

EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF 'INCLUSION':
BUILDING TRUST IN CROSS-CULTURAL PLANNING PRACTICE

by

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abstract

For almost two decades, some contributors to planning literature have argued for the inclusion of voices and faces of difference. But surprisingly little attention has been paid to the challenges faced by planners in building trust and addressing questions of legitimacy in cultural communities with which the planner does not identify. We know that cross-cultural planning *is* being practiced, but the literature tells us little about *how* planners traverse boundaries in a direct and lived sense. This thesis tries to get at that 'how' question by turning the lens away from communities of difference and back on the planner. In-depth interviews were undertaken with five British Columbian planning practitioners with a broad range of interests to gain a sense of their challenges in building trust across culture. The overarching themes of the thesis are trust and legitimacy, and through this frame three major themes are identified in the data: 1) Relationships and personal connections form the basis for a great deal of cross-cultural planning and come in many forms, ranging from the personal to the professional. 2) The concepts of identity and positioning are deeply personal for each of the planners and given their diversity these concepts play out in various ways, but at the core for each is self-reflection. 3) Creating new and shared understandings, both between and amongst communities and between planners and communities, is integral to the work of cross-cultural planning, and indeed its hope is what makes planning possible, and is handled in a number of different ways by the planners. The findings also present a number of 'navigational tools' necessary for planning across difference. What emerges is not a 'recipe' or 'blueprint', but rather an understanding that planners who effectively interact with and are inclusive of difference learn not to predict outcomes. Instead, they learn to respond sensitively, intuitively, and creatively with what comes their way.

table of contents

abstract	ii
list of tables	vi
list of figures	vii
list of figures	vii
acknowledgements	viii
<u>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</u>	1
1.1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF 'INCLUSION' IN PLANNING	1
1.2 HOW THE JOURNEY IS UNDERTAKEN	2
1.3 COMING FULL CIRCLE	4
1.4 THE STUDY	6
overview	6
1.5 FIVE PREMISES	7
a planner's identity matters	7
planning is not just for 'P'lanners	7
citizens have good reason to be distrustful	7
cosmopolitanism as the ideal	8
social justice must inform all planning	8
1.6 FIVE DEFINITIONS	8
identity	8
race	9
culture	9
ethnicity	9
cross-cultural planning	10
1.7 A PEEK AHEAD	10
<u>CHAPTER TWO: LOOKING AT LITERATURE</u>	11
2.1 TWO ASSUMPTIONS	12
connecting through shared aspects of identity	12
being an insider	14
2.2 KEY IDEAS	15
difficult dialogue	15

the identity of the planner.....	18
privilege and transformation.....	21
listening and storytelling.....	24
metaphor.....	27
2.3 A WORD ON CONCEPTS IN THE LITERATURE.....	29
trust.....	29
legitimacy.....	29
conflict.....	30
self-reflection.....	30
2.4 HOW CAN THESE KEY IDEAS AND CONCEPTS BE INCORPORATED INTO PLANNING PRACTICE?	30
2.5 A PEEK AHEAD.....	33
<u>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY MATTERS.....</u>	<u>35</u>
3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH.....	35
in-depth interviews	35
3.2 MEET THE PLANNERS.....	37
norma-jean mclaren	38
kari huhtala.....	38
rupert.....	39
oscar allueva.....	39
lisa bhopalsingh.....	40
3.3 APPROACH TO ANALYSIS.....	40
the nature of the findings	41
3.4 A PEEK AHEAD.....	42
<u>CHAPTER FOUR: CROSS-CULTURAL JOURNEYS.....</u>	<u>43</u>
4.1 CONCEPTS.....	45
legitimacy.....	45
trust.....	47
personal versus organizational.....	48
gauging trust	49
long term and delicate.....	50
4.2 THEMES	51
the importance of relationships and personal connections	52

professional connections.....	52
personal connections.....	53
the role of cultural interpreters	56
identity and positioning are deeply personal.....	59
kari	59
norma-jean	60
oscar	60
lisa.....	61
rupert.....	63
the need to create new and shared understanding	65
creating an environment of (dis)comfort	66
the necessity of creating space.....	69
a planner's inner conflict	72
4.3 NAVIGATIONAL TOOLS	75
 <u>CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING EDUCATION.....</u>	 <u>85</u>
in the school.....	87
in the classroom	89
in the community	92
 <u>CHAPTER SIX: PERSONAL REFLECTIONS AND RESEARCH LIMITATIONS</u>	 <u>95</u>
6.1 ASSUMPTIONS.....	95
6.2 REFLECTIONS ON RESEARCH	96
6.3 FUTURE RESEARCH	99
6.4 FINAL THOUGHTS.....	99
 <u>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</u>	 <u>102</u>
 <u>APPENDIX A: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....</u>	 <u>107</u>

list of tables

table 1: concepts and themes by participant	80
table 2: navigational tools	84

list of figures

figure 1: chapter map.....	44
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chapter one: introduction

1.1 a brief history of 'inclusion' in planning

In a constantly changing and ever diversifying society, planning literature rightfully continues to concern itself with the 'inclusion' of voices and faces long marginalized by modernist approaches. Such a shift has begun to make its way into planning practice at various levels and to varying degrees, and two trends have emerged in this regard (Wallace and Milroy 1999). The first seeks to incorporate diversity into planning practice on a case-by-case basis. According to Wallace and Milroy (*ibid.*) such action is facilitated by planning legislation, past practice, and professional codes of conduct. Operationally a case-by-case approach seeks to improve access to the planning process for diverse groups by increasing outreach and 'accommodating' or 'recognizing' specific demands. In this sense, diversity is incorporated into regular practice over time while planning structures remain largely unchanged by placing the case-making onus on the individual or community of 'difference' who in the end are placed in a position of continuously fighting the same battles. The bulk of planning literature seeking to address diversity is placed in this realm because examples and case studies from planning experience exist here. For example, Preston and Lo (2000) looked at 'Asian Theme Malls' in suburban Toronto through the lens of land-use conflict. Mohammad Qadeer (1997) looked at pluralism in planning as it relates to landscaping, 'ethnic' malls, and housing. David Ley (1995) investigated the so-called 'mega-home' issue that resulted in conflict between recent immigrants, primarily from Hong Kong, and longer-term residents over housing design in some of Vancouver's elite neighbourhoods. Daniel Hiebert (2000a) looked briefly at all of these issues while remarking on the challenge facing planners in deciding which complaints are motivated by 'legitimate' concerns (he uses the example of congestion), and those motivated by racism. David Edgington and Thomas Hutton (2002) assessed multicultural policies and programs in the municipalities of Greater Vancouver by surveying translation services, consultation and participation programs, and contact with cultural advocacy groups.

The second way of incorporating diversity into planning practice is to "take diversity as a point of departure" (Wallace and Milroy 1999:70), where we see the city as *already* constructed by diversity, requiring "more than a moral obligation towards inclusivity, and instead demand[ing] an understanding that diversity is fundamental to who we already are" (*ibid.*). An approach that challenges planners and communities to create systems together that are inherently inclusive of everyone has not yet been developed for city planning. While a case-by-case approach recognizes diversity, an approach that 'takes diversity as a point of departure' *values* it. Although a small body of literature is located here,¹ theorists

¹ For the most comprehensive examples see Sandercock 1998 and 2004.

have difficulty finding case examples where diversity is used as a starting point. As such, we do not know what it looks like in practice. Stephen Dang's (2002) master's thesis on the 'end of mainstream' is the exception here. His investigation, by way of case study, looks at Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH) in Vancouver, a unique organization born during a period of increased political recognition of Canada's social diversity. Diversity is thus the organization's grounding platform, and they have continued to grow around it.² Sandercock (2004) has since written about Collingwood Neighbourhood House, thereby bringing it to a wider planning audience.

Although many cities follow the case-by-case model, Wallace and Milroy (1999) assert that it is not yet clear which model will ultimately prevail, but in the meantime both approaches are welcome because they bring issues of diversity further into public debate. My only caution here is that a case-by-case model can be (and often is) framed as 'minority', or 'special interest', making further demands on the 'mainstream' while refusing assimilation; it places the case-making onus on those already marginalized by planning structures. Such an approach is far from productive. Space exists for a public discourse that speaks to both the heart and the mind of inclusion in either model, but it must be actively sought. Theory makes it clear that inclusion is an essential piece of the planning puzzle, which necessitates cross-cultural interaction. The question now becomes how inclusion is operationalized.

1.2 how the journey is undertaken³

While planning spent the 1990s effectively making the case for inclusion, other disciplines addressed questions of legitimacy in cross-cultural work. For example, counselling disciplines focused the debate around whether or not cross-cultural work should even be done given longstanding relationships drawn on the oppressor/oppressed dichotomy and the arguable inability of one who has not experienced oppression to understand the (re)actions and thoughts of one who has long been marginalized.⁴ The assumption in planning appears to be that working cross-culturally is both *necessary* and *possible* for several reasons: 1) Increasing social diversity and a formal recognition of that diversity demands that we see what has long been 'hiding in plain sight'.⁵ 2) Through professional codes of conduct, planners have an ethical responsibility to ensure decision-making processes are equitable and the voices of all concerned publics are heard. 3) Outside of professional codes of conduct, planners have the responsibility to help

² The Director of Community Services at CNH, Oscar Allueva, is one of the participants in my study.

³ The idea for this section title comes from Kaye Haw who addressed questions of legitimacy in her research. She responded by saying: "Whether the researcher stays at home or goes out into the wider world there is the necessity for travelling, and travelling necessarily involves risk. The question become not whether the white researcher or any other researcher, white, black, old, young, should stay at home, since they are all involved in a journey anyway, but *how the journey be undertaken*" (Haw 1996: electronic journal, page number unavailable, emphasis mine).

⁴ For an excellent overview of the discussion please see: Mio and Iwamasa 1993; Parham 1993; Pedersen 1993; Ponterotto 1993; Sue 1993. For an overview of the most recent stage model developed on 'white racial identity development' and cross-cultural counselling please see Sabnani *et al.* 1991.

communities overcome divisions and learn together through a shared understanding of difference and commonality (Baum 1998; Sandercock 1998, 2003). Thus, it is the planner's role to find not only that which separates us, but also that which is common amongst us (Forester 1999). 4) If we are to accept that planning has been part of 'the problem', then we must accept that we too must be part of the solution in finding ways to live together and fostering a sense of acceptance of all forms of otherness (see premises section below).⁶ 5) It would be functionally impossible for planners to work only with their own cultural group, indeed the very idea implies a static notion of both culture and identity and does not reflect our current understanding that individuals are made up of many identities, all of which are shifting and fluid. 6) Given this understanding of identity, it becomes clear that even if a planner were to share a common ethno-cultural background with a community, she would still be working cross-culturally in some capacity through other aspects of her identity, for example gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation. 7) Even if it were desirable for planning practitioners to work exclusively with their own ethno-cultural communities, the current members of the profession do not reflect the diversity found in cities across the country. This trend does not appear likely to change anytime soon, for the anecdotal evidence found in my class of planning students alone, while unscientific, suggests that either people of colour are not applying to planning schools, or are, for one reason or another, not being accepted. Given the historic treatment of so-called 'minority' communities by the planning profession, I would place bets on the former.⁷

So, in the words of Uma Narayan: "working together continuously across differences seems to be a project we cannot avoid or get away from. We are condemned to either ignoring and annihilating differences, or to working tenuously across them to form always risky bonds of understanding" (1988:34). With this need for planning across difference long established, we now need to turn our attention towards *how* this journey is undertaken. Forester (1999) calls on us to explore the "real challenges of inclusion in practice [...or] continue to hear the sound of one hand clapping: deconstructive techniques without reconstructive political analysis" (Forester 1999:212). Because "the dominant group has not learned to listen and the subordinate group has learned to distrust" (Mansbridge 2000:99) within this planning relationship, one of the biggest challenges of inclusion to emerge is building trust in cultural communities where there has historically been distrust. We have few conceptual tools or case studies for

⁵ This idea was taken from the novel *As the Crow Flies* by Ann-Marie MacDonald (2003:618).

⁶ This idea comes from two of the five planning practitioners I interviewed. They asked 'if white people are part of the problem, why wouldn't they be part of the solution?'. This sentiment is echoed by Libby Porter, who speaks of the necessity of approaching cross-cultural planning with indigenous groups in Australia with an "attitude of genuine humility and a genuine acceptance that we do not have the answers and that sometimes we might be part of the problem" (Porter 2004:104).

⁷ Unlike their American counterparts, most Canadian planning schools do not record data related to ethnic diversity within their student body, and do not have policies in place to address an apparent lack of diversity (McIntyre *et al.* 1997). The collection of such data was one of the recommendations to come from a report on planning schools undertaken by a group of students at the School of Community and Regional Planning at UBC (*ibid.*).

how to approach these challenges (Wallace and Milroy 1999), and yet planners *are* working cross-culturally in every realm of planning. Thus, in this study I seek to learn from planning practitioners *already* engaging difference to understand how they address questions of legitimacy and build trust in the process.

1.3 coming full circle

Of course my hope for this thesis is that it has academic merit, but in many ways it is also about me. I want to know what is required, in a very real sense, of those who work cross-culturally, and to figure out for myself whether or not I have what it takes to 'cross borders' in a way that is not hurtful and does not perpetuate past injustices. I decided on this topic after recently coming full circle and realizing that I had yet to answer the questions that I began asking myself six years ago. My choices in education have long been informed by my interest in social justice, an inherent component of which is border-crossing. My first degree was in First Nations studies and included a minor in northern planning and development, which emphasized the value of Indigenous knowledge in development. Degree requirements also required that I choose a 'world area' and my choice here was 'African Studies'. For the first time I was getting a sense of the impacts of colonization and the lived experiences of 'difference' and oppression. It was in this light that I came to understand the context of planning, and by the time I graduated I was scared. I was scared of saying or doing the wrong thing. I was scared of repeating the same mistakes that others had made, often with good intentions. At the root, I think I was scared of not being accepted. By telling myself that there were plenty of Indigenous people capable of planning in their own communities, I was convinced I, as a white planner, could never be useful. Instead I spent the next three years working at a job I hated, travelling, and figuring out what I would do with my life. In the end I decided to continue with planning, but this time through design. Within my first semester I found myself being drawn back into the community development/social planning realm, and before I knew it I was border-crossing in books again.

Two experiences during this time forced the fear to resurface. Last spring I had attended a couple of interdisciplinary conferences related to race and ethnicity. During a workshop at the Canadian Critical Race Conference at UBC a heated dialogue broke out about the membership policy of Researchers and Academics of Colour in Education (RACE). Formed as a response to a history of systemic racism in academia and beyond, it is open only to individuals of colour. This group was holding a meeting during the conference and a call had gone out to people interested in joining. The white woman who raised the issue in the workshop had attended the meeting and was advised that it was open only to people of colour. Obviously hurt by this, she did not understand why her contributions as an ally would not be accepted by the group. RACE supporters argued that the purpose of the group is to provide support amongst those who share similar experiences of systemic barriers in academia. Discussion is intended to be open and

frank, without the need to contextualize comments and explain 'starting points' for those who have not experienced racism. Similar space has long existed for white academics as a matter of fact, and RACE opens similar channels for those of colour, but they must continuously defend their space. Of course as academics these individuals are also involved in dialogue through larger circles and networks, but RACE presumably provides them a respite from the exhaustion of that. I understand the need for this space and am not hurt by my exclusion from it, because I see that it is not an ideal but the point at which we are at in reaching that ideal. Nonetheless, it reaffirmed that I was wading through muddied waters.

Several months later I looking to set up a case study for my thesis (a different topic at that time) and came across a non-profit organization in Victoria that had recently embarked on a project aimed at racially diverse families, the first of its kind in Canada. I set up a meeting with them so that I could learn more about the project and the organization. To a certain degree I was expecting questions about my interest in the project in relation to my identity (i.e. why is a white woman interested in multicultural families?). I wasn't too bothered by this idea and in fact it made sense to me that they would want to know what lay behind my motivations. What I was not prepared for was how quickly and explicitly the questions came. Within minutes I found myself legitimizing my abilities and commitment to social justice through my marriage to a person of colour. They were interested in his background and how long we had been together. Initially I felt the meeting went fairly well, but upon reflection I grew increasingly uneasy with the position I had been in and my reaction to it. Maybe I am more anxious than most, but all of a sudden I realized that I was in the same place I had been six years previous, scared off of planning in a culturally politicized context. Obviously I had not dealt with the questions when they arose previously.

When I have a question I instinctually turn to books, and this case was no exception. I poured through planning literature and while I was inspired by what I found in some respects, I was disappointed in others. I would often sense that I was just creeping up on the answers, they were just around the corner, and all of a sudden the text would move on to something else. I turned to literature from other disciplines, which proved helpful, but past experience has shown that it can be difficult making the connection to planning. Maybe the problem was me. Was I struggling to answer something that was obvious to everyone else? Was my reading of planning literature wrong? I wasn't sure, but that didn't seem to be the case. It soon became clear that we need more stories of how planners deal with questions of legitimacy and trust. Either practitioners were not dealing with these questions or people were not talking about it. I assumed the latter based on what I had read on the political nature of cross-cultural work and the 'dis-ease' (Forester 1989) planners felt talking about difference. At this point it was clear that to find answers I needed to ask the questions often on the verge of being answered in books, and thus the idea for this thesis was born. I am under no illusion that these questions will be resolved once and for all within these pages; certainly I will continue to revisit these ideas throughout my practice, indeed my

life, but at the very least the work here will provide me a platform from which to jump into those muddled waters.

1.4 the study

In light of the understanding that there has been remarkably little attention paid to the 'strategies' planners might typically employ to gain the acceptance and trust within cultural communities not their own, the purpose of this research is to explore the various ways that planning practitioners legitimize their efforts and build trust when they work cross-culturally. Thus, *the goal of this thesis is to identify what we can learn from planning practitioners who work to gain the trust and acceptance of cultural communities not their own.*

In realizing this research goal there are three primary objectives: 1) To explore issues related to, and gain an understanding of, the politically sensitive nature of cross-cultural research; 2) To uncover common themes in cross-cultural planning in practice, as well as identify where planners may differ in approach, and; 3) To provide recommendations for planning education.

overview

The thesis is divided into six chapters. This chapter provides a background as to why this topic is being pursued, the layout of the thesis, and finally, five premises on which the thesis is founded and definitions of important terms. Chapter two reviews the literature from various disciplines about the nature of cross-cultural research and professional work. The literature review uncovers some of the key issues related to 'border-crossing' in gaining an understanding of the politically sensitive nature of such work, and sets the context of what is known about cross-cultural planning for the remainder of the thesis. The third chapter addresses methodology and outlines how the research was pursued and why, and how the analysis was undertaken. It is also where the reader is introduced for the first time to the five planning practitioners who participated in the study. Chapter four is the 'grit' of the thesis and will focus exclusively on what the participants tell us about cross-cultural planning, both key themes and the skills required. In assessing whether or not some of the skills discussed by the practitioners can be incorporated into an educational setting, Chapter five lays out lessons for planning education. The final chapter is a reflection on the research process and a discussion of the limitations of this research, from both a personal and academic standpoint.

1.5 five premises

Just as the words of every individual are informed by any number of experiences and histories, this thesis has been informed by several premises, or grounding principles, that work here to set the context of this thesis, and the beliefs that lay behind it.

a planner's identity matters

Identity (defined below) influences not only how a planner thinks about planning, but also how the planner is perceived by others (Sandercock 1998), and in this way her identities matter in much the same way that everyone's identities matter, because "we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position" (Hall 1992:258). We are all made up of many identities, so just as I am white, I am also a woman. I am a sister. I am a daughter. I am a partner. I am a friend. I am an ally. Somewhere in each of these identities, I have something in common with many others. I hope that at the end of the day I can use each of my identities, and their intersections, to forge bonds with others, both in my work, as well as in life.

planning is not just for 'P'lanners

Planning is something that humans have always done, and perhaps it is even part of what it means to be human. And yet, planning in 'the West' has moved rapidly in the direction of professionalization, "the distinguishing mark of a professional expertise is not its intellectual depth, but its *exclusivity*: not just anyone, on their own, can become a member of a profession. So, a professional is someone who has learned (and often laboured long to learn) a required body or cannon of knowledge" (Bickenback and Hendler 1994:163, emphasis mine). This 'colonization' of a certain area of activity has driven planning to concern itself with purely technical matters (Thomas 1994) and rule enforcement (Aberley 2000). If we truly want to be more inclusive of 'others' in our practice, we must also begin defining the profession based on *inclusivity* by looking outside its artificially contrived borders for more intuitive, flexible, and caring approaches. Thus, my definition of planning is loose and includes not only 'P'lanners but also those whose work, regardless of their educational background, involves the lost *heart* of planning found in community organizing, community development and capacity building.

citizens have good reason to be distrustful

Over the last two decades planning theorists have established that modernist planning paradigms, which see the planner as 'expert', have advanced the claims of some populations at the expense of others. In this blueprint approach to planning, great attention was paid to the control of space, both its production and use, and those who were seen as different were controlled in the same ways. In this sense, planners

effectively played the role of 'spatial police' (Sandercock 1998). Although a great many people felt disregarded by the profession, the effects were especially profound on people of colour who were pushed to the side, neither seen nor heard. It comes as no surprise then that citizens in general, and many cultural communities specifically, regard the motives and actions of planners with suspicion. Planners have come to recognize a greater diversity of voices and faces in recent years, and their actions have arguably changed accordingly, but we have a great deal of work to do in shedding the perceptions of our roles as the state's control agents.

cosmopolitanism as the ideal

Cosmopolitanism is defined by Daniel Hiebert as "a way of living based on an 'openness to all forms of otherness', associated with an appreciation of, and interaction with, people from other cultural backgrounds" (Hiebert 2000a). In this sense diversity is both *accepted and ordinary*. Hiebert notes that his perspective is similar to Sandercock's vision of 'cosmopolis' (1998) where bridges are built across difference. Cosmopolitanism is often juxtaposed to transnationalism, where individuals are seen to connect through social and economic networks with both a country of ancestral origin and the country of residence, but it is likely that both can exist simultaneously. The networks and relationship established through cross-cultural interaction (including those garnered through planning) can potentially foster a sense of the acceptance found in cosmopolitanism.

social justice must inform all planning

In recognizing that equity demands treating some groups differently than others in certain circumstances, social justice looks beyond 'fairness' and 'neutrality.' Since social justice is informed by the indivisibility of economic, social, and environmental well-being for all, planning must have social justice at its heart in all its realms.

1.6 five definitions

identity

For years identity was viewed as a set of fixed, mutually exclusive categories, but recent thinking has come to understand that everyone is made up of multiple and intersecting identities that are not fixed or immutable, but rather fluid and constantly shifting. Thus, the experiences of women are not the same because other elements of identity contribute to a changed experience. For example, a black woman who is also a mother will have different experiences than an Asian woman with no children living in the same city, because race and ethnicity transform the experiences of gender (Ruddick 1996). This is especially important in the context of planning, which often reaches out to ethno-cultural communities in seeking to

be more inclusive, and in the process risks isolating certain aspects of identity and forcing the whole person to disappear (Wallace and Milroy 1999). When an aspect of one's identity feels threatened one may begin emphasizing that identity, which in turn will colour other experiences (LeBaron 2002).

race

It has long been understood that there is absolutely no biological basis for race as a concept; it is nothing but a social construct. And yet, we live in a racialized society informed by several hundred years of divisions and different lived experiences based on skin colour. We cannot simply erase the history of race for it continues to have profound implications on the way all of us live, and in many ways race still defines our interactions with one another. While the focus in this thesis is not on race, in any discussion of planning across difference we cannot escape race as it has informed planning for decades. When the term does arise the intention is not to perpetuate the notion that race has a biological basis, but rather it arises with the understanding that race is a social construct whose nefarious history implicates our current lives.

culture

'Culture' is often used to imply essentialist characteristics of various groups. We often hear people say that a specific group acts in a certain way, or eats certain foods, implying that these cultural traits are absolute, and yet we know that culture is so much more than how people dress and what they eat. Culture is not static but rather malleable and shifts through the incorporation of new meanings as we ourselves change, and herein lies the hope for planning. Worsely (1984) defines culture as supplying a project or a "design for living" which tells us not only who we are and what is what, but also what is to be done (as quoted in Mayo 2000:5). Because culture is informed by shared identities (ethnicity, gender, language, religion, professions, sexual orientation, etc.) we all belong to many cultures (LeBaron 2003) and we combine these within ourselves, replete with contradictions, to know how to live, and to inform our (re)actions. Generally speaking, when the term culture is used in this thesis I am referring to *ethno-cultural* communities, which does not detract in any way from the fluid and shifting nature of culture.

ethnicity

Used incorrectly, this term is often interchangeable with 'culture'. Tricky to define, ethnicity is best applied with flexibility to groups who share a sense of belonging with one another based on "common origins, history, culture, experience and values" (Castles and Miller as quoted in Thomas 2000). In using this definition, however, Thomas (*ibid.*) cautions us away from essentialist notions of ethnicity that are often used to exclude groups.

cross-cultural planning

As discussed in the previous section, my idea of planning is broad and inclusive, and while I have recognized that culture is a fluid design for living shared by *any* group of people, this research has limited the notion of culture to mean *ethno-cultural* groups. For our purposes cross-cultural planning refers to physical or social development activities undertaken by a planning practitioner who does not share the same ethno-cultural background as the community with/for whom she is working.

1.7 a peek ahead

The introductory chapter has provided a background as to why cross-cultural planning is relevant, and outlined why we need more examples from the field about how the journey is undertaken. It has also presented five premises that have contextualized this thesis: 1) a planner's identity matters; 2) planning is effectively undertaken by many without a formal planning education; 3) we must strive toward a cosmopolitan ideal; 4) if citizens are distrustful they have reason to be, and; 5) all planning is informed by social justice. A number of key terms have also been defined here, and I have provided an overview of what is to transpire in the coming pages.

In chapter two I will review literature from a number of disciplines (primarily sociology, education, planning, conflict mediation, and cultural studies). Because planning literature often does not address the politicized nature of cross-cultural work, I turned to other disciplines and have included here anything I could find that related to cross-cultural research and work. The purpose is to contextualize the thesis and in so doing gain an understanding of the politically sensitive nature of cross-cultural research.

chapter two: looking at literature

In the first chapter I reviewed the idea set forth in planning literature that cross-cultural work is both necessary and possible, but that planning literature reveals few details as to *how* it is done. The danger of viewing cross-cultural planning as a given is that we risk losing sight of its sensitive nature. The purpose, then, of this literature review is to contextualize the thesis by gaining an understanding of the politically sensitive nature of cross-cultural interaction and research by identifying common themes found in *any* literature related to this area.

Planning is by nature interdisciplinary, so it is not surprising that we often turn our attention to other disciplines in search of answers not found within our own realm. Indeed, ecologist and Professor of Planning Bill Rees notes that "planning is the one academic discipline and professional pursuit that explicitly attempts to be holistic or at least integrative at the level of society as a whole. At its best, planning provides a context in which the specialized knowledge of other disciplines comes together and begins to make unified sense" (Rees 1995:355). Linkages of this sort also happen on the ground, for planners "provide legs for good ideas, [but] they are far more likely to do so when spurred on by activists capable of linking lived urban experience to progressive theories from fields such as human rights, cultural studies, feminism, and design" (Wallace and Milroy 1999:70).

In piecing this chapter together, my initial exploration was very broad and involved general searches of the social sciences, humanities and other interdisciplinary fields such as women's studies and cultural studies. In the end most of the research applicable to cross-cultural planning came from the fields of geography, sociology, social work, women's studies, education, mediation and cultural studies, and has been instrumental in helping me gain insight into common themes that arise from 'border-crossing'. These themes will be handled here in a couple of different ways. First, what I will call 'key ideas' will each be addressed in turn, and include: difficult dialogue; the identity of the planner; privilege and transformation; listening and storytelling, and; metaphor. Next, there are four major concepts that are common throughout this literature: reflexivity, conflict, and at the base of it all, trust and legitimacy. It was initially my intention to separate each of these into sections, but the difficulty of this task was quickly apparent. These concepts form the foundation for much of the literature, implicit or otherwise, and they will play the same role here. I will take a short word on each after the section on key ideas. A final section will look at what the literature tells us about how planning might begin to make sense of all this. My first task, however, is to lay out two assumptions that I carried into the literature review and investigate how they fared in my reading: that it is possible, indeed beneficial, to connect across shared aspects of identity, and the notion that there are inherent benefits to being an 'insider' to culture.

