towards holistic approaches in participatory planning:
exploring community cultural development in vancouver’s diverse communities

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abstract

In an urban world of increasing diversity, uncertainty, isolation and fear, creative and compassionate planning approaches are called for more than ever before. A concern of many planning theorists and practitioners today is how to create more inclusive participatory democratic processes and ensure that planner's work contributes to the development of greater social and environmental justice. This research follows planning theorists like Leonie Sandercock, John Forester and John Friedmann in a search for a new planning paradigm, a new praxis of inclusive engagement. It brings art, story, emotions, spirit, body, intuition, culture, identity, and other such taboo notions in the "mainstream" planning world front and centre in imagining a professional revolution.

This research is motivated by theorists and practitioners who identify the need for a more holistic planning approach, rooted in an expanded view of the interconnected, relationship-centred and multi-faceted nature of people, communities, and planning issues and the recognition that who and how we are as practitioners is as important as what we do. It is also driven by the argument that culture not only matters, but that understanding and working with its varied and creative expressions in community and participatory processes holds uniquely insightful and transformative opportunities for communication, connection, and action. Finally, it is guided by John Forester's idea that there is a wealth of invaluable knowledge about what's going on and what works in authentic, daily, messy, discreet practice situations contained within the experience stories of practitioners and community members. Learning how to truly listen to and work with stories – in the many forms in which they are told – and tell our own, is a vital planning capacity in need of enhancement.

Despite current theoretical debates and an increasingly recognised need for new (or perhaps re-imagined or re-awakened) capacities and tools for planning in cities of difference, little has been written about community cultural development (CCD) as a useful avenue of consideration. Meanwhile, cultural and arts-based participatory processes are becoming increasingly accepted in other fields of literature as uniquely effective in building community, transforming consciousness, resolving conflict, bridging difference, and engaging individuals and groups (especially the most marginalised) in learning, decision-making and action.

The empirical research for this thesis is based in urban Vancouver, a multicultural city known for its community cultural development activity. Here, through listening to their stories and observing and experiencing their approaches myself, I explore the goals, capacities, skills, and impacts of various practitioners incorporating creative and cultural expression in their work. I also look at two case studies: the creative cultural work of the Kalayaan Centre, a Filipino community centre, and the Renfrew-Collingwood Arts Pow Wow, an arts-based community development program in an exceptionally diverse neighbourhood. I explore what is going on in these processes and consider what planners might learn from the experiences of these practitioners and participants towards creating more equitable, more appropriate, more pluralist, and more inspiring places to live and ways of living. I investigate what unique and essential functions and roles artists and creative/cultural activity play in society and planning and argue that a movement towards more inclusive participatory democratic processes will necessarily involve incorporating aspects of a community cultural development approach.

**Cover image: Collingwood Community Spirit Mural, Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Vancouver.**
towards holistic approaches in participatory planning

**Chapter One: What's Art Got to Do with It?**

1.1 Divers/cité - the art of the possible
1.2 Setting the stage: debates and themes
  - Re-inventing a profession – planning in cities of difference
  - Towards a holistic practice – connections and reflections
  - Take back the art! Imagining a cultural democracy into action
  - For the love of cities
1.3 Research questions and objectives
1.4 The method to my madness
1.5 Organization of the thesis

**Chapter Two: Towards Holistic Planning: Exploring "New" Approaches to Diversity**

2.1 Introduction - Re-Visioning Practice
2.1 Civic participation and planning in cities of difference
  - The times, they are a changin'

---

**Table of Contents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
3.3 the planning context - envisioning cosmopolis

history of citizen participation in BC 71
public involvement and planning in the city of Vancouver 73
but which publics? planning and difference in the city of Vancouver 78
what's art got to do with it? creative approaches and the city 81
the office of cultural affairs 82
vancouver board of parks and recreation 84
cityplan and community visioning 86

3.4 conclusion 86

chapter four: planners' practice stories

4.1 the unofficial story 90

4.2 planners' perspectives 91

the cultural planner - building bridges 91
the multicultural planner - we've come a long way, but not far enough 93
the community planners - changing the way we work 95
the Parks Board coordinator - how arts processes work 99
the diversity planner - communication is the key 102

4.3 learning from planning stories 105

stories of planning evolution in Vancouver 106
art and culture - filling the gap 107
are these planners engaging in more holistic practice? 109

chapter five: practice stories of community cultural development in vancouver

5.1 grassroots creativity - stories of transformation in action 113

who's doing what 114
questions of reality, form, and philosophy 116
how they work 118
who and how they are 123
experiencing community cultural development 124
what's going on in CCD 126
chapter six: telling untold stories: sinag bayan and cultural work at the kalayaan centre

6.1 introduction to the case study
6.2 background: a community beyond borders
demographics
the kalayaan centre
literature review
6.3 the story of sinag bayan – the evolution of a community cultural theatre collective
why culture?
creative struggle – a cultural tradition
every word is a weapon of freedom
breaking ground
sinag bayan – a community cultural theatre collective
regarding planners and city planning
6.4 learning from the experiences of the filipino community
the centre and sinag bayan – implications of diversity for planning
the centre and sinag bayan – cultural work and community engagement

chapter seven: the renfrew-collingwood arts pow wow – building community through cultural expression

7.1 introduction to the case study
7.2 background: “a place for everyone”
7.3 stories of the pow wow
how it all began
the ways of the pow wow: goals and methods
experiencing pow wow processes 181
  1. overall pow wow coordination 181
  2. aboriginal development 183
  3. neighbourhood development 184
  4. community development 187
  5. communication and media 191
  6. reflecting on and evaluating the pow wow 192

7.4 learning from the pow wow 199

chapter eight: the medicine wheel of planning

8.1 new metaphors for a changing reality 204
8.2 implications for planning theory and practice 214
8.3 recommendations: thoughts on planning in vancouver 219
8.4 and the journey continues 222

references 226

appendix a 240
# list of tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Policies and Programs Addressing Diversity Implemented by the City of Vancouver</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Practitioners voice the goals of their work</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Practitioners/participants voice the goals of their work</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
list of figures

1.1 Spot the planning activity 1
1.2 My stuff about difference 6
1.3 Love and "public" life 7
1.4 My stuff about "wholeness" 8
1.5 The creative mind 9
1.6 My stuff about creativity 10
1.7 The thing about cities 11

2.1 Welcome to Fortress Europe 21
2.2 Whose stories / histories count? 26
2.3 Considering culture 29
2.4 Community – romance or reality? 30
2.5 Denis Coderre, former Canadian Minister of Citizenship and Immigration surrounded by children at an Ottawa public school 31
2.6 The popular education spiral of learning 33
2.7 ‘The Scream’ by Edvard Munch 38
2.8 Laughter 39
2.9 Kundalini yoga image showing chakras 41
2.10 Going Forth By Day (2002) part 2: The Path, video and sound installation by Bill Viola 42
2.11 Through the looking glass 46
2.12 Cave painting, Lascaux France, c. 15,000 – 10,000 B.C. 50
2.13 Denver City Beautiful 51
2.14 Arts and cultural planning 52
2.15 Properties and functions of arts processes in CD 54
2.16 Necessary conditions for successful CD through arts processes 54
2.17 Making art relevant – rap/hip-hop artists Missy Elliot vs. Bill Shakespeare 56
2.18 Powerful metaphors: Collingwood’s new Community Spirit totem pole 58
2.19 Powerful metaphors: Mosaic tree of growth and renewal created by street-involved youth 58
2.20 The censored mural “American Tropical” (1932) told the story of the exploitation of the Mexican work in Los Angeles 59
2.21 Mexico’s Day of the Dead 60
2.22 Core principles of community cultural development 62
2.23 Indicators of successful community cultural development projects 63

3.1 Cradled by mountains and ocean 69
3.2 Chinatown 69
3.3 Concord pacific residential high-rises on False Creek 69
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Local high school students participate in a day of native planting in Renfrew Ravine's Gateway Garden</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>The meditative labyrinth</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>Mosaic in the Renfrew Ravine Garden</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>Collingwood Spirit Mural</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>The music club jamming</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.10</td>
<td>Advertising poster</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>Medicine wheel evaluation</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>Participant and Focus Group evaluation results</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Without the generous and enthusiastic participation of my interview subjects — brilliant storytellers all — this research project would not have been possible. Their insight, humour, and candour were invaluable and their creativity and vision inspiring. For their willingness to open up their lives and work to me and share their reflections, I am most grateful.

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chapter one: what's art got to do with it?

1.1 divers/cité\(^1\): the art of the possible

Figure 1.1 Spot the planning activity.

When asked to consider which image they associate with urban planning, the average person's (or planner's, even) gaze is likely to be drawn to the fourth image – the group of white men and women around a conference table discussing charts and figures. Then one's eyes shift to the other images: a group of Filipino-Canadian community theatre performers, an anti-war protest, First Nations carvers erecting a Community Spirit totem, and a Public Dreams community circus in Vancouver. What do these images have to do with planning? Why were these images chosen?

The planning profession, for most of its history, has been dominated by an understanding of itself implied in the fourth picture: planning as a benign, value-free, rational, scientific, decision-making project undertaken by a group of well-trained experts in the interest of a homogeneous public. This understanding isn't surprising when one considers that urban planning practice, education, theory, and legislation are rooted in

\(^1\) This is the name of the week-long gay pride festival in Montreal, one of the largest, oldest, and best in the country. I like the play on the French word for diversity – "diverse/city" and thought it an appropriate title to introduce a thesis concerning planning in multicultural and otherwise diverse cities.
an Enlightenment epistemology that ultimately drives dominant North American / European culture. That is, largely, a white, male, educated, capitalist culture.

This understanding of modernist planning has been repeatedly called into question by those claiming the profession has not produced the results it intended/claimed. Post-modern, post-colonial and feminist critiques focus on the histories, voices, publics and the inequalities of power that the modernist planning paradigm has left out, denied, or marginalised. More recently, theorists and practitioners from many fields have recognised that increasing globalisation, transmigration, and assertion of rights and identity mean that difference, otherness, fragmentation and diversity are some of the most defining characteristics of contemporary cities and urban communities. There is no homogeneous public, only multiple overlapping and intersecting publics.

Look at the rest of the images. What do you see? I see reflected increasingly heterogeneous cities and communities, places where assertions of cultural identity, citizenship, recognition and right to difference imbue an everyday local politics. I see the bright light of possibility held in mutual learning across differences towards collaboration, understanding, accommodation and meaningful incorporation. I also see the paralysing chill of fear – the fear of difference, fear of “the other”, fear of uncertainty and change, and the fear of loss of cherished ways of life, taken-for-granted realities, and illusions (Sandercock, 2003).

I see that we are not disembodied heads (LeBaron, 2002). I see that we know and communicate our desires and understandings about our lives and our communities not only through our rational but also our emotional, physical, spiritual and imaginative intelligences (ibid., 2002). Looking at these images I see that creative expression, culture, and representation matter. They are at the heart of how we make and express meaning in the world, feeding our values, shaping our perceptions, and guiding our choices.

A primary concern of many planning theorists and practitioners today is how to move towards more inclusive participatory democratic processes. In this thesis I follow planning theorists like Leonie Sandercock, John Forester and John Friedmann in a search for a new planning paradigm, a new praxis of inclusive engagement. I explore
how to do planning in a messy, diverse, politicised world, where relations of power are always present, dynamic and embedded/embodied. Keeping John Forester's question "What ought to be done, when and how, in real cases that matter?" (1999: 9) in mind, I look into the practices of real practitioners engaging diverse and marginalised Vancouver communities in creative and transformative participatory processes.

Leonie Sandercock (2003) has called for planners to learn a new language; to develop literacy in different ways of knowing, learning, and communicating, and new skills in light of the realities within which they are working. Here, I explore the capacities, skills, and impacts of practitioners using creative expression and the arts towards achieving a more inclusive civic participation in planning for change. This thesis brings art, emotions, spirit, body, and other such taboo notions in the "mainstream" planning world front and centre in this conversation.

Despite the current theoretical debates and the real practical everyday need for new (or perhaps re-appropriated, re-imagined, or re-awakened) capacities and tools for planning in cities of difference, little has been written about creative expression or community cultural development (CCD)² as useful avenues of consideration. Meanwhile, cultural and arts-based participatory processes are becoming increasingly recognised in other fields of literature (education, conflict resolution, and community development) as useful for addressing social problems, building community and bridging difference. In practice there is simply a great deal of interesting community-based arts work happening on the ground, from which one could learn so much in terms of both process and policy implications.

Here, I take the opportunity to focus on two case studies in urban Vancouver, a multicultural city known for its community cultural development activity. The first is a community theatre arts collective in the Filipino community, the second a multi-faceted arts-based community development program in an exceptionally diverse neighbourhood. I explore what is going on in these processes and consider what planners might learn from how these practitioners and participants think, feel, and act towards creating more

² My use of the term community cultural development will be discussed in more detail in chapter two. It is adopted by some to describe arts/culture projects which (a) are participatory and collaborative, (b) employ a generous concept of culture including activities not traditionally considered "art", and (c) have community development goals, including conscientization, empowerment, and self-development (Adams and Goldbard, 2001).
equitable, more appropriate, more pluralist, and more inspiring places to live and ways of living. I question how a movement towards more inclusive participatory democratic processes might (or might not) be enriched through incorporating aspects of a community cultural development approach.

The process of creating this thesis represents an important part of my journey, in the evolution of my personal and professional path. This ongoing journey is about figuring out who I am and how to be as a person and practitioner as much as it is about what to do in this world to overcome fear of difference and work towards John Friedmann's (2002) notion of an Open City in real spaces with real people. It has been challenging, humbling, inspiring, frustrating, and wonderfully fun. My motivations and findings are personal as well as academic. Indeed, I've learned that recognising that our personal and professional lives are interdependent and culturally-based is an essential step in opening up to working with difference. We cannot leave our emotions and biases at the door. Fooling ourselves to believe that we can do so only hinders real communication, ignores dynamics of power, and obscures valuable "subjective" bits of information. It is with this spirit of awareness that I have attempted (struggled?) to approach this study as well as reflect on my findings. In the next section, I introduce some relevant theoretical debates and the themes of this thesis more systematically, including a brief explanation of my personal motivations and biases for following the research path that I have taken.

1.2 setting the stage: debates and themes

re-inventing a profession – planning cities of difference

Planning, like other academic fields and helping professions in the second half of the twentieth century, has been in an ongoing process of re-negotiation. The crisis of modernity, globalisation, unprecedented global trans-migration, the dawn of the post-colonial and neo-colonial eras, and the rise of the media age and of civil society have fostered numerous debates hinging on the implications of an increasingly diverse, fragmented, yet interconnected world on the future of planning and democracy (Adams and Goldbard, 2001; Burayidi, 2000; Castles and Miller, 1998; Friedmann, 2002;
First and foremost is the reality of difference itself. In the past, the planning profession has seen diversity as a problem (causing conflict and instability) or an exception (the need to accommodate those "other" than the "norm") (Wallace and Milroy, 1999). In the urban struggle over space and belonging, multiplicity (religious, cultural, economic, psychological) is seen as a threat (Sandercock, 2003). This fear is not only played out in the everyday politics and relationships of city dwellers, but it is also embedded in a planning system with a racist history that continues to favour dominant groups in society (ibid.). There is a strong movement towards understanding difference as an inherent reality in human society, a reality to be celebrated, full of rich possibilities and challenges (Ameyaw, 2000; Landry, 2000; Le Baron, 2003; Sandercock, 1998; 2002; Wallace and Milroy, 1999).

But, what kind of difference matters, and how? This question raises others surrounding the complex concepts of culture, identity, and citizenship -- concepts which speak to basic notions of who we are and who belongs where with what rights and responsibilities. Long-held understandings of culture and identity as static and singular are not easily abandoned, even in the face of experiences that reveal them to be fluid, multiple, overlapping, and contested. Debates over how citizenship is defined rage at the heart of the quest to promote justice and equity through planning in multicultural societies (Kymlicka, 1995; Young 2000). Simultaneously, the assumption of national citizenship as a relevant category, is challenged by those who observe citizenship as being primarily affected and expressed at the local, community, and city levels (Friedmann, 2002; Siemiatycki and Isin, 1997) as well as at a transnational level (Pratt, 2002; 2003; Sandercock, 2003).

Debates about citizenship go hand in hand with both theories of participation and epistemological debates about knowledge and power. It is generally accepted that in order to overcome inequality, racism, fear, and the marginalisation of minority groups, democratic processes and institutions must become more inclusive and diversified. How a more inclusive participation could be achieved is the question. This thesis explores a variety of traditions of theory and practice regarding participation, including those rooted
in Habermas's communicative action and Friedmann's social learning (Forester, 1989; 1999; Innes, 1996); empowerment models rooted in a Freirlean (1970, 1976) critical pedagogy; and those that highlight the importance of culture and focus on opening up to different ways of knowing and being in the world (Adams and Goldbard, 2001, 2002; Landry, 2000; LeBaron, 2002, 2003; Mayo, 2000; Sandercock 2003). It also looks at the implications of competing notions of and approaches to diversity, multiculturalism, identity, and participation in the daily practice stories of real planners working towards more inclusive planning processes. I clarify my own personal interests in diversity and planning in Figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.2 My stuff about difference**

The possibility, excitement, challenge and inspiration inherent in human diversity have driven my academic work, and social choices for most of my life. I have an early memory of becoming aware of the judgements attached to difference that is very clear. Every time my family approached the McDonald Bridge on the return home from a trip to Halifax, we had to drive through a low-income, mostly African Canadian neighbourhood. Tense, my mother would always tell my sister and me to lock our doors as we drove through. I learned to be afraid - of what, I wasn't sure - but I knew it had something to do with the fact that "they" were different from "us". It was later, attending a racially mixed high school where a racist education system, geographic segregation, and economic inequalities fuelled violence and distrust between communities and students, that I began to question how difference matters.

Seventeen, aching to break free of the suburbs and thirsty for inspiration and anonymity, I headed for the first of several big cities and new cultures I've had the privilege to live in and explore so far in my life, my first love, Montreal. A growing awareness/confusion of my own experiences of marginalisation (as a queer, arts-oriented female student) and dominance (as a well-educated, middle-class, employed, able-bodied, white person) reminds me of the complex and shifting implications of difference on a daily basis. I tend towards a post-modern power-based analysis as well as spiritually-rooted heart-based understanding which fire in me a deep desire to continue working with marginalised communities and towards the realisation of greater social justice for all regardless of gender, race, faith, sexuality, class, or ability.

In terms of planning, I'm most interested in how the broad range of work that planners do from urban design, to transportation planning, to social planning, to ecological resource management - can be made more inclusive and democratic. I want to explore how planning can be re-visioned and re-focused towards contributing to more meaningful communication across difference; how planners can promote more understanding, acceptance and responsibility; and more freaking fun and magic in our cities!
towards a holistic practice - connections & reflections

In response to the challenges of working in increasingly diverse cities and communities, some theorists and practitioners are promoting what some are calling a more holistic approach to practice across fields: from planning to social work, conflict resolution, education, healthcare, community development, and social service provision (Forester, 1999; Fryer, 1996; Landry 2000; LeBaron, 2002; McKnight and Kretzmann, 1993; 2003; Sandercock, 1998b; 2003;). Although ideas regarding a holistic approach vary, many start with an assumption of the fundamental interdependence of reality and proceed with an interdisciplinary approach to understanding their work.

Sustainability theory, for instance, argues for the balance of economic, social and ecological factors in defining problems and making choices. Some community developers and conflict resolution mediators identify that different cultures (and different peoples within the same culture) have different ways of obtaining and communicating knowledge. Community development (CD) or conflict resolution approaches that engage only one way of knowing (e.g. reason or logic) marginalise and miss out on the contributions of those for whom other ways predominate. (e.g. emotion or intuition) (Hogget and Miller, 2000; LeBaron, 2002; 2003; Sandercock, 2003).

Planning issues affect people in political, economic, social, emotional, and spiritual ways, yet in practice, planners have difficulty integrating the multi-faceted needs, interests, ideas, and resources of the heterogeneous publics for whom they work. When engaging people in participatory planning, planners tend to design processes that rely on forms of information collection, communication, and decision-making based on their technocratic and social-scientific roots. An already narrow approach becomes all the more alienating across cultures, classes, languages and religions when inclusive, innovative, spiritual, and creative forms of expression are denied.

Figure 1.3 Love and "public" life.

Unfortunately, love and compassion have been omitted from too many spheres of social interaction for too long. Usually confined to family and home, their practice in public life is considered impractical, even naïve. This is tragic.
- The Dalai Lama
Designing a more inclusive practice first involves recognising the connectivity and fluidity of aspects of our material/physical worlds (economy, environment, our bodies), social worlds (culture, politics, social structure, communities), and inner worlds (emotions, identity, spirit, imagination, intuition) and how this connectivity informs planning issues. This isn't easy work, considering how most planners have been educated and socialised on the job. It involves the risky work of creativity and imagination, of thinking about old issues in new ways and opening up to unconsidered realities and possibilities.

This thesis explores the work of theorists from a variety of fields and practitioners working with real communities that suggest a range of capacities, skills, and tools that can be developed towards a more effective, more holistic approach to working with diverse publics. Findings imply an important role for creative and cultural expression in such an approach, such as story-telling, ritual, and engaging in creative and artistic processes. The discussion will explore debates concerning the role of emotions and spirit in planning and CD, the importance of relationship and listening in its many forms, and the necessity of critical self-reflection and mindful awareness on the part of practitioners. More personal reflections on what a holistic approach means are shared in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4 My stuff about “wholeness”

I actually made the connection between planning and the arts before I linked in ideas about emotions, spirit, bodies, imagination and a holistic approach. I was drawn to thinking about arts and planning when I began SCARP because of a desire to re-awaken my own creativity and a recognition that if I indeed wanted to work cross-culturally I would need to look outside of what was offered in my planning education for guidance. Once I began to talk to people about their experiences of artistic processes, I realised that arts and culture, and the multiple parts of us that they can engage, highlight big chunks of our lives that mainstream planning often leaves out: emotions, spirit, relationship, magic, imagination. Chunks that happen to mean a lot to me.

At the same time, I was learning about a holistic approach to problem-solving on a very personal level. After suffering what amounted to an emotional breakdown in 1999, I discovered that my problems were systemic. I needed to understand how my mind, body and spirit were connected (or disconnected, as it were) in order to get well. That healing process over time led to a path of spiritual exploration for me. A fairly recent introduction to Buddhism continues to hit home aspects of a holistic approach to life that echoes practices in cross-cultural work. Without a mindful awareness of the self and how we constantly reinforce our identities by projecting pre-conceived ideas on novel situations - and the ability to let go, to loosen our grip on what we think we already know, genuine communication with others is impossible.
take back the art! imagining a cultural democracy into action

The term "art" and what it refers to may seem straightforward to many, but it's a slippery category. Must it involve a canvas or a stage? What about popular culture, street expression, landscaping? Surely these are forms of creative expression; but what is creativity anyway? Where does it come from and what does it contribute? What are the roles of art, creative expression, and imagination in society, communities, and relationships? How are they used to transform, educate, plan, liberate, provoke, communicate, inspire and affect change? What is community cultural development, and what are its goals, methods, impacts, and criticisms?

There is a distinct absence of academic writing on the role of creative expression in the planning literature on civic participation and community development, despite the fact that the arts have been a powerful tool of communication, education, transformation, and celebration as long as we have been human. The use of creative expression is being increasingly recognised as contributing unique value in education, conflict resolution, and cross-cultural community development practice (Adams and Goldbard, 2001; 2002; Bruce and Dexter Davis, 2000; Greene, 1995; LeBaron, 2002; 2003; Lowe, 2000; 2001; Mayo, 2000). Many see processes of creative and cultural expression as useful tools for bridging conflict and difference, building relationships and community, generating new ideas and solutions, engaging in dialogue, and transforming attitudes, perceptions, and self-image.

Indeed, there are planning departments across North America and Europe that integrate the arts and creative expression into their public participation programming (City of Vancouver, 2004a; 2003e; 1993b; Sandercock, 2003, Jones, 1988). Most planning academics are just not writing about it, or if they do write about it, art and creative expressions only become a springboard to discuss other "more important" matters. Similar to the realms of the emotions, bodies, and spirit - in fact due to their
association with these realms - the arts and artists have long been de-valued as important parts of planning issues and solutions (indeed, society at large) due to their perceived "soft", radical, subjective, and subversive qualities. Often the arts are seen as a bonus, an extra, and non-essential. They are the first victims of budget cuts in schools or government departments. When assessing the value of creative expression, focus is usually placed on the artistic product (vs. the process), the "expertise" of the artist, and the commercial or technical value of its contribution.

In an attempt to answer the above questions, this thesis focuses on practices of participatory creative expression that could be placed in the category of community cultural development. It explores the idea of holistic practice, and thinks about ways to create more inclusive participatory democratic processes. I venture to explore what there is to be learned through an examination of writing about CCD, stories I've been told by practitioners and participants, observation of processes in action, and a reflection on my own experiences with such processes. More personal thoughts on creativity and art are shared in Figure 1.6.

Figure 1.6 My stuff about creativity

My father is a marine biologist and an artist, my mother, a librarian who studied botany in university with an artistic eye and talent in design. Growing up in an environment where scientific and arts-based values and ideas simultaneously complimented and conflicted with each other left me struggling with the two ways of understanding the world and expressing myself. I've always been interested in the ways art, representation and design shape our perceptions and experiences of issues and spaces. It wasn't until I spent eight months in the Philippines working for a human rights organisation, however, that I really felt on a daily basis the power of a people's art in the struggle for change and survival. Participatory and insurgent theatre, music, and visual expression are used to educate, politicise, provoke, communicate and inspire in the daily fight for national and social justice in that country. It was there that I first heard of the notion of cultural democracy.

As I explored the urban struggle around me in Manila, I rediscovered journaling, practising yoga, and my love of photography. Those creative processes helped me gain a bit of perspective at a difficult moment in my life, discover new ways of thinking and feeling about things, and open up more to change and uncertainty. These and other personal experiences of the transformative and communicative power of creative expression were in the forefront of my mind when I began thinking about civic engagement in planning. I continue to grapple with what creativity means in terms of daily life - how can I approach my professional and personal relationships in a creative - meaning open, flexible, appropriate and inspired - way? How can I discover and encourage my own creative capacities? In a way doing this research and writing this thesis for me has been about trying to answer these questions.
for the love of cities

The final key theme of this thesis is its focus on cities and the urban experience of difference, culture, planning, and citizenship. The twentieth century has seen human settlement become increasingly urbanised. More than 70% of the population of North America and Europe live in cities, and cities are the principal migration and immigration destination in these regions (Castles and Miller, 1998). This rise of cities as sites of increasing struggle over space and belonging (Sandercock, 2003) and new spaces of politics and of re-enactment of citizenship (Siemiatycki and Isin, 1997) make them “the principle sites for responding to the multiple challenges of our times” (Friedmann, 2002: 237).

Figure 1.7 The thing about cities

I spent the first third of my life in a small town, the second third in a suburb, and the last ten years living in the heart of the cities of Halifax, Montreal, Vancouver, Manila, and Toronto. When I moved to Montreal at 17 years old I felt I had come home, this crazy sexy city that never sleeps, its foreign tongues and cultural divides, its unpredictability, its diversity, and the passion of its people was a far cry from suburban Nova Scotia. My love for cities derives from my delight in the possibilities and challenges of diversity, the contradiction of anonymity and connection, the constant change, the hidden mysteries and surprises, and the sheer enormity of the urban project. As city builders and citizens, how can we overcome the dullness and destructiveness of fear, isolation and violence that haunts so many urban experiences and promote respect, relationship, compassion, magic, celebration, and positive social action and justice?

1.3 research questions and objectives

In this thesis, I am considering several overarching questions:

- Under what circumstances is public participation in planning made meaningful and constructive in an urban setting composed of multiple publics?
- How do we plan for more inclusive participatory democratic processes?
- How should we approach developing more holistic planning theories and practices?
- What does, and could, community cultural development contribute to what??
My primary research question, then, is:

*What lessons do community cultural development processes hold for re-thinking or improving participatory planning processes and engaging diverse and marginalised groups in democratic planning and governance in increasingly diverse cities?*

Some subsidiary research questions include:

- How are CCD processes used and understood by community-based practitioners working with individuals and communities that are often marginalised from community planning and decision-making processes?

- How are the arts, community art, and CCD processes used and understood by planners working for the City of Vancouver?

- What’s going on in these processes? How do people experience them? What do they result in?

- What social, economic, cultural, physical and spiritual impacts do processes and products have on practitioners, participants, and the community at large?

- What capacities, methods, tools, and approaches do CCD practitioners possess or employ? What are the effects of these?

My objectives in undertaking this study are five-fold. First, I have attempted to gain an understanding of the literature within and beyond planning concerning (a) urban civic participation, (b) the implications of diversity, (c) the role of emotions, the body, the spirit, imagination and creativity, and (d) art and social change (participatory arts and cultural work in particular). I wanted to explore emerging ideas in working towards more inclusive participatory democratic processes and make explicit some useful links between different realms of theory and practice. Second, I wanted to examine and evaluate what city planning departments in Canada – specifically in the city of
Vancouver – are doing to address diversity, achieve more inclusive participation, and incorporate the arts into their work.

My third objective was to consider what could be learned from what was being done outside the bureaucratic planning system to creatively engage diverse and marginalised groups in community development and action. I explore the practices of a variety of Vancouver-based practitioners doing work that could be described as community cultural development. I also present two case-study processes in depth, to be able to (a) gain thorough understanding of the goals, capacities, skills, and techniques employed or exhibited by practitioners and (b) analyse the experiences and impacts of CCD approaches, processes and products on the participants and communities where they are implemented.

Fourth, based on what I have learned, I provide a series of recommendations for (a) how public planning processes might be improved in Vancouver, and (b) what can be learned more generally from stories of CCD practice about engaging diverse publics in participatory planning processes and developing a more inclusive democracy. My final objective has been to provide an enriched analysis through the sharing of relevant personal reflections and experiences along the way and a more effective presentation of my material by attempting to incorporate a variety of ways of communicating it (i.e. imagery, stories, text).

1.4 the method to my madness

The main purpose of this study, as I have mentioned, is an exploratory one. With it, I am trying to get a feeling as to what is going on, seek new insights, ask questions, and assess phenomena in a new light (Robson, 1993). According to Robson, exploratory studies are best suited to qualitative data collection and case-study or ethnographic methodology, and I have designed my research accordingly drawing on multiple sources of data. Due to my background in anthropology, I definitely have a bias towards unstructured interviews. I wasn’t afraid to get personal when I felt sharing something of myself would enrich the dialogue or create a more conducive story-telling environment. I see the research process as a relational one, where an interview is as much an act of
engaging in human relationship as it is about getting information. As in most case study and ethnographic research, my approach to data analysis was ongoing and dialogic (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002). Both logic and intuition led me to identify patterns and consider relationships among what I was seeing, experiencing and hearing.

That relational process for me meant getting involved. Engaging in both passive and participant observation, I was able to see and feel what was going on at particular moments of the processes I was studying, rather than relying solely on the reported perceptions of others. Engaging in research relationships leaves both parties changed and, with that in mind, I attempted to reflect on how my presence impacted others and the information I was collecting, as well as how my understandings and perspectives changed through these relationships.

Influenced theoretically and analytically by John Forester (1999), I examine the practice stories of planners, community cultural development practitioners, and community activists for what they tell me about not only what happened, but also what they say about their values and ethical judgements, what capacities and skills they need and use in their work, what choices they made and what they could have done. Their stories engage my emotions and imagination, invite me to empathise, and reflect on how I would have handled the same situation (Forester, 1999: 36). My findings are both personal and academic.

To achieve my first two objectives, I underwent a review of relevant literature and policy documents and spoke to several planners about current practices related to participation, diversity and the arts. To begin the exploration of community-based practice I interviewed eight planners whose work relates directly to diversity, participation, and the arts and eight artists/organisers doing community cultural development work across Vancouver, with each interview lasting from 45 to 100 minutes. These people were selected through a combination of snowball and purposive sampling techniques, as I wanted to hear from practitioners working with a variety of communities, neighbourhoods and media. I attended three art exhibits, five performances and visited eight physical spaces that are products of CCD processes. I also participated in a number of CCD processes, such as: community quilting workshops at UBC (January-May 2002), a women's quilting workshop at an artist's home (March,
2003), a three-day DanceArts movement workshop about environmental issues for youth (April, 2003), and a forum theatre production by Headlines Theatre (April, 2003) where I took notes as a participant observer.

I chose two case studies on which to spend more time and focus my questions in more detail. The first is Sinag Bayan, a community theatre project and arts collective developed by the members of several Filipino community organisations in East Vancouver. The second is the Renfrew Collingwood Arts Pow Wow, an arts-based community development program in one of the city's most culturally diverse neighbourhoods. My intention was not to do a comparative study, but rather look at two case studies of where a CCD approach is being used in different ways. Most community art projects, primarily due to funding restrictions, are short-term and don't benefit from formal evaluation or follow-up. Both case-study projects have been underway for several years and therefore the impacts of the processes can be more effectively studied over time.

I chose to look at Sinag Bayan partially because I have an established relationship with the Filipino community in the City of Vancouver. Some of the organisers and participants showed interest in the study, and I hoped that my relationships and previous experience might lend to a richer and more nuanced analysis of the case. Here CCD is being used by a marginalised ethno-cultural group as an important part of their educational, political, and community organising work towards positive change and social justice for their community. Organisers and participants are all volunteers and the project has received virtually no external funding over the years. I conducted interviews with three of the organisers and one focus group of participants. Working with the organisations as an intern for four months in 2002, I also had numerous informal conversations about the projects and attended many performances and cultural events before and during my field research.

The Renfrew Collingwood Arts Pow Wow is an arts-based community development program run by the community and supported by Collingwood Neighbourhood House. I chose it as a case study because it differs from Sinag Bayan in several ways. It focuses on a geographical (vs. cultural) community; it was well-funded and therefore involved a greater number of people; it is a collaboration across communities and languages; and
though community-based, it collaborates with several levels of government. I spent two weeks at the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, conducting seven interviews with six artists and community developers, visiting public art sites, and exploring the physical and social environment of the neighbourhood.

Four factors make Vancouver a natural place to embark on a study about difference, planning, and community cultural development. It's the second most multicultural city in Canada, with its immigrant and visible minority populations rising steadily each year. Its City Council and planning department has recognised the need to address the implications of cultural and other diversity with a range of changes in policy and practice. Vancouver also boasts a relatively well-established community of socially engaged artists and CCD practitioners. The social, cultural, political and planning contexts in Vancouver are discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. Above all, I wanted to do research in my city of residence about something I care about. Living in Vancouver for those two years allowed me to consider my research questions as a citizen of the city myself. I was rendered a participant observer automatically, and over the year and a half that I conducted my research I investigated the issues in as many ways as I could.

1.5 organization of the thesis

Next in Chapter Two, I outline the analytical framework I've used to define and investigate my research questions and analyse my findings. That framework follows the themes I have delineated in this introduction, namely the implications of diversity in today's cities on planning and participatory planning practice in particular; the notion of "holistic planning" and the role of emotions, bodies, spirit, relationship, and imagination in participatory planning with multiple publics specifically; and finally, an analysis of the role of arts in society and the function and possibilities of participatory arts from the perspectives of a variety of disciplines, including community cultural development.

This exploration of literature within and beyond planning suggests that planning education, institutions and practice do not adequately equip planners to face today's reality of diversity and work within the multi-faceted, interconnected, contested, relationship-centred realms of planning. A revolution of the planning orientation is called for; one that shifts planning priorities towards the development of cultural fluency and a
new planning language that recognises and can engage different ways of knowing and being. Components of this suggested approach include a transparent politics, a critical awareness of power, and a commitment to community empowerment and intercultural dialogue. The wealth of knowledge contained in the body of writing regarding a more holistic perspective and multiple intelligences suggests that a shift in orientation will require that practitioners develop a multitude of qualities, skills and tools beyond their traditional planning instruments. An exploration of education, conflict resolution, community development, and community cultural development literature points towards processes of creative and cultural expression as uniquely effective in awakening these capacities and creating participatory approaches that are more inclusive and accessible. The chapter suggests the planning literature has some catching up to do in terms of exploring these themes and in investigating the rich and vital knowledge held by practitioners in many fields facing the challenges and possibilities of diversity on a day-to-day basis.

In Chapter Three, I zoom in on Vancouver, providing a discussion of its socio-economic and political context. In way of a back-story, I assess the planning environment in the city, paying particular attention to public participation, multiculturalism and diversity, and the arts. In these sections I attempt to offer an understanding of the policy and practical realities within which the practitioners and community members interviewed for this study work and live and around which their stories are intertwined, through an examination of the "official story" of planning in Vancouver based on official documents, websites and academic studies. Findings reveal the City, more than most others in Canada, has made considerable efforts to address the realities of diversity and broaden public participation in planning, including the exploration of community-based arts. The extent to which these efforts have in fact achieved broader participation, increased accessibility of information and services for immigrants and other marginalised groups, and integrated the essential and valuable field of arts and culture in planning processes, is questioned and considered through the examination of critical writing in these areas.

In considering the official planning story in Chapter Three we get only a partial idea of what is going on related to diversity, civic participation and the arts in Vancouver. In Chapters Four and Five I delve into a number of unofficial stories of everyday practice, both of planners working for the City of Vancouver and a variety of community cultural
developers working at the grassroots level, in order to gain insight from individual accounts of reality and experience. Listening to and analysing these stories gives us an idea of how the fundamental realities of diversity, civic participation, and culture play out for individuals in specific, messy, daily, deliberative practice situations. Chapter Four uncovers insights into how individual planners working for the City perceive and approach their work. While their stories reveal an increasingly holistic understanding of people, communities, and planning in some respects, they expose some reluctance to opening up to the political and critical aspects of such an approach as well.

Through the examination of the stories of eight community cultural development practitioners in Chapter Five, I take a closer look at what is going on in CCD processes and how practitioners are engaging people in dialogue, community development, planning, and action that moves toward greater social and environmental justice and that encourages more inclusive and respectful ways of living in the city. Findings reveal practitioners share similar goals, employ a vast array of tools, and display unique skills and personal qualities in their practice — including a knack for story-telling and listening; self-awareness; a willingness to take risks and be spontaneous; the willingness to let go of control and to be wrong; creative vision and leadership; literacy in the language of emotions, body, imagination, intuition, and spirit; and the ability to be present and open to change, transformation, difference, discomfort, contradiction, conflict and surprise. These capacities seem to equip practitioners well for working in participatory settings with diverse populations.

Chapter Five shows that the act of engaging people through creative and cultural expression welcomes and values different kinds of knowledge and styles of communicating, essential in working with diverse populations and in reaching out to and enabling the mobilisation of marginalised groups. It also unearths the ways in which doing art together contributes unique functions and experiences to participatory process. Creative expression seems to do special kinds of work — such as facilitate cross cultural communication; create ritual space that promotes connection, present-awareness and self reflection; promote mutual learning; challenge assumptions and stuck perceptions; and build self esteem, identity, capacity, and felt agency — that planning will need to include in efforts to craft more inclusive participatory opportunities. In this chapter I outline ways in which the philosophy, values, and practice of CCD might enrich a more
holistic planning understanding and approach, while also identifying some of the limitations and challenges of this type of work. While Chapter Five gives us a general idea what CCD is about and how it is implemented and experienced according to its practitioners, Chapters Six and Seven provide deeper and more complex analyses of specific communities, who, acting in spaces of “insurgent citizenship” (Holston, 1999), are employing community cultural development in long-term approaches to community building, education, and organising.

Chapter Six examines how members of Vancouver’s large Filipino community incorporate cultural work in their daily struggle for social justice, human rights, political and institutional change, recognition, belonging, and meaningful civic participation at local, national and international levels. It also raises a number of critical questions about how planners respond to diversity and approach working with and in the interests of Vancouver’s many ethno-cultural communities, including: the need to re-think understandings of multiculturalism and diversity; a consideration of what might be required to achieve real community development and collaboration; recognising the importance of learning how to listen as planners; acknowledging the significance of story in planning; and engaging in the conversation about identity, belonging and home that is so central to the experience of diversity in the city.

Chapter Seven contemplates the story of the Renfrew Collingwood Arts Pow Wow as a rare and exciting example of an established and trusted community-based institution attempting to build community in a large, fragmented, diverse urban residential neighbourhood through a CCD approach. Supported and administered through the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, known as a leader in inclusive community-based service provision, advocacy, and development, the Pow Wow provides an interesting case study of how processes of cultural expression can contribute to community development in line with principles of diversification.

In Chapter Eight I come full circle, reflecting on the insights gleaned in the first seven chapters, addressing once more the key themes of this thesis, and considering the implications for planning theory and practice. Some recommendations for developing more inclusive opportunities for public participation are also directed towards planners in Vancouver specifically.


**chapter two: towards holistic planning - exploring "new" approaches to diversity**

2.1 introduction - re-visioning practice

I put the word new in quotation marks in the title to this chapter because although my thesis is an exploration of approaches that might be considered "new" to planning, they are hardly new practices and hardly new to other disciplines such as feminist and cultural studies that have put these approaches at the centre of their work. These approaches are about innovative ways of bringing existing disciplines together towards fresh ways of thinking about deep-rooted problems. They are about attempting to move towards a more balanced and responsive approach to planning in cities of difference. They are about gaining some perspective on the strengths as well as the areas that could be improved in how planners think about and do their work. They are about opening up to ways of knowing we all share yet value differently, inherent capacities we can develop in useful ways, and recognising the rich array of resources that exists within people and our diverse communities.

In this chapter, I walk through the analytical framework from within which I am thinking about my research question - what can planners learn from community cultural development practitioners and processes about engaging diverse and marginalised groups in democratic planning and governance in increasingly diverse cities? That framework was introduced in the discussion of relevant debates and themes in Chapter One. This discussion will follow the same three broad themes: (1) the implications of diversity on planning and participatory planning in particular; (2) the notion of holistic planning and the role of emotions, bodies, spirit, relationship, and imagination in participatory planning with multiple publics specifically; and finally, (3) an analysis of the role of arts in society and the function and possibilities of participatory arts from the perspectives of mainstream planning, community development, education, conflict resolution, and community cultural development.
2.2 civic participation and planning in cities of difference

the times, they are a changin'

Diversity, transition, and uncertainty are fundamental characteristics of cities of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Economic and cultural globalisation (Adams and Goldbard, 2001) and unprecedented immigration, migration and urbanisation levels (Castles and Miller, 1998) are rendering cities into spaces of intense and often violent struggle for urban survival and belonging. Other post-war social forces, including the rise of civil society (Friedmann and Douglass, 1998), the resurgence of indigenous peoples, and the post-colonial discourse contribute to what Sandercock deems a new urban condition within a "new world disorder" (2003: 4).

Within this condition, she states, difference, otherness, fragmentation, splintering, multiplicity, and heterogeneity prevail. The disorder derives from diversity being viewed as a threat, "a complicated experiencing of fear of 'the other', alongside fear of losing one's job, fear of a whole way of life being eroded, fear of change itself" (Sandercock, 2003: 4). The problem with planners' view of dealing with diversity is that it is viewed as a problem, rather than as an opportunity, an asset, or a resource. Most planners perceive the diversity of communities as an issue falling outside their regular planning function (Wallace and Millroy, 1999; Wallace, 2000; Au, 2000). "Finding morally defensible and politically viable answers to these issues [of diversity] is the greatest challenge facing democracies today" (Kymlicka, 1995:1).

In this thesis, I begin my thinking with what Sandercock (2003: 21) argues are the two most under-explored questions within the discourse on migration: how to create better or more meaningful opportunities for immigrants (and other marginalised groups) to

Figure 2.1 Welcome to Fortress Europe

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In this thesis, I begin my thinking with what Sandercock (2003: 21) argues are the two most under-explored questions within the discourse on migration: how to create better or more meaningful opportunities for immigrants (and other marginalised groups) to
become full and active members of society and how to promote more effective intergroup relations.

planning's response to diversity

practically speaking

Canada, being a "new-world" nation ultimately based on immigration, is one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse countries in the world. Difference has been at the forefront in Canada from the beginning as aboriginal and French minority identity, claims, rights and policies have evolved over the last one hundred and fifty years. With the liberalisation of Canadian immigration policy in the 1960s, patterns shifted over the following two decades, from newcomers arriving primarily from European countries of origin to mostly Asian and Middle Eastern source countries (Hiebert, 1999; Wallace and Milroy, 1999;)

Attracted by diverse employment opportunities, community ties, and the availability of services, immigrants settle overwhelmingly in urban areas (Castles and Miller, 1998; Siemiatycki and Isin, 1997). Indeed, whereas immigrants make up only 18% of the total Canadian population, more than half of them live in Canada's three most multicultural cities: Montreal, Vancouver, and Toronto (Wallace and Milroy, 1999). Immigrants comprise 50% of Toronto's population, 46% in Vancouver, and 28% in Montreal (Statistics Canada, 2001). Consequently, newcomer populations and members of more established communities are encountering unprecedented cultural, racial, and religious diversity on a daily basis at all levels of everyday life: in the workplace, over backyard fences, in public spaces, schools, hospitals, and community organisations.

Planners' response to diversity tends to focus on ethnicity, taking a narrow approach to difference (Au, 2000; Shipley, 2000). The complex intersection of race, class, gender, culture, physical ability and sexual orientation is therefore usually obscured (Wallace and Milroy, 1999). The current convention is to treat diversity as an exception "that needs accommodating over and above a 'normal' set of demands covered by the planning function" (ibid.:55). Planners typically respond on a case-by-case basis, with traditional tools applied in an incremental, procedural, and reactive manner (Qadeer, 1997). Issues
are often worked out in an adversarial way, through the courts or municipal boards (Qadeer, 1997; Wallace and Milroy, 1999).

Qadeer (1997) argues that this approach has been relatively successful, as evidenced by the multiple landscapes of Chinatowns, mosques, ethnic schools, and the diversity of built form in Canadian cities. He notes, however, that these approaches are not nearly adequate and many contend that the embedded cultural bias and normalised racism within planning institutions, processes, and practices must be addressed (Au, 2000; Qadeer, 1997; Sandercock, 1998b; 2003; Wallace, 2000; Wallace and Milroy, 1999).

The traditional municipal planning framework for working with diversity is rooted in the approach of more senior levels of government. Canada’s governing structures regarding diversity function at the national and provincial levels and are rooted in a universalist human rights perspective that guarantees equal treatment for all before the law, looking past ethnicity and gender (Wallace and Milroy, 1999). It is also recognised that to achieve equity, individual groups may require different treatment, such as women (e.g. pay equity), and cultural minorities (Canada’s 1971 Multiculturalism Policy and 1988 Multicultural Act) (ibid).

Multicultural policy is widely challenged from all ends of the political spectrum as being, variously, one-dimensional, assimilationist and divisive (Wallace and Milroy, 1999; Sandercock, 2003), ineffective in achieving equity (Qadeer, 1997), procedural and nationally-focused (Pratt and PWC, 2003) and ultimately ignorant of the realities of the already racialised constitution of society and institutionalised racism (Sandercock, 2003). As Canada becomes even more diverse, it is becoming clear that multicultural policy does not address the implications of incommensurable values between groups, the complex intersectionalities of diversity, and the trans-national nature of the migration experience (Pratt, 2003; Sandercock, 2003; Wallace and Milroy, 1999).

The implications of such principles of diversity emerge at the local municipal level. It is at the local level that communities are planned, where individuals and groups feel the impacts of diversity and governance structures in their daily lives (Edgington and Hutton, 2001), and where citizenship is enacted and claims to rights are made (Siemiatycki and Isin, 1997). Planning tools are applied largely in a universal and neutral fashion,
assuming that all parties are equally capable of communicating their needs and concerns (Wallace and Milroy, 1999). Planning legislation across Canada typically refers to either individuals or "the public" as a whole (ibid.). It is formulated at the provincial level, municipalities being creatures of the province, and must conform to federal policy as well. As more and more responsibility is falling to municipalities, the inflexibility of this nested hierarchical system is becoming difficult to reconcile with the need for change in practice and policy at the local level (Burstein, 2000).

Diversity challenges planners in a variety of ways, not least of all in their ability to ensure equity, inclusiveness, and culturally appropriate solutions. According to Sandercock (1998b; 2003) the values and norms of dominant culture are embedded in the legislative frameworks of planning, by-laws and regulations. These dominant values and norms, she argues, are also embodied in the attitudes, behaviour and practices of planners. The xenophobia and racism of citizens can also find an outlet in the planning system. Finally, in working in diverse publics, planners come up against cultural practices incommensurable with their own values, perceptions, and practices (Sandercock, 1998b; 2003).

Similarly, Qadeer (1997) notes that planners must face the "normalised racism" and embedded cultural biases in their practices and institutions. He also observes that conflict and fear play out in communities as diversity fuels changes in the built form and social realms. The tension between groups and a distrust of the planning system, especially amongst marginalised groups, makes working in communities and realising a broad participation difficult (Au, 2000).

Both Burayidi (2000) and Sandercock (1998b; 2003) argue that planners must learn more about culture and how it affects planning issues and processes. This is a thorny issue for those planners who see diversity and immigration as outside their responsibility and whose assumptions are rooted in rational planning models (Au, 2000; Wallace, 2000). Culture affects attitudes and behaviours towards communication, disclosure, conflict, accomplishing tasks, styles of decision-making, and ways of knowing (Burayidi, 2000: 5). For Lebaron (2003), "cultural fluency" is developed through becoming aware of one's own cultural biases as well as learning to become attentive to the different cultural "starting points" (e.g. an individualistic vs. collective approach to understanding
the world) and ways of knowing and making meaning. She cautions against five forms of "cultural trap": automatic ethnocentricity; thinking that all cultures can be classified/are static; assuming cultural complexity is too hard to deal with; and focusing on either only commonalities or differences.

Planners are increasingly responding to the challenges and possibilities of diversity by changing the way they practice. City planners in Toronto (Qadeer, 1997), Vancouver (Lee, 2003) and Surrey (Ameyaw, 2000) are moving past the reactive approach and attempting to address diversity in proactive ways, like trying to design more inclusive participatory processes through outreach to minority and marginalised groups and community development. Diversity training of staff has been implemented in some cities. For the most part, however, the focus tends to be placed on increasing accessibility to information and processes through the provision of language and translation services, rather than considering changes in transportation planning, planning legislation and zoning, or local economic functions (Burstein, 2000; Edgington and Hutton, 2001).

As yet, no municipalities in Canada have reviewed their Official Plans in terms of diversity (Lee, 2003). Wallace and Milroy (1999) lament that planners interested in developing practices more responsive to diversity have few places to turn. Ameyaw (2000) contends that planners must take a more pro-active stance in fighting racism, and that the first steps should include diversifying planning institutions, articulating the importance of diversity in policy and codes of conduct, and by bringing more voices to the table by improving participation.

**calling cosmopolis - shifting our orientation**

As previously discussed, one of the most fundamental challenges planners face as a result of diversity is the need to reflect on their own cultural biases and those embedded in their institutions and practices. Within the post-modern and post-colonial political environment of the last several decades, critiques have emerged of the fundamental values on which planning as a profession has been based.
Those values form the basis of what Sandercock (2003) has deemed "the six pillars of modernist planning", which can be summarised as: a belief in instrumental rationality; comprehensiveness; an enlightenment epistemology grounded in positivist science; top-down state-directed planning; a belief in a homogeneous public interest; and a view of planning as apolitical and value neutral. This reductionist approach has meant that for most of the history of the profession the belief was held that land-use and physical development issues could be isolated from socio-economic, racial, ethnic concerns (Ameyaw, 2000) and other realms of policy and practice such as education, healthcare, and the provision of social services (Wallace and Milroy, 1999). This approach has prevented seeing cities as holistic entities, people as multi-faceted, and existence as interconnected and has accepted existing power relations (ibid.).

This "official story" of what modernist planning does is challenged by those who see it as an exclusively white, male, Eurocentric, bureaucratic, positivist endeavour. In the effort to unmask planning's biases, many researchers have presented insurgent histories of communities long excluded by modernist planning, such as those of Native Americans (Jojola, 1998), women (Hayden, 1981; 1995; Dubrow, 1998), gay and lesbian men and women (Kenney, 2001), and African Americans (Woods, 1998). Planning theorists have opposed modernist planning's assumptions of one-way processes [e.g. Friedmann's (1987) mutual learning and empowerment approaches]; apolitical and power neutral practice (e.g., Forester, 1989; Flyvbjerg, 1998); and its focus on technical solutions [e.g., the communicative action and deliberative practice of Innes (1996) and Forester (1999)].

Faced with cities characterised by a politics of difference, fragmentation, diversity, new claims of rights and citizenship, and a pervasive fear of the "other", planners are forced...
to question this old model, its values, and their skills and tools on a daily practical basis. They are faced with the questions: How do we plan with multiple publics? What should our roles be? What tools and skills do we need? What capacities should we develop?

Leonie Sandercock (1998b) proposes the enlightenment epistemology be replaced by an "epistemology of multiplicity", which involves opening up to learning to work with and value six "ways of knowing", including knowing through dialogue, from experience, from local knowledge, through symbolic and non-verbal evidence, through contemplation, and through action-planning. She suggests a radical re-wiring of the planning framework, balancing reason-based approaches with a value-driven rationality that appreciates practical wisdom.

Sandercock (2003) also suggests an alternative multicultural perspective; one that goes beyond the typical nationalist, procedural liberalism and individualist access to rights that reinforces Anglo cultural hegemony and that can both level and protect difference (Pratt, 2002). This alternative perspective recognises culture's embeddedness, sees culture as evolving and dynamic, and prioritises intercultural dialogue. Sandercock (2003) argues that multiculturalism will always be contested, that right to difference cannot supersede other rights, that a sense of shared belonging must ultimately come from a shared commitment to political community, and that to reduce fear and intolerance we must also address material inequalities. Based on her analysis, the most needed roles planners have in responding to diversity, beyond legislative and market-based considerations, are to promote intercultural dialogue, enable excluded groups to mobilise for change, and profoundly re-consider their own qualities and skills.

Sandercock (2003) proposes five qualities that planners must elaborate to shift towards a new planning imagination. She begins with the need to expand planning's political horizons. Community mobilisation is a necessary first step in realising an insurgent / radical planning, but coalitions and participation with the state are also essential. Second, she promotes planners develop a more therapeutic approach, recognising that conflict is rooted in relationship. Planners need a language and processes of emotional involvement, to be able to deal with fear, anger, hope and memory and move towards reconciliation. Creating political spaces for such multicultural conversations is vital.
Third, planners must move towards a more *audacious* planning, daring to take risks, surrender control, and engage in long-term thinking. Fourth, planners ought to expand their *creative* capacities. Planning needs visionary leaders who create environments and introduce tools conducive to creativity and experimentation. Diversity and difference ought not to be considered only for the challenges they pose, but also as resources to be nourished and celebrated. Finally, planners have got to expand their *critical* capacity, developing a critical awareness of both the state and of communities and recognising that social representation matters. Relations of power are continually present and planners have to always be asking who is getting what, where, when and how and who is being excluded. (Sandercock, 2003)

Ameyaw (2000) and Burayidi’s (2000) discussions of appreciative and holistic planning in multicultural societies echo many of Sandercock’s points. Appreciative planning is based on mutual respect, trust, and care-based action. It encourages multifaceted processes that unite rational and non-rational processes of social interaction and learning to enable citizens to solve problems and make decisions (Ameyaw, 2000). Scientific one-way process is eluded through networking, communication and dialogue. From an appreciative or holistic perspective, the planner’s role focuses on supporting partnerships, enabling community-directed assets and needs to be addressed. An empowering and co-operative style of problem solving respects that groups have knowledge and ability to act in their own interest and has a greater sensitivity to values and culture (Burayidi, 2000).

It is clear that although some positive steps have been made to address the many implications of diversity on planning practice and theory, there is an incredible amount of work that still needs to be done. Planners face many challenges; one of the most crucial is how to bring more voices into the planning conversation with more inclusive participatory approaches. Before I turn to a brief review of participatory planning and popular education literature, I would like to articulate how I am thinking about some of the key concepts relevant to the issue of diversity.
a few pieces of the puzzle

Culture, identity, community, citizenship, participation, multiculturalism (see discussion on page 23), – all are complex concepts with contested meanings that figure prominently in the academic and public discussions regarding diversity and difference.

*Culture*, "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (Williams, 1976 in Mayo, 2000:13), "consists of the values the members of a given group hold, the norms they follow, and the goods they create" (Giddens, 1989: 310 in Mayo, 2000:13). This sociological definition emphasises both the ideological as well as the material aspects of culture. A more restrictive usage of the term defines culture as the arts and media, both "high" and "popular". Culture can be understood to be an "underground river" of "systems of shared understandings and symbols that connect people to each other, providing them with unwritten messages about how to express themselves and how to make meaning of their lives" (LeBaron, 2002:10). According to a post-modern perspective, cultural groups centre around a wide variety of shared *identities*, including race, age, nationality, geography, profession, gender, sexual orientation (to name but a few) and as such we each belong to multiple cultures (ibid.). Cultures are fluid, living, changing systems that influence our values and our ways of knowing and being in the world, often in unseen, unacknowledged ways outside of our awareness. No one ever belongs to just one culture and this complexity and fluidity make cultural-based assumptions problematic. In this thesis the term is used to refer to systems of *values, norms, and ways of life* as well as the *arts and media* as the two concepts are inherently interconnected. Art both "draws from and participates in the construction of culture as a way of life, a system of values and beliefs, which in turn, affects culture as a creative, representational practice" (King, 1991:2 in Mayo, 2000:14).
Identity is a constructed, multi-dimensional, fragmented concept or perception of self (Hall, 1996). One holds multiple personal identities (i.e. parent, immigrant, woman, African-American, renter) that shift over time in a process of constant negotiation, becoming more or less important depending on the particular social context (Hall, 1996; Mayo, 2000). People hold both individual and collective identities, which are influenced by culture and worldview and can be both chosen and imposed (Barth, 1969; Lebaron, 2002). Like culture, identities influence our behaviour, values, preferences, sense of belonging and the making of meaning. The politics of identity, as different groups claim rights, spaces, and recognition in the city based on particular identities, is emerging as a field in which planners will increasingly have to operate (Sandercock, 2003).

Community is equally difficult to define, the concept long recognised for its slipperiness and often questioned as being a useful abstraction at all (Mayo, 2000). It, like the others, is also "a relative construct referring to a group of people who share a perceived common interest" (Dang, 2002:6). A common interest could be geographic, cultural, social, economic, political, spiritual, or professional, or any number of these together and often involves a shared identity. Communities, like cultures and identities, are defined by belonging and outlining boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Community (and civil society) is often reified as "the answer", on both the left and right ends of the political spectrum, as the basis for positive social change (associated with romanticised notions of the past) or as an alternative foci for addressing social needs (as opposed to the state) (Mayo, 2000). Some planning theorists suggest that in today's fragmented and heterogeneous cities, rather than focusing on "creating community" (in the sense of community as having shared identity and common goals) planning should be working towards getting along and working together in the face of difference (Sandercock, 2003). In this thesis, community will most often refer to communities of interest (sub-cultural communities) or geographical communities (based on common residence in a distinct locality).
Citizenship is another concept much debated the last few decades as world social, economic, political, and demographic trends call into question traditional lines of thinking. First added to the concept of "passive" legal citizenship (i.e. legal civil, political, social rights) was the notion of active exercise of citizenship as "desirable activity" or responsibility – that a democracy depends not only on the justice of its basic structure, but also the quality and attitude of its citizens and their sense of tolerance and capacity to work together (Kymlicka, 1994). More recently, writers have debated about how to encourage this responsibility or civic virtue (ibid.). Increased social and cultural pluralism have led to an expanded notion of citizenship beyond responsibility or membership in a political community to also be understood as an identity (Young, 2000; Stevenson, 2003). The long-established notion of national citizenship as sharing a common culture is increasingly called into question by many who feel excluded despite common legal citizenship due to differences of identity, such as class, gender, religion, etc. (Kymlicka, 1995; Sandercock, 2003). These traditional "universalist" citizenship rights have been defined by and for dominant culture (i.e. white men) and therefore a concept of "differentiated citizenship" is needed to accommodate special needs of minority groups who are disadvantaged in the political process (Young, 2000). With increased immigration and the blurring of national borders, cities are becoming principal sites for enactment of active citizenship and the struggle over claims for rights and belonging (Friedmann, 2002; Siemiatycki and Isin, 1997; Sandercock, 2003;). In this thesis, the concepts of "urban" citizenship, "insurgent" citizenship (Holston, 1998), and "cultural" citizenship (the actual inclusion and participation in social, cultural, economic, and political life vs. legal citizenship, which doesn't guarantee active inclusion) will be used most frequently.

participation: the heart of democracy

In the rational-comprehensive mode of planning that dominated the first half of the twentieth century, planning was seen as something that was done to people and places.
During the 1960s' rise of civil society and democratic protest, the modernist planning model came under criticism for being too scientific, too top-down, for assuming objectivity was possible and that planners held "expert" knowledge (Lee, 2003). Sherry Arnstein's (1969) famous "ladder of citizen participation" identified a continuum of citizen engagement, from consultative and manipulative approaches to more genuine collaboration and citizen control. The notion of advocacy or equity planning also emerged during this time, which saw planners' role as advocating for disadvantaged groups in the planning process (Davidoff, 1965).

Not until the 1970s and the mutual/social learning and transactive planning of John Friedmann (1987; Sandercock, 1998b) was a theory of planning participation really articulated. In Friedmann's view, neither planners nor citizens have all the answers; planners bring useful tools and theory to processes while citizens contribute knowledge of the local context and concerns. For Friedmann, planning must be seen as a democratic process, where a transactive style emphasises interpersonal relationships, dialogue, learning from experience, reciprocity, and action and recognition of the importance of values, feelings, and conflict (Campfers, 1997; Friedmann, 1987; Sandercock, 1998).

By the 1980s, the need for public participation was generally accepted in planning practice (Lee, 2003). There has been, however, much criticism that traditional participatory planning approaches, including public meetings and hearings can replicate and further inequalities rather than diminish them, as traditionally powerful groups in society - the squeaky wheels with more time and resources - dominate participatory processes (Abers, 1998; Cooke, 2001).

In the last decade and a half, many new approaches and tools have been added to the planning repertoire including public consultation, facilitated discussions, forums, and focus groups (Lee, 2003) as well as in some cases, methods based in the tradition of community development. Recently, participatory planning theory has been influenced most by notions of power, communication, and diversity. John Forester's (1989; 1999) approach, rooted in the communicative theories of Jürgen Habermas, sees planners' role as focusing and shaping attention through dialogue. He highlights the contextual, emotional, and power-laden nature of practice and promotes a self-reflective style that is
rooted in self-empowerment and learning from the real experiences of planners and communities. His work has influenced the development of communicative action and consensus-building practices that are increasingly used by planners (Innes, 1996).

Although public participation in planning in some sense has come a long way from exclusively top-down processes, as we have seen in the last section, much of today's planning education and practice continues to be rooted in modernist notions of technical expertise and a homogeneous "public interest". As previously mentioned, a transformative, empowerment-based approach is advocated by many planners, particularly those concerned with expanding the planning conversation to include diverse and marginalised groups.

**transformational learning and empowerment**

A key intellectual tradition underlying popular education and community development approaches is that of the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire (1970, 1973). His innovative literacy work with peasants in Brazil revolutionised social practice (Campfres, 1997). Through dialogue-based learning rooted in local knowledge and experience, participants transform from passive objects of oppressive forces seemingly "beyond their control", into active critical subjects in the construction of their realities and histories. The development of this "critical consciousness" or **conscientization** is the centre of Freire's educational work, where the traditional one-way "banking" processes of education is replaced by a dynamic collaborative project (Freire, 1970). Two of his most powerful concepts are the "internalisation of the oppressor", the process by which "individuals and communities are subliminally...

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**The Learning Spiral**

1. Apply learning and practice skills, strategize and plan for action
2. Share experience as the basis for meaningful learning
3. Add new information and theory in response to learning needs
4. Transfer Learning to the workplace
5. Analyze experience for patterns and focus on what needs to change

*Figure 2.6 The popular education spiral of learning*
persuaded to worldviews and self-images that serve interests counter to their own" (Adams and Goldbard, 2001) and the notion that learning is a dynamic process.

Community practitioners have taken Freire's concepts and applied them in the development of adult and popular education (Clover, Follen and Hall, 2000); community organising activities (Campfiers, 1997); the self-help movement, participatory planning programs (Lee and Balkwill, 1996; Rifkin and Pridmore, 2001); and community development (Campfiers, 1997; McKnight and Kretzmann, 1993). Values that unite these traditions include the need for community mobilisation, the ideal of participatory democracy, community-based needs assessment and problem definition, an asset-based approach, the social and structural integration of diverse groups, and the need to help build capacity for action amongst marginalised groups in particular (Campfiers, 1997).

The work of Augusto Boal (1985; 1998) also hinges on dialogue. Using theatre as a language of learning and experience, he attempts to break down the oppressive walls around the arts erected by the ruling classes and bring creative expression back to the people as a vehicle for social liberation. His "Theatre of the Oppressed" (TOTO) tools of "forum theatre" and "image theatre" invite participants to engage with unresolved social and political problems, and their emotional and physical experiences of these problems, on stage. There, people find space to articulate issues of real relevance to them and work on possible solutions and actions towards change (Adams and Goldbard, 1997). Inspired by his work, theatre processes have been incorporated into therapeutic and activist practices around the world (Shutzman and Cohen-Cruz, 1994). Recently, Boal has applied TOTO to the realm of official political action, his tools and his entire theatre company accompanying him to his post and office in the Brazilian Legislature (Boal, 1998).

Another practical transformative approach useful when planning for multiple publics is participatory action research or PAR. Basic PAR ideology can be understood as "a self-conscious people, those who are currently poor and oppressed, will progressively transform their environment by their own praxis" (Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991). PAR began to emerge in the 1970s, in response to the extractive nature of academic research in developing countries. It is based on the theories of emancipatory education
of Friere, experiential learning of John Dewey, counter-hegemony of Antonio Gramsci, and, within planning, community development theories of Saul Alinsky, and theories of knowledge and communicative action of Jürgen Habermas (Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991).

Like popular education, PAR attempts to break down the distinction between “researcher” and “researched” (Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991; Park et al 1993; McTaggart 1997). The means of research are more important than the ends. By engaging in the participatory knowledge generation process, often in collaboration with an outside PAR researcher, individuals and communities become aware of the structural causes of their oppression and use their own knowledge, creativity and resources to take action. PAR is meant to plant the seeds of continued self-reflection and experiential learning.

**summary: diversity and participation in planning**

In responding to the increasing diversity, fragmentation and multiplicity of contemporary cities, planners and planning theorists have responded in a variety of ways. In practice, the planning profession tends to treat diversity as an exception to be accommodated over and above “normal” planning functions and responsibilities. While it can be said that considerable progress has been made towards achieving a planning practice more responsive to the realities of diversity in some Canadian cities, for the most part, planners respond to such issues in an ad hoc and reactive fashion equipped with mostly traditional tools. This response is based on a much-debated universalist human rights background as well as a highly contested multicultural framework.

Diversity challenges planners in a multitude of ways, not least of which in the need to address the basic cultural and epistemological bias embedded in planning institutions and legislation and embodied in planning practice. Many theorists and practitioners propose a more holistic approach to planning; prioritising the development of cultural fluency and a new planning language that recognises and can engage different ways of knowing and being. Components of this suggested approach include a transparent politics, a critical awareness of power, and a commitment to community empowerment and intercultural dialogue.
The need for planners to develop certain qualities and skills has also been advocated, including their creative capacities, their ability to work with therapeutic approaches, and their willingness to take risks. Lessons for the development of more inclusive participatory democratic processes might also be gleaned from the traditions of transformative education and community development. The discussion contained in the next section focuses on questions of how planners might and plan more holistically and attempts to flesh out an "epistemology of multiplicity".

2.3 holistic planning: blurring boundaries and waking up

whole planning for whole people

My heart and soul, my identity, my sense of self – for me these are deeply connected with my relationships: my relationships with my family and friends, my communities, my work, the city I live in and its neighbourhoods and spaces, the farmer in California that grew my avocado, the living and non-living natural world. These are the domains of planning: relationships between people, places, communities, environments, conflicts and celebrations, and ultimately the interconnected systems of the world. As practitioners, it is about who we are and how we are, as well as what we do in the world, as our values and everyday approaches to knowing and being in the world shape all aspects of our professional practice. I believe many practising planners would agree, and yet, planning practice and theory rarely explicitly address our experience of the world other than the rational or the intellectual – for example the emotional, imaginative, physical, or spiritual - or what they might imply for practice.

Nevertheless, the future of our neighbourhood parks, our livelihoods, and the safety and relevance of our urban spaces are deeply emotional things. We experience our social realm and the built form of our cities with our bodies as well as our minds. We use our imagination and intuition as we come up with creative ideas and make choices about what "feels right" as renters, home-owners, parents, gardeners, and voters. We crave and seek out spaces and people that feed our souls and reflect our innate need for celebration and spirit. It is in breaking down artificial boundaries between different ways of knowing, different interconnected realms of existence, between our selves and our work, that we can begin to recognise the rich resources that abound within and between
us; to awaken the wisdom, strength, and creativity we all have to move past fear and work towards "getting along" in cities of difference.

**how we know - working with our multiple intelligences**

As discussed in the last section, some planning theorists are promoting a more holistic, people-centred (and driven), culturally fluent approach to multicultural planning (Ameyaw; 2000; Burayidi, 2000). With that and Sandercock's (2003) five qualities of a new planning imagination in mind, in this section, I explore literature that focuses specifically on the role of emotions, the body, the imagination, creativity, and spirit in working with people through social and political action. I question the implications of these "multiple intelligences" (LeBaron, 2002) for planning practice. I identify how they might be seen and engaged as resources, and suggest that an examination of community-based art literature and practice might reveal further insight into the development of capacities and tools that would contribute to a more holistic approach to planning.

I rely heavily in this section on the work of Michele LeBaron (2002; 2003) and her relational approach to conflict resolution and cross-cultural work. Her work challenges the boundaries that have been erected between constructed/reasoned approaches and imagination/intuition/felt experience, arguing that as practitioners we typically operate from a narrow band of approaches, drawing on fewer resources than we have to offer. She argues that reason, analysis and logic are necessary for problem solving, but they are not all we need. By bringing emotional, spiritual, physical, and imaginative resources to the table, we have more routes to resolution and transformation and processes become more accessible and useful to a wider range of people.

There is, of course, a vast history of social thought that considers the importance of forms of knowledge other than reasoned or technical, from Aristotle's thinking about practical wisdom (Sandercock, 2003); to Buddhism's focus on an experience-based spirituality as a basis for personal and social action (Dalai Lama, 2000; Mipham 1999; 2003); to the fin de siècle philosophy (reacting against positivism and scientific determinism) that addresses the significance of intuition, instinct, myth, the body and the unconscious (Hughes, 1958); to the importance of experiential (Horton, 1990) and
imaginative (Dewey, 1934) knowledge in education; to feminist writings on embodied knowledge (Bardo, 1989; 1993; Davis, 1997).

LeBaron states that conflict emerges when people have difficulties dealing with difference; that differences influence the lenses through which people view each other, often leading to mismatched perceptions and expectations. For her, conflict is about symbols, perceptions, identities and meanings as well as communication, social dynamics, and material differences. Like Forester (1999), she argues that all conflicts and solutions are rooted in relationship, and therefore relationship must be situated at the centre of our approach to resolving conflict and working across cultures.

**she's just so emotional!**

Emotions shape the landscape of our mental and emotional lives. Like geological upheavals in a landscape, they mark our lives as uneven, uncertain, and prone to reversal. Are they simply, as some have claimed, animal energies or impulses with no connection to our thoughts? Or are they rather suffused with intelligence and discernment, and thus a source of deep awareness and understanding? If the latter, the emotions cannot be sidelined in accounts of ethical judgement, as they often have in history and philosophy. They must then form part of our system of ethical reasoning, and we must be prepared to grapple with the messy material of grief and love, anger and fear, and in so doing to learn what role these tumultuous experiences play in our thinking about the good and the just.

(Nussbaum 2001: xii)

Emotions have long been dismissed as irrelevant, disruptive, and even dangerous in the public spheres of politics and planning, not least because of their association with feminine knowledge, as implied in the title of this section. Planners, trained in educational and research traditions rooted in an Enlightenment epistemology, have long been instructed to ensure that parties "leave their emotions at the door" when engaging in dialogue and decision-making.

Nussbaum (2001) defines emotions as value judgements of things we consider important in our lives. A frontier area in science, emotions are defined as "instant and instinctive ways to handle life that kick in before rational analysis.
has had a chance to function" (LeBaron 2002: 47). Rather than negative, LeBaron sees them as vitally important in addressing conflict, as powerful, instinctual, and helpful cues to action. "Emotions, felt through the body, are one of our most direct sources of strength and energy" that, when understood for the "riches they offer, when put into a place where they are neither discounted nor in absolute control, can provide key information and insight to guide our actions" (2002: 45). From the community development perspective, both Hogget and Miller (2000) and Hustedde and King (2002) make a case for the importance of emotions. They both suggest that emotions are "often the driving force of motivation and action (Hustedde and King 2002: 338). Forester (1999) maintains that neglecting the emotional character of a planning case would both make it less subjective (making us less able to empathise) and less objective, telling us less about what really matters.

For Hogget and Miller (2000), development work is fundamentally emotional. Participants feel deeply about the issues and how they are treated. They need to express these emotions and work through new ones as they arise through the process. Participants bring to processes emotions at the level of the individual, rooted in their personal biographies. They also bring emotions rooted at a societal level, "just as there exist collective ways of thinking (discourses, ideologies, etc.) so also, and often attached to these, there are collective ways of feeling (collective sentiments)" (Hogget and Miller 2000: 357). Racism, for example, is a set of related feelings (fear, hatred) as much as a set of ideas. Finally, at the micro-level of groups and communities, there exists "emotional cultures" that develop in response to local circumstances and realities; poverty or uncertainty might breed emotional cultures of apathy or anxiety, for example.

Bringing these emotions into the open and reflecting on them "not only offers the possibility for greater insight and self-awareness ... but also provides an opportunity for learning, changing the way we feel, letting go, and moving on" (Hogget and Miller 2000: 359).

If we have been socialised and trained for generations to avoid emotions as negative or disruptive, how can we as planners learn to engage our own emotions and the emotional lives of others so as to "provide the basis for creative collective action"? (Hogget and
Miller 2000: 360). Hogget and Miller advise paying attention to establishing an open environment where emotions are welcome. Story-telling activities, for example, can draw emotions out in relevant and natural ways and can also be fun (LeBaron, 2002; Sandercock, 2003). "Democracy has to be convivial" in order to attract involvement and also to build trust, which in turn enables the expression of differences (Hogget and Miller, 2000: 360). Most importantly, those involved in community development work need to have the capacity to reflect and be aware of the emotional processes at work in groups and in themselves. Forester (1999) suggests that through examining planners’ practice stories we can learn a great deal about how emotions and values shape practice and planning situations.

According to LeBaron (2002), the first step to seeing emotions as assets in group processes is becoming aware of them. This requires active reflection and taking time to just be with how we feel. To do this we have to slow down and take time out to write, think, or talk about emotions. It is important to be aware that men and women, children, and people of different cultures often express and experience emotions differently. Finding the right place to open up to emotions in community work and drawing healthy emotional boundaries are other considerations LeBaron identifies. For instance, airing negative emotions as an end in itself can, contrary to popular wisdom, amplify negative energy rather than provide a “release”. These are, for many practitioners, new and difficult arenas to navigate. LeBaron (2000: 67-79) suggests some places to start, all of which are centred in relationship:

1) **Extending** refers to how we greet one another and bring people into process. Emotionally fluent practitioners welcome both positive and negative feelings and balance negative expressions by anchoring the process in positive visions from the past and for the future. Appreciative inquiry is one method of extending.

2) **Engaging** sincerely and authentically, trust is developed to open up. Emotionally fluent practitioners show authentic feelings themselves; they promote sincere listening activities without judgement; they help people express emotions while maintaining respect and positive relationship; and they introduce alternate ways of engaging emotions, for example, through the body (e.g. yoga), the use of the arts, symbols, visualisation, storytelling, etc.

3) **Reflecting** on our progress in developing emotional fluency helps us move forward as we consider what has worked and what has not, and continue to practice and take care of ourselves and our emotional health as practitioners.
I would argue that developing an emotional fluency and working with people's emotional as well as rational intelligences is essential in developing a more responsive practice and more inclusive processes. This will require a concerted effort on the part of planning educators and practitioners to reflect on the role of emotions in their interactions with individuals and groups and how capacities might be encouraged and developed in academic and practical settings. Hogget and Miller (2000), LeBaron (2002) and Nussbaum (2001) all assert that harnessing emotions sensitively can provide a base for creative thinking and action.

we're here in body too

As any athlete, yoga or meditation practitioner, or anyone who has been sick can attest, the body is fundamentally connected to the mind, the emotions, and the spirit. Our bodies hold wisdom our logical minds do not. Again, like the emotions, the body's capacity for wisdom has been neglected by Western rational knowledge systems rooted in a Cartesian legacy of mind-over-matter (Bordo, 1989; 1993; Davis, 1997). Our bodies hold strength and power. They are associated with complex layers of cultural and social perceptions and norms (ibid.; LeBaron, 2002). Through the critical theory of Michel Foucault (1978; 1979), the body has come to be understood as the primary site for the operation of modern forms of power. Voluminous and varied feminist writings explore bodies as both symbolic (social constructs where representations of identity and difference are inscribed) and as material (embedded in the immediacies of everyday, lived experience) (Bordo, 1989; Davis, 1997). Planning is deeply implicated in how our bodies experience social and physical space, and for much of the history of the profession, planning can be said to have acted as "spatial police", regulating the movement of bodies (Sandercock, 1998b; 2003).

LeBaron (2002) reminds us that bodies and physicality have been used in conflict resolution for years – sitting in a circle where everyone can see each other and opposing...
groups are not pitted face to face, for example, encourages people to open up to real dialogue. Getting people moving together can build trust, highlight the humanness of the "other", shift energies and bring out new insights (Boal, 1979; 1998; Landry, 2000; LeBaron, 2002; Lerman, 2002;). Bringing other senses into a process, such as smell, touch, and hearing, can unlock memories or emotions and can engage people of different cultures and capacities who may relate or communicate better through some senses more than others. As with emotions, working with a high level of cultural fluency is essential when considering the impact of process and space on people's bodies, as culture shapes the way people perceive their bodies and physical experiences.

...and spirit

![Figure 2.10 Going Forth By Day (2002) Part 2: The Path, video and sound installation by Bill Viola](image)

What constitutes the spirit of an individual or a community is an arguably ephemeral notion, difficult to define and deeply personal. For the purposes of this discussion, it is considered a fundamental concept in at least two ways. Most simply, each of us has our own spiritual identity, whether it is associated with an organised religion or more undefined. It is at the centre of where we make meaning, where we connect with others and understand the self, and is an elemental source of inspiration and energy to move forward in life (LeBaron, 2002). It is deeply tied up with our emotions and bodies, and differences in spiritual orientation can lead to conflict as well as be resources for learning and connection. Hustedde (1998) argues that communities have collective souls or spirits that are based on collective values, emotions, strengths, and energies and insists that practitioners must learn to consider and work with the notion of soul.

My interest in spirit is related to three sets of notions: (1) mindful awareness, knowing/not-knowing, openness, and presence; (2) interdependence, relationship, and compassion; and (3) magic and sacredness. LeBaron (2003), following some basic
concepts from the Buddhist tradition, argues that developing a mindful awareness of the self and what is going on in the present is crucial in expanding our cultural fluency. In order to interrupt our assumptions about the "other" and our habitual responses to situations, we must begin with becoming aware of ourselves, our biases and identities and chronic patterns. The ability to really listen to others is only possible when we have been able to let go a little - of what we want to hear, what we assume we will hear based on judgement, what we think we know, or what we are planning to say next (Lindhal, 2002).

This slowing down and opening up to the present, to what we really see and hear in the world, is essential in working across difference and beyond assumptions (Johnson, 2004) and for shifts in perceptions to take place (Glassman, Brown and Gimian, 2004). Being truly present requires humility, insight, passion, reflection and patience - especially when working with those we consider "other", "enemy", or just plain wrong (Lindhal, 2002). These concepts are central to Buddhist practice and philosophy, which on one level is fundamentally about working to "tame the mind" and "turn it into an ally" so as to be able to step back from habitual negative patterns and act more positively in the world (Dalai Lama, 1999; Mipham, 1999; Trungpa, 1973).

There are many practices that can be used to develop mindful awareness, openness, deep listening, and presence, both as practitioners and in process. Meditation, self observation, and visualisation have long been used in the Buddhist tradition to expand peoples' capacity for awareness. Appreciative enquiry (Ameyaw, 2000; LeBaron, 2003) is another way to practice deep listening and open up to others. Ritual, story-telling, and creative experiences that require people to participate in new ways of communicating can also help people open up to shifts in perception, feel safe, and be present. At the heart of popular education is the pursuit of a critical consciousness of the present, an awareness of reality, and a deep faith in the power of humankind to make and re-make, create and re-create, become more fully human, and transform reality (Freire, 1970).

The notion of basic interdependence is central to many spiritual traditions (Dalai Lama, 1999; Thich Nhat Hanh. 1992), as well as more recent understandings of quantum science (Wheatley, 1994), economic and cultural globalisation (Adams and Goldbard, 2002) and environmental sustainability (Macy, 1992). The implications in terms of how
we do planning are many and at the root of a move towards more holistic approaches. The interconnected level of thinking about spirit, processes and diversity has to do with how we perceive our self as ultimately separate from, or connected with, others, particularly within individualistic North American and European cultures. Compassion arises when the line between self and other blurs. Coming to an understanding of the implications of our thought and actions on others, and our ultimately common goals of peace and human flourishing is essential in planning with multiple publics towards greater compassion, taking action, and rekindling hope (Willis, 2004). Processes and spaces that enable people to reveal and open to differences as well as commonalities, and the interconnections of different spheres of life, are needed. Collaborating across fields of research and practice, levels and departments of government, communities and civil society organisations is also essential.

Finally, we turn to spirit in the sense of celebration and of sacredness. Sandercock (2003: 227) explores these notions through her discussion of the "city of desire" and the "city of spirit". The city of desire is rooted in the imagined city of excitement, in our dreams, in our everyday pleasures and celebrations. The city of spirit is about re-introducing the notion of the sacred to our deadened western industrial landscapes and social interactions. She argues that planners need to learn to focus on desires as well as needs, and appreciate the basic human need for spontaneous celebration and festival as an expression of spirit. Collaborating with artists and communities, she suggests, are one way of re-enchanting and tapping into individual and collective spirit.

Dialoguing and working with people is an act of trust and hope, an act that inevitably leaves both parties changed. At the heart of community development and planning is the notion that we can make our lives better, that we can help each other, and that we care about each other and the environment that nurtures us. There is a magic in that. If we work from a position of reverence and celebration and gratitude for this magic, we may begin to relate to each other and our problems and mandates differently. If we remember that everyone has their own relationship with the spiritual, and that this impacts our choices and priorities and preferences, we will be better practitioners. Again, these are not easy realms to traverse and engage. Introducing choices to community members or process participants is crucial — for example, alternative modes
of communication and dialogue can be invited through the use of the arts, listening activities, or rituals.

**imagining futures**

Creativity, like emotion and spirit, seems to be a concept that defies easy definition, however, the capacity to work with multiple intelligences is an important element. In today's rapidly changing and increasingly diverse world, a capacity to develop creative solutions and approaches is essential (Fryer, 1996; Greene, 1995; Landry, 2000; Sandercock, 2003; Turner, 1999;). Turner (1999) outlines the many attributes that have been associated with creativity: a willingness to take risks, to learn from mistakes, a willingness to change, and the application of divergent and convergent thinking in the problem-solving process. Other trademarks of creative practice are flexibility, originality, good listening skills, self-confidence, a keen sense of intuition, comfort with deep emotion, and an ability to redefine situations (Turner, 1999:91-92).

For Turner, creativity is "striving for a state in which one is not limited or boxed in by favoured ways of thinking" and a creative proposition is "both a tentative statement of how things are and a suggestion about how they ought to be" (1999: 95). Landry (2000) sees visionary leadership, cultural sensitivity, long-terms aims, lateral thinking, and the ability to be open-minded and find strengths in perceived weaknesses as hallmarks of a creative approach to planning diverse cities. He sees people, their cleverness, desires, and imagination, as the greatest resources. Changes in taken-for granted ways of thinking about things, or what Landry (2000) calls "mindsets" is fundamental to creative approaches. Changes in mindset can generate will, commitment, and energy, allowing for a fresh look at urban possibilities.

"Imagination is what, above all, makes empathy possible. It is what enables us to cross the empty spaces between ourselves and those we teachers have called "other" for years. If those others are willing to give us clues, we can look in some manner through strangers' eyes and hear through their ears. That is because, of all our cognitive capacities, imagination is the one that permits us to give credence to alternate realities. It allows us to break with the taken for granted, to set aside familiar distinctions and definitions." (Greene, 1995: 3)
Imagination makes it possible for us to understand those different than us. Its role is not to resolve difference, but to "awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, and unexpected" so that we can make choices based on new information (Greene, 1995:28). Imagination gives us the capacity to envision our past or present situation differently, from new angles, and invent visions of what should or could be. Participating in the arts, Greene says, either as a creator or observer, helps to release imaginative capacities.

LeBaron has found similar evidence that indicates that "our capacity to imagine another future is a powerful step in creating that future" (2002: 102). Cultivating the imagination, she believes, leads to a spirit of inquiry and curiosity that opens up the space for creative approaches to emerge. Imagination also involves play and aesthetic pleasure, universal aspects of life that are often ignored but that can be strongly helpful when we are frozen in the grips of conflict. Our ability to play brings lightness to our interactions, and our love of aesthetic pleasure inspires us to create spaces and communities that feed on our need for connection, beauty and harmony (2002: 105). The imagination can empower us by helping us see alternatives to our present situation, visualise what we want, and can allow us to change the boundaries of time, planning for generations to come.\(^3\)

According to LeBaron, our memories of things often freeze our ability to imagine. "Frozen" images of the "other", stereotypes, or judgements based on our past experiences of pain are stubborn and can obscure the complexities of real life. LeBaron offers a number of approaches for engaging the imagination, including visualisation, appreciative inquiry, the use of symbols, metaphors, rituals, and storytelling. She also reminds us that there is a dark side to imagination, seen in self-deception and reinforcement of negative beliefs. The capacity to imagine can be either "harmony producing or conflict enhancing"; indeed our imagination makes everything real, fears as

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3 See also Steven Covey (1989; 1991) and Michael Bichard (2000) for current writing in the field of management which note the importance of the above qualities in a leader.
well as possibilities, and therefore we have to use it with discernment and discipline (LeBaron, 2002:118).

Putting our imagination into practice, we are guided by intuition (ibid.: 124). According to Eichler and Halseth (1992), intuition includes insights, hunches, and seeing the whole rather than the parts – the ability to fill in the spaces where information might not be apparent to the logical mind. LeBaron says that intuition is at work when we have “gut feelings” or when the hairs on the back of our neck signal us to something.

To intuit is to know without knowing exactly the process by which the knowing has arrived. To intuit is to sense strongly – feelings that are from a deeper or different place than emotions.

(LeBaron 2002: 124)

Some call intuition our sixth sense. It is connected to our memories, but it also arises from outside our habitual channels of knowing – from our five senses, but also our mind’s eye and our heart (ibid.). Many practitioners rely on their intuition, but few reflect on where it comes from or how to summon it. For LeBaron, cultivating intuition is like focusing on letting go – the more we try the more it eludes us. The best bet is to become aware of it when it arises, notice it, and try to follow it back to its origins.

Again, emphasising the role of intuition in human lives and thinking goes back to pre-Socratic thought up to the time of Aristotle, who spoke of intuitive knowledge as the basis of practical wisdom, distinct from theoretical or technical knowledge (Louden, 1986). The role of intuition was also underscored in fin de siècle philosophy by thinkers such as Sorel, Bergson, LeBon and Freud who were reacting against the positivism / mechanism / scientific determinism that was the reigning paradigm for understanding social phenomena at the time (Hughes, 1958).

Eichler and Halseth (1992) maintain that intuition can be developed. For them, taking an intuitive leap requires letting go of figuring things out, which is necessary to experience a more direct knowing. Flexibility in using different approaches and theoretical models also helps. It has something to do with engaging both the left and right brain, so activities that do this also aid in working with intuition. The intuitive process is also enhanced by a supportive environment where people are encouraged to try new
methods and take risks. Taking time for reflection and meditation, and paying attention to the whole body's reaction to a situation is also important.

LeBaron (2002) identifies three other elements of intuition that reflect the previous discussion of spirit. Firstly, she says intuition requires developing a "mindful receptivity", or openness, a spirit of inquiry, and an ability to truly be present in situations. Secondly, using an empathic ability, so essential in working with diverse groups, draws on imagination and intuition at the same time. She describes empathy as "a bridge across which our hearts travel to enter another's path" (2002: 130). As we suspend judgement and become curious, our ability to understand increases. The final element is that of deep listening, already identified as a key activity in opening up to difference.

**summary: towards wholeness in planning**

In summary, I want to first to draw attention to what could be called the "dark side" of engaging our multiple intelligences or different ways of knowing in working with multiple publics in planning. No one approach, way of knowing, or tool is inherently useful, "good" or appropriate in any given situation. Janet Abu-Lughod (1998) has persuasively argued, with regards to those who promote the rise of civil society as a wholly positive force, that they are confusing "form" with "content". Community and civil society are not inherently positive - exclusive communities and racist civil society groups certainly exist.

As community and civil society can be oriented in an excluding, oppressive way that encourages fear and isolation and serves a narrow interest, so can imagination, emotions, bodies and spirit be engaged in ways that run counter to a more inclusive, open, just, and respectful social environment. Rituals, metaphors, stories, arts and media have been used as tools of propaganda and social control since their advent. The danger lies in a reductionist and simplistic view. Indeed, a truly holistic approach implies a broader, more balanced, aware, and specific view.

As argued in the previous section, planning education, institutions and practice do not adequately equip planners to face today's reality of diversity and work within the multi-faceted, interconnected, relationship-centred realms of planning. Artificial boundaries, rooted in an Enlightenment separation of mind/reason and emotion/intuition/felt
experience and between who we are and what we do has left planners operating from a narrow band of approaches and drawing from fewer resources than they (and citizens and communities) have to offer. A holistic approach is fundamentally about breaking down these boundaries and developing capacities and tools towards an "epistemology of multiplicity" and a more people-centred, culturally fluent, politically transparent, critical, open and creative practice.

An exploration of some of the literature regarding emotions, the body, spirit, creativity, intuition and imagination reveals just a part of the depth of knowledge and writing that exists on a more holistic and interdependent view of existence and action - from Aristotle and ancient Buddhist philosophy right up to current management, environmental, conflict resolution, community development and planning practices.

These writers suggest that planners hoping to respond to diversity and the multi-faceted reality of planning situations must develop a multitude of capacities, including emotional fluency; an awareness of and ability to work with physical/felt experience; mindful awareness, presence and letting go; the ability to tune in to spirit and basic connection and meaning-making; facility in encouraging creative environments and working with imaginative and intuitive knowledge; and a practical understanding of the interdependence of these and their relationship to reasoned and technical approaches.

The literature also identifies a whole host of tools that could assist both in the development of these capacities in planners and of more accessible, inclusive, and effective participatory processes. These tools include story-telling, getting physical or bringing all five senses into a process, meditation, visualisation, deep listening, appreciative inquiry, ritual, and celebration, to name a few. Much of the literature points towards the arts and creative expression in particular - from the literary to visual to performing arts - as useful instruments in awakening these capacities and engaging multiple intelligences. It is a closer look at the role of "arts and culture" in society, participatory planning and social action to which I now turn.
2.4 the art of transformation: inclusive civic engagement through community cultural development

art and society

For thousands of years, art was an integral part of our everyday lives. The job of creative expression in sculpture, ceramics, music, and dance was like any other occupation. Painters did not sign their work; individuals created art whether it was their job or not. Art served an array of functional purposes central to the making of meaning in our lives: communication, spiritual inspiration, commemoration, celebration, or simply the beautification of everyday items. It wasn't until the rise of imperial empires, and then capitalism, that impenetrable walls were erected between the "high art" of museums, masters, and the moneyed classes and "low art" of the people. (Dewey, 1934)

As such, most of us do not think of ourselves as artists. Those of us who have grown up in cultures that privilege verbal and textual communication and rational analysis in particular may not naturally make the link between art and social action, politics, or planning. We leave art to the experts (real artists with recognised talent) and children (kindergarten finger paints), uninterested or perhaps afraid of expressing ourselves in different ways and sceptical of the value of art produced outside of the "high art" world (e.g. graffiti, popular music, street theatre). In increasingly diverse cities with significant immigrant / migrant populations, individuals and communities that place higher value on cultural expression are proliferating many visible forms of creative expression - street festivals, community choirs, theatre productions, murals - in their struggle for cultural preservation and recognition (Adams and Goldbard, 2002; Baca, 2002; Pacific, 1998).

The tendency to ignore the power of the artistic creative process, commodify its products, and under-emphasise its relevance in everyday life is reflected in how planning
academics and the social sciences have traditionally treated the relationship between art and society. The focus tends to be placed on social function and economic value of the artistic product (major public art works, operas, theatres, art auctions) and the general presence of artists or the "creative class" (Anonymous, 1998; Blair et. al., 1998; Milne et. al, 1995; Moses, 2001; Wynne, 1992). While these "culture industries" undoubtedly have positive and negative impacts on the economy, the social realm, and the liveability of cities and communities, their impact on the realisation of more inclusive participatory democratic processes is not discussed.

The planning possibilities and social, economic, or ecological impacts of participatory or community-based arts has not been addressed significantly in the planning literature, despite the fact that it is becoming increasingly used in a variety of practical planning situations (City of Vancouver, 2004a; 2003e; 1993a; Edgington and Hutton, 2002; Jones, 1988). Writing in other fields such as education, community development and conflict resolution reflects a growing appreciation of arts processes as useful vehicles for bridging difference, fostering dialogue, addressing social problems, building community, motivating transformative learning, and contributing to empowerment and capacity building. This section will review some of this varied literature that focuses specifically on the theories and practices of community cultural development. First, however, I briefly explore cultural planning, the field of planning that specialises in arts and culture.

culture industries - mainstream planning and the arts

Considered integral to culture and therefore the "public welfare", the professional arts have played a role in planning since early in the profession in both North America and Europe (Blair et. al, 1998; Evans, 2001). Public art and museums were routinely part of the City Beautiful plans of the early twentieth century (Blair et. al., 1998). With the expansion of the post-war welfare state,

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4 Please see Evans (2001) and Sandercock (1998; 2003) for two of the few exceptions.
state arts agencies were established and along with them came a renewed interest in public, and often participatory, arts in the 1960s and 70s (Adams and Goldbard, 2001; Blair et. al., 1998; Dickson, 1995). Although not necessarily linked directly with planning departments and passed over by most planning academics, many arts organisations and projects were established at this time by artists and organisers working with culture, history, community and identity and professing political goals of social and democratic change (Adams and Goldbard, 2001; Dickson, 1999).

Beginning in the 1970s, the planning profession has been gradually recognising the interconnectedness of existence, planning issues, and functions and the role of the city as a shifting site for the struggle of cultural rights, identity and cultural production and consumption (Evans, 2001; Sandercock, 2003). At that time, arts and urban regeneration policies started to be adopted in Europe, North America, and Asia (Evans, 2001). The term cultural planning came in to use, which is defined along with arts planning in Figure 2.14.

In practice, however, cultural planning - with its ideals of equity and participation - is often narrowed to amenity provision and not well integrated into broader planning issues and functions (Evans, 2001). The last few decades have seen the commodification of the arts as urban cultural assets, creating a "cultural economy" or "culture industry" that focuses on cultural activity as an economic development and employment strategy (Evans, 2001; Landry, 2000). Indeed, a literature search using cultural planning as well as art or creativity and planning as keywords yields plenty of articles focusing on how cultural assets can be useful in spurring downtown or tourism development (Anonymous, 1998; Milne, 1995; Moses; 2001). There are also a few articles on how public art work can increase the liveability of public space or mitigate the...
negative affects of built form such as freeways (Blair et. al., 1998), and virtually nothing regarding participatory arts and civic engagement or multicultural planning. For that, we must turn to the writing of other fields.

**the art of change - lessons from non-planners**

Public art and performance facilities are the kinds of artistic products most often written about by planners and of concern to developers. Public art and community-based art are sometimes confused. Public art is simply art that has been installed or performed in public spaces by professional artists. The degree to which communities are consulted about the work varies (Finkelpearl, 2000) and active participation in the conception and creation of the art work is uncommon. Community art and community cultural development are terms used to describe participatory arts processes that have "long-term cultural and political ambition" (Lowe, 2001: 459), and have become a field of theory and practice unto themselves in the last four decades (Adams and Goldbard, 2001; Dickson, 1995). Before I discovered community cultural development as a term, a set of theories, and approach to practice I explored literature within the fields of community development, sociology, conflict resolution and education to learn how they viewed community-based creative expression.

**community development**

Bernie Jones (1988) argues that culture (meaning the arts) has played an important role in the history of community development and that the move to democratise control over creative expression was closely related to the empowerment of communities through political struggle. Jones (1988) and Kay (2000) stress that, rather than seeing arts as a tool, they must be envisioned as fundamental parts of the community development process and integral components to any regeneration policy. Both authors evaluate a number of community art projects in their articles and come to similar conclusions as to the pivotal role of the arts in social and economic development and regeneration and the necessary conditions for their successful use, outlined in figures 2.8 and 2.9.
Kay (2001) and Jones (1988) point to a range of reasons the arts might play a unique and significant role in community development, such as their flexibility, capacity building potential, and accessibility. However, they do not really get into what it is about artistic or creative processes in particular that make them such transformative processes. How do they build bonds between people, affect personal individual development, and make people feel better and healthier? How might they contribute to a holistic approach to practice by engaging different parts of people differently?

### Sociological perspectives

Sociologist Seana Lowe's (2000; 2001) two articles, one the product of an evaluation of community art projects in Denver and the second based on extensive interviews with community artists, focus on the unique ritual framework provided by community art. She argues that ritual creates spaces for social interaction that leads to new social networks, interconnection, cohesion, and solidarity among participants. Solidarity evolves through the building of positive relationships, providing mutual support and encouragement, and the communicating of common concerns during the projects. Individual and collective identity can also be positively impacted through imagination.

By being exposed to different interpretations and varied meanings, neighbourhood residents became more aware of possibilities outside their own frames of reference...By learning new methods of self expression and receiving positive responses, individuals added creative dimensions to their self-concepts and discovered new ways to represent themselves to others...Art shows that it is possible to make an idea a reality...a powerful metaphor that impacts thinking. (Lowe, 2000:12)
**transformative art education**

The root of art education can be traced to theorist John Dewey (1934) and his assertion that changes in the individual imagination were the precursors to changes in society, leading to the notion of transformative learning through the arts. Education theorist Maxine Greene (1995) states that "the arts, in particular, can release imagination to open new perspectives and to identify alternatives" (cited in Lowe 2001:469). "Consequently, community art compels personal and social transformation because it uniquely combines the capacity for change in ritual interaction with the power of art to symbolise the change that occurs, while also liberating its participants and meeting a fundamental human need" (Lowe 2001: 469).

In their introduction to the special arts edition of the journal *Education and Urban Society*, Holloway and Krensky (2001) also follow Greene's (1995) argument that arts offer opportunities for gaining perspective and for perceiving alternative ways of transcending and being in the world. They suggest that visual, dramatic, instrumental and literary arts create spaces where anything is possible. "This free space is a possible world that breaks down social barriers and allows young people to name themselves, envision alternative realities, and engage in remaking the world" (Holloway and Krensky, 2001: 258). They also maintain that arts education can enrich, transform, and save lives in a society where growing lack of self confidence, voice, and agency may lead to violence.

A number of fields within art education exist. Empathic art education uses imagination to develop an ethic of care among students, hopefully leading to positive social action as they begin to perceive other realms of reality. Critical art education uses art as a tool to unearth, understand, and address oppression in society. And within multicultural art education, there exists a continuum of practice from tokenism to transformation. (Holloway and Krensky, 2001) Throughout there is the notion that for transformation to occur, the boundary between the teacher and student, and artist and non-artist must be overcome towards a shared critical learning reminiscent of popular education.
Bruce and Dexter Davis (2000) are high school English teachers who discuss their own strategy of bringing slam poetry into the classroom to address conflict and violence. They argue for making curriculum relevant to students' lives (e.g. using hip hop to teach poetry instead of Shakespeare). The long history of political poetry is introduced to students and over a semester they learn about slam and write and perform very personal, emotionally charged poetry about their lives in a non-judgemental and supportive environment. The purpose is to show students the power of words in order to instruct them in non-violence, leadership, and social change (2000: 124). Many students who participated in the slam class found the experiences “life transforming” and as one student said, “poetry helps you get your mind and soul and heart together. It gives you a different view of life than you had before” (2000: 125).

Creativity, difference and conflict

Connors (1998), Campbell (2001), Passingham (2000), and Pacific (1998) discuss the use of arts processes in education and community development among marginalised groups and in contexts of conflicts over difference and change. Connors (2000) argues that media, visual metaphors, and story-telling helped students learn about conflict resolution by giving them the objective distance to talk about emotional issues, a heightened awareness of others' realities, and also by allowing them to develop problem-solving, analytical, and critical thinking skills.

Campbell's (2001) after-school arts program in some of Iowa's poverty stricken communities helped students who might be labelled "low ability" and "unmotivated" to imagine futures, develop a positive self image, and feel connected to humanity. The combination of free experimentation and critical and creative reflection about issues
resulted in increased feelings of agency, voice, and community action among participants.

The community theatre facilitated by Won Smolbag Theatre on the Pacific Island of Vanuatu created a safe space outside of everyday social expectations to discuss emotional, serious, and divisive topics about change and development (Passingham, 2000). Passingham argues that in communities struggling with negative changes due to globalisation, theatre can introduce traditionally sensitive topics and encourage dialogue where it normally wouldn't occur, opening up issues of power to public scrutiny. Landry (2000), Sandercock (2003), Shutzmann and Cohen-Cruz (1994) all explore in depth the power of creative expression through story-telling, the use of metaphor, ritual, theatre, and celebration to contribute to both empowerment and therapeutic approaches to social change and planning for the future of cities and communities.

**metaphor, narrative, and ritual**

The conflict resolution work of Michele LeBaron (2002; 2003), as previously discussed, clearly articulates how metaphor, narrative, and ritual - central aspects of community-based art and cultural development - can be used to resolve conflict, bridge cultures, and work positively in the face of difference. Our work, she argues, must be holistic, open and integrated. It must situate relationship at the heart of our approach because "relationship is both the medium in which conflict sprouts and the soil that births and sustains resolution" (2002: 19). We must welcome surprise, practice self-awareness, transcend limitations, and involve our whole selves, including our physical, emotional, imaginative, and spiritual intelligences in understanding conflict rooted in difference and working towards solutions.

Cultural differences exist in every society, as each of us is a multicultural being. In the global village of today, we constantly encounter diverse ways of naming, framing and addressing conflict. To successfully bridge these differences, we need approaches that work on the symbolic level - the place where we make meaning, telling and re-telling stories about our people and our lives that give coherence and form to our history and relationships. It is the place where identity is forged, day after day, in the fire of conflict and the glow of connection. (2002: 1)

According to LeBaron (2002), **metaphors** are not just poetic; they are windows into who we think we are, our purpose, and our approach to life. They can clarify, bridge
worldviews, and invite us into imaginative conversations (e.g. a colour-blind world or Sandercock's (2003) metaphor of "mongrel cities"). They can also judge, dismiss and minimise, limiting our understanding and leading to miscommunication (e.g. the "dark continent" referring to Africa; the "third world" referring to poor countries in the South; the "boondocks" referring to remote rural communities).

Our minds work largely through metaphor and comparison, and conflict arises when groups see issues, roles, and processes through different metaphoric lenses (LeBaron, 2002). Introducing new metaphors can shift perspectives and redirect energies, promote communication, build safe spaces, and acknowledge creativity. LeBaron shares the example of how two groups of anti-abortion and pro-choice activists overcame conflict and recognised some of their common goals through shifting the view of their experiences from the metaphor of war to that of a journey. The heavy use of metaphor in participatory art is definitely one aspect of its provocative and transformative character.

**Narrative** and story is a universal and instinctive human activity (LeBaron, 2002) and an inherent component of community arts work. Stories connect us in relationship; they give our lives place, identity, and context and act as windows into our cultures and worldviews. They can be barriers to resolution or resources for change depending on how we construct, tell, and receive them (ibid.: 220). Stories engage our emotions, help us imagine, teach through empathy and identification, and help us figure out "what is going on" in complex situations (Forester, 1999). In conflict resolution, the challenge for
third parties is to help parties find the gracefulness and spaciousness that emerges when people step away from their stories as the only truth (LeBaron, 2002: 222).

LeBaron (2002: 224-225) identifies five ways stories, verbal and non-verbal, can engage people in relationship: (1) they engage our attention and emotion, bringing us into connection with others and keeping us present; (2) they stimulate empathy by bringing us out of ourselves to a place where we can touch those we never would have; (3) they provide information, legitimising and making sense of others' experiences; (4) they convey messages indirectly, maintaining harmony; and (5) they engage us in deep listening with all our senses, our bodies, our hearts, and our imaginations.

Leonie Sandercock (2003) outlines the multi-facetted uses of story in planning. Like Forester (1999), she envisions story as essential to planning practice, research, and teaching. She emphasises its importance in multicultural planning, identifying several key arenas of planning as "performed story" (2003: 186). First, stories play roles in process. Telling and listening to stories of the past and present and imagining new stories about the future are central to community participation processes, mediation and negotiation, and intercultural collaboration in participatory action research. Second, stories can act as catalysts for change, inspiring and shaping the imagination of alternatives.

In multicultural cities, the dominant culture's version of events is the implicit norm and most planners -- who are often male, white, heterosexual, and able-bodied -- are part of the dominant culture. Hearing other versions of the past, of the "truth" can motivate change; it can educate towards a more critical consciousness. Stories can frighten, shock, embarrass or de-familiarise (ibid.). Sandercock (2003) argues that planners must expand the language of planning, beyond the usual dull "objective" debate of the facts, to include the language of emotions, values and power; that is what public policy is really all about.

The importance of non-verbal story - the stories contained in body language, music, theatre, and visual arts as well as the stories written into the physical spaces of the city (stories about who belongs where and when) is emphasised by all three authors. As will be seen, all community art processes are in some way about telling stories -
revealing unrecognised histories, chronicling experiences, challenging taken-for-granted realities, and imagining futures.

Figure 2.20 The censored mural "American Tropical" (1932) told the story of the exploitation of the Mexican worker in Los Angeles.

As mentioned above, the ritual framework of community cultural development processes is considered to provide a social space apart from the everyday where people communicate, connect, and imagine in ways they would otherwise not have the opportunity to do (Connors, 2000; Landry, 2000; Lowe, 2000; 2001; Passingham, 2000). Michele LeBaron (2002; 2003) examines ritual even further. She defines ritual as symbolic action that has distinct qualities of attention, intention and awareness; that brings people into a space of mind apart from business as usual; and that draws on the power of liminality. With ritual, we celebrate what we create, we deepen relationships, and we enact and become meaning.

Ritual marks rhythm, repetition, structure, synchronicity and pattern in life. It helps hold dissonance together by creating new frameworks for thinking and holding together ambiguous or different ideas. Ritual changes cognitive systems by giving us new felt experiences of others and ourselves outside of the assumptions that previously limited us. It also makes it possible to feel secure in times of change and transition. (LeBaron, 2002: 255)

Figure 2.21 A young girl lights candles for an altar (above) and traditional cartoon images (below) for Day of the Dead, the one of the most important traditions in Mexico.
According to LeBaron, the dynamics of ritual are unique in the opportunities they present for making connection across difference and conflict, transforming ideas and identities, building community, and working through transition. Like Lowe (2000; 2001), LeBaron understands rituals as patterned ways of moving away from our habitual ways of being, of suspending our knowing. This patterned behaviour helps focus concentration on the present and promotes calm interaction. Rituals engage our emotions, which are powerful guides to action, as well as our bodies, instruments that both enact change and receive somatic messages to inform action. The shared intention of ritual participants is synergistic and powerful. Ritual space invites a consideration of commonalities, as well as recognition of our multifaceted selves, and opens us to the possibility of change.

LeBaron (2002) argues that rituals function best with a clearly articulated shared purpose. She also cautions that rituals won't always work. They can fail to engage people, especially if there has not been satisfactory group input into their design, or if they have been designed with a lack of "cultural fluency" (LeBaron, 2003). This indeed goes for processes designed using metaphor and narrative tools and any other sort of engagement through creative expression. A self-conscious focus on cultural difference and the fundamental possibilities therein is one thing that sets the community cultural development literature apart from other fields of writing looking at the participatory arts.

**community cultural development - the would-be paradigm**

There are many words used to describe the type of practice I introduced in the last section. Community art, community animation, cultural work, participatory or emancipatory arts, community residencies; each of these terms are rooted in different regions of the world and emphasise different elements of the work. Following Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard (2001; 2002) I prefer community cultural development because it encapsulates three fundamental elements of the work. Community describes its collective and participatory

*The root idea of community cultural development is the imperative to fully inhabit our human lives, bringing to consciousness the values and choices that animate our communities and thus equipping ourselves to act - to paraphrase Paulo Freire - as subjects in history, rather than merely its objects.*

-Adams and Goldbard (2002:17)
nature; *cultural* indicates a broad concept of culture that is not fixed but dynamic and changing, and encompasses the wide range of tools and methods used by practitioners, from traditional arts to oral history and environmental design; and *development* iterates the dynamic nature of cultural action, with its goals of empowerment and conscientization (2001: 4-5).

CCD practitioners don't see their work as substituting for other social and political action needed to work towards more equitable and inclusive society. Rather, they see their activities as the "best available tools to teach the skills and values of *true citizenship*: critical thinking, interrogating one's own assumptions, exercising social imagination and creative problem solving, simultaneously holding in mind one's immediate interests and the larger interests of the community as a whole" (Adams and Goldbard, 2002: 17, emphasis mine).

Like LeBaron (2002; 2003), Sandercock (1998; 2003), Friedmann (2002), and Forester (1999), CCD practitioners argue that to improve cities, processes, the social system and the environment, practitioners need to work towards changing our own and others' "operating systems" - opening up to new and fundamental tools of comprehension, analysis, and creative action (Adams and Goldbard, 2002: 17).

I call community cultural development a would-be paradigm because of its multiple and radical nature. It doesn't represent a consolidated field of practice, theory and scholarship because it has been undervalued and never seen as quite legitimate by the long-established traditions of fine arts and applied social science. Nevertheless, there is a long history and a great deal of collaboration and common vision within the "movement". Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard (2001; 2002) provide an excellent analysis of its historical and theoretical roots, which can be traced to the work of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal, radical history and anthropology, the discourse on cultural democracy and globalisation, and community development.

CCD projects are always based on building long-term dynamic relationships. Relationships are negotiated between individuals, communities, artists, institutions, physical spaces and ecological systems. Figures 2.22 outlines the common principles and beliefs of community cultural development practitioners, based on Adams and
Goldbard's (2001) discussion. Figure 2.23 identifies their indicators of successful CCD projects.

**Figure 2.22 Core principles of community cultural development.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CCD's core principles and beliefs</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation and experience.</strong> Active participation in cultural life is essential in shattering a persistent media-induced trance and awakening people to pursue their own legitimate aspirations for social autonomy and recognition. Live, active social experience empowers people to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equality.</strong> All cultures are essentially equal, and a critical examination of cultural values is the first step to speaking one's own truth. CCD works towards the expansion of liberty for all from within a perspective of human rights and toward redressing inequalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dialogue.</strong> Society will always be improved by the expansion of dialogue and the active participation of all communities and groups in exploring and resolving issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diversity is a social asset.</strong> Rather than deny, downplay, or fear difference, CCD sees it as a resource to be nourished and protected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transformational process.</strong> Culture is an effective crucible for social transformation, one that can be less polarising and create deeper connections than other social change arenas. Cultural expression is a means to emancipation, not the primary end in itself; the process is as important as the product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture as dynamic.</strong> Culture is a dynamic, protean whole, and there is no value in creating artificial boundaries within it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of the artist.</strong> Artists have roles of agents of transformation that are more socially valuable than mainstream art-world roles - and certainly equal in legitimacy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Adams and Goldbard (2001)

**Figure 2.23 Indicators of successful community cultural development projects.**

- **Relationship** - practitioners and participants develop mutually meaningful, reciprocal, and collaborative relationships.
- **Ownership** - participants are full co-directors of the project and feel a strong sense of ownership.
- **Learning** - participants deepen and broaden their cultural knowledge through mutual learning, including self-awareness and greater mastery of the arts.
- **Communication** - participants are satisfied with what they have been able to express and communicate; dialogue has been fostered.
Adams and Goldbard (2002) have edited a collection of twenty stories of community cultural development practice from around the world. The sheer variety the work in this anthology represents is remarkable and exciting.

From the mural painting of young Latino gang members in Los Angeles (Baca, 2002), to the theatre of female migrant workers and victims of conjugal violence in South East Asia (Legarda, 2002; Mok, 2002), to the digital art and community media of youth in Birmingham (Stanley, 2002) and urban poor in India (Paranjape, 2002), these stories talk of how CCD processes have helped raise critical consciousness, build capacity, facilitate communication, educate, bridge conflict and difference, engage multiple intelligences, celebrate humanity and encourage social action. Their perspective on creative expression reflects that of much of the literature already discussed and echoes the principles of and criteria for successful CCD processes as listed above. Dickson (1995) offers an equally thorough discussion of the history and practice of community arts in the UK.

it seems too good to be true! some reminders

It is important to note that unintended negative outcomes of participatory arts or CCD processes are rarely discussed in the literature. The inevitable challenges to using these approaches are left unexamined, for example, dealing with a lack of perceived legitimacy and therefore funding and support, the problem of measurement and attribution of process impacts for the purposes of evaluation and grant-writing, or processes that simply don't work. A well-balanced analysis of process must necessarily address any negative outcomes, challenges, or dark sides. Newman et. al. (2003) maintains that the enigmatic nature of the creative process itself doesn't lend well to technical evaluation. This is becoming more problematic as arts processes are being commissioned more and more by levels of government and agencies that require practitioners to demonstrate results in a traditional way. As more holistic approaches to
civic engagement are taken, so must compatible systems of evaluation for those processes be developed.

As mentioned in the last section, participatory art processes can be as oppressive and narrow as other processes if they are imposed or culturally inappropriate. Participatory processes can simply reinforce inequalities if they are not literate in issues of power, if they favour the dominant culture or exclude relevant groups in population. While arts and creative processes themselves seem to contribute important and unique functions, they are not meant to replace other forms of planning, but rather enhance participatory processes, especially in multicultural contexts, open up planning to new capacities and tools, and assist in the transformation of the orientation or "operating system" of the profession. In all of the literature, it is reiterated that CCD processes must be part of long-term processes and approaches, include plenty of background research and relationship-building, and be participant-owned and driven. It is important to differentiate processes that are part of an overall CCD approach from those that have less substantial goals and are more of a one-time thing.

**summary: creative cultural expression and civic engagement**

Art has been central to society for as long as we have been human. The arts and culture have also been included as components of planning functions since the beginning of the profession. Although the fields of cultural and arts planning promote an integrated approach and emphasise cultural rights and community participation in arts and cultural production, the last few decades have seen an increasing tendency to commodify the arts and artists as urban cultural assets, and a focus on cultural "industries" and "economies" over dialogues and processes. While arts processes form a part of some municipal planning programs, the literature has neglected to consider their role in participatory or multicultural planning practice. This thesis attempts to begin to fill this gap.

There is a great deal to be learned from the diverse literature regarding community-based arts and creative cultural expression. It suggests that the flexibility and accessibility of community arts processes appeal to a broader audience than traditional
planning or CD processes, particularly to diverse and marginalised populations. They appeal because they engage and welcome different ways of knowing, being and communicating and value the resources participants bring to the process. They can help build self confidence, a sense of agency, and capacity for action. They also encourage economic investment, build community, bridge difference, and encourage active citizenship.

Arts processes work to achieve these impacts in many ways. The unique ritual framework of community cultural development, and its frequent use of metaphor and verbal and non-verbal story-telling, engages people on the symbolic level, where we make meaning, form identity, and establish values. Rituals, formal or informal, create social spaces where "anything is possible", spaces away from business-as-usual and everyday situations of conflict, where people can communicate, connect, and imagine in ways that otherwise wouldn't be possible.

CCD processes engage the imagination, allowing people to conceive of alternate realities, shift stuck perceptions, and think "outside of the box". The ability to imagine is essential in overcoming fear, bridging difference, and coming up with creative solutions and ways to move forward. CCD processes, with their ritual framework and their focus on getting people doing things together, often involving their bodies and right brains, encourage people to be present and aware. In engaging with others and hearing their experiences, an awareness of one's own feelings and biases is encouraged. These processes help people see commonalities across difference and conflict, build relationships, and loosen their grip on taken-for-granted perceptions or their version of the "truth". Mindful awareness is also essential in developing critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Community arts processes are also fun. Their conviviality feeds the human need for spirit, magic, celebration and beauty. CCD processes and products are often used to mark meaningful or sacred spaces, ideas, relationships, or events.

Creative processes, used from within a community cultural development approach, can form a unique and fundamental part of (or could fundamentally enrich/contribute to) an empowerment-based, transformative, holistic approach to planning for change in diverse
contexts. Looking more closely at and learning from what is going on in community cultural development processes, and at how practitioners perceive and do their work, would be a useful step in “shifting our orientation” as planners, thinking and working to change our “operating system” and begin working from within an “epistemology of multiplicity”.

2.5 conclusion

It is fundamentally clear that the planning literature has a lot of catching up to do. With this theoretical framework I hope to contribute in a small way to filling that gap and the development of links between areas of practice and research ripe for connection and further consideration. There is also an urgent need to analyse the real practices and experiences of planners and other practitioners wrestling on a daily basis with how to engage people in meaningful processes, actions, and relationships in increasingly diverse and rapidly changing cities.

The main goal of this thesis is just that; to examine what is going on in Vancouver in terms of creatively and effectively engaging diverse and marginalised communities in civic participation and action from the perspective of daily practice and experience. In Chapters 4 through 7 I look at the stories of city planners embroiled in this undertaking and then turn to an investigation of the work and experiences of innovative practitioners of community cultural development working across the city, looking to answer the questions: What is going on in these processes? How are they experienced and understood? What qualities, capacities, skills and tools do practitioners display? What are the social, economic, emotional, physical and spiritual impacts? What can planners learn from them about developing more inclusive participatory democratic processes and a more pluralist planning culture?

Before turning to those narratives however, in Chapter 3 I provide a bit of back story, outlining the economic, social, political and planning context of Vancouver; the urban setting in which the stories of planning and community cultural development practice and experience analysed in Chapters 4 through 7 take place.
3.1 introduction

Having one of the most multicultural populations in the world (Edgington et al. 2001), Vancouver, British Columbia is a natural place to consider the impacts of diversity and difference on planning practice. Vancouver also presents an excellent place to explore innovative and creative practical approaches to engaging diverse groups in decision-making and social action for several reasons. For one, Vancouver is seen by many from within the field of community cultural development to be a hub of community-based creative initiatives in Canada (Interview with P03, March 14, 2003). Also, the municipality has a track record of supporting and initiating relatively progressive and innovative programming (Interview with P02, March 20, 2003; McAfee 1993; Sandercock 2003). Finally, a strong history of community organising, along with government devolution and budget cuts, has developed a broad and imaginative, if beleaguered, non-government sector (Clague 1997, Dang 2002). There is simply a great variety of work being done in Vancouver.

That variety is reflected in an array of community-based and non-profit organisations run by, or in the interests of (to name but a few): immigrants, visible minorities, First Nations, street-involved youth, women, drug users, parks, the queer5 community, the differently-abled, the environment and low-income families. These groups naturally employ diverse approaches to planning, education, and public engagement – from those that are similar to traditional planning approaches (e.g. surveys, public meetings) to more innovative and inclusive approaches (e.g. community development, action research, community theatre). A significant number of groups in Vancouver incorporate elements of a radical community cultural development approach in their work.

In this chapter I establish a back-story that will situate the findings I present in the following four chapters. To that end, the purpose of the chapter is two-fold. Section 3.2 provides a brief social, economic, and political overview of Vancouver, while section 3.3

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5 The word queer will be used in this thesis to refer to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and two-spirited communities when referring broadly to these groups as a whole; otherwise specific groups will be mentioned.
fleshes out the planning context, paying particular attention to public participation, multiculturalism and diversity, and the arts. In these sections, I attempt to offer an understanding of the policy and practical realities within which the practitioners and community members interviewed for this study work and live, and around which their stories are intertwined.

3.2 vancouver today

The imposing and magical natural setting of Vancouver, British Columbia, with its looming Coastal Mountains, vast Pacific Ocean, lush greenery and eternal moistness are probably the only elements of my mother's stories of her childhood home that I recognised when I arrived there for the first time in 2001. Economic shifts and socio-cultural forces in the last forty years have transformed the social and physical landscape of the city of Vancouver drastically. The city has evolved from the nucleus of a resource-based provincial economy to an internationally important multicultural metropolis.

The Vancouver I have come to know exemplifies Sandercock's (2003) "mongrel cities" of the 21st Century. My Vancouver story might start on the number 8 Fraser bus headed home, where I hear more Cantonese, Punjabi and Tagalog spoken than English. In my Vancouver, on November 17, 2001, Aaron Webster was beaten to death in Stanley Park because he was gay, a target of fear and hatred. My Vancouver is the first North
American city to implement safe-injection sites for intra-venous drug users as part of a harm-reduction strategy. My Vancouver will host the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. My Vancouver is a city of suburban sprawl and downtown re-densification, of extravagant wealth and grinding poverty, where both Hollywood starlets and street-involved youth claim its sidewalks – and First Nations claim the land itself. It is a city of collaborations, contradictions and conflict, where planners and community development practitioners are trying to understand and keep up with the challenges and possibilities of today’s urban reality.

Vancouver’s population has continued to grow significantly since World War II, much of that growth fuelled by immigration. Traditional immigrant source countries were largely European; however, in the 1960’s, a liberalised immigrant selection policy gave immigrants from all countries equal treatment (Hiebert, 1999). In the decade from 1986 to 1996, immigration from Europe and the United States plummeted while trans-Pacific migration rose; by 1996, Hong Kong was the most significant country of origin for immigrants to Vancouver (Hiebert, 1999).

Today, Vancouver is Canada’s second most multicultural city (City of Vancouver, 2004b). Just under 46% of Vancouver’s population is made up of immigrants, while nearly half (49%) are considered visible minorities. More than half (51.3%) have a mother tongue other than English. (Statistics Canada, 2001) Almost two thirds of immigrants in Vancouver come from Asia, the three most numerous groups being of Chinese, Filipino, and Indian origins (City of Vancouver, 2003). Vancouver’s planners and community workers are increasingly faced with the implications of racism and violence, ethnic spatial segregation and economic/political marginalisation, and often their own lack of cultural fluency on their work (Hiebert and Ley, 2003; KTRC, 2001; Lee, 2003; Pratt, 2002; Qadeer, 1997).

Vancouver is also home to a large Aboriginal population, including Coast Salish people who are indigenous to the Vancouver region, as well as First Nations, Métis and Inuit from all over Canada (City of Vancouver, 2004b). As there were no treaties signed in British Columbia, the title to the land comprising Vancouver and much of the rest of the province has been contested and claimed by First Nations for the last 100 years. A lack

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6 From a locally-based to a globally interdependent, and a resource-based to a service and technology-driven economy.
of resolution on most land claims, racism, and an "unresolved post-colonial condition" (Sandercock, 2003) continue to have a profound effect on the relationship between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations (including all levels of government) as well as the social, economic, and cultural lives of Aboriginal communities. About 62.5% of Vancouver's total off-reserve Aboriginal population of over 10,000 people have incomes below the low income cut-off (City of Vancouver, 2002b).

It is projected that in Vancouver's population, diversity and immigration will continue to grow (Au, 2000). At the same time, the city's population is ageing rapidly and income disparity is increasing (Au, 2000; Blomley, 1998). Currently 24% of Vancouver residents are in the low-income bracket (Au, 2000). An inflated housing and property market has seen a rapid decline in affordable housing in the city, while social spending has been slashed at the provincial level, leaving fewer and fewer dollars for social housing (Au, 2000; Smith, 2003). Nowhere is this more evident than in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, where "torn between 'gentrification and ghettoization'" (Smith, 2003: 497), one of the country's most impoverished urban communities tries to manage the combined pressures of encroaching development, cultural differences, and a drug problem of massive proportions with fewer and fewer public services. The drive to develop and "clean up" the city for the coming 2010 Olympic Games will no doubt have significant effects on this community (Matas, 2003).

3.3 the planning context – envisioning cosmopolis

history of citizen participation in BC

Both the provincial government in British Columbia and the city of Vancouver have a history of innovative experimentation with citizen participation in governance. In the past, major public policy initiatives, including community resource boards (CRBs) and community human resources and health centres

"represented the full realisation of the pioneering ideas and experiments of the 1960s: decentralising services to the community; co-ordinating, integrating and rationalising them; and creating a local political accountability for human care services to the whole community where none had existed before (or since)." (Clague, 1997: 98).

Provincial policy was mirrored in the city at that time, with the introduction of the new Local Area Approach to community planning in 1964, where local citizen area councils and service teams were established to ensure services and community development
plans addressed local needs and priorities (Clague, 1997). Neighbourhood Service Centres, many still existing today in different forms, were created at that time\(^7\), as well as the city’s Social Planning department in 1968 (City of Vancouver, 2003).

The arrival of neo-conservatism in the 1980s brought with it legislation that sliced through and devastated government programs and services, arguing for the market, rather than the state, as the primary means for generating and distributing wealth in society (ibid.). The CRBs were no more. The non-government community responded with the launch of the self-help/mutual help empowerment movements, which throughout the 1980s guided the development of a strong network of community-based organisations\(^8\)(ibid.). The 1990s saw another change of government and more fiscal conservatism, as well as welfare pluralism and the rhetoric of citizen participation and community development as positive things (ibid.). Clague (1997) argues that the provincial government has often confused community consultation with community development. At the municipal level, it was during the early to mid-1990s that Vancouver launched its unprecedented and ambitious experiment in citizen participation, CityPlan (McAfee, 1993; Lee, 2003)

The transition in governance that began in the 1990s, represented by the devolution of responsibility from federal to provincial governments and from provinces to cities, continues today. It is placing a great deal of pressure on community organisations and the City of Vancouver to take on responsibilities without providing the accompanying budgets (Clague, 1997; Burstein, 2000; Au, 2000). With the BC Municipal Act of 1999, British Columbian city councils were given fairly broad powers to provide a wide range of services to meet local community needs, including social planning and the distribution of grants to local NGOs (Edgington et al., 2001).

The turn of the 21\(^{st}\) century brought with it another change in provincial government. The New Democratic Party was replaced by Gordon Campbell’s Liberals in 2001. Reminiscent of the early 1980s, Gordon Campbell’s neo-conservative administration has slashed programs and services and authorised the biggest purge of the civil service in the province’s history (Lunman, 2002). Cutbacks have gouged deeply the resources of

\(^{7}\) Such as the Britannia Community Services Centre on Commercial Drive.

\(^{8}\) Such as the BC Association for Community Living (BCAL), a client empowerment group for people with mental challenges and their families.
many community-based service providers and organisations. Partly in response to the provincial agenda, citizens of Vancouver elected a progressive city council\(^9\) in a landslide election in November of 2002. This included Mayor Larry Campbell whose platform focused on promises to help the city's drug users, as well as create a more responsive government that listens to its citizens (Armstrong, 2002). It is within this political environment, along with that provided by the federal government presently in transition, that we consider the realities and possibilities of broadening the opportunities and approaches to engaging diverse publics in planning and decision-making in Vancouver.

**public involvement in planning in the city**

As noted in Chapter 2, the use of public participation in planning processes is an indication of attempts on the part of city planners to use various forms of knowledge and literacies in their practice, particularly through dialogue, listening to people's experiences and concerns and valuing local knowledge. As indicated above, the City of Vancouver has been encouraging some forms of public participation in planning since the mid 1960s (Clague, 1997). The nature, depth, and quality of the opportunities offered to the public to participate in planning decisions have varied from process to process (Context Research Ltd., 1998). No overall approach or formal policy exists for guiding the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public involvement in city planning. The development of such a policy is still in the works, and began in many ways with CityPlan, the ambitious city-wide public consultation process held between 1993 and 1995.

The CityPlan process produced the city's first city-wide plan to guide policy decisions. Faced with public opposition to plans prepared by staff, City Council decided it wanted public input on how the City would accommodate growth and change in the following 30 years, as well as an integrated and comprehensive plan that also included ideas on arts, culture, and community services (Lee, 2003; McAfee, 1993). What they got was a plan produced by the largest public consultation process to date in Vancouver, including over 20,000 active participants (City of Vancouver, 1995). A variety of methods were used to obtain citizens' ideas, including ideas fairs, community "citizen circles" (facilitated discussion groups often with the help of artists), and surveys, among others (Interview

\(^9\) Mostly from the COPE (The Coalition of Progressive Electors) party.
Mandated specifically by City Council, efforts were made to include "hard to reach" groups, such as minority and ethno-cultural groups, through the Community Access Program which included extensive translation services and a 4 month broad community-based outreach program directed at engaging recent immigrants and other often marginalised groups in dialogue (Interview with P05, May 21, 2003; Lee, 2003).

CityPlan has its proponents and its critics. It has won numerous awards for innovation in public participation and is considered by some to have resulted in a publicly driven set of supportable directions for the city of Vancouver (McAfee, 1997). Others critique it as having produced nothing more than a "wish list' with no analysis of costs or benefits, or tradeoffs [and]...no distinction between trivial and significant wishes" (Seelig and Seelig, 1997: 20). Some planners interviewed reflected that even though CityPlan had engaged a breadth of people (including marginalised groups) the City never had done before, it fell short of the community development or citizen-driven processes they advocate, as it was ultimately still about a top-down process trying to fit community ideas into traditional planning models (Interview with P05, May 21, 2003). Its greatest legacy might have been the recognition that the overall approach to planning must move in the direction of more and better participation (ibid.).

The Community Visions Program was approved by Council in 1996 as one of several programs designed to bring CityPlan to the neighbourhood level. Visioning\textsuperscript{10} consists of four main steps: the Vision Fair, Workshops, Council approval of the Community Vision, and Implementation (Interview with P04, May 15, 2003). The City Planning Department

\textsuperscript{10}For a detailed analysis of the Community Visioning process in Vancouver, with particular attention paid to diversity and multiculturalism, please see Joanne Lee (2003).
first invites residents to participate in creating ideas about the future of their
neighbourhood through a variety of ways (open houses, surveys) and then asks them to
choose their preferred directions based on those offered by the public through a Choices
Survey (Lee, 2003). A policy document is created based on survey results and then
submitted for Council approval. If approved, a City Vision Implementation Teams assists
and supports community individuals and groups in taking actions towards realising their
Visions.

There has been much public support for the processes as well as a significant amount of
dissatisfaction. The design of the Visioning process is criticised for not accommodating
dissenting opinion (Interview with PW01, June 9, 2003), for offering many “non-choices”
in the Choices Surveys (such as “do you want safer neighbourhoods?”) (Interview with
PW05, June 9, 2003), and not adequately accounting for the implications of working with
a multicultural population (Lee, 2003). The Implementation phase has both been
praised for supporting real community development processes (Interview with P04, May
15, 2003) and criticised for not producing much in terms of tangible change (Lee, 2003).

CityPlan and Community Visioning are only two, albeit significant, ways in which the City
of Vancouver engages the public in decision-making. Out of CityPlan came the Better
City Government Initiative of 1996, one of its main priorities being to improve its public
involvement processes. Context Research Ltd. was contracted in 1997 to conduct the
Public Involvement Review (PIR) - an objective review of the public involvement
component of ten planning processes in the City of Vancouver, from re-zonings to
CityPlan. The review concluded that Vancouver overall does quite well in terms of public
involvement; it offers more opportunity for the public to become involved in decision-
making than other cities in BC, and is much better than it used to be (Context Research
Ltd., 1998).

Significantly, the planning and mandating of the public involvement processes evaluated
were seen as the city’s weakest stages. Goals and objectives for public involvement
were general and seemed to suggest that any public involvement was good in and of
itself. Few specific goals or strategies were established at the outset to determine if and
how the public could be most usefully and appropriately engaged (see also Seelig and
Seelig, 1993). Understandably, a lack of clear mandates made it difficult to evaluate the
strengths and weaknesses of individual processes. However, the evaluators did offer some comments based on their other categories of criteria.

In terms of resourcing the processes, ensuring impacted parties were included, communication, and strategies for involvement, the City was seen to have performed quite well overall. There were, however, several noteworthy criticisms in these areas. One was the lack of staff training in public involvement. Another was that although no “hard to reach” or marginalised groups were constantly excluded and in some cases were specifically targeted and engaged (i.e. CityPlan), many groups (e.g. financially disadvantaged, new immigrants) were consistently underrepresented overall.

In terms of communication, many participants found the language used by planners inaccessible, either due to the frequent use of technical jargon or the lack of consistency of translating material into other languages or forms (e.g. large print). The most common complaint regarding the city’s involvement strategies was that input was not valued, a typical comment being “why did they ask for my input if they were going to argue with me for giving it and then questioning my motives? If they have already made up their minds, why go through the process?” (Context Research Ltd. 1998).

Finally, the area of feedback and closure was seen as another clear weakness of the City’s typical approach to public involvement. It was extremely rare that the City indicated at all how people’s input was used or how it impacted decisions, to the frustration of many of the participants involved in the evaluation. Evaluations of public involvement processes are not generally conducted. At present, the City of Vancouver is in the process of implementing many of the recommendations offered by the evaluation team, including training staff in public involvement skills, improving ongoing contact with communities, and creating a Multicultural Outreach and Translation Strategy. It is clear that the City is committed to involving the public in a wide variety of decision-making processes, and in many ways, it is doing better than many other Canadian cities. Encouragingly, the City is likewise committed to improving its approach.
to public participation so as to ensure more responsive, appropriate, and effective planning processes and decisions.

The PIR challenged several assumptions the City appears to have been making regarding public involvement. By highlighting the importance of mandating and following up on processes, it questions City motivations in seeking public involvement in the first place. Are these processes simply ritualistic, _pro forma_ exercises done so the City can tick the "public was involved" boxes or to truly achieve better, more collaborative, responsive and appropriate decisions in each specific case? It challenged understandings of the ultimate purpose of public involvement by emphasising the importance of maintaining long-term relationships with communities and individuals, so as to foster an ongoing culture of participation, rather than case-by-case consultation processes.

What the PIR didn't question directly, and this thesis challenges, are many of the social assumptions embedded in the way the City approaches public involvement. Does everyone understand or hold knowledge about planning issues in the same way? Do we all share the same dominant ways of communicating; if not, how are we to plan together if we don't understand each other? Are traditional participatory planning processes accessible to all or effective in every situation? How do differences in social, political, and economic power impact participation? The following sections and Chapter Four will shed some light on these questions by looking more directly at the City's approaches to diversity planning and incorporating arts and culture, as well as gleaning insights from planners' accounts of their work regarding participation, diversity, and cultural development.
but which publics? planning and difference in the city of vancouver

The City of Vancouver has responded to its increasing ethno-cultural diversity with a string of policies and programs intended to promote broader access to civic services and incorporate minority groups into the decision-making process. Although ethno-cultural groups tend to be the focus of most “diversity” policy and programming, initiatives have been developed targeting other groups as well, such as youth, seniors, and First Nations peoples. Similar to most Canadian cities (Qadeer, 2000), Vancouver’s approach has been a piecemeal one. The City responds to specific needs or conflicts with particular programs as they arise, rather than developing an overall policy framework (Interview with P05, May 21, 2003; Edgington et. al., 2001).

This ad hoc approach is evident in the Public Involvement Review, where some processes were seen to have clear guidelines for multicultural outreach (e.g. CityPlan) whereas others were criticised for having had none at all (e.g. the Blenheim Street Downgrading) (Context Research Ltd., 1998). The result is municipal policy that generally does not reflect the ethno-cultural diversity of the City, and a practice that doesn’t always attempt to achieve a more representative participation. Still, the last twenty years have seen a significant rise in initiatives addressing diversity issues, as can be seen in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Policies and Programs Addressing Diversity Implemented by the City of Vancouver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative, Date Implemented</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Planning Department, 1968</td>
<td>Social and cultural planning and development; collaborative programming / research with community groups and government departments; focus on low income neighbourhoods, immigrants, youth, First Nations peoples, and the disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Employment Opportunity Program, 1986</td>
<td>Guides the hiring of a diverse workforce, with equal opportunities for women, visible minorities, First Nations peoples, and the disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Policy on Multicultural Relations, 1988</td>
<td>Recognises diversity as a strength; encourages access to civil services for all residents, regardless of background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings Institute, 1989</td>
<td>Provided diversity training to staff, other municipalities, and provincial government ministries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Conference “From Bridges to Barriers”, 1993</td>
<td>Hosted by city; reaffirmed policy of reflecting cultural diversity in all aspects of civic involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CityPlan, 1993-1995</td>
<td>See section 3.32. Ambitious city-wide public participation process that included extensive outreach to and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Visioning and Vision Implementation, 1996-present</td>
<td>Neighbourhood level participatory planning process that includes outreach to multicultural and cultural groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Advisory Committee on Cultural Communication, 1994</td>
<td>Council-appointed committee which advises Council on various policy-related issues concerning diverse groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Relations Unit – Police Department</td>
<td>Responsible for a number of initiatives which address diversity issues within the Vancouver Police Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Elections, 1993, 1996, 1999</td>
<td>Special efforts made to reach out to diverse cultural communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Communications Strategy, 1995</td>
<td>Guides new communication initiatives related to diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Youth Strategy, 1995</td>
<td>Forms a framework for creating opportunities for youth to be partners in determining the future of Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilingual Information Referral Phone Service, 1996</td>
<td>Provides information on civic issues in four languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Media News Monitoring Service, 1997</td>
<td>Provided overview of key issues in ethnic media for Council and City staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Research and Community Needs Assessments, 1996, 1999</td>
<td>Social Planning collaboration with community groups to conduct profiles and needs assessments of particular communities towards better understanding their unique challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Consultation towards a City-wide outreach Strategy, 2000</td>
<td>Aims to gain an understanding of people's perspectives on multiculturalism/diversity, public participation, and access to services; forms framework for city-wide outreach strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcomers' Guide to the City, 2002</td>
<td>Guide intended to inform newcomers on civic issues and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Service Grants, Ongoing</td>
<td>Provides financial support to about one hundred non-profit service organizations serving Vancouver residents, many which specifically serve immigrants/refugees or other distinct communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storyscapes: Aboriginal Stories of Vancouver, In progress</td>
<td>One of several programs directed at First Nations communities; Social Planning department collaboration with community and government partners; means for First Nations communities to express their stories, voice to visions of the future, and share their rich knowledges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation and Interpretation Policy, In progress</td>
<td>City-wide policy designed to provide guidelines on dealing with translation and interpretation needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from City of Vancouver 2003 and Joyce Lee 2003. 24

It is difficult to determine how effective these programs have been at encouraging broader civic participation of Vancouver's many diverse groups. The City's multiculturalism and diversity initiatives have yet to be evaluated in any comprehensive way. In general, there has been little empirical study into local governments' responses to increasing diversity or into the degree of success they have achieved in increasing access to civic services and more representative decision-making (Edgington et. al., 2001; Edgington and Hutton, 2002). The City of Vancouver, compared to its surrounding municipalities and some other Canadian cities, has been seen by some as leading the
way in multiculturalism (Edgington and Hutton, 2002; Qadeer, 1997). Although it has a less comprehensive approach than that taken in other non-Canadian cities such as Sydney, Australia (Edgington et. al., 2001), the City seems to be moving in the right direction (Lee, 2003).

One of few such analyses, the findings of Joyce Lee's (2003) recent study of the Community Visioning processes in four Vancouver neighbourhoods is worth noting. She found that multicultural outreach was a strong component of both CityPlan and the Community Visioning but that within the CityPlan document itself, concern for multiculturalism is "barely perceptible" (2003: 70). Although exhaustive measures were employed to achieve broader participation, the profile of the average participant remained within the white, middle-aged, middle-class majority. Lee identifies numerous causes of non-participation among multicultural communities, including the need to focus on more pressing priorities, social and geographic isolation, fear of authorities and lack of understanding of the political system, and culture. She contends that overall, newcomers receive inadequate support and information from the city, but acknowledges that the many barriers to participation (e.g. poverty, racism, lack of transportation or childcare, intergenerational conflicts, lack of refugee services) are also related to broad basic needs that are not being adequately addressed by other levels of government.

Lee (2003) maintains that the City has had very good intentions with regards to achieving a more representative participation, but that not enough research was done into how to best encourage that participation. She points out that, for instance, many older Punjabis are illiterate and therefore the most widespread form of participation offered in the visioning stage (i.e. the Choices survey) was useless for this sector of the population. Lee speculates that Visioning in Vancouver has successfully allowed for broader involvement in planning, but has been perhaps less successful in actually achieving it. To that end she recommends adopting a visible and intense

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11 Culture influences individuals and groups in terms of participations in a myriad of ways, including certain communities being more comfortable with different modes of citizen participation, a cultural tendency to avoid conflict or the discussion of problems, or a lack of cultural understanding between groups.
multicultural outreach strategy, recognising multicultural voice through policy and building ongoing relationships, further diversity training for staff, and hiring minority planners.

Ultimately, Lee concludes the City is moving in the right direction as it continues to enhance its appreciation for diversity, build on its cultural sensitivity and focus on grassroots outreach. I share her sentiment that the opportunity this presents for mutual learning is encouraging. She insists that a fundamental pre-requisite for determining how to best encourage a broader participation is the promotion of an enhanced intercultural understanding through the education of City staff and both the ethno-cultural and mainstream populations about cultural differences and “different ways of knowing” (Lee, 2003: 122).

The how is the question. How do you promote intercultural understanding and engage in mutual learning about different ways of knowing and being in the world? These are questions traditional planning departments are not inclined to ask nor equipped to answer. This brief review of the scant literature on the City of Vancouver’s approach to multiculturalism and diversity reveals that planners are beginning to question some of the social assumptions embedded in traditional planning practice that have excluded certain groups in the past (e.g. the idea of one overarching “public interest”), and to develop more inclusive practices. Other assumptions remain entrenched. Most City of Vancouver planning processes, for instance, continue to favour dominant forms of communicating (i.e. verbal, textual, concise, linear, “fact”-based) perhaps marginalizing or alienating those who express themselves more readily through story-telling, movement, action, or in more circular, visual, emotional or collective manners (Interview with P01, May 5, 2003).

**what’s art got to do with it? creative approaches and the city**

As municipalities take on more and broader responsibilities in planning, service delivery, policy setting, and governance, the development of arts and culture is no exception. Evidence can be seen in an increase of arts and culture-based programming in community centres, an increase of collaborative projects between cities and arts
organisations, a renewed interest in responding to the needs of the "creative class" and an increase in cultural and heritage programming (Interview with P02, March 20, 2003 and P03, March 14, 2003).

The City of Vancouver has embraced the notion of the "creative city"\textsuperscript{12}, envisioning the arts and culture as part of an integrated planning vision. It sees arts and culture as fundamental to the economic viability, liveability and quality of life of its communities, and an effective means to encouraging cross-cultural understanding amongst such diversity (City of Vancouver, 2003c; 2003e; 1995). In 1987 City Council adopted a set of cultural goals that included the promotion of creative excellence, diversity, accessibility and a broad range of opportunities for residents to participate in the cultural life of the city (City of Vancouver, 2003c: 3).

The City is involved in arts and cultural development in a great variety of ways – from the support of traditional arts and cultural institutions (e.g. museums, libraries, operas, and theatres) to the managing and support of community cultural development initiatives. This section will consider three principle avenues of municipal "arts and cultural" involvement in Vancouver – through (1) the Office of Cultural Affairs, (2) the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, and (3) Neighbourhood Planning.

**The Office of Cultural Affairs**

The Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA) advises the Vancouver City Council on issues related to arts and culture in the city, develops and manages cultural support programs and participates in city planning and development processes (City of Vancouver, 2003c). It co-ordinates a civic grants program that assists non-profit cultural organisations with the costs of development, capital expenditures, and special projects. It also works with other civic departments to upgrade city-owned and other cultural facilities through zoning incentives, capital funding, and its Public Art Program. Most relevant to this study, in terms of offering citizens means of participating in their community, in planning, and in decision-making, the OCA manages two community-oriented programs – the Community Public Art Program and the Celebration Grants Program. For both programs, community groups or organisations must submit applications to the city to compete for a limited
amount of grant money – for the Community Public Art Program, typically five or six projects split a total of $75,000 (City of Vancouver, 2004a)\textsuperscript{13}.

The Community Public Art Program (CPAP) has been operating for nearly a decade and encourages collaborations between artists or other design professionals and communities on projects that build community pride, cohesion, and identity (ibid.). The goals of the program include: fostering neighbourhood identity through highlighting local sites through art works; supporting residents' leadership and including their ideas and issues; recognising the diversity of cultures and interests; and encouraging the creation of permanent artworks with both artistic merit and community benefit. A variety of kinds projects are supported though the program, some of which will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

The projects supported by the CPAP are necessarily limited to visual mediums such as murals, sculpture, and installations. The Celebration Grants program, launched in 2002, provides opportunities for non-arts organisations to put on community-based festivals, cultural celebrations, and parades. The OCA also supports community-based arts programs through its operating grants, awarded to groups like Headlines Theatre and DanceArts - organisations that engage communities and publics in the design and implementation of performances that address relevant social and environmental issues.

Although these programs have produced a range of artistic products it is difficult to judge how successful the OCA is overall in achieving its social goals by way of the participatory processes involved. The Community Public Art Program has never undergone formal evaluation and many argue that social impacts of these projects are inherently difficult to measure (Interview with P02, March 20, 2003; Newman et. al., 2003; Lowe, 2002).\textsuperscript{14}

The majority of the projects the OCA supports with the CPAP are what many community artists, community developers and planners interviewed characterised as "one-offs" –

\textsuperscript{12} The City was instrumental in the development of the Creative City Network, which is an organization of people employed by municipalities across Canada working on arts, cultural and heritage policy, planning, development and support, which evolved out of a national conference on cultural planning held in Vancouver in 2002.

\textsuperscript{13} The amount of support offered each year through the CPAP is relatively modest, for five for six projects at $10,000 to $20,000 each. This funding is meant to include artist compensation as well as all supplies and process costs for a period of several months to a year.

\textsuperscript{14}
they engage members of a community for a short period of time, usually months, until the artistic product is completed; that is where the support ends. Any spin-offs, identified needs, or potential further work coming out of the project are neither officially monitored nor directly supported by the City. Some projects are part of greater community-based strategies (e.g. the Renfrew Ravine Sanctuary) and planning programs (e.g. The Downtown Eastside Community Play), but generally the community public art projects are conceived and implemented independent of any explicit planning processes. One exception is a unique and recent collaboration between Headlines Theatre and the City of Vancouver entitled "Practicing Democracy" that saw citizens participate in a legislative theatre process around issues of poverty and cuts to welfare, the products of which were then interpreted by a lawyer into a set of recommendations that was presented to City Hall (Diamond, 2004; Gallant, 2004). While it is too early to determine the impact of the process in terms of concrete actions or changes, the willingness to officially value the knowledge emerging from a participatory creative process is quite a radical action on the part of the City.

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

The arts and culture programming at the Park Board was designed to complement rather than duplicate the mandate of the Office of Cultural Affairs (Interview with P03, March 14, 2003), and in 1993 decided to focus on the applications of the arts in community development. Their programs, which include a Community Arts Program, an Artist in Residence Program\textsuperscript{15}, the running of Community Centres, and the regulation of busking, performances, and celebrations in parks, are based on principles of community cultural development outlined in their 1993 Arts Policy (City of Vancouver, 2003a). The policy, developed through public consultations, research, focus groups and workshops, argues that the arts are both an

\textsuperscript{14} In chapter five I do analyze aspects of some of these projects, as well as share the perspectives of planners and organizers on their impacts and effectiveness.

\textsuperscript{15} A community centre hosts an artist in residence for up to a year, and the artist works with the community on projects and issues of joint interest or concern.
essential part of healthy communities and provide tools for community development and social change.

It recognises that arts in recent years have contributed significantly to the economy and have proven to be effective bridges between people and communities. A strong community cultural development approach is evident throughout the document. These include notions that creativity is a basic and powerful human capacity, that art experiences improve social, emotional and spiritual health and develop creative thinkers, and that the arts support an exploration of values and are essential cross-cultural and social change tools (ibid.). The ultimate goals of the recommendations in the policy in 1993 were to expand opportunities for people to learn and create, to develop a broader role for artists in the community, to link art to everyday lives through community cultural development processes, and to make arts central to all Park Board policies.

Dozens of CCD projects have been initiated and supported by the Park Board in the last ten years, many of which have had significant positive impact on the social and physical realm in the city (City of Vancouver, 2003d).

In 2003, the Park Board continued its collaborative approach to planning by way of a public consultation process to review the policy, assess what had been achieved in the intervening 10 years, explore community expectations and initiate further planning (City of Vancouver, 2003d). Figure 3.11 outlines the vision of the revised Arts Policy, which is guided by the values of creativity, inclusion, community, and collaboration. The Park Board seems committed to a real empowerment-based CCD approach, an understanding of which is deepened in the Chapter Four through examining the practice story of a Park Board Coordinator.

The Park Board holds a vision of a city where the arts are an integral part of everyday life, where community cultural development processes strengthen civil society, where parks and community centres reflect the cultural vitality of the community and where people are able to learn and express creativity in ways that build healthy communities.

Figure 3.10 Park Board Arts Policy Vision, 2003
Neighbourhood Planning: CityPlan and Community Visioning

In terms of urban planning in Vancouver, CityPlan was the first process that integrated the use of artists and creative interactive techniques in order to garner a wider participation and make the process more accessible (Interview with P05, May 21, 2003; Lee, 2003). It didn’t employ anything that would be considered community arts or CCD processes, but rather employed artists and tools, such as mapping and visualisation, to assist participants in communicating their concerns, desires, and opinions during the Ideas Fair and citizens’ circles. As CityPlan was essentially a conventional consultation process, the arts were used to facilitate getting information from people, rather than in a more transformative or community development oriented way (Interview with P05, May 21, 2003).

In contrast, Vision Implementation is a more community-driven process, and here creative expression and non-conventional community planning tools (such as theatre, community gardening, children’s art contests, and multicultural community dance performances) are used to facilitate community and capacity building (Interview with P04, May 15, 2003). The City’s community planning approach will be discussed in more depth through an examination of practice stories of community planners in Chapter Four.

3.4 conclusion

In Vancouver, one of the most multicultural cities in the world, the impacts of an increasingly diverse population are some of the biggest challenges facing planners today. In addition to changes in residential patterns, built form, and the social realm resulting from rapid demographic change, changes in the economic and political spheres are resulting in increased income disparity, a withdrawal of state-supported programming and devolution of power to the local level, and an amplified struggle over belonging, recognition, and rights to the city.

Vancouver City planners in the last twenty years have responded to increased diversity with a variety of policies and programs. Their focus has tended to be placed on ethnocultural diversity and concerned with improving access and participation for minority groups. A predominantly ad hoc and piecemeal approach has resulted in some
successes, but at the same time, policy and legislation do not reflect the diverse reality of Vancouver's population. Many look to Vancouver as a leader in multicultural planning, arguing that relative to other Canadian cities, it is doing very well (Edgington and Hutton, 2002; Edgington et. al., 2001). Other studies show that while through processes like City Plan and Community Visioning, the planning department is moving towards greater cultural sensitivity, dialogue and outreach, overall, newcomers receive inadequate support and information from the City (Lee, 2003) and in most planning processes, "hard to reach" and marginalised groups are consistently underrepresented (Context Research Ltd., 1998).

Public participation in planning and decision-making has a long and relatively strong history at both the provincial level in British Columbia, and in Vancouver itself. It is often seen as a leader in this field as well, with award-winning CityPlan cited as a successful large-scale citizen participation process that has resulted in a workable long-term vision for the City (McAfee, 1993). Others question how broad and meaningful participation was in CityPlan and subsequent Visioning processes (Lee, 2003).

The independent review of the City's public involvement revealed that while the City is relatively good at implementing participatory process, it is weak in terms of initial research, outreach, and mandate and in following up on public contribution afterward, leaving participants questioning if their opinions are truly valued (Context Research Ltd., 1998). Inevitably the question arises -- are these merely ritualistic exercises or rather poorly planned genuine efforts to plan collaboratively? Outreach to marginalised and multicultural groups is inconsistent in the city's participatory planning (ibid.), and where processes have included that outreach, it has been questioned how effectively a broader representation has been achieved through the use of mostly traditional planning tools like meetings and the Choices Survey (Lee, 2003; Seelig and Seelig, 1993).

The City continues to exhibit a commitment to improving its multicultural and participatory planning approaches and is in the process of developing pro-active strategies for outreach to cultural groups, a language policy, and guidelines for public involvement based on criticisms and recommendations of the Public Involvement Review (Interview with P05, May 21, 2003). This willingness to reflect and change, as
well as focus on building relationships and outreach indicates an encouraging possibility for continued mutual learning.

Challenges for planners in Vancouver continue to be the need for conceptualising diversity beyond a narrow ethno-cultural based definition, and understanding the implications of class, gender, age and other intersecting differences on planning issues and processes. An awareness of and strategies for dealing with the implications of real structural issues of power and the cultural biases embedded in planning institutions, legislation and practice are essential first steps. Planners in Vancouver must reflect on their roles as well as their traditional capacities and tools in light of the realities in which they now find themselves working and some of the criticisms voiced regarding current planning practice (from academics, other planners, and the public). The analysis of practice stories of real planners in the next chapter sheds some light on the extent to which this is happening in specific personal contexts.

The City of Vancouver envisions the arts and culture as fundamental to the economic viability, liveability and quality of life of its communities, and an effective means of encouraging cross-cultural understanding. As such, the arts are much more integrated in municipal functions than in other Canadian cities. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation in particular sees community cultural development as a fundamental component of its approach to planning and running parks and community centres, towards a more equitable, liveable, and inclusive city.

The scant literature available, mostly from departmental websites and publicly available text, suggests that there is a relatively collaborative support system for the arts among cultural planners, the Parks Board, and to a certain extent, neighbourhood planners, leaving a lot of room for possibility. How seriously the city sees arts processes, or community cultural development, as viable and effective tools in urban planning in general (and in making participatory processes more meaningful and inclusive in particular) is another question altogether. There is a great deal of talk of the essential role of artists, creativity, and the arts in enhancing liveability, managing diversity, and encouraging participation, but most of the resources seem to be funnelled towards more traditional arts areas. I sense a great deal of untapped possibility. The analysis of stories of planning practitioners in the next chapter, all of which incorporate cultural
expression and the arts into their practice in one way or another, will further illuminate the way cultural and creative expression are used and perceived.

This chapter represents the official story, gleaned from official documents, city websites, and academic reports with some supplemental information from personal communication. The following four chapters are based on empirical research of real planning and community cultural development practice. Next, I flesh out the planning context in Vancouver regarding diversity, participation, and creativity through analysing the practice stories of six real-life planners.
chapter four: planners' practice stories

4.1 the unofficial story

The field research process for me was an exciting and inspiring one, hearing the stories of real people working in unique and messy everyday situations. Talking to skilled individuals about their experiences and observing some of them in action were valuable learning opportunities, as an urban citizen and future practitioner as well as a researcher. Their willingness to open up and reflect on their work and lives was refreshing and moving, a quality I don't doubt makes them better at what they do. I certainly walked out of each interview with something new to think about, an assumption challenged, a richer sense of the realities of practice, and a connection of relationship.

The conclusions in Chapter Three are based primarily on the "official story" as it has been written about by planners and academics. From it, we get a partial idea of what is going on related to diversity, civic participation and the arts in Vancouver. The next two chapters delve into a number of unofficial stories of everyday practice, both of planners working for the City of Vancouver and a variety of community cultural developers working at the grassroots level, in order to gain insight from individual accounts of reality and experience.

The findings presented in Chapters Four and Five are drawn from conversations I had with fourteen practitioners between March and June 2003 as well as my own observations of people and processes. In this chapter I add depth to my understanding of the planning context in Vancouver by looking at the practice stories of six flesh-and-blood planners working at the heart of the issues relevant to my research questions. In the next chapter, I explore what is going on in an assortment of transformative community cultural development (CCD) processes, through the examination of the practice stories of eight practitioners, a number of informal conversations with other artists, and my own experiences and observations of CCD-related processes and events.
4.2 planners' perspectives

My respondents consisted of four planners working for the City of Vancouver - one in Social Planning, the second in the Office of Cultural Affairs and two in the CityPlan Division working on Community Vision Implementation. I also interviewed an artistic coordinator of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation as well as a diversity planning consultant who has worked with a variety of City departments over the years, as well as a host of non-government related diversity and community development initiatives. I chose these practitioners based on their experience relevant to planning for diverse populations, engaging the public in participatory planning, cultural planning and community cultural development as well as their interest in participating in the study. Although I would have liked to get the perspectives on these issues from planners working in many other fields (indeed I believe it is crucial to do so), such as housing, transportation, urban design and engineering, I chose to focus on practitioners explicitly working in the aforementioned arenas due to the size and scope of my thesis.

As each conversation lasted between one and two hours, the data I collected was voluminous and rich. Again, due to the scope of my thesis there isn't room to plum the depths of every story. Rather, what I have done is treat each planner's story separately, highlighting what I have judged to be the most telling points in each. In some cases, as with the first, I have found a general paraphrasing of pertinent details and perspectives most appropriate, whereas with others the inclusion of lengthier excerpts of stories are included and analysed.

the cultural planner - building bridges

The cultural planner is one of five working for the city. The work of his small team, as discussed in chapter three, focuses on encouraging and enabling cultural development in the city.

"...our job is... to try to find access points throughout the city's structure, to support cultural development. That could be through bonusing programs on new buildings that are built, it could be through public art, working with the engineering department to get access to the streets, or with engineers on green ways, getting an artist into the design process, working with the finance department trying to explain how we could use money better by using part of it as an advance grant, working with council to hear what they think should be done and respond to the kind of requests they get from external cultural groups. We are in the system, but we don't feel restricted by that." (Interview with P02, March 20, 2003)
This broad mandate means he works with different levels of government, communities and the private sector as well as all kinds of creative expression, including festivals, professional arts and entertainment and community-based arts. He identified his main goal as "to have a moment when staff, politicians, and the arts community are going in the same direction" which means "working towards a net of relationships and keeping those in shape while being flexible". Although he sees relationships as fundamental to his practice, he finds the time and resources needed to maintain them are always in shortage. In the last sentence of the above quote he also hints that although his team is part of the “system”, and there may be restrictions as to what can be done or what is seen as a priority or the accepted way to doing things within that system, the planner must find ways of manoeuvring around them.

A second point that stands out in the cultural planner's story is how unique Vancouver is as a city, in that the arts are very integrated. Unlike other cities where the arts are kept at arms length and supported primarily through the funding of arts foundations, in Vancouver "the city understands the multiple benefits of cultural development" in terms of "indirect returns on investment" such as employment benefits, putting Vancouver on the map culturally, and making the city more liveable and more respectful of diversity.

In terms of community-based arts, the cultural planner is enthusiastic about the potential of art processes and products to contribute to creating more liveable spaces, building community and a sense of place, and facilitating positive social change. However, he is quick to point out the tension between more process-oriented work that has social development assumptions and projects that are more product-driven, having mainly aesthetic assumptions. Some projects balance both well, while others fall short on process or aesthetic effectiveness. He argues that 3-4 month projects, like most the cultural planning department supports, can only achieve so much. Their impact is also difficult to measure. He suggested he would like to do a program review in order to help determine future directions.

Beyond cultural planning, the planner suggests that the arts, such as theatrical role-playing and participatory co-design processes with artists, are essential in working through difficult issues, getting beyond language, and being more responsive to cultural
diversity. He points to the City's support of Headlines Theatre's "Practising Democracy"\(^\text{16}\) forum theatre process as an innovative collaboration and the Celebration Grants as an opportunity for diverse communities to create festivals that stress sharing and connection across difference. These projects are specific and experimental, rather than part of an overall approach for using arts and creative expression as tools in non-arts-related planning processes. Overall, the cultural planner spoke quite formally relative to the others, using mostly traditional planning and art-world language.

**the multicultural planner - we've come a long way, but not far enough**

In contrast, the multicultural planner was less formal and more personal. At the outset he mentioned that he had both a professional perspective on difference, participation and the arts, as well as an "insider" perspective as a member of a minority community and an arts enthusiast. He points to CityPlan, discussed in Chapter Three, as the first public participation program where a central mandate was to reach marginalised and multicultural groups, and where creative tools were used to engage people beyond traditional methods. While he admits it is debatable how much CityPlan actually broadened *meaningful* participation, he argues it has left a legacy of recognition within the City that the overall approach to planning has to go in the direction of more participation and include community development approaches.

Spearheaded by the multicultural planner, the CityPlan's Community Access program, also discussed in Chapter Three, reached out to many marginalised groups — from cultural to youth groups to the differently-abled — in an effort at engaging them in the process. His team included workers from and known to those communities in order to address issues of power and trust. They went to people where they worked and lived, in coffee shops and schools, rather than only in formal process settings. The language of planning had to be broadened in the "citizen circles". People talked about issues that were important to them, not necessarily the technical planning issues planners traditionally ask for public feedback on.

"So, for example, the group might want to talk about intergenerational issues, parents wanting to talk about how they can't relate to their kids. Now that might not be a very traditional planning concern, or even a city planning concern. But when you look at

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\(^\text{16}\) This project will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.
those questions and what they imply, it's the social fabric and cohesion of communities, cultural expectations, these are all the issues." (P05, Interviewed May 21, 2003)

These more holistic and pro-active approaches to participatory planning and outreach to marginalised and diverse groups were initially met with scepticism; requests for resources were consistently questioned by managers. Today, outreach resources are built into community planning processes from the start. The planner characterised his role as "wearing two hats" - advocating for change and attempting to influence his peers, while maintaining relationships and building alliances wherever he could.

"I had to constantly insert myself to challenge certain views and certain perceptions and certain omissions. That was kind of hard too, because it was like you were part of the team but not part of the team. You're there to work together but also there to challenge." (P05, Interviewed May 21, 2003)

Although with CityPlan there was considerable change in the manner planning was conceived in Vancouver, the multicultural planner argues that it was ultimately a conventional planning process. There was confusion on the part of the public as to how their participation was reflected in the final product.

"It's all set up in a way that is not coming from a community development perspective – it's trying to fit people's issues into your own mode of thinking. Even when you say we go through a very extensive process of distilling people's ideas, even with these open sessions where anyone could come in and say anything they wanted – but, in the end it was the planners who actually get to decide what issues get to stay on as the key issues. And there are these sorts of single issues, or "one-offs", or only one person ever mentioned it – it may not be less important, but it never made it to the list. And it depends on if you attended the first meeting – the probability is not great, and with so many different cultural groups, how representative can you be? Whatever issues become the focus are considered the issues of importance." (P05, Interviewed May 21, 2003)

He argues that with diversity and marginalised groups it is critical to work with a community development approach. "You can't just translate material and expect people to show up" - issues of power are always there and must be articulated and dealt with.

"You really have to get down to basics and look at what community really means to people and their needs and desires. Working from a community development perspective, you really have to leave your agenda at the door, when you start working with groups. You can't go in thinking that things are set in stone. You really have to adjust it. Almost every step of the way. I don't mean that we throw out the whole entire objective, but as long as you really know, at the end, what you really value from that participation. You have to be very clear." (P05, Interviewed May 21, 2003)
According to the planner, there has been a considerable change in orientation since that time, which is particularly evident in the next story. Staff members are more culturally competent and the notion that better and more accessible participatory approaches are necessary, cost money, and take time is becoming increasingly accepted. The Public Involvement Review helped the City identify its weaknesses in terms of participation and work is being done on the review's recommendations, such as the development of a participation strategy.

For the multicultural planner himself, he is presently working on developing more proactive approaches to multicultural planning with the development of a policy and guidelines on how language issues are to be managed and a comprehensive strategy for outreach to cultural groups. From his story and the manner in which he tells it, it is clear that the multicultural planner sees himself as a political actor and his practice a daily evolving dialogue with his colleagues, as well as the populations with which he works. His view of dialogue is imbued with power, where one of his main jobs is to work to challenge boundaries and broaden his and others’ capacities to communicate across difference.

the community planners - changing the way we work

I spoke with two neighbourhood planners from the Vision Implementation Team at the same time. Right up front they mentioned that within the City many people see what they do as "mushy, grassroots, and subjective", not the "real work of planning" and that their whole team consists of women, save one man who is "very in touch with his mushy side". This awareness, of how their work is different from traditional planning work and how it is perceived, permeated our conversation. The energy in the office space was different than the planning offices of the previous two planners - people were dressed casually and offices felt more open.

The whole Visioning process is interesting, one which has been both praised and criticised. With the vision fairs, questionnaires and workshops, the City invites citizens to participate in a city-designed process for determining how people see the future directions of their communities. In contrast, the implementation process is community-
driven, where planners support individuals and groups who want to take action towards changing things in their neighbourhood, through capacity building, resource provision, and the bringing together of people with different knowledge, assets, and perspectives.

The theme of their story is unmistakable; in today's diverse and multicultural world, characterised by urban isolation and disempowerment --"we need to change the way we work as planners" (P04 and P06, Interviewed May 15, 2003). They identify their biggest challenges as the fact that city-dwellers don't know each other and they don't trust the City, know what it does or has to offer, or what they can offer in return. They stress that community planning must be done with a community development approach.

The following three excerpts from their story suggest ways on how community planning with diverse neighbourhoods could be done differently. The first paragraph is in reference to one of the City's first Vision Implementation projects, Windsor Way. This multicultural community had identified safety as a main concern, but it was a number of people's interest in starting a gardening project in the strip between the sidewalks and the curbs that first brought people out of their houses, seeing each other, and making connections with one another and the city staff. The second paragraph focuses on changing how people are engaged in participatory planning, and the third focuses on skills and capacities of planners.

"The greening, the gardening was really the building block. It got people out of their houses and in the streets and seeing each other and seeing, gee, this is really a beautiful place. Then they saw they could do more, and that's where the public arts came in. It's an opportunity to express yourself more. It builds pride in the neighbourhood. And anytime you can get neighbours working together on a project, getting to know each other, which builds capacity in the neighbourhood -- people feel good, that they can get together, co-operate, work with the city -- I think it's a whole different relationship evolving in the Vision areas than we ever had before. A lot of times before that, community involvement often meant community activism, which often meant conflict. "We don't like what you're doing, we want it differently". But now that they are meeting city staff, seeing that they are human beings, and see that there is the opportunity to work together to change things about their neighbourhood."

"...We traditionally expect people to come to public meetings, and with a microphone stand up in front of a room full of people tell us what's on their mind. I mean, duh!! What percentage of the population is comfortable with that? Or we only have meetings at night when people work all day and don't have child care -- so when you do that, provide childcare. Go where people are. Instead of having an open house where people have to come to you, go where they are, go to their meetings, talk to them in spaces where they are already talking and find out what they are thinking. Go early. Before you have a plan you want to bounce off them, go out and find out what their issues are."
"...In terms of a skill set, you need to have a true belief that people do know best, that they are smart, that given the right information and access to resources, they will make the right decision.... It's definitely the piece about letting go of the ego and the idea of a solid product you can point to. It's hard because we don't deliver a "plan". But we build social capital....There's that, but it's also that you're constantly working yourself out of the project, and the thing moves on to the community or others in the bureaucracy. We do a lot of handing off - introducing people to each other. And engineers are happier with their jobs because rather than dealing with hostile people after they have taken action, they go to the community in the beginning and work on a solution together. Everyone is having more fun." (P04 and P06, Interviewed May 15, 2003)

The planners make a distinction between traditional participatory planning methods, which tend to "use people", for instance on advisory boards (i.e. the relationship only lasts the length of a project), and capacity building, which supports and enables people to "create something that doesn't rely on us, so people become interested enough in their community and civic life to continue" (P04 and P06, Interviewed May 15, 2003). This requires a shift in orientation, to a valuing of local knowledge, a belief that people "know best, that they are smart" (P04 and P06, Interviewed May 15, 2003), and a focus on relationship. This shift requires re-thinking the role of planning, to one focusing on helping create opportunities for community members to connect and towards establishing a new kind of relationship between people and planners; one based on collaboration, respect, and listening from the beginning, rather than a reactive and adversarial approach. This means planners must "park their egos", become aware of their agendas and biases, and become comfortable with the subjective, messy nature of community development rather than "delivering a plan".

The neighbourhood planners stress that this approach is especially crucial when working cross-culturally and in situations of conflict. Opening up informal opportunities for dialogue is key. Traditional methods like meetings won't work - they only isolate certain groups further and rely on the "token" participation of the same "spokespeople" from minority groups. Particularly with marginalised groups and new immigrants, planners have to go where people are, in the everyday spaces that mean something to them and where the effects of diversity play out, such as in schools. They caution that each situation is different and that approaches and tools are chosen as you go along, getting to know the community and people and issues at play.
The variety and cultural sensitivity of opportunities to participate is essential. The planners have found that arts and creative expression, be it through gardening, children's plays, sidewalk stamps or murals, are great ways to get people physically doing things together, sharing knowledge and ideas, and seeing humanity in others. It builds pride, can diffuse conflict, and is fun. They recognise that as planners they are primarily "wordy people" and that communication in diverse communities needs to move beyond language (e.g. giving people instant cameras to document what they don't like about their neighbourhood). Food and children are also great crowd drawers and social equalisers; a fact that some planning managers were sceptical of at first (i.e. including food in resourcing for planning processes).

In addition to being able to let go of control, the planners emphasise the importance of being open to surprise, to one's assumptions being challenged. One must also be willing to pursue continuous learning. "You have to do everything. Go take a native plant medicine course, learn from other people, be a Girl Guide leader...You have to find ways to listen to what the community is telling you, whether it is spending days walking around or whatever" (P04 and P06, Interviewed May 15, 2003). The shift requires letting go of the idea of planning as sequential and see it rather as slow incremental changes in behaviour and perspective rooted in communication and learning.

When asked how planners in other departments see their work, they indicate their colleagues are necessarily responding to and recognising their successes (e.g. Vision Implementation has helped divided communities bridge difference; people in Vision areas are becoming more involved in civic and social action), despite their reluctance to see the value of "mushy", emotion-laden work. It's all part of a process of change, they argue, as they attempt to overcome traditional disconnects and build new relationships with and among communities.

The community planners indicated isolation as a major barrier to participation that their work tries to overcome. They didn't speak directly about what they perceived as root causes of that isolation or exclusion – such as racism, cultural bias in planning legislation, or income disparity. They recognized, however, the complexities of marginalisation in discussion about the need to get over planning's comfort with tokenism, the need for cultural sensitivity, the need to create more accessible processes,
and the importance of understanding different ways of knowing and how different people use and experience community and space. The planners focused on ethno-cultural and linguistic diversity rather than other facets of difference throughout the discussion.

Their perspective struck me as a practical, reflective, and responsive, one based on the perceived realities in which they work and demonstrating a real faith in a community development approach, rather than an overtly radical or politicised one. I was impressed with their openness and their commitment to finding better and more appropriate ways to work. In terms of the Visioning process itself, it's impossible to judge their effectiveness based on this story alone. The planners said anyone can get involved at any stage of the process, but there has been considerable criticism that the visioning processes may not achieve the broadest participation or be that inclusive (Lee, 2003).

the Parks Board coordinator - how arts processes work

Whereas in neighbourhood planning, community development and creative expression are just beginning to be recognised as useful tools, at the Park Board, the community development approach has been central to the running of community centres since the 1960s in Vancouver and the arts have been a vital component of their approach since the early 1990s. The Parks Board staff member with whom I spoke has been an arts coordinator there for over ten years and had plenty of stories of successful and not-so-successful community-based arts processes to share. The highlight of our conversation lay in gaining a deeper practical understanding of how arts processes can contribute to planning. The following is an excerpt from her story about the first CCD process the Parks Board organised in 1993, the Trout Lake Restoration Project, which was facilitated by a number of artists from the Public Dreams Society17.

"They did a really good job of gathering together all the different interests around the park. All of them felt passion and each thought their interests were the most important. You had the swimmers who thought we should just blast bleach into the lake, clean it out so you can swim all summer... Other people felt it should be a wildlife reserve and people shouldn't be allowed to swim in it. Others thought it should be a dog park... Those meetings were hair-raising. You wouldn't think so, but there was a lot of conflict there. People would be screaming. It was a long process. And they finally found the common element, the one piece that they could all agree on, which was that the lake was an eco-

17 This organisation is responsible for the Illuminaires Festival; the Parade of Lost Souls, First Night and other well loved and attended public celebrations in Vancouver.
system. That whatever happened at one end was going to impact the other. So we kind of build from there as to what could they do that would meet all needs."

"To make a long story short, through a lot of art processes they were asked to portray what it is they liked about Trout Lake. So you got very fine paintings of birds, to "Van East RULES!" to kids swimming, so you got a really broad image of the place in people's eyes. And through the whole process, people weren't asked to say "This is what I want it to be", they weren't even being asked to communicate with one another, it just happened. They sat down beside one another in a workshop and they naturally began to communicate. Kids were there, which is very important. Kids are one of those things—they cross language barriers, age barriers. People feel relaxed. They are working on the right side of their brains; they're not all linear and trying to get their position across. They're just drawing and playing. They did banners, pebble mosaics, celebrations, and other things. They also included the scientific end of things—they did a core sample to find out what was happening at the base of the lake and found out all this information that the Parks Board didn't know. And then the final thing was that they came up with this operational maintenance plan for the park, which they presented to the Board and which has been implemented since 1996." (P03, Interviewed March 14, 2003)

This story draws attention to the way that arts processes can facilitate communication across difference and language and can respond to different ways of knowing (physical, emotional, right-brained, and scientific/rational). She underlines the importance of creating a relaxed and fun environment, where people don't feel pressured to support their positions, where passion, emotion, and conflict are not avoided. This ritual space was conducive to keeping people in the moment, seeing each other's multiple facets and commonalities, rather than just their positions. The coordinator points out that doing something creative together seems to be particularly effective in bridging differences in age and culture, and in producing new ideas and solutions.

Like the neighbourhood planners, she also points out that community development work is very hard for practitioners who are used to being in control. It requires a real willingness to relinquish ownership and "step back and let people make decisions you might not agree with" (P03, Interviewed March 14, 2003). For many people with the City, these are not familiar areas of planning, so the Parks Board coordinator must always be pushing the parameters. At the same time, she thinks that "there has been fairly broad understanding that the role the arts are playing is actually important to the role that community centres are playing" (P03, Interviewed March 14, 2003).

In line with a community cultural development approach, the Parks Board prefers working with issue-based projects, taking a long-term perspective, and focusing on
community empowerment towards facilitating a planning process or resolving a conflict or historical disconnect. Another story that effectively illustrates the power of representation and arts processes in dealing with fear and disconnect is about a group that brought together the Chinatown community and the Downtown Eastside community. This group hired an artist to run public workshops making procession items to be used in a parade planned to celebrate the lunar New Year. Seniors showed younger kids how to make traditional lanterns and the artist also created a huge God of Fortune. This was the first time these communities had ever collaborated, and it was very successful.

"Just this past summer, [that same artist] worked to make another giant puppet, named Jesse, who is kind of a street involved youth with this big gorgeous piercing in his nose .... Anyway, Jesse and the God of Fortune marched in this procession from Victory Square down to the Chinese Cultural Centre where there were concerts, 500 people or so attended. And the Chinese media, which has never been behind those sort of collaborative events, reported that this was (in the caption of a picture) the God of Fortune taking care of the homeless youth. Following that just recently, the Chinese Revitalisation Committee decided that it should do a fundraising dinner for Carnegie's 100th anniversary. There is no amount of talking that could have got us there. It was an image, that somebody from the media saw and interpreted, that touched people in a way that nothing you could have said would have" (P03, Interviewed March 14, 2003).

The Parks Board coordinator asserts that out of the ninety or so processes supported by the Board so far, there have only been four where the impacts were not generally positive, leaving some bad feelings in the community. One example was a collaboration process between a school and a community centre, where the co-ordinators from each had strong conflicting visions where the processes should go. Parks Board and City staff had to go in and mediate a number of times. Secondly, when the product finally went up - ceramic masks of children's faces and body parts, which were supposed to symbolise walking, hugging, and sharing - it was not whimsical and warm as intended, but quite disturbing to some who thought the ceramics looked rather like dismembered body parts. When the artist was approached to see how the piece might be modified, she refused to change it. Bad feelings remain in the community and between the parties to this day. The principal problem here, argues the coordinator, is that what the community was saying was overshadowed by individuals' inability to let go of what they thought was right and really hear people. It and the previous quote point to how emotionally powerful images can open minds and hearts to difference as well as disturb, alienate, and de-value.
This story also underscores the delicate balance the artist has to play in a CCD process, a balance that for many artists is quite a challenge.

"They need to play a role that ensures an outcome that will make the community proud, that has aesthetic value, while at the same time trying to ensure that everyone who has participated in the process feels that their participation has been valued, and that they are left with the strong positive feeling about what they are able to do, and contribute, and learn about themselves and their community, and the arts in the process." (P03, Interviewed March 14, 2003).

the diversity consultant - communication is the key

My conversation with the diversity consultant was a particularly special experience for me. She was very interested in discussing what a holistic approach means to her, her methods and experiences, and hearing about my research and motivations. Her practice for the last twenty years has focused on working with a great variety of people - planners, police officers, high school students, minority groups, geographical communities, and more - to combat racism and fear of difference, manage diversity, and develop capacities and tools for positive change and community development. Towards those ends, the diversity planner's work is rooted in story - telling and listening – and the fundamental belief that we cannot plan/work with people if we cannot communicate with one another. We had a great connection and it was plain to see that she spoke from the heart, from a space of reflection, curiosity, sincerity and presence. She was very frank with me about her strengths and weaknesses, her biases and starting points, reflecting on how who she is impacts her practice.

The diversity planner identifies herself as a weaver of stories, verbal communication being her dominant form. She argues that we all have a dominant way of communicating with which we are most comfortable and which acts as our default approach. In planning with people, particularly across cultures and languages, she says, it is essential to create spaces and processes open to and literate in many ways of communicating and knowing. The diversity planner addresses this need by typically working in a team with others who compliment her skills and communication styles (i.e. two of her regular collaborators are more into spirit and physicality, than words as she is). In this way, each team member helps broaden the range and accessibility of the process as well as consistently challenging one another, shaking each other out of common assumptions and taken-for-granted approaches.
She recalled an instance when she and a partner were working with high school students organising workshops about racism. The diversity planner suggested a process where one group would define a type of oppression and the next would give an example of it. Her partner recommended another approach, asking the kids to show them what oppression looked and felt like.

"It was earth shattering for me; I was shaking to see them act out how they experienced this stuff. What they'd seen, what they'd felt in their bodies. Through this mime or a small word piece they brought alive into the room what was real for them, in a way that the words I would have used wouldn't have." (P01, Interviewed May 5, 2003)

This experience illustrated for her how people communicate and understand story in different ways. In her current projects, she keeps the image of an aboriginal medicine wheel visible so her and her team are always reminded of the different parts of being human. The planner argued that in community development and planning, practitioners tend to stick to their comfort zone, their default method, their dominant form of communicating and working. Working in a diverse team – of communication styles, generations, and cultures – is essential in getting past default approaches and coming up with more appropriate and creative ones. The second point focuses on the importance of listening and the ability to be present.

"...when we go into community development, most of us go in figuring we already know what the hell is right. And we just have to get them to figure it out or see it, you know, or worse, we'll just tell them what to do and they'll have to do it.... We do this because we don't listen. We go out to community to ask them questions, but we don't have a clue how to hear what they're saying. So the piece about listening that I've learned from two of my mentors, one of them is the curious piece – choose to listen, in a way that shoots you out of your usual pattern. Which means that every time I think "I know what you mean" my response is "no, you don't". Which shuts me up. What stops us, most of us, is that voice in our heads that's chattering away while this person is talking. I was aware of it when you were talking about your thesis, because you said something that triggered me and I think "Oh, yeah" and my mind goes on down this path, I don't stick with you. And as Westerners, we fear sticking with the other person's thoughts because we would lose who we were and we wouldn't get where we are going.

To stay curious with that person is the hardest thing. All you have to do is trigger an emotional pull, and we as humans are gone. And you see that in public meetings when bureaucrats or whoever will jump on a person because they've gone down their own path...So the curiosity piece is huge. It's so easy to misunderstand what we think we hear – usually as planners we hear something like "I want to know what you're going to do about the drug dealers." We do two things then: we either go to where we are ourselves about public drug dealing, or we go into judgment about what we pick up in what they're saying. Rarely do we say to the person "what is it that's concerning you about that, what is that in your world?" (P01, Interviewed May 5, 2003)
For the diversity planner, story is about both telling and listening. We need to create processes that attract and are accessible to a broader range of people and we must learn how to really listen to people when they communicate with us, both verbally and otherwise. Deep listening requires practitioners to step back, let go of their assumptions, their need for control, and what they think they know about a community or the best plan of action, and be present with people.

Allowing oneself to be truly present, and, as she puts it, "stick with another persons' thoughts" (rather than instantaneously making judgements and assumptions and going somewhere else altogether based on one's own dominant through patterns or default positions) takes work and skill. Planners could do well to question how constructive or creative are patterns rooted in a Western listening (and thinking) culture that favours black / white dualities, quick judgement, adversarial debate, categorising and labelling, versus a more open, unrestricted, fluid, curious, and receptive approach. We have to get past the "chatter in our heads" – the stories we tell ourselves and the judgements we make constantly about the world around us – in order to make some space for the stories of others. We also have to get past our own fear – our fear of losing our self, the self-concepts that might be changed by truly opening up to others' ideas and different ways of knowing. The challenge is developing both that self-awareness and that spirit of curiosity that makes real listening possible. As discussed in Chapter 2, a mindful awareness of our own assumptions and default patterns as well as deep listening can be encouraged in many ways – through meditative activities, visualisation, ritual, engaging the body, appreciative inquiry, creative expression, etc. These are skills the diversity planner argues that planners must spend time and resources learning, and are skills she tries to teach in her workshops.

In current planning with multicultural communities in Vancouver, the diversity planner argues that generally planners continue to work only with spokespeople: those "interlocutors" or members of cultural minorities who have become skilled at navigating the communication gap. Getting beyond this comfort with tokenism is essential, she argues – "we wouldn't stand for it in an all-white English-speaking neighbourhood" (P01, Interviewed May 5, 2003). Without truly hearing each other's stories, we won't ever understand the possibilities and challenges our differences represent or move forward together in change. The planner points to the Community Access process, the thorough
multicultural outreach aspect of CityPlan mentioned in Chapter 3, as one of the most effective processes of multicultural engagement the City has yet undertaken.

The planner emphasises the importance in a group process, of establishing a system of communication, one that respects each other’s ways of communicating and works against the most dominant taking over. She suggests that creative art processes, theatre, dance and movement could all contribute to a public engagement approach that firstly has room for more and varied kinds of communication, and secondly might encourage deeper listening, exposing people to patterns and experiences “other” than their own. Bringing creative expression into processes might help planners engage people more holistically and recognise the multifaceted nature of all planning issues and situations. “There are many things that I think bring people to a place where they feel safe enough to talk to us; almost invariably it doesn’t come out from us going out and doing a lecture” (P01, Interviewed May 5, 2003).

4.3 learning from planning stories

As I mentioned in the introduction, hearing these “unofficial” stories was a rich learning experience. I likely learned more about planning practice through talking to these six people than I did in two years of academic planning courses. I have shared only a fraction of each of them, honing in on content and manners of delivery most relevant in gaining a deeper understanding of planning practice in Vancouver specifically concerned with dealing with diversity, improving public participation, and integrating arts and culture. Whereas Chapter Three told the “official” story of policies and approaches, these individual stories give us an idea of how these issues and policies play out for individuals in specific, messy, daily, deliberative practice situations (Forester, 1999). We get a sense of how they see their roles, what kind of people they are and how they do their work, what they perceive as strengths in the planning system and areas in which they see a need for change.

It is evident from these stories that the planning profession in Vancouver, like elsewhere, is in an ongoing period of transition and negotiation regarding its role in city-building and society (Friedmann and Douglass, 1998; Sandercock, 1998; 2003). Planners are questioning their roles, their relationships with citizens and communities, their goals, and the kinds of tools and approaches most appropriate and effective in achieving them.
stories of planning evolution in vancouver

Five out of the six practitioners I interviewed argue that increasing diversity and other complex changes in cities and communities mean that many of the old planning models and tools no longer work, indeed perhaps never worked or even oppressed and excluded certain groups and individuals. They all see a move towards a community development approach in planning, focusing on more collaborative, pro-active, and politically-aware relationships, as essential in creating a more inclusive and responsive planning system. The majority of planners identified the need to move beyond a traditional comfort with the "token" participation of members of multicultural and marginalised groups as key, and a communicative, collaborative, development-oriented approach as the best way to begin. To that end, the multicultural planner is working on developing a more comprehensive, less ad hoc, approach to addressing the implications of diversity in planning and doing outreach to multicultural communities and the community and Parks Board staff are increasingly looking towards a community (cultural) development approach for direction and guidance.

While this is a positive step, the tendency for most planners within the planning department to limit their discussion of diversity principally to ethno-cultural difference suggests that other important aspects of diversity are perhaps being overlooked in many cases (Wallace and Milroy, 1999). These planners see diversity as a basic element of a city's or community's reality and therefore part of their personal evolving planning function, rather than considering it a "problematic issue" to be addressed primarily with special programs.

At the same time, although I didn't discuss it directly with every practitioner, I sensed from several of them that the City favours a relatively narrow and limited understanding of multiculturalism and citizenship. For example, the cultural and multicultural planners both mentioned that the City prefers supporting/dealing with organisations and projects that target a "multicultural" population rather than specific ethnic groups, suggesting a universalist desire for groups to focus on integrating and getting along (towards "unity in

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18 These changes are rooted in demographic, economic, social, cultural and political changes, such as globalization, immigration, the politics of identity, an ageing population, and increasing income disparity.
19 With the exception of some mention of generational differences and youth issues, but only peripherally. The Parks Board and diversity planners were the only respondents to address gender and physical ability as aspects of diversity they had encountered, addressed or considered in their practice. Class, educational background, sexual orientation, etc. didn't come up.
difference”), rather than claiming rights or demanding services based on unique experiences. This issue emerges as an important one in the relationship between the Filipino community and City planners in the case study in Chapter Six.

When asked about the challenges of diversity / "multicultural" planning and achieving a more inclusive civic engagement, the planners I spoke with hardly mentioned the impact on their work of identity politics, struggles for belonging and rights, and fear of difference. This surprised me, based on the emphasis placed on these issues in some of the literature (Fincher and Jacobs, 1998; Pratt, 2002; Sandercock, 1998; 2003; Young, 2000) and in my own empirical case study research. Sometimes these issues were implied, but the practitioners’ language was mostly limited to overcoming a lack of communication and connection between individuals, groups and communities. Issues of power were articulated directly and critically by some practitioners and less by others, and the idea that cultural biases are embedded in planning legislation and policy was scarcely discussed. I suspect this is due primarily to the fact that these individuals operate in a planning culture that is only willing to go so far in its recognition of its own political nature and the criticism of its own power structure. Overtly “political” community or advocacy groups – who often also perform community development and building functions – seem to be avoided as collaborators by the City in favour of those with a “safer” agenda focusing on service provision or community building. Planners generally seem to be uncomfortable with taking on advocacy and mobilising roles when things get “political” (or rather critical of dominant political agenda) – but then it’s all political, isn’t it? There doesn’t seem to be a planning language to address the messy, contested, and ambiguous nature of identity, citizenship, multiculturalism, and rights claims which characterises much of the political conversation regarding diversity.

**arts and culture – filling the gap**

Cultural and creative expression represent much better avenues for dealing with messy, contested, shifting and difficult realities of oppression, identity politics, and difference than the traditional ones (avoidance, adversarial approaches, or the discounting of dissent), precisely because they are open rather than closed and can help shift and unstick some of the powerful assumptions around these issues. They allow for ambiguity. They highlight the importance of representation and work with it. They assist in fostering
mutual learning and research and they invite and value a broader participation in a variety of forms. Most importantly, they can form a basis for dialogue where it is sorely needed. It is in the realm of developing critical and self-aware transparent political capacities, as revealed further in the following chapters, that planning is failing and must begin to address in the face of the changing realities in which it works.

It is clear from practitioners' stories that processes of cultural and creative expression are starting to be recognized as uniquely useful in their accessibility and flexibility in working with diverse populations. Getting people doing things together facilitates communication across difference and opens up physical/social/ritual space to deal with conflict and shift assumptions. Arts can engage people on a more holistic level and in revealing and valuing their rich resources, move planning processes towards a more community development and empowerment-based approach. Most practitioners recognise that more collaborative and holistic approaches, including those that include cultural and creative expression, require special qualities and skills. A few of them also identified how just doing these kinds of processes themselves (i.e. bringing in storytelling, engaging artists, trying to begin with supporting community initiatives) also help to cultivate these qualities and skills in planning practitioners as they go. It is a process of learning.

Their stories reveal that each of them, in their own practices are "changing the way they work," taking risks and seeing some positive results as well as encouraging peer feedback as they introduce new tools and develop new professional capacities. At the same time, "we've got a long way to go." Their stories show that they feel they are "pushing the envelope," challenging their contemporaries and "constantly inserting themselves" in the face of colleagues that are often not comfortable or in agreement with their methods or the changes they promote.

Five out of six practitioners argued that many planners who are traditionally trained and technically/bureaucratically minded resist or have difficulty working with community development and cross-cultural communication techniques. They require one to let go

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20 For example, community development; community cultural development; being pro-active and going where people are vs. having them come to you; opening up to new ways of listening and communicating, such as story-telling.

21 Such as, skills in communication and listening; informal dialogue, research and learning; participatory research; relationship building; collaboration vs. adversarial approaches; awareness of bias and power to a certain extent; becoming more literate in emotional and non-verbal language.
of control of a process, open up to non-verbal and emotional language, have faith that “people are smart” and know what’s best, and be aware of power and inequality. While most of these practitioners gave the impression that their perspectives don’t represent the majority of planners, they also maintained that many of their fellow planners, engineers, architects and designers are beginning to recognise some of their successes, overcome their scepticism of the importance of diverse outreach and community development processes, and come to a broader understanding of the significant role arts can play in communities.

The planners contend that moving towards a more inclusive and participatory planning system requires changes of mindset and structure at many levels, least of all a redistribution of resources and developing the necessary political will, as well as prioritising time differently and revolutionising training and education. The diversity consultant makes a case for wider dialogues, collaborations and learning across disciplines and fields, such as community development but also with organisations, activists, and leaders working on the ground in communities, in schools, and in agencies. There is much difficult work to be done, and still many questions coming from these practitioners about how to do it.

**are these planners engaging in more holistic practice?**

I argue they are. I was somewhat surprised as I harboured assumptions and stereotypes of planners as formal, bureaucratic, and technocratic. In contrast, my conversations with these practitioners were informal, comfortable, personal and nitty-gritty practical as well as thoughtful and reflective. All but one planner displayed (and argued for its importance) considerable awareness of and reflection on how their identities, backgrounds and cultural biases impact their work, and the ways in which they attempt to address this. I was surprised by their level of candour and reflexivity.

In the first section of Chapter Two, I outline some of the components of a “holistic approach” to planning cities of multiplicity advanced by planning theorists such as Ameyaw (2000), Burayidi (2000), and Sandercock (2003). In the second section of that chapter I consider more deeply what it might mean to engage *whole people and communities* as *whole practitioners* ourselves by adopting an “epistemology of
multiplicity" (Sandercock, 1998) and opening up the implications of (and rich resources inherent in) our multiple intelligences, our multi-faceted selves and interconnected world. Finally, I explored literature on art and society, creativity and planning, participatory arts and community cultural development, looking for insight as to whether and how creative expression might hold a special role in a more holistic approach to participatory planning. These practice stories can be considered in light of these notions of holistic approaches.

As mentioned above, all of the practitioners I spoke with advocated a planning practice based on a community development model, rooted in experiential and mutual learning, dialogue, asset-based capacity building, and a co-operative, pro-active approach. In practice, these planners reject the six pillars of modernist planning in many ways, in favour of an “epistemology of multiplicity” that is open to and values knowing through dialogue, experience, local knowledge, symbolic and non-verbal evidence, contemplation and action-planning (Sandercock, 1998). It’s an evolution, a process, and a messy one at that. Some elements of modernist planning persist more than others, particularly the reluctance to see planning as an inherently political and value-laden process.

These six practitioners also display and encourage many of the capacities and tools planners need to develop in order to shape more holistic practices. The community and Parks Board practitioners and diversity consultant in particular exhibit a welcoming to and comfort with the languages of emotion, intuition, and conflict. Several spoke of the importance of physical experience and knowledge, as well as embodied learning. All of the practitioners show a willingness to take risks, challenge/question themselves and their colleagues, surrender control, and have faith in people and communities. Several of them talk about the importance of being present, learning how to really hear what people are saying, and being aware of and moving past assumptions, biases, starting points, default approaches, comfort zones, and the “chatter in their heads”. All of them, in one way or another, convey the importance of spirit and celebration, while a few hint at the fundamental spiritual aspect of truly working with and opening up to others.

The above encompasses what Sandercock (2003) called notions of audacious and therapeutic competencies, two out of the five aspects of a new planning imagination (the other three being political, critical, and creative). In terms of expanding planning’s
political horizons and critical capacity, the stories of these planners indicate a keen criticism of power issues in some cases and less in others. There is definitely an impression that community mobilisation and collaboration between public and private interests and communities are seen as essential. However, what that means exactly for each practitioner is unclear. Overall, their stories and general avoidance of political language indicates the planning profession's tendency to avoid the implications of its inherent political (messy, contested) nature (and therefore the current political conversation about identity, difference, multiculturalism, etc.) remains.

As for developing a creative practice, the first two capacities are indispensable and these practitioners seem to be aware of their importance. The growing understanding of the usefulness and power of the arts and the creative process for individuals, groups and communities is also evident in these practitioners' advocacy of collaborations with artists in a range of planning activities and the use of participatory arts processes. The stories, observations, and analyses they offer regarding art processes and the use of creative expression in their work offer much insight into how these processes work and why, and reflect much of the existing literature on the subject. What's particularly interesting in terms of this thesis is how arts and culture provide tools, approaches and encourage certain skills and capacities important for planning for multiple publics in a specific urban planning context.

In reviewing these “unofficial planning” stories, an omnipresent refrain from the practitioners is the importance of relationship and communication, and specifically, how dominant modes of communication are culturally and personally determined. From most of the practitioners we heard similar appeals: We have to learn how to listen to what individuals and communities are saying to us, in the many ways they are saying it. We need to be communicating from the beginning. We need to get to know each other, to re-learn how to do that. We need to understand ourselves better and how who we are effects how we work. We pay a lot of lip service to participation, but to truly create meaningful opportunities for diverse populations we have to make a lot of fundamental changes, question many assumptions, and commit time, energy, resources, and ourselves.
The practitioners I spoke with see creative expression, the arts, and community cultural development as doing special work and having diverse positive impacts in Vancouver in the fields in which they work. They also speculate that these kinds of processes hold great possibility for contributing much more than they already do, in terms of facilitating dialogue and communication, especially across difference; creating different kinds of social spaces, away from issues and conflict and more open and expressive; making decisions and imagining alternatives; creating special, inclusive, more liveable and respectful cities and physical spaces, and contributing to community development processes. Currently, the arts are integrated in some ways towards these ends in Vancouver municipal departments and functions, but they could be much more so in terms of an overall approach to planning, beyond primarily arts-based projects and issues. In the next chapter, I examine the practice stories of artists, community organisers and cultural developers, some of which have worked closely with the planners interviewed in this chapter and others who have not, in order to better understand Vancouver’s grassroots creative community work and what is really going on in these processes.
5.1 grassroots creativity - stories of transformation in action

As a leader in community cultural development work in Canada, Vancouver was an exciting place to explore a variety of current CCD practices and processes. The CCD literature fails to elaborate on the special qualities, skills, and capacities required of CCD practitioners, which includes working with multiple intelligences, although the importance of this understanding is clearly mentioned. As so little has been written about community cultural development in this city, especially with planning in mind, I thought it useful to get an idea of the variety of work being done before examining case studies in depth. What are individuals and organisations doing to creatively engage people in action that moves toward greater social and environmental justice and that encourages more pluralist ways of living? What are their goals, methods, and tools? What skills and capacities do practitioners display? How do people experience these processes and products? What can the planning profession learn from their stories about the implications of diversity and creating a more inclusive planning culture?

There was no shortage of practitioners eager to discuss work they consider fundamental to a healthy urban society, and that many regard as under-studied and often under-appreciated. This section provides a brief overview of CCD work by examining the stories of eight practitioners who possess a broad range of field experiences. This sample is not meant to be representative. Interviewees were chosen based on social networks and willingness to participate, however, I looked for people with a diversity of backgrounds, years of experience, and whose choice of artistic mediums and target community/participant groups varied widely.

I have organised the analysis of these practice stories into five sections: a brief biography of each respondent and their work; a general discussion of practitioners' perceptions of working with diversity and civic participation; a summary of how they do what they do (their goals, capacities, skills and techniques); a reflection of the experiences and impacts of their work on the participants and the communities where...
they are implemented; and a consideration of the challenges, negative impacts and any "dark sides" of CCD practice.

**who's doing what**

Community-based arts work in Vancouver ranges from public art projects created by artists in consultation with communities, to short-term community-based arts projects or residencies, to longer-term, more radical, social-change-oriented community cultural development work – and everything in-between.

Vancouver has an active and vibrant arts community and a range of arts organisations, conferences and gatherings that support and attract artists and organisers involved in community-based art and CCD work. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the municipality is quite forward thinking in terms of an integrated approach to the arts. The Creative City Conference, held in November 2002, has spawned a national Creative City Network of people working at the level of local arts, design, heritage, and community arts work, as well as a newsletter and a string of conferences on related topics. On the more radical side of things, in August 2004 Cates Park in North Vancouver welcomed the 15th Annual Under the Volcano – Festival of Arts and Social Change, a weekend of workshops, exhibits, and performances by artists and activists promoting issues such as the rights of women, First Nations, and immigrants, and the fight against war and imperialism.

Before delving into the details of the experiences of my respondents, the following discussion presented in boxes, briefly outlines their professional backgrounds related to CCD and identifies the projects to which they spoke to most during our conversations helping to give a sense of the great breadth of work that exists in the city – from small

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22 The City of Richmond, also, has been pursuing a more active and collaborative role with artists, designers, and community through its Lulu in the City Series of lectures and workshops in the last few years.
projects to large-scale programs, annual events, all working with various media, issues
and participant populations.

1. Creative Community Health Development
As a community developer with the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, a central part of this
practitioner's job is reaching "hard-to-reach" members of her very multicultural and economically
diverse community. Most of our conversation revolved around a two-year-long (2000-2002)
community art outreach project she managed called Body pARTS which involved three
neighbourhoods, three artist facilitators, and focused on engaging women, children, seniors, gay,
lesbian, bisexual, transgendered individuals, people with mental illness, people with disabilities,
and the aboriginal community in a dialogue about health and well-being through drawing, story-
telling, and the creation of large multi-media wall hangings. We also discussed her experience
organising Banners on Broadway, a multi-year community banner-painting project in the
multicultural Mount Pleasant neighbourhood. (Interview with CD01, May 4, 2003)

2. Art, Parks, and Storytelling
This artist and activist's community art experience consists of a number of related projects she
facilitated in South Vancouver, including: engaging different community groups in producing
murals on bus shelters, a collaborative memory-mapping project between schools, community
centres and other groups that involved collecting oral histories and creating public historical
markers, and a public art project in Everett Crowley Park. These projects were all part of the
South East Vancouver Discovery Project. (Interview with CD02, May 16, 2003)

3. Multicultural Mosaics
This visual artist has facilitated community-based arts projects with a variety of communities;
including an indigenous-planting project with First Nations people at False Creek and a mural
project in a school in Point Grey. Our conversation focused on his most recent project,
Community Walls, Community Voices (2003), where hundreds of residents of the multicultural
Commercial Drive area participated in mosaic workshops that resulted in a large-scale permanent
mosaic series on a retaining wall on that street. The project brought together a great diversity of
people and a significant role was played by First Nations youth throughout the design and
creation of the project. (Interview with CD03, May 23, 2003)

4. Radical Quilting and much more...
This visual artist has been doing community-based / driven work for over twenty years. Some of
her many projects include a community-designed and implemented museum exhibit about the
history of the Chinese community in Vancouver; an exhibit of oral history and artwork done by
people with developmental disabilities in association with the BC Association for Community
Living; the Middle East Quilt Project that brought together 300 people from around the world
and created 30 quilts that have travelled the globe since 1999; and more recently, community
quilting processes in the Mount Pleasant and Kerrisdale neighbourhoods that have brought
together recent immigrants to Canada. (Interview with CD04, March 21, 2003)

5. Theatre of the Living
This practitioner is the outreach co-ordinator for Headlines Theatre and a theatre artist who has
been involved in socially-engaging theatre, story-telling, and movement work for many years.
Our conversation touched on the creative activist work she has done with a number of
organisations dedicated to working with youth and issues of mental illness, as well as the
Headlines' forum theatre projects that were current at the time: "Don't Say a Word: How Not to
get Your Ass Kicked," which was about youth violence and was written and performed by
students of two Vancouver high schools; and "Practising Democracy," which was written and
performed by citizens of the city about issues of poverty. The city council endorsed the process
and received an official report on the results in the spring of 2004. (Interview with CD05, March 19, 2003)

6. Creative Learning across Difference
Like many others, this respondent considers herself both a community cultural development practitioner and a studio artist. Our conversation focused on her experiences and impressions of the main CCD processes she has been involved with: she has done two elementary school artist residencies and she facilitated Watch your Step!, a process where street-involved youth were trained and then facilitated creative processes that built capacity and enhanced self-esteem while also building bridges between the youth and new residents of the area, and enhancing the public space in Yaletown with permanent public artwork. (Interview with CD06, June 9, 2003)

7. Celebrating Public Dreams
This celebration artist has been with The Public Dreams Society since it was founded in 1987. This organisation produces Vancouver's spectacular, participatory, urban celebrations Illuminaires, Circus of Dreams, Parade of the Lost Souls, and First Night. It also holds workshops for artists and non-artists in celebration-making, costume, puppetry, lantern-making and is often invited by communities across British Columbia to facilitate participatory arts processes and celebrations to help build community, develop local capacities, and address social problems. (Interviews with CD07 in February 21, 2003)

8. Young People Dancing Towards Change
This practitioner is the Director of DanceArts, a socially/community engaging dance company. The company creates small and large-scale art projects and productions which include live performances and touring, video, film and television, workshops and animation events. Two recent large-scale music, theatre, and multi-media performances entitled Ice: Beyond Cool and Fire: Where There's Smoke were rooted in four years of workshops with hundreds of teenagers exploring issues of suicide and violence, respectively. Written and performed by the teens themselves, the projects toured around Canada and engaged audiences and local activists, youth-centred agencies, teachers, and counsellors in dialogue and organising. (Interviews with CD08 April 4, 2003)

questions of reality, form, and philosophy

The respondents had much to say regarding public participation in planning in Vancouver and their own experiences of trying to engage diverse communities and individuals in creative and social action. Most of their comments revolved around three interconnected themes: the impact of diversity, isolation, disillusionment, distrust and inequalities in power and resources on civic participation; the importance of the form in which opportunities for participation are offered; and the difference between public consultation and community development.

Practitioners contend that in today's society, barriers to participation in local governance, planning, and social action are many and multi-layered. One artist argues that a general culture of non-participation has resulted from a lack of knowledge of how government
structures affect peoples' lives and how to communicate their concerns because they are so rarely asked their opinion (CD02, Interviewed May 16, 2003). A number of artists speak of participation fatigue and disillusionment; community members they talk with don’t feel their opinion is valued, lack faith in participatory processes, and often feel put down and powerless (CD01, Interviewed May 4, 2003; CD06, Interviewed June 9, 2003; CD07, Interviewed February 21, 2003; CD08, Interviewed April 4, 2003). Others talk of fear and “NIMBYism”, people wanting to avoid getting involved in anything perceived as related to “trouble populations” (CD03). In a city as diverse and multicultural as Vancouver, many communities and individuals also experience barriers to participation based on language, income, age, low self-esteem, ethnicity or race, sexual orientation, gender, physical ability, or mental illness (CD01; CD02; CD05, Interviewed March 19, 2003; CD06). The artists/organisers maintain that the majority of opportunities to participate in planning in Vancouver are simply not accessible to most and are not structured to respond to the varied ways most people are able to or willing to contribute.

Many of the respondents claim that community-based arts and CCD often offer processes that are more accessible to a wider range of people and that engage people more meaningfully and holistically. One practitioner mentions in reference to what many planners call “hard to reach” populations “these people are not ‘hard to reach’ to their friends, their families, or in the places they go – just when you call a meeting” (CD01). The respondents argue that how people are asked to participate is crucial. Few people respond to or are comfortable with the formal meeting format (CD01), it draws a very narrow demographic, and elicits only certain kinds of information (CD06). It represents the dominant power structure and only responds to ways of knowing, being and communicating that speak to those parts of that structure. One practitioner stated “our planning system doesn’t respond to art work, although it should” as it can provide so much information about the needs and resources of individuals and communities; “they don’t look beyond the microscopic or the big picture – outside the box and beyond their assumptions” (CD01).
Most of the practitioners, however, are quick to assert that the form in which you try to reach people is just as important as why you do it – the intention or philosophy behind eliciting participation. Many of the artists/organisers were critical of most participatory planning as ritualistic and shallow, done without the proper initial research, training or follow up so as to achieve a level of community ownership or buy-in in a process. For them, it's the difference between using people to extract information needed to complete a mostly pre-determined project and collaborating with people, trusting them, and shifting some of the power and responsibility to communities and citizens in a longer-term approach to democratic decision-making.

"People aren't going to put forward their opinion if their opinions aren't respected or used. And on the other hand, public opinion is so rarely solicited that people don't know how to communicate/participate and they don't have a vision for their community, they don't have ideas of how things can be different. Artistic process could help, but you also need training and education and once people start responding there needs to be a way of using those responses in a very productive way."

(CDO2)

**Figure 5.3 Engaging the few**

**how they work**

The practitioners with whom I talked spoke passionately about their philosophies, the goals they have in their work and how they perceive their roles. These discussions often recalled similar discourse on the objectives and principles of community cultural development in Adams and Goldbard (2001; 2002), Dickson (1995) and others. They spoke of arts / CCD processes as essential channels of social transformation; social diversity as an asset and possibly as well as a challenge; and the fundamental values of
dialogue, participation and mutual and experiential learning in working towards positive social change and equity. Table 5.1 outlines the way the artist/organisers characterised their goals as they told their practice stories.

Table 5.1 Practitioners voice their goals in their work.

| Ownership: To facilitate truly community-driven processes where local knowledge and assets are stressed in the planning and implementation of projects rooted in participant goals and desires. |
| Communication: To foster dialogue and create spaces where people interact that normally wouldn’t, creating storytelling and listening opportunities using a range of mediums of communication (often untold or denied stories/histories). |
| Positive Experience: To create avenues where people can have fun, enjoy themselves, play, celebrate, and feel good about their participation; contribution, and the artistic product. To enhance self-esteem/image of participants, especially the most marginalised. |
| Relationship: To bring people together, encourage connection and sharing across difference, and establish mutually meaningful and collaborative relationships between participants and artists/organisers. |
| Learning: To provide an opportunity for people to learn about art, themselves, others, and their environment in new, different, accessible, and transformative ways. To facilitate shifts in consciousness, promote critical and self-awareness; to move, shake, provoke, open, and heal. |
| Community development: To build capacity for action, change, to address problems and disconnects. To create positive, inclusive, beautiful and productive social and physical spaces. |

“Art work, people’s creations must be the focus, not only a ‘tool’. It wasn’t about using art to get in the door and then turning it into something else. It’s about finding a balance between trying to reach deeper and use arts to understand peoples’ needs and wants, and still respecting the actual art work.” (CD01)

“In ‘Don’t Say a Word’, there is the possibility that the audience be really shaken and moved. [Also] we are hoping that it will build a culture amongst youth that makes violence not OK. It’s not actors pretending to be kids – it’s actually kids who propagate the culture. That’s where the ownership happens. I think it’s a really beautiful model for community development” (CD05)

Community-driven, inclusive, transformative and fun processes are clearly a principal goal for all of these practitioners. The product, however, was a focus for some and less for others. Some practitioners, as they told their stories, concentrated on the significance of the product relative to how it reflected the process and instilled pride in the participants. Others, such as the two quoted above, stressed the interconnection between the process and the product itself – be it a performance, celebration, or piece of public art – and its power to engage, provoke, question, and transform people and spaces not necessarily involved in the original creative process itself. Creative products, such as the forum theatre plays of Headlines Theatre, DanceArts productions, and
Public Dreams celebrations are in fact processes themselves to a certain extent, inviting spectator participation.

The practitioners tend to see themselves in the dual role of artist-facilitators, their principal job being to bring their specific knowledge and experience in the arts to the community development project, assisting others in tapping into their own creative and cultural resources. Their methods and tools are many. CCD processes take a substantial amount of time, at the least 4-6 months, but more often over a year or more. The process generally (although not always) consists of four progressive stages: (1) an initial preparation, research and outreach phase; (2) a training, implementation, and creation phase; (3) an exhibition, performance, and celebration phase; and (4) an evaluation and follow-up phase. As in any community development process, experiential learning/reflection/action and relationship building are central aspects of the process from beginning to end. Figure 4.5 lists many of the kinds of tools practitioners use throughout the CCD process.

Stage 1: Preparation – All of the practitioners stress the importance of preparation, good planning and thorough outreach at the outset of any project. CCD processes are initiated in a variety of ways, but ideally at the core of every one is the cultivation of relationship between the community/participants, the CCD practitioners, and any facilitating organisation that might be involved. Relationship building is a fundamental means and end in itself in CCD, the basic building block of the work. Many of the practitioners mentioned starting with existing networks in doing outreach, and therefore
stressed the importance of engaging local people as much as possible as project team members, resource people, participatory action researchers, and of course as participants. They encourage a constant awareness of who is participating, who is not, and who might be excluded, how, and why. This participatory approach is essential in order to develop a common goal, vision, or some sort of agreed-upon starting point with which to move forward as well as ensure the process is as culturally appropriate and potentially effective as possible. Many practitioners cited juggling participant goals/ideas with the need for some sort of coherent aesthetic vision/product as one of their most challenging jobs, something they weren’t always able to achieve as well as they would have liked.

**Stage 2: Creation** – As CCD is about the experience and empowerment of the participants, practitioners emphasise good listening skills and the need to value everyone’s creative contributions equally. It’s not about who’s the better artist, but about cultivating the creativity of each participant and making the processes as accessible and attractive to as many as possible. As such, it is crucial to offer a great variety of ways for people to participate (e.g. different roles, modes, creative mediums, levels of commitment). “Everyone is an expert”, and practitioners often participate in activities alongside participants, further breaking down barriers, sharing more of themselves, and creating a welcoming and non-intimidating environment.

Cultivating creativity requires that practitioners are very conscious of creating open, fun, welcoming, safe environments where people can take risks, open up, be themselves, and cross boundaries. Some of them discussed the importance of welcoming both positive and negative emotions, the importance of where processes were held (e.g. in community spaces, on “neutral” turf where conflict was an issue), of what conditions are appropriate for the participants involved (e.g. cultural issues, childcare, time of day workshops are offered, food or monetary compensation for street-involved youth). Several practitioners stressed how important it is to be open, to keep one’s biases,
assumptions, and agenda in check, so as to avoid creating processes that are intimidating, too technical, didactic, or oppressive.

Several practitioners mentioned the importance of having a theme or starting point during the creation process. Often, participants are doing artwork or performing for the first time and it can be easier to begin, open up, and try something new if there is a little direction or something to work from. At the same time, they are careful not to stifle creativity by imposing too many limitations or suggestions. All practitioners identified the importance of time in the creative process. On the one hand, if people are given time to let their ideas incubate through several stages of creation, intellectual, social and emotional processes can deepen, taking them places they never would have gone in a quick process (CD06). On the other, creating things quickly and instinctively – without giving participants enough time to analyse or criticise their work – can help people tap into different ways of knowing, move past assumptions and taken-for granted perspectives, and open up (CD01).

**Stage 3: Exhibition/Performance** – CCD processes typically culminate in an exhibition or performance of the finished product, inviting the wider public to share in the experience. The level of participation of the public in this exhibition or performance may also vary. Members of the public are often spectators in more formal settings, but they may also become performers and artists in their own right in a participatory theatre format. There is often a celebration involved, a ritual of sorts, and things done to further mark the meaning of the work for participants and others (e.g. having community leaders speak or attend, unveiling signage, sharing the story with the media). Relationship building hopefully continues and expands through this process, as do the opportunities for the creative product to foster dialogue, contribute positively to physical and social space, or achieve any of the other specific goals of the project.
Stage 4: Evaluation/Follow-up – As CCD projects are action and change-oriented, practitioners are always looking to see what results of the processes might imply for future action. The amount of time or resources they “officially” have for follow-up work depends on how the project was funded or supported. The same goes for evaluation. For established organisations like Headline’s Theatre, DanceArts, and The Public Dreams Society, evaluations are essential components of any project. For smaller projects or those not associated with such established organisations, evaluation typically seems to be done informally by the practitioners and volunteers themselves. Sometimes there is time and resources for a more thorough participatory evaluation of a process, but funding is typically modest enough to be prohibitive. External evaluation is rare, unless mandated by a supporting body such as the Parks Board.

who and how they are

The practitioners I interviewed struck me as very special kinds of people. All of them, except for the community developer who has little arts experience, are gifted artists who are very individually motivated and skilled in their respective crafts/mediums. All of them do their own studio work as well as CCD or community arts work. At the same time, having little or no training (yet varying levels of experience) in community work, these practitioners may be considered “organic”, naturally gifted community artist-organisers who display capacities and skills essential to community development work, and a more holistic approach to community work in particular. First of all, the practitioners are open, friendly, approachable people and good communicators; they are all both storytellers and listeners. They seemed observant and responsive, yet at the same time displayed strong vision, leadership, and original ideas, as shown in the three interview quotes below. This style of communicating and working with people came across very clearly in our conversations as well as in process where I was able to observe the facilitation skills of a few of the practitioners in action.

“You need to be accepting and open, while at the same time being aware of your personal boundaries. It’s important to be diplomatic, even tempered, flexible and good at drawing people out” (CD03)

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23 The impacts of funding sources for community art / CCD projects are discussed further in the last section of this chapter.
"We are working towards health and wholeness in this work. We are each made up of different parts – cells – as are communities; we must recognize and maintain the integrity of different parts, individuals, and environments." (CD05)

"The key is listening to what people say, especially when working with a group with very different circumstances and needs. I had to listen and think, 'ok, I wouldn't do that with a school group, but here it makes sense and is important.'" (CD06)

An analysis of their practice stories reveals that practitioners are flexible and willing to adapt to circumstances, whether it be resource limitations or the abilities and goals of participants. They also indicate an inclination to be open, to share their assumptions and biases and consider the implications for their practice. The practitioners articulated or displayed a willingness to be affected, moved, and changed - by others and by a process – as well as a willingness to learn about themselves and their own creative process through this work.

Several practitioners cited the need to have a combination of skills for this kind of work, either in one person or a team, bringing together a strong process sense with aesthetic and creative skills. To varying degrees, practitioners seemed to be literate in both the languages of the emotions, body, intuition, imagination and spirit, as well as the language of reason, action-plans, and resources. Every person is unique of course, dominant in certain areas more than others. Some practitioners came across as very political, talking of transformation, shifting consciousness and power, and socio-political change, while others focused more on community building and bringing people together. What they all shared were special artistic and creative dexterity and vision. Their storytelling and listening abilities and their willingness to relinquish control, trust others, and be changed themselves help them cultivate special kinds of environments, processes, and relationships that harness and encourage creativity in others.

**experiencing community cultural development**

A good deal of the practitioners' stories centred on the processes themselves, as they responded to my questions: What are the impacts of this kind of approach? How do people experience these processes? What do art and creative expression bring to a community process? What's going on here? This section highlights the positive effects and transformative capacity of CCD according to their stories; the way they tend to
broaden who can and does participate in process as well as expand how people are engaged. The challenges and potential negative impacts of CCD processes are then discussed in the following section. Before I begin either, however, I would like to share a few of my own experiences of community cultural development in Figure 5.8.

**Figure 5.7 Experiencing Community Art: A few personal stories**

My first experience of community art was in 2002 when myself and three classmates decided to organise a community quilting process amongst the students, staff, faculty and alumni of our planning school. Since then, in the process of research for this thesis, I have attended numerous performances, exhibits, and courses; visited spaces and public art; and participated in a number of processes of community cultural development (please see appendix A). Three experiences stand out for me the most.

I attended the fourth and fifth annual "Roots, Rhymes and Resistance" (RRR) in 2002 and 2003, which is a community cultural evening of performance organised by Ugnayan ng Kabataang Pilipino sa Canada / the Filipino-Canadian Youth Alliance of Vancouver. It is a venue for Filipino youth to express their concerns, educate the community, and empower themselves through creative and cultural forms. The performances include dance, spoken word, theatre, and music. It is incredible to be a part of these evenings – the energy in the room is celebratory, full of intensity and emotion. The audience consists of people from all generations and many communities. The performers, most of whom are very young, have this amazingly positive, invigorating space to express themselves that they don't have access to in school or other public spaces. There is so much talent and courage, as well as pride in the room. What was particularly moving for me was to see many people I know quite well express themselves in very open, emotional, raw, physical ways that communicated things I had never known or felt from them in our daily work interactions. I was on the edge of my seat at times, feeling my way through the performances. A freestyle rapper from the Native Youth Alliance did a piece that reflected experiences similar to some of those expressed by Filipino spoken word artists, conveying solidarity between groups and individuals. These evenings really highlighted for me the transformative power of performance.

As I did research on my second case study, I spent a lot of time exploring Collingwood Neighbourhood House as well as Slocan Park and Renfrew Ravine where many of the Arts Pow Wow celebrations and community public art processes are held. One of the things that strikes me about spaces that have been transformed by community cultural development processes is just how pleasant, personal, interesting, provocative and inviting many of them are. I've seen pictures and heard stories of what Slocan Park was like before the Pow Wow: an underused park perceived to be unwelcoming and unsafe by the community it was meant to benefit. Now it's feels like a place, not just a space. It's changed practically (i.e. safety lighting, walking paths) and magically, with a gorgeous Aboriginal carving of an eagle surveying it from the north end, mosaics in walkways, a mural on the field house, and native plantings around the park. It’s become a place of celebration and gathering in the community, which I can feel walking through it on a Saturday afternoon.
Finally, I attended a workshop that was part of DanceArts’ third youth-focused multi-media project, called Earth. It was a three-day movement workshop where we (8-11 young people between 15 and 27 years of age) engaged in dozens of physical games, exercises and discussions about how we relate to and feel about environmental issues. I’d never done movement/dance work before and I was excited but nervous. We started with a lot of physical trust games that put me at ease. There was definitely something unique about getting my body moving that stops my mind from falling into its usual ruts; in fact it gets me out of my head and listening to my heart, body, intuition. We had to come up with images, poses, sketches, and dances that expressed things we wanted to convey. I was by far the oldest. It was such a rare opportunity to hang out with and talk to young women about these issues – about peace, equality, power, nature, conservation, and consumerism. With that range of ages I think it would have been nearly impossible to achieve the intensity and depth of conversation we did if we had just been asked questions. I bet few of those women would have come to a youth meeting about the environment if it was just about talking. Moving and dancing, we were all equal. No one was older, better. All offerings were accepted and therefore I think we all felt a bit freer, less self-conscious than usual. There was something very powerful and resonant about expressing what were simple but profound notions or feelings though our bodies. We went further than we would have, and I felt like I came up with ideas, connections, and insights I wouldn’t have if not for the images, the metaphors we used, and the whole ritual we engaged in. And it was FUN.

what’s going on in CCD

In the following section, I elaborate on how cultural development practitioners view the process and benefits of CCD in enhancing civic participation and engagement in community planning.

1. Accessibility and Appeal. Practitioners see CCD processes as often more accessible and appealing than other kinds of opportunities for civic participation. As CCD processes invite and value many ways of communicating, learning, experiencing, and knowing, they attract a broader range of participants and offer more choices in terms of involvement. Many of the respondents mentioned that CCD is particularly appealing for groups and individuals typically marginalised by mainstream process because they specifically work to identify and overcome barriers to participation rooted in inequalities of political, cultural, economic and social power. They attempt to create processes that speak to the groups and individuals they are targeting, that are relevant and appropriate to their lives. All practitioners underlined the fact that CCD especially attracts a multicultural and often multi-generational crowd.

Practitioners have been both surprised and impressed at how willing people are to try new creative things and open up in this way. “People were just remarkably willing, no
matter what age!” (CD01). Faced with the reality of an overwhelming bureaucracy and busy lives, fun, enjoyable processes and opportunities to play mean a lot to people (CD02, CD04, Interviewed March 21, 2003). Practitioners discussed how many participants directly express their appreciation for the experience, as well as pride and confidence in their contributions - “people leave feeling good, which is a big thing because people often leave meetings not feeling good at all” (CD01).

2. Communication and Story. Practitioners find that people are more comfortable opening up and telling their stories when they are offered a variety of ways of expressing themselves. Art and cultural expression, they argue, is particularly effective in overcoming language barriers. “It’s a real equalizer for those who’s English isn’t great or for those more articulate in modes other than verbal. Generally, I think only 5-10% of the population thrive at communicating verbally in formal meetings – but that’s how planning processes are done.” (CD01). “If done properly, art processes are just so much more open to people expressing themselves.” (CD05). Through story in all its forms, people begin to see commonalities and understand differences; they validate their own unique experiences; and they are surprised, challenged, and emotionally and imaginatively engaged.

3. Creative Process. Practitioners emphasised the uniqueness of the creative process itself and the special things it brings to a participatory process. These “special things” include:

(a) Now-ness/Newness. Making or expressing something creatively brings you outside of your comfort zone and away from habitual patterns; it makes you stop and be present. “It just sort of takes your brain somewhere else. Because you get into your own sort of groove about language and how you formulate stuff and the arts provides an opportunity to just come at it in a different way.” (CD01).
(b) Intuitive process. Instead of being asked a question or to directly comment on an issue, the creative process asks you to start with a theme or idea and see what happens. Using physical materials, one must engage the right side of the brain and bring in aesthetics, intuition, what 'feels right', taste, as well as intellectual ideas about the issue. This produces different results and makes different kinds of meaning. “It can deepen emotional and intellectual work on an issue.” (CD06).

(c) Action / Creation. A number of practitioners drew attention to the importance of action, of making or creating something into being, of the importance of trying something in the development of a sense of agency, confidence, imagination, and intuition, rather than just talking about it. One practitioner contends the making deepens the emotional aspect and argued that while art as communication is one thing, art as creation is just as powerful. “The meaning is in the making” (CD06). Creating something and witnessing the creations of others goes beyond a verbal exchange or intellectual understanding to an immediate place of visceral, emotional experience. “You see it, you feel it” (CD05).

(d) Reflection. Reflexivity is built in to the creative process. “There is incredible stuff that happens when people are expressing themselves, in writing or visual art, because it is creating something that allows you to reflect on – and give you enough distance away to interpret your actions. As long as you're just living, doing, living, doing - it's very hard to reflect. When you have art that's there, you become conscious about how other people perceive you. It's kind of a way of stepping outside yourself.” (CD05).

4. Ritual and Connection. The ritual of doing something creative together is a fundamental transformative act. Practitioners had scores of stories of how through CCD processes participants meet and interact with people they otherwise would not. In reference to two elderly women who discovered a common connection to one house in their neighbourhood during Community Voices / Community Walls a practitioner stated, “To be able to directly share with thousands of people, intimately share the deepest parts of ourselves, that’s powerful. Dorcy and Vera now have a bond that will last forever.” (CD03). The power of collective rituals is their capacity to facilitate relationship and connection through opening up a space to slow down and be present, to see the humanity in others, and perhaps recognise common goals in the midst of difference.
5. Surprise and Spontaneity. Practitioners spoke of how surprise and spontaneity were constant elements of CCD processes and how important it was to be open to these. Some mentioned how participants often react spontaneously and surprise themselves with what they are able to do and where the process takes them emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, and physically, building confidence, self-image, and reflection. Participants and practitioners alike are also surprised by others’ spontaneity and experiences and by their own assumptions being revealed or challenged. “Arts open up a different way of listening to people. No comment is required from the listeners – you just sit back and observe – and are constantly surprised, your assumptions about what a person is about based on...whatever. It’s very refreshing to find yourself way off all the time. To find yourself challenged and to recognize how automatic it is to make those assumptions – to be proved wrong was very invigorating” (CD01).

6. Learning. Experiential and mutual learning are fundamental goals and building blocks of all CCD processes. Each practitioner’s story described how participants developed new knowledge and skills; from youth learning artistic, leadership, and life skills in Watch yOUR Step! (CD06), to high school students learning about the history of their neighbourhood through collecting oral histories from local seniors in the South East Vancouver Discovery Project (CD02), to health care providers learning about the health and wellbeing concerns of Kurdish women (among many other social and ethnic groups) in Body pARTS (CD01), to members of a whole community learning about the lives of their diverse neighbours through the creation and consideration of Community Voices, Community Walls mosaics on Commercial Drive (CD03).

7. Emotion. Practitioners related how arts processes can help engage people on an emotional level, something they consider essential in community development and planning processes that invariably hinge on issues about which participants have strong feelings. They highlighted the fact that participants are much more willing and comfortable expressing emotions in spaces where they feel welcomed and valued, however they wish to express them. One practitioner stressed the importance of valuing the emotional contributions of and cultivating positive experiences for marginalised groups and individuals who regularly feel that their feelings, assets, and needs are not valued in society (e.g. street involved youth) (CD06).
8. **Bodies and Space.** In planning and community space, doing art helps people build and reflect on physical relationships to things, people, spaces, and environments (CD01). Through creating art pieces and performances, participants physically alter their environments in positive ways. Getting physical keeps people in the moment, stopping the chatter in their heads (CD01, CD08). Practitioners also noted the significance of engaging somatic intelligence, addressing our physical experience of things, and becoming aware of how we communicate and know with our bodies.

"With theatre in particular, it’s embodied. I’m a very big proponent of embodied learning and direct experience...for me something really different happens when I’m moving. I actually believe on a cellular level stuff starts to...like when you can get fluidity into your muscles and joints – when the blood is moving – there are so many shifts that happen on a physical level that in a way begin to validate those shifts in social change. Suddenly you know it in your body, in a way that our culture really doesn’t give us enough opportunities to do. And more and more kids especially are sitting at computers, sitting at video games, obesity is on the rise – it breaks my heart because I think there is so much intuitive knowledge we would have if we knew how to listen to our own bodies." (CD05)

9. **Conflict.** Practitioners reveal instances when arts were distracting in a way, in that doing art together relieved some of the pressure to communicate and deal with issues, thereby diffusing tension and having people busy doing things alongside one another and interact more naturally. In the case of *Watch yOUR Step!*, the visibility of street-involved youth making public art to high-income Yaletown residents both humanised each group to one another and subverted the power relations in Community Day exhibits, where the youth were the art experts (CD06). The *Middle East Peace Quilt* brought together Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Arabs, in a collective call for peace (CD04). Dance Arts travelling multi-media productions *Fire* and *Ice* and Headlines Theatre’s *Don’Say a Word* brought the rarely discussed issues of youth suicide, violence, and racism out into the open and offered safe spaces for dialogue amongst youth, service providers, and educators, away from perceived spaces of conflict.
what's the catch? the dark side

Beyond the complex issues of "reality, form and philosophy" discussed at the beginning of this chapter, practitioners consistently cited several other major challenges – the "noir" or dark sides, if you will – in their experience of working with community cultural development processes. These "dark sides" involve conflicts and struggles over the following dimensions or aspects:

**Resources / Relationships.** The struggle to secure sufficient resources and achieve constructive ongoing relationships with systems of governance and / or commercial interests came up with every CCD practitioner. Most artists struggle financially at the best of times. Each of my respondents finds managing the impacts of consistently meagre funding on the quality of their projects posing a great strain on their work. This constant reality is rooted in how both arts (particularly community-based) are devalued in our consumer society (always hungry for a commercial product) and process is devalued by our modernist technocratic bureaucracy (always hungry for "official plans", hard products, and easily measurable and replicable results).

Practitioners have trouble getting recognition and resources from mainstream arts agencies in particular. Several of them mentioned that community development and social service funders are coming around as they begin to recognise the value of CCD work. Ultimately, practitioners are never reimbursed for their real time, most projects are done on shoe-string budgets, and typically end up with more modest productions, and are perhaps less effective or accessible than they could have been in an ideal funding situation. Funders increasingly require proof of economic, social, and cultural changes and impacts of these processes. However, they seem unwilling to provide the funds necessary to do the projects well, develop/research systems of evaluation appropriate to the messy and enigmatic nature of participatory arts, and implement those evaluations.

As with community development, processes are very dependent on the people running them and their communication, leadership, creative abilities. Practitioners indicate how hard it is to get good consistent leadership in the non-profit sector (CD01; CD06). Others articulate a need to learn how to work with, not just outside, the official city,
provincial and federal power brokers and to understand governance systems better (CD02; CD05). Several practitioners complained that there are just so many rules at City Hall that it can be nearly impossible to obtain approval for the smallest, simplest project in Vancouver. One woman lamented what she perceived as a lack of faith in citizens and too much administration and not enough vision at the Office of Cultural Affairs.

"...although community public art has become fairly well-known in Vancouver, most of it has sort of an aesthetic end goal...although it is community-building in its process, no further CD outcomes beyond the process of doing it are part of it. I think developing that kind of capacity and understanding is really necessary" “I would like to be seeing it used more in planning processes.” (CD01)

Process / Product. The last section speaks to what was pointed out in Chapter Four as well; that CCD practitioners often find themselves “battling the end result”. The “product” is often perceived as the most important part of a process by funders, as opposed to the significance of the process for facilitators and participants. All practitioners agree that achieving a balance between an effective, empowering, transformative process that participants are happy with and an aesthetic product of a certain standard is a constant struggle. One practitioner pointed out that this is a constant battle in participatory democracy in general (CD04).

The process is a priority but the product is also imperative. If it is ineffective or breaks down, especially in the case of public art, there can be negative consequences in terms of future funding, sustainability, and motivation of participants. The participants can feel a loss of pride or legitimacy in the project. Outsiders may doubt the success and validity of the project and question its community relevance if it doesn’t improve the physical space for those who weren’t involved. This could lead to less support in the future. Finally, an unsuccessful product represents a lost opportunity for its use as an educative, provocative, communicative tool in the future.

Quality / Effectiveness. A point raised a number of times in the literature on CCD was echoed by several practitioners – that doing art can be as intimidating as using words for some participants. The planning and structure of the process is crucial. The arts are not some sort of magic tool. In fact, because of the way they are often viewed in

\[24\] Literally, many of these processes, lasting months to years and involving tens to hundreds of participants are typically
society, they can be as narrow, intimidating, inappropriate and oppressive as other poorly implemented participatory processes. As maintained at the beginning of this chapter, the content is as important as the form – its effectiveness and possibility lies in how creative expression is used and valued. Practitioners remind us that research, outreach, cultural fluency, and good planning is especially important when working in diverse contexts, and while CCD can be particularly helpful in those circumstances, misunderstandings, uncertainty, and surprises will always abound.

5.2 conclusion

From the few stories shared in this chapter, it seems there is great deal of innovative community cultural development work going on in Vancouver. These processes enjoy a relatively good deal of support (at least in theory) from the municipality, community organisations, and the arts community. Overcoming the inadequate financial and other resource support will be imperative if such work is to contribute to more inclusive planning processes and to society and communities in general on a longer-term more integrated basis. The reluctance of the city and funding organisations to “put their money where their mouth is” is embedded in the way society and government undervalues art and process-oriented work. This reality needs to be changed, the first step being to open up dialogue between artists, activists/organisers, planners, funders, and governments, which to a certain extent, as evidenced in Chapter 4, is beginning to happen.

These practitioners are compelled to do this kind of work because they see opportunities to engage in arts and culture as essential to a healthy urban pluralist society and cultural democracy as a fundamental requirement for equality and social and environmental justice. They cite diversity, isolation, powerlessness, distrust and fear as common challenges and argue that how and why people are engaged in democracy and planning is crucial, criticising most participatory planning as ritualistic and inaccessible. They argue for the fundamental importance of community development approach, the necessity to develop the political will to be truly collaborative, and the need to direct public resources into training (in participatory planning and diversity) and relationship

done on budgets of $5,000 to tens of thousands, including artists' salary and supplies.
building, in order to increase the accountability, accessibility, and effectiveness of participatory planning.

Looking at specific stories of real practitioners' experiences and perspectives, we get a wealth of information about what is going on in these specific practice situations, who these practitioners are, how they work, their skills and tools, and the kinds of impacts and effects arts have on community processes and CCD has in general. There is so much that the planning profession could learn here about creating more inclusive and holistic democratic planning processes, and as we saw in the last chapter, some planners are already looking towards community artists and community cultural development practitioners for guidance, ideas, and collaboration.

In this chapter, we have seen that a community cultural development approach can broaden who is engaged in decision-making, civic action and involvement and how they are engaged, drawing from a broader range of capacities and resources within communities and practitioners that in most planning processes. Their accessibility and flexibility offer multiple opportunities for involvement, a lack of which is a common criticism of participatory planning today. Their combined community development, people and relationship-centred and asset-based approaches ensure processes are driven by community needs and resources towards community empowerment. CCD is about planning by whole communities for whole communities and individuals themselves, the emphasis being on collaboration with (not control by) organisations and levels of government. A basic recognition of the multi-faceted nature of people and communities and the fundamental interconnected nature of existence is an important starting point and basis of CCD work.

The act of engaging in creative and cultural expression together not only engages and values different ways of knowing and communicating, essential in working with diverse populations and in reaching out to and enabling the mobilisation of marginalised groups. It also does different kinds of work that planning will need to include in developing more inclusive participatory processes. These processes facilitate cross-cultural communication and story telling and listening. The creative process itself works to keep people in the present and take them outside their habitual patterns and assumptions; it engages intuitive, emotional, imaginative and somatic knowledges revealing different
information, meaning and insight; it constitutes an act of reflection in itself, and generates feelings of agency, confidence, and increased self esteem. The ritual of creating art and cultural expression together promotes connection, understanding and presence. CCD provides particularly effective avenues for promoting mutual learning, managing conflict, and opening up groups and individuals to change and spontaneity. Not least of all, CCD can produce art works and physical spaces that enhance the social, ecological, economic and cultural sustainability of cities and neighbourhoods.

The practitioners' articulation of their goals, how CCD works and is experienced, its positive impacts, the importance of the integrity and fluidity of the process, the conflict over process / product and the challenges posed by resources and relationships with funders and government, reflects similar discussion in the CCD literature (i.e. Adams and Goldbard, 2002; 2001; Dickson, 1995). The literature fails to pursue as nuanced a description or consideration of working with multiple intelligences as the practitioners have here, although the importance of this understanding is clearly mentioned. There is also little CCD literature directly commenting on the special qualities, skills, and capacities required of CCD practitioners. The discussion of these issues is more adequately covered in the literature on working with multiple intelligences and the role of participatory arts from within the fields of conflict resolution, education, community development and sociology.

Practitioners display skills and capacities identified as particularly important for planners to develop as they orient themselves towards more holistic planning for multiple publics. These practitioners seem to have natural qualities and gifts, as well as a great deal of experience working with community cultural development where they have had to learn, change, and develop their abilities. These qualities include: self-awareness; the willingness to take risks and be spontaneous; the willingness to be wrong; creative vision; leadership; critical and political awareness and orientation; the ability to let go of control; story-telling and listening; literacy in the language of emotions, body, imagination, intuition, spirit; the ability to be present and open to change, transformation, difference, discomfort, contradiction, conflict, and surprise.

25 The structure of preparation/creation/sharing/evaluation and follow up, which is rooted in a popular education learning model of shared experience/analysis/action/reflection.
These practitioners share a strong belief that “there are really a lot of ways that art or other creative things ... do things that other processes do not” (CD05). All of the practitioners strenuously argued that art processes can and should be used in an array of planning processes and could enhance the participatory work done on any number of planning issues, making them more inclusive, meaningful, holistic, constructive, and creative.

What we don’t get from isolated conversations and observations with such a diversity of practitioners is an evaluation of one process or community over time. We get a general idea of what CCD is about, how it is implemented and experienced according to its practitioners, but we lose out on a deeper more complex analysis of any specific situation that perhaps only detailed case studies using more ethnographic research methods can uncover. The next two chapters do just that, delving into two specific case studies.
chapter six: telling untold stories: sinag bayan and cultural work at the kalayaan centre

6.1 introduction to the case study

Chapters Four and Five provide a detailed context for the analysis of the two case studies of community cultural development in action in Vancouver in Chapters Six and Seven. Through the analysis of individuals' practice stories in Chapter Four, I sketched an image of how individual planners working for the City perceive and approach fundamental realities of diversity, civic participation, and culture in their work. While their stories reveal an increasingly holistic understanding of people, communities, and planning in some respects, they expose some reluctance to opening up to the political and critical aspects of such an approach as well. Through the examination of the stories of eight CCD practitioners in Chapter Five, I outlined ways in which the philosophy, values, and practice of CCD might enrich a more holistic planning understanding and approach, while also identifying some of the limitations and challenges of this type of work.

Keeping those insights in mind, in Chapters Six and Seven I take a closer look at two communities in Vancouver (one ethnic, the other geographical) and the efforts being made within those communities at the grassroots level to research, reflect, plan and take action for their future through community cultural development processes. In this chapter, I consider the experiences of Vancouver's Filipino community. Acting in “spaces of insurgent citizenship” (Holston, 1998), this community wages a daily struggle for social justice, human rights, political and institutional change, recognition, belonging, and meaningful civic participation at local, national and international levels. My case study focuses on the members, organisers and constituents of the seven Filipino community organisations based at the Kalayaan Centre and the arts and cultural work.

26 For example, the importance of different ways of knowing; the need to focus on CD approaches and relationship building; and the development of new planning skills and capacities, including creativity and cultural fluency.
27 Such as an aversion to the perceived conflict-inducing nature of advocacy groups; focusing on the language and processes of “community building” while avoiding notions of “social justice”, “human rights”, and “advocacy”; being more critical of process-based limitations and exclusions in traditional planning systems than structural and institutional ones; and having a limited view of the complex and contested understandings of multiculturalism, identity, and belonging and the implications for their daily practice.
that figures so prominently there – specifically the community theatre work of the recently established Sinag Bayan Community Cultural Theatre Collective.

As I mentioned in Chapter One, I chose this group in part because of a level of comfort, relationship, and intimacy that had developed over time through my completing an internship at the Kalayaan Centre. I also have a deep concern and commitment for the interests of the Filipino community in Canada and the continuing struggle for national and social liberation in the Philippines itself. This commitment is born out of experiences working and travelling in the Philippines; my growing awareness of the interdependence of Canadian and Philippine labour and immigration policies; and developing an understanding of the realities of living in Canada as an immigrant or migrant worker. This particular case study chose me, if you will. I wasn’t thinking much about arts and cultural work when I started my internship at the Kalayaan Centre, but the more time I spent there, the more I recognised how integral and powerful the arts were to their educational, organising, mobilising and political work.

My internship at the Kalayaan Centre was a rich learning experience, both personally and academically, constituting an integral part of my own continuing politicisation. I was inspired and impressed on a daily basis by the strength, creativity, commitment, and talent of the volunteers getting so much essential and positive work done in the community. The level of trust and sharing offered by my co-workers, mentors, and interviewees was motivating and moving. I was also stimulated by a desire to understand the experiences of a community whose needs were obviously not being entirely met by local municipal and provincial service providers. I was interested in their criticisms of Canada’s immigration, labour and multiculturalism policies, as well as the changes they proposed and embodied through their work.

The findings presented in this chapter are drawn from conversations, observations, and experiences I have had with this community and its members beginning in May 2002 up until the present. I also interviewed five community members and organisers directly involved in Sinag Bayan and attended numerous cultural performances put on by the collective as well as other organisations at the Centre between March and June 2003.
The questions I am asking and attempting to answer in this chapter include: What is going on in this community in terms of civic participation and relations with planners and structures of local governance? What are the big issues in this community, its strengths, needs, and barriers to participation? What are individuals and organisations in the Filipino community doing to creatively engage people in action that moves toward greater social justice and human rights and that encourages more pluralist ways of living? Why are the arts and culture so central? What are their goals, methods, and tools? What skills and capacities do practitioners display? How do people experience these processes and products? What can the planning profession learn from their stories about the implications of diversity and creating a more inclusive planning culture?

6.2 background: a community beyond borders

In order to situate the stories of practitioners and community members in some kind of context, this section provides a background on the Filipino population in Vancouver and the community of organisations and individuals with whom this chapter is primarily concerned. This backgrounder consists of a brief demographic snapshot, a discussion of the role of the organisations and the Kalayaan Centre itself, and a review of some of the more recent literature on Filipinos in Canada and Vancouver.

demographics

There are over 60,000 Filipinos in British Columbia and over 22,000 in the City of Vancouver; they are the third largest visible minority group in that city and the fourth largest in British Columbia and Canada overall (Statistics Canada, Census 2001). According to the 2001 Canadian Census, Filipinos represent 1.8% of the overall British Columbian population and 4.1% of Vancouver's, while they constitute 7.6% of total visible minorities in BC and 8.3% of the visible minorities in Vancouver.

Demographics reveal unique circumstances in a rapidly changing Filipino community in Vancouver. Over half (55%) of the Filipino population arrived between 1991 and 1999 (41% came from 1971-90 and 4% before 1971) (Martin Spigelman Research Associates, 2000). While earlier waves of Filipinos came to Canada primarily as independent and family class immigrants, statistics show that in the last ten years from
1/3 to 1/2 of all Filipino immigrant landings were applicants coming to Canada through the federal government’s Live-In Caregivers Program (LCP) (McKay and PWC, 2002). Applicants work as full-time live-in caregivers for the children of Canadian employers in exchange for eligibility to apply for landed immigrant status upon completion of the program. The increased numbers of Filipinos, particularly women, immigrating to Canada under the LCP in the last ten years has had a dramatic impact on the community as a whole, as will be discussed in the next section.

Demographically, the Filipino community in Vancouver is increasingly young (67% were between 15 and 44 years old in 1996), female (62%), and well-educated (32% of Filipinos in the Vancouver CMA had a university degree, compared with 23% of other immigrants and 13% of the Canadian-born population) (Martin Spigelman and Associates, 2000). Despite relatively high education, 48% of Filipinos work in the sales and service sector earning the second lowest average income after those working in primary industries (ibid.). Filipinos live in all cities of the Lower Mainland, but there is not an identifiable enclave as for many other ethnic communities (Hiebert, 1998).

While statistics provide some information about the Filipinos in Vancouver, numbers only tell one kind of story about the complex lived realities of individuals and communities, a story of averages and percentages. Research over the past decade, often spearheaded by or based on collaborations with the organisations of the Kalayaan Centre, has started to fill out some details of those experiences. Before turning to a review of some of that literature, I’d like to introduce the Kalayaan Centre itself.

**the Kalayaan centre**

Located at 451 Powell Street in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, the Kalayaan Centre is one of the few Filipino community centres in British Columbia. The Centre opened its doors to the community in 1996 and houses some of the most active and progressive Filipino community organisations in the province. Figure 6.2

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28 Some participants of the program also serve as live-in caregivers to elderly clients, but they are the minority.

29 Women dominate this sector.
briefly outlines the mandates of these seven organisations.

**Figure 6.2 Community Organisations housed at the Kalayaan Centre**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Mandate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Philippine Women Centre of BC</td>
<td>1. Since 1989, the PWC of BC has led research, education, community economic development, organising, mobilising, and advocacy efforts towards the social justice and human rights of the most marginalised in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Filipino Canadian Youth Alliance</td>
<td>2. Since 1995 UKPC / FCYA has educated and organised around the common issues of Filipino-born youth and second generation youth, incorporating participatory research projects, cultural evenings, theatre and dance into their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas Filipino Workers Organization</td>
<td>3. Formed in 1995 from the realisation of migrant workers that they can empower themselves and the Filipino overseas community. SIKLAB fights for the rights and welfare of migrant workers in Canada and the Philippines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Filipino Nurses Support Group</td>
<td>4. Founded in 1995, FNSG organises, educates, and mobilises with non-practicing Filipino nurses in BC to assert their right to practice nursing and be liberated from domestic work; against the roots causes of their forced migration from the Philippines; and for a just and humane society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The BC Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines</td>
<td>5. BCCHRP was founded in 1982 in solidarity with the Filipino people and their struggle for genuine democracy, social justice, human rights and peace in the Philippines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kalayaan Resource and Training Centre</td>
<td>6. Founded in 1996 The Kalayaan Resource and Training Centre provides comprehensive research, resources and skills training to create a space for Filipino-Canadians to be socially active members in the Filipino community and Canadian society at large.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino-Canadians Against Racism (Fil-Car)</td>
<td>7. Founded in 1999, the community-based group Filipino-Canadians Against Racism (Fil-Car) educates, organises and mobilises against systemic racism faced daily by Filipino-Canadians.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Kalayaan Centre website – [http://www.kalayaancentre.org](http://www.kalayaancentre.org))

"The Centre" or "KC", as it is affectionately hailed by many, is a lively and warm place of gathering, community, friendship, and organising. In addition to being the headquarters of these seven organisations, the Centre provides essential services to the community, including a settlement worker funded by the province, a Filipino literature and video library, computer and internet access, a place to gather socially, and countless workshops and events put on by the organisations based there or other allied organisations that often use the space, such as Grassroots Women, a multicultural

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30 UKPC stands for Ugnayan ng Kabataang Pilipino sa Canada,
31 SIKLAB stands for Sulong Itaguyod ang Karapatan ng mga Manggagawang Pilipino sa Labas ng Bansa in Tagalog.
women's organisation. There is also a housing co-op founded by PWC and run by domestic workers that is situated above the Centre. While organisations at the Centre, when they can, secure funding for their research projects, on a day-to-day basis things are run on volunteer contributions of time and expertise, community financial and in-kind donations, community economic development ventures and fund-raising efforts. They have no ongoing government-funded programs, as they receive no core funding as a women's or immigrants' centre.

The organisations of the Kalayaan Centre are progressive in their politics and unreservedly political in their work, which include strong nationalist and anti-imperialist views. Unlike other Filipino community organisations in Vancouver, those at the Kalayaan Centre see all of the work they do as being inherently political - whether it be community development, service provision, advocacy and political campaigns, mass actions, research, education, community theatre, renters' rights workshops, youth fashion shows, or lobbying City Hall - and ultimately, all essential steps towards their goals of social justice, human rights, and positive change for the community.

Differences in politics and settlement experience have resulted in fragmentation within the Filipino community in Vancouver as a whole (Pratt and PWC, 2003; Martin Spigelman and Associates, 2000). The older and more established Filipino immigrants typically have very different settlement experiences and politics than second generation Filipino youth or more recent migrant workers. Organisers and members of the Centre typically refer to the older established community as the "mainstream Filipino community" relative to the marginalised community represented by migrant workers, domestic workers, youth, and low income families. Much of the educational work of organisations at the Centre is directed at this mainstream community, raising

32 From, for example, the Ministry responsible for Multiculturalism and Immigration, Heritage Canada, or Status of
awareness of the experiences of other Filipinos in Vancouver. The implications of these factions on community experiences and relationships with the City of Vancouver emerge as I examine the stories of Sinag Bayan in section 6.3.

**literature review**

Anita Beltran Chen's (1998) overview of existing literature on Filipinos in Canada, completed in the mid 1990s, reveals there has been little significant study of the community, particularly considering its size. Similarly, Espiritu and Wolf’s (2001) U.S.-based research indicates that despite being the largest Asian-origin immigrant group in the United States (second only to Mexicans as the largest migrant population after 1965 overall), Filipinos remain extraordinarily understudied and overlooked. They suggest that the community may be neglected by academics in some measure “because they blend so easily into the U.S. landscape” as a mostly professional middle-class population accustomed to U.S. lifestyles and proficient in English, coming from a former U.S. colony (Espiritu and Wolf, 2001: 157). This perceived ease of assimilation, they argue, obscures diverse and unique experiences that are in great need of study, such as the strong *resistance* to assimilation and rejection of American identity they discovered among second generation Filipino youths.

While the last decade has seen virtually no significant research on the community across Canada on the whole, there has been considerable work done in Vancouver specifically, led and inspired by organisations at the Kalayaan Centre. The PWC organised some of their first Participatory Action Research (PAR) projects in the mid 1990s looking into the experiences of women migrating to Canada under the LCP as domestic workers. Three community-based studies (PWC, 1996; PWC and Pratt, 1997; PWC, 1997) at that time engaged dozens of Filipino women in planning, research, story-telling, analysis, and action-taking processes. They reveal what they see as the exploitative and racist nature of the federal government’s LCP program that leaves women vulnerable to abusive employers; social, economic, and physical violence; forced un-paid overtime; a lack of privacy and dignity on the job; unsuitable housing conditions; and ultimately a cycle of “de-skilling” and low paid domestic work after they

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Women, or non-profit funding agencies like the United Way.
complete the program. Their stories reveal discrimination and stereotyping both within the Filipino and non-Filipino communities.

An essential part of this research, and the process for the participants, is its analysis of the structural conditions at the root of their experiences: the export labour policies of the Philippines that send hundreds of thousands of Filipinos abroad each year to remit foreign currency; Canada’s LCP, which essentially offers citizenship in exchange for filling an essential service for Canadian families (childcare) under often exploitative and poor social, physical and economic conditions; and public discourses on immigration, labour, child-care, and multiculturalism. Through the PAR model, the women identified the causes of their situation, developed policy recommendations, and began organising to advocate for change and educate others.

Since those earlier projects in 1996 and 1997, over a dozen research projects have been implemented and published by organisations at the Kalayaan Centre. UKPC/FKYA, the youth group, led a PAR project about the causes and experiences of systemic racism experienced by Filipino, Chinese, Aboriginal, Jewish and other youth of colour, out of which was also published a facilitators’ guide to anti-racism education and a handbook providing legal information to youth about their rights at school, work, and in dealing with police (UKPC/FCYA 1998a; 1998b; 1999).

In 1999, the KRTC published a guide for those in search of affordable housing including information about renters’ rights and frequently-asked questions about housing while under the LCP, which was then used to facilitate workshops on housing across the

Figures 6.4 and 6.5 SIKLAB members call for government action on the housing crisis in the streets of Vancouver in 2003 (left). SIKLAB wraps up the participatory evaluation of their ongoing affordable housing campaign in June 2002 (right).
Lower Mainland (KRTC, 1999; KRTC and Koeller, 2002). The PWC has also done PAR on the issue of Filipino “mail order brides”, and the Canadian dimension of trafficking in women in 2000, as well as collaborations with FNSG (Filipino Nurses Support Group) on research projects into the experiences of foreign-trained nurses doing domestic work in Canada (FNSG and PWC, 2001; FNSG, 2001; FNSG, 2002).

Organisations and members at the KC have also collaborated with academics on a number of occasions, most notably with Geraldine Pratt of the University of British Columbia (Pratt and PWC, 2003; 1997; Pratt 2002; 1999; 1997) as well as a number of others (McKay and PWC, 2002; Zaman, 2003). These researchers have mostly focused on the effects of the LCP on the experiences of the Filipino community in Vancouver, as it is having such a significant impact; indeed as one community member assessed “the LCP filters and forms the Filipino community” (McKay and PWC, 2002: 11).

McKay and PWC’s (2002) analysis of 72 Filipina life histories suggests that because a significant proportion of Filipino immigration is now composed of LCP migrants, stereotypes (as being un-skilled, un-educated, destined for live-in child-care work) over-determine experiences and identities for all Filipinos. They find that women suffer discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, and immigration status and reveal narratives of de-skilling, exploitative circumstances, class prejudices within the community, being excluded from public space, difficulty in the re-unification of families, and racism.

Pratt (2003) argues that we cannot understand domestic workers (LCP) settlement experiences within the boundaries of the receiving country or by simply looking at wage levels and occupational status; rather we must look at them as embodied and transnational experiences, with a broad and nuanced feminist analysis. Like McKay and PWC (2002) and much of the research coming out of the Kalayaan Centre, she looks to individual stories to better understand the complex realities of these women from a more holistic perspective.

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33 Notion that LCPers should be grateful for the opportunity to become a Canadian citizen, that it’s better here than it is at home, Canadian’s complacency with their own relative virtue; that experience of citizenship, multiculturalism is experienced only nationally vs. internationally, in more complex ways.

34 In particular families who have been separated for extended periods of time (often many years); one member in Canada under the Live-in Caregiver’s Program and the rest of the family staying in the Philippines until enough money has been saved for their travel to Canada and sponsorship.
The downward spiral of occupational mobility experienced by most LCPers may be in part due to stereotyping and stigmatisation, she maintains, but is more determined by rational choices (i.e. to send money home to a dependent family in the Philippines rather than invest in professional upgrading) and situational constraints (i.e. closed social networks) (Pratt, 2003). Women have to balance the costs – the ability to help family in the Philippines vs. the personal costs of reduced self-esteem, stigmatisation, and family dislocation. Pratt (2003) insists it is important for Canadian feminists to critique the LCP to disrupt Canadians’ complacency about their relative virtue. We must be fighting to change conditions in the Philippines that lead to women having to make these choices, and fight for reforms to unjust Canadian immigration laws.

Pratt’s (2002) research into the experiences of second generation Filipino youth examines another principal theme (the first being the changing experiences of the community due to the LCP) that emerges through the cultural work I examine in the next section – which is the search for home and a sense of belonging amongst the community, particularly the youth. “Filipino youth are negotiating multiple homelands in an effort to belong” Pratt (2002: 5) states, as the facts of their Canadian birth and citizenship are persistently re-negotiated. Second generation Filipino youth grow up in Canada traversing the “post-memories” of their parents’ often traumatic migration experience, their own experiences of exclusion (of always feeling the outsider, racism, being constantly “read” as newly arrived or exoticised as Asian or “multicultural” by the white Canadian population) and the revelation that legal citizenship is not equivalent to cultural citizenship. Pratt (2002) observes that one way to fight against isolation is to identify strongly and positively with Filipino culture. She reminds us that cultural belonging and identity occur within complex fields of cultural and economic power, both imposed and negotiated / chosen (vs. the assumption that it occurs within one nation-state and is self-made) (ibid.).

The youth members of UKPC/PCYA (Ugnayan) participate in “therapeutic returns” or “exposure trips” to the Philippines to learn, re-think their identities and political strategies and learn from organising traditions there. “For many it is not the nation that is sought as home; it is claiming a concrete history of struggle in the Philippines that allows them to re-imagine themselves. This home is a community of resistance and is
a type of homecoming that can be brought back to Canada, and used to re-configure Vancouver as home" (Pratt 2002: 15). Ugnayan and other groups at the Centre see their struggle as a part of the struggle in the Philippines, shared struggles, and a larger history of resistance.

Pratt describes briefly *Breaking Ground* (a community theatre project discussed at length in the next section), which emerged out of a visit to the Philippines to learn about cultural work and a synthesis of experiences in both countries, that both educates and gives voice to the despair and frustration felt by many youths in Canada.

The political and cultural activities of Filipino-Canadian youth suggest a different, mediating, geographical imagination in relation to multiculturalism – one that works between the nation and the netherworld of global capitalism. This entails tracing the specific histories of connection between Canada and other nations. This geography of connectivity ruptures the national boundedness of the multicultural project in Canada. To be fully multicultural, Canadians must appreciate the specificity of connections and the complexity of identifications and attachments held by many Canadian citizens. This offers a way of re-imagining Canada, and not just Filipino youth. It is not just the peculiarity of these Filipino children of immigrants to find themselves in and between nations; it is the situation of our nation to be so. (Pratt, 2002: 19)

Pratt suggests that the efforts of second generation Filipino youth to find home in Canada, this blurring of boundaries and meanings, may hold the promise of re-imagining a transnational global multiculturalism (beyond the nationalist, procedural liberalism and individualist access to rights that reinforces Anglo cultural hegemony and can both level and protect difference) and transforming the practice of politics and claims to rights to belonging. While the youth she interviewed reject attachment to Canada, they are ironically very active in the civic duty of public participation, introducing new ideas and practices, many rooted in Philippine organizing traditions, potentially “changing the meaning of Canada as home” (2002: 19) for all of us.

The final study I want to mention was commissioned by the City of Vancouver to survey the rapidly growing Filipino community as to its needs, identify agencies available to serve those needs as well as gaps that should be addressed. The task was undertaken by Martin Spigelman and Associates and the report was submitted to Council in 2000. Spigelman and Associates, through interviews with dozens of community members and those who work with them in the social services sector, identify the Filipino community’s most pressing needs as: an orientation to life in British Columbia and better information on services; opportunities to learn about working and living in BC; opportunities to come
together (cultural nourishment, break down internal barriers, develop Filipino-specific services); Canadian work experience and the chance to worked in their trained fields; special services for LCPers addressing their isolation and vulnerability; social housing; protection from abuse and family counselling (especially regarding re-unification); timely and professional services that respect confidentiality, privacy, and cultural and linguistic preferences.

Interestingly, the report *dismisses racism* as an issue affecting the youth in the community\(^35\), stating youth “had clearly come to terms with their dual identity and are perfectly comfortable with their Filipino ethnicity and Canadian values”. This clearly contradicts the testimony and experiences of youth interviewed by Pratt (2003) as well as pretty much everything I found through my own research process, which included common experiences of racism, exclusion, and ethnic-based violence.\(^36\) Government services at all levels, he finds, which focus on multicultural and immigrant-related initiatives, rather than ethno-specific ones, were seen as providing some useful services but certainly not meeting all of the community’s needs. Spigelman identifies divisions within the community along political and philosophical lines, but doesn’t elaborate on them. In their recommendations to the City, Spigelman & Associates promote a community development approach that would work with the strengths of ethno-specific organisations as well as multicultural organisations. Ultimately, however, the Report presents an apolitical analysis, avoids discussing the basis of the divisions and conflict within the community which might have been illuminating, presumes the mainstream conceptions of multiculturalism and citizenship, and fails to consider the political, economic and structural causes of the community’s experiences, as in the previous literature.

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\(^{35}\) It doesn’t mention racism at all in connection with any other sectors of the community.

\(^{36}\) Members of the Centre criticised this report as being unbalanced, inaccurate, and a-political. More about their interaction with Martin Spigelman and Associates and other representatives of city planning are discussed later in this chapter.
6.3 the story of sinag bayan – the evolution of a filipino community cultural theatre collective

Having articulated a sense of the organisational, social and political context of the community which is the focus of this case study, I turn to the case of community cultural development work itself. While Sinag Bayan is a relatively new collective, established in 2002, it represents an ongoing evolution of cultural work that has roots in cultural traditions in the Philippines, as well as years of increasingly integrated practices of community development, research, education, creative expression, arts, and popular culture at the Kalayaan Centre in Vancouver.

My description and analysis of this case study begins with an introduction to my interviewees, all of whom are participants/organisers of Sinag Bayan who became involved with cultural work at the Centre over the years in different capacities. I will briefly share some of their stories relevant to how they perceive the goals and describe the methods of their work. Second, weaving details of their individual stories together, I outline the development of cultural work at the Centre and within the community overall chronologically, tracing the steps in learning, experiences, and community impacts. Third, I examine interviewees' perspectives on and experiences with planners and the City of Vancouver. Finally, I reflect on what is going on in this community, and what its member's stories can teach the planning profession about diversity, multiculturalism, and developing more inclusive democratic planning processes and a more inclusive planning culture.

why culture?

While I chose to focus on Sinag Bayan and the experiences of community theatre in this community, the arts and culture play a role in much of the community development, education, mobilisation, and political work at the Centre, from the use of comic books to
reach out to youth, to the showcasing and auctioning off of community-produced visual art for the Purple Rose\textsuperscript{37} campaign, to socially and politically stimulating fashion shows, to incorporating music and theatre performances in direct street actions. I spoke with five people directly involved in Sinag Bayan, three young second-generation Filipinos who were drawn to cultural work through Ugnayan and Roots, Rhymes and Resistance\textsuperscript{38}, and two female migrant workers\textsuperscript{39} who came to theatre work through their involvement in SIKLAB. I asked each of them: Why culture? What are the goals and methods of the work you are involved in? Their responses are reflected in Table 6.1 and the commentary and quotes below.

When asked why cultural work was important or what the arts brought to their work everyone agreed that “culture is a really broad tool” (KC02, Interviewed March 10 and May 6, 2003). It is seen as bringing out emotional experiences and connections very well, as well as other dimensions of experience. A number of respondents mentioned that culture works “in-directly”, as opposed to lectures or mainstream dialogue. It can be a “way in” to talking about abstract or uncomfortable issues or concepts, but also, because stories and experiences are seen and felt, arts and culture engage people on more levels, which really helps deepen their educating, organising, and mobilising work and make it more responsive to community needs and realities. The body, for instance, “is a really powerful and untapped resource. It is able to express emotions in ways that you just can’t say – hard emotions like loneliness, depression; body work really helps people open up and identify and express emotions (KC02).

Another respondent argues arts are important because “talking doesn’t always reach everyone” (KC01, Interviewed April 2, 2003). “Using creative means to communicate something relates to people on a more personal level which can also still relate to larger issues and greater context; this makes a message more accessible and understandable as it hits closer to home” (KC03, Interviewed May 6, 2003). “It relates to people where they are, on a one-on-one basis” (KC02). Everyone agreed that events that have cultural components draw a wider attendance within the community.

\textsuperscript{37} The Purple Rose campaign is an international campaign exposing and fighting the sex trafficking of Filipino women and children.
\textsuperscript{38} KC02, Interviewed March 10 and May 6, 2003; KC03, Interviewed May 6, 2003; and KC04 Interviewed June 3, 2003.
\textsuperscript{39} KC01, Interviewed April 2, 2003 and KC05, Interviewed June 3, 2003.
Respondents stressed the importance of story-telling in the community, of providing the opportunity to tell and hear untold and denied stories and histories, which they consider a political act. They also related how their cultural work is uniquely transformative and empowering, particularly for young people who are looking to have fun and play, as well as for places where their talents and experiences are encouraged and valued. Arts and culture were also praised for their ability to help people think creatively "outside the box" about solutions and alternatives, open up to learning and difference, and challenge one's assumptions. Expressing the notion that creativity is good and productive and encouraging people to take risks and explore their talents are important things for a number of respondents who argue that in Filipino culture, creativity can be seen as not safe, not secure, and is not typically encouraged in families (i.e. pursuing an arts-related career).

Table 6.1 Practitioners/participants voice the goals of their work

| Celebration | To continue and encourage a tradition of arts and culture in the community, to showcase and celebrate the creativity, innovation, and talent in the community, to have fun and be together in positive, imaginative and inspired ways. |
| Storytelling | To both tell and hear/see stories of our lives and experiences, to unearth and examine untold stories and histories, especially those of the most marginalised members of the community, gather information about the community here and in the Philippines, document it, and communicate it to learn from each other, to develop new stories of the future. |
| Education | To educate the community, as well as non-Filipinos, through a process of mutual learning and relationship building, to raise awareness about the community's situation here and in the Philippines, and deepen our understanding of the root causes of our experiences. |
| Organising and mobilising | To create experiences that raise awareness, shift consciousness, and educate, that inspire involvement and action in the community, to build solidarity and relationships with other groups and communities towards collaboration and support for change. |
| Place and space | To provide open, encouraging, safe, challenging, creative social and physical spaces where people's contributions are valued, to give youth and the community the spaces they didn't have growing up and don't get anywhere else. |
| Empowerment | To have community members develop skills and become empowered to use culture to express themselves, understand their experiences, and make change here and in the Philippines, to challenge the "don't rock the boat, you should be grateful to be in Canada" mentality of the mainstream Filipino community. |

"Ugnayan is trying to use arts/culture as a tool for social transformation, trying to popularise the idea how art can be used to help community rather than being divorced from reality." (KC04, Interviewed June 3, 2003)

"It is a "way in" to talking about difficult or abstract ideas like globalisation, imperialism, displacement – it's always about dialogue, transformation, a way of raising consciousness, it's education, basically" (KC03)

"There is the importance of images and stories – to reflect your experience and people seeing their lives and experiences reflected." (KC02)
While unique to the social, cultural and political context of the community, the goals expressed by the practitioner/participants also reflect the underlying goals common to community cultural development practice – goals of expanding cultural democracy and citizenship, facilitating dialogue and learning, conscientisation, community development, social and political change and justice, and making art and culture relevant to everyday life and accessible to everyone. Their methods are also rooted in a CCD approach following a participatory democratic model of planning and decision-making, focusing on and valuing the assets and strengths of all involved, integrating different generations, genders, and backgrounds to promote mutual learning, building on existing cultural capacities, and promoting fun, play, openness, risk-taking, and imagination. “Fun is really important – we deal with a lot of heavy issues in theatre workshops and you have to have an open mind and be optimistic or you get burnt out” (KC03).

creative struggle – a cultural tradition

The work of the organisations at the Centre has always included creative cultural elements. When asked how the theatre production *Breaking Ground* and then *Sinag Bayan* came to be, respondents traced an evolution that began with solidarity nights in the mid-1990s.

At these events, people would share what they had learned at conferences, often by creative means, through skits, music, and poetry. These were mostly social nights where people let loose, but they also created a space to share stories. Later, PWC and SIKLAB held fundraising dances that would have a cultural program mid-way, with story-telling about the Philippines, colonisation, and resistance. Sometimes there were short skits. Each time they did a performance like that, they would do an assessment, to reflect on it and develop a sense of the goals and impacts of cultural performance. It was the drive of the youth in the community, however, that pushed the cultural work to a broader level with the *Roots, Rhymes, and Resistance* evenings, the first of which was held in 1999.
the title of this section comes from the name of last years' (2003) Roots, Rhymes, and Resistance (RRR), and expresses the spirit of the event in general, which is a venue organised by youth for youth to express themselves, learn from and educate one another, and empower themselves through creative and cultural forms. Respondents argue that many Filipino youth, born in Canada or the Philippines, undergo a search and struggle for identity and belonging amidst experiences of racism and exclusion here in Canada. Finding little space or outlet for expressing their confusion and questioning at school, they need a forum where they can voice their struggle for understanding.

Before they found Ugnayan, two of my respondents themselves felt they had few options. They were attracted to art in terms of self expression, but found the art they were encouraged to do in school was abstract and not relevant to their lives. "I think if I had written poetry about my experience as a Filipino in high school, I might have been laughed at or not as accepted as much. So we definitely use that as a way for our members to understand who they are and their own experience" (KC04). These organisers/participants have found (unlike the conclusions of the City-commissioned study) that many youth in their community experience the same struggles they do and are often attracted to arts and culture, especially when it speaks to their own lives.

Influenced by the creativity they already saw in the community and having met some Filipino-Americans who did very strong cultural work, a number of youth were inspired to do more. It began with Pinoy Poetics, a small fundraising cultural night with mostly
spoken word and musical performers. Then, Ugnayan started the *Filipino-American War Campaign*, a process of research and story re-telling uncovering the truth about that war not told in American or Filipino history books. *Roots, Rhymes and Resistance* was born then in a “struggle against a certain kind of forgetting” (Pratt, 2003), an effort to “make the invisible visible” (Sandercock, 1998), tell their own stories and versions of history towards creating a basis for understanding their experiences today, challenging other versions of the truth, developing identities beyond borders and beyond the individual (“we use a lot of ‘we’ instead of ‘I’”), and planning for change tomorrow.

Since 1999 RRR has evolved into a more open forum, focusing not only on history but any expression relevant to the lives of youth and the community, for mobilising and organising youth around current issues. Respondents say that for them, getting together with other youth has helped them reflect on the root causes of migration, their parents’ experiences and linking them with their own feelings of confusion and exclusion. They also maintain that getting involved in RRR builds youths’ capacity as they learn new skills and confidence in themselves as they take action in their own interests and recognise their contributions being valued. It is also a fun, energising, positive, inspiring experience to share of themselves and witness all of the talent that exists in their community.

The solidarity that builds out of working creatively together has occurred both within and across communities. In particular, Filipino and First Nations youth have developed connections through RRR. Members of the Native Youth Movement have performed at RRR, as well as attended the Indigenous Youth Conference in the Philippines in 2003 and were involved in organising a youth conference in Vancouver in 2004. While the youth maintained that this kind of link is the result of a long process of relationship building, they argue the cultural work helps a great deal: through sharing music, poetry, and other expressions, members of both communities begin to recognise they struggle with many similar issues and can learn from each other’s experiences.

Other than the solidarity, support, and interest of a number of progressive advocacy / immigrant groups, a number of respondents mentioned that RRR is “not very accepted

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40 For instance, US troops “re-colonisation” of the Philippines in the War on Terror, the feminisation of migration, racism and violence in high schools, or the exoticisation of Asian women.
by the mainstream Filipino community" (KC04), or the non-Filipino community for that matter. They said they don't get much recognition or media coverage of the event and point to the mainstream Filipino community's Independence Day\(^{41}\) celebrations as much more publicly accepted and attended because it's apolitical attitude is "easy to swallow" (KC04). The political and ethno-specific nature of RRR challenges a public and levels of government more comfortable with a feel-good version of multiculturalism that's solely about the celebration of diversity and blending of difference.

**breaking ground**

About the same time Uganayan was developing RRR, some community members at the Centre were beginning to experiment with community theatre. PWC and SIKLAB approached *Headlines Theatre* to do some work on issues related to the marginalised members of the community, namely youth experiences of discrimination and the experiences of domestic workers under the LCP. Respondents characterise the Theatre of the Oppressed (TOTO) workshops as very intense, visceral, and emotional and the performance of the final interactive piece as empowering and consciousness-raising for the actors and audience alike as they saw before them real situations that happen in the community unfold and practiced coming up with solutions. For the domestic workers in particular, they built important skills in the process, not least of which was finding their voice. "This is a space and a way for them to unleash that voice that they have and bring it out for even just one night – and that night leads to something else, speaking up elsewhere on other nights" (KC02)

According to Sinag Bayan members, the TOTO helped them build direction in the cultural work of the Centre, but they also identified drawbacks with the method. They felt TOTO worked best at the level of individual situations and changes, while they were interested in looking at the broader picture of the community's experiences and its relationship to different social and economic forces and structures. Members were also motivated to try something new by recent violent incidents towards members of the community at Van Tech High School. A couