonial practices, that continually (re)inforce the superiority of 'us' and the inferiority of 'them'.

Postcolonial discourse, however, is relatively new and remains within the academic realm. Of particular interest to me is that postcolonial discourse and research addresses the way in which research has been conducted in the past, as well as current studies of marginalized groups. The discourse reveals how these research endeavours continue to (re)enforce colonial efforts of organizing and categorizing ways of knowing and doing that fit a white European model of thinking. As Berg (Scaling Knowledge, 2004, pp.553-554) posits, "my own work is sometimes riddled with the contradictions of my relatively privileged position in academe and my inability to fully understand and acknowledge such privilege" (pp.553-554).

A number of researchers (e.g., Berg, 2004; Berg and Kearns, 1997; Bhabba, 1984; Chakrabarty, 1992; Gregory, 2004; Spivak, 1985) are attempting to address the scaling of knowledge within academic discourse. All too often North America and Europe are used as an unacknowledged point of reference when attempting to speak of other cultures and ethnicities. This practice produces a narrative whereby the West is the source of 'real' knowledge. Scholars are attempting to contest this particular power relationship in knowledge-production, as it reinforces the colonial practices that are often being critiqued in Postcolonial Studies and Cultural Studies. As a person of Aboriginal identity who passes for white, I am challenged to remember my position as I examine how whiteness affects the experiences of urban Aboriginal women seeking housing in Kelowna.

3.3 Making Space White: An Examination of Kelowna's Development as a White Culture

I am seeking to understand how Kelowna has come to be read as a 'white' landscape in order to better understand the experiences of urban Aboriginal women and housing market discrimination in Kelowna. In addition, through my education and my sensitivity to Aboriginal issues, I have learned to see how particular landscapes can come to be read as 'white'. An important piece of my research is the attempt to understand how Canadian cities came to have particular models for urban development and how those models for development influence the way urban Kelowna has developed and is developing.

Interestingly, very few scholars have written about the Okanagan region. However, researchers at the University of British Columbia have now begun to comment on how space is used and interpreted in the Okanagan. Luis Aguiar and colleagues (2005) have begun a discussion about how the space in Kelowna has developed as a white space and the nature of the city's characteristic whiteness:

> The history of the Okanagan is of making space white. From the beginning stages of colonisation, white British and Scots 'settled' in the area and recruited fellow country men to join them in reproducing an enclave of the British Empire here…[t]here is then, the history of Kelowna, a conscious attempt to make space white. Today, this marking of white space is as overt even if communicated through different outlets. Whiteness is arrogantly depicted in the publicity, promotions, media and rhetoric of place marketing of Kelowna (Aguiar, et al., 2005, p.131).

As researchers with the University of British Columbia turn their focus to Kelowna and the development of the area, there is a consensus that Kelowna is consistently publicized and portrayed as a white playground. The portrayal of Kelowna as a 'white playground' connotes

that Kelowna was always white. However, Kelowna did not begin as a white community; as Aguair, et al., (2005) assert, Kelowna was 'made' white. The making was accomplished through careful depictions of a white settler history that grew into successful agricultural development, which is maintained by white culture, and finally, Kelowna is, more often than not, portrayed as a 'playground' for white activities.

Kelowna essentially has been packaged and marketed in such a way as to invite people with similar histories and appearances (Aguiar et al., 2005). The City of Kelowna effectively has been marketed/branded for consumption by people who seek 'sameness' and 'familiarity'. These people are "people and business sharing a 'white' identity, from high-tech specialists, to 'family-oriented people, to retirees" (Aguiar et al., p.124). In turn, this kind of marketing has had an impact on the way people who are not-white feel able to use or identify with the same landscape. Urban Aboriginal people are not reflected in the promotion of Kelowna. Therefore, they do not feel invited to use the space in the same way that white people are invited to use the space.

The early focus of settlement in Canada was to find and create a space where settlers could feel at 'home' with their own kind— Kelowna and the Okanagan region resembled topographically the European landscape—which happened to be other settlers of mostly British background. In itself, this settlement pattern is not an uncharacteristic desire and it is widely practiced all over the world. As Peter Ennals and Deryck Holdsworth explain, "[t]he European encounter with Canada was driven by a desire to harness a varying set of natural resources needed for European sustenance and manufacture, and by a wish to colonize territory and settle population as part of an expansion of European society into the New World" (1998, p.3). Although the population and the circumstances have changed over the

years, settler communities continue to maintain power relations that are no longer uncontested in current conditions – especially as the population grows and becomes more diverse, not only ethnically but culturally as well.

The primary economic focus of the fledgling township was cattle, but quickly changed to agriculture, beginning with tobacco production, which shifted into a highly successful orchard industry producing primarily cherries and apples. Presently, the city and surrounding area have a prolific portfolio of venues, events, and businesses that attract attention from all over the world. Kelowna is in the centre of the Okanagan region and has become the focal point for economic and tourism activity in the Okanagan. On the surface, Kelowna sounds like a paradise nestled in a valley with lakes and mountains, yet there is a hegemonic quality about the social environment in Kelowna that prohibits particular groups from ever feeling 'at home'.

As Sharon Dale Stone (2001) observes, "Kelowna has a reputation of being a conservative place intolerant of difference; it is in the middle of an area widely regarded as both the "bible belt" and fertile ground for the spread of white supremacist ideology" (p.60). What is most notable about the city of Kelowna is the lack of diversity in the population, a lack of diversity that is a direct result of (and contribution to) the city's hegemonically white character. In the 2006 Kelowna Community Profile, the percentage of visible minorities was 6%; whereas, for British Columbia the figure was 22% (Government of British Columbia, 2006). Several historical factors account for the lack of ethnic diversity. The more notable reasons are that Kelowna is not a port city and is not significant enough in size to support services for newly arriving immigrants. In addition, the migration of diverse ethnic groups to the area was initially limited. The Royal British Columbian Museum (RBCM), in its project

titled "The Living Landscapes" (2002), notes that in the early settlement of the interior of the province there were "British settlers and five ethnic groups:

- First Nations people (1880s - early 1900s and 1940s to 1960s),

- Chinese (late 1800s to 1930s),

- Japanese (1942 - late 1940s),

- Doukhobor (early 1930s - late 1950s),

- Portuguese (1955 - early 1960s)"

The ethnic groups were primarily used as labour (RBCM, 2002), yet there is little acknowledgement of their participation in the building of British Columbia. In fact, in British Columbia, blatant racism during World War II led to both the displacement of Japanese people from the coast and their internment in camps in the interior of British Columbia.

In early British Columbian history, a large number of British[6] created an enclave of sorts in the valley (Barman, 1996). Generally, across the Okanagan there were enclaves of middle-class British people, interspersed with Scottish, Swedish, and French-Canadian people (Barman, 1996; Ennals and Holdsworth., 1998; Aguiar et al., 2005). By 1921, over 60% of the population in British Columbia were from Britain or its colonial possessions. This translated into one in three British-born citizens in the non-native population (Barman, 1996). Very quickly, the population of British Columbia became a majority of white people. The British quickly asserted their dominance by (re)creating "class-based institutions, ranging from social clubs to private schools based on the British model" (Barman, 1996, p. 140). The British enclave provided support to the population in agriculture efforts of the region. In this way the British settlers were able to (re)create the Okanagan landscape in an image they were

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[6] One out of every three white persons in British Columbia was British - a proportion far higher than anywhere else in Canada (Barman, 1981, p. 612)

accustomed to, with neighbours who were from the same background and harboured the same sympathies. The relationship with (re)creating the landscape into a familiar homeland transformed into an investment in the landscape culturally. This resulted in both the eventual exclusion of existing populations of those who were non-British, such as the Aboriginal, Chinese, and Sikh populations, and the explicit prevention of others from moving to Kelowna.

3.4 Architecture and the Home: Reflections of White Culture and Identity

In terms of social and cultural reproduction, the home is embedded in the fabric of Western cultural identity and the successful (re)production of that identity. "Rather than view the home as a private space that remains separate and distinct from public politics research has shown that the home itself is intensely political, both in its internal intimacies and through its interfaces with the wider world" (Blunt, 2005, p.510). Indeed, as I noted in chapter two, the body and ideologies a person holds come to be read through the type of housing one lives in. Values and ideologies are represented through architecture.

For early settlers in British Columbia, the landscape offered a place to (re)produce their idea of home. British Columbia was a template for

> a contingent of ex-British Indian Army types in the ranching community, and they also sought to replicate a life of leisure and privilege on the other side of the mountains. Ranching ventures in the Cariboo, orchards in the Okanagan and Kootenays, and hobby farming on Vancouver Island, all were opportunities to act out life as landed gentry in British Columbia (Ennals & Holdsworth., 1998, p. 162).

Orchards were a particular draw to early settlers to the Okanagan. As knowledge of success

in the orchard industry spread, more British settlers came to the Okanagan and ultimately settled in the area, building homes and orchards. The architecture of Early Kelowna demonstrates an attempt to (re)produce the homeland in the new country. There are many local examples of this attempt at (re)production in downtown Kelowna. For example, on Abbott Street, houses are rich with designs from the Arts and Crafts movement, steep peaked gables of the Gothic Revival, beam works of Tudor Revival and late Victorian homes featuring hip and gable dormers (Re/Max, 2005). Laurier Avenue also is rich with homes that model various 'English' fashions in architecture. The churches in the city also contain an old world style. For instance, churches such as St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Benvoulin Heritage Church, and the Cathedral Church of St. Michael and All Angels reflect a pan-English architecture (Re/Max, 2005).

The persistent homogeneity of the white culture does not stop with bringing architectural influences from Europe, it continues to be reinforced through mass production of large homes and two door garages. As Friedman (2005) notes, "[c]hanges in production and distribution of building products have also contributed to homogeneity. Doors, windows, exterior cladding, and roofing products are now manufactured by multi-national corporations that market identical items nationally and even internationally" (p.16). Newer neighbourhoods in Kelowna have a sameness in their housing design, where every house on any given avenue or street looks the same as the next, with only minor variations such as where the garage is located or how the windows are styled. In terms of perception of space, Kelowna's architectural spaces are homogenous in appearance, and it is not a stretch to argue that this homogeneity extends to occupants of houses too. Indeed, I argue that the city as an institution has an aversion to diversity and is complicit with conforming to white values and

norms.

3.5 No Home Like a White Home: An Examination of the Exclusionary Consequences of Kelowna's White Homogenous Landscape

Statistically speaking, the population of Kelowna is homogenous. The 2006 Community Profile indicates that only 6,520 people are 'visible minorities' (an awkward term that I will change to 'minoritised people' in order to reflect the constructed character of 'minority' as a category). This represents 6% of the population in Kelowna (Statistics Canada, 2006). The development and advertisement of the area is decided by and aimed toward white people of European background. The landscape of Kelowna is easily read as 'white' through the architecture, the historical naming of streets, and the amenities. Several mainstream areas in Kelowna, such as Abbot Street, the Waterfront, the Cultural District, and the downtown core, demonstrate a celebration of the European settlement of the valley. The architecture of Kelowna is not strikingly different from any other midsized Canadian city, and there is little diversity.

Gated communities are another example of diminishing diversity, as they are visibly exclusionary by virtue of their walls and locked gates. In the Glenmore suburb of Kelowna there is a proliferation of gated communities that cater to 'adult living'. The idea behind the gated communities is to keep the residents in and to keep the deviant population out (Aguiar et al., 2005). In an effort to create community, the gated communities have effectively created exclusionary communities that take up large tracts of land, place a significant strain on the city's resources, and provide a false sense of security. Simply, gated communities are yet another visible demonstration of a community that wishes to be isolated from 'others'.

As part of an infilling movement in Kelowna's urban development, there are

condominiums and apartment developments being generated. Mira Vista, The Gate, Centuria Urban Village, and The Cannery Lofts, just to mention a few, are all new developments in Kelowna that are part of the infilling movement. There are elements of the developments that demonstrate a not-so-subtle form of exclusion. The critical point about the mobilization of these developments is in the way they are advertised and the population that is being solicited to live in these developments. Their promotional websites feature white people living carefree and seemingly happy lives. Age ranges do fluctuate; however, it is clear that the people in the advertising are in the middle to upper class income bracket. Maravista, for example, advertises a lifestyle that appeals to the baby boomer generation, complete with golf, cycling, scenery, and a caption that says, "Own the view. Live the experience" and "A reflection of your life made richer" (http://miravistakelowna.com/).

Inherent in the advertising is a colonial understanding of owning the land and owning the view. According to the advertisements, Kelowna is an ideal location to act out white Eurocentric colonial ideals. Many of the new developments in Kelowna rely heavily on ideas of affluence and ownership of the natural landscape. For example, the advertisement for Yaletown appeals to a younger generation, an urban generation. Yaletown announces its motto – "Your life. Your way. Your town" – coupled with images of young white people living affluent lifestyles. The advertisement is exclusionary — seemingly inviting young white couples to live in their condominiums and make Kelowna a place that is theirs—free from diversity. Nowhere in any of the websites for any of the new developments is there a display of diversity (outside of age); every location apparently seeks white affluent couples who want to be owners and live in a town of their making.

Street names also serve as markers of identity of a community; in Kelowna the street

names recognize early white settlers. There is significant literature on the cultural politics of naming both cities and streets that draws attention to how 'places of memory' are constructed (Azaryah, 1996; Schein, 1997; Dwyer, 2000; Alderman, 2002, 2003; Berg L. and Kearns R., 2002; Till, 2003; Rose-Redwood, 2008). The street names, especially the more recognized designations, such as Abbott Street, Aberdeen Street, Benvoulin Road, Bernard Avenue, Ellis Street, and Pandosy Street all honour early settlers and their contributions to the development of Kelowna. All of them were white and successful entrepreneurs who emigrated from Europe (Barman, 1996). The street names are incorporated into everyday life and are a taken-for-granted part of navigating the urban centre of Kelowna. They serve as a strategy that determines how the past is thought of by the population in Kelowna (Till, 2003; Rose-Redwood, 2008). Yet, both the city's name and the region's name are derived from the local Aboriginal nation—the Okanagan. There are no streets or avenues that reflect the facts that a large population of Aboriginal people lived here before Kelowna was settled by white Europeans and that Aboriginal people were part of helping agriculture in Kelowna become successful. Effectively, the Okanagan people and their contributions to the space that is named Kelowna is rendered silent. The social exclusion of the Okanagan people is achieved in part through historical narratives that are reified and legitimized through hegemonic discourses of public remembrance (Schein, 1997; Dwyer, 2000; Rose-Redwood, 2008). The street names, instead of numbers, demonstrate "whose conception of the past should prevail in the public realm". (Till, 2003, p.290). For a person new to Kelowna, there is little evidence of the diverse population that was in the region during the settlement and growth of Kelowna. Because of the lack of attention to the diverse population that helped settle Kelowna, a sense of fragmentation is reinforced.

3.6 Continued Exclusion of Non-White Values and Identity in Kelowna

Kelowna, like most Canadian cities, is a fragmented community. Several neighbourhoods have their own distinct identity, and those identities act upon the social relations within and outside of those neighbourhoods. The identity politics of neighbourhoods and communities can act as a form of social exclusion for individuals who do not share the same identity. A notable neighbourhood in Kelowna is Kettle Valley, which reproduces values that reinforce whiteness. Kettle Valley is a suburb of Kelowna. Until recently, public transportation to this suburb was very limited. The importance of this edge community is the demonstrable desire to live outside a 'dangerous' city and live in a location that promotes particular upper middle class values. The slogan for Kettle Valley is, "Where you want to live, how you want to live" (http://www.kettlevalley.com/). Kettle Valley rests at the city's edge and is exclusive in terms of housing prices and in terms of access to services within the greater community of Kelowna. A large number of the homes are uniform in design and take their shape from historically popular designs, which are labeled as "neotraditional", such as Victorian, Colonial, Tudor, and Craftsman Designs. The shape of the neighbourhood is an attempt by Kettle Valley planners to isolate and identify with a return to a time and lifestyle that was simpler and safer. Ultimately, what has been produced is "low density suburbs on the outskirts of cities…regarded as the ultimate living experience where one could raise children, isolate himself or herself from the urban environment of the workplace and also establish a social status" (Momer, 1998, p.74).

Designed for homogeneity, the community in Kettle Valley speaks loudly to whom and what is welcome to share in "neotraditional" living. Kettle Valley is celebrated because

of its structure and its aim to be a 'family-centred' neighbourhood where homeowners can return to a time when neighbourhoods were safe. Modern technology allows the neighbourhoods to achieve these goals; live video cameras were once set up throughout the neighbourhood and residents could point and click at any time of the day from any location in the world and see what was happening in their neighbourhood. In truth, an argument can be made that the cameras are surveillance for unwanted or deviant traffic in the community, and not so much about watching children play soccer in the nearby field.

Kelowna's shopping centres and grocery stores also cater to the reproduction of whiteness. The city is host to a proliferation of 'big box' chains and franchises, such as Wal-Mart, Home Sense, Rona, and Urban Outfitters.[7] Most of the products sold in these stores are mass-produced to meet the needs of the mainstream consumer. There is little diversity in clothing stores or food sources. The argument can be made that there is not enough of a diverse population to produce demand for a diverse shopping experience. The lack of a diverse population may be partly a result of the lack of diverse shopping choices. There are few options for other ethnic minorities in terms of locating cultural specific needs that fit their lifestyles. As a result, there is an unspoken sense of exclusion, in Kelowna, of ethnic minorities.

Certainly, other factors that are not racially or class driven discourage different populations from settling in Kelowna. Kelowna is not a port city and does not have all the services that are necessary for a port city to work, such as language and cultural services. In addition, the cost of living in Kelowna is high, and for a first time homebuyer, the prices of homes are steep and daunting. Furthermore, if one is seeking to rent a home in Kelowna, the

vacancy rate is very low, sitting at 0.4% (City of Kelowna, 2005-6) for almost three years. Affording and finding housing in Kelowna is difficult regardless of ethnic or class background. As I have discussed, however, there are strong landscape indications that the preferable ethnic background is white, European, and from the middle to upper class (Barman, 1996). The selected parts of history that went into creating Kelowna as an urban space filled with tourism opportunities are certainly selective and leaning more toward the telling of how the British 'tamed' the area. Kelowna has been effectively marketed through a selective history, a "history" that is not the whole picture, and only shares one particular viewpoint of settlement (Aguiar et al., 2005). Until marketers of Kelowna choose to include a more complete portrayal of the development of Kelowna, there is little chance for an increase in diversity.

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[7] These types of businesses tend to pay minimum wages and do little to offer wage bonuses, increases, incentives or benefits. As discussed in the chapter on housing and affordability, this practice has a significant impact on an employee's ability to live in Kelowna.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

My research focuses primarily on the practices urban Aboriginal women use in seeking housing in Kelowna. The rationale for this focus is based on Simonsen's belief that "lived experience and social practice is … intrinsically corporeal" (2003, p.63). Where these women seek housing, how they approach potential landlords, and how they integrate into a neighbourhood are have a strong relationship to how their bodies are perceived. The perception of their bodies also shares a relationship with where and how the women feel safe and accepted. Because they are gendered, their bodies are not only marked with the physical appearance of being different-from-white, they are also inscribed by hegemonic ideas of sexuality and gender. In essentialist ways their movement in the city of Kelowna is limited by hegemonic white ideas about the female Aboriginal body and where the body belongs; these kinds of bodily constructions of race and gender have a profound effect on how people access services in Kelowna, including housing.

4.2 Overview of Research Concepts Informing the Development of this Thesis

Practice analysis as understood through Simonsens's (2003) work is the primary research concept underlying this research project. Practice analysis requires the researcher to focus attention on embodied or practical knowledge and how this knowledge is acted upon in everyday lives. This approach "makes the body a metaphor for studies that consider difference" (p.157). This is part of thinking in terms of spatial scales, "starting from the body

as 'the geography closest in' and reaching out from there to other scales of social life"
(p.158). The body is the closest to the individual's experiences. Experiences do not happen in
a vacuum and are comprised of a series of events that are experienced bodily. Practice
analysis traces the emotions and experiences of an individual in order to demonstrate how
identity is affected through a myriad of human interactions. This form of analysis
acknowledges not only that the body is central to the experience of the individual, but also
that his/her experiences are informed by daily taken-for-granted activities. Even though the
daily taken-for-granted activities appear mundane, practice analysis maintains that these
daily activities are in fact a way of identifying difference and the effects of difference upon
individuals. Socio-economic status, ethnic background, family composition, and gender are
some of the ways that difference is identified through practices, in relation to accessing
housing.

This research project examines the experiences of twelve Aboriginal women in their
efforts to secure rental housing. The choices these women make in their housing search, such
as where to seek housing, methods of seeking housing, and their sense of the community they
are seeking housing in may appear like strategies that the average person uses in their
housing search. The choices made by the women are in fact evidence of how they have
modified their lives and sense of self according to their sense of belonging and security in the
community of Kelowna.

Narrative Inquiry (NI) as a method is best suited as a means of analyzing the
embodied experience. Narrative knowledge captures the emotion of the moment being
described—the experience (Chase, 2004). This complements Simonsen's practice analysis.
NI is not only concerned with the language or the text as it is usually employed, it is also

concerned with the reading of the body and the landscape through experiential confessions (Chase, 2004; Riley, T. & Hawe, P., 2005). The NI method attempts to discover life histories and lived experiences through multiple forms of discourse (Chase, 2004; Riley, T. & Hawe, P., 2005).

For my research, I determined NI to be the method best suited for assessing the experiences of the participants because my investigation was primarily concerned with how whiteness, as a set of social-spatial structures, affects the experience. The experience of urban Aboriginal women in the housing market in Kelowna is what I seek to unpack; part of unpacking and trying to understand the experience is acknowledging that the body is an integral part of an individual's experience. For this research, the application of both NI and practice analysis is grounded in the sense that the remembered experiences, the story of the remembered experiences, are bodily narratives that are intimately linked.

I am also concerned with themes found in the narratives my participants shared with me. Based on my literature reviews, I was aware of the scope of themes that could potentially arise, such as exclusion, racism, poverty and gender. However, as discussed in chapter five and chapter six, the two main themes that surfaced during my interviews with the participants were those concerning identity and surveillance. Included in these themes were discussions about exclusion, racism, poverty and gender, which were interlocked with issues of identity and surveillance. The themes, identity and surveillance were evident in the language the participants used to describe their experiences with housing in Kelowna. According to Simonsen, "[s]ignificance/meaning is constituted by the use of language, and being a language user is always connected to a practice and to a specific situation that in some sense has to be taken as given" (2003, p.162). Language is integral to this research, as language is

the primary tool humans use to order and describe their environment. The language used to describe environment is culturally bound. The culture a person belongs to provides the language sets for that person to identify him/herself and the environment he/she is in. A conversation is the way we learn about other people, their experiences and the world they live in (Kvale, 1996). The conversations with the participants revealed how they feel that their identity is negatively affected by discrimination and the lack of affordable housing. The participants' use of language also illustrated their feelings about surveillance and how those feelings have subsequently affected their behaviours and activities.

Rose (1993) states that "[d]iscourses intersect so that certain identities are constituted as both more powerful and more valuable than others; thus, in the current dominant culture of the West, a white bourgeois heterosexual man is valued over a black working-class lesbian woman" (p.6). Rose's thesis is at the heart of what I am trying to understand regarding my participants' experience in the housing market in Kelowna. Her analysis, among those of many other prominent whiteness scholars, demonstrates that whiteness has a particular identity that has more value than a non-white person's identity. The emphasis on whiteness as a preferred value furthers my understanding of access and barrier issues facing non-white people in rental housing, especially in Kelowna.

Rose's thesis also helped me to understand as a researcher what I needed to focus on when speaking with my participants. Some examples of the questions that I needed to ask included: What do the residents of Kelowna use as the predominant language when talking of affordable housing? How does this language shape understandings of access to housing? A discourse analysis provides me with insight into the language that is available to describe affordable housing in Kelowna. In addition, the language the participants used helped me

identify the barriers they faced while attempting to access affordable housing.

In addition to language, I am also interested in structures, the same kinds of structures that Hilary Winchester identifies as constraining "individuals and enabl[ing] certain behaviours" (2005, p.5). She argues that "in some circumstances individuals … have the capacity to break rather than reproduce the mould" (2005, p.5). So rather than conform to the constraints there are some individuals who are able to see the flaw in the structures that produce constraints and challenge the system that is otherwise prohibitive. The constraining structures within my research are related to access to the rental market in Kelowna. Constraints such as socio-economic factors have the potential to produce situations where the women attempting to enter the rental market will devise strategies that will allow them to "break rather than reproduce the mould" (2005, p.5).

A discourse analysis becomes a way to understand the systems in place that maintain particular cultural structures. These systems have influence or place rules of conduct on people, animals, plants, events, and even places that make them appear natural when, in fact, the conduct is socially constructed. The artifice is never fully acknowledged; instead the origin of the system that emphasizes structural control is not recognized in the mainstream collective imagination (Wait, 2005, pp.164-165). The examination of my participants' discourse and experiences revealed that they suffered from the normalization of particular behaviours within the hegemonic white community.

Relationships of inequality are free from challenge in the absence of the ability to recognize social structures that constitute unequal power relations. In this absence racism, exclusion, and violence will continue to exist. In this way, marginalized groups continue to suffer at the hands of those who maintain long-held beliefs and practices, who sincerely

believe that because "this is the way it has always been done," it is the way it should always be done.

The participants' narratives reveal how meaning is always a matter of perception and not about some external absolute reality. The intent of this research is not to measure, but rather to understand the experience of securing adequate housing in Kelowna. The participants of this study and the way they articulate their experiences are integral to understanding how whiteness is affecting their access to housing. I accessed this by asking the participants to reflect on their experiences in previous rental housing situations in the community and to convey to me their knowledge of how that affected their housing search. In this way narrative is a reflective tool, a means of looking back and framing a story around events. Chase describes (2004),

> "[n]arrative [as] retrospective meaning making—the sharing or ordering of past experience. Narrative is a way of understanding one's own and others' actions, of organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, and of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time" (Chase, p.656).

It is the 'meaning-making,' the 'understanding', the 'connecting,' that I am interested in elucidating with this research. Landscape and culture are integral to how meaning is made, and how the urban environment is used and thought of in the dominant community. The perception or meaning of the landscape for the dominant community shapes the experiences of marginalized people, as the former group is viewed as having a 'right' to the experience; whereas the marginalized group is viewed as having to earn the 'right' to the experience. This perception regarding rights to experience demonstrates a relationship between culture and landscape that sustains a hegemony.

My interest and preoccupation with landscape stems from a line of reasoning that culture and the landscape are mutually constitutive, both acting upon and reinforcing each other. Landscape reflects the values of the hegemonic classes (Nash, 1999). As a result, the disadvantaged are forced to navigate and integrate into a landscape that does not primarily reflect their values or needs. "Landscape serves not only to reflect societal structures but also to reify them, in other words it sets them in concrete and make[s] them real…[i]f social hierarchies are embodied in bricks and mortar, not only do they become real, they become accepted as part of everyday life and as part of the natural order" (Winchester, 1992, p.141). As a result of the built environment being naturalized, an imprint is left on the way culture and citizens organize and routinize their daily lives. Edmund Bacon (1974) stresses that "[t]he purpose of a design is to affect the people who use it, and in an architectural composition this effect is a continuous, unbroken flow of impressions that assault their sense as they move through it." (p. 20).

Cities are designed in accord with hegemonic social relations. Kelowna is designed primarily with the automobile in mind, then with wealthy people in mind, then with middle class people in mind, and lastly, with the poor in mind. Since most citizens assume that the city is designed with (a generic) 'the people' in mind, they do not dwell so much on why particular venues are located in certain places in the city. Although there is an ability to identify good parts or bad parts of the city, as well as where services are located or not located, little thought is given as to why one location is valued more than another.

Much of the way a resident of Kelowna navigates the city is based on the social hierarchy that is imprinted on the landscape. The effect is that the imagined body uses the space differently depending on ideas about race, class, and gender. For instance, a single

female will be less likely to walk downtown in unlit areas by herself. A non-white person may visit areas of town that offer either amenities more suited culturally, or host a larger non-white population. A person who is low-income is less likely to shop in centres that boast boutiques or activities that require a significant sum of money for admission or participation..

Through discussions with my participants, I began to understand that the body and the self are viewed in particular kinds of ways that are dependent on where one is located within the urban landscape. For example, an individual who lives in an affluent part of the city and has access to reliable transportation interacts with the urban landscape in a positive manner. Access to services, to shopping, and to leisure activities are not considered onerous or oppressive because of affluence and ease of accessibility. An individual located in a less affluent area of the city with little or no access to reliable transportation will be more likely to have a negative view of self since she/he will experience daily obstacles to accessing services within the city, in a context where others experience and report quite the opposite.

4.3 Locating and Accessing Research Participants

The participants for this research were contacted through the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society. The Friendship Centre movement initially began in the 1950's as a way to help facilitate Aboriginal peoples' transition from reserve life to urban life. The mandate for these centres was (and continues to be) to improve Aboriginal life in urban centres as well as to create opportunity in terms of access to services and employment. Critically, the need for the Friendship Centre demonstrates a lack in mainstream services to understand the needs of Aboriginal people (Berg, L., Evans, M., Fuller, D., & The Okanagan Urban Aboriginal

Health Research Collective[8], 2007).

Different urban centres have different urban Aboriginal concerns that need to be addressed, depending on various elements that are specific to the region, though issues such employment, lack of housing, problems of addiction, support for family, and the development of life skills are widely felt. In Kelowna, the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society handles many different programs that assist urban Aboriginal. Housing is one of the central foci of the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society; it also offers programs to assist Aboriginal people in acquiring skills for the local labour market. The need for housing for urban Aboriginal people is great considering that as of 2007 over 24% of the homeless population were Aboriginal (PHATCO, 2007). Organizers at the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society are on the front line of the homelessness crisis, and are aware of how their population is marginalized in Kelowna.

I had been volunteering for the Friendship Society for over a year when I approached their directors with a request that they be a community partner with me in my research. The response was positive as all parties involved in this research concur that there are overwhelming challenges the Society is confronted with in terms of advocating for adequate and affordable housing for their members. The research conducted for this thesis could not have been successfully completed without the participation of the urban Aboriginal community.

As my community partner, the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society agreed to provide me

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[8] The Okanagan Urban Aboriginal Health Research Collective is made up of researchers from the Ki-Low-na Friendship Centre, the Ooknakane Friendship Centre, the Vernon First Nation Friendship Centre and UBC. Members include: Wendy Antoine, Marcel Aubin, Lawrence Berg, Molly Brewer, Mike Evans, Stephen Foster, Peter Hutchinson, Donna Kurtz, Sheila Lewis, Carmella Alexis, Cam Martin, Cynthia Mathieson, Buffy Mills, Mary-Anne Murphy, Jessie Nyberg, Colin Reid, Dixon Sookraj, and Edna Terbasket. Duncan Fuller has a more indirect connection to this project, and his participation arose out of a number of discussions about the problematic character of 'participation' in PAR. These discussions led to his contributions as a co-author of this paper.

with space to hold interviews with participants as well as recruit participants through their centre. In return, I have offered the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Centre the use of this thesis to assist them with their needs. This thesis will add to a growing body of work regarding urban life and the Aboriginal experience of living in a white settler city. Currently, the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society is working with the city and the Provincial government to develop housing that meets the needs of their clients. In this respect, my research interest potentially may assist the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society in articulating the difficulties urban Aboriginal women face when trying to find housing in metropolitan Kelowna. All the participants' interviews and identities are confidential and are known only to this researcher. The thesis supervisor and committee do have access to these files (rendered anonymous) for the purposes of checking the research.

4.4 The Interview Process

I interviewed twelve urban Aboriginal women about their experiences in the housing market. I used posters placed at the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society to advertise and outline the project, and ask for volunteers[9]. The staff at the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society were interested in my project and worked hard to help me bring together participants for my research project.

I educated the staff at the centre about my research so they were ready to explain it to the participants before contacting me for an interview. I chose the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society as the location for the interviews because I believed that it would be both familiar and comfortable for participants. Also, while my research was of relatively low risk for

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[9] see Appendix C- Recruitment Poster, p. 148

participants, the topic of housing can be distressing, especially if there is a history of difficulty in securing stable and adequate housing. Therefore, the location also provided trained staff who would be able to assist and comfort any participants who might become distraught during the interview. The participants' personal experiences and circumstances represented a wide range of socio-economic, educational and vocational backgrounds. Initially, I planned a focus group, to bring all the participants together to share in their experiences; however, there was little interest and substantial time conflicts among potential participants, so this idea was abandoned.

My interviews followed a semi-structured format, and focused on six different topics related to housing and housing searches:

1. Current tenure,

2. Experience with rental agents or real estate agents,

3. Satisfaction with current housing,

4. Affordability,

5. Constraints,

6. Changes they might make in their housing if they were free to do so.

In each section, and dependent on responses,[10] I probed further in order to obtain more detailed answers to my questions. Thus some sections would be shortened or lengthened depending on participant responses, and my need to question further to get a clearer sense of their answers to my questions.

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[10] see Appendix E - Interview Guide, p. 154

4.5 Ethical Considerations

Before I began my research, I needed to address my position as a researcher, as well as my position as a resident of Kelowna. I am aware that my worldview has a potential to influence the way I interact with the research material and how I interpret the results of the data. My positioning directly influences the types of questions I ask and how the participants would respond to me as a researcher. Bamberg (2004) suggests that positioning is "to link not only the creative act of storytelling with the construction of story content but both in a fuller and more productive way to the act of constructing identities, that is, identities of the speaking (storytelling) *subject*" (p.135). My background, my beliefs, my assumptions influence the kinds of questions I ask, the way I design my research, the relationship with the researched, as well as the way I analyze the data and represent and disseminate my research. My subject positioning and the way that it informs my research also influences how I view the work I am engaging in.

Scholars have recognized the way that their individual paradigms can affect-research outcomes. The research is an endeavour to seek situated knowledge (Haraway, 1991). Central to the idea of situated knowledge is that there is no one truth that stands as an absolute. In fact, Haraway's (1991) discussion about situated knowledge accepts that knowledge is partial and is intimately linked to the context in which the knowledge is produced. Understanding that knowledge is produced and is partial, not an absolute, enables the researcher to reflect critically on his/her standpoint and how that influences his/her part in knowledge production.

Researchers are not free from their own histories. Gillian Rose (1993) speaks about how she traces her positioning back to her undergraduate years. Rose labels her experience as

'seduction'. For her, seduction means "[she] was, and still [is], seduced by men's systematic and exhaustive claims on our meanings and realities through their occupation of everything which is thought of not as male, but simply as human" (p.15). Her education and aspiration to do better with her life than her parents influences her receptiveness to academia. I, too, share this position as a researcher. My initial experience in academia was an attempt to remove myself from my economic surroundings and learn other methods of becoming a contributing member of society. As a result, I have been exposed to discourses in feminism, colonialism, post-modernism, Marxism, neo-liberalism, oppression, and hegemony.

The main paradigms that resonate with me, and with which I identify easily, are feminism, Marxism, post-colonialism and post-structuralism. My exposure to these topics has relevance to the way I interpreted what the participants were attempting to tell me about their experiences with housing in Kelowna. All of my educational and lived experiences are part of thinking about my participants' responses, and I must acknowledge my skills and my biases because they had a direct impact on how I chose my methodologies and methods. This also affects how the research project will appear as a finished product for other academics and (possibly) the community I am working in.

I have had my own struggles with unaffordable housing, so I began to wonder what seeking and securing housing was like for other people, specifically people who may not be considered 'insiders' of Kelowna, a community that celebrates whiteness and the broader white settler history of the region. My interest brings me back to my positionality, the implications of my background, and my appearance as a white academic researcher. In my research, I have attempted to be clear about my preoccupation with whiteness and post-colonialism. My background, my current interests, and my future interests have implications

on my research. I identify as a visibly white female with Aboriginal ancestral histories and identities. My appearance as a white female affects my perception of privilege. My Aboriginal ancestry and the way I was raised also influence my sense of privilege. In addition, I am affiliated with a large research community, which is predominantly white and affluent. All of these identities intersect and are part of who I am as a researcher and how I approach my research interests.

I believe, in terms of feminist insights, there are significant implications I should be aware of, especially since I am interested in women's narratives and experiences. I am visibly white with Aboriginal ancestry, I am affiliated with an academic institution, I am a researcher, and I live in a predominantly white community. These frameworks affect the outcome of my research as well as the way my participants respond to me in the interviews. My subject position affords me particular privileges that may or may not be afforded to my participants because of their subject position. I must be aware of this as a researcher and not assume that simply based on my gender that I am on equal terms with my female participants.

Limb and Dwyer (2002) indicate that "feminist geography has been centrally concerned with rewriting geography both to incorporate 'the missing half' of a peopled geography and to show that all geographical analysis requires an interpretation of gendered processes and subjectivities" (p.4). As feminist geography gains more credibility, knowledge that has been ignored is being brought into the scope of analysis and interpretation. Limb and Dwyer's observation positions the way traditional approaches to "gendered processes and subjectivities" (p.4) become exclusionary in social practices. My research is part of the feminist geography movement that values those processes and subjectivities, and seeks to

understand them better.

As a feminist geographer conducting research with women and housing, I needed to be aware of the gendered character of the home and housing. Lorber (2003) calls gender 'pervasive' to the point where our culture "assumes[s] it is bred into our genes. Most people find it difficult to believe that gender is constantly created and re-recreated out of human interaction, out of social life, and is the texture and order of that social life" (p.96). In this respect, men and masculinities are valued for their contributions outside of the house. In masculine discourse home is constructed as a safe and relaxing place to return from the public sphere (Boydell K.M., et al., 2004). However, for women the home is constructed differently. Although the construction is not overtly expressed in North American culture, it is still relevant and important because of its tacit implications for gender constructions. The Canadian cultural understanding is that women are meant to be in the home as well as associated with ideas of what makes home. Women are positioned by hegemonic discourses in terms of housekeeping, child rearing and overall family life. Lorber (2003), in fact, extends gender as a social institution that North American people use as a way of organizing our lives. Gender is the way we create "a predictable division of labor, a designated allocation of scarce goods, assigned responsibility for children and others who cannot care for themselves, common values and their systematic transmission to new members, legitimate leadership, music, art, stories, games, and other symbolic productions" (p.98). The ways in which gender structures are legitimized and enforced through culture is "by religion, law, science, and the society's entire set of values" (p.98).

While the feminist movement of the sixties has accomplished much in its efforts to separate the feminine from its powerful association with the home, Canadian culture

continues to cling to the stereotypes and often reacts against the feminine gender role(s) that female persons assume in attempts to be successful outside the home (Faludi, 1991). In North American culture, many women do not consider the home a place to relax or a place of safety (Wardhaugh, 1999). Within my current knowledge of how the home is made for women, I needed to be sensitive to my subjects in understanding that "home" may have more meaning for them than simply accessing housing. An Aboriginal woman may have been culturally raised to understand home much differently than the members of the white culture she is attempting to live among. Because home may mean more than simply housing, I asked my participants how they experience "home".

The cultural differences between my participants and myself bring me to my paradigm as a person interested in postcolonial and poststructural theory. The part that I, as a researcher, needed to be mindful of was that I am a visibly white woman researching the narratives of urban Aboriginal women in order to identify the barriers and structures they face trying to access housing in Kelowna. If I was to be successful in conducting research that was respectful of the experiences these women shared with me, I could not ignore the academic implications of that knowledge. A post-colonial perspective acknowledges how colonialism has effectively disrupted, dismantled, and disempowered Aboriginal people in Canada (Harris, 1997; Roy, 1989; Peters 2002; Razack, 2002; Sefa Dei et al., 2004). As I employed my understanding of post-colonial theories, I was cognizant that colonialism continues and that I must make efforts not to continue colonial violence.

My visibility as a woman of Aboriginal descent who passes for white, and the potential connections to colonialism are complex and contradictory. In addition, my whiteness also changes the way I am able to access housing, which in turn informs my

assumptions about barriers and access to housing. Outsiders have predominantly researched Aboriginal people, an activity that has resulted in a large body of academic literature produced by outsiders for outsiders with little consideration for the population researched (Smith, 1999; Mohammad, 2001). I had to be aware of the cultural history and my multiple positions as an outsider. I had to be vigilant to avoid entering into colonial types of research (and inter-personal) relationships. In designing my research, I was aware that I was looking for structures and barriers that are created by whiteness, and sought to avoid discussions about Aboriginality. I was trying to identify the ways that colonialism is still pervasive in white settler communities, and thus the focus of my work was whiteness rather than Aboriginality. As a feminist poststructuralist, I had to be aware of how Aboriginal people's and women's 'voices' have been appropriated and silenced.

The ideas of appropriation and silence bring me to an 'insider' and/or 'outsider' discussion, which certainly affected my research. Robina Mohammed (2001) defines 'insider' and/or 'outsider' as the demarcation of who is identified as belonging to a particular group and who is identified as being an outsider. Social positioning and belonging are integral to this identification and are used to exclude those who are considered outsiders (p.101) My research is part of a knowledge-making process and as Susan Smith suggests, I had to "recognize the extent to which [I am] immersed in, rather than detached from, the production of knowledge" (2001, p.25). Because I was engaging in a close, yet temporary, relationship with my participants, who are part of a marginalized and over researched group, I had to be aware of my part in the production of knowledge. To the participants, I am another researcher, an outsider, who is seeking information based on their experiences as urban Aboriginal women. Their experiences are important to my research; as they will help

me better understand barriers created by the culture of whiteness. I have been clear that my research is not about Aboriginality; rather my research is about understanding whiteness in Kelowna. Researchers have a history of taking Aboriginal experiences for the advancement of their careers without any reciprocity or respect for the participants of their research (Smith, 1989). There are safeguards within academic institutions, such as ethics boards, that work toward preventing further exploitation of vulnerable groups. The participants trusted me with the narratives of their experiences, narratives that I used for the advancement of my education in my efforts to earn a Masters degree. My success depends on how I translate and produce the knowledge the participants shared with me during the course of this research. Their experiences will hopefully shed light on the exclusionary forces of whiteness in Kelowna.

My position as researcher requires that I report the findings in a particular kind of way: academically. This requirement was challenged by my immersion into the experiences that the participants of this research shared with me. The participants' experiences in most cases were painful and full of emotion regarding the exclusion they felt, and I found that I did not want my research to sanitize the emotion and the experiences the women shared.

4.6 Protocol and Confidentiality

When I identified a potential research participant, I briefed her on the nature of the project and gave her a participation consent form. A few days later, I would contact her either by phone or in person. If she wanted to participate, I then gave her the consent form[11] as appropriate (verbally if required) and then requested consent. I sought subsequent consents (i.e. for use of the material) at the conclusion of the interview. The names of participants are

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[11] see appendix, "Consent Forms"

not on any tapes or transcripts. Names appear on consent forms; all the other material is coded to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. All the interview material is also kept in a secure office.

4.7 Data Analysis

I recorded all twelve of the interviews using digital audio recorders. I used two digital recorders to ensure that if one malfunctioned, I would still have data on the other recorder. Once the interviews were completed, I transferred the data to a secure computer in the Centre for Social, Spatial and Economic Justice. I then transcribed the interviews (full print-outs of the transcriptions were stored in my locked desk in my UBC graduate research space). I read all of the interviews and made notes in the margins. Afterwards I reviewed the notes and searched for themes that arose in each interview. It became apparent that all the participants discussed two main themes: *surveillance* and *identity*. I then re-read the transcripts and highlighted all comments about surveillance in pink, all comments about identity in yellow and other comments, such as solutions or concerns, in blue. The choice for the third theme of 'other' stems from my concern to that all the participants in my research are heard; they offered solutions that were relevant to the improvement of their lives and the lives of other Aboriginal women in Kelowna.

4.8 Research Participants

I gave all my participants pseudonyms which I have listed below, followed by a brief description of their living situations. These women graciously shared their experiences with me, and in the following chapters I will be interpreting and sharing their insights and perspectives.

1. ALICE has no children, and lives in an adult-only complex.

2. COLLEEN has adult children, and lives with her partner in a rented home.

3. EILEEN is a single parent and lives in subsidized housing,

4. GINA has a partner with children and they rent a house.

5. JULIE is a single parent, and is having difficulty finding and securing affordable housing.

6. ROSA has adult children and lives with her partner in a small rented suite.

7. SANDRA is a single parent and rents.

8. SASHA is a single parent and lives in a rented home.

9. SHELLEY is a single parent and is renting a home.

10. SUSAN is a single parent and new resident. She is living with a roommate until she can secure housing for her family.

11. TRUDY is a single parent and lives in subsidized housing.

12. YVONNE has a partner and children. They are currently sharing a home with a relative.

Chapter 5:
Identity and the Social, Ideological, and Political Pressures
to Conform to Mainstream Society

The meaning of a woman's body is connected to her projects in the world – to the way in
which she uses her freedom – but it is also marked by all her other life-situations. There are
countless ways of living out the specific burdens and potentialities of being a woman.
(Kirsten Simonsen, p.165)

It's just ironic … it's like, what you said, like I said you know? Why do they wanna change
us so bad, for us to be like them you know?
(Interview, 7)

You know, I'm proud to be who I am.
(Interview, 7)

5.1 Identity, Self and the Complexity of Stigma

Analysis of the discussions with the research participants revealed that identity is

much more complexly about white ideological constructions of Aboriginal identity, and the

participants' resistance to those constructions. The participants shared complex narratives

about how they perceived themselves. The complexity of their narratives is related to the

multiple ways in which their perception of self is made or influenced by their daily lives as

well as the community in which they live. In most cases, the women were aware of the

negative stereotypes that members of white mainstream society in Kelowna held of

Aboriginal women. In every interview, the participants repeatedly stressed how they and

their bodies were judged negatively. Especially in their search for affordable housing, the

women encountered labelling that effectively distanced them from entering the housing

market in the community.

The stereotypes associated with identifiers such as single mother, welfare recipient,

whore, lower working class, and dirty Indian not only allow the "white" community to keep

the women at a distance, but also has negative effects on their self-esteem. Most of the participants are then confronted with an overwhelming sense that they must present an identity that meets mainstream expectations. Often, the management of identity involves taking specific steps to adjust their public representations of self and appearance of their homes. A conflict arises between their sense of self and their public self. The conflict is the desire to take pride in their identity as Aboriginal, rather than be ashamed (Battiste, 2000; Lawrence, 2003). The conflict is between mainstream visions of what they should be, and their own sense of what being Aboriginal means. The implications of assuming the mainstream vision of what they should be could lead to increased opportunities in entering the housing market as well as acceptance into mainstream culture by transforming into an identity that is less obvious: a white mainstream identity. However, assuming a white mainstream identity suggests that there is something inherently wrong with their sense of Aboriginality. According to the participants of this study their sense of being Aboriginal is not something to be ashamed of, but something to be embraced and celebrated. Yet, in their situations, there is a consensus that being Aboriginal and claiming that identity has created obstacles in their personal lives and their attempt to secure housing in Kelowna.

George Herbert Mead, an American philosopher, sociologist and psychologist identifies the self as something that "is not initially there at birth but arises in the process of social experience and activity" (1956, p.199). My position regarding identity is that identity is fluid and is susceptible to change contingent on experiences. I also believe an individual is able to possess more than one identity, given the situation and geography as identities change (Turner, 1978, 1984; Tajfel, 1982; Holloway, 2000). For example, a female can identify as a woman, employed, Aboriginal, mother, and married. Each one of the single word identifiers

can be used together or separately depending on the context in which the person is employing them – at home, at work, at the supermarket and so on.

Self "develops in the given individual as a result of [his/her] relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process" (Mead, 1956, p. 207). Mead's thesis applied to urban Aboriginal women's experiences means that for urban Aboriginal women, because of the multiple social relations in which they engage, there are multiple selves that need to be negotiated – especially in a predominantly white community like Kelowna. According to Mead, "[w]e divide ourselves up in all sorts of different selves with reference to our acquaintances" (p.207). The experience expressed by the participants is that their many selves do have to be managed – in the white spaces of Kelowna my participants had the sense that their Aboriginal self must be managed in a way that marginalizes their Aboriginal identity.

This chapter begins with linking identity to housing, specifically traditional notions of housing. The discussion will follow some of the traditional concepts of housing and home. These long held concepts have imprints from notions of class, gender, race and belonging. The impact of the ideas in turn has shaped how community and belonging is measured through material conditions. The discussion moves to how material conditions, such as houses, are attached to bodies. I will explore how linking different types and forms of housing impacts the ways that class is understood in this community. I focus the discussion on Aboriginal women and single mothers and the stigmatization they feel as they are coerced in to rendering themselves invisible. Finally, I reflect critically on how neo-liberalism and racism have impacted the ways in which identities are negotiated in the urban environment. This will be done by working with the participant's articulation of how they understood

others' behaviour or attitude toward them in the public spaces of Kelowna.

5.2 Without a Home: Challenging the Traditional Concepts

The house is a way of interpreting the status of the inhabitants in one's own culture (Duncan, J., 1981). In North America people moved away from the multi-family dwellings to the single family detached dwelling (Duncan, J., 1981). The change in style of housing reflected the change in economy as modes of production became more industrialized. Increasingly, people were able to earn wages that changed their status and as a result were able to consume more products (Duncan, J., 1981). The consumption of products has become one of the ways of interpreting a person's status in current North American culture. The interpretation of status, through housing, changed ideas about identity, class, gender and family (Duncan, J., 1981; Perry, 2003). The desire to move away from multi-family type of dwellings and into single-family dwellings is a demonstration of one's personal wealth (Duncan, J., 1981). A person who is seen to live in a five-bedroom house with two garages is thought to have more status than a person who lives in a rented apartment. In addition, the location of residences also identifies the social status of a person. For example, in Kelowna, a person living in the Mission area of Kelowna is more likely to be middle-income wage earner, whereas someone living in Rutland is more likely to be a low-income wage earner.

Access to resources and participation in one's community is correlated with how one is housed. The wealthier a person/family is, the better the housing is, the access to transportation is increased, access to medical and health services is increased, and access to community activities is increased. Alternatively, the poorer a person/family is the worse the living conditions and access to resources and transportation. For a person/family that are

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restricted by their socio-economic status, the threat of becoming homeless is increasingly in focus. The meaning of home has its opposite: homelessness. Being homeless is much more complex than an 'either/or' statement would suggest however. Homelessness, being the antithesis to being housed, is identified by the modern world as dirty and liminal (Sibley, 1995). As a result, bodies that are not housed come to have particular identities that are shaped through negative hegemonic discourses. The discussions evoke notions of gender, class, membership and family. So the body, before a person is even able to speak, is already assumed to have a particular identity based on lack of housing. Homelessness means being excluded from what is associated with having a home, a neighbourhood, and a community. The homeless body is excluded from participating in the mainstream activities of day-to-day life. The homeless body is in a constant physical survival struggle, and that reality prevents the homeless person from enjoying the social, psychological, and emotional sense of identity that comes from having a physical place to call 'home' (Hulchanski, D., & Shapcott, M., 2004).

Julia Wardhaugh (1999), Katherine Boydell et al., (2000) and J.R. LeBlanc (2002) agree that without homelessness our culture would not even consider home as a part of identity. In this regard, homelessness is the negative foil that gives housing a key part of its symbolic meaning. Homelessness not only defines 'home', but also defines the people who are both housed and not housed. The public discourse is based on notions of homelessness constituting something that is deviant and results in "the social and spatial exclusion of those who do not fit into the purified space of residential neighborhoods, spaces that are hardened against marginal people" (Wardhaugh, 1999, p.96). In Canada, the traditional concept of home arises from "assumptions of the white, middle class and heterosexual nuclear family"

(Wardhaugh, p.96). Anything that does not resemble those assumptions is deemed outside and other or alien. In this way, identities are created and constructed through ideas that homes are safe, just, right, moral, and normal. Homelessness – as the negative foil for having a home, helps to constitute the homeless themselves in negative forms of identity such as dirty, unsafe, criminal, immoral and abhorrent. Subsequently, bodies that are not housed are linked to these negative ideas and value judgements.

Most academics in Urban Studies and Housing Studies link identity to space and place. 'Home' constitutes a physical place that conveys ideas of safety and sanctuary as well as a space where identity-making activities take place. In this respect, J.R. LeBlanc suggests that,

> [d]iscussions of identity in contemporary (especially, postcolonial) theory, then, are bound up in these questions of "space," specifically, the transformation of safe spaces ("home") out of which we formerly drew our identity and acted (we thought) authentically into spaces of conflict, contest, and confusion (2002, p.204).

Inside these "safe spaces" (LeBlanc), 'home' is a space where identities of morality, citizenship, family, gender, class, and race are reinforced. For those who are affluent enough, these identities are rarely challenged outside of the home – provided they live in an affluent community. However, marginalized and lower socio-economic identities are not afforded the same privileges. Their identities are challenged in the home as well as in the affluent community in which they reside – such as Kelowna.

The 'traditional' concept of home is embedded in the national collective imagination and reified through popular media, advertising, public institutions, and policies. Much of North American history is founded on early settlers making a home and becoming successful in ways that they were not able to accomplish in Europe (Ennals and Holdsworth, 1998). The

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style of settlement chosen to mirror gentrified European life was passed down generationally and culturally. The pressure of 'keeping up with the Joneses' is maintained through public discourse about how to measure life satisfaction. Colleen, one of the participants in this research, shared an observation that demonstrates how discourses of identity are remade in varied socio-economic circumstances:

> I'm not part of the elite group that is well off, and professional and rich … I think there's a big divide between that group of people who are professionals, who have the fancy homes, who can maybe afford it … to the ones who are just living day by day and trying to make a life and get by. I have a good life. I'm not complaining. I'm comfortable, like I'm good. But it's just … to me … there's so much things happening that people try to sweep under the rug, like the devastation of the homeless, the street people … I work with it everyday and I think Wow … you know (Interview, 1).

As Colleen stressed, the 'elite group,' the 'professionals' are set apart from the life that Colleen has led and the life that she has witnessed others leading. Yet, that life she talks about with 'fancy homes' and the ability to 'afford' privileged circumstances continues to be held as an ideal to achieve in mainstream Kelowna. Even though she admitted she is comfortable and has a 'good life,' she is aware of the discourse that suggests her life could be better. Her assertion, that she is comfortable, is a verbal resistance to feel pressured to join the elite group. Her observation reveals a significant class division between the wealthy and the poor in Kelowna. Colleen adds that the elite group attempts to ignore the division, choosing "to sweep it under the rug" (Interview, 1).

In Kelowna, the participants of my study have a strong sense of the economic class

division that exists within the community. Most of the participant's narratives circled around the discussion of class; they identified the pressure of class as what excludes them from the city. Rosa, for example, articulated what 'mainstream' meant for her:

> Oh … mainstream to me means people who have grown up in a white culture and can only see white culture, have no understanding for a life with meaning. That meaning, to mainstream people, is … high paying jobs, education, … which are things that would be good for all of us right? But … having all your towels [are] stacked in coloured order … you know, buying microwave food, having a fancy car, taking vacations to Bermuda but having that mind-set that if you don't have those things, you're not worth it. You're scum, you're white trash, you're trailer park trash, … you're an Indian. You're a dirty Indian. It's like having those things, to [mainstream people], is what life is all about and they don't see past that. That's what mainstream is to me (Interview, 8).

Rosa identified the ideal lifestyle for the mainstream person that includes having adequate housing, job security, money, and affluence. She identified these markers of mainstream life as lacking meaning – they are arbitrary. She addressed the pressure she felt and that she was aware of "having that mind-set that if you don't have those things, you're not worth it" (Interview, 8). The quality of "it" is at stake here. According to Rosa, the mainstream culture adds value to life if "all your towels [are] stacked in coloured order", you eat "microwave food", you drive a "fancy car", and you go on "vacations" (Interview, 8). What Rosa's narrative is identifying that the affluent hegemonic white social class in Kelowna not only creates, but also perpetuates the social division in Kelowna. Moreover, her narrative suggests that the identity status of 'Indian' places the Aboriginal self at the bottom of the social

divide. Rosa stresses the notion that not only is being 'Indian' an undesirable category, being 'Indian' is also associated with being dirty, not clean, not white, not mainstream.

The trope of the 'dirty Indian' has no place in "purified residential space" (Wardhaugh, 1999, p.96). Instead, through reading, perceiving and judging the body of an Aboriginal person as 'dirty Indian' and noting that homelessness also constitutes 'dirtiness.' Both categories, Aboriginal and homelessness, have a relationship and become solidified as the 'other' to which the accepted hegemonic group can identify themselves as not belonging. In addition, the connections promote strategies for excluding less than desirable bodies from engaging in the same spaces as clean and white bodies engage, such spaces as particular forms of housing.

5.3 Material Conditions Speak and are Read Through Her Body

Housing is not simply a matter of wood, foundations or even human shelter, it is "an animate social force that [is] generative of proper gender roles, work habits, and domestic ways" (Perry, 2003, p.587). Housing, like the body, is read for its meaning. So just as a body that is female, male, tall, fat, short is read to have a particular meaning in our culture, so too is the house read for meaning. Stigma is attached to those who are not homeowners (Hulchanski, & Shapcott, 2004; Stapleton, 2004); the assumption is made that rental lifestyles are not stable and indicate an inability to make a commitment. Moreover, affordable rental housing, which is subsidized by the government or not-for-profit societies, carries a stigma which excludes people from full participation in the community (Stapleton, 2004). Subsidized affordable rental housing speaks loudly "of material conditions, of wealth and poverty, and of the economies that create and the divisions of labor that sustain them"

(Perry, 2003, p.588). People who find themselves in need of affordable rental housing find themselves slotted into stereotypes that portray them as lazy, passive, and too dependent on support services (Boydell., et al., 2000).

Shelley, a participant in this research study, confirmed the stigma of subsidized housing. She articulated an awareness that subsidized housing is stigmatized; she has learned to avoid spaces that have negative stereotypes attached to them. Shelley was clear about avoiding spaces such as Rutland and subsidized housing, because she was aware of how the mainstream public in Kelowna viewed these places and how association stigmatized people who lived in these spaces. What she was attempting to avoid was being labelled as lazy, as dependent, as poor, as uneducated, as lacking in a quality that excluded her from mainstream living in Kelowna.

> For me it was like, okay … I guess … the downfall of this is I didn't apply for the low income housing 'cause I just have my own I guess stereotypes in that I don't wanna be ghetto-ized, I don't want to be put in a bunch of houses where it's noticeably … Native housing" (Interview, 4).

Shelley was attempting to avoid living in the space of subsidized Aboriginal housing[12], where negative stereotypes have the potential to create a marginalized identity for the inhabitants of that location. As Jouni Hakli and Anssi Passi (2003) assert: "[a]ll identities can be said to have a spatial dimension because all individual and social action is spatially contextual – it literally 'takes place' somewhere" (142). Shelley perceived that subsidized housing would exacerbate the stigmatization that she already encountered. Not wanting herself and her children to be 'ghetto-ized,' Shelley stated emphatically, "low-income …

doesn't even have to be all Natives if everyone in the community knows, well that [the] housing complex there is for low-income. I don't want my kids to, to feel that" (Interview, 4). She did not want her children to feel the stigmatization applied to spaces that are negatively perceived as where people who are not mainstream live. Shelley was concerned with what her children would feel, how their own perceived identity would form from the experience of living in subsidized housing predominately occupied by marginalized Aboriginal families. She was attempting to save her children from the social pressures she felt as a First Nations single parent attempting to raise her children in an affluent white community. Shelley wanted to protect her son from identifying himself based on the stereotypical notions 'Indians' are labelled with daily. She felt "that the representations or images that my son sees. You know, that there's, … the stereotypical drunken and homeless Indian man. You know, it's scary for me as a mother of a Native child and a Native son" (Interview, 4). What Shelley was articulating is an awareness of how the dominant white people construct Aboriginality. She extended her explanation of why she found it frightening to raise her son in Kelowna when she emphasised that stereotypes are "very embedded in the society ... the worthlessness of being an Indian woman to me is an everyday occurrence. And I feel it constantly … " (Interview, 4). Her awareness of the entrenched negative stereotypes of Aboriginal women generates fears that in the community of Kelowna her son would have no positive sense of his own Aboriginality. She worried that for her son, there are no positive representations of being Aboriginal for him to seek as a positive role model in Kelowna. The Okanagan Métis & Aboriginal Housing Society manage two subsidized rental properties. One property located on the Westside and the other property located in Rutland. These

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[12] The Okanagan Metis & Aboriginal Housing Society manages two subsidized rental properties. One property located on the Westside and the other property located in Rutland. These properties are specifically focussed on Aboriginal housing

properties are specifically focussed on Aboriginal housing needs.

5.4 Aboriginal Woman: Invisible Outside of the Home

The problem of stigmatizing and stereotyping is further compounded for women who are closely affiliated with traditional notions of home. In her work "The Unaccommodated Woman" (1999), Wardhaugh identifies how women's identities are closely linked to being in the home (cooking, cleaning, child rearing); whereas, men's identities are linked to activities outside of the home (work, outdoor activities). These ideas around socially constructed gender-appropriate activities and spaces of belonging become troubled when women are found to be homeless on the streets. Because the idea of women is intimately linked in Western European culture to homemaking and child rearing activities, which are performed inside the home, a homeless woman challenges long held beliefs about the role of women in housing. There is an ideological clash between an idea of a woman as homemaker and an idea of a homeless woman.

The clash has resulted in a backlash against women who are homeless (Wardhaugh, 1999). Women who are homeless are often victims of violence. Furthermore, there is little in the way of services to help women who are homeless (Wardhaugh, 1999). As a result, homeless women have devised strategies to avoid the violence and seek other resources to cope with a lack of services. They often camouflage themselves to either appear as a housed person or to be completely invisible by keeping their stature small, their clothing in good repair, and their overall hygienic appearance maintained. Camouflage can include sitting on benches rather than in the doorways of abandoned buildings.

The pressure for the single mothers I interviewed regarding housing is no less than for

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needs.

those who live on the streets and attempt to camouflage themselves in public. Both single mothers and homeless women experience the need to use subterfuge as a means of lessening the obstacles they must overcome to improve their lives, and the lives of their children. The single mothers I spoke with admitted to lying in order to secure housing for their families. As Eilleen describes,

> Well, you know what, I had to lie too ... how many kids I have. I just said I had three kids, boys ... at first, I 'cause I didn't know about how … I didn't know how the Ministry ran here. I didn't know how the housing market was, or rental market so … at first I told them like my situation so the guys said basically he said to me … we can't rent to you because this is only two-bedrooms, you need maybe three or four bedrooms so … I lied on one of my applications in order to get the house … yeah but it's crummy looking, I didn't like it, the house, but I really had no choice (Interview, 11).

This deception was not something of which she was proud. Her choices at that point in her housing search were limited to the extent that she felt she had to lie to secure a home that she knew was not adequate—"crummy" in her words. Eilleen's concerns about housing affordability and Ministry regulations around housing made her believe she had to obscure the truth about how many children she in fact had. She elaborates further about her situation,

> … well here I had a hard time because … the cost. And at the time, like I left an abusive environment and came here and…one of the main problems I had was, because I had three kids, one older girl and two younger boys I wasn't … like the bracket … the money brac- well no, I had a house that was under the social service, how much they give you for rent (Interview, 11).

The ability to afford housing plays a significant role in identity creation and maintenance of that identity. According to the Ministry of Housing and Social Development BC Employment and Assistance Rates website (http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/mhr/ia.htm#a), Eilleen would receive $700.00 maximum for shelter costs for herself and three children. In Kelowna, a three-bedroom house averages $994.00 per month (Kelowna Housing Resources Handbook, 2007). If Eilleen were to rent a home with four bedrooms, the price would be even higher. A two-bedroom in Kelowna averages to $845.00 per month, which is a bit closer to what Eilleen is able to afford, and this forces Eilleen to conceal her children and secure less than adequate housing.

Deceit in this way becomes a necessary evil. Another participant, Gina, shares, "[m]ind you, I overcame it easily by lying but I mean, that doesn't make me feel good to say that I lied to get a place" (Interview, 10). The participants of this research and many other women who share similar stories find themselves traversing uneasy moral ground when attempting to provide for themselves and for their families. Often single mothers are confronted with situations where their sense of morality is challenged by the need for security. As a result, they have to negotiate their senses of self between the actions of a parent securing a home for their family and between being a 'moral' citizen in the community.

5.5 Single Mother: An Identity Best Left At Home

In total, I interviewed twelve women. Seven of the women reported being a single parent either currently or at one time in their life. Their identity was in part rooted to their role as mother rearing children without the support of a partner or the potential financial

support a partner can bring to the household. Their self-identification as single mother was not a positive identification. They are aware that their status and identity as single mothers isolated them and made them a target for social exclusion.

All of the women but one are mothers and all have expressed difficulty finding housing that will accept children. Landlords do refuse to rent their property to families with children, single mothers, or people on social assistance (Dion, 2001; Novac, et al., 2002). Some of the mothers have lied about how many children they have in order to secure safe housing or to circumvent Ministry rules about the required number of bedrooms per child. Eight of the women have been or were currently on social assistance, and this created even more problems for them in regards to housing. Consistently, they have been confronted by landlords who perceived them as unable to meet their monthly commitment of paying rent on time. Indeed, one can only assume that it would be difficult for a parent on income assistance to pay the full amount of rent on time since the income assistance maximum shelter allowance for a family of three is $660/month (BC Housing and Social Development, 2007). As noted in Chapter 2, $660/month in Kelowna will pay for a bachelor suite or perhaps a one-bedroom suite. A single mother on assistance, who is attempting to secure adequate housing for her family, faces significant challenges.

Colleen, one of the participants, was clear about the struggles she faced as a single parent confronted with housing needs. She says, "… being on income assistance and I was a single mom … that at that time in my life was, you feel … landlords … kinda judge you" (Interview, 1). She articulated her struggle as a single parent on income assistance and how that particular position left her vulnerable to the view of others, particularly landlords. She was exposed to social judgement that centred on her ability to mother appropriately. The

judgement is not based on her parenting skills. Instead the judgement is based in her lack of a partner and her need for social assistance.

Single mothers on assistance are often made to feel they need to make a significant change in their lives. Society recognizes they are single mothers and there are programs and assistance available for mothers to gain skills that could potentially change their economic status. However, as Colleen pointed out, this particular stance is not based on the reality of day-to-day particulars of a single mother's life. She observed, "[s]o I find it very difficult for single moms who are trying to make, you know, plans for themselves, a career goal to go to work but then when you look at all the options and you bring everything together, it comes down to they can't even afford to make the change" (Interview, 1). Single mothers are expected to seek employment once their child reaches age three, instead of the former requirement of seven-years old (Atkey, & Siggner, 2008). In addition, single mothers who are receiving income assistance from the government have experienced an 18% cut to welfare rates, elimination of the Family Maintenance exemption, and the elimination of the earnings exemption (Atkey, & Siggner, 2008). The consequence is that single mothers have the extra burden of finding day care, and paying for this out-of-pocket, while trying to cope with the loss of a $300.00 in potential earnings to support the family. These challenges continually work on single mothers preventing them from achieving sense of worth.

5.6 Declining Government Support, Rental Supply, and Social Equity

Government funding cuts to various social programs that assisted low-income individuals has also contributed to the negative public attitude toward low-income and impoverished populations. Important to the focus of this thesis is government withdrawal

from rental properties in the beginning of the 1970s (Drummond, et al., 2004). The changes in the policy landscape over the last forty years have placed pressure on both private and publicly funded rental markets. The changes have also contributed to the way that the public views homeownership versus renting.

In the 1970s "the federal government introduced a series of tax reforms that made the tax treatment of rental properties less favourable for investors" (Drummond, D., et al., 2004). Investors could no longer could apply the costs of depreciation to tax write-offs. This resulted in a decline in investment in rental properties, which was reflected in the drop of new rental units being added and existing stock being maintained. Investors turned to more lucrative developments such as "higher-end rental properties, owner-occupied units, and commercial real estate" (Drummond, et al., 2004). In the mid-1980s the federal and provincial governments made significant cuts to their "direct spending on government-owned public housing; subsidies to non-profit organizations and cooperatives; and subsidies to private developers to build affordable rental housing" (Drummond, et al., 2004). Then in 1993 the federal government withdrew all funding for new assisted housing (Drummond, et al., 2004). Cities, municipal governments, have been forced to learn how to be creative with limited resources in order to serve the whole population, including the people directly affected by funding cuts. The removal of subsidies from rental housing has had a profound effect on low-income individuals and families that is reflected in the increasing homeless population. There are no new subsidized housing stocks being created and the stock that is in existence is quickly deteriorating, forcing residents to seek shelter in less affordable housing (Porter, 2004). The ultimate result is that the lack of affordable housing and the lack of subsidies to generate more affordable housing have isolated low-income people from their

community (Hulchanski, & Shapcott, 2004). A stigma has been created because of the government's insistence that market mechanisms must be used to assess needs and generate solutions. By insisting on that the market generate solutions, the government and other proponents of the neo-liberal form of governance are suggesting that there is something wrong with the individuals and families who cannot manage to afford housing. As one policy analyst notes:

> Federal and provincial policy makers appear willing to deceive themselves into believing that markets…can solve the housing problems that are created by poverty. The belief in market-made solutions for social problems is made more attractive by the recognition that poverty is a very expensive problem to fix. The belief is made even more attractive by the wish for an invisible hand that can wave away the problems. At least, wave away the responsibility, the blame and the shame (Skaburskis and Mok, 2000, p.193).

There is an emerging notion that the federal government believes that if welfare recipients simply took advantage of the training programs provided by social services that they would be able to pull themselves out of poverty (Skaburskis and Mok, 2000). Once more, the federal policy discourse places the onus on the individual to find a way out of poverty and a way into affordable housing.

Lenk (2003) suggests "policies within housing programs need to specifically address the stigma and isolation of tenants and seek creative ways to connect them to the community" (p.4). The lack of training, the gaps, the underfunding all generate a discourse about the person or people who are in a constant state of poverty. The discourse is that there is something wrong with the person in poverty and not with the system. In this way, people

who are marginal and struggle with affordability are the gauge by which normal is defined. Individuals and families with stable incomes and stable housing are considered normal and those with low-wages and unstable rental situations are considered abnormal.

5.7 Racism: Experiences of Aboriginal Women in Kelowna's Rental Market

Aboriginal people have suffered under the public imagination of what it means to be Aboriginal, which is linked to tradition – tradition locked in time. Much as homelessness has been stigmatized by notions of the importance of ideas of cleanliness, order, purity, normality, so have Aboriginal people. The result has been a public discourse about policy on how to handle the 'problem', the same orientation that has hampered the ability homeless people to find success and safety within Canadian culture and affordable housing.

Colleen relates an experience that a fellow co-worker had trying to find housing in Kelowna, "[a]nd we actually had … women on staff that are very visible First Nation … on the phone it sounded all great and dandy ya, you bet for sure, yada yada. They get there, they see they're First Nations 'Oh it's rented already'" (Interview, 1). Colleen's co-worker found it difficult to secure housing in Kelowna and as a result was forced to leave her job and leave Kelowna in search of housing in another community.

Colleen further elaborated on what she thought was happening, "[w]ell I think it's just again, it's, you know … she works with the Native Friendship Centre, obviously she's Indian … there's probably gonna be wild parties … I mean who knows what they think, right?" (Interview, 1). When I asked Colleen what she found to be the biggest hurdle for herself in finding housing in Kelowna, she responded:

I'm going to say the racism. I don't find this community very open to First Nations

people at all … I work in the area of employment education, I'm talking to a lot of

employers … the stigma is still there that First Nations people are lazy, … alcoholics,

they're drunk, you know whatever … and I see a lot of that, even when I was looking

for a place, it's like once they knew where I worked "Oh she's probably Native" even

though they couldn't ask me … they're assuming, … she's probably Native

(Interview, 1).

She knew from her own professional experience that employers have a particular view of

Aboriginal people and she too also felt the pressure of the stigma in her own search for

housing. Even her affiliation with an Aboriginal organization opened her up to scrutiny from

the white community.

Not only was her affiliation with an Aboriginal organization used as a negative

marker against her, but she also noted her appearance and the vehicle she drove limited her

ability to find adequate housing:

Now I don't think I wanna rent to her, and I don't kinda like the truck she's driving

and … 'cause it look, I mean hey it's a nice lookin truck but it's just an old Ford …

it's got in good shape [laughing] … it's the perception that people would get and, and

I find that a lot (Interview, 1).

Colleen has lived in the community of Kelowna for seven years and identifies as an

Okanagan nation woman. She observed there is a lack of Aboriginal presence in the urban

landscape:

When I came to Kelowna, like being here for 7 years … two summers ago I walked

down main street uh in the heat of the day, at the prime time of tourist season and you

will not see one visible First Nation working in any event shops. And even today

we're still trying to educate the employer into hiring First Nations people. There's, you know, so this town is very … and it it's surprising because they're surrounded by two bands (Interview, 1).

The two bands Colleen was referring to are bands that are members of the Okanagan Nation Alliance which has seven member bands: the Okanagan Indian Band, Upper Nicola Indian Band, Westbank First Nation, Penticton Indian Band, Lower Similkameen Indian Band, Upper Similkameen Indian Band and Osoyoos Indian Band. The Okanagan Indian Band and the Westbank First Nation are the two bands that surround Kelowna. As of 2006, the population for the Okanagan Indian Band was 2,284 and for the Westbank First Nations was 5,170 (Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006). Despite a significant population, Colleen was able to observe a lack of Aboriginal presence in downtown Kelowna. When she attempted to address the lack of physical presence in the employment sector in Kelowna, she was met with the following response:

Well then maybe that isn't the area that they should be working in but we could possibly put them in the kitchen as cooks and stuff. And I'm thinking oh, so you're not even going to give 'em a chance, you're just going to stick them in the kitchen because you don't want nobody to see them. And I thought to myself, they're typical Kelowna (Interview, 1).

Colleen struggled with this response, especially when she considered how employers sourced labour.

She knew, because of her position as an employment counsellor, that there was a large labour force within the local Aboriginal community that was not being employed, yet the employers in the City of Kelowna continued to bring labour from outside of the region

and country.

> They speak English more than they speak their own language. Now Mexicans come speak Spanish, Jamaicans come and speak their own lingo and then Asians speak their own language. They, you know, they don't speak English so … now you have to teach them to speak English and you, it it's a lot harder I would think than taking a First Nations person I mean and, and training them. You know. We are trainable. We can work, you know (Interview, 1).

According to Colleen the Aboriginal population in Kelowna is continually confronted with stereotypes that limits their employment choices within their own community. In this respect, Colleen recollected a particular conversation with a downtown business owner: "[s]ee that's the thing. I even had one woman say to me, 'Well you know … I … you know I look in the park and I see all these drunk Indians and I think well I don't really know if I wanna have them working for me.'" (Interview, 1).

This attitude is not uncommon and has other manifestations in the public discourse. The stereotype of the 'dirty Indian' has a particular impact on the local Aboriginal population, manifesting in feelings of isolation, separation, and a lack of involvement in the community. Shelley described how she felt "sort of the dirty Indian so I've been very mindful of that and very … it's really important to me not to be a, you know, the stereotype" (Interview, 4). Shelley was a well-presented woman, with a strong educational background. Yet, because of the stereotype that she was mindful of, she stated "it's awful … just then people start stigmatizing themselves too …" (Interview, 4). It is hard to imagine living in a community that appropriates one's own identity, myths, stories and land and sells them as commodities for tourism purposes. Yet, that same community continues to passively deny

opportunity for involvement in development or promotion of what has belonged to one's community for hundreds of years before white settlement. The same group of people is further demeaned with rampant stereotypes. The situation creates a particular kind of self-awareness that is damaging and continually requires individuals to assess how their bodies are being viewed.

Despite these appropriations and damaging stereotypes, the Aboriginal community strives to combat the mainstream commentary. As Trudy, a participant, succinctly asserts, "they're proud to be Native and … there's no reason not to be" (Interview, 6).

Chapter 6: Surveillance and Control over the Body

…all power would be exercised solely through exact observation; each gaze would form a
part of the overall functioning of power

(Foucault, 1971, p.171)

6.1 Surveillance Keeps 'Them' Under Control

Michel Foucault, a French philosopher, historian, intellectual, critic and sociologist,
wrote extensively about the power of observation in *Discipline & Punish: the Birth of the
Prison* (1977). Much of my discussion about surveillance in this chapter is informed by
Foucault's work about surveillance and the practices that make surveillance an effective
social control mechanism. Foucault's discussion about surveillance and the way surveillance
techniques have transformed the management of the body is confirmed by the experiences of
the participants in this study.

Foucault uses Jeremy Bentham's (1785) concept of the Panopticon to illustrate how
surveillance is established and then manipulated for ultimate control over the body and its
movement. The Panopticon is described as:

> [t]he architectural perfection is such that even if there is no guardian present, the
>
> power apparatus still operates effectively. The inmate cannot see whether or not the
>
> guardian is in the tower, so he must behave as if surveillance were perpetual and total.
>
> If the prisoner is never sure when he is being observed, he becomes his own guardian.
>
> As the final step in architectural and technological perfection, the Panopticon includes
>
> a system for observing and controlling the controllers. Those who occupy the central
>
> position in the Panopticon are themselves thoroughly enmeshed in a localization and

ordering of their own behaviour (Rabinow, 1984, p.19).

As a result of the perpetual surveillance, not only in prisons, but also in classrooms, in hospitals, in military compounds and in factories, the individual, the inmate and the controller, internalize the surveillance. Discipline became embodied and mundane in the "whole micro-penalty of time (latenesses, absences, interruptions of tasks), of the behaviour (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body ('incorrect' attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness), of sexuality (impurity, indecency)" (Foucault, 1977, p.178). The punishment changed as well from torture and execution, to light punishment, to deprivation, to humiliation. The constant sense of surveillance created, "no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, out to be a minimal cost" (Foucault, 1980, p.155).

Surveillance, a French word meaning 'to watch over', has become a powerful mechanism for social control in North America. Daily, in North American communities, people are confronted with different types of surveillance that modify and control their behaviours. Examples of the mechanisms range from the use of security guards, police presence, security cameras, and digital tracking of debit and credit card usage. News headlines continually discuss the levels to which the average person is monitored or tracked, either physically or through purchases or use of current technology such as the Internet. Many discussions reference the classic Orwellian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) that depicts a fictitious time when the government becomes omniscient through persistent and pervasive surveillance of the population. Often the term "Big Brother" from the novel is used

in current media and public discussions when scrutinizing the level of surveillance in North America. Public fear and paranoia is created based on speculation about how much governments and public institutions know about a particular individual or group and the possible idea that privacy is no longer a reality in North American daily lives.

More importantly, there is widespread concern that the various methods of public surveillance are affecting personal and public behaviour. Commonly held notions in Western culture about being free, or having freedom of movement or even freedom of speech are being challenged by some critics of surveillance, such as Christopher Dandeker (1990), Didier Bigo (2005), Stephen Graham (2001), Stephen Graham & David Wood (2003), Kevin D. Haggerty & Richard V. Ericson (2006), and David Lyon (1994, 1996, 2001, 2006). These researchers and critics have discussed the various ways that surveillance has changed North American society into a docile one in which individuals internalize the surveillance they experience outside of the home. Even the home becomes a place where surveillance does not stop and the lines between public and private blur. This chapter's epigraph emphasizes that through observation, power is exercised in the public realm and in the 'private' home.

6.2 Surveillance from a Colonial Perspective

Using the 'gaze' to gain control over a population is not a new phenomenon. Foucault traces the demise of torture as a form of punishment and the rise of the prison system. The prison system, according to Foucault, initiates the power of the gaze as a form of discipline. Foucault states, "[t]he exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible" (1975, pp.170-171). The making 'visible' through the power of

the gaze affects the way bodies are managed and perceived in the urban environment. The production of power and authority through surveillance produces two kinds of bodies, "the normal and the abnormal body, the former belonging to a homogenous social body, the latter exiled and spatially separated." (Razack, 2002, p.11). The 'exiled and spatially separated' body will make attempts to fit into the visible social landscape by using different methods to adhere to expected standards. For example, Sandra, a participant in my research study, shares:

> Nowadays every little thing you do is, you know, under a magnifying glass, and they're watching you right? … it's rules for everybody, it's not just Aboriginal people but the experiences … with Aboriginal people … they're not looking at the person. … our First Nations people … are so fuck'in worried about you know being judged, you know, they, they don't even look at themselves. These are people I'd know for months and months and they dress up to go come with me to look at a place, they don't even look like themselves. They look like idiots. And I would never use that word to them. You know, I miss—I get so frustrated sometimes, why can't you be who you are to find a home? (Interview, 12).

Sandra's anecdote illustrates power of the visual social differences; a person is compelled to 'dress up' and 'they don't even look like themselves' in an attempt to 'appear' socially acceptable.

Rosa, another research participant, furthered this feeling of having to assume a 'mainstream' appearance in order to be accepted:

> … if you dress a certain way, it does open doors for you so … I kind of [got] rid of them, but I used to have mainstream suits … Blouses … and high heels and things

like that and make-up … but it's like pretending to be something you're not. It wasn't comfortable but I felt like I kind of gone to a few places and I didn't get accepted so when I went to that home I put, we all put on our best look ... So that somehow that instant impression would be that we were mainstream (Interview, 8).

The Aboriginal experience of fitting in with the socially acceptable urban environment is not a new phenomenon and has a history rooted in early settlement and colonization of North America. Early white settlement of British Columbia under the doctrine of *terra nullius [UNPEOPLED/EMPTY LAND]*. This doctrine gave legal force to the settlement of lands occupied by "backward" people, where no system of laws or ownership of property was held to exist (Culhane, 1998). Early white settlers arbitrarily legally asserted that civilized people did not exist on the land. In the case of British settlement of British Columba, "already inhabited nations were simply legally *deemed to be uninhabited* if the people were not Christian, not agricultural, not commercial, not 'sufficiently evolved' or simply in the way" (Culhane, 1998, p.48). Essentially, Aboriginal people, or at least Aboriginal interests in land, did not exist according to early law.

In 1876 the Parliament of Canada passed the Indian Act, a legal provision that gave the government exclusive authority to legislate all matters regarding "Indians and Indian Reserves" (Culhane, 1998). Over the years different amendments to the Indian Act have prohibited the movement of Aboriginal people on the Canadian landscape. These amendments included prohibitions such as the following: requiring a permit to leave the reserve, not being allowed to enter pool halls, not allowed to ingest alcohol while on the reserve, even prohibiting the sale of agricultural produce by Aboriginal people (Roy, 1989). These rules placed on an entire group of people that were initially deemed to be non-existent

has had a profound effect on the way Aboriginal people use urban space. As a result of a long history of rules and regulations regarding how Aboriginal people have been 'allowed' to use space in Canada, there is a general sense in which they are always under constant supervision.

The experience of constant supervision over the Aboriginal population has had profound and long lasting consequences, both for the supervisor and the supervised. In relation to residential schools, the current Canadian government and Aboriginal groups are working toward healing the cultural and personal wounds inflicted by such circumstances. When asked, Alice, a participant in this research project, linked her feelings of supervision living in Kelowna to her experiences living in a residential school:

> Interviewer: Do you feel that you're being supervised for when you come home?
>
> Alice: Yeah! … It- it seems like that … and you know what makes it even worse is that … I was in a Residential School and I … you know, from the time I was 10 years old til' I was 19, I was supervised by nuns, maybe that's why I'm so aware of it (Interview, 7).

Alice's response no doubt resonates with many Aboriginal people who have personally experienced residential schools and were affected by the government and church-based violent efforts to assimilate Aboriginal people in Canada. More to the point, the residential school policy sent a clear message to Aboriginal people to become as inconspicuous as possible. Rosa succinctly states, "[i]f you said you were Native and could get away with being white, you might be pulled into Residential schools. So if you could hide, you did hide" (Interview, 8).

The visual appearance of Aboriginality has real life implications for a population

whose colonized history is predicated on an appearance equated with being less than human. The establishment of these practices is a layered and prolonged engagement between the colonizer and the colonized. In the case of Aboriginal people, "[t]he colonial encounter produces, in this way, both the colonizer whose eyes commit the act of violence, and the colonized who is erased by the colonial gaze. Both are depersonalized – the colonizer caught in a delirium of desiring what must not be desired, the colonized locked into showing that he is the human the colonizer says he is not." (Razack, 1998, p.4). In relation to a white settler community, such as Kelowna, subjectivity is constituted simply by an us/them binary, in this case, the colonizer and the colonized. In this relationship, the urban Aboriginal population is often not visible in the urban landscape unless they are seen acting out stereotypes that reinforce mainstream white attitudes toward Aboriginal people (Rose, 1993, pp.110-111).

6.3 External Surveillance

Aboriginal people are aware of how white society perceives their presence in the urban landscape. As one participant, Trudy, suggests "it's kinda like living in a fishbowl" (Interview, 6). The interactions of Aboriginal people are scrutinized daily and Aboriginal people note the obvious discomfort of even acknowledging one another in public. In this respect, Shelley described a particular situation that left her feeling uneasy and unsure of what her son was learning from the experience.

> And so we sat outside and you know, I notice I'm the only Native person around and my son is, you know, dark, kind of dark, light/dark I dunno whatever but … we're noticeably Native and then all of a sudden a Native man comes who looks really totally, you know, face beaten up, rough, half cut and he's trying to make a

connection to me and here he's from Treaty 7, he's you know, this guy is uh, you

know, he's I won't say the reserve he's from but I know the reserve and I probably

am you know, could even realistically be related to him somehow and … so he came

up and uh was basically kinda like, wasn't asking for anything, money or food, was

just sort of like "Where are you from?" (Interview, 4).

Shelley began this description of the situation, noting that she and her son were the only

"dark" and "native" people on the restaurant patio. Already the situation was uncomfortable

because of her visibility; the situation was exacerbated by the approach of an Aboriginal man

that she identified as being Treaty 7 and having a rough appearance. The situation is difficult,

not because of her uneasiness about being approached by someone who appeared to be in

rough shape, but because of the striking contrast of the visibility of her and this man

compared to the rest of the people eating at the restaurant. The situation became even more

tenuous because of this realization:

what was really hard about that was … that I immediately became aware of the other

non-Native people sitting around the tables watching us … And I immediately

became aware of my son looking at this Indian man who is noticeably a street person.

So I worried, not only about the impact of their looking at me, I worried about my son

and then our lunch came and he was like, I know he could sense my uncomfortability

because I didn't wanna have a drawn out conversation with him, I was just wanting to

be with my son, I felt really embarrassed, which is awful. You know, awful

(Interview, 4).

Shelley's experience is not uncommon, especially in Kelowna, where the population is

significantly homogenous, which means different skin colour is highly visible and easy to

interpret as different.

Shelley's story demonstrates the persistent stigma that is attached to Aboriginal bodies and makes these bodies targets for mainstream scrutiny. Colleen, another research participant, recollected a conversation with a downtown Kelowna businessperson: "See that's the thing. I even had one woman say to me, 'Well you know … you know I look in the park and I see all these drunk Indians and I think well I don't really know if I wanna have them working for me'" (Interview, 1). In the preceding conversation the connection being made is that one individual represents an entire population. The connection is a rather limited connection, considering the visible minority population in Kelowna only accounts for 6% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2006), which makes it easy to identify deviant non-white behaviour.

The objectification of Aboriginal bodies goes much deeper than identifying a small number of Aboriginal people as drunks and linking that judgment to an entire population. The judgment is insidious and has detrimental consequences to the population that further (re)enforces ideas of segregation and exclusion. The female Aboriginal woman is subjected to notions of exoticism and sex, she is objectified and stripped of identity. Often in situations where Aboriginal women have suffered violence as a result of public perception of her body as a sexual tool, the legal system becomes her enemy rather than her ally (Razack, 2002). Among the Aboriginal community the knowledge of such stereotyping and its consequences is common, and affects the way people identify themselves and how they help their children understand themselves. Shelley, a single mother, noted the struggles she had raising her children in an environment that is hostile toward Aboriginal people. She also discussed how, as a woman who is Aboriginal, she was made to feel like an object of desire:

I guess a Native woman is really objectified … people could say that's just your own

thinking, or your own projections but I've had situations where you know, I'm

walking down the street in Vernon for instance and, I parked my car and I'm going to

the Friendship Centre just around the corner, and a car with an older white guy, you

know, slowing down and looking at me (Interview, 4).

She provided another example of her experience of being sexually objectified as she relayed

a story about getting coffee at a local Tim Horton's restaurant:

And I get that a lot, even just say walking into Tim Horton's. I notice older non-

Native men, just the way they look at me. And I don't even wear high heels, and not-

'cause I'm older, I'm not … I'm not a … any means young, and I don't dress flashy

… it's like looking at you but feeling very objectified … it's scary (Interview, 4).

The sense of being objectified that Shelley shared is not new to her. She was aware of the

space she took up as a woman and even more so she was aware of the space took up as a

visibly Aboriginal woman. She was confronted in a single moment, in a restaurant, by

centuries of gendered and racialized oppression.

The feeling of being objectified has real implications, especially in the face of

violence against women. The objectification of women allows the individual or group that is

performing the act of objectifying to remove all traces of humanity from the person being

viewed. Removing humanity from the person who is being objectified enables an individual

or group to commit acts of violence. Simone de Beauvoir wrote extensively in her book *The*

Second Sex (1949) about how the social construction of women as the 'Other' enabled the

oppression of women. Other notable authors and scholars such as bell hooks (1999a, 1999b,

2000) and Judith Butler (1993, 1999, 2004) have added their observations about the social

construction of gender and the subsequent oppression of women in North American culture.

Sut Jhally, a scholar in the area of media, advertising and consumption, demonstrated

through his documentaries "Dreamworlds" (1990) and "Dreamworlds ll" (1995) that the

male adolescent fantasy that reduces women to highly sexualized body parts, objects, in

entertainment media such as music videos.

Objectification of women can be found in multiple media sources. The images filter

throughout North American culture and psyche. As a result women have learned strategies to

distance themselves from the stereotypes that are portrayed and performed in media. The

lives of women are constructed in such a way as to create a barrier against "bodily invasion"

(Simonsen, 2003). "Bodily invasion" is about power relations and about fear of violence. For

women being 'wise' is about not frequenting the city at specific times or in specific places,

not wearing specific clothes etc" (2003, p.169). As Shelley noted, she was not young, she did

not wear flashy clothing, and yet she continued to feel the gaze of older white men. She was

aware of presentation and what typically brought unwanted male attention, but she could not

manage her physiological appearance in the same way as clothing.

As a result of stereotypes and attitudes felt in mainstream culture, Aboriginal people

find themselves having to use camouflage techniques to avoid attention. The alternative to

camouflage for most urban Aboriginal people is to gravitate to places and communities

where their appearance as Aboriginal is less of focus for public attention. When talking about

whether she fit in the community, Sandra shared the difficulty that Kelowna's Aboriginal

people felt in trying to be accepted as part of the community:

> I think I pretty much fit in anywhere but a lot of our First Nations people don't fit so
>
> that's why they go to the low income part of town and they all sort of share rent and

try not to be noticed to much right? Cause they don't fit in anywhere (Interview, 12).

The act of selecting areas of town that feel friendlier toward urban Aboriginal people is part

of an internalizing of the mainstream white culture's surveillance of their bodies.

6.4 Personal/Internalized Surveillance

The internalization of surveillance is not a phenomenon that happens instantly. The

process takes a long time, is culturally bound, and typically place-specific (Foucault, 1975).

Different communities have different attitudes. What may be considered 'normal' behaviour

in one community does not necessarily apply to all communities. Insiders are acutely aware

of what is common and what is not; whereas, outsiders have to learn what is common

generally through making public mistakes.

For the First Nations population in Canada, surveillance has had a profound affect on

their lives and their bodies and ultimately on the ways in which they engage urban life. As

Colleen said, "Well look at me. I look First Nations. They don't wanna hire me" (Interview,

1). She was reduced to appearance and she knew that her appearance limited her

opportunities for employment and consequently there was little motivation to enter the labour

market. Colleen illustrated the generational impact of surveillance as she elaborated on the

reasons Aboriginal people struggle with finding employment in urban centres:

They [Aboriginal people] … have the skills and qualifications and still won't get

hired because they look First Nations. And … so I … I find that really hard because

my Mom grew up being "Don't tell nobody you're First Nations 'cause they won't

hire you … you won't have opportunities if you tell people you're First Nations." So

what a sad thing to grow up with (Interview, 1).

In Kelowna, Colleen noted, "there's places that I will go and there's places that I don't feel I fit in" (Interview, 1). She described some of the spaces in Kelowna where she came to understand an underlying sentiment of not being welcomed:

> Well and I even feel that when I go into some of the shops in Kelowna, and you know, and you go into these fancy stores and they look at you as if to say "Well…" And they walk away from you because they think "Well she's not gonna buy nothing here. She can't afford what I have in my store." … Some of the gyms … for example because I think they're for more of the elite … things like The Grand, things like … just places like that that I just don't think are … where I just don't fit in like I would be there, right? (Interview, 1).

There are no signs that state Aboriginal people are not welcome, or people who are low income are not welcome. Colleen simply learned to understand she was not welcome because of a prolonged exhibition of behaviour that makes her internalize the feeling of not belonging. There is no significant difference between her and the sales staff, or the gym attendants, or the employees at the Grand, other than skin colour and national heritage. In terms of personal appearance Colleen says: "I'm a very casual dresser ... I don't dress up in the diamonds and the furs and those kinds of things, I mean great if you want to, but I don't … I'm very laid back and I'm casual but comfortable and look nice and dress well and yeah and, and people would just kinda assume that well … you can't afford anything" (Interview, 1). Colleen was aware that her personal appearance limited how she was treated in Kelowna, how she was viewed as a person economically and socially. Accordingly, she modified her behaviour and only visited places where she felt she fit in, in order to avoid feelings of not belonging. Despite the fact that her family is from the Okanagan Nation and has a long

history in the Okanagan Valley, she did not feel as though she belonged.

Shelley pointedly avoided stereotypic behaviours of Aboriginal people. She made rigorous attempts to distance herself from the stereotype she identified as "the dirty Indian". Shelley described her tactics:

> when I was going to university, the same thing. I had references from everywhere I lived, I always made sure that give them a month's notice to really make sure it's cleaner and better than when you moved in. You know it's been a big thing for me as being Native you know, it's always such a stereotype about you know, sort of the dirty Indian so I've been very mindful of that and very … it's really important to me not to be a you know, the stereotype (Interview, 4).

Shelley has internalized the stereotype of "dirty Indian" and made changes in the way she navigated her daily life so that little connection could be made to her as a "dirty Indian". Her attempt to disassociate herself from the stigma is a demonstration of embodiment of stigma, and the ideological constructions of stigma within the particular racist history toward Aboriginal people in North America. Shelley changed her appearance to what she associated as opposite of a 'dirty Indian'. She was not contesting the stigma rather she was conforming and assimilating behaviour that she learned was 'accepted' in mainstream culture in Kelowna.

Racial stigma produces and sustains material inequalities and is in held in place by histories of prejudices, exclusion and poverty (Sibley, 1995). Through surveillance, racial stigmatization is (re)produced continually throughout history and because of surveillance the violence of racial stigma is continually (re)employed upon the racialized body. Surveillance also affects the way the body uses space and how space can come to be known as racial.

Neighbourhood surveillance activities have affected the ways areas of Kelowna are viewed among local residents.

6.5 Neighbourhood Surveillance

Surveillance of neighbourhoods legitimizes and (re)enforces discrimination toward groups that are perceived as deviant from the norm (Lyon, 1994, 2001). Typically, discussions about neighbourhoods centre on which neighbourhoods are nice and safe and which neighbourhoods are bad. Generally, these neighbourhoods are referred to as slums, ghettos, or enclaves. Effectively the neighbourhoods act as a marker for ease of surveillance. Bodies that live there and attempt to use urban space outside of their own stigmatized neighbourhood carry the stigma of that neighbourhood with them. Yvonne, a participant in this research project, shared an anecdote regarding a Kelowna neighbourhood that demonstrated the linking of space with the body:

> Oh like jokes. Oh you live in Rutland? … oh one joke that I heard, it was kind of funny but you know, I dunno, I don't think Rutland's bad but … oh …" oh did you hear about the, the zoo in Kelowna?" And I went "What zoo?" "Oh yeah yeah if you put a fence around Rutland … then that's the zoo …" (Interview, 5).

The anecdote is dehumanizing the space known as Rutland by alluding to the space as a zoo. A zoo is a place where spectators go to watch exotic animals in a contrived natural setting. This allusion turns the inhabitants into exotic animals to be watched by spectators.

The performance of residing in an area such as Rutland, is a "question not of treating the body, *en masse*, 'wholesale', as if it were an in-dissociable unity, but of working it 'retail', individually; of exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the

level of the mechanism itself – movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body" (Foucault, 1977, p.137). Through stories that frame a particular space and the bodies that inhabit that space as something not human and subsequently as the 'other', the individual is constricted in the ways s/he can use urban space. Shelley noted that her obstacle "has to do with income and if you have the choice between renting between, you know, a couple that are working or choose a mother with children and a university student and Native, I mean it's so many checkmarks against you" (Interview, 4). Yvonne also shared "being on income assistance and [being] a single mom … that, at that time in my life was, you feel landlords …kinda judge you?" (Interview, 5). Shelley and Yvonne are acutely aware that their identities as 'native', 'single mom', 'on income assistance' were all markers by which they were identified. These positions are viewed as negatives instead of strengths as implied by what they are not, which is 'white', 'married', 'employed'.

These social markers affect the choices the women make when seeking housing; so much so, they will make choices to avoid these markers to their own detriment. Shelley said, "the downfall of this is I didn't apply for the low income housing 'cause I just have my own I guess stereotypes in that I don't wanna be ghetto-ized, I don't want to be put in a bunch of houses where it's noticeably … Native housing" (Interview, 4). Shelley was referring to subsidized housing that is sensitive to Aboriginal needs. For Shelley while the housing option would alleviate financial concerns and come equipped with a community that understands her and her family's needs, she was aware of the stigma that would be placed on her body should she live in an Aboriginal supportive housing. While the housing is conceived as a place of assistance in the urban environment, the attempt is perceived as a 'ghetto-ization' of a group of people and that is what Shelley wanted to avoid.

Shelley's actions were more than just avoidance; she was responding to a widespread consensus that plague Aboriginal people, which is that they are rowdy, drunks, thieves and all other kinds of less than desirable people. The consequence is behaviour from the non-Aboriginal community that limits and excludes Aboriginal people from the urban landscape. Alice, a participant in this study, relayed a story that demonstrates how the imagination of the non-Aboriginal community has resulted in an uncomfortable relationship with her landlord. Alice shared that,

> there was an incident where someone had broken into their building. In the front door. And the next morning, he called me and asked me if I could identify that person. And I told him, "what makes you think I would know that person?" He didn't respond to that. And I asked him "is this person Aboriginal?" Apparently he's got cameras on all the time. And so … and then I asked him "Is this guy Aboriginal that broke in?" He said "no." I says " Well what makes you think I'd know this person?" And I didn't know this person … when I first started working there, I mean when I first applied, he just questioned me about, you know, my job. He says "I don't want no drinking, I don't want no this, this, this" and I says, "I don't drink. I don't party" (Interview, 7).

Alice's experience demonstrates that there is good reason to attempt to avoid situations that feed into stereotypes about Aboriginal people. She has indicated that she was the only person who was visibly aboriginal living in her complex. Her visibility as an Aboriginal person often left her exposed to accusations of improper behaviour from her landlord.

Alice, whose difference is being visibly aboriginal, lives in an adult only building, where all the tenants are white and the landlord is white. In addition, the landlord has set up a surveillance system around the perimeter of the property and Alice has indicated that she

feels as though he is watching her movements. She commented that on occasion, she has come home late in the evening and her landlord would be standing outside the front entrance attempting to interrogate her whereabouts. Foucault likens the feeling to an 'examination', "a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish" (Rabinow, 1984, p.1978) those people who are made visible through what differentiates them and allows a space for judgment of their bodies.

In another situation regarding purchasing a car, Alice relayed a story regarding her landlord's reaction to the purchase:

> He came down $500 so I bought it for 15,000. And my landlord says to me "Did Indian Affairs buy you this car?" I just said, "Are you kidding! Why?? Why would they buy me a car?" And he says "Oh well I always hear people getting money from the government." I said "Maybe from bands" I said "They do get money" I says "But those bands are wealthy like, like say West Bank. They're leasing off the land to get all this money. Other bands have uh casinos. You know, that's where they the people from that, those reserves get extra money. I said, "I'm not that lucky." I say, " I have to work for everything I have" I said "I had a house but I sold it. But with part of that is what I'm buying a car with. 'Cause I need a good one." (Interview, 7).

The landlord's response was based on what he has learned through hearsay regarding Aboriginal people and funding. Alice has heard the same thing over and over again and often finds herself in a position where she has to educate others about the 'privileges' she is perceived as having because she is Aboriginal. The same as every other tenant in her building she pays her rent on time, is clean and not intrusive, yet her movements, whereabouts and personal details are under constant scrutiny from her landlord because she is Aboriginal. She

even relayed a story about having visitors and her landlord's insistence on knowing the details of whom she was inviting to stay in her apartment:

> You know, his carvings and stuff he wanted me to keep them. And then soon as this guy came, there was a knock on my door. And here's my landlord standing there again asking a silly question. I can't even remember what it was … and he seen this guy standing in there and I didn't say anything, he didn't ask me anything but it's like. And then with my brother too-my brother moved here or he's staying with me right now. 'Cause I, I went back to Alberta and he came with me because I didn't want to drive alone so I thought if you wanted to go back he can, you know, go by bus but he wants to stay so now he's … he asked, I said uh … "I just wanted to let you know, my brother's gonna be staying with me for a while." "Well how long?" And I said, "I don't have a definite uh-uh-uh- specific date," I said. But he did give me an extra key for him so it's like … Okay, I'm renting this apartment okay? It's costing me almost a thousand dollars to rent it. I should be able to have as many visitors as I want … I should be able to have some sort of privacy … (Interview, 7).

The examination of Alice's daily life, despite her best efforts to demonstrate she is not deviant, continues based on what makes her different from the other tenants and her landlord—visibility. Regardless if the neighbourhood stigma attaches meaning to the body or if the meaning is attached through visible difference, the participants of this research shared experiences of being subjected to a constant supervision, a particular kind of surveillance that leaves them subject to interrogation and discrimination, despite their best efforts to conform and to become as inconspicuous as possible.

6.6 Surveillance Over Appearance

The attempt to be inconspicuous is thwarted often based on the fashion of the day. "[T]he subject is objectified by a process of division either within himself or from others" (Foucault, 1982, p.208) which typically is decided through outward appearance, either through phenotype of skin colour and through clothing and possessions such as vehicles. Colleen described a moment when she was searching for a home and got the distinct impression from the landlord that something about her appearance was not adequate.

> And it was quite, quite cute, and you know quite fixed up. You know, an older home but cute little place. And the landlord's comment to me was "Ohh … I don't think you need a place like this." And it was almost, and I drove a Ford pickup right? An older Ford pickup. And I thought to myself, I got the impression that she was looking at the truck thinking that I just didn't drive the, the right car … (Interview, 1).

The outward appearance of the "older Ford pickup" is observed as a marker of ability to afford the "older but cute little place". The landlord's conclusion that Colleen may not have the means to afford the place was based on the appearance of Colleen's vehicle. Concerns about appearance for Aboriginal people go much deeper than just ownership of a vehicle and the potential implications to others. There is a consensus that based on appearance the participants in this research are continually in the position of having to explain themselves, to prove that they are not the preconceived stereotype in other peoples imaginations. For example, Alice explained:

> Everytime I wanna look for housing I almost have to explain my whole being to people. And that annoys me. Like they ask me such questions, and I don't know if they ask everybody. Like … do you drink, do you … you know … I imagine they ask

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everybody but … I don't drink … it's almost like I have to give my whole life story if

I wanna rent a place. I don't drink. And I'm not talking about juice or pop. I'm

talking about alcohol. I don't drink alcohol. I don't use drugs … I don't … I'm not

even on prescription drugs (Interview, 7).

The constant requirement to explain oneself demonstrates a relationship between the person

who is doing the telling and the person who is expecting the telling—it is a power

relationship. In Alice's case she was powerless in the relationship she had with her landlord

because of the constant surveillance and requirements to justify her movements. Despite the

fact that Alice is an employed adult holding a respectable position within her community, she

is continually pushed into the position of a child having to answer to their parent. She is a

tenant answering to her landlord, despite the fact that she paid her rent on time and did not

damage the property or cause disturbances that would require such a detailed explanation of

self. The same can be said of all the participants in this research and their relationship with

the white community of Kelowna.

The relationship that the participants of this research have with the white community

of Kelowna is tenuous and is fraught with worry and concern regarding appearance. The

participants are acutely aware of their position in the community and how their movements

and bodies are under constant surveillance and judgment. The awareness has become

internalized to such a degree that the participants pay attention to how members in their own

community are representing them. For example, Shelley shared an experience where a young

man of Aboriginal appearance caused her stress by his clothing choice:

like this young guy living with him, me, I tell him when we go to town sometimes,

like when we went to town shopping he, he always wears a black kerchief around his

head, and he looks like a gangster and I was telling him … what are you doing? You

don't think that there's already enough racial profiling? (Interview, 4).

Shelley expressed concern regarding racial profiling because she was acutely aware of how

her body was read by the white population in Kelowna. Shelley's experience informed her

response to the young man living with her. In the following excerpt Shelley shared an

observation of a situation between the young man and an employee in a local fast food

restaurant:

By you wearing that, do you know what you're saying? Do you know how much

you're drawing even more attention to yourself? And it's not even your culture, I

mean it's your, you know, if you're African-American and you know, a hipster or a

rapper or … I don't know. Maybe I could see it! You know? But I'm not, I just feel

like you're following something you don't even understand and we I … I remember

going even through, going through McDonalds, he's sitting in the car next to me with

this, you know, black thing over his head and a guy yelling, Caucasian guy serving

us, I saw him look at him and I feel sad that I think there there's a fear of Native

people (Interview, 4).

The cycle of surveillance is never-ending and the acts serve to (re)enforce notions of

otherness as well as create and sustain fears regarding others. The young Aboriginal man

who was dressed as a 'gangster' was attempting to physically display his power as deviant

and dangerous. The public who were watching him were having their fears. Everything

becomes connected through the act of surveillance, the home, the urban environment, the

body, and the self is open to scrutiny, evaluation and judgment that are continually recycled

through the imagination. The impact on Aboriginal people is that they are found to be in a

constant struggle to be authentically themselves while at the same time attempting to avoid

stereotyping from the non-Aboriginal community.

Chapter 7:
Conclusions are Not Necessarily Solutions

"All I want is a room somewhere/Far away from the cold night air/With one enormous chair/Oh wouldn't it be loverly?"

~ Eliza DoLittle, *My Fair Lady* (1964)

7.1 Thesis Conclusion: More Research Needed

The conclusion of this research revealed two clear means of producing gendered, classed, and racialized divisions of urban space: Identity and Surveillance. I began this research suspecting discrimination was a significant reason as to why urban Aboriginal women may be experiencing barriers in the housing market. I acknowledged that there were other factors at work that affect access to housing such as availability and affordability (but these are also gendered, classed and racialized processes). The women of this research shared that the issues of discrimination they faced while attempting to access housing in Kelowna changed and confronted their sense of identity. Often the conflict with identity was negotiated through the surveillance of their bodies. The women listed the various ways in which they would modify their appearance, such as hair, makeup, clothing and possessions, as a means to lessen the effects they felt from the surveillance of their bodies.

Some of the women noted the pressure to conform from what they identified as 'mainstream' Kelowna, challenged their own sense of pride in their heritage and identity. They faced challenges such as how to instil a sense of pride in their children about being Aboriginal, while living in a community that created a sense that being Aboriginal was not desirable. They felt the stereotypes such as filthy, dirty, lazy, and drunken were consistently held by many of the white residents of Kelowna. They expressed stories that demonstrated

the various ways in which they came to understand the negative stereotypes toward

Aboriginal people in Kelowna.

The women of this study came to understand that there are certain places in Kelowna

where their bodies become the subject of intense surveillance. As a result, the women

avoided areas such as the Mission, the Cultural District, the Grand, Rutland, bingo halls,

aboriginal subsidized housing, restaurants, and gyms. All of these places, for the women,

became spaces of surveillance where their actions, behaviours and selves were scrutinized.

The conclusion of this research reinforced and demonstrated for me that racial discrimination

was the dominant barrier for the urban Aboriginal women of this study.

I find the conclusion to this thesis difficult to address because although the 'problem'

facing urban Aboriginal women in securing housing in Kelowna has been researched.

Observations regarding their experience have been made, and discussion has been generated,

nothing is over in the sense that the term "conclusion" would suggest. Little has changed

since I first began this study. While my research project is ending, the participants continue

to live in Kelowna, continue to seek affordable and adequate housing, and continue to

navigate ways of being in the community without feeling ashamed for being Aboriginal. The

city and non-profit groups are making efforts to address the lack of affordable housing

(Province of British Columbia, 2007; City of Kelowna, 2006). These efforts are marginal at

best when one considers the urgent and immediate need for housing that the participants in

this study and many others in similar situations are facing (Hulchanski et al., 2004).

Housing is only a part of the struggle for the participants of this study. Hegemonic

whiteness as a social-spatial structure and discursive formation interlocks with other axes of

identity such as class and gender to affect accessibility to housing. The white community

continues to exclude Aboriginal people and to retain preconceived ideas regarding the Aboriginal community. This research was concerned with understanding how the experience of whiteness affects urban Aboriginal women's ability to access affordable housing. The beginning of understanding has taken shape within this research and yet further research is needed, especially in terms of finding solutions that would be useful for the participants of this study and their counterparts. In addition, further research is needed to understand whiteness and the structures of whiteness in Kelowna in order that Kelowna and the Okanagan region might move forward toward a more inclusive way of co-habiting and creating urban space.

When I began this research, I understood that women and non-white people suffer inequalities within the social and economic structures of Canada, British Columbia and specifically in my research area, Kelowna (Stone, 2001; Aguiar et al., 2005). I expected that, through my research interviews, I would learn stories about exclusion and struggles with affordable housing. I felt I was prepared for the stories that would be shared with me. I did not expect the ways that my participants would elaborate on how living in a white community affected their lives and, more importantly, how living in Kelowna had affected the way that the women viewed themselves, their history, their future and their participation in the city of Kelowna.

7.2 Housing Exclusion and the Urban Aboriginal Woman

Income is an important factor in securing adequate and affordable housing (Drummond et al., 2004; Stapleton, 2004; Atkey & Siggner, 2008). All of the women in the study noted that living in Kelowna is expensive. One participant identified herself as a professional with a high level of earning who nonetheless had her own struggles affording

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housing in the community. As a result of the high cost of housing, the participants had a shared experience of inadequate housing. These types of housing situations often led to problems with landlords. In several situations, the participants shared stories of illegal and questionable actions committed by landlords. In many cases, the landlords would deliberately take a long time in repair and maintenance of the rental properties. The participants noted that these same landlords also would arrive at the tenant's residence unannounced. During these visits the tenants were often interrogated by the landlords about their activities, such as how many people where living in the residence, whether they were drinking or taking drugs, and the reasons for the tenants coming and going from the property. Most of the women, when asked if they took legal action or were able to lodge a complaint, indicated that raising any concerns often left them at risk of being evicted. Eviction is a significant concern for the participants and, as a result, they often continued in situations that were problematic In addition, the women noted that landlords often viewed the women as incapable of being sole supporters of the household. Landlords were reluctant to rent to the women, or would often harass the women in sexually explicit ways. Although most of the women resisted being gendered and assumed strategies that protected them from the structural violence that landlords committed, they indicated that having a male partner eased the landlord's assumptions about what the women could afford.

7.3 Housing and Landlords' Bias Against Aboriginal Children

Participants of this research who felt the most pressure were single parents. In this respect, landlords' reluctance to rent to single parent families was not the only barrier that these individuals faced. Often the Ministry of Children and Families would place limitations

and restrictions on these women. The number of children in a family dictates assistance rates

and thus affects the quality of housing that the single family could afford. In most cases, the

assistance from the government was not sufficient to meet the cost of housing (City of

Kelowna, 2006; Ministry of Housing and Social Development, 2007).

In addition to limited resources for housing, parents were confronted by their

landlords' notions of how many rooms are needed for families with two or more children.

Often the participants in this study were forced to lie about how many children they had so

they could rent housing to meet their immediate needs. Discrimination against the

participants of this study was also experienced through their landlords' fear of noise and

property damage. Landlords often informed the parents that they felt the number of children

in the family would indicate a significant potential for neighbours complaining about noise

and of children damaging the rental property. Despite presenting references that belied the

landlords' fears, the participants in this study were often turned away based solely on their

single parent status.

Landlords concerns about gender, specifically regarding children of opposite sexes

sharing a room, or a parent and child sharing a room exacerbated the women's need to

obscure the truth about the number of children they had and their sleeping arrangements. The

single mothers in this study also pointed out that the lack of a male partner assisting in

parenting made the landlords hesitant. Often the single mothers were tempted to obscure the

truth regarding their single parenting status. In many of the cases, the single mothers were

aggressively interviewed regarding their ability to single parent. The women indicated

frustration regarding the lack of respect for the work they do raising their children on their

own.

7.4 Housing and the Issue of Privacy

Privacy, and the right to privacy, is significant concern for the participants of this study. Regardless of what they were renting, the participants often struggle with their right to privacy. The participants noted concerns about landlords. One frequent concern among the women was the nature of the surveillance they experienced from their landlords, which was intrusive and accusatory regarding their daily activities. When challenged, the landlords would often retreated behind excuses regarding the safety of the rental property. In addition, the participants were often confronted with questions about employment, family background, income, credit history, rental history, entertainment choices, and lifestyle choices. There is also the precarious nature of retaining secure housing. Defining what is appropriate in tenant/landlord situations where the power relationship is unequal becomes complex. Often the participants found themselves in situations where they worked hard to keep their landlord happy and participated in behaviours that they perceived would keep their landlord happy and mollified. The constant threat of eviction forces the participants into uncomfortable situations. For the women, the home is considered a safe place, except in situations where the idea of safety is threatened by intrusions on privacy, harassment or domestic abuse. The behaviour exhibited by the landlords changes the way the women begin to view their homes. The home is no longer a safe place, and when they leave their home, their personal space and belongings remain vulnerable. Legally speaking their rental unit is their personal space, as long as they as tenants are abiding by their rental agreement. Yet very few of the participants are aware of their rights as tenants. Exerting one's rights becomes precarious, especially in a community where housing resources are limited and dwindling.

7.5 Housing and the Stereotypes of Race and Gender

Race plays a significant role in the experiences that women face in housing situations. In a white settler mind frame, the raced female body has been exposed and exoticized (Roy, 1989; Razack, 2002; Lawrence, 2003). This form of making race through gender leaves the woman vulnerable to harassment (Razack, 2002). As discussed in chapter six, urban Aboriginal women who were formerly street workers and currently living in subsidized housing, were continually harassed by their landlords because of their status and their background. Their 'race' becomes the conduit through which structural violence and discrimination is condoned in white communities.

Race is not the sole reason for discrimination. There are several subject positions that interlock such as gender, class, and familial status that affect the nature of discrimination in housing in Kelowna. Services for the urban Aboriginal women are limited and their racial identity usually becomes the focal point for their experiences with discrimination. In a predominantly white community, such as Kelowna, it is not hard to imagine how racial discrimination can be so prevalent. In some cases, it is not the direct intention of housing providers to discriminate based on race. In fact, most housing providers are caught up in the same hierarchy of relationships that create barriers for urban Aboriginal women accessing housing. Stereotypes as well as communally held beliefs or ideas about lifestyle and living impact the way people viewed as outsiders are able to interact with the community.

This research project determined not only race and/or ethnic identity to be a barrier to housing, but also in many cases, gender and socio-economic status. All of these inequalities shape the way the women of this study strategized their daily activities while living in Kelowna. There are multiple inequalities that urban Aboriginal women have to confront

when seeking and securing adequate housing in Kelowna. In a white settler community, it is difficult to tease out exactly where the exclusionary behaviour comes from and in the case of the research project it was hard for my participants to consider how the barriers could change to render the situation more inclusive.

7.6 Removing Barriers: Policy Changes and Future Research

The effort to discover solutions to the housing situation in Canada is providing many cities with significant challenges. Affordable and subsidized housing is becoming increasingly difficult to locate and fund. In addition, an increasing number of people are becoming homeless as well as in danger of becoming homeless. Between population increases and housing shortages, communities across Canada are experiencing situations that seem insurmountable. In 2006, David Hulchanski visited UBC Okanagan to talk about housing in Canada. He recollected a conversation he had with an overseas city planner about the housing situation in Canada. The planner asked Hulchanski why Canada faced so many challenges regarding housing when the country had all the resources to ensure housing for everyone. The question demands an answer in action, not in words. What is missing is the will to effect change. The concept of housing as a right, that everyone should expect to have a home of some form, is radical in nature, but the social welfare system and non-profit societies might well be better equipped to address social concerns if housing were considered a right in Canada (Skaburskis and Mok, 2000; Walker, 2003; Drummond et al., 2004; Hulchanski et al, 2004; Porter, 2004).

The journey to recognizing housing as a right in Canada may need several small steps before actually employing the idea of freedom of housing. A proactive enforcement of fair

housing laws and more education about fair housing laws needs to be addressed, especially in situations where housing has been secured. A proactive enforcement of fair housing laws is important for women, especially in the context where they are at a higher risk for sexual harassment or discrimination based on having children. Fair housing laws would provide protection for women and other minorities in the housing sector. My belief is that as individuals and communities work toward establishing proactive legislation and enforcement of fair housing laws, people will begin to view housing as a significant right that needs protection. In this way, the idea of housing as an entitlement becomes less of a frightening concept and more of a step in the right direction for the benefit of marginalized populations, such as urban Aboriginal women in Kelowna.

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Appendices

Appendix A – UBC Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval

UBC

The University of British Columbia Okanagan
Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
3333 University Way
Kelowna, BC V1V 1V7

Phone: 250-807-9412
Fax: 250-807-8438

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL- MINIMAL RISK RENEWAL

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	DEPARTMENT:	UBC BREB NUMBER:
Lawrence D. Berg	UBC/UBCO IKE Barber School of Arts & Sc/UBCO Admin Unit 1 Arts & Sci	H07-01253

INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:

Institution	Site
UBC	Okanagan

Other locations where the research will be conducted:
The research is managed out of the Allied Social Research Centres at UBC-Okanagan. Much of the research will be associated with the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society (KFS, the First Nations Friendship Centre in central Kelowna). Research participants will be interviewed by the co-investigator (Sheila Lewis) at the Friendship Society offices. The interviews will take place during office hours, and there will be KFS staff available in case the interviewer or interviewees require assistance.

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):

Sheila Lewis

SPONSORING AGENCIES:

N/A

PROJECT TITLE:
White Picket Fences: Whiteness, Urban Aboriginal Women and Housing Market Discrimination in Kelowna BC

EXPIRY DATE OF THIS APPROVAL: July 15, 2010

APPROVAL DATE: July 15, 2009

The Annual Renewal for Study have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board Okanagan

Appendix B – Letter of Initial Contact

White Picket Fences: Whiteness, Urban Aboriginal Women and Housing Market
Discrimination in Kelowna,

Letter of Initial Contact

The "White Picket Fences: Whiteness, Urban Aboriginal Women and Housing Market
Discrimination in Kelowna" is a project involving the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, and
researchers at UBC Okanagan. The researcher for this project is Sheila Lewis under the
direct supervision of Dr. Lawrence Berg. Sheila Lewis is a graduate student with UBC
Okanagan and is working on completing her Interdisciplinary Graduate Degree with specific
focus in Anthropology and Human Geography. The goal of the project is to learn about how
women in the Urban Aboriginal Communities of Kelowna are searching for housing and
their experiences during the search for housing, and how people within the community think
housing could be improved. We hope that we can have some input into improving services
through this project. Any and all participation in the project is purely voluntary, and
participants are free to withdraw from the project at any time. You are being invited to
participate in the project because as a member of the community and we think your
experiences with housing (both good and bad) are important to know so we can help change
things in good ways.

How will the project work?

We will be interviewing people in the community about their experiences about housing. We
will be asking you to take part in a taped interview that will take about an hour to complete.
As well as a focus group with fellow participants, that will take 2-3 hours to complete.

Risks and Benefits

We don't see any risks, but sometimes when people start talking about things that happened
that weren't so good, it can be hard. We hope this won't happen, but if it does we will stop

the interview and then figure out if you should talk to someone else, whether that should be a counsellor or one of the staff members at Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society. We are hoping that talking about things to do with housing and housing searches will maybe help people in the community change things for the better – that's why we are doing this research in the first place. We are not doing any activities with potential for profit, nor do we have any intent to do so.

What if there are some things you want to say but want them to be confidential? How will participants be protected?

We will make sure that only people on the research team will be able to tell what you said unless you tell us otherwise. Your name will not be on any tapes or transcripts. Your name will appear only on your consent forms, all the other material will be coded so people from outside the project can't tell who said what. All the interview material will also be keep in a secure office when not being used, and it will only be used by members of the research team for the reasons we've said here. Later on in the project you can tell us if you want people to know what you said, but unless you tell us, we will not give anyone your name or tell people which ideas and thoughts were yours. However, the researchers have no control over what participants in the focus group reveal afterwards about who said what. You will have to consider this if you want to participate in the focus group after the initial interviews.

What if you don't want to participate, or if you start and then decide you don't want to continue?

It's all good. If you decide not to participate that's fine. We don't want anyone to do anything that they aren't happy to do. We want this research done in a good way from start to finish, so if you decide halfway through to stop, that's OK – no one will get into any trouble. If you do decide to stop, we will give you back or destroy any of the earlier interview materials you gave us and be happy with that.

What happens to the material after?

Material and experiences from the project will be used in a report for the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society and may be used for scholarly publications. The tapes and transcripts will

be held securely at UBC Okanagan under the care of Dr. Lawrence Berg. After five years all materials will be shredded and destroyed.

What if I have any questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about anything to do with the project you can ask Lawrence Berg, the principle investigator, at (250)-807-9392. The other University researcher is Sheila Lewis. If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.

I want to participate

If you want to participate, you can contact Sheila Lewis, to arrange a time to meet, by phone (250) 862-7553 or by email she.lewis@hotmail.com .

Appendix C – Recruitment Poster

Aboriginal Women and Housing in Kelowna

I am inviting urban Aboriginal women to come and share their experiences of buying or renting housing in Kelowna. Your experiences, whether buying a house or finding a place to rent, will help me better understand any barriers that you might be experiencing in the housing market in Kelowna.

My name is Sheila Lewis and I am a graduate student with the University of British Columbia – Okanagan.

The interviews will be held here at the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society and should take no more than an hour to complete. Afterwards, you may be invited to participate in a focus group with other participants to share experiences with housing in Kelowna.

If are interested in contributing your experiences with seeking housing in Kelowna please contact me: Sheila Lewis (250) 862-7553.

This research is in affiliation with the University of British Columbia-Okanagan. The supervisor is Dr. Lawrence Berg, and you are encouraged to call him if you have any questions: (250) 807-9392. If there are any concerns about the research you may report these to the Office of Research Services, UBC-O (250) 807-8150.

Appendix D – Consent Forms

White Picket Fences: Whiteness, Urban Aboriginal Women and Housing Market Discrimination in Kelowna, British Columbia

This project is supervised by the Principal Investigator, Dr. Lawrence Berg. He is an Associate Professor with Community, Culture, and Global Studies in Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences. He can be contacted by phone at (250) 807-9392. The graduate student and Co-investigator, whose research this study is for, is Sheila Lewis,. She is a student with Graduate Studies at the University of British Columbia-Okanagan. She can be contacted by phone (250) 862-7553 or by email she.lewis@hotmail.com.

The "White Picket Fences: Whiteness, Urban Aboriginal Women and Housing Market Discrimination in Kelowna" is a project involving the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society, and researchers at UBC Okanagan. The goal of the project is to learn about how women in the Urban Aboriginal Communities of Kelowna are searching for housing and their experiences during the search for housing, and how people within the community think housing could be improved. We hope that we can have some input into improving services through this project. Any and all participation in the project is purely voluntary, and participants are free to withdraw from the project at any time. You are being invited to participate in the project because as a member of the community and we think your experiences with housing (both good and bad) are important to know so we can help change things in good ways. There are two phases to the project. The first the researcher will be conducting individual interviews with participants. The second, participants may be asked to join a focus group to share their experience with others about housing in Kelowna.

Participation Consent

We would like you to participate in this research project. It is important that you understand a few things first though. **Your participation in this research is purely voluntary**. If you don't want to participate then please don't. You also have the right not to answer a particular

question and still continue to participate. Your participation in the research will remain confidential if that is what you want. If you do decide to participate, and then decide later that you don't want to anymore, you are free to withdraw. **You can withdraw at anytime**. If you do decide to withdraw, your contributions to the research will be returned to you if you wish. After you have completed your interview and/or taping and had a chance to think about it, **you have the right to waive confidentiality and to be recognised as the owner of the knowledge and stories contributed to the project**.

If you want to participate in this research could you please fill out the information below. Unless you say so later, the only place your name will appear is on forms like this. We will use this information to keep in touch and when any research results become available.

Participant Name_____

Address _____

Phone Number (_____) _____ Email address _____

I understand the purpose of this research as it is outlined above. My participation in this research is completely voluntary. If I decide to participate and then change my mind, I am free to withdraw from the project at any time. I have the right to refuse to answer any question. I agree that I may be audio taped during the research. I understand that by signing this document I am agreeing to participate in the research in the way described above, and that I have received a copy of this consent form.

Participant Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Consent to Use Interview Material

First, thanks very much for helping with the project. It's great you could participate. Now it's time to decide if you want us to use your contribution to the project.

If you decide to let us use your interview, we will include the material with the contributions from other people to try to say something about the current situation for the Urban Aboriginal Community in terms of housing and housing searches. We will write about what people said, we will include some of the actual things people said in their interviews to explain to other people about the situation today.

So, the question is, will you let us use the things you said? Before you decide here are some things to think about. Remember, these will be public documents, so other people will see them. Unless you say otherwise though, we will maintain anonymity – this means no one will be able to tell that that it is you who said a particular thing. We may have to change things to make sure that no one can tell who said what – but that's usually not very hard.

Another thing to think about is - is there anything in what you said that could come back on you later? (Researcher and Participant will take some time to discuss these issues while the material is fresh in their minds – if there is any question in the mind of EITHER researcher or participant – STOP - wait until a transcript can be made, and another meeting to go through the transcript arranged. Then and only then should the Consent to Use Interview Material be re-addressed)

So, do you want to give us your material? You choose. If you want everything back you can have it. We will give you all copies of everything. If you only want us to use some of the interview, we can do that too. This is purely voluntary – no one will get in trouble if you decide to quit now. If there is anything you want to take out you should tell us now, and only give us what you want.

If you sign below, you are agreeing to let us use your materials in things we make or write about the project. The things we will be making or writing will be for the purpose this researchers' obligation in her graduate program and for scholarly publications. You retain ownership of your materials – they are yours to do with as you please – you are just letting us use these things. No one person will receive any money for the use of any of the material. Projects like this don't usually make any money – usually we have to look for grants to do research.

We will leave copies of the completed project available at the Friendship Centre before we make them public for a couple of weeks, so you can see them. Then, if you do see anything you don't like regarding your material, we can take it out – *but you will have to tell us*.

If this is OK with you, then please sign the statement below:

I, _____ agree to allow the **White Picket Fences: Whiteness, Urban Aboriginal People and Housing Market Discrimination in Kelowna** to use my interview materials in publications resulting from the project. I understand that I keep ownership of my materials, but I am giving the project the right to use the material.

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Participant's Consent to Use Focus Group Material

First, thanks very much for helping with the project. Now it's time to decide if you want us to use your contribution to the project.

If you decide to let us use your material, we will include your thoughts with the contributions from other people to try to say something about the current situation for the Urban Aboriginal Community in terms accessing housing. We will write about what people said, we will include some of the actual things people said in the focus group to explain to other people about the situation today.

Unless you say otherwise though, we will maintain anonymity – this means no one will be able to tell that it is you who said a particular thing. We may have to change things to make sure that no one can tell who said what – but that's not very hard. Something to consider that is not in the researchers control is what other participants reveal afterwards about who said what. We have no way of ensuring that the other participants in the focus group will not share what you have said outside of the focus group. You may want to think about this before agreeing to participate in the focus group.

Another thing to think about is – is there anything in what you said that could hurt you or someone else later? (Research and Participant will take some time to discuss these issues while the material is fresh in their minds – if there is any question in the mind of EITHER researcher or participant – STOP – wait until a transcript can be made, and another meeting to go through the transcript arranged – then and only then should the "Consent to Use Focus Group Material" be reconsidered).

So, do you want to give us your material? You choose. If you only want us to use of the focus group material, we can do that too. If you don't want us to use your contribution to the focus group material we will remove your material from focus group. This is purely voluntary. If there is anything you want to take out you should tell us now, only give us what you want.

If you sign below, you are agreeing to let us use you materials in things we make or write about the project. You retain ownership of your materials – they are yours to do with as you please – you are just letting us use these things. We will leave copies of anything we do available at the Friendship Centre before we make them public for a couple of weeks, so you can see them. Then, if you do see anything you don't like regarding your material, we can take it out – *but you will have to tell us*. You can withdraw your information at any time, but after a certain point, publication, it cannot be withdrawn because it will be in the public domain

I, _____ agree to allow the **White Picket Fences: Whiteness, Urban Aboriginal People and Housing Market Discrimination in Kelowna** to use my focus group materials in publications resulting from the project. I understand that I keep ownership of my materials, but I am giving the project the right to use the material.

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Participant's decision to waive confidentiality

Another thing to think about now is if you want us to keep your name confidential. Some people want to make sure that they are recognised as the person who said a certain thing, others would rather things stay confidential, so people can't tell what they said. This is up to you too.

The thing to keep in mind though is that people will know what you said. So if there is anything that might embarrass you or someone else, or anything that might get you or someone else in trouble, staying anonymous can protect you.

(Researcher and Participant will take some time to discuss these issues while the material is fresh in their minds – again, if there is any question in the mind of EITHER researcher or participant – STOP - wait until a transcript can be made, and another meeting to go through the transcript arranged. A great degree of caution must be exercised here! If after careful consideration both researcher and participant are satisfied that it is a good thing for the participant's name be on the material, Then and only then should the "*Participant's decision to waive confidentiality"* be signed).

If you want us to use your name with your material please sign below - if you only want your name on some things and not on others, that's ok too. Just tell us which things you want to remain anonymous and which you want to have known as things you provided to the project. Again, this is purely voluntary and your choice. Do what makes you feel comfortable. You don't have to decide this now, but you can if you want. You can also change you mind up until we actually send things to be printed up.

Circle *some* or *all* in the statement below - if you don't want us to use your name just cross the whole statement out.

I, _____ want my name attached to the use of *all / some* of my research materials in the publications and other research results of the **White Picket Fences: Whiteness, Urban Aboriginal People and Housing Market Discrimination in Kelowna**

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Contact for information about the study:
If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Sheila Lewis (250) 862-7553 or her supervisor Dr. Lawrence Berg at (250) 807-9392.

Contact for concerns about your rights:

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.

Appendix E – Interview Guide

Interview Guide for White Picket Fences: Whiteness, Urban Aboriginal Women and Housing Market Discrimination in Kelowna, BC

Current Tenure (renter/owner)

How did you come to live in the place you're living in now?

> Do you currently rent or own your home? (Depending on answers questions will be asked based on **owner** or **renter** status)

> Why did you choose your current place of residence?

> How long do you see yourself living there and why?

Experience with rental agents or real estate agents

Where do you go to begin your housing search (e.g., newspaper, Ki-Low-Na Friendship society, homefinders, word-of-mouth)? Why?

> **(Owner)** When you're dealing with a real estate agent where do they tend to show you? Why do you think they show you these areas?

> **(Renter)** Can you tell me about your experiences with your landlord(s)?

> **(Owner)** How do you feel about your relationship with your real estate agent?

> **(Renter)** How do you feel about your relationship with your landlord?

> Did you experience any problems in your housing search?

> Can you tell me about previous or current moving experiences here in Kelowna, good or bad?

Satisfaction with current housing

Can you tell me a little bit about your neighbourhood?

> What do you think about the people in your neighbourhood?

> If you could change the relationship with the people in your neighbourhood, how would you change it?

> What do you think other people in the city think about your neighbourhood?

How do you feel about your place of residence?

Do you feel like your home reflects who you are? How do you feel people respond to your home?

Do you feel safe in your place of residence? If so why? If not why?

Affordability

Do you think it is affordable to live in Kelowna? If so why? If not why?

Do you think people within your income bracket would have difficulty living in Kelowna?

Have you had difficulties meeting the cost of housing?

What proportion of your income do you spend on housing?

Constraints (racism, economic, etc)

What is the biggest hurdle for you when trying to find housing in Kelowna?

Have you ever felt as though you were discriminated against while searching for housing (e.g., by landlords, other residents, housing providers)?

What kind of discrimination do you feel you have encountered (e.g., economic, social, cultural background)?

What helps you with obtaining housing in Kelowna?

Can you tell me how you feel about living in Kelowna? Do you feel apart of the city/community? If so why? If not why?

Changes they might make in their housing if they were free to do so.

If there were any changes you could make in your housing situation, neighbourhood or community what would they be?