2.1 two assumptions

connecting through shared aspects of identity

Before beginning this research I reflected on how I connect with people with whom I do not share an ethno-cultural background. As I suggested in the first chapter, I came to the understanding that while I am white, like everyone else I am so much more than the colour of my skin. I am also a woman, and certainly that should allow me to connect with other women – on the basis of a shared experience of gender. Michelle LeBaron highlights the way that differences in common can at times transect group boundaries and connect people in one group with people in other groups. She uses the term ‘connective thinking’ to explain “search[ing] for common threads, for shared meanings and overlaps in identities” (2003:39). This notion helps us recall that “all individuals are multicultural, sharing identities and meanings with people from a range of other groups, and that cultural generalizations are not manifested evenly within groups or across time but change with context, external influences, internal dynamics, and individual preference” (*ibid.*54). Underscoring the idea that culture and identity are not static, Stephen Dang asks: “Does an 18 year old Japanese lesbian grunge musician have more in common with her 25 year old sister accountant, a 60 year old Japanese lesbian feminist or the 17 year old president of the Kurt Cobain fansite in Seattle?” (2002:4).

In looking at the experiences of various cross-cultural researchers, evidence suggests that powerful connections *can* be made across shared aspects of identity, even in the face of ‘difference’. However, still other experiences discourage the assumption that such connection is a given, for the very reason that makes it possible; identity is not static and continuously intersects with other influences, both internal and external.

When Maria Jaschok (2000) was completing research on Chinese Islam and women’s rights in China, she found that collaboration with a Chinese Scholar, Shui Jingjun, allowed her access to the community she was seeking to study. Jingjun writes that she grew to trust Jaschok quickly despite an environment of distrust because she was a woman known to express egalitarian principles. They shared a sense of connection through gender and feminism. Although this allowed an initial connection, they later found through ongoing dialogue their standpoints (what LeBaron (2003) calls ‘starting points’) and boundaries of selves were adjusted. Indeed, the lines between insider and outsider, margin and centre, were continuously redrawn and redefined (Jaschok and Jingjun 2000). While legitimacy was granted in this case through shared experiences of gender across ethno-cultural lines, it must be maintained through a commitment to community and work. Hale Bolak’s (1997) experiences of research in the Middle East

tell us, on the other hand, that what initially gains trust in the field may not always gain favour with the rest of the community, and great care is required in negotiating between the two.

Stephen Norwood (1996), a male historian, has spent a large part of his academic career documenting women's roles in early labour history. He has had greater access than his female colleagues to many early labour organizers, not because he is a man, but because he is a former labourer and the grandson of an early organizer in the movement. Many of the elderly women he was seeking to involve had a deep sense of distrust of women academics, whom they perceived, rightly or wrongly, as bourgeois and patronizing. On the flip side they had an immediate trust of the ally whose grandmother was a respected friend and who had his own direct experience of what it meant to be a labourer. He thus gained access to the private documents denied to other historians. Does this mean that his telling of the story is better or more accurate? No, but it does mean that another layer is added in its telling.

Counter to these experiences of successful connections across shared aspects of identity, Rosalind Edwards (1990) cautions against relying too heavily on such connections. Before beginning research for which she, a white woman, would be interviewing black women she read a number of studies wherein bridges developed through gender. She approached the interviews cautiously hopeful that this would bear out in her own work, but found otherwise: "Trust between myself and the black women respondents – or rather, trust of me by them – was not something that was easily established on the basis of sex alone" (1990:486). Indeed, the small successes she met with in her research came only after learning to explicitly place herself in a position of difference by being direct about the privileged position she held in society because of race. In this way, respect was won through recognition of difference rather than commonality.

Social geography, which has also only recently shifted from seeing identity as categories that operate independently of one another, further supports this notion. The 'categories' are now recognized as being "mutually *transformative*, and *intersecting*, each altering the experience of the other" (Ruddick 1996:138, emphasis hers). Research began to identify ways that race changes the experience of gender, for example, with "black women and white women confronted with experiences of gendered relationships that marked systemic similarities and differences in their roles as women" (*ibid.*). So, while the shifting and fluid nature of identity allows us to connect across difference based on a shared aspect of identity, such as gender, so too does it trip us up in assuming that it is *enough* to connect us. In some cases it may be, in others we may need to make our differences explicit in order to understand what is common between us. The challenge is to learn the difference between the two.

being an insider

Similar to the first assumption, I have often been caught thinking that if one shares an ethno-cultural background with a group, questions of legitimacy will not present themselves. Obviously this infers a static view of identity; one that is fixed and immutable, does not change over time, nor does it intersect with other aspects of identity. I do not think I am alone in getting trapped from time to time in this line of thinking; it is easy and we are raised believing it. To be clear, it does little more than reinforce an essentialist notion of culture. Certainly some have found 'insider' connections to be successful at least in establishing research, if not carrying it out. Researcher Charles Menzies (2003) was able to establish contacts and build trust with the Gitxaala partly because his own family history is rooted in that area. For him the importance lies not in debating the merits of 'insiders' over 'outsiders' but that both have the same responsibility to "conduct respectful research that demonstrates not just the form, but the content of respect and honour" (2003:22). At the same time, however, there are countless narratives, a sample of which we will look at here, from researchers that caution us against the assumption that 'insiders' do not face challenges to their research or practice.

Tracy McFarlane, an American of Jamaican descent, was outlining her proposed research, investigating the factors that influence well-being for Jamaican immigrants in New York City, to her fellow graduate students for feedback. She was receptive to the responses until someone asked about how experiences related to race may impact community well-being. McFarlane bristled at this suggestion and responded that her community would not let the prejudice of others prevent their economic progress in America. She had intended to facilitate a story of "survival and positive outcomes, not one of vulnerability and deficits" (as quoted in Weis and Fine 2000:78). She was compelled, it seems, to cast a positive light on her community, but was unaware of her assumptions until faced with a question about race. In the end, she was shocked to find respondents report the effects of racism as inseparable components in their lives. Indeed, more participants discussed events related to racism than any other stressor. Her desire to report on the resilience of the Jamaican immigrant community in New York had prevented her from seeing the role that racism played in perceptions of well-being. Even as a member of the community she was researching, she had a number of assumptions to 'unpack' during the course of her research.

Michelle LeBaron (2003) also discusses her experience of hiring a young Chinese-Canadian woman to do interviews with members of the Chinese-Canadian community. The woman encountered a situation with an elderly Chinese-Canadian man, in Canada for over fifty years, from whom she was unable to garner any information as to his experiences with conflict during this time. While there were likely a number of issues at play here, the underlying lesson is it may not have been appropriate for a young woman to be questioning an older man in that cultural context. While her cultural understanding may have opened

doors, her *positions* as woman and researcher prevented this connection from garnering the information she required

Addrianne Christmas (2000), an African American researching church involvement in community building activities within her own community, was anticipating questions of 'how black are you?' because of her involvement at a mostly white academic institution. She was *not* prepared for questions of "who are you to air to those white people what goes on over here?" (as quoted in Weis and Fine 2000:88). She managed to get her research completed, but only after she reassured community members that she was not an agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) working to close down the church. Community members made telephone calls to her school's administration, but it did not stop there. She was soon contacted by the FBI, asking why they were receiving phone calls from a local church about her being an agent (!).

I have already had to 'unpack' the assumption that those carrying out research or doing planning from the 'inside' have established relationships founded on trust and do not face questions of legitimacy. As we have already seen, research carried out from 'inside' or 'outside' will not necessarily be better or worse, but it will certainly produce different outcomes. With the reasons for doing cross-cultural planning established, and two of my main assumptions addressed, we can now settle into the key ideas emerging from my reading of the literature.

2.2 key ideas

difficult dialogue

I'm looking for the flat words
The ones that won't upset
Won't spill the beans
The ones that always seem OK

Laundering the Data, Bob Jarvis (as reprinted in Johnson and Jarvis 2002)

Huw Thomas was not the first to remark that "planners are not comfortable discussing race and racism" (2000:1). Indeed it has been fifteen years since Forester first remarked upon the 'dis-ease' and 'tension' that surround discussions of race and racism in planning. He noted that these feelings "provide us with perhaps the clearest indication possible that planners – students, practitioners, and professors alike – do not yet know how to think about, much less deal with, these sensitive issues" (1989:188). Planners are not alone here. LeBaron (2003) tells us that people in general 'tiptoe around cultural differences' given the potential pitfalls in engaging with difference.

To be clear, race and 'difference' are not easy issues to discuss. They *should* cause discomfort; this is precisely the point, and herein lies the need for discussion. In describing a move toward 'a city we can build together', Boston activist/practitioner Mel King stresses that it "will entail some very uncomfortable experience as we root out our prejudices and confront our fears" (as quoted in interview with Sandercock 1998:132). Planner/organizer Marie Kennedy echoes these sentiments and adds that *not* engaging in important discussions because they are difficult is akin to saying "'I've got my good politics, and those folks over there are just too narrow-minded and backward to understand and to be able to have an intelligent discussion about this'" (Forester *et al.* 1993:118).⁸ She understands that when difficult discussion happens, it may mean having a fight and being asked to leave, but in her mind that is the risk of community organizing, and while some have come close, no one has yet asked her to leave. With a communicative turn in planning, Forester sees opportunity presenting itself through a public deliberation that can:

Bring parties face to face across lines of class, race, gender, and territory – parties who bring histories of being doers and done-to, histories of rights enjoyed and rights betrayed, histories of hopes deferred and pains suffered. Hardly all knowing, these parties bring values and preferences of self and needs, that can change as political possibilities change. (Forester 1999:206)⁹

Similarly Baum (1998) identifies one of the key roles of planning as helping 'communities of memory' transform themselves into 'communities of hope' by redefining themselves and creating community identities together. It is difficult to imagine this happening *without* painful conversations.

Sandercock's (1998) discussion of 'voices from the borderlands' reminds us again that planning must forge connections across difference through communication, sensitivity, empathy and openness, while not succumbing to the paralyzing force of difference "or the quicksands of identity politics" (1998:121). In offering her own experience LeBaron (2003) furthers the idea of 'paralysis' and 'quicksands' with a discussion of cultural complexity as one of five 'cultural traps'¹⁰ in which it is easy to get caught from time to time. Her explanation of the complexity trap particularly resonated with me, as this is where my fear is often located. This trap involves becoming overwhelmed by both the awareness that "culture is everywhere and it matters" (2003:37) and the various levels that we ought attend to if we are culturally competent: "our multiple lenses; others' multiple lenses; worldviews that shape expectations, perceptions,

⁸ Kennedy here hints at the difficulty planners sometimes face when they are presented with situations that place them in ethically fragile positions. Aside from Sandercock's (2003) discussion of Tovi Fenster's planning with ethnic communities in Israel, there is little literature addressing how one might mediate her core values, as a feminist for example, with conflicting values from another culture. Fenster's approach is twofold: opening up dialogue and presenting flexible design solutions that can be changed as values change over time. She calls this 'mapping the boundaries of social change' (as presented in Sandercock 2003:8).

⁹ Dialogue of this nature has begun to happen in planning with the introduction of mediation and facilitation classes, yet in my experience these do not have a significant cross-cultural component.

¹⁰ The remaining four traps are: automatic ethnocentricity, taxonomies, universalism, and separation. For further explanation of these see LeBaron 2003:39.

and behaviour; context; individual differences; and status and power dynamics" (*ibid.*). She goes on to discuss one of her early experiences in the field in which she was left wondering if she wanted to continue working in a cross-cultural capacity. She gradually shifted from thinking of such situations as 'minefields' and began instead to see them as '*mindfields*' and was soon able to see that opportunity lay in the various and different minds in the room. Indeed, "our collective opportunity was to open them, share them, and enjoy them, knowing that we would step on each other's toes from time to time, trusting that we could navigate our ways out of that" (*ibid.*).

Canadian cities have undergone massive change in the last two decades, both structurally and demographically; a shift that continues to play itself out in different ways across the nation. The common thread, however, remains fear. As Sandercock (1998) explains this fear manifests in a number of different ways but at the base of it all is a fear of difference – a fear of the 'other'. When fear of difference partners with fear of change, 'communities of memory' emerge and a community ceases to look forward to what is possible, and maintains a myopic and idealized vision of what once was. Interestingly fear still presents itself as a barrier when we do not fear the 'other' so much as we fear making mistakes and offending the 'other', as LeBaron (2003) notes: "[w]e are afraid of culture, afraid that our failure to understand its complex workings will trip us up, afraid of its potent capacity to disrupt the order we have grown accustomed to" (LeBaron 2003:33). Along this vein Forester speaks of hope and reconstruction, and calls for "an approach to deliberation and judgment that appeals to the public recognition and engagement of difference, a discursive ethics protecting and nurturing voice, an argumentative planning that seeks not deal-making but public imagination and reconstruction" (1999:202).

All too often opportunities for dialogue, and thus transformation, are lost to a fear of broaching difficult and personal topics.¹¹ In his look at the planning processes of two communities (one cultural/religious, the other geographic), Baum (1998) found that often participants chose falsely constructed a agreement over engaging in difficult dialogue. Interestingly, a focus on unity not only sidelined core issues (such as racism in one case), it also excluded people who could not be trusted to refrain from raising those issues. While planning processes may be much *easier*, especially for the planner, if uncomfortable issues are not discussed, the outcome will certainly be weaker. Robert Mier also reminds us that through fear of failure and fear of doubt, "chances are you're reducing the problem you're dealing with to something that is both

¹¹ The so-called 'mega-home' issue in Vancouver is an excellent example of this. To resolve an issue that was superficially about housing design, but had elements of racism at its core, the City of Vancouver opted for design guidelines that favoured long-time residents of these high-end neighbourhoods over their 'newcomer' neighbours. This approach effectively closed the door on what could have been a painful yet productive dialogue across difference. I suspect the issues continue to bubble under the surface in these communities. For a more detailed discussion of 'mega-home' conflicts see Ley 1995.

manageable and irrelevant" (as quoted by Krumholz and Clavel 1994:81). Clearly it is not possible to plan effectively across difference when working around this pain. While we must carefully weigh competing priorities, one thing is clear; if we expect others to address uncomfortable issues, planners too must paint themselves into the picture. Only then will we be able to see what has been 'hiding in plain sight.'

the identity of the planner

[E]ach one of us...(could) reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there. See whose face it wears. (Lorde as quoted in Ledsworth and Asgill 2000:297)

Difficult topics like racism matter not only in the context of *how* to plan, but they also matter in the context of "*with and for whom* any planning at all is to take place" (Forester 1989:189, emphasis his). Although inclined to agree with Forester, I would take this statement one step further by suggesting that we must also turn the lens back on those asking the questions, and look at *who the planner is*. The identity of the planner is not often addressed in the planning literature, and it may indeed be one of the most political aspects of cross-cultural planning.

Robert Beauregard (1998) wrote briefly on the identity of the planner in comparing the work of two theorists, Sandercock and Forester. For Sandercock aspects of the planner's identity, such as gender, race, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, influence both one's thoughts towards planning, and also how a planner is perceived and received by others. So, planners in a postmodern world must be attentive to how personal identity affects the planning process. Forester acknowledges, in his later turn toward a more communicative fashion of planning, that planners must balance a need for people to express their painful histories with the risk of turning planning sessions into 'therapy sessions' (Forester 1999), but at the end of Forester's day, aspects of one's identity do not make a good or bad planner (Beauregard 1998). An important factor that may explain away differences between these theorists is that Sandercock writes on an 'insurgent' planner typically working outside of the state,¹² while Forester's work considers planning as an enterprise of the state. Outside of this work there is very little to suggest that a planner's identity matters. Just as we need more examples and cases of planning across difference (Wallace and Milroy 1999), we also need more examples of how (or whether) planners mediate their identities in building trust across difference.

Norman Krumholz and Pierre Clavel (1994) compiled transcripts from interviews with eleven planners whose goals are aimed toward social equity. Their work is done within bureaucracies, often on behalf of

¹² It is important to note here that while Sandercock believes such work happens outside of the state, it cannot happen *without* the state.

marginalized populations in the United States. They note in their introduction that most of the eleven planners, indeed most of the planners they know, are white males and females who 'represent' people of colour. Of course this raises questions of a political nature, and this is not lost on Krumholz and Clavel who note early on that "how they manage to function effectively across these lines without contributing to further fractioning of the solidarity of communities of colour is one of the great untold stories of urban life" (1994:3). It was thus with eager anticipation that I poured through eleven chapters, each on one of these individuals, and to my disappointment, ten of the eleven did not offer insight into this 'great untold story of urban life'. From these ten chapters, it would appear that a planner's identity matters most in equity planning, where the planner often speaks *on behalf* of the community. The exception to this was Robert Mier who worked under Mayor Harold Washington in Chicago, and had this to say:

I think the dynamics of race in this country is the most powerful force confronting, shaping *who can and should do planning*. It is the central issue facing planners, and it's got to be confronted in every aspect of the daily work, daily life, of planning. Planners have to focus attention on it. I think a lot of planning is attention shaping. Plans shape people's attention. So planners have consciously to admit that they are confronting race. (Krumholz and Clavel 1994:81, emphasis mine)

In this light it is all the more surprising that each of the other accounts of daily planning practice include, at best, minor references to 'race' and 'culture', with no significant discussion of planning across difference. In concluding their work, Krumholz and Clavel answer their introductory question of whether or not white equity planners can work effectively for minority communities without further fractioning communities of colour, by suggesting that "the stories in this book make clear that they can, but the issue requires more research" (1994:237).

Where race and difference are openly discussed, the focus is on the 'other' while there remains uncertainty around discussing race and culture as it relates to the self (the planner). The assumption here seems to place the (typically white) planner in a position of neutrality. There are a few exceptions which allow us glimpses of how some practitioners have dealt with challenges of inclusion as they relate to identity. One such gem is a profile of Los Angeles 'activist/practitioner' Gilda Haas in Sandercock's *Towards Cosmopolis*, which looks not only at the capacity building work Haas does today, but also at how a 'middle class white Jewish woman with little exposure to diversity' came to be doing such work. She began her work through listening to people's stories and 'learning by doing'. One of her first lessons was "unlearning a whole lot of stuff" (as quoted by Sandercock 1998:133), a theme with which we will reconnect. Over the course of her career to date Haas has gone from being frightened on her first picket line to realizing that "no one cares what colour, or age, or class I am because I'm not trying to take over" (*ibid.*, 135). If planning practitioners do indeed use and create theory on the job, then planning needs more stories that speak to who the planner is, and how their identity is mediated over time and in different

circumstances, so that students and other practitioners alike might better learn how to incorporate these lessons into our own practices. In the meantime we will need to turn to literature on cross-cultural research in a number of other disciplines.

In completing research on Muslim girls in the education system, it quickly became apparent to white researcher and educator Kaye Haw (1996), that her identity(s) was just as important as the identities of those she was researching. For the girls she became a confidante, an 'outsider' who could not exert authority over their lives. She had a more formal relationship with their fathers who treated her with respect because of her position as an academic. Her relationships with their mothers were again less formal because they were able to connect through shared experiences of gender and motherhood. Her findings in the end were drastically different than those of an 'insider' would have been because of her identities, but are nonetheless an important part of the telling (Haw 1996). Coupled with my earlier discussion of Sandercock's work on identity, parallels can readily be drawn with planning to understand that who is doing the planning becomes just as important as who is being planned with, in shaping its course and outcomes. Depending on the planner and participants a different outcome will be achieved, not better or worse, which adds another layer to an already rich fabric.

The question of identity becomes increasingly fraught with tension when we consider the words of Jeffrey Weeks on difference and the challenges it poses in modern democracies. He notes that values are at the heart of identity and touch on core issues of not only who we are, but also what we want to be and become. The major question that faces us now is "how to achieve a reconciliation between our collective needs as human beings and our specific needs as individuals and members of diverse communities, how to balance the universal and the particular" (1990:89). This is the precise situation of which Donald Schon speaks when he calls on us to turn our focus toward an "epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic, *intuitive* processes which some practitioners do bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict" (Schon 1983:49, emphasis mine). Mier also encourages us to (re)learn to trust our *intuition* and to respect doubt. His experience has told him that "the more certain planners are, the more scared I am of them" (Krumholz and Clavel 1994:81, emphasis mine). Clearly in understanding and listening to our intuition, we as planners must also understand our own cultural bias and the ways that our identities interact with others in the community.

In order to embark on such a journey, planners need a firm and solid understanding of self – replete with contradictions. We need also to have the capacity to continuously revisit that understanding throughout our practice. According to Marjorie Mayo (2000) the issue of self-identity is one of the most basic issues that anyone working with communities must address. To avoid such an awareness is to risk distorting our interventions with cultural assumptions. Indeed, "in societies which are culturally laden with racism,

sexism, homophobia, ageism and ableism, not to mention class prejudice, such awareness is central to empowering practice" (Mayo 2000:7). Echoing this, self-evaluation is essential "if there is to be any movement away from intransigent political positions to tentative new formations" (Parmar as quoted in Ledwith and Asgill 2000:292). Just one of the ways that we can facilitate movements away from memory and toward hope is through self-reflection both for ourselves and for the communities with whom we work.

privilege and transformation

Much of the literature in this field appears to be implicitly informed by both transformative learning theory and heuristic research. It is worth introducing a definition of each here to contextualize the following discussion on discovering, understanding, and unlearning privilege:

Transformative learning involves experiencing a deep, structural shift in the basic premises of thought, feeling, and actions. It is a shift of consciousness that dramatically and permanently alters our way of viewing the world. Such a shift involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationship with other humans and the natural world; our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race, and gender; our body-awareness; our visions of alternative approaches to learning; and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy. (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2002:11)

[Heuristic research] involves self-search, dialogue and self-discovery until insight is found. It begins with a question which has an element of personal challenge in relation to self and the world. It is a transcendence of the autobiographic and the socio-political, which unfolds the meaning of human experience. It requires passionate, disciplined commitment to remain with a question intensely and continuously until it is illuminated or answered. (Ledwith and Asgill 2000:295)

I have already mentioned the importance of understanding privilege in cross-cultural work, and not just in the sense that it is a 'privilege to do what we do', but more importantly as it relates to who we are and the positions we hold as citizens:

But if I think in terms of the much larger female constituency in the world for whom I am an infinitely privileged person, in this broader context, what I really want to learn about is what I have called the *unlearning of one's privilege*. So that, not only does one become able to listen to that other constituency, but one learns to speak in such a way that one will be taken seriously by that other constituency. And furthermore, to recognize that the position of the speaking subject within theory can be an historically powerful position when it wants the other actually to be able to answer back. As a feminist concerned about women, that's the position that interests me more. (Spivak 1990:42, emphasis mine)

The difficulty with privilege is that we who have it, are not aware of it until we either encounter those without it, or we encounter a part of ourselves that does not have it. For example, I am white so this gives

me privilege. However, I am also a woman and in a whole host of circumstances I am without privilege. So, this thinking through helps me learn my privilege, but how is it unlearned?

For some, it may be an intense 'stream of consciousness' about all the benefits accrued by privilege, as did Peggy McIntosh (1988) with white privilege in her essay on 'unpacking the invisible backpack'. Narayan (1988) takes a more analytical approach and provides an excellent overview of how privilege is played out in groups trying to bridge difference, and narrows it down to three reactions on the part of the privileged: 1) Minimizing the emotional costs of oppression. This does not happen intentionally, for while the 'outsider' to oppression may intellectually understand the impacts of oppression, if he has not been oppressed it is difficult for him to grasp the full impact of oppression in its entirety; 2) Missing the subtler manifestations of oppression. For those who learn of oppression second-hand it is easy to identify, for example, racism when it is explicit, but not when it comes through implied gestures such as tone of voice and facial expressions. In this way it is easier for 'insiders' to oppression to understand more fully the way oppression permeates society, and; 3) Not making connections and failing to see oppression in new contexts. So, while an 'outsider' to oppression may understand the commonplace context of oppression, he would fail to carry that understanding to new, more unfamiliar contexts. Similarly he may be unable to transfer what he knows theoretically to a lived example of oppression. Under this light, it is understandable that Narayan (1998) asserts that 'good will' is not enough to make working across difference possible. Just as Harvey (1999) makes clear that changing ourselves is a necessary but insufficient factor of social change, so too is good will – much more is required to work across difference.

For others it may be confronting difference over time, as did Libby Porter (2004) in her work with indigenous groups in Australia. She came to realize that the 'personal is political' because each of us personally embodies the privilege that comes from the various ways that dominant society marginalizes others. She too has found Spivak's 'unlearning privilege' to be useful in cross-cultural research and for her it "requires critical reflection on how we have come to value our own knowledge and practices and investigating why that knowledge is privileged" (2004:104). This unlearning is not only "key to *doing* cross-cultural research, it is one of the things that *happens* to you when you do cross-cultural research" (*ibid.*, emphasis hers). Further compounding this, Spivak calls on us to unlearn our privilege "as loss", something that I was confused by until I turned to Porter's understanding of this loss: "seeing how our privilege has blinded us to so many other possibilities and other world views. How might it be possible to see privilege as a profound emptiness, rather than just a fulfilment of status and power" (*ibid.*).

David Harvey (1999) underscores exactly this when he suggests that when we seek to change our world, we end up changing ourselves. Indeed, he asks how any of us can discuss social change while not simultaneously being prepared to change ourselves:

The planner cannot, in the end, suppress or repress the personal any more than anyone else can. Furthermore, the planner cannot hope to change the world without changing herself or himself. The negotiation that always lies at the basis of planning practices is, therefore, between political persons seeking to change each other and the world as well as themselves. (Harvey 1999:273)

Not an individualistic process, it cannot happen without encountering difference as it is a social process through which we learn new ways of telling our own stories differently (Kimball and Garrison 1999). It is for this reason that organizer/planner Marie Kennedy spends time at the beginning of each planning process making assumptions explicit:

I feel strongly that no matter who we are, we bring our previous experience, our baggage, our preconceptions with us into any planning or organizing situation. The first step in that process is to get real clear about what you are bringing, and to be explicit about that. You either can set your baggage aside in order to clearly hear and listen to other people's experience, or you can check it out against other people's opinions and against facts to see whether your preconception is born out or not. (As quoted in interview with Forester *et al.* 1993:113)

Christina Simmons (1996) echoes this sentiment when she discusses her role as a white American woman teaching African-Canadian history in Canada. Her position(s) as 'outsider' has created confrontations with difference in her classes that have in the end been productive as the challenges of her students cause her to reconsider her reading of history, and she theirs. Being part of the historically dominant group has at times been an obstacle for "seeing and understanding well" and of that her students have been critical. It is through dialogue that change is effected, not just in the classroom, but more generally within society as well. That an aspect of Simmons' identity can ignite this dialogue holds important lessons for planning and can have positive implications, as well as more challenging ones. The relationship to planning becomes clear when she discusses the lessons for those in positions of power:

In order to address these difficulties, we need to undercut the power we exercise in the classroom – to avoid a defensively authoritative position, to admit the limits of our knowledge, and to listen to dissident voices. Above all, trying to build engaged, respectful relationships with students creates a better chance for fruitful interchange over difference. (Simmons 1996:155)

Simmons concludes that "maybe some of the boundary crossing is part of, or contributes to, *changing the position we started from*" (1996:155, emphasis mine). She sees her role as "trying to tell the 'whole story' (or more of it)" while understanding at the same time that this is an illusory goal. When one considers the positioning of some 'insiders' this appears to make sense.

Paulo Freire, too, speaks of travel that allowed him to better understand both himself and his home, again through a confrontation with difference (Giroux 1993). He refers instead, however, to a physical travel throughout the world that allowed him to garner the same benefits of which the others speak. Geraldine Pratt (1998) serves us an important reminder, however, that when we too easily generalize the benefits of border-crossing we fail to recognize that there are border-crossers who never learn to question their own privilege or explore the meanings of their own identities (an idea we will return to later). This is to say that border-crossing in and of itself is not enough; there is work we must do while we are there. For those of us who can identify with, and be identified by, the mainstream in some aspects of our lives, there is a certain romanticism to border-crossing. It's important to remember that border-crossing is easier for those of us who have a place to cross back home to.¹³ Another caution comes from Kaye Haw (1996), a white educator who has researched Muslim girls in the education system. This talk of exploration and border-crossing need not be interpreted as a new kind of colonialism, but rather a confrontation with difference in order to gain an understanding of our own systems of meaning, as well as others. At the end of the day, this travel, physical or otherwise, is part of life's journey, so the task at hand is learning how to do so:

sensitively, judiciously, continually being aware of your limitations, reflecting critically, making your limitations explicit and admitting when you are wrong. It is about risk and being prepared to use the experiences of other cultures and environments to examine critically your own so that others can be included. (Haw 1996:electronic journal¹⁴)

listening and storytelling

Travelling sensitively through critical reflection requires at least two key skills: listening and storytelling. If Mansbridge is correct in asserting that "the dominant group has not learned to listen and the subordinate group has learned to distrust" (Mansbridge 2000:99) then planners have much to learn about listening. Forester (1989) has been immensely helpful in our understanding of how to listen better.¹⁵ In listening lies the secret to transformation and opens possibilities of sharing a world together. If we are used to merely hearing, listening well takes risk; we make ourselves vulnerable by opening ourselves to responsibility. As with any, this risk can prove fruitful. In enabling us to learn, it provides a foundation on which to build relationships, and to be transformed in the process:

Without real listening, not simply hearing, we cannot have a shared, critical, and evolving political life together. In listening we may still better understand, explain, and cut through the pervasive 'can't', the subtle ideological distortions

¹³ For years I failed to understand why my husband (who is of colour) is not as eager to travel as I am, until he finally said to me "I've been travelling all my life." What he has always searched for is a place in which he felt at ease, at home; a place where he belonged.

¹⁴ The HTML formatting of this journal does not reveal page numbers.

¹⁵ For further analysis on the communicative shift in planning see Healey 1992; Healey and Gilroy 1990.

we so often face, including of course our own misunderstandings of who we are and may yet be. Listening well, we can act to nurture dialogue and criticism, to make genuine presence possible, to question and explore all that we may yet do and yet become. (Forester 1989:118)

Forester stresses that listening involves not only understanding meanings, but the ability to “*explain* social and political influences on them” (1989:114, emphasis his). He later cautions against focusing too closely on social structure at the expense of the individual, or vice versa. To that end a fine balance must be reached between the two for too narrow a focus on the former abandons the individual, and on the latter may ‘blame the victim’ and “neglect fundamental needs to restructure our social and political institutions” (Forester 1989:117). Certainly listening to personal experience has a place in planning, but it must be handled carefully for the risk of focusing on any one oppression loses sight of the greater purpose (Himani Bannerji as outlined in Sandercock 1998). Similarly, Wallace and Milroy (1999) forward the idea that a focus on any one aspect of a person’s identity (such as culture) causes the whole person to disappear.

Listening to *what we do not hear* is an important aspect of listening that is not sufficiently addressed by Forester. Learning to appreciate and understand silence in all of its meanings enforces that “silence as a will not to say or a *will to unsay* and as a language of its own has barely been explored” (Trinh Minh Ha as quoted by Razack 1993:67, emphasis mine). In her reflections on childhood, Canadian novelist and poet Dionne Brand (2004) brings forward an aspect of silence. She recalls trying to reconcile the need to know her history with the ‘will not to say’ of the one person who could tell her – her grandfather. She terms this the ‘gift of forgetting’:

It was such an awful experience historically that perhaps forgetting is a gift. He needed to forget it also. In those circumstances forgetting is a kind of pleasure. If you took the results of it to heart you would probably perish. There are all kinds of ways of coping with catastrophe, perhaps his was [forgetting]. (Brand, 2004)

When we ask questions that force a remembering, we can do a type of violence to a person whose way of recovering from trauma is the gift of forgetting. We must learn to listen to and respect the silence of others. Of course Brand here is referring to forgetting as a gift from one’s ancestors, those who have been persecuted for difference. This argument could not be responsibly construed to suggest that those of us in a historically dominant group can invoke the same ‘gift of forgetting’ in order to avoid confronting our own histories.

None of this takes away from the idea that much of planning is possible through storytelling (see for example Sandercock 2004; Throgmorton 1992). We can see people ‘in context’ through stories because they are “full of feelings, imaginings, intuitions, and implicit decisions positioning self and other. Stories

invite others into worldviews and different cultural ways of seeing" (LeBaron 2003:277), thereby setting into motion the possibility of 'story cocreation' between and amongst diverse groups. This too can be seen in the many calls to bring the personal voice into research and practice.¹⁶

Legal researcher and popular educator Sherene Razack (1994) understands storytelling to be a powerful tool in effecting social change, but asks us to ensure a sound understanding of why we want the stories of the 'other' to be told. We must ask ourselves who benefits in the telling. She teaches classes at a summer college in human rights in Ottawa, where the curriculum is organized to encourage storytelling in the effort to 'make space for different voices', and to ultimately forge alliances through sharing lived experience. She recalls a circumstance in which a class discussion turned to South Africa, and a white woman could not understand the silence of a black woman from South Africa. She asked the woman to talk about her experiences and Razack recalls the sense of trust built over five days immediately dissolving as the black participant defended her right to silence and left the room, visibly upset. Razack's reflections of the 'fallout' are worth quoting at length here:

In the chaos of what then ensued, it became clear that the sentence so simply expressed by a white woman, innocently inviting a woman of colour to share her experiences of racism, recalled for every person of colour in the room (seven out of 20) that this was not in fact a safe learning environment. For me, the instructor and a woman of colour, I tried hard to retain my composure. Later, distressed to the point of tears by the 'loss of control' in 'my' classroom, and not consoled by the learning value of the event, I wondered how it was that I could have been so powerfully affected in spite of many years' experience of just this type of situation. I recall trying clumsily to explain to a colleague that we (people of colour) are always being asked to tell our stories for your (white people) benefit, *which you can't hear because of the benefit you derive from hearing them*. Suddenly, the world was still white after all and the pedagogy that insisted that the oppressed can come together to critically reflect and share stories seemed a sham. (Razack 1994:63, emphasis mine)

Clearly, the ability to *listen*, in this case to silence, was compromised by a desire to *hear* another's story. While the personal and social transformation requires interaction across difference, respecting another's right not to share their person in every social context is essential. Razack emphasizes the importance of paying attention to the way in which our varied identities are "constructed and played out at any one time in any one context" (Razack 1994:67). As we shall explore in the next section, if the student had been listening to her partners in improvisation, and responding in turn, she may have focused on her need to know rather than on asking for the stories. Ruth Behar explains a similar phenomenon is social science research that I think is applicable to planning: "We ask for revelations from others, but we reveal little or nothing of ourselves; we make others vulnerable, but we ourselves remain invulnerable" (as quoted in Weis and Fine 2000:34).

¹⁶ See, for example, the anthology *Reflexivity and Voice* (Hertz (Ed.) 1997).

metaphor

Much ground has been covered to this point, making it useful to summarize here by way of metaphor. Michelle LeBaron (2002) writes of the power of metaphor in bridging conflict, in designing processes, and gaining new perspectives into 'other worlds'. Metaphor is an important part of the way we communicate, both the mundane and the profound. At their core, metaphors "communicate whole systems of meaning" (LeBaron 2002:183), and have been invaluable in my understanding of the meaning behind this body of literature. Here I identify the three metaphors which serve to powerfully explain what it means to work cross-culturally. Note that each of them involves fluidity of movement, underscoring again that nothing in planning or culture is static; indeed the only constant is readjustment (repositioning) and change.

Michelle LeBaron (2003) discusses the bridging of cultural conflict as an art: "it is to dance on shifting sands in scenes with others painted by brushes largely out of our control" (2003:301). There is movement in this metaphor (dance, shifting sands) which mimics the fluidity of culture and identity. For LeBaron the dance is not just between individuals, but it is also something that occurs within ourselves:

As we develop [mindful awareness],¹⁷ we notice with more intention and presence how our inner terrain – responses, perceptions, meanings, identity – dances in our communication and conflicts, bringing us closer together or further apart, keeping us curious or shutting relational doors. (LeBaron 2003:84)

So it is up to us, we can decline the offer to dance but to do so closes a door. Planners cannot play the role of wallflower, however, hoping that someone asks us to dance; if we want doors to remain open to us we must often be the suitor. This requires risk and relinquishing enough control to recognize that for many processes the outcome is unknown – we are dancing to an improvised song.

And to what rhythm do these dancers move? Schon (1983) would have jazz musicians improvising together set the mood and tone for the dancers. They too would come to symbolize the nature of planning:

When good jazz musicians improvise together, they also manifest a 'feel for' their material and they make on-the-spot adjustments to the sounds they hear. Listening to one another and to themselves, they feel where the music is going and adjust their playing accordingly. (...) As the musicians feel the direction of

¹⁷ LeBaron defines what she calls a mindful awareness in this way: "Awareness of our selves as situated within boundaries drawn by our cultures, worldviews, and individual habits of attention contributes to our cultural fluency. This awareness is an essential complement to understandings of cultural dynamics. The fluency with which we apply our understandings grows as our awareness of the filters through which they pass increases. Becoming aware of these filters, maintaining awareness in the moment, and choosing culturally fluent ways to engage others is the gift of *mindful awareness*" (2003:84, emphasis hers).

the music that is developing out of their interwoven contributions, they make new sense of it and adjust their performance to the new sense they have made. (Schon 1983:55)

As with dancers controlled by outside forces, no one musician controls the setting for this fluid movement. In improvisation there is no conductor, there are only the musicians who make sense as they act and react to one another. For Forester there remains a power, but we must plan in the face of it, improvising as we go along: "In the face of power, planners must improvise sensitively and imaginatively, changing objectives, discovering and responding to novel problems, adjusting their priorities and efforts accordingly" (Forester 1989:178). This force is to be found and followed in general directions, rather than specific instruction, if such flexibility and improvisation is to be maintained. There is no 'recipe' for inclusive planning; it requires planners to be "moral improvisers" (*ibid.*:180). LeBaron also refers to such a force when she speaks of a larger picture: "We are at once different from others and the same. We belong, in the course of our lives, to many pictures – to a very large one that encompasses us all and to many smaller ones that separate us, giving our lives purpose, meaning, flavour, and vibrant colour" (LeBaron 2003:300).

Through such vibrancy, fragments begin to emerge. In describing the overlapping and shifting discourses that come with any imaginable combination of intersecting identities, Haw (1996) uses the metaphor of a kaleidoscope:

At any one time these discourses can shift and change places rather as the pattern shifts and changes as you twist the eyepiece of a kaleidoscope so that the combination of pieces which go to make up its pattern are altered. The pattern can remain static before it is shifted again in an endless variation of combination over time, which can always be subtly different for each individual, even while they belong to groups, just as the pieces which go to make up the patterns of the kaleidoscope remain the same but take their meaning (their perceived colour and shape) from the places that they hold. (Haw 1996:electronic journal)

While Haw uses this image to communicate the nature of intersecting identities, the image of kaleidoscope can also be seen in the work of others, such as David Harvey (1973) and his description of social relationships:

These relationships are not necessarily in harmony with each other. They are frequently in contradiction and out of this contradiction flows conflict. Transformations occur through the resolution of these conflicts and with each transformation the totality is restructured and this restructuring in turn alters the definition, meaning and function of the elements and relationships within the whole. New conflicts and contradictions emerge to replace the old. (Harvey 1973:289)

Similar shifts and fluidity can also be seen in LeBaron (2003):

As we interact we perceive others' behaviour and adjust our own in an unbroken multidirectional loop, creating a unique, culturally influenced thumbprint of our relationship at that moment in time. Later, that print may change as we change and the context shifts; yet it is also true that an aerial view may show us patterns that play out between us and others over time. (LeBaron 2003:49)

Here, LeBaron uses the metaphor of a thumbprint to look at the same phenomenon described by the kaleidoscope, but adds an interesting new addition – the idea that over time we can see patterns and themes emerging in our relations with ourselves and with others, highlighting the ongoing and cyclical nature of a planning that cannot wish for quick results. It is a type of planning that recognizes its work may never be complete, but will be marked by its ability to strive for that which is ideal.

2.3 a word on concepts in the literature

Four concepts quickly emerge from the key ideas explained here. So pervasive are these concepts that to pull them independently from the text would distort their influence, for they comprise the heart of cross-cultural interaction. I will take a turn on each of them here.

trust

That communities typically marginalized by past planning practices are distrustful of planning, indeed of planners, comes as no surprise. Because trust is not something we can discuss in isolation there is not any huge amount of explicit discussion of trust and trust-building in the literature, but rather it is implied that the cross-cultural interaction *seeks to build trust*. This is the underlying concept in all of the literature discussed here, and can be summarized by a few actions: building opportunities for social interaction; “stress[ing] the need to learn about the realities of others without relying on them to inform us” (Razack 1993:62); examining what we share and where we differ; engaging in difficult dialogue; *listening* to words and to silence, and; making space for “histories of being doers and done to” (Forester 1999:206). Above all trust building calls for a recognition that “no one is off the hook since we can all claim to stand as oppressor and oppressed in relation to someone else” (Razack 1993:62).

legitimacy

As with trust, legitimacy was not addressed explicitly in a great deal of the literature, but is an overarching theme that speaks to our actions as planners. It appears to need constant management, and will change from community to community, in some circumstances rising as an issue, in others not. It is understood that while planners have established for ourselves that cross-cultural planning is both necessary and possible, those with whom we plan may not immediately share this perspective and we can be quickly placed in a position of having to justify our work. Freire's piece best addresses the reason why cross-cultural work should be done, and the legitimacy we all have in its pursuit:

If the women are critical, they have to accept our contribution as men, as well as the workers have to accept our contribution as intellectuals, because it is a duty and a right that I have to participate in the transformation of society. Then, if the women must have the main responsibility in their struggle, they have to know that their struggle also belongs to us, that is to those men who don't accept that machista position in the world. The same is true of racism. As an apparent white man, because I always say that I am not quite sure of my whiteness, the question is to know if I'm really against racism in a radical way. If I am, then I have a duty and a right to fight with black people against racism. (As quoted in hooks 1993:153)

conflict

As we have explored, to understand ourselves and positions of privilege we need 'confrontation' with difference. Such a confrontation implies a negative encounter, but this need not be the case. If this project is to meet success, we must turn the notion of conflict and confrontation on its head and begin viewing conflict as a productive and essential component of working cross-culturally (LeBaron 2003). Many of us are brought up believing that conflict is best avoided but, as we have seen here, transforming ourselves is not possible without it. Indeed within conflict lies our greatest capacity for learning and transformation, both individually and socially, and we must learn to embrace its presence in our lives, even if we maintain our discomfort with it.

self-reflection

And if we are to learn anything from conflict we will need to build the skills necessary to reflect on our personal selves. Included is reflection on values, on our reactions, on our biases, on our own cultural programming, and on our need to know. Reflection is not a one-time event – it is a way of living as a practitioner and a citizen and it happens continuously throughout life as we learn and grow both internally and in relation to each other. Not only is it a tool to understand how *we perceive others*, but it allows us to understand how *others perceive us*.

2.4 how can these key ideas and concepts be incorporated into planning practice?

We will turn to the five planning practitioners shortly to gain an understanding of how they plan cross-culturally, but the literature offers us a hint of how planning may begin to make sense of all this. Recall Wallace and Milroy's (1999) identification of two methods of incorporating diversity into planning. One was a case-by-case approach, the other to take diversity as the point of departure.¹⁸ While the purpose

¹⁸ Taking diversity as a point of departure requires a vision of the city as already constructed by diversity, where the approach demands an "understanding that diversity is fundamental to who we are" (Wallace and Milroy 1999:70). Thus, it requires major, pre-emptive, changes to the structures through which planning is done rather than reactions to conflict when they arise (as seen in the case-by-case approach).

here is not to debate the merits of one over the other, it is possible to incorporate some of the key ideas from cross-cultural literature into both styles.

The importance of self-reflection in building trustful relationships is not lost on me, yet one can get the sense after spending time with the literature, that we may run the risk of venturing toward self obsession, forgetting that we still have work to complete. Porter (2004) too welcomes the trend toward a more communicative style of planning, but reminds us that its departure from more 'rational' styles of planning cannot be complete. Clearly the need for balance presents itself and we must recognize that self-reflection certainly makes our work better, yet sometimes the community needs us to get on with the business of planning – their role does not lie in guiding our journey of self-discovery. The point I take from the literature is that self-reflection happens while you complete the work of planning, and a natural reflexivity is built into practice over time so that you almost do not notice its occurrence. In any planning practice there is room for both reflection and 'work', but again we must learn to follow the cues of others in order to dance to improvised music as we find balance.

Harvey (1999) addresses this idea, when the planner finds herself caught between a desire to operate outside of the norm and the circumstances of an actual work situation where demands are made of her time, and skills are acquired and employed "in limited ways for purposes usually defined by others" (1999:275). In this light the planner is a cog in a wheel where he is both constructed by and constructor of that process (*ibid.*). It is as Dell Upton (2000) reminds us, the structure within which we work "is not a force of nature; it is the cumulative result of choices made by individuals who could have made other choices" (Upton 2000:65). And the planner is capable of so much more:

Yet the planner can desire, think and dream of difference. And he or she has available some special resources for critique, resources from which to generate alternative visions as to what might be possible. A prime resource lies in the tradition of Utopia. 'Where we learn it from; may then become just as important as 'where we see it from.'¹⁹ (...) But the planner armed with resources from the utopian tradition can be a subversive agent, a fifth column inside of the system with one foot firmly planted in some alternative camp. (Harvey 1999:275)

Such action requires no small amount of courage, and yet social justice expects nothing less. We must find ways of planning to the demands of our personal utopias. As Ledsworth and Asgill (2000) outline in their personal history of trying to build a 'critical alliance' across race (one a black woman and the other white), their own journey to understanding required courage and determination, not to mention "tenacity, stubbornness, (and) cussedness" (2000:295).

¹⁹ This echoes a similar understanding of learning to Jane Jacobs (2002). When a radio interviewer asked her permission to unplug her refrigerator due to noise levels, Jacobs followed her into the kitchen and said "I take my learning where I find it" (reference).

In his hopes for the future of planning, Aberley (2000) envisions that professional success will not be evaluated *solely* on how we meet the demands of our employers. Planners may continue to work toward this end, but they will also choose more often to dedicate unpaid time to work outside of the status quo for projects that demonstrate how sustainability and social justice can be achieved. Another imagining involves planners regularly making time to step away from their day-to-day jobs in order to evaluate the 'big picture' that they set for themselves, both professionally and individually. This agenda will be influenced equally by *heart* and *mind*, and our worth will be realized for technical expertise as well as a clear articulation of beliefs and values (Aberley 2000). He also speaks to the idea that planning is so much more than a profession, and we must begin to identify it as a way to make our lives *something more*. LeBaron (2003) echoes a similar idea when she writes of developing cross-cultural capacities. These are not concepts that we can learn in our eight-hour work-days, they require a dedication that extends to the way we live our lives.

Libby Porter underscores Aberley's hopes by recognizing that while our reflection on how our own attitudes and values impact daily practice is an essential component of doing cross-cultural work, there is more to it yet:

Also required is the ability to focus on moments within institutional rules and parameters where real and lasting change can be achieved. It is about influencing and shaping the institutions and rules within which planners work. For indigenous nations, this means using state-based systems (and that is where planners can help) to find strategic moments of opportunity that can result in recognition of indigenous rights and responsibilities and the material privileges that should ultimately flow (2004:108).

Norman Dale (1999) also speaks of learning to identify the strategic moments where he could effect change in his role as community liaison for an economic-planning process between government and the Haida Gwaii. From the outset he didn't agree with the approach of those who hired him, one that he refers to as "keeping the kids at play while the big guys down south do the real work" (1999:928). He saw the First Nations with whom he was working as more deserving than that, and afforded the space in negotiations for their stories and histories to be told. When meeting with his clients, he adopted what he refers to as an 'ethically fragile position', one that saw him in the role of 'covert change agent' who 'wore' a number of different outfits, depending on his audience. He understood that this balancing act meant learning to identify when it was appropriate to speak out and when to remain silent, for they could easily find someone else to do the work – someone whose philosophy fit their expectation (*ibid.*), which would have been a real loss to the community.²⁰

²⁰ Had he been candid in his approach, he would not have this story to tell now, and while he does not necessarily think it is ethical to gain access to a situation by concealing one's intentions from those in power, he knows that regardless of who hired him, he "sought an economic development plan that was both fair and likely to be implemented in good faith" (Dale 1999:945).

Much like Aberley and Porter suggest, the modernist structures are not necessarily best thrown out, for the technical certainly has its place in planning, but it must be balanced with the heart. An example of how this may be done comes from Dale's (1999) work, outlined above, where he used narrative to get at issues inaccessible to rational approaches. Historical narratives about residential schools allowed him to not only build empathy among non-indigenous members of the group, but he was able to recall this empathy at critical points during the negotiation process. We must learn to focus on those moments and spaces within planning systems that provide planners with such opportunity. Like a kaleidoscope where certain configurations of elements may present opportunities for change, planners must be quick to seize the opportunity before the configuration shifts again and the opportunity disappears.

In a sense, then, we must begin to personally identify with our work by connecting ourselves to it. In making this point, Porter (2004) cites David Harvey's (1999) emphasis on the personal as political. And yet, both note that this does not go far enough; personally identifying with our work is both necessary and insufficient in creating social change. Aberley (2000) underscores this by noting that it is still too easy to separate what we *believe* and what we *do*. Perhaps this is one of the reasons Porter has raised questions as to the "adequacy of relying on the 'goodwill' of planning practitioners" in changing the practice of planning across difference (2004:104). For all the benefit reflexivity has on our practice, this understanding is, according to Porter, a 'fundamentally inadequate' response to the types of claims made by indigenous nations (2004), and those of other diverse groups. To change the structures that perpetuate injustice in the name of difference we must begin to use in practice what we learn about others and ourselves through cross-cultural interaction.

2.5 a peek ahead

The literature review unveiled several key ideas and concepts about cross-cultural interaction and has provided a sense of what planning with diversity might entail given its politicized nature. At the end of the day many of these key ideas have been pulled from literature found outside of formal planning, but are clearly related to planning practice. This chapter sets the context for what follows by identifying what literature tells us is important in cross-cultural interaction, if not planning, and outlining its politicized nature. What it does *not* do, however, is set a framework for the research and analysis. The reason for this is clear: planning literature does not tell us enough about *how* planning practitioners work to build trust across difference. As such, there is an inherent danger in applying the findings of other disciplines and professions to planning without exploring first how cross-cultural planning is done. Evidently so much of this work is intuitive and it appears that one has to get out there and 'step in it'²¹ to figure out what really works for personal practice. After being immersed in this literature for the better part of a

²¹ This idea is borrowed from Oscar Allueva, one of the research participants.

year, I was more scared than when I'd begun. It was time to find out how planning practitioners mediate these waters. Before we step right into the 'grit' of the thesis, we must first take a look at the methodology that lay behind this research, and in so doing we will meet our participants for the first time.

chapter three: methodology matters

It should come as no surprise that the research for this thesis followed a purely qualitative vein, for no quantitative measures exist to understand *how* the journey of cross-cultural planning is traveled, given its complex, sensitive, and experiential nature. To some extent this research is contextual, in that it identifies *what* exists and how it manifests itself by asking what cross-cultural planning involves. However, in looking at the context this research also asks evaluative questions as to *how* things operate (Ritchie 2003). In combining both contextual and evaluative research approaches, the research is at its core exploratory in nature, for the process of trust and legitimacy-building across culture in the context of planning has received “little or no systemic empirical scrutiny” (Stebbins 2001:9).²²

3.1 research approach

In large part my research was inspired by Forester’s use of planners’ stories from practice as “windows onto the world of planning” (1999:7), where the assumption is that a perceptive analysis of planning situations encourages us to strive for improvement in our own practice “by showing what can be done through practitioners’ vivid, instructive, and even moving accounts of their successes and failures” (*ibid.*). For Forester, stories are a way of understanding the complex and political daily experience of planning practice. In my experience I have found such relaying of direct experience to be highly effective, but also instructive has been gaining insight into what and how a planner thinks about cross-cultural planning more generally. This has happened through stories to a large extent, yet depending on a planner’s comfort level with discussing direct experience, it has also come through understanding what a planner thinks about specific aspects of planning across difference.

in-depth interviews

In designing my research methods for this thesis, I turned almost immediately to in-depth interviews as a way of understanding what is involved in cross-cultural planning and how planners mediate and navigate difference. This approach allowed me to become clear in not only what is experienced by planning practitioners, but also how they respond to these experiences. According to Lewis (2003) three factors must be considered in choosing in-depth interviews as the method: 1) *The nature of the data sought*. In depth-interviewing is the *only* dialogic data collection method through which it is possible to ground the perspectives within the context of personal experience. 2) *The subject matter*. Opportunities for clarification and a detailed understanding of complex processes and experiences present themselves in in-

²² This is one of Stebbins’ (2001) three conditions for exploratory research. The other two are: when a “group, process or activity has been largely examined using prediction and control rather than flexibility and open-mindedness, or has grown to maturity [...] but has changed so much along the way that it begs to be explored anew” (Stebbins 2001:9).

depth interviews. 3) *The research population.* Dialogue is essential in getting at process oriented information, so surveys or questionnaires are not sufficient here. Of all dialogic methods, in-depth interviews are ideal for busy populations, such as professionals, because they allow the researcher to meet participants at a time and location of their choosing, rather than requiring that they travel outside of the office to a scheduled focus group session.

Legard *et al.* (2003) lay out six key features of in-depth interviews, each of which I followed closely in my research: 1) *Structure was combined with flexibility*, so that not only were the important topics (as I saw them) covered, but done so in an order that best suited the participant. This semi-structured interview approach is essential for in-depth interviews as it allows the researcher to personalize the interview by modifying the order, wording, and even inclusion of questions (Robson 1993:231). More importantly, however, flexibility allowed other important topics (as the participant saw them) to emerge without restriction. In this vein I refrained from interrupting when I felt the participant straying from the question so that not only were new topics covered, but very often the participant naturally returned to the topic area. Moreover, in some cases questions were answered before they were asked, thereby reinforcing the validity of the question. 2) *Interviews were interactive in nature*, so that material was generated by interaction between the participant and myself, and allowed for new questions to arise in relation to the participant's responses. 3) *A range of probes was used to achieve depth in responses.* Responses tended to be somewhat superficial until participants developed a sense of comfort. Probing, either immediately after the participant's initial response or returned to later on once a comfort level had been established, served to elicit more detailed responses. 4) *Interviews were generative*, in that new knowledge or ideas were at some point likely to be created. My hope was to lead participants down paths they had not considered before, but it is difficult to say whether this happened in all cases. 5) *Data was recorded in its 'natural form'*, which meant tape-recording each interview to allow for nuance and the participant's own language and understanding to be captured for future reference. 6) *Interviews were completed face to face*, essential for discussion of a personal nature as it created a more personable environment and allowed for a complete connection to be made in terms of body language and nuance.

The questions themselves were intended to be quite personal in nature, as it was my hope to focus on the personal values that inform planning practice, the understanding of cross-cultural planning, and personal experiences, rather than those of the organization or government with which a planner's work is affiliated. The participants were asked a series of questions that included, but were not limited to: whether or not they had ever had anyone question their legitimacy because they did not share a common cultural background, and if so how they had dealt with this; whether or not they've questioned their own legitimacy; their experiences in building trust in cultural communities, and; whether or not they've been

ethically conflicted between some of their own core values and those of another cultures, and how they've dealt with this.²³

I conducted five in-depth interviews with planning practitioners primarily in the Greater Vancouver Regional District, although one lives in Nanaimo and works on contract in the Lillooet region of British Columbia and another lives in Vancouver but practices in several provinces in Canada. The interviews took place at a location of the participant's choosing, in three cases at their places of employment, and in two cases at the homes of the practitioners (which, I suppose are also places of employment because these two are consultants who often work from home-based offices). The interviews lasted anywhere from one to two hours, with the average being approximately one and a half hours. Consent forms were signed in all cases, and all interviews were tape-recorded. Each interview was subsequently transcribed almost verbatim (save the recording of pauses, laughter, etc.). At the end of each interview I asked the participant whether he or she would like to be identified in the final document or would prefer to remain anonymous. Three of five participants preferred to be identified by name, one opted to remain anonymous, and the fifth was indifferent and left the decision up to me.

Limitations present themselves with every method and the in-depth interview is no exception. While these interviews remain the best way to get at how planning practitioners engage diversity, they limit the number of participants involved. Not only does it require considerable time (a maximum of two hours, with the possibility of a half hour follow-up interview, was requested in the contact letter) on the part of busy practitioners, each interview produces a significant amount of data to understand and analyze, both of which lead to small sample sizes. As I will discuss in the analysis section, small sample sizes reduce the level of abstraction possible. Small focus groups would also have been useful in generating the experiences of planning practitioners, and ensuring that each of us were 'on the same page', yet organizing them would have been logistically unlikely given the busy research population.

3.2 meet the planners

The exploratory elements of this research required me to seek a range of planning practitioners, diverse not only in the type of planning they do, but also in gender and ethno-cultural background, to move us away from the idea that only Euro-Canadian planners risk questions of legitimacy and trust-building in their work. All five participants were found through my pre-existing contacts where I was able to ask practitioners working in the area who they might recommend as potential interviewees. Two of the five planners work as independent consultants in smaller communities, although one of them also has experience working for a small municipality divided between primarily white residents and three

surrounding First Nations bands. One planner works for a local neighbourhood organization that uses diversity as its grounding platform. The final two planners work for municipalities within the GVRD, one in a rather 'conventional' planning role that seeks to balance the physical and social aspects of planning; the other in a role strictly focused on social planning as it relates to multiculturalism. The following introduction to our cast of five gives a sense of their diversity. Four of the five planners are identified here by name. Rupert is a pseudonym for the fifth planner who preferred anonymity. We will learn much more about these folks in the analysis found in chapter four.

norma-jean mclaren

When she began working cross-culturally in the 1960s, Norma-Jean knew she was entering a politically sensitive field during political times, and despite being a white woman whose legitimacy was questioned on several occasions, did not waver in pursuing the work which holds her passion. While her academic background is in adult education, she is very much a planner in the tradition of community development. She has long had a passion for peace, social justice, and healing division across cultural and ethnic lines, all of which clearly inform her work. Although based in Vancouver she works throughout British Columbia, Alberta, southern Ontario and Saskatchewan as a community developer focused in three general areas. For many years she has led organizations through a process of becoming more sensitive and equitable in the provision of services. These organizations include school boards, colleges, hospitals, corrections, police departments, security providers and the corporate sector. Secondly, one of Norma-Jean's strengths is working with communities divided along cultural, ethnic, or racial lines toward capacity in addressing their own issues. The goal is for communities to expand their abilities and responsibilities for community healing. Her work often involves communities where treaty processes, land access issues or racial incidents have served to disable the community's faith in its capacity to function as a whole community. Thirdly, her work involves building community networks and framing existing and potential community partnerships, allowing innovative and effective working relationships to develop across rural and urban neighbourhoods.

kari huhtala

Educated in planning at SCARP, Kari's career has followed a number of different paths thus far. His interest in social planning emerged through his active engagement with twelve neighbourhoods in Vancouver, ranging from Shaughnessy to the Downtown Eastside, in the capacity of neighbourhood planner at the City of Vancouver. Although he did not intentionally set out to do cross-cultural planning through his education, he quickly realized that it was an essential component of planning in diverse urban centres during a period of rapid demographic changes. With twenty-four years of experience under his

²³ Please see Appendix A for the original interview guide, bearing in mind that this served as a guide and the order

belt, Kari has been a senior policy planner at the City of Richmond for the past eleven, and his work there covers both the social and physical aspects of planning, a blend which allows him to consider the community aspects of projects such as rapid transit to a greater extent than if he was responsible solely for social planning.

*rupert*²⁴

Through an education in the social sciences and humanities, Rupert gained many of the communication, analysis and critical thinking skills associated with the planning profession. He did not intentionally set out to do cross-cultural work, but through an early position with ethnic seniors, with whom he shared a linguistic background, he quickly recognized the challenges of bridging the sometimes competing interests between diverse segments of any community. He realized fairly early on that the way planning systems understand community dynamics and needs may not be accurate, and that working with one population has implications for other populations. Although Rupert has long been cognizant of the need for effective civic participation that transcends boundaries, the dialogue when he entered the field in the early 1980s was not centred on the politicized nature of cross-cultural interaction, but rather on the need to help ethnic populations overcome barriers to participation with little recognition of the importance of communication and interaction between groups. After moving into a position with an immigrant services organization in Vancouver he learned very quickly that planning across difference is often done in an environment in which one thinks on his feet and there is little room for error. In many ways his work has long been a marriage between his personal experience as an immigrant and his professional interests in social justice, and this continues to be true in his current role as a social planner with the City of Vancouver. In this capacity he works directly with communities and organizations as well as civic departments and various levels of government on issues related to inclusion and multiculturalism.

oscar allueva

Oscar's background in social work suggests that he has long intended on working in a social change capacity, but he did not set out to work specifically in a cross-cultural context. As with Kari and Rupert, it was what happened to him when he started working, first with the Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, followed by the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, and realized that diversity surrounds us and must be incorporated within organizational structures. He remembers dialogue as to the political nature of cross-cultural work when he started out in the 1980s, but it did not affect his decision to enter the field. As an immigrant Oscar was familiar with experiences of diversity and has never questioned the 'imperative of inclusion' and wonders why one would want to do it any other way. In this sense, he seems a perfect fit

shifted from interview to interview and other questions arose based on participant responses.

²⁴ Because this is a pseudonym the biographical sketch here is not as detailed as those of other planners so that his anonymity is not compromised by career-related details.

as Director of Community Services²⁵ at the Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH)²⁶, an organization that has taken diversity as a point of departure and has continuously used it as a platform for every action and decision they make. For the past eleven years, his focus is on the overall planning and delivery of programs at CNH, and through my conversation with him it became clear that it is not easy for him to separate his work and values from those of the organization as a whole, in that they each are informed by the other.

lisa bhopalsingh

With five years of planning experience under her belt, Lisa has had an interesting start to her career by working in turns with the Municipality of Lillooet, the District of Lillooet, and one of the First Nations bands in the Lillooet region of British Columbia. While conducting research for her planning thesis in the region, she was offered a planning position with the local municipality and began by completing planning basics such as zoning, land-use applications and sewer treatment projects. Three First Nations bands surround the Municipality of Lillooet, and their involvement in planning processes has not typically been high in the past. Because Lisa had established contacts with First Nations members in the area while doing her thesis research, the municipality quickly realized the resource they had in her ability to establish connections founded on trust. She has now done work in a number of capacities that involve encouraging cross-cultural interaction, such as the Community to Community Forum to garner greater cooperation between First Nations communities and their neighbours. That she started to receive contract offers from one of the bands is a testament to her ability to build trust between groups long divided. She attributes this ability, in part, to her identity as a mixed-race individual. Growing up in Trinidad and England, part Indian and part English she moved to Canada as a young adult and notes that she has never *fully* belonged to either of her cultures of heritage so she may feel a certain comfort 'in-between' that is not shared by others.

3.3 approach to analysis

As previously mentioned I transcribed each of the five interviews, almost verbatim. Other researchers have found success in transcribing only what is pertinent to their studies. I felt this option closed to me as I could not yet distinguish between the essential and peripheral, and I feared losing important pieces of the puzzle. I then spent a day with the transcripts, reading them through and taking very general notes of whatever came to mind. During a second reading of the transcripts, I took more detailed notes as to what

²⁵ His position is one of two that together form the position of Executive Director.

²⁶ CNH was established in the early 1980s as a response to a number of factors such as the development of Skytrain, 'urban blight', and the flow-through of traffic as the suburbs began to grow. For a more detailed description of the work of CNH, please see Dang (2002) and Sandercock (2003).

each participant had said about some of the challenges and strategies of working cross-culturally, both in the context of trust and legitimacy, and any other context in which it was raised. While the notes from the first reading were general, those from the second reading produced a separate set for each planner. At the same time that I was constructing this set of notes, I was keeping another main series of notes detailing how the comments of each planner related to those of other planners in order to get an initial sense of similarities and differences. Once this phase was completed, I put the notes and transcripts to rest while I worked on other things.

I came back to the notes two weeks later and produced a third, more condensed, set of notes; this time based on the second set as opposed to the transcripts themselves. Finally, eleven obvious themes started to emerge. I took these themes and gave each one sheet of paper, and went through both the second and third sets of notes and documented what each planner had said with regard to each theme. It quickly became obvious that there was a great deal of overlap amongst the themes. For example, 'establishing relationships', 'personal connections', and 'cultural informants' were too interconnected to treat separately, and thus became a combined theme. There was also significant discussion on making mistakes in cross-cultural situations, but this was almost always discussed in relation to the use of cultural informants, which necessitated its inclusion in this category. In this way, the eleven key ideas were narrowed down to three main themes, which fit under the umbrella of the two concepts addressed at the outset – trust and legitimacy. Once the structure was established, I was left with large portions of the discussion still uninvolved in the themes. Upon closer analysis, it appeared that the bulk of this discussion involved the skills needed to do cross-cultural planning, and these essentials comprise the final section of the analysis.

Again I took two weeks away from these ideas and came back to review the notes once again. To my relief I found that the themes and structure I had laid out still seemed clear, renewing my confidence in them. Finally, I charted the ideas out on one large scroll of paper and created an index under each heading of what each planner said on that topic and where it was located in their transcript. I also marked the spots where the topics were raised in each transcript with a different coloured sticker for ease of access in the future. With this completed, I finally felt able to write up my findings.

the nature of the findings

The level of abstraction found in this project is not high, and for good reason. Research limited to five individuals, themselves demographically diverse with respect to gender, ethno-culture, and the realms of planning they pursue, cannot responsibly be generalized. Certainly generalizability was not the intent from the outset for it requires a far greater sample size than five, no matter the method. In piecing together the aforementioned themes, however, I am interpreting the data as I understand it. Where

possible, and this is primarily where the participants differ, tentative explanations will be offered as to why this *may* be occurring, and is in this sense inductive and grounded in nature. Grounded theory generally emerges from the data set, however it is gathered, and in so doing seeks to answer questions about 'what's going on here?' (Morse and Richards 2002:55). It is the most appropriate method for researchers seeking to "learn *from* the participants how to understand a process or situation" (*ibid.*, emphasis theirs), as I have sought in this study. Of course my study has exploratory elements at its core, which demands these offerings be verified through further research.²⁷ As with any research, and especially with exploration, this is not the end of the story. More research can always be done, and is nearly always required; as such I will propose areas for further research in my final analysis. Given the sensitive and personal nature of the research, chapter four and the short biographies in this chapter were made available to all participants for their review and feedback. All comments, and there were surprisingly few, were incorporated into the text.

3.4 a peek ahead

In the end, this is my telling of the story. Someone else with the same research question would derive variations of the themes about to unfold, not only because their interpretation would be different but their conversations would have likely been different too. In this sense, the research itself is similar in nature to planning, as the results can be, and often are, different (not necessarily better or worse) depending on the planner. Now we can finally focus our attention squarely on the planners to get an understanding of how they travel the landscape of cross-cultural planning, including the navigational skills they employ.

²⁷ Stebbins (2001) says it is impossible to both generate and confirm hypothesis with the same data.

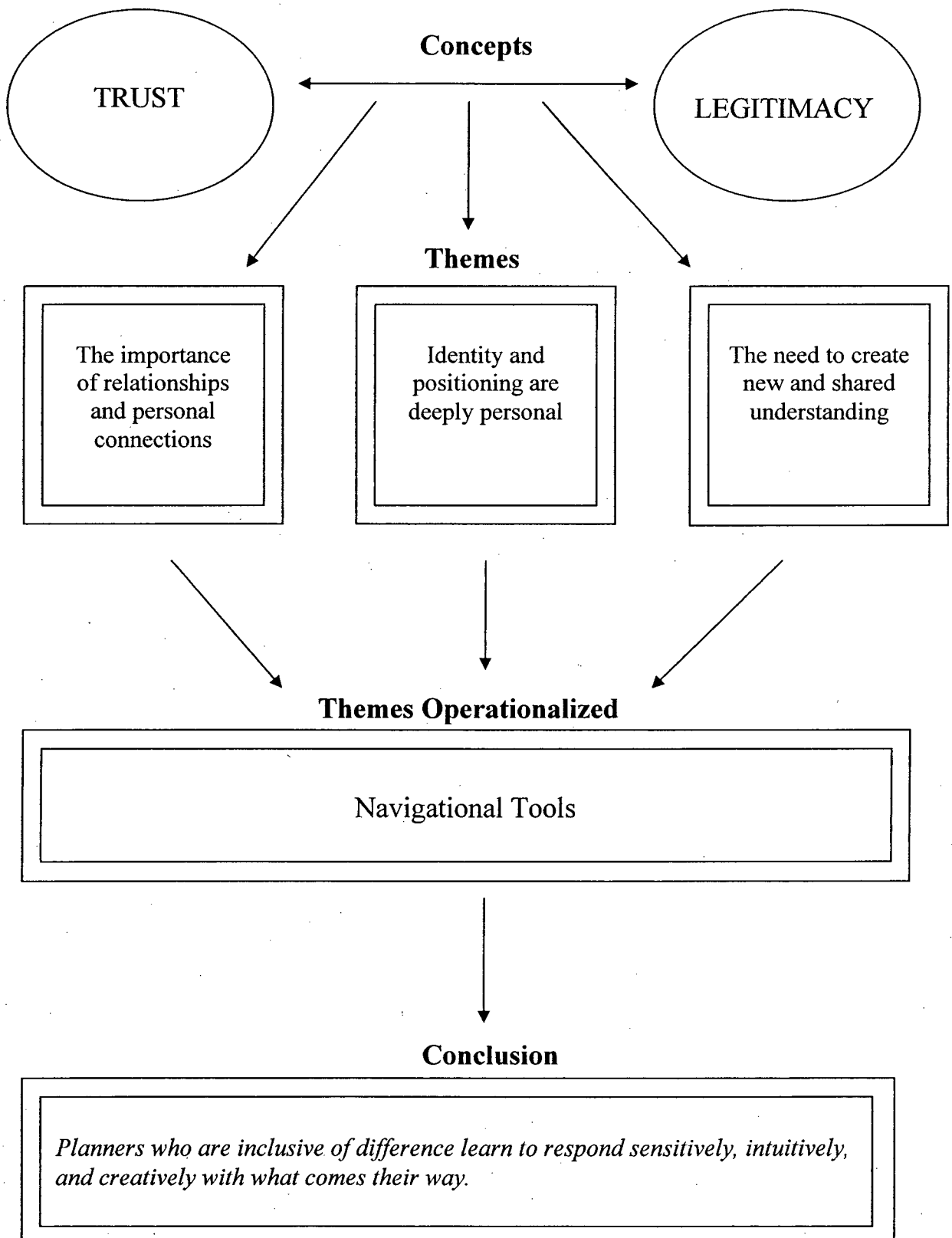
chapter four: cross-cultural journeys

I was told by one of the research participants that in sorting out cross-cultural planning we must get out there and 'step in it,' precisely what I intend with this chapter. Having toured now through the literature, what the research seeks answers to, and the methods by which I arrive at findings, we can finally look closely at what the planners have told us. In reporting my findings, I have identified common themes, or groupings, as mapped in figure 1.1. Grouping the results was no small task and not one of these themes is mutually exclusive; each intersects with others and the stories presented in one section have relevance in others. Where possible, I indicate connections while relaying examples. Informing all of the sections, and indeed the participant responses, is a tacit understanding that cross-cultural planning is neither 'good' nor 'bad', 'legitimate' nor 'illegitimate' for its own sake, but that the journey by which it is undertaken informs its merit.

Legitimacy and trust have been guiding concepts in my research from the outset, and this reporting is no exception.²⁸ Here I deal with the two concepts, which incidentally the reader will recognize from the literature review, immediately so that they act much as an umbrella, shadowing and informing what falls beneath. From there we move to the three themes identified in the data: 1) Relationships and personal connections emerged immediately as a theme from all five planners and in many instances it is what allows them to do cross-cultural planning at all. Relationships come in many forms ranging from personal to professional, and at times merging, all of which influence planning in any number of ways. 2) Identity and positioning are deeply personal for each of the planners and given the diversity of the participants these concepts play out in various ways. Hence, the approach taken in this section is to look at each planner individually and investigate just how identity impacts his or her planning. 3) The need to create new and shared understandings both between and amongst communities, and between planners and communities, is integral to the work of cross-cultural planning, and indeed the potential for this is what makes planning possible. This theme is further divided into three sections: (dis)comfort, making space, and a planner's inner-conflict. Although not the focus of my questioning, each of the planners discussed a number of skills necessary for cross-cultural planning. I capture these in a final section on navigational tools.

²⁸ The primary difference between trust and legitimacy is found in the fact that while it may not be possible to have the trust of a community without also being seen as legitimate, it may be possible to be seen as legitimate without having the trust of a community. For example, an Indo-Canadian cultural community may believe that it is legitimate for a white woman to plan with them, but they may not trust, for any number of reasons, the white woman who *is* planning with them.

figure 1: chapter map



4.1 concepts

legitimacy

Based on experiences I have had in attending conferences and through my understanding of the literature outlined in chapter two, I came to this research with the idea that it is not uncommon for politicized groups with histories of 'being done to' (Forester 1999) to question the legitimacy of a planner who does not share a common ethno-cultural background. I was surprised to learn that this does not appear to be the case. In the experience of the five planners I interviewed, only two say they have had their legitimacy questioned outright. Interestingly, these experiences came only to the women planners I interviewed, with the three men not ever having their legitimacy questioned in their long careers to date (although all readily admit it could have happened without their knowledge).

Early in her career Norma-Jean dealt with the issue of legitimacy on several occasions. When the challenges came from powerful men she would typically be encouraged to fight back, and yet when powerful women questioned her legitimacy she would 'disappear' into herself. She went through an apologetic stage, in turn forcing a reflective phase in which she searched for her own answers as to why she does cross-cultural planning, eventually becoming clear in who she is and what she is doing, an idea to which we will return in the section on identity. Challenges of this nature were generally thrown at Norma-Jean when she was working in First Nations communities, and again it was early in her career, placing her at the birth of intensely political times with the growth of the 'pan-Indian' movement, inspired in part by the Federal Government's 1969 White Paper, calling for further assimilation of indigenous populations in Canada. The only other time she recalls questioning her own right to be in a place was at a meeting in Detroit, again with a racialized population during highly political times. She was one of two white women in a room full of black women in her early days of working in community and found herself without the confidence to speak up and say she could not understand what they were saying. As we will see in the coming pages, this would change for her over time as she found her voice and her comfort with who she is and the work she does. Challenges to legitimacy, Norma-Jean tells us, are not very common and, when they do occur, in some ways they say more about the planner than the community. She soon discovered she was the one pulling away in many cases. Her experiences tell me that "*no one is going to give [me] the right to be there*" and that "by your experience and by your choice either people bring you into something or they don't." Now long resolved through a reflexive practice, legitimacy has not re-emerged as an issue for her, and because she has changed over the years she can no longer see it doing so. In large part this assurance is related to a place of 'coming into elder', in any world, where one says "I know what I'm doing, I know what I'm not doing, take it or leave it."

Lisa is the only other participant to have had her legitimacy questioned, and there are important similarities between her and Norma-Jean that set them apart from the other participants: they are both women and they both work in consultative capacities, often with First Nations communities. Given a strong colonial history one might assume, as I did, that Lisa's challenges to legitimacy came from within the First Nations communities with whom she has worked. In fact, the challenges came from non-Native community members in Lillooet, upset that the municipality hired an 'outsider' to the community rather than developing local capacity. One of the critical individuals had lived in the community only two years longer than she herself had, raising questions for Lisa of how long it takes to become an 'insider'. Her experience tells us that communities may challenge legitimacy for a variety of reasons and that we cannot rely on our assumptions to tell us where to watch for them. Similar to Norma-Jean, Lisa has thought through her own questions of whether to do cross-cultural work, equally because of the exhausting difficulties it can sometimes impose and not wanting to be "just another 'white'²⁹ consultant." In the end, Lisa hints at the idea that cross-cultural work happens to you when you do any planning at all, at least if you seek to be inclusive. In a similar light, both Lisa and Norma-Jean agree that those who are part of the problem (that breeds distrust in the first place) must also be part of the solution, in itself a response to questions of legitimacy. In responding to questions of legitimacy their ideas also converge on some of the benefits of working cross-culturally, in that the planner has access to resources, or possesses skills, that the community may not, either because of culture or training.

Interestingly, none of the other three planners have had their legitimacy challenged. While it is difficult to draw conclusions about the reason, it is instructive that they share similarities that set them apart from Lisa and Norma-Jean. All three of these planners are men who do not work in a consultative capacity; each is employed either by a municipal government (two of three) or a service-providing agency (one of three). Although none of them have ever had to explicitly address legitimacy in their practice, they have each given the idea consideration in one form or another, thereby reinforcing its importance as a topic area in cross-cultural planning.

Of Finnish background, Kari hints at the absurdity of planning only within the Finnish-Canadian community, noting that what matters is not his background but his sensitivity in how planning cross-culturally is undertaken. When he first began planning in Richmond, Kari considered whether it made more sense for the City to hire someone from a specific cultural background; someone more representative of the community.³⁰ Realizing that no matter who did the planning a cross-cultural component would always present itself, the issue was quickly resolved in his mind, putting to rest any

²⁹ Lisa often uses this term to describe herself because although she is part English and part South Asian, she says she *looks* white and often 'passes' as such.

further doubts. Also planning in a municipal capacity, Rupert has not had his legitimacy questioned, something he chalks up to his care in preparation before walking into a community. An important distinction that sets him apart from the others, however, is that unless there is a crisis requiring municipal intervention, he does not enter a community unless they have first approached the social planning department. Because a community participates in identifying its own needs and solicits the services of a government agency, there may be less need to then question the legitimacy of that agency, and the individuals within. As we will further explore in the following section, an organization garners much of its legitimacy through its action, potentially legitimizing the individuals within. Such has been the case for Oscar at the CNH where great care is taken in approaching situations with their own experience and awareness of what newcomer groups typically experience while trying to prepare themselves for the types of dynamics that may present themselves. Although Oscar recognizes without hesitation that true inclusivity requires significant commitment in working against homogenizing forces, it is so natural for him that he cannot understand any other approach: "it was just me – not that it was good or bad, it was just me. I don't think I can divorce that part of me from the way I am. I don't just turn it on and off, I mean people just don't do that."

In all, then, it appears that challenges to a planner's legitimacy in working cross-culturally happen far less frequently than I had initially assumed or imagined from my early reading on the topic. Indeed, they appear to be limited to intensely politicized environments and periods, especially with populations where the relationship with the planner is seen in a 'being done to' and 'doing' light. No suggestion that we move toward complacency in this regard is found here. The planners have shown that they have thought through these questions, in varying degrees, regardless of whether or not they have been directly posed, and this has informed their planning practices to some extent.

trust

My discovery that trust is difficult to discuss in isolation in the literature review certainly seems to hold in my interviews with the five participants. Although each planner had something to say about it directly, it again underlies much of what was said; trust is built slowly over time and maintained through the themes and tools discussed in the sections to follow. I have pulled three general ideas from their thoughts: there is a difference between personal and organizational trust, and what the planner seeks to build depends very much on whom she works for; there are ways to gauge levels of trust in a community, but these are often situation or culture specific, and; trust is built over the long term and must be delicately maintained and mediated.

³⁰ Richmond has a significant immigrant population, where six out of ten residents are born outside of Canada, primarily in Asian countries.

personal versus organizational

One of the clearest ideas emerging from the data is that trust depends a great deal on the organization with which one is associated, and regardless of the type of planning a participant does, there appears to be an important distinction between *trust in the organization* and *trust in the individual*. Those planners who work or have worked in a municipal environment (two currently, one formerly) agreed that trust is first developed in the individual (planner) over time and comes about later in the organization, likely a response to distrust of government amongst many communities. Stating the obvious with a smile Kari readily admits that "when you come from City Hall you're not the most popular person around" so the focus is then on developing comfort with the idea that he is there to represent community interests. Echoed by Rupert, efforts are poured into bringing the needs and concerns forward to policy makers, and slowly the community begins to see him as an individual rather than an arm of the government.

Lisa was able to bring the trust previously built as a student working on her thesis within local First Nations communities to her new job at the municipality where division along cultural and racial lines has long prevailed. Already trusting her as a person, they began to see her as an ally and in turn civic participation began to increase. Not minimizing the effort it takes to establish trust, Lisa understands that seemingly simple gestures can go a long way. She uses the example of sending out postcards to each of her research participants while on holidays in England. When she later returned to work for the municipality she received surprised comments about the postcards as everyone had just assumed she would disappear back to UBC after getting from them what she needed. During several years with the municipality she managed to maintain levels of trust to such a degree that she began receiving contract offers from one of the local bands.³¹ Now working in a consultative capacity without a partner, Lisa approaches trust in much the same way she always has.

Norma-Jean's role in fractured communities suggests that the trust she garners is in her as an individual and as a community developer, reinforced not by any one statement but by the way she speaks about her work generally. In communities divided between Native and non-Native populations, she has seen the value of working with a First Nations partner in contributing to her success. It is especially important to have this representation from someone with a connected understanding of the subject area when she

³¹ Quickly recognized by her superiors at the municipality for her capacity to build and maintain trust, Lisa was kept out of situations that would have placed her in compromising positions. One such situation revolved around land disputes where Council had verbally agreed to provide land to the Band for a cultural centre. When a new council was elected and without a written agreement in place, the decision was made not to honour the previous council's agreement and for some the attitude shifted to one of "why should we give them land, they've got enough on the reserve." Negotiations quickly ensued and Lisa's personal bias in this instance fell with the band. Both she and her boss recognized that any involvement in this issue could force a loss of trust of the entire community – for both herself and subsequently for the municipality, where trust was tenuous at the best of times.

works in the realm of community healing. So, although Norma-Jean does not work for an organization she shares a similar perspective with someone like Oscar who has a capacity to build trust through the organization with which he is involved. At the end of the day, the trust she builds is very much through the merits of, and values espoused and realized in her work.

The imperative of inclusivity driving the mandate of the CNH influences Oscar's own work to a great extent. Indeed, his work and experiences cannot easily be separated from that of the neighbourhood house: "people might say that the organization has become a reflection of the people in it...but I think if you asked the people in it they would claim that the organization is far more a driving force than they are." One of the (what he calls) obvious ways to build trust is to have a multicultural staff so that citizens see themselves reflected in the organization and are thus more prepared to be trustful. Flipping the experiences of the above municipal planners on their heads, groups appear to trust the organization first and then the individuals within. Where this does not hold true is when he is called upon to translate into Spanish for a new client and the shared connection is 'automatically disarming' and can make the difference in that person returning to the neighbourhood house and feeling good about being there. The connection here is similar to those outlined by municipal planners in that it is made between individuals and follows to the organization.

gauging trust

All planners offered hints on gauging levels of trust within a community, but found it difficult to discuss thoroughly because of its context-specific nature. The nature of service provision allows some planners the opportunity to utilize more quantitative indicators of trust, although Oscar may not view or discuss it on strictly quantitative terms. The CNH looks at the extent to which ethno-cultural groups in the community come to them and use services, and provides an example:

When there are situations that happen, if they come to us and say 'we want to rent a room because we want to do something public to deal with the misconception of Muslims that's happening as a result of 9/11.' So when those situations arise we take pride in the fact that it's because they feel that this is a place that they support. The fact that we have a lot of religious groups using our facility is also a real expression of the belief that this is a very accepting place for everybody, no matter where you're from or what religion you worship. And so, when we get those requests we're on them – this is good, and not only is this important for us value wise, but it also sends a message to other groups that we're very open to having different groups who are worshipping or having social programs or just using the facility for what might be cultural activities.

Others rely on more qualitative gauges. Rupert cautions against looking to such indicators as being invited to functions within the community, because he notes that politicians are invited all the time – not necessarily indicative of trust. Instead he looks at whether or not a community engages him in discussing issues of great importance. Although he notes that it is pretty exceptional when this happens, and it

generally does so only after years of engagement, he has been 'lucky' enough to have this happen on several occasions.³² For Norma-Jean, gauges are often culturally specific so that if a community laughs with you, you can feel you've been accepted, or if they cry with you, you'll know 'you are in'. It can even be as drastic as "if they even sit down with you it means you're in." Gauging trust can also mean looking for and interpreting small gestures from an individual, as Lisa explains:

There's one lady who's finally smiling at me – and I swear she used to scowl at me. Or, I'd phone her and she'd just be really, really short. And now, it's interesting – she definitely has a huge distrust of anybody who is white – now in the last few months when I've seen her and she's actually come to some of the meetings I've held, she smiles at me. To me, that's huge. When I first met her I felt this huge wave of distrust, 'you're just another one of these white people...' and I just had to not take it personally and I'd always ask her and be polite, and persevere because I felt that if I just took it really personally and just kind of gave her back...then that wouldn't get us anywhere. And now I'm seeing that after a long time she's actually smiling at me.

There seem to be no hard and fast rules to gauging trust and, like many aspects of cross-cultural planning, so much of it is intuitive and intangible, making it difficult to pin down and set into words.

long term and delicate

Trust building of course does not happen in isolation from other aspects of a planner's work and is a continuous and ongoing project closely connected with every element of cross-cultural interaction, and Rupert, like the others, notes that he is constantly engaged with groups in building trust because new groups are always arriving. Not surprising, the planners were unanimous in recognizing that trust is built over a long period of time and is not something that can be rushed or forced, as Lisa's quote above suggests. This poses a particular challenge for municipal planners, who, according to Kari, are often pressed, by politics and finances, to complete processes faster than is optimal, where the approach is one of 'getting by' with little time spent and minimal levels of participation. Rupert echoes this sentiment in saying that there is often little room for error in many environments, both municipal and non-profit. Kari readily admits that their approach backfires more often than not, so even long-settled Euro-Canadian communities are distrustful of municipal planners. Coupled with different cultural understandings of the purpose and motives of local government, the situation quickly becomes complicated.

Another reason that trust is an ongoing project is that, as three of five participants expressed, it takes a long time to build and just moments to undo. Providing an example of this, Lisa tells the story of a

³² It is possible, too, that such engagement by the community has very little to do with trust and everything to do with quality of work and character.

workshop at the Community to Community Forum³³ in which both levels of government (municipal and band) were sitting down together, discussing cooperation for the first time. Several 'break-out' groups were formed for discussion and when the person responsible for note-taking in one of the groups summarized for the larger group a discussion on sacred burial sites as 'bones not bottles' on a flipchart, the connections growing between groups that day were almost immediately deflated. The note-taker's intention had not been to offend people, and indeed those in his group (mixed Native and non-Native and including the Chief) were comfortable with what he had written because they understood the nature of the discussion he was trying to convey, a fact of little comfort to First Nations individuals in the larger group. Faced with losing the day's work in trust building, Lisa was able to address the hurt in the room by telling the groups it was in fact a positive sign that people felt comfortable even expressing their anger over seeing the statement, and that the experience gave everyone a chance to reflect on how we all need to focus on the way we communicate. As we will discuss further on, mistakes are easily made when working across cultures generally, and especially where connections are tenuous at best. This is precisely what Oscar speaks of when he says about trust, "you can lose it all in one moment – one stupid thing somebody says or does." The work here is again continuous and a planner's skill comes not necessarily in learning how to avoid making mistakes (likely an illusory goal anyway), but rather in learning how to spot, and subsequently recover from them (Norma-Jean).

4.2 themes

When we turn our attention here to the three major themes emerging from the data, we do not turn away from trust as it continues to underlie and influence what is discussed in these concepts. We look first at networks, relationships, and personal connections to see the influence they have on planning cross-culturally. In fact they appear to emerge as the single greatest tool a planner uses in ensuring that their journeys are undertaken sensitively, with an eye toward being demographically representative. This section is further divided into three categories: professional relationships, personal relationships, and the role of cultural interpreters. The format switches slightly for the second theme, where we look at the planner's identity and positioning. Because our cast of interviewees is ethno-culturally diverse, each has something different to say about how personal identity impacts planning and what that has meant for planning practice, so we will devote a section to each. The third and final theme is the creation of new and shared understandings, between communities *and* between planners and communities. In many ways, this is the ultimate goal of cross-cultural planning, but to get there is not always guaranteed; these appear to be moments to savour. The planners here advise us on three different issues: creating environments of (dis)comfort, creating space, and addressing inner ethical conflict.

³³ Lisa was one of the planners behind The Community to Community Forum, held to encourage greater co-operation between First Nations communities and their neighbours, and funded by the Union of BC Municipalities, the federal government, and the First Nations Summit.

the importance of relationships and personal connections

There was not a planner who did not speak of the importance of personal connections in the communities with which they engage, and for several it was a recurring theme they returned to again and again. The connections run the range from relatively formal to those that grow into close friendships, fulfilling in their own right, as well as contributing to a deeper understanding of cultural nuances.

professional connections

Kari asserts early on that the challenges posed by cross-cultural planning are found not only in the basics of communication and language, but also in the building of relationships. The City of Richmond approaches ethno-cultural groups with whom they seek to work in two different ways: either by engaging a community directly if there are pre-established relationships they can draw upon, or by using cultural support organizations³⁴ as initial intermediaries to communicate, workshop, and receive information from a specific community. The method the City chooses depends on the community's comfort level in interacting with local government. Networks within the service-providing community are collaborative, with little room for competition as the focus of service providers is fixed on ensuring the needs of cultural communities are met (Oscar).

Rupert drives home the value of networks within the Social Planning Department in preparing a planner to enter the community. As with other interviewees, members of his networks are not limited to cultural communities but extend to other levels of government and a broad range of service providers. Different from partnerships where each agrees with the perspective and approaches of the other, they draw upon each other to understand the issues a cultural group may be facing. To illustrate how professional connections are used within the service community to ensure processes and events are sensitive to specific community needs, I offer Oscar's example of a forum to increase the understanding of Muslims in a post 9/11, 2001 environment. Oscar describes the forum's organization:

We had a relationship with the Muslim Centre – sort of a cultural centre up the street – that had come to us a few months before with another request, and so we went back to that person. We also had a contact through one of the settlement services agencies that was well known as a leader with the Muslim community. We brought those two people together and we had them reflect back to us what was the sentiment of the community and how they felt about the larger community and gave us advice on how you could try to bridge the two together. In a sense, we were trying to build on their advice, but we didn't know if they were leaders, or if they were seen as leaders in the community – we had to trust our judgment that their advice made sense and should be pursued. Giving that consideration we thought, 'okay, well, let's go ahead and

³⁴ The City of Richmond turns to established networks with two organizations, SUCCESS and the Multicultural Concerns Society.

create something where we can bring a number of people together in a forum to discuss the Muslim values and try to give people a sense of good information in contrast with what was being circulated in the media.' And it was successful, it was a positive exchange, so we relied on contacts that we had and we didn't want to go through much deliberation, in part because we had that trust with people that were there. Also we did check through other people in the community whether this was a good idea, so we checked with some of the other agencies and political leaders and others and there was a general sense that this was a good thing to have.

Trust, then, is not built in one direction only, and when any planning at all is done there is a certain faith placed in the other, and indeed in the relationship. Oscar had to trust the relationships he had formed with others, and the individuals themselves, to represent the interests of their community, at least in the initial stages of what was to become a community process. Also note the layering of community contacts in confirming and reconfirming the information garnered from the initial contacts. This is undertaken without malice or distrust. It is, rather, part of seeking to be inclusive of entire communities.

Every planner in this study spoke of the necessity to garner information from several sources and agreed that a planner cannot rely on one person for information, cultural or otherwise, needed to enter a community. Norma-Jean offers us a strategy for 'getting at' others for information when she talks about how we, as planners, often turn to settlement services organizations to understand a community. In employing such an approach we rarely go beyond service providers and planners must learn instead to:

ask them for names of people in each of these communities that they had worked with who some of them were on their boards or committees, but some of them were clients. Then we called *them* and talked to them and asked them to bring neighbours or friends with them. So it's going further and further out but even if you're not creating a forum, in that kind of situation you say to whoever your connection is 'who should I be talking to in the community?' You know, they'll tell you who you should be talking to but you ask *them* who *they* think you should be talking to and that person who *they* think you should be talking to. So you spread the circle further and further out and you start getting very different things back in.

Exercises in relationship building for Rupert also require background work in sorting out who plays what role in the community so that relationships of trust are formed with key individuals. This is especially true of communities in which there is not just one core but many, each claiming its own legitimacy and representation. It becomes a question of clarifying what one wants to achieve by working with the community, for example addressing barriers to participation for seniors and working with the appropriate demographic from that point (Rupert).

personal connections

While professional relationships can be seen as a given, all interactions have a personal aspect at their core, as Kari explains:

even in the most staunch, dry, meeting that might take place at City Hall [...] you end up having this social interaction with people that may happen before, after, and sometimes during a meeting where you end up talking about who the individuals are themselves and not just what the business is. So there's a social role that happens once you understand that role of talking about themselves, their family, trip, food, entertainment and it makes it much easier to 'do business'.

This fits well with Kari's earlier assertion that municipal planners are often pressed to do things in the most expedient manner possible, often at the risk of good process. What we see here is the planner building relationships *while* accomplishing tasks at hand. Beyond multitasking, it is the way humans relate to one another in any setting and can be seen here to go beyond culture. Kari emphasizes that this type of relationship building does not take an inordinate amount of time, and indeed it quickly becomes second nature as people move to put one another at ease. Echoing these sentiments Rupert stresses that in large part building relationships and understanding what really matters to people can be intuited from casual conversation, where it becomes important to pay attention not just to *what* people are saying, but also to *how* they say it.

Relationships are central to Oscar's work and he stresses their importance for the neighbourhood house. Its foundation is "built one-on-one, it ultimately comes down to that." As we will discuss in a later section, the development of relationships has been key in creating shared understandings across cultural divisions over a period of time. The importance of cultural or linguistic connections are also not lost on him and when he is called upon to translate into Spanish for a client he speaks of an immediate connection that is not easily described. And yet when this happens he works to make connections between the individual and other staff members so that over time a comfort in connecting across difference begins to emerge for both client and staff:

But if I'm dealing with somebody for the first time and there's translation needed, then that's fine, but I will always continue to make sure that that person is building trust with other staff that they're dealing with. It may be a way to begin the relationship, it may be a way to strengthen the basis for trust, but it still has to be garnered on the basis of continuing relationships with other people who have to also be exposed to dealing with people like this. And our staff and volunteers need to be faced with having to communicate

We have established that a planner's work involves creating relationships with individuals, but Oscar shows us that creating relationships *between others* is equally important. Lisa underscores exactly this by relating her experience of working in a divided community. While employed by the municipality she would take phone calls from members of the surrounding First Nations communities that presented opportunities for relationship building, as she explains:

The level of trust in [Lillooet] has not been great, especially between government and government – First Nations and the Municipality – [...] I had a person call me and say, 'well we need Council to support an application for

something that we're putting in, do you think they will?' And of course I can't answer that and I'd say 'well, you know, I can't answer that but I can put it forward,' but they didn't want to ask the question to the appropriate person, even though they knew who the person was to ask. So, I had to be careful because I didn't want to get people used to just thinking that I would always be the link. They have to learn to speak to each other.

What may be initially perceived as the mundane presents incredible opportunities to foster relationships between those long divided. She talks later on in our interview of how she is able to put these connections to work in encouraging those on each 'side' to attend one another's meetings as a way of increasing civic involvement.

Working in a small community, Lisa's experiences differ somewhat with regard to personal connections and she talks a great deal about relationships she has formed in the community in a very personal way. In fact some have evolved into close personal friendships. Of course these bonds have formed for their own sake, and yet there are times when close relationships placed her in a position she may not have otherwise found herself in. Friends are more comfortable than others would ever be in making it clear to her where she has erred and where she has succeeded. Recall Lisa's story of the 'bones not bottles' comment that quickly unraveled the trust built cautiously throughout the Community to Community Forum. At the end of the session a friend approached her to make it clear that she handled the situation well. Lisa says of that incident:

Somebody that I know quite well, who again is now a close personal friend of mine, who is from the Band and knows the elder quite well. She thanked me; she said 'thank you very much for acknowledging Rose's concern.' [...] So it was good to have that feedback from her. If she wasn't a friend of mine, I'm not sure that she would have felt comfortable coming up to even tell me that...even if she had thought that.

Contrarily, she is now working a contract where she does not yet have a personal connection with the manager. Lisa will normally ask the manager if there is anything she would like to see as a way of eliciting feedback, but is still unsure about the manager's style and whether she is the type to be so direct. Forging new relationships in climates often hostile to 'outsiders' Lisa has met success in connecting across gender, and in uncomfortable situations has sought out women, as we will see in a later example. Close connections with others have had drawbacks in Lisa's work³⁵, yet personal relationships remain one of the most rewarding aspects of her career, and are in part what draws her to cross-cultural planning.

³⁵ Under her current contract Lisa is sub-contracting work to several individuals chosen by the Band, as part of a capacity building effort. One of the sub-contractors is a close personal friend from the community, hired in large part because of familial ties, who is not well-suited for a position requiring the drafting of a report. This has posed challenges for Lisa who has had to sensitively reassign responsibilities in order for the work to get done properly, but without damaging the friendship.

the role of cultural interpreters

The idea of cultural interpreters was raised in three of the five interviews, either directly as in the case of Norma-Jean or by discussing the role but not naming it as in the case of Lisa and Oscar. The term describes individuals who play a role in helping planners understand cultural nuances and experiences. Where they differ from the relationships outlined above is that they are normally 'bicultural' individuals who have experience and an understanding of at least two cultures and generally walk with a foot in both the 'dominant' and a so-called 'minority' culture. In our interview Lisa gave a number of examples of getting a better sense of what was happening by asking bicultural people within the community. One example from when she started a new contract with a First Nations band is perhaps the most illustrative of cultural interpreters in action:

I had to do two conference calls with groups of people that I hadn't met so I couldn't see their faces – I didn't know what their reactions were. And we were covering some stuff that was a bit politically sensitive and there were long pauses and I didn't know if people were rolling their eyes or what. I didn't know and I'm on the phone kind of saying...trying to make a joke out of it, and a few people laughed. And afterwards I spoke to the person who's the head of the department, Janet, and she said 'you know people need a bit of time to process and answer' and that was her very diplomatic response. But then I asked Laura, 'hey Laura, what was going on in that room; and she said, 'oh it was nothing – it was nothing to do with you,' but she said 'you wouldn't have known that.' And I said, 'you're right, I was just sitting there saying oh krikky are they just sitting there throwing their arms up going 'what the hell is she talking about' or have I lost them, or have I offended somebody?'

Seen here is a constant confirming and reconfirming to ensure the planner has not done something to offend, where others play a critical role in helping her navigate because as an 'outsider' to the community she does not yet have a good sense of whether or not she has offended someone. Planners must rely on others to guide them when they have erred, highlighting again the importance of trusting relationships, and while it seems we most need cultural interpreters in the early days, it also takes time to build connections where an interpreter would feel comfortable pointing out and explaining our foibles. Importantly, it does not appear necessary that an effective interpreter be from the community with whom one is engaged. Lisa mentions, on two occasions, running cross-cultural scenarios from the day's work by her husband, who is Métis and a member of a different band. Similarly, Norma-Jean talks of using a personal connection to get at the meaning of something, but stresses that we can only ask this of bicultural people. A planner cannot ask the group with whom she is working where she went wrong as "they're not even going to express it if I'm so stupid that I don't know." To them, the issue is one of 'common sense' – difficult to explain to someone who appears not to possess it. This underscores the value to planning of personal connections, and seems to tell us that cross-cultural planning cannot happen in isolation. To some degree in order for us to effectively cross-borders we must make this a personal

journey as much as a professional one, for what we learn in our personal lives can be immensely instructive for our professional ones.

A broad network of people with various cultural understandings is contained under the roof of the CNH, and facilitates Oscar's work. For a long time they resisted hiring cultural specific workers, and although they recognized the necessity of such an action, they made sure that the approach was one of community development. The organization's intent through this approach is to further develop relationships between cultural communities and other staff, and the culture specific worker is the vehicle through which this happens:

we have a Chinese cultural worker and when she's dealing with a particular situation in the program she's making sure that the person is dealing with the supervisor in that program and building a good relationship with those people. And when there's sensitization of those staff to this particular client, she's teaching people why the reaction may have been what it was, and particularly where it has a cultural basis.

A bridge similar to this is what Lisa looks for when beginning a contract in a new community. While the people who act as bridges may not be bicultural, others can provide insight into community dynamics and pinpoint issues of which to be aware. Both Native and non-Native, the bridges she solicits have extensive experience working with both Euro-Canadian and First Nations communities. Recognizing that this can be a double-edged sword, such preparatory information can also increase the planner's own personal tension and fears of entering a conflicted environment.

Norma-Jean offers two cautions about relying on the lived realities of cultural interpreters. In the first instance she uses the example of oil companies in Calgary where First Nations people are employed as entrées into First Nations communities. At times the company will go to First Nations communities with the person who is bicultural:

And in their eyes that means they act like a white person, so they understand *them* but they act like *us*. But they'll [the First Nations person] go out to the community and that person will revert to the understanding of how they must behave in community, and not do what the oil and gas company wants them to do because now they're in community. So, everybody gets confused. So you can have bicultural people but what do we ask of them when they go out with those of us who are not of that culture and we're expecting them to act as intermediaries. What does that do to them and their position in community? What does it do for them and the fact that then they're seen as their behaviour is white and they're lost to the community.

Where we run into trouble, then, is in requiring bicultural individuals to do our work for us by interacting cross-culturally on our behalf, in what is not, for them, a cross-cultural situation. So, while cultural interpreters can be incredibly instructive in planning practice, planners must be sensitive to the position we impose on them, and what that may do to relationships within their own community. Unaware, the

results could be more destructive than instructive and have the potential to destroy connections and trust established over time.

Norma-Jean serves us another caution in a story of a project she took on with social workers in the Fraser Valley. Upon first meeting it was clear that the social workers wanted a 'cookbook' approach to working across certain cultures, but said that they did not need Norma-Jean and her partner to talk about the Indo-Canadian community. When pressed they explained they already had the information they needed from their Indo-Canadian secretary, whom they had asked to comprise a list of 'how to deal with an Indo-Canadian client' by outlining specific details of her cultural frame of reference. Surprised to see on the list the claim that men in Indo-Canadian homes do the shopping for the household she called the woman to ask some questions. As it turned out, her mother was agoraphobic, and afraid to go outside had her husband do all of the shopping. This story spells out for us the idea that a person can only relay *her experience* of a culture, again underscoring the need for a broad network in garnering a number of perspectives. It also reminds us that not only is identity important, so too are the intersections of identity; a woman will give us a very different perception of community and cultural nuance than will a man, no matter the culture.

Norma-Jean's experience raised several new questions for me, so I asked her where one draws the line between understanding behaviours or actions that may be culturally influenced, so that we reduce the risk of offending, and essentializing an entire cultural group. Her response, illuminating the intuitive quality of cross-cultural interaction, was that while it is not ever helpful to have a blueprint of how cultures operate, it remains important for us to understand certain cultural features such as who speaks first in a community, or how eye-contact and touch will be perceived. Gaining and acting on such knowledge may present a challenge for planners, and I would include myself here, who derive comfort in working with a plan of some sort in hand. By nature we fear the unknown, thus we constantly strive to shape what lies ahead. This is where cultural interpreters can help us without themselves being placed in compromising positions. Juxtaposing Norma-Jean's point with Lisa's experience of discomfort during the conference call, the notion that planners can more safely turn to interpreters in sorting out what went wrong after a bad experience rather than asking them to map out where the landmines may be lying. Norma-Jean supports this conclusion:

So, you may have to put out a request to one person that you get to know quite well saying [...] 'if you see me screwing up on something big can you just kind of let me know?' [...] The other way around it is you can feel stuff now and then and not have a clue what it's about and say to someone 'something happened there, can you tell me what it was? Because I missed it and I don't know what that was.' And that's more likely that they'd say 'okay, well what happened was...'

In this way, we do not so much learn how not to trip up, but rather learn how to address our trips and to get faster at picking up the signals that we have tripped. Here, cultural interpreters can coach us in a way that does not jeopardize their standing in the community.

identity and positioning are deeply personal

Part of the reason for selecting a diverse set of planners to interview for this study was to explore how a planner's identity and positioning inform trust-building within cultural communities other than one's own. The respondents each had different things to say about the relationship between identity and their work as planners, but what remains common amongst them is that their understanding has been accessed through varying degrees of personal reflection, and for some a process of personal transformation. So while each planner has struggled through issues of identity in different ways, there are common threads weaving similar fabrics throughout. This section highlights how this happens by looking at each planner in turn, and reveals some interesting findings.

kari

As a European immigrant who has been in Canada for many years, Kari acknowledges that Canadian values have influenced who he is and inform the bias from which he undertakes planning processes. In the planning environment that Richmond provides, where the physical and socio-cultural environment has changed drastically over the last fifteen years but the "ideas have not reached the same pace," Kari does not so much question identity but instead stresses skills, sensitivity, and resources as indicators of how cross-cultural planning can be done. Trial and error in day to day planning provides opportunity for reflection, in his mind, because through such a process he gets to know and understand himself and what does and does not work for him. Stumbling is "the only way to learn. I mean undoubtedly you will make a mistake, you will stumble over the most sensitive of issues, you will embarrass yourself. As long as you're focused and everybody understands who you are everybody will allow you to stay, right?" In this way being clear in who he is allows others to understand and accept him despite his stumbles. He is clear in his sense that "it doesn't matter who I *should* be, I *can never be that person*," an idea that has echoes of Norma-Jean's earlier comments in dealing with questions of legitimacy "I know what I'm doing, I know what I'm not doing, take it or leave it." Notice the clearness with which both of these statements are spoken, suggesting that if we are clear with ourselves, others will be inclined to accept us for what we can contribute because there leaves less room for uncertainty in our intentions. Clarity about their purpose in cross-cultural planning, both with themselves and consequently with others, has been seconded by the three other planners (Oscar, Lisa, Rupert).

norma-jean

As I outlined in the first section, Norma-Jean's identity as a white woman initially put her in a position of defending her legitimacy in doing cross-cultural planning. Here is how she describes the process of transformation she underwent in addressing her own insecurities:

I think that what came across to me was that I had to be really clear with myself what exactly I was doing there. And as I went through the years I went through a very apologetic phase and I had many people who I think of as elders – two Native men and a black woman from the States – who just said 'would you stop apologizing and get on with what the hell ever it is you're doing? You're a walking apology. Stop it.' And during those years I really had to go through some deep personal growth – a hugely difficult period. I don't mean it was difficult in the sense of I didn't want to do it, but it was difficult to *work through all the layers of stuff that my own culture and my character had put together* – that had created this kind of walking apology [emphasis mine].

Here we see the 'unpacking' and 'unlearning' of privilege that informs some of the literature covered in chapter two. Norma-Jean goes on to speak briefly of self-reflection as one of the key methods in bringing about this shift in thinking, but importantly she also speaks of using the words of those she respects as a 'background' for self-reflection. She needed the words of the First Nations partners with whom she trained to help identify the situations in which she would force herself to disappear. Her partners would say, "you stand up and you're this powerful woman and then you walk into this situation and you disappear. Where the hell did you go? Are you going to be here or not be here? Be consistent." Again we see the significance of personal relationships in the work, and indeed the life, of a planner. Learning to "walk in your own skin in a way that you're clear about who you are and what you're doing and what you're not doing" has been central to her finding comfort in her identity through reflexivity and transformation. Part of this process came through recognizing that it was her journey and not those of her challengers. Norma-Jean suggests that those with whom she is planning can sense when she has not been honest with herself. Understanding this brings clear Lisa's reference to being transparent in your intentions: "people have to know your intentions are honest and you have to be open. And if they feel that you're not being open or if you're hiding something then they pick that up." Again, we see the importance of clarity: one must first be clear with herself in what it is she is doing and then must convey that honestly, either through word or deed, to others.

oscar

Experiences of immigrating to Canada many years ago with his family have contributed to Oscar's understanding that inclusion in planning is an imperative that feels natural rather than forced for him. Recognition of identity's importance in planning still bears out in his work, but importantly his is an

understanding that all aspects of identity can play a role in influencing outcomes. He speaks of situations in which he will seek out another staff member to play a role because of some aspect of their identity:

There are times when situations come up and I'm sort of looking at other people to take it on, thinking they'd do a better job; 'could she do a better job maybe because this person will identify better with a woman or will identify better with somebody who speaks that language or they share certain characteristics more than I do.' This happens all the time, you know, if you're talking to the Director, people might be a little bit uncertain about – or tentative – because of the authority. So you're always juggling all those sorts of things, not just the cultural things but the effect you might have because of your position, the effect you might have because of your gender – not just your cultural background.

We see the recognition that identity matters, but perhaps even more clearly we see a tacit understanding that interaction with difference is not necessarily a good thing for its own sake, but how the process is undertaken remains key, with an eye on the long term. Through his approach Oscar gives a nod to the idea that someone's comfort is paramount, and in many cases this is developed over time, in tandem with trust. Oscar's strategies in employing the skills of those around him are reminiscent of Lisa's boss at the Municipality of Lillooet who would also have her liaison with the surrounding bands because he knew they would be more responsive to requests coming from her than from him.

Even though Oscar has reflected in his practice on how his background colours the work he does, just as does everyone else's, he does not take it further than this because he never sees himself doing cross-cultural planning in isolation. All planning he does is informed by the perspectives of a group of people, each coming from different experiences of identity. Even when he works alone, what he does is informed by the Board and the two directors and in this sense it is a group working cross-culturally with other groups. His perspective made me reflect on some of my own assumptions in coming to this research. Perhaps because I was interviewing individual planners I thought of them as working alone. I was asking him to separate the work he did from that of his organization when this was clearly an impossible task. He and the neighbourhood house are intricately linked; he is as much a part of it as it appears now to be part of him.

lisa

Lisa has seen direct impacts of her identity on planning, giving rise to an intense discussion revealing that she has thought through this relationship thoroughly and will perhaps continue to do so as it is not yet fully resolved. Several times during our interview Lisa raised identity in the context of building trust with both 'sides' of a divided community, and spoke of her work being enhanced by aspects of her identity. Very early in the interview I asked her why she thought it was that the First Nations community trusted her to such an extent while she was municipally employed that they began offering her contracts for planning work. Her response was threefold with two of three reasons related to identity: 1) As an

'outsider' in the region she was perceived by them as not having a personal history of divided relations and to some extent they saw her as unbiased by that history. 2) As previously discussed, Lisa also made attempts to maintain relationships she had made while doing research in the area, seemingly the first researcher to do so. 3) Being of mixed-race background, she found she could more easily build trust with both sides because the Native community did not see her as all white 'like some of those people in town,' and were therefore able to identify with her 'difference'. People would thus comment on her appearance, "'oh yeah, well you're not just all white, you've got this East Indian part of you' and 'I could tell you looked a little bit different,'" and in some cases that she looked much like a sister. On the other 'side', the mayor of Lillooet at the time was English, and being part English she could understand his humour, references, and terminology, something he soon began to identify with.

Near the end of our conversation Lisa spoke of her early days in the community and the difficulty everyone had in categorizing her, something attempted by most so that they would know what to expect of her behaviour. No one could figure out where she fit into the picture because she had relationships with people on 'both sides'. She was not an environmentalist nor a logger and she certainly was not behaving as they had expected her to. In the end they decided she was 'just Lisa.' She readily acknowledges that her appearance has played a role in her acceptance into the community, but also evident are her actions in contributing to this acceptance. Lisa's remarkable ability to border-cross with fluidity and apparent ease comes in part from her ethno-cultural background, simply because she has been doing it all her life:

I'm half East Indian, but in some ways I'm not accepted as being East Indian because I don't look East Indian *enough*, and I'm more accepted as white, especially in England where I grew up since I was twelve. And then when I go back to Trinidad I get reverse racism where I'm called 'white girl' and it's quite obvious that people don't accept me as belonging – even my own family.

Accompanying an understanding that ethno-cultural identity plays a role in planning, is the recognition of colour, or perceived race, as impacting one's acceptance into a community: "My husband and I are the same racial mixes – half white, half East Indian in my case and First Nations in his case – he turned out brown, I turned out white. And that has implications for us in how we're accepted in different situations." Lisa is accustomed to not being contained by boundaries, but rather shifting between them, something that has also helped garner positive outcomes in her practice. None of this is meant to undermine the idea that the trust she builds within communities is of course a testimony to her skills and actions once all is said and done, a topic area we will return to in a later section on the skill requirements of cross-cultural planners.

Reflexivity continuously presents itself in Lisa's work as she seeks the clarity that others have found over time in understanding why she keeps doing cross-cultural work. She says that underlying her actions are

questions of “what’s my purpose here? [...] What am I meant to achieve here? What am I meant to learn here?” Such questions rise to the surface when working cross-culturally leaves her frustrated (as it often can). She reminds herself that the answers she seeks are important, but the constant questioning can also render a planner ineffective, or paralyzed with indecision, and such a planner is no good to anyone. Part of her answer comes in a practical form in that she’s on the receiving end of contract offers with First Nations bands in the Lillooet region. She also has an ability to see many different sides, as outlined above, and it is to her mind “a real gift to be able to work with many different people from different backgrounds – I think if you can do it and survive and not be shot at or take it too personally, then I think you can do a lot of benefit.” A piece she is still working through is trying to figure out her own place in the “big scheme of things.”

Through reflection, questioning, and learning from the experiences of others she has understood the power of how the planner is perceived in community, and she has been careful to avoid the trap of ‘trying to be an Indian,’ what Libby Porter (2004) refers to as a “deeply held white desire to ‘Indigenize’.” She has seen this in the work of others and has been privy to the voiced perceptions of those in both Native and non-Native communities. For fear of being perceived as romanticizing another’s culture she often finds herself questioning her actions but will even bear perception in mind when choosing what to wear to a meeting. It is difficult to say why Lisa appears to have had more cause for reflection in her practice, and has definitely questioned identity’s relationship to planning to a greater degree than the others, save Norma-Jean. It could be because of her experiences with a small but divided community over a number of years, as opposed to larger municipalities. Also possible is her identity as a mixed-race individual forces a unique positioning calling for more questions of herself than someone with experiences in the dominant culture (which she also has because she can ‘pass’ for white). Qualitative research captures frames from the thoughts and lives of individuals as they exist in the moment of the research. With the least number of years of experience of all the interviewees, we have captured Lisa early in her career, and are thus potentially looking through a window at intense reflexivity in action as she tries to resolve for herself a number of issues that others in our cast consider long resolved. While not likely forgotten, the others have incorporated the lessons learned into everyday practice and have perhaps not had cause to reflect on identity in years, playing a smaller role in our interviews.

rupert

As with the others Rupert knows that as a first generation immigrant he brings his personal experiences of integration and cultural identity issues to his work. His work is personalized in this way, and could be a contributing factor to his ‘community hat’ fitting better than the others he wears as a planner. Where he departs from the rest is in a tacit reflection that does not lead him to question the values that drive him toward cross-cultural planning, but rather have helped him to see the influence identity has on the

planning environment within which he works. Here we hear a similar refrain to Oscar's in a reminder that planners do not work in isolation from one another, but the consequences of this are much different for Rupert than they are for Oscar, who's work is enhanced by the diversity that surrounds him. Rupert says:

there could be a danger sometimes when you are seen by your colleagues or perceived by your immediate environment as too closely affiliated with the cultural group that you're working with – in a way beyond a professional capacity; that you have other interests or that you are representing other interests. Then it may take away from the effectiveness of the work. If you cannot communicate well with your colleagues what you are doing, there is a pitfall because they may actually then say 'well, yes you know how to deal with these issues but you can't really work on other issues.' So people can tag you in a way that may be detrimental.

When I tell him his response might suggest that a planner from a different cultural background than the community is seen as more neutral he recognizes that it is indeed a double-edged sword. A planner from the same background may be more culturally informed about a group but the relationship is then deemed a personal one and hence, more biased. An issue he has struggled with throughout his career, and through his set of experiences and reflection he now knows enough about himself and his work to respond effectively to such criticism. This too is suggested in Kari's comments about the efficacy of hiring those from specific cultural communities to undertake planning with their own communities because they may be placed in a position where there would be bias or conflict with another cultural community.

A planner of colour, Rupert raises this issue of identity in a way that other planners have not and although the results here are by no means conclusive it raises the question of whether Euro-Canadian planners would be placed in similar positions of having to defend their interest in working with specific groups. Interestingly those from the dominant culture are perceived as neutralizing forces in community, where their biases are not likely to interfere with the work of planning. Although he has addressed the issue in his own practice he still cautions students who come to him wanting to work on projects with their own cultural communities of another danger:

Sometimes, actually, I run across other students who say 'oh, I'd like to work with such and such a community because I am from that community' and my advice is 'well, I don't know whether you want to just get started from there because it is a good thing but it can also work against you because you can get stereotyped into it. That is your strength and that is where you should belong, but then to get out later is a bit more of a challenge.'

Being pigeonholed into working with one's own community strikes me as something that would not happen to Euro-Canadian planners, and Rupert is the only planner to raise the issue here, and he does so on the basis on personal experience. Of the only other planners who work, or have worked, in a municipal environment, one is Euro-Canadian and has not faced similar challenges, and the other is part

South Asian and part English and the risk of her being pigeonholed into planning with a South Asian-English community, or being perceived as biased for doing so, is slim for obvious reasons.

Although interesting, a great deal more research is needed into this area before any such conclusions can definitively be drawn. What *does* emerge clearly from the research here is that identity matters and is something that each interviewed planner has been faced with addressing, albeit in very different ways and to varying degrees. Ultimately there appears to be an intense period of self-reflection early on in these cross-cultural planning career (as seen by Lisa's experiences as well as Norma-Jean's and Rupert's recollections), eventually giving way to direct experiences building and affirming confidence. While some are weaned of self-reflection in relation to identity, for others it remains an ongoing process, but one that becomes less intense over time. For each of these planners, regardless of different identities creating different planning experiences, being clear with oneself and with others the reasons for their border-crossing remains an imperative. Borrowing from Howell Baum (2000), one can say that identity matters but it shouldn't matter too much. At the end of the day, a planner's worth is tied to the quality of the work done in the community. For each cross-cultural planner identity must be worked through in a personal way, and while it may help or hinder one's entrance into a community, over time she will be judged on the quality of her actions and strength of character.

the need to create new and shared understanding

Recall Lisa's example of the Community to Community Forum in which trust was tenuously built and subsequently dented because of one person's 'bones not bottles' comment in reference to sacred burial sites. No one in the breakout group, comprised of both First Nations and Euro-Canadians, was offended by this person's three-word summation, while most indigenous people in the larger group were hurt by what they deemed insensitive. While the outcome was not necessarily positive, it is noteworthy that the small break-out group came up with a shared understanding through dialogue, and in some senses even a shared language. In this remarkable human quality lies the hope for planning across difference. Because shared understanding provides the foundation for all other work to effectively take place, cross-cultural planners strive toward it in much of their work.

We see the necessity for a foundation of common understanding in Kari's example of a seemingly straight-forward planning activity, the relocation of a group-home, ultimately going awry because of competing cultural frames of reference. In this scenario a drug and alcohol recovery home moved from a location where it had been based for over twenty years to a predominantly Asian community in Richmond. Within two weeks of this move "the entire Asian community in Richmond exploded." The fracas hit the media across the country and included daily demonstrations in front of City Hall for more than seven months. A great deal of fear existed over the impacts such a home would have on the

community and after trying to ignore the issue for some time, Council conceded the need to address the growing divisions within the community and set up a task-force headed by Kari. As he does with any community building process, Kari spent these eighteen months trying to garner a sense of ownership of the process so that each individual felt as though he had been heard and his ideas incorporated. Comments in a series of meetings and forums, in which the City picked ad hoc people from the community and placed them in a moderating role, showed that in many Asian countries the idea of a group home is akin to a detention centre where someone has been committed by the state, while group homes here operate on a self-committal basis. Arriving at a decision was not easy, but after a long and heated process most participants agreed that developing an education and awareness process would go much further than a legal zoning process (operationalized this would amount to 'zoning by illness') in addressing the needs of the community. The creation of this shared understanding can now serve as a base to enable smoother decisions in relation to group homes of any nature, and indeed it may facilitate the adoption of other planning decisions by providing a model of how to arrive at decision-making within a diverse city. It may also encourage the City of Richmond to allow for such processes in other decisions in anticipation of different cultural 'starting-points'. Kari's experience confirming one of planning's central lessons in increasingly diverse cities in recent years: trying to make decisions without ensuring a shared frame of reference and understanding of a situation can be disastrous and if not properly handled can lead to further division.

While much of the previous section is focused on the intensely personal aspects of planning, this theme is also personal in some respects but gets at the 'guts' of planning: bridging deep differences in order to create new understandings both for the planner and across divided groups. All five of the planners underscored that *process* is key to creating new frames of reference for groups by unequivocally stating that there can be no predetermined outcomes heading into a process, that where the planner has bias it must be clearly presented at the outset, and that she must also set the parameters as to what can and cannot be changed. These basic tenets of citizen participation were discussed somewhat generally by each of the planners. The emphasis here will be on the three issues that emerged from my research: (dis)comfort, creating space, and ethical conflict as it relates to what LeBaron (2003) calls cultural 'starting points'.

creating an environment of (dis)comfort

Kari sees his work closely connected with establishing a sense of comfort within cultural communities as a way of spurring meaningful participation in civic affairs, and in this context the concept of comfort was raised on several occasions in my interview with him. His experience tells him that people of all backgrounds must feel a certain level of comfort before they are confident enough to participate and that this is built up over a number of years. In large part this happens for him through the relationships

outlined earlier in the chapter, in order that Canadian values of inclusion filter down so that people of all backgrounds begin to see that they have a role in community associations, for example. We can see a similar approach to building comfort levels in the work of both Oscar and Lisa who state explicitly that when people are drawn to them because of certain skills or qualities (for him the connection has been language, and for her because of previously established relationships of trust) it is very much accepted, but the real work is found in the creation of connections between those individuals and others so that over time people grow more comfortable dealing with each other. Already addressed is a discussion on relationship building and connection across difference, but it is worth offering an example of how these connections can help establish comfort over time by looking at an example of a missed opportunity. Norma-Jean and her partner were hired to do some work with a school district to understand why the teachers were having trouble garnering the participation of many Indo-Canadian parents in school activities such as parent-advisory committees, assemblies, and parent-teacher interviews. Norma-Jean describes her meeting with the teachers:

And then they said something that had both my partner and I just sitting there with our mouths hanging open, which was this: 'In fact our janitor has, you know, he kind of gets some of these parents into the library on a night and whole bunch of them will come and talk to him, but they won't come talk to us.' And we are both sitting there thinking, 'what are you talking about? If he gets parents in...whoa wait a minute here.' And then, this guy came to the door and looked in and grinned at me. And it was a person I had worked with years before because he sat on CUPE's national anti-racism committee and designed stuff for the union all over Canada on issues of their workers and anti-racism. And I looked at him and I said 'could you come here for a minute' and I said 'does anybody know who you *have* working here?' They knew nothing about this guy, and he was also the one hosting these meetings for fifty and sixty parents.

Rather than engaging the janitor in the type of casual conversation that Rupert and Oscar emphasized in the section on relationships, the school ended up hiring consultants to figure out how to do what their janitor was already successfully doing. The janitor was able to create participatory forums with parents because he had a connection with them, quite possible through shared ethno-cultural background, and could have been an incredible resource for the school in helping to develop levels of comfort amongst the parents in participating outside their circle. Near the end of our interview Norma-Jean crystallizes her story by saying that where we get into real trouble is by treating people as though they are victims and nothing more. When we avoid "calling out their skills and pieces and bringing them into the equation as part of the solution," we give them no reason to feel comfortable participating.

The other gem hidden within this story is the reminder that planners must often be the suitor rather than the wallflower if we seek to make others more comfortable. In the context of setting up planning processes Norma-Jean tells us that we cannot rely on our existing connections but we must always be

setting up new ones, talking to as many people as possible: “and not just the ones who look like you, who talk like you, who think like you.” She goes a step further in suggesting at an earlier juncture in our conversation that we face danger in “foreign territory, in the most literal sense of the word.” The danger is ourselves, because we immediately seek to make the foreign familiar, and we do this by generalizing: “we want the word as soon as we experience one thing. So we go to a meeting and this is what happens, we ask for people to come out and this is what happens, then we generalize to say ‘well, that’s what those people are like.’ What’s hard for us to understand is that we are *always* finding out new things, *always* expanding our understanding of people.” Norma-Jean’s words tell us that we must either find ways to seek comfort in discomfort, or to accept that there will always be periods of discomfort in cross-cultural interaction; discomfort is its nature. Drawn to what we know, what seems familiar, we seek those who are like us, and in making ourselves more comfortable we risk making others less comfortable, continuously reinforcing the lines that already divide us. Moreover, we continually draw new lines either by seeking to make those who are different more like us, or by defining others through our own terms we generalize the other’s lived experiences, often incorrectly.

By making ourselves uncomfortable we can bring about a sense of comfort in others, or at the very least encourage others to take risk in discomfort, a trait apparently integral to the role of the cross-cultural planner. Lisa also offers us an example of this, and again we see the importance of social connections in addition to professional ones:

I was once invited to this birthday party, again through people I’d met while working, and I was the only non-Native person there in a house full of people. And there were a few people when I walked in and you could see them thinking ‘what’s the white girl doing here?’ all over their faces. And I was thinking ‘what the hell did I come here for’ because cross-culturally that can happen – you know you sit there and you’re thinking ‘geez, I feel like I don’t belong and people aren’t talking to me.’ I wasn’t too sure what to do and I thought ‘well, if I get up and leave that’s going to reinforce that I’m a white girl who’s not comfortable, and that’s not going to help anything.’ [...] And then I thought...I always find connecting with other women is important and that I’ve been able to build a lot of bridges that way. So I thought ‘well, I don’t care if it’s stereotypical, I’m going to go into the kitchen and help.’ So I just went into the kitchen and said ‘hey you guys, is there anything I can do?’ And I could see all these women who didn’t know me just looking at me and then finally someone said ‘yeah, sure, you can cut the bread.’ Okay. So I cut the bread. ‘Anything else I can do?’ ‘Yeah, you can do this...’ And then gradually people started talking to me.

Faced with discomfort, Lisa convinced herself to stick through it because she inherently understood the greater implications of leaving. Yet, overwhelmed with discomfort and the reception she had perceived, she sought a slightly less discomforting situation by seeking out the reassurance of gender. Gradually others began to extend a hand, presumably to make her feel more comfortable, by accepting the invitation to dance. Of course the example comes from a social situation, but in a small community lines are easily

blurred between any actions one may take in the social realm and implications for professional work, making her immediate inclination to leave all the more risky. New understandings created between people at a birthday party can quickly grow into something larger, with professional implications. It is also important to remember here that for many cultures the distinction between the professional and personal is much hazier than in the European model.

the necessity of creating space

Just as comfort is the gestational grounds for the creation of shared understandings, planners must also construct environments where such understanding can flourish. Planners working in different realms have established various approaches here, but common themes run throughout. From an organizational standpoint there are policy-oriented ways of making room for new meanings to emerge. When it was first brought to the attention of the CNH that First Nations were not using their services to the extent that their numbers suggest they should, they took the issue seriously and set out in search of reasons. They learned that the aboriginal community did not see themselves represented in the CNH and was thus not a place they wanted to go, possibly due to issues of comfort. How was this situation to be addressed? By appointing an aboriginal board member. Gaining the trust of the community, and here their approach is service oriented rather than political, has been slow but representation on the board allows them to understand where things have not been right and where they needed to effect change. Each such move forces people to continuously shift their thinking against external homogenizing forces. Another policy approach to space creation is offered by Rupert who tentatively discussed his contributions to the CityPlan³⁶ process, whereby he spotted a gap in community involvement. When the initial process was conceived there was little allowing for the participation of diverse cultural groups, beyond "maybe we'll do the Chinese or the South Asian community because they're quite visible." Struggling to get a more inclusive framework accepted, Rupert understood the importance of opening space in the city-building process for opportunities to create new meanings across difference. Through his actions Rupert shows us the opportunity for seizing the moment in a bureaucratic process to effect change for marginalized populations. Knowing CityPlan was to inform future directives in the city for years to come, Rupert illustrates tenacity in ensuring space is created for the inclusion of difference. It also seems a case of battle choosing in that he may not always fight to the same extent, but having spotted a case where doing so could change the course of planning it was necessary that he be relentless in his pursuit.

Oscar and Lisa demonstrate a tacit belief in social justice by creating more space, or treating groups differently, in order to treat everyone equitably. On an interpersonal scale, Lisa recounts a period during which an indigenous councillor had been elected for the first time while she was working for the

Municipality of Lillooet, although the aboriginal population makes up approximately fifty per cent. Witnessing discriminatory comments from other councillors and staff, she tried to make space for his full participation:

I was aware that he sometimes felt a little left out and so I'd really make sure that when I was doing meeting and I was addressing each of the councillors that I made sure to give him lots of airtime as I was facilitating. I wanted to make sure that he wasn't sidelined in discussions, which to me seemed to happen sometimes with others – they'd just kind of ignore him and I'd create the space so he could speak if he wanted to, because I'd find that some of the councillors weren't always doing that.

We see a conscious effort to compensate for the discriminatory actions of others in order to even the scale, again making space with the hope that over time opportunities will present themselves for new understandings to emerge. Based on other elements of our conversation on racism (discussed below), it appears that Lisa's attempts go beyond an understanding of equity to encouraging the councillor to stay on in his post for a long-term chance to slowly change the hearts of other councillors and staff. On a larger scale, Oscar talks of situations where having the majority make decisions on behalf of minorities can be dangerous and how that is mediated at the CNH. Although they have long tried to avoid planning with specific ethnic groups in isolation in favour of an approach that focuses on multicultural groups, the CNH recognizes that this may place some groups at a disadvantage and such scenarios must be handled sensitively. He explains their position this way:

I think there's a danger sometimes when you're dealing with particular groups to use an approach that is inclusive of everybody because there's a particular quality of that group, or characteristic, where it wouldn't be right to have the majority group making judgments or trying to derive some kind of policy on this particular group. Because I think there's a danger there of imposing, in a very serious way, values that don't quite fit. And I think that's where you have to go to the leaders of that group – sort of what we did with the Muslim issue [in an earlier example] – and try to develop an approach where that group is setting its own parameters and they are voicing that and they're the ones that are the leaders in creating this, and then just seeing what unfolds. And when you do that, when you give it over to the [larger] group, you worry that they will come up with something that is maybe not offensive, but may stigmatize others in the process.

The forum on portrayals of Muslims in the media is a perfect example of the need for a group to have a greater voice in the planning process because of heightened sensitivities and widespread misconception. The intent is to make space for even the possibility of creating new understandings of one another by disproportionately handing over voice to one group. From its inception the CNH has consciously sought out and involved some groups over others. The intent is not to "cater to one group to the exclusion of all others" but rather so that everyone has an equitable platform for their voices. Each time they employ

³⁶ Developed in the mid-1990s, CityPlan is a city-wide participatory planning process intended to set the frame and parameters of development in the City of Vancouver over a twenty year period.

such an approach they find it important to be crystal clear in how they frame it and explicit in the reasons that lay behind the approach, otherwise it is easy for others to condemn them. Oscar was not alone in emphasizing the need for transparency in planning processes, as the other four also stressed the same point.

One of the biggest challenges in cross-cultural planning is finding common values that people can agree on, as Oscar pointed out. From Norma-Jean we receive a method of clearing the space for this to happen. In her experience people can most easily find agreement on the big pieces, like integrity, but “stumble on the little pieces that are just about custom.” Thus, for longer processes with culturally mixed groups it may be appropriate to clear space for the discussion of custom so that the real discussion can take place “without driving each other nuts.” One method may be requesting participants to lay out what truly matters to them versus what they are used to:

‘So when we’re here and you see a man helping pour the tea and your custom is that men don’t do that, can you catch your thoughts that there’s something about him that is weak or something, because another culture doesn’t have your practice. Is it possible for you to catch that thought?’ So, if we’re going to all live together, what gets in the way is the ‘oh my way is not just the right way, it’s the polite way and the rest of you are rude and unnatural.’

There are many examples of what needs to be laid out, with time being one of the biggest cultural differences, according to Norma-Jean, and the idea behind such an exercise is to bring to everyone’s attention that we all do things in different ways – whether or not we are from the same or different cultures. The idea that in some scenarios we must create group customs, sort of a mini shared understanding, so that we can begin to address the bigger picture in establishing shared understandings on a larger scale, quickly emerges here. Norma-Jean suggests that group rules be revisited from time to time throughout the process, and even still it would appear to me that such pre-emptive measures can save significant time in the long run.

When Kari reminds us that we need to build flexibility into any process in allowing for the discussion of certain issues, he underscores what Norma-Jean sees as a personal responsibility – making the unspoken, spoken. At the outset of specific processes she ensures that space is created for the airing of past actions between the groups or their ancestors. A failure to do so appears to seal the fate of the group in such a way that the unspoken will inevitably come back to haunt the process. Highlighted also by Lisa, Oscar and Rupert in their emphasis on understanding the historical and cultural contexts of the groups with whom they work, Norma-Jean says that the role of the planner in this regard is clear:

It’s to make the unspoken that’s in the room spoken in a way that people can live with, but so that it’s not the elephant in the room that nobody will talk about and everybody’s going to trip over, and it’s all going to fall apart because the elephant’s still in the room creating what elephants do. So, for example, if

we try to create a whole community process between a First Nations community and a governmental agency without talking about what's going to get in the way of this working – you know, what about the residential school experience? What about the experience of government and police actions in that community is going to rise up like a ghost and sabotage this thing.

Norma-Jean uses the 'tale of the ancient mariner' as an analogy to illustrate the idea that until marginalized – indeed colonized – populations believe that their story has been *listened* to in full and acknowledged, it will come back to sabotage the process time and time again, and we need not look far for such examples. The creation of space for the telling of stories tells us of something else important to process. Think back to Norman Dale's (1999) negotiations between the Haida Gwaii and other levels of government from the second chapter and we see that the empathy garnered when space was created for the recounting of past injustice and its long term effects on community (in that case residential schools) can be recalled during difficult times in the process. The creation of space in this sense goes a long way in creating shared understanding by helping us all see what has been hiding in plain sight.

a planner's inner conflict

I include a section on a planner's inner conflict here because it is an issue that can stand in the way of gaining a shared understanding, but if handled well can also lead to new understandings. Weighing heavy on my mind in preparing this research was the question of how a planner copes with the personal and professional desire to be inclusive of all populations regardless of 'difference' and cultural practice on the one hand, and the dissonance she feels in balancing her own values and beliefs when they may conflict with those of another culture on the other. For example, how does a feminist planner reconcile for herself the inclusion of a group dominated by men and whom she deems as oppressive towards women. In three of five interviews (Rupert, Oscar and Norma-Jean) the issue of such ethical conflict was raised by the participant before I had a chance to ask the question, clearly showing that it has weighed on the minds of others. No dichotomies reside here; there is no right from wrong. Each navigates this thorny issue in a way that *feels* right. The planners who work within an organizational or municipal setting (Rupert, Kari and Oscar) were very clear that where one group is offensive toward another cultural group the planner has a responsibility to ensure that policies of inclusivity are expressed and enforced, so it becomes clear that exclusion will not be tolerated. Their responses are best summed by Rupert:

When you anticipate there's a value clash with the group you're working with you have to be very clear in your values from the outset. Because, for example, if you're working with a group that's for religious, or for whatever reason, says 'we actually would exclude other groups because we have a religious belief or we have particular type of beliefs – when it becomes exclusionary then we cannot go in and say we would allow for that. We have to make it very clear because it is against our general City – it's not even a policy, it's a value thing because exclusion can constitute discrimination of another group.

The real challenge comes in how, or whether, a planner continues working with such a group and in what capacity, and this is the piece that seems unresolved at the municipal level. Certainly such action does little to encourage the 'difficult dialogue' outlined in chapter two, but given the time constraints often placed on municipal planners and the responsibility they and other organizations have to all citizens, it makes sense. The argument that clear discussion on racism can bring about longer-term understandings between individuals and groups is a difficult one to make in the context of the deep pain and history it can raise for those long marginalized. In many ways it is an easy argument to make for one who has no direct experience with a force as powerful as racism. We see the value of planning processes aimed at this specific issue (as with the Muslim forum), but it is a stretch to imagine the legitimacy of a municipality allowing explicitly offensive statements to be aired during a re-zoning hearing, regardless of whether or not they are religiously based, for example. The risk of losing those who once felt a sense of comfort in a city process is too great in such a scenario. All of a sudden City sponsored public processes, or indeed the inclusive structures of the CNH, are no longer a safe haven from the discrimination that people of colour face in day-to-day life, damaging the progress built to date.

Oscar's position within an inclusive framework allows him to be slightly more flexible, in that if a group is involved in exclusionary activities, and this is closely monitored by the CNH, then they are 'not in'. But if, for example, a group of Chinese seniors uses the facility it is fine as long as they allow all Chinese seniors to participate, akin to a City process that solicits the participation of specific ethno-cultural groups. They must, however, pay a private members' rate because they are not entirely open to the public. Here is a tacit recognition that for some support can be gained from meeting and sharing with those who are like ourselves in terms of experiences and cultural understanding. As with the academic group RACE discussed in chapter two, it may not be an ideal in the sense of cosmopolitanism, but it remains indicative of the point we are at in reaching that goal. Oscar illuminates precisely this when he talks about values filtering down over time. Early in his career he struggled with precisely these inner conflicts when he would interact with someone from a culture where you address the man rather than the woman. Wondering if such interactions were appropriate for him to be having, he felt torn in two directions:

Ethically, from a social worker perspective I needed to recognize that there was a cultural reality here and I needed to respect it. Also we have a multicultural policy here that says that everyone has a right to be heard and to participate and to engage and to be given all those rights. But when you boil it down to the individual interactions and the conversations and all those small steps, there was lots of conflict. I don't mean negative conflict, but as you say, this dissonance – 'this doesn't quite fit, I know there's a reality here, I feel compelled to provide something else and I know that's not ethical in this case.'

Transforming his thinking over time he has focused efforts on creating relationships with people and not challenging such cultural difference for its own sake; "we need to be able to work through that over a

period of time. But to impose certain values on people is just not acceptable in any context, so where there is conflict we now have the confidence that we're going to need to work through this, and *as they're transformed, we're transformed*" [emphasis mine]. In Oscar's work we see Fenster's idea of 'mapping the boundaries of social change' (as explored by Sandercock 2003:8) operationalized through a patience that tells us "the values we're trying to live by and that flow from the Canadian context – and I mean it in an idealistic sense – will start to filter down and provide newcomers and people with different values to provide a way of reconciling." Important here are the values informing inclusion, which tell us that not only is the 'other' changed, but so are we through a process of mutual growth, emerging from shared experience and understanding.

Working as a consultant allows an individualization of response to ethical conflict. Neither consultant I interviewed spoke of policy responses to exclusionary or discriminatory remarks or actions in their work. Their focus has been more on the long-term transformation of which Oscar spoke, with Lisa talking about her personal responses to discrimination over her lifetime. With a parent in each of two different cultural and racial groups she was perhaps impacted by racism in both directions and would respond vocally and negatively, as one might expect. She now understands of herself that the presence of people with discriminatory views in her life helps transformational process, and that not excluding these individuals can go a long way in changing values and belief sets over time. Norma-Jean speaks of a similar shift in her responses to cross-cultural situations where her values differ:

Say you have a fairly traditional Indo-Canadian family where the men would not prepare food or make tea or any of those kinds of things. Now, when I go there I could sit with the men and have this happen until the woman comes and they say, 'hurry up, get her some tea' and in my mind I'm thinking 'you could have done that yourself,' but in fact they're not going to. That would have been much more my style in the past, it would not be my style now – I would know that that is not going to be comfortable for them. [...] I think that's shifted over the years in that I think I'm much more likely to relate to people one to one than culturally now.

Echoing Norma-Jean's recognition of the individual, Kari speaks of the importance of connecting with people for what they are rather than as representatives of a group, which as we learned in the literature review forces the whole person to disappear. When we focus on what is common amongst us "rather than superficial ethnic or cultural difference" we find that core needs are often the same, and *that* is what one plans with (Rupert). Connections with individuals rather than with culture are where these stories and perspectives come together, with each planner talking of connections and meaning making that happens one-on-one with individuals, where the relationships discussed in the previous section are forged between individuals rather than across cultural lines. And this nicely closes the loop in our themes by bringing us back to where we started; relationships and personal connections indeed appear to lie at the heart of this journey, and form the foundation for any work that follows.

4.3 navigational tools

One can hardly avoid uncovering some of the key tools and skills practitioners employ working cross-culturally while identifying main themes related to *how* cross-cultural planners plan, as I have done thus far. Integral to the work of planners, these tools, boiled down to skills and human qualities,³⁷ are worth addressing in isolation. For the purposes of overview, the tools are tabled (Table 2) with an indication of which planner identified specific tools as important. This is not to suggest that each planner identified a particular skill by name, although this occurred frequently, but referred to the skill by way of description or example. For example, Lisa was asked how she resolved a particularly sticky situation for herself. Her response, "by talking to myself," suggests that self-reflection was employed as a tool. Where Norma-Jean speaks explicitly of integrity, Lisa illustrates its importance to her practice through an example of turning down a contract offer to compile an emergency plan for a First Nations band. She felt strongly that this should be optioned 'in-house' because such a plan is integral to the community and her knowledge of helicopters on site would do the community little good in an emergency situation when she does not live there. In the end she agreed to oversee the contract provided she could subcontract much of work to members of the community and walk them through the process in order that capacity be built for the annual update of the plan.

Forester (1999) noted that when many of the skills employed in 'extraordinary practice' are broken down, we find them to be remarkably ordinary. The same can be said here. The skills employed in cross-cultural practice are not drastically different from those put to use in any practice, indeed in life. And yet, *how* they are employed becomes important, with some emphasized more than others. *Reflexivity* is just such a case. As we have seen thus far, an almost constant process of reflection on practice is at play for these planners. Importantly, however, this reflexivity is also put to work as it relates to the 'self' both in terms of knowing how oneself operates and reacts to various situations, but also in how one's identity impacts and influences both practice and community. We see this latter self-reflection most clearly in the work of the two consultants, both women, who work in smaller, more divided communities. It is a process that weighed heavily in Norma-Jean's early work as she sought answers to questions of legitimacy, just as we see it as an issue close to the surface for Lisa who is five years into a career where such questions still arise. We see it least in Kari, perhaps because he has long resolved this issue for himself, or because the nature of his relationship with communities is different than is the case for the others. Possible also is that as a white male, and thus identified as part of the 'mainstream,' he has

³⁷ Neither the category of 'skills' nor the category of 'human qualities' are mutually exclusive, for it is difficult to precisely identify where flexibility, for example, stops being a quality of the person and enters the realm of a professional skill. Similarly, while some personal qualities are a birth right, like intuition for example, others can be developed over time and with considerable work.

struggled less with questions of identity than others, who have likely given thought to the issue of identity long before their planning careers started. In all, for each planner it is important to know him or herself, recognize biases and be clear in those biases with communities.

Clarity emerges also in repetitive references to *communication* skills, with an emphasis on *listening*. All planning processes require excellent communicators, and especially those that are inclusive of difference. As we have already seen, effective communication is essential as much in casual conversation as in the more involved discussions of planning process, because this is where we learn about people and possibly pick up clues about custom and ways of communicating. It is also where planners speak most of their ability to introduce *humour* into the picture in attempts to personalize relationships and develop common understandings. We learn to listen not just to what a person is saying, but *how* they are saying it (Rupert). No surprise, we also learn how people are comfortable communicating. Often people communicate well verbally because of centuries of oral traditions as a way of knowing, as is the case with indigenous peoples. Importantly, however, both recent and long settled immigrants may not feel confident in their written communication skills, so "their brilliance lies within their mind and within their words, it does not lie in their writing" (Norma-Jean). There may never come a time when we cease to miscue in cross-cultural communications so our focus turns to exercising *sensitivity* in responding to our gaffs, and others'. This is the same sensitivity that finds its way into all the words and deeds of these planners as they navigate their way through and between cultures.

Receptivity to constant learning is common amongst these cross-cultural planners, in that each speaks of 'learning by doing', 'stepping in it', 'trial and error', etc. Cross-cultural planning also requires us to 'catch our thoughts' when we seek to generalize. Each of our cast of five spoke of the dangers of generalizing across cultures, but perhaps Norma-Jean summed it up best. It is worth repeating Norma-Jean's quote that as soon as we enter 'foreign territory' we begin generalizing to provide ourselves with a sense of comfort. We seek our comfort in knowing how people will (re)act so we mentally group people together and assign them 'cultural traits'; and "what's hard for us to understand is that we are *always* finding out new things, *always* expanding our understanding of people." Understanding how our generalizations affect others we must continuously be open to learning new things. We may never be able to stop our brains from categorizing information, but we can learn to 'catch our thoughts', as Norma-Jean suggests.

Cross-cultural planning is a constant *balancing* act where the planner continuously walks a fine line between cultures, different ways of knowing, and competing interests. Rupert speaks of the planner wearing many different hats, and balancing these can also pose challenges. One of these hats is that of the *facilitator* and *mediator*, skills paramount in cross-cultural planning where the planner searches out

what is common amongst us all, and this commonality is what makes planning possible. As we have seen, though, we must balance what is common with a recognition of difference, for we must create the space for the telling of stories that give recognition to socio-historical contexts. While there is a certain degree of control in this role, the planner too must understand when to *release control*, so that the process becomes the community's own, and they begin to develop a sense of ownership over it (Kari). Done properly, people will often accept outcomes they had not hoped for because when they see the planner *respect* the process, they do too (Oscar). The other critical role of the planner is *community educator*, and cross-cultural planning is no exception here, where the emphasis on encouraging civic participation recognizes that people have a right not to contribute (Rupert) and that recently arrived immigrants may have different attitudes about local government and participation in the broader community (Kari).

When planners *use the resources that surround them*, they implicitly understand that they do not work in isolation. As Oscar explains, even when he is physically working alone in his office, his colleagues and the Board of Directors inform all of his work. The recognition and employment of the skills of those who professionally surround a planner ensure greater representation of the community in many cases,³⁸ but of equal importance is the use of skills present in the community in many processes. The benefits of cross-cultural planning are made clear by Norma-Jean and Lisa when they state that communities can gain access to resources they may not otherwise have because of the planner's access to another culture. Here we would see the planner enter a community and ask 'these are my skills, what can you use?', while calling out the skills of the community to build a participatory process. If specific skills or knowledge sets are not immediately available, the planner's responsibility comes in knowing where to find them, as we see in Oscar's example of planning with culturally unique communities. When there was a surge in Kurdish populations in Canada the CNH was invited to participate in their settlement planning. Not knowing enough about unique cultural characteristics of the Kurdish community and understanding the risk of generalizing experiences with other populations, they set out to locate 'cultural informants' from within Vancouver's immigrant services sector in order to ensure they were appropriately prepared.

Where the resources are not immediately available, the planner steps in to contribute to building capacity within the community. Lisa demonstrated this in her most recent work in the aforementioned contract with a First Nations band, in which she saw the flaws of hiring an 'outsider' to create an emergency preparedness plan. Due to funding regulations that necessitated the contract be outsourced and the fact that those with the capacity for plan completion were already over-stretched in their workloads, Lisa recognized the need to help develop skills within the community and set up the contract in this manner.

³⁸ For example, we saw this when Oscar spoke of turning to other staff members to complete tasks with clients because of specific skills or aspects of their identity (i.e. gender) and in Norma-Jean working with a First Nations partner in First Nations environments because of an understanding of spirituality and healing.

A perfect example of *creativity* at play, Lisa knew the funder's stipulations on contracting a consultant from outside the community were based on little more than paternalism, she noted that no conditions existed for *subcontracting*. She hence negotiated a contract with the band whereby she would be the lead consultant and would subcontract to others within the band, allowing others to develop skills for annual updates to the plan, working herself out of a job in the process.

Illustrated through this example is the *recognition of a critical moment* in which change can be effected, something we also saw in Rupert's earlier example of sneaking inclusivity through the back door of the CityPlan process. We saw this too in the section on (dis)comfort, in that the planner must distinguish between the times during which to foster comfort and when to force a discomfort in crossing boundaries and interacting with difference. Although largely intuitive, this recognition comes too with the buildup of experience. This is not the only area that employs *intuition*, as this sensory perception arises time and again in my conversation with our cast. The importance of intuition arises frequently in the work of LeBaron who defines it as a "means of knowing without being aware of the process by which the knowing arose" (LeBaron 2003:172). She partners intuition with imagination by providing a number of exercises meant to enhance our sense of intuition, or at least our ability to hear it. A scientist might tell us that there is no rational basis for the 'notion' of intuition, and thus the West's pursuit of the rational has long taught us to ignore feelings for which there is no 'reasonable' basis. The experiences of these planners tell us that we must learn again to listen to and follow our intuition, because almost any cross-cultural scenario demands it. Norma-Jean talks of the importance of listening to intuition:

So, your intuition can be running perfectly high and my work right now is to keep my intuition up and keep listening to it – keep listening to what my gut is saying is true here. I'll start off on some thing or other and my own wish to accomplish a goal, to finish a series of plans or any of those things, and start running roughshod over what's actually being intuitively sent to me. I'm just not on receive.

Planners run into trouble in countless ways with myopic intent on the goal, or product, rather than the process, highlighting the need for *flexibility* to be part of any approach. Rupert reminds us of just this when he says that if "the methodology is challenged, then I am always open to changing it and [then] it's based on good advice and feedback from the people. You have to be able to change and be flexible, absolutely." Note that in his view the process should be flexible and open to restructuring; but also it seems that the product still matters. The flexibility in process does not imply that we must lose sight entirely of an end result, for very often this is why the planner finds herself in the community at all. While process is certainly important to the community, they need results from their input.

In addition to the tools outlined here, there are seemingly intangible 'human qualities' that present themselves in the effective cross-cultural interaction. Largely amounting to personality, Oscar describes these general human qualities:

We have great people who come in and who are just naturals at doing cross-cultural work. Sometimes I would say it's their personality – they're just great people with warm personalities who just exude warmth and they're really good at meeting people and engaging and just very outgoing. And they have no training in it, yet people open up to them, talk to them, and feel comfortable with them. And they have a sensitivity which completely belies their own background or experience working with different cultures.

What seems to underlie all of the human qualities discussed by the planners, but something not discussed explicitly is *patience* with the process, coming in the recognition that building trust in communities where there has historically been distrust requires a great deal of time. Even when discussing the frustration of setbacks, each planner also seemed to speak of trust building with a quiet *confidence* that under the right conditions it is possible to build trust anywhere. Somewhat paradoxically, also common is the sense of *humility* with which they speak of their experiences, with no one claiming to have the answers. Certainty seemed to come only in knowing that there will always be times when they mess up and embarrass themselves. The recovery is as much a part of the process as anything else. Intangible qualities present themselves throughout this topic, making navigational tools difficult to discuss in isolation. What the intangible also tells us, however, is that we must rely on our senses, an idea that LeBaron (2003) puts forth, most certainly when it is clear that there is no *right* answer. Clearly such a toolkit is not amassed overnight. While some of it is natural ability, it also comes with time and experience, so that the more experience one has as a planner, the better planner he becomes (Kari), but it is also important to handle the experience with a sense of clarity as to why you are doing cross-cultural planning at all (Norma-Jean).

We can see the development of a 'cultural fluency' in practice through many of these tools, with an emphasis on fluidity of response. Just as culture is not static but rather fluid and constantly shifting, so to is the nature of cross-cultural planning. I have long known that we can have no recipe or blueprint for working cross-culturally, but in many ways I came to this research project looking for the *Lonely Planet* equivalent to travelling cross-culturally just the same. I know now that this was an illusory goal. Does this mean I walk away from this project empty handed? Certainly not. I now understand in a way that I could not have before that planners who effectively interact with and are inclusive of difference *do not learn to predict outcomes, but rather learn to respond sensitively, intuitively, and creatively, with what comes their way.*

table 1: concepts and themes by participant

Research Participants	Concept
	<i>Legitimacy</i>
Norma-Jean	Legitimacy questioned early in career by oppressed groups (largely First Nations) during intensely political periods in history. Her initial response was one of 'making herself disappear' in the presence of strong women, she resolved her own issues through painful process of self-reflection and an 'unpacking' of what her own culture had built up. Once she became clear with her reasons for pursuing cross-cultural work, questioning ceased to be an issue in her practice.
Kari	Has not had legitimacy questioned at any point in career, and although he gave the issue thought early in his career he recognizes that no matter who does the planning a cross-cultural component will always present itself.
Rupert	To his knowledge his legitimacy has not been challenged, something he connects to his care and sensitivity in understanding a community before entering. However, the social planning department is generally approached by the communities with whom they work and rarely enters a community without their services being solicited, thereby reducing the chance of challenges to legitimacy.
Oscar	Has never had legitimacy questioned, in large part because the CNH is seen by many as representative of many cultural communities and staff do not work, and are not seen to work, in isolation.
Lisa	Has had legitimacy questioned, not by the First Nations communities with whom she works, but by Euro-Canadian residents of Lillooet upset by the Municipality's decision to hire an 'outsider'. Resolved in large part through discussion with her boss and reflection on what 'insider' means and how long it takes to be seen as one.

Research Participants	Concept
	<i>Trust</i>
Norma-Jean	In communities divided between First Nations and Euro-Canadian, she works with a First Nations partner who understands local spiritual and healing contexts, so trust is established in the integrity of approach. Trust is built over the long term and its gauges are community and culture specific.
Kari	"When you come from City Hall you are not the most popular person around" so establishing trust is difficult in <i>any</i> community, but especially challenging with different cultural understandings of local government. Compounded by municipal environments where politics and finances pressure planners to sacrifice process for product, trust can be a daunting endeavour for planners.
Rupert	Trust is established first in the individual and then in the municipality over the long term. When a community involves him in discussions of great importance he understands he has been accepted.
Oscar	Built up over time and shattered in moments. Generally developed in organization first and then the individual because citizens are more prepared to be trustful when they see themselves reflected in organization. The exception is when he translates into Spanish for a new client, the connection can be powerful and immediate, making the client prepared to then trust the organization
Lisa	Seemingly simple gestures can go a long way. Trust is in her as an individual and she works to build that into the municipality. Trust is built over long periods and can dissipate in moments. Gauges are situation dependent; can come in the form of a smile.

table 1 (cont.)

Research Participants	Theme
	<i>The Importance of Relationships and Connections</i>
Norma-Jean	Important not to rely on one source – must get deeper and deeper into a community by asking each person she speaks with who <i>they</i> have spoken to. Bicultural individuals can play the role of ‘cultural interpreters’ who key in helping her understand cultural gaffs and foibles. Through them she has learned to more quickly pick up the signals that we’ve tripped and how to recover. When seeking out cultural interpreters it is important to remember that they can only give us <i>their</i> experience of culture. We must also be aware of what we ask of them and how this impacts their position within community.
Kari	Connect with cultural support organizations to communicate, workshop, and receive information from specific cultural communities. Community building also happens in an informal sense by connecting personally with individuals before, during, and after meetings, for example. Important to connect with people as individuals rather than as representative of a group.
Rupert	Networks form major element in garnering information on various communities and preparing to work with them. Networks are extensive and cover a spectrum of service-providers and levels of government. They do not always share approaches and perspectives but can still be effective in drawing upon one another to understand the issues a community may be facing. No one source is trusted for information – a planner must have many.
Oscar	Vast networks within service providing community to draw upon where the nature is collaborative rather than competitive. Relationships also play an important role inside the neighbourhood house, in that the foundation is built ‘one-on-one’, and his is an ongoing effort to ensure that relationships are being built <i>between</i> others across cultures. Resisted hiring culture specific workers, but have done so with an emphasis on increasing understanding amongst groups, so that they may act as ‘cultural interpreters’ through the lens of community development.
Lisa	Stresses the importance of personal relationships and their role in developing wider networks of trust. Discusses too the effectiveness of ‘cultural interpreters’ in explaining errors or situations of discomfort. Cultural interpreters are often more effective when the relationship is founded in friendship because they will be more comfortable telling a planner where she erred. Emphasizes the importance of building relationships <i>between</i> others when a planner has the trust of a group(s).

table 1 (cont.)

Research Participants	Theme
	<i>Identity and Positioning are Deeply Personal</i>
Norma-Jean	Had to undergo a period of profound personal growth in assessing assumptions and 'unpacking' privilege in order to understand her role in, and desire to do, cross-cultural work. Self-reflection and the words of close friends helped her through this process, where she has learned to "walk in [her] own skin in a way that [she's] clear about who [she] and what [she's] doing and what [she's] not doing."
Kari	Understands that after living in the country for so many years, Canadian values have shaped who he is. Although his identity plays a role in planning, at the end of the day "It doesn't matter who I <i>should</i> be, <i>I can never be that person</i> ," and so the question then becomes how sensitively he undertakes planning. Clarity in his biases and who he is helps others understand him.
Rupert	Sees his positioning as a first-generation immigrant and working cross-culturally as a nice marriage between the personal and professional. Identity impacts not only planning with communities but also the professional environment within which one operates, and planners must be cognizant of how their work with their own cultural communities is perceived by colleagues. Recognizing that a planner who shares a common cultural background with a community may be better positioned to understand frames of reference and context, a planner can also be in danger of being 'pigeonholed' by colleagues. Have to be clear in articulating ones skills and interests.
Oscar	Understanding inclusion in a very personal sense through direct experiences of immigration make much of his work feel natural to him. Discusses the importance of identity to planning by talking about how he seeks others out to complete certain tasks because of aspects of their identity. His work is coloured by who he is, as is everyone's, but by recognizing that planners do not work in isolation he knows that his practice is also informed by the diversity that surrounds him.
Lisa	Identity plays a huge role in her planning because mixed-race background allows others to connect with different aspects of her, facilitating the establishment of trust. Has been crossing borders her whole life and is not contained within the same boundaries as others because people have difficulty categorizing her. At a reflexive point in her career she is still sorting out what attracts her to cross-cultural work, but feels its related to her identity somehow.

table 1 (cont.)

Research Participants	Theme
	<i>The Need to Create New and Shared Understanding</i>
Norma-Jean	Significant risk in generalizing experiences; we must understand that we are constantly learning new things. Important to talk to people who we perceive to be unlike us by not being caught in social boundaries. Easy to find agreement on large concepts (i.e. integrity) but we stumble on elements of custom. We can work through this for longer-term projects by creating group parameters for mixed groups from the outset. Planner must make the unspoken in the room spoken (i.e. residential schools), or it will always return to haunt the process. Form connections across individuals rather than culture as a way of approaching one's inner-conflict.
Kari	Allow space for the discussion of certain issues. Example of group home relocation illustrates the importance of shared understanding as a foundation for planning activities. No predetermined outcomes and bias must be clearly articulated. Much of cross-cultural planning is found in creating comfort so that everyone can contribute and understand that their voices play a role in city-building. Important for people to connect as individuals rather than as representatives of groups.
Rupert	Explicit discrimination is not tolerated by City values and policy and planners must be clear in their approach here. Recognized need in CityPlan process to allow for participation of ethno-cultural groups to create space for the potential of creating a shared understanding. Important not to dismiss certain attitudes outright, but approach the topic through the lens of values.
Oscar	Working to build relationships between others over time when people are drawn to him because of linguistic background. Allowing the majority to make decisions for minority can be dangerous and often requires treating groups differently, but planner must be explicit in their approach. Cultural values change over time with exposure to other groups, creating a process of transformation for all involved. Group activities are monitored closely for discriminatory practices. One of biggest challenges is finding common values that all can agree on.
Lisa	Persistence in uncomfortable situations can lead to future understanding growing from small gestures. Consciously counteracting the discrimination of others is important to the work of a planner. Not dismissing outright expressions of racism so that the possibility for new understanding remains open. Developing relationships between people over time and establishing comfort with difference also important.

table 2: navigational tools

Cross-Cultural Planning Tools	Norma-Jean	Kari	Rupert	Oscar	Lisa
Skills					
Reflexivity	*	*	*	*	*
Communication and listening	*	*	*	*	
Using and finding resources	*	*	*	*	*
Facilitation and mediation	*	*	*	*	*
Community education	*	*	*	*	*
Releasing control		*	*	*	
Recognizing critical moments			*		*
Receptive to constant learning	*	*	*	*	*
Understanding cultural context	*	*	*	*	*
Balancing	*	*	*	*	*
Personal Qualities					
Creativity	*	*		*	*
Intuition	*		*	*	*
Humour	*	*		*	*
Integrity	*				*
Sensitivity	*	*	*	*	*
Flexibility		*	*	*	*
Respect	*	*	*	*	*
Patience	*	*	*	*	*
General human qualities				*	*

chapter five: implications for planning education

Having toured through the themes identified in the journeys of five cross-cultural planning practitioners, we have a good sense of what planning across difference involves. Through them we understand that legitimacy may rear its head from time to time, but that it is neither common nor frequent. We understand, too, that trust is frequently fragile, built over time, and is in turns invested in the individual and the organization, depending much on the context in which planning is undertaken. Emerging from the interviews are three key themes: 1) Relationships and networks, both personal and professional, are the systems that contribute to ensuring a planner's approach is equitable, sensitive, and grounded in the appropriate socio-historical context. 2) A planner's identity and positioning are deeply personal, are individual and situation dependent, and can impact how communities, and indeed colleagues, receive her. Each planner works through her identity in different ways, but reflexivity lies at the core for all. 3) Ultimately cross-cultural planning aims to create and build new and shared understandings across diverse groups, and between planner and community. This responsibility is mediated through creating environments of comfort while at times putting oneself in a position of discomfort, making space for dialogue around sensitive issues in a setting that attempts to balance privilege, and being clear in one's approach by reflexively understanding self in relation to difference. I have also established through the interviews that a number of skills, consciously and subconsciously employed, are inherent to this work and are built over time. Based on what these planners have told me and my own experience in planning school, it appears that cross-cultural planning education at the School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) is moving in the right direction in some ways, and is starting to include elements that speak to what they have told us.³⁹ Planner responses, however, also provide an even clearer rationale for incorporating new concepts through various methods into our education. While some skills can be taught directly, other, more innate human characteristics, can be brought out and nurtured by educators who have experienced cross-cultural planning in a personal way.

We now turn our attention toward planning education by reviewing which of the lessons from our cast of five can effectively be incorporated into planning programs, and how. Three of the five planners (Oscar, Norma-Jean, and Rupert) do not have educational backgrounds in planning although two (Oscar and Norma-Jean) are educated in the human services (social work and education respectively). This does nothing to detract from the recommendations here, as the work they do speaks to the heart of planning.

³⁹ It should be noted that new course offerings in recent years have followed the arrival of a professor committed to learning and planning across difference. It is clear that cross-cultural planning curriculum cannot be dependent on the presence of one individual – it must come from a shared commitment amongst faculty to working across difference in a transformative way.

The other two (Lisa and Kari) are educated in planning, both receiving masters degrees from SCARP at UBC, albeit two decades apart.

The extent of our cast's exposure to cross-cultural issues in their educations is varied, with Norma-Jean clearly having the most exposure given an early interest in working cross-culturally. Her master's degree in adult education focused on bicultural/second generation youth and how they mediated the cultures of their peers with that of their parents, so that when she entered the field she was well aware of the politically sensitive nature of cross-cultural work. Contrasting her experience is Rupert, who, with a background in psychology, philosophy, and English, had important critical thinking skills when he walked into his first job working with 'minority' seniors groups. He had to learn quickly through experience, however, that balancing the interests of diverse ethnic groups is no small task and he turned this around to be a strong skill. Oscar's social work degree surrounded issues of organizational development where little attention was paid to working cross-culturally. Like Rupert he 'hit the ground running' when he worked at the Kiwassa Neighbourhood House where the cultural mix was strong and inclusion was increasingly becoming part of the mandate, experience that served him well at the Collingwood Neighbourhood House.

Lisa's experience is slightly different in that her thesis involved looking at energy policy in the Lillooet region, placing her in a position of researching cross-culturally with First Nations groups although she had not necessarily set-out to work cross-culturally. Educated at SCARP in the late 1990s, she identified strongly with imperatives of inclusion, but 'planning across difference' components of the School's curriculum were not as strong then as they are now. A similar education in the late 1970s did not address cultural components, so Kari was first exposed to cross-cultural dynamics upon graduating when he found work within a range of Vancouver neighbourhoods where culture and difference presented themselves as increasingly important issues. When asked whether they felt prepared to work cross-culturally at the start of their careers, most agreed that they *felt* prepared, but quickly realized they in fact had much to learn. Luckily for us, we can take what they learned on the job and look at ways of applying it to planning education. Given the vast range in the nature of planning programs across the country, the implications for planning education found in this chapter are specific to SCARP for two reasons: as a student at that school it is the context with which I am most familiar, and this thesis is not likely to be read by many outside of the School and therefore has greater impact if directed specifically within. I have focused my comments to three broad areas where lessons can be incorporated: the School, the classroom, and in the community at large.

in the school

Planning generally has made symbolic strides in addressing diversity during the last decade. This should not stop educators from pursuing more gains as there is clearly much work to be done. As noted in chapter one, most Canadian planning schools do not record data related to ethno-cultural diversity amongst their student-body, and indeed do not have policies in place to address an apparent lack of diversity (McIntyre *et al.* 1997). I can only speak with certainty to this issue through the lens of the entry class of 2001, my own class, in which there are a number of forms of diversity but little ethno-cultural diversity. Of course we cannot ignore that each of us is diverse in a number of different ways, just as we cannot overlook a glaring lack of ethno-cultural diversity amongst the student body.

By seeking to be more representative of the communities by which we are surrounded, the School could give students the opportunity to experience diversity directly through working and personal relationships that go beyond a theoretical discussion of inclusion.⁴⁰ Emerging clearly in the previous chapter was the idea that part of planning is risk-taking and learning to interact with those who are unlike ourselves, and through a diverse student body this learning could take place in a very lived and real sense in the classroom, as well as the lunchroom. Drawing from reciprocal or comparative learning theories (Afshar 2001), diversity of this nature allows learning to occur “through sharing and comparing values, ideas, experiences, knowledge, and skills from different contexts such that the pool of knowledge from which to address planning issues is widened and deepened” (*ibid.*, 341). Common in calls for a more ‘globalized education’ where students from both the ‘first’ and ‘third’ worlds are brought together to reach a shared understanding of one another, reciprocal learning can also happen between neighbours in diverse communities in a global city. Because we naturally seek out those who are like us, we cannot expect that students will gather the necessary cross-cultural experiences in their own urban environments, making it even more important to provide that environment within an academic setting.

If Oscar’s experience at the CNH tells us anything, it is that cultural communities trust the organization because they see themselves represented there amongst staff, directors, and the Board of Directors, meaning that as planning schools become more diverse they will attract students from diverse backgrounds with greater ease. This too, has implications for planning practitioners down the line. Diversity and inclusion became imperatives for the CNH from the outset, and planning programs can find guidance here in seeking to be inclusive within their student body. In this sense the School has a

⁴⁰ To be certain there is a host of reasons for any program to be comprised of the same demographics found within society generally, not least of which are equity and representation, and the discussion in this chapter is not meant to suggest that the active recruitment of so-called ‘minority’ individuals be done in the name of making ‘majority’ students feel more comfortable.

responsibility to reach out to culture-specific communities in attracting new recruits and this can be handled in a number of different ways: through existing contacts and networks, through project partnerships, or even through advertising in various language media. In the end, however, students from so-called 'minority' communities may not feel at ease until they see themselves represented amongst faculty; another direction in which the School must head as it has begun to do with gender representation. Certainly I am not the first to raise the idea of increasing diversity in planning programs, but the research here provides further support by indicating that personalized interactions and relationships go a long way in building comfort amongst difference. Over time comfort allows us to see 'difference' through the lens of the everyday.

Course offerings within the School are another area for potential change that these five planners lead us to. Two phases exist here in making room for an increased focus on cross-cultural planning at SCARP. Firstly, given its richness and increasing importance in every 'stream', it does not seem a stretch to make mandatory a course in planning across difference. This approach should be viewed as a temporary measure until details of a more imbedded and holistic approach to cross-cultural planning can be implemented (phase two discussed below). Of the five planners interviewed here, only Norma-Jean set out to work cross-culturally, and the other four tacitly acknowledge that cross-cultural planning is what *happens to you when you set out to do any planning at all*. Indeed, Rupert and Kari show us this was just as true in the 1970s and 1980s as it is today, while Lisa and Norma-Jean reveal that cross-cultural planning is not exclusive to urban centres. A mandatory course in cross-cultural planning would be a first step in ensuring that aspiring planners understand at least the basic principles of planning across difference. The course could further be divided into segments specific to each of the streams of planning so that we gain an appreciation of the relevance of culture to community development, urban design, or the environment, for example. Further, a mandatory course of this nature could cover professional ethics, not just as it relates to Professional Codes of Conduct, but also included would be an exploration of those ethics that may guide a student in working through their own approaches to the ethically sticky cross-cultural situations in which all five have found themselves. With a relatively low number of required courses (Friedmann 1996), SCARP is well positioned to make mandatory another course in either year of the program. This course *should not replace* the current course offered in 'multicultural planning' which could serve to build on the preliminary exploration and could act as an 'advanced' course for those seeking careers related to cross-cultural planning, with a more intense focus on theory in the Canadian multicultural context in addition to a personalized exploration of identities combined with trust and relationship building exercises.

Phase two of implementation ensures that a cross-cultural context is provided throughout the curriculum and implemented with the understanding that planners of all stripes work cross-culturally, whether they

seek to or not. This approach, requiring a curriculum review, sees inclusion everywhere as an imperative and ensures the School's graduates are prepared to deal sensitively, intuitively, and creatively with what comes their way. It will be done with a concentrated intention that recognizes the 'challenges of inclusion'. Similar to a project completed at the planning program at the University of Cincinnati (Looye and Sesay 1998),⁴¹ an exhaustive review would allow the School to employ students, either for pay or credit, to not only review syllabi but to research, through secondary sources, what is currently available in specific topic areas through a 'cultural' lens. Literature reviews would be undertaken for each course in determining where a cross-cultural perspective may be appropriate for introduction. Similar to approaches taken by feminists who argue that we need to study all aspects of planning through the lens of gender, phase two of implementation recognizes that we do not understand diversity in isolation.

An example of an area of curriculum in need of a cultural component is facilitation and mediation, key skills that planners employ in cross-cultural work. Courses in this vein have presented themselves in recent years, and yet in my experience there is little in them specific to cross-cultural conflict, or indeed creating shared understandings amongst or between culturally diverse groups. Students hired by the School to assist with curriculum review would provide a report to the faculty member responsible for the course and make themselves available for discussion. A faculty that understands the imperative of inclusion in an embedded sense will understand that, depending on their backgrounds, they may not have the 'navigational tools' required to educate students in this area, and will bring in practitioners who have a depth of experience in the area (to be discussed in the section following section). The background research completed by students can help to alleviate the pressure, at least initially, on faculty while allowing students to sharpen their research skills generally and further familiarize themselves in their area of interest. Opportunities for professional projects present themselves through such an approach in each of the streams. Literature reviews could be kept in the School's library or web site for further reading options for students and faculty alike. *A comprehensive and embedded approach that understands there is no realm of planning untouched by 'the challenges of inclusion' treats diversity as a given – an ordinary part of everyday life – rather than relegating it to 'specialty' status, and allows us to move beyond tokenistic approaches to inclusion in education, and in planning.*

in the classroom

Prefacing the discussion on how we learn principles of diversity, inclusion, and border crossing is an emphasis on theory.⁴² The debate within planning education of a theoretical base of knowledge versus

⁴¹ My comments in relation to curriculum review through a cultural lens are modeled after the experiences of curriculum diversification at the University of Cincinnati, as outlined in Looye and Sesay's 1998 article.

⁴² My understanding of theory is that it comes not just in books, but that practitioners use, live, and create theory daily. My comments in this section are focused on the needs of aspiring planners, and as we have seen in this thesis

the practical skills needed to learn to plan has been around as long as the profession itself, and Aberley's (2000) comments are insightful here:

Great pressure continues to be exerted on planning schools to turn out graduates who can hit the ground running with quantitative and technical skills. This kind of training is expected to take precedence over a more interdisciplinary approach to education, one that emphasizes skills involving listening, research, and many forms of communication. While no one will argue that technical skills are not critically important to learn, the teaching of GIS or decision analysis too often ignore the qualitative sensibilities that must ultimately guide their use. (Aberley 2000:25)

In conversation I had the opportunity to ask three of the five planners (Kari, Oscar, and Rupert) whether or not the skills and knowledge they had discussed could be taught in the classroom. All three confirmed what I have long felt about planning education; school is the place for learning theory. When students leave school they have a lifetime to learn skills but very rarely will they have time to learn theory while practicing (Rupert). Similarly, Oscar tells us that those without a theoretical background are less likely to be prepared for many cross-cultural situations. Underlying so much of what planners do, a practice seems hollow without theory as a solid base. Indeed, it has been argued that the planners here show us their use of theory in the field, and are its creators in large part. It is unclear whether this is *because* they come from academic backgrounds with an emphasis on theory, or because they have the *skills* necessary to 'create' theory. Although it is an area in need of further research, I would suggest that their ability to use and create theory in their practices comes from a solid theoretical base garnered in school. Theory, best taught in the classroom, should underlie our education in the same way, while tangible skill development can happen through education in the community, as we will explore further in the next section. We would do well to recall the words of Rees and Wallace and Milroy from chapter two in learning where to look for theory. Planning is at its best and most effective when we pull together knowledge from other disciplines, in one case scientific and the other focused on cultural studies, human rights, and women's studies. By its very nature planning is interdisciplinary and we should not hesitate to learn from other disciplines when we seek holistic approaches.

One of the biggest lessons emerging from this research is a reaffirmation that *what* we know is not nearly as important as *how* we know it, and understanding many ways of knowing has increasingly become an integral component of our education. We must continue to question *how* we arrive at knowledge through a reflexivity that questions our assumptions and biases in order to understand *what* we know. There are no blueprints or recipes for cross-cultural planning, and what must continue to be emphasized in the classroom is that we will constantly be learning new things. We can never know all we need to know about cross-cultural planning, and just when we think we do, its nature will shift and change just as

the importance of understanding the historical, social, economic, environmental, and political context of the

cultures themselves do. What now becomes important is learning how to spot, and react to, specific situations in cross-cultural contexts. It must also be emphasized to us that we will never be able to stop the power that our own cultural make-up has in guiding our thoughts, but activities can be introduced that help us 'catch our thoughts' and learn to identify over time where our cultural bias presents itself so that we can be clear in our approach. This is most effectively learned indirectly with continued interactions across difference, again highlighting the importance of a diverse student body. Since such an environment is not readily available, students must not only be encouraged to seek out those who are different from us in our daily interactions, but *faculty must also bring into the classroom those with expertise in this area*, as has been done in the multicultural planning course. Underscored here is the idea that cross-cultural work is not something we do only in our professional lives, but is personalized through a life commitment to increasing our understanding of one another. Opportunities exist through UBC's Learning Exchange, for professors to provide service to communities in a service learning model, where personal transformation through interactions with difference can be experienced in a very real way.

A personalized approach also opens doors for the exploration of identity, and not only as it applies to the 'other'. Through this research we have learned that identity does in fact matter, but that it matters differently for each planner because personal identities are so different. The addition of a multicultural planning course in September 2002 moved in this direction and has succeeded in filling a gap in the curriculum by providing students the opportunity for reflexivity on a number of sensitive, yet essential topic areas. Students are encouraged to think through their personal identities as they relate to culture, race, family, etc. Journal exercises have proven to be an immensely helpful tool here, but because of their intensely personal nature have been left to students to pursue independently with little follow-up. As a balance it would be useful to also include the 'cases' of other planners who have embarked upon their own personal journeys through identity and its implications for planning practice. This thesis has been immensely instructive for me in understanding how others have become comfortable 'walking in their own skin' over time. Unfortunately, few such cases exist in literature and it would be up to faculty to search for practitioners comfortable enough to speak to students of personal experiences. What is lacking in literature can often be compensated in classroom exercises. Here I am thinking of the 'planner for a day' exercise in Sandercock's theory class, whereby a student chooses a planner to observe for a half or full day. Such an activity could be instrumental in helping a student gain a sense of the intuitive, fluid, and largely unscripted nature of working cross-culturally. I would suggest here a half day of observation with an hour set aside at the end for dialogue where the student can ask questions as to a planner's thought process during specific moments or questions that he cannot find answers to in texts. In this way

students supplement theory by seeing it in action and are encouraged to “take [our] learning where we find it” (Jacobs 2004).

Many courses already emphasize the importance of group work, which is effective in learning to work across all types of difference. Group work must continue to be part of our education, by stressing the trust and relationship building qualities inherent to such work. Also learned through group practice is the importance of recognizing and calling out the skills of others, central to a planner’s work. The real beauty of group approaches is that theory can be learned in a setting that calls attention to other skills. In light of the previous discussion on diversity amongst the student body, group work has the potential to offer skill building across difference in a way that cannot be taught directly, underscoring again the importance of diversity in the School. Groups can also spark the creativity seen amongst our planners in a way that may not happen for some individually. Creativity must be nurtured in classroom environments that go beyond an encouragement to ‘be creative’ and toward creative teaching styles with creative assignments. Human qualities specific to planning sensitively across difference cannot be taught in isolation, but we can certainly be made aware of them in the classroom. For example, intuition cannot be taught, but we can over time learn to be confident in what it tells us rather than consciously blocking it out, as many of us have arguably been taught over the course of our lives through a rational/scientific approach to learning and knowledge.

in the community

Internships provide students with excellent opportunities to supplement newly acquired theoretical knowledge with practical experience in the field, and have been encouraged by the School and faculty. The School would do a great service to students by actively seeking internship opportunities in Vancouver and abroad, the coordination of which would serve nicely as a work-study placement. Although they have some responsibility here, students are more likely to complement their education with related work experience when presented with opportunities. Very difficult to teach in a classroom setting, and generally attempted through role play or pretend case scenarios, practical skills are best enhanced ‘on the job’ and internships provide a great ‘head start’ in this regard. My own limited experience has shown that communities are more forgiving of the foibles of students than those of professionals, allowing students to learn how to plan cross-culturally in a freer, slightly less sensitive, environment.

An inspiring example of learning to plan through direct action comes by way of Kenneth Reardon’s portrayal of a community-university partnership between East St. Louis and a number of different programs at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The East St. Louis Action Research Project (ESLARP) has worked with communities through a number of different development projects through action research, but more personally it has:

provided more than 800 architecture, landscape architecture, law, and urban and regional planning students with the tools required to successfully enter a low-income African American community where they have experienced an overwhelmingly positive series of social interaction with people of colour that have challenged many to re-examine their racial fears and prejudices and the impact these previously unexamined sentiments have had upon their approach to policy analysis and planning practice. (Reardon 2002:431

Not without its challenges, this program has allowed students transformative experiences, whether they were seeking them or not, in order to unpack their assumptions and stereotypes in an experiential way not always possible in the classroom. Of course this happens naturally for some and for others it may take encouragement. Reardon and his colleagues quickly found that students would generally 'stick to their own' and refrain from interacting with community members at social events. Echoing the 'forced discomfort' theme identified by three of our five planners, faculty devised a number of methods to overcome, and indeed confront, the students' fears of interaction by building into their approach a number of reflexive tools, both personal and through group discussion amongst themselves and with faculty.

The importance of the experience is not lost on Reardon, as his reflection underscores what has been found in this thesis:

Planners committed to "expand choice and the opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of disadvantaged groups and persons...", as required by the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, will find themselves working in many communities of colour during their careers (American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP 1989)). Their work in these communities will be undermined, in many cases, by unexamined racial prejudices and biases *unless their planning education provides them with the experiences and tools to correct distortions in their thinking* encouraged by contemporary American popular culture. (Reardon 2002:431, emphasis mine)

Without a reflexive component of our education we *might* reach the same understanding later in our careers, but such a process will not be immediate and we would be doing a great disservice to many along the way. Reflexivity is an ongoing process in the work of each of our planners, albeit in varying degrees, and when we learn to reflect in action in an environment that nurtures personal growth, is more forgiving of our errors, and is guided by those who have likely followed a similar path, we can more confidently enter our practice and work to effect change in our communities by being clear in 'who we are, what we're doing, and what we're not doing.' Such interactions with the community are likely to draw in faculty who could experience personal transformation alongside their students. A similar environment may not exist through the internship stream if the focus is not on the personal, and tasks generally concentrate less on process and more on product.

The ESLARP project is a wonderful example of operationalizing theory while providing service to the community. This can allow a renewed focus on theory in the classroom and important skill learning can happen in a setting in which it is best learned. Required for such an undertaking are significant resources, both monetary and human, but nonetheless I cannot think of a discipline more suited to such forward-thinking community development work than planning. Effective practicum options have recently been made available in the SCARP curriculum and there may be opportunities for expansion here. What might be more worthwhile in the long-term is a major project that combines the efforts of a number of departments in providing mutual learning opportunities between any number of communities and students. This may not be specific to SCARP or even to UBC, for we could take our learning from the experience of other professions and look to projects undertaken in disadvantaged communities by law students across the country, under the umbrella of Pro Bono Students Canada. Certainly such projects are not established in the short term but are built over time with concerted energy and resources, through networks and dedicated working relationships.

Many of the suggestions in the chapter are long term projects that require resources, but are important just the same. Efforts in attracting students from diverse backgrounds is an area the School can start in immediately, and while the results will not be immediate such a move has the potential to impact the nature of our education more than any other measure discussed here. Through daily interactions across difference in the lunchroom as well as the classroom students will have the opportunity to engage in dialogue and challenge one another's assumptions and positions of privilege, especially when reflexive processes are built into more formalized group activities and projects. Above all, the opportunity allows students to naturally connect with one another as individuals rather than through a planner/community dichotomy where distrust may have already complicated the relationship. Changes reflecting some of the more personal experiences of planning have been made in the classroom with the introduction of a course in multicultural planning through an emphasis on reflexivity and the politically sensitive nature of planning across difference, not limited to ethno-cultural difference. If my research indicates anything at all it is that cross-cultural planning happens to planners whether they seek it or not. My fear is that students who have worked through their education without intending to plan in a cross-cultural context may not have the appropriate tools to effectively traverse the parameters of such a context. The School would do well to review its curriculum to ensure that cross-cultural components are integrated in a meaningful way throughout, based on the experiences of practitioners who are inclusive of difference. As a stop-gap measure, a core course investigating cross-cultural planning in the context of each of the 'streams' would serve a similar purpose. The School should shift its focus toward long term projects within diverse communities where students *and* faculty are free to pursue their planning interests, be it environmental, social, or physical in a nurturing setting where practitioners are actively involved in encouraging and guiding students through reflexive processes.

chapter six: personal reflections and research limitations

In this chapter, I present my personal reflections on the research process, propose areas for future research, and a second look at the assumptions I carried in with me. Reflections came to me in spurts, changing in nature during the research process through constant assessment and reassessment of work completed, and work to be completed.

6.1 assumptions

In chapter two I identified two assumptions that I carried into the preliminary research for this thesis, and investigated how they stood up in light of the literature. My first assumption was that it is possible, indeed beneficial, to connect with others across some shared aspect of identity when there is no shared ethno-cultural identity. The literature was found to be mixed in this regard, and so too were the results of the interviews. Lisa met with success in connecting with other women, and Rupert acknowledged this was possible in some circumstances, but he more prominently displayed an ability to look for what was common *between* groups or individuals. In a similar light, Norma-Jean, Oscar, and Kari all stressed that connecting with people as individuals was paramount, and that while culture is important it becomes secondary to the relationship. The other assumption was that there is benefit to be found when a planner shares a cultural background with the community. The literature confirmed that there *may* be benefits but also highlighted some of the dangers of this assumption by identifying how a common background could further complicate the relationship. The same is true of the research findings. Rupert talked about the dangers of being pigeonholed and seen as biased in relation to identity, while Oscar spoke to an immediate connection with those from the same linguistic background.

In undertaking the research I came to identify two other assumptions I brought with me. Firstly, my reading of the literature coming into the project, in addition to some of the personal experiences I discussed in the first chapter, led me to believe that most planners have had their legitimacy questioned when they do not share a cultural background with the community they are working with. I learned quickly that in the case of the participants it is neither frequent nor common for planners to have 'legitimacy' rise as an issue as I had framed it. My tendency to turn first (and often only) to books for answers entangled me in this assumption, and ultimately made me realize that I must be more confident in seeking out those with direct experience. The research process showed that others are happy to share their experiences and talk about their work. Much of the literature in this area comes from the United States where the socio-political context is different than that found here, making it difficult to draw parallels, something I tended to do in my reading. A more dichotomous American context focuses on issues of 'race', while in Canada we neatly avoid such a distasteful topic by replacing the word with

'culture'. Indeed, Norma-Jean's experience shows us that challenges to her legitimacy came in intensely political environments with radically oppressed populations; a First Nations context in Canada and an African-American one in the United States. So while literature poses difficulties with regard to context, it too presents another set of problems that are only now clear to me. The fact that I had trouble finding Canadian literature surrounding the issue of legitimacy in cross-cultural environments, planning or otherwise, *should* have indicated that it may not be a significant issue, although this may have implicated me in another assumption. It would seem that practitioners and researchers alike will be inclined to write about their experiences if they have faced challenges. Could one imagine a journal article in which the author is moved to write about his experiences of *not* having his legitimacy challenged? In this regard I have learned to pay closer attention to intuiting the reasons for gaps in literature, without suggesting at all that the resulting research is moot. On the contrary, all of the interviewed practitioners indicated through their words that they had thought through their own legitimacy in the work they do, in one sense or another, regardless of whether or not it had been questioned by others.

Secondly, I approached my research through an assumption that planners work in isolation. Intellectually I knew this to be nonsense, but in retrospect it appears that in framing the questions and my *expectations* of responses I saw planners as working alone. Nowhere was this more apparent than in my interview with Oscar, for whom planning is approached through a mandate of inclusivity, not just for those with whom the CNH seeks to plan, but also for those who do the planning in the organization. His every decision and action is guided by policies derived by a diverse group, hence his work is inseparable from the work of others in many ways. Each question I posed that related to him as an individual was answered from an organizational standpoint, and although initially flustered by this I later came to understand just why a planner might have difficulty isolating himself and his work from that of colleagues. This assumption did not detract from the research in any way, and others seemed to separate their work from that of their colleagues more easily for a number of reasons (working in a consultative capacity, for example), but ultimately I feel more comfortable seeking cross-cultural planning opportunities knowing that the work will not be mine alone. Again this underscores the importance of approach, in that it is not whether or not planners work cross-culturally but *how* they set out to do so.

6.2 reflections on research

The exploratory nature of my research necessitated a broad sample selection, in the hope of locating emerging themes attributable to a range of planning realms. Diverse planners themselves also exemplify just how individualized identity is in relation to planning; while each of the planners came to different understandings of their identities, they all went through a reflexive process in reaching their conclusions and came to understand that while identity matters in planning, 'it shouldn't matter too much.' Coupled with the necessity for in-depth interviews, a broad sample selection meant a small sample selection,

thereby limiting the conclusive nature of the findings, not unusual for exploratory studies. A study limited to one specific area of planning, municipal planning for example, may have facilitated a greater degree of generalizability. Yet we would not then be able to gain an understanding of the themes that potentially span various realms, making the research useful for the great many students who are about to become 'planners' but are still unsure of their path. The other benefit to a broad sample selection is an illustration of the importance of cross-cultural skills running the entire spectrum of planning, from physical to community development to social policy.

Given the somewhat limiting nature of a masters thesis, I contained my methods to include only in-depth interviews because I understood this to be the most effective means of gathering a planner's thoughts and experiences on a pointed number of issues not covered in planning literature. I still believe this to be the best suited method for my study, but can readily think of other methods that may have helped at getting at some of the information I was seeking. Observation of planners in action would have been immensely helpful in illuminating some of the human qualities discussed more generally. Moreover, observation would have allowed me to look for common actions or skills employed by the planners that they themselves may not be aware of or that do not readily come to mind in conversation. Similarly, a focus group may have had the benefit of ensuring that all participants were 'on the same page', allowing for similarities in response styles (i.e. the use of examples) and a direct comparison of similarities and differences in experience.

I have already dealt with one of the concepts (legitimacy) used in this thesis from the outset. The other, trust, presented a different set of challenges. By nature a broad concept, trust is difficult to discuss in isolation as seen in both the literature review and in reporting the findings. Informing much of what a planner does, it is perhaps most critical of all in a cross-cultural context where the planning relationship with communities has been historically founded on the unstable grounds of distrust. More useful might have been an approach that took 'trust' out of the research question in a more general attempt to have the participants define the challenges to cross-cultural planning, rather than the challenges specifically related to trust building, an approach that would have been in keeping with the research's exploratory nature.

My intention at the outset of this project was to narrow the parameter of 'culture' to focus on planning across 'ethno-cultural' divisions. My background in First Nations Studies told me that I should have made a further separation between First Nations groups and other ethno-cultural groups given their vastly different histories and the context of ongoing relationships with colonialism; juxtaposed approaches of 'inclusion' on the one hand and the recognition of inherent rights on the other need to be clear in any research. My first reaction to the data told me that my failure to make this distinction would come back to haunt my findings, and yet as I began to look more closely at the data it became apparent that the

planners who have worked cross-culturally with *both* 'minority' groups *and* First Nations also did not make a clear distinction, and seemed to suggest that many of the personal challenges of working cross-culturally are the same. Had I made the separation in my questions it may have placed an onus on the participant to create a (possibly false) separation in their experiences. Because I sought answers to *how* a planner works cross-culturally rather than *what* a planner needs to know in doing so, the inherent differences between working with First Nations and working in some other cultural context may be minimized somewhat in my answers. No matter the group, such factors as intuition, sensitivity, and reflexivity are integral components of a planner's toolkit. Similarly, relationship development, working through personal identity, and creating an environment where shared understanding can flourish seem to comprise the work of cross-cultural planners in any context. There is no question that innumerable details of cross-cultural planning are situation- and group-specific, but with the development of approaches that contribute to *longer-term cultural fluency* as we have seen from these five planners, those waters can be effectively navigated as the situation demands.

Finally, the research process itself posed several challenges of a more personal nature that forced me to reflect on a number of aspects of my own make-up, and consequent implications for my own planning practice. Conducting interviews in an intensely personal topic area was difficult in a number of ways, but especially where the participant was not forthcoming with personal information. Raised in a cultural environment that places great emphasis on the privacy of the individual I am not comfortable 'prodding' into the personal lives of others, and especially not into the lives of strangers. Alleviated somewhat by my family-in-law who discusses any personal issue freely and with ease, my own 'culture of my character' affected my research in unexpected ways. Coupled with an understanding of how the 'where are you from?' question can immediately impact one's sense of belonging,⁴³ I had difficulty posing this question in interviews where the information did not present itself naturally. Personal information of this nature was important to my understanding of participant identity and implications for planning, and while I was able to garner sufficient details to draw parallels and identify differences, the research may have been enhanced with richer fabric from personal lives and histories of each participant if I had been better able to broach more personal topics.

⁴³ With Czech accents my parents have frequently been on the receiving end of this now hotly contested question. I vividly recall one incident, at 12 or 13, shopping with my Mom at a large department store. At the check-out the cashier asked my Mom with earnest sincerity where she was from. Her reply came in the form of a frustrated mumble, something I had seen many times before. Assuming it came from some misplaced embarrassment over her heritage, I asked her why her response to these questions did not reflect her usual warmth. She explained that each time she hears the question she is reminded that she will never quite belong in a country she very much considers her home. Such experiences are hardly unique, but I have never since asked someone where he is from.

6.3 future research

The exploratory nature of this research suggests opportunities for future research in a number of different areas. Beneficial to the field would be any research that examines any one of the three main themes in greater depth and detail, by using in-depth interviews, but also through observation to explore the idea that planners may be employing skills or approaches of which even they are unaware. Where this thesis has been instructive is in indicating generally how planners work across difference. It has not targeted the development of strategies for planning with specific ethno-cultural groups. Opportunities exist to identify differences in the approaches taken by planners who work cross-culturally within specific communities, or in identifying *what* a planner needs to know before entering a particular cultural community, similar to the approach taken by Jeffrey Cook (2002) in his thesis on planning with First Nations.

As indicated in the literature review, and in chapter four's section on identity, a great deal more research into identity, as it relates to the planner's self rather than the 'other', is necessary. New research might investigate just how a planner's identity implicates her reception by the community and interactions within, or might indeed identify other important aspects of identity in a more conclusive sense than I was able to do in this small study. Such research might also include how a planner's identity affects relationships or perceptions by colleagues, and the implications for planning practice. I wonder whether this experience is as common as I suspect it might be, and how other planners of colour have mediated their own experiences in this area. Further research possibilities might exist in exploring how mixed ethnic identities might impact a planner's relationship-building skills and opportunities, as Lisa's experience suggests they might. Obviously such research would be limited in its practicality in that while we choose some aspects of our identities, other aspects are predetermined or even projected upon us. Specific skills developed through life experience and related to identity (for example, the fluidity and ease with which Lisa crosses the same boundaries that inhibit others) may not be relevant to others' practice directly. Where research into specific identities becomes useful is in providing a wider audience with cases to understand how planners mediate and come to terms with identities over time and implications for planning, all of which serve as powerful teaching tools in helping students mediate their own identities. The nature of shifting identities might also suggest that planner identities shift in relation to the communities with whom they plan, offering research opportunities into how specific identities are implicated in specific contexts.

6.4 final thoughts

When I set out to do this research I had a fairly high level of anxiety, as I established in the first chapter – anxious about making a mess of things and repeating the errors of planners who have walked before me, I was unsure whether I had what it takes to be a cross-cultural planner. I was easily, if not justifiably,

scared off by several experiences that made me question my *right* to work cross-culturally and assumed that others had similar experiences. Relieved to learn that challenges to legitimacy are neither common nor frequent, I grew to understand how others have dealt with similar situations, if at all. What I now understand in a way I could not have before is that these fears and anxieties are more about me than they ever were about someone else. No one needed to question my legitimacy because I was doing that on my own. Ignoring my insecurities altogether may have been easier in the immediate term but this course of action would have set me up to fail not only myself, but the communities with whom I sought to work. Working through insecurities is no overnight project, but not only has this undertaking shown me that I need to do it, it has shown me where to begin, and *how*. Also clear is that the separation between the work of a planner and the life of a planner is not neat and using cross-cultural experiences and skills developed in life can be immensely instructive in practice.

Planning is one of the legends we have created to understand a reality that is too complex for human understanding.

Jarvis 1995:113

On the basis of my thesis research I can say with certainty that cross-cultural planning is complex, and its understanding comes through lived experiences of interaction with difference, rendering it difficult to communicate through words on paper; there are no words to convey an embodied understanding of its richly textured fabric. The nature of cross-cultural planning is lived, and it is not easily explained, underscoring the need for me to go out and experience it on my own, although investigating it and writing about it has made me more confident to do just that. While this thesis could never give me a recipe, these five planners have illustrated through thoughtful words their own understandings of, and experiences with, cross-cultural planning. In doing so they have provided me with my own platform from which to dive into these 'muddled waters'.

Beyond my own personal lessons, this thesis has made a contribution to planning. For perhaps the first time we have available an exploration of what 'inclusion' looks like when it is operationalized. For too long we have discussed the need for inclusion in planning practice without understanding what is required of practitioners at a very personal level. We understood relationships to be important, but we did not understand that they serve as vehicles, allowing practitioners to work across difference. We understood identity to be important, but only as it relates to the 'other'. We now know what identity and positioning mean to the planner because they are deeply personal, require reflexivity, and for some the mediation of identity involves personal transformation. We understood that a planner's goal is often to move communities of memory towards hope, but we did not understand that creating shared understanding involves the planner as much as it does the community. *In planning, it is no longer only the community*

that transforms through participatory process, it is indeed ourselves. We now understand the tools and human qualities that planners use to navigate these waters, and we know that those who seek to be inclusive of difference do not create recipe books or predict outcomes, they learn to respond sensitively, intuitively, and creatively with what comes their way. If we remain open to learning, this process may yet happen to us all, intended or not.

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appendix a: sample interview questions

1. Please describe your work.
2. What is your educational background?
3. How did you come to be interested in cross-cultural work?
4. When you entered the field was there significant dialogue surrounding the politically sensitive nature of cross-cultural planning? If so, did this weigh into your decision to enter the field?
5. When you first began practicing did you feel prepared? If so, how did you prepare for your work? If not, what do you feel would have better prepared you?
6. How do you now prepare to work with groups that you do not culturally identify with?
7. Have you ever had someone question your legitimacy as a cross-cultural planner because you did not share the same cultural background? If so, how did you respond to this? Was your response effective?
8. Have you ever been in situations where you've felt ethically conflicted because your planning values are in conflict with a group's stated cultural values? If so, how have you handled this situation?
9. Talk about some of the ways you build trust with communities.
10. How do you gauge whether or not you have the trust and acceptance of the group you are working with?
11. Are there things you would caution against when trying to build trust? If so, what are they?
12. Have you had points at which you question your own legitimacy in doing cross-cultural work? If so, have you been able to resolve this for yourself? If so, how?
13. Have you ever felt that not sharing a common background has hindered a planning process? If so, in what way? What was your response to the situation?
14. Are there circumstances under which you think cross-cultural planning should not be done? Are there types of projects you will not accept? If so, please explain.
15. Describe your most disappointing planning experience. What went wrong? What would you have done differently?
16. Describe your best planning experience. What contributed to making it so positive?
17. Have there been times when you've felt you don't have the appropriate education or training? If so, what has been your response?
18. Do you think the types of skills you've talked about today can be taught in a classroom setting? If so, how? If not, why not?
19. Have you been in a situation in which you were not seen as legitimate because an aspect of your identity, combined with your position, is not seen by some cultures as legitimate? If so, how did you respond to this situation? What were the outcomes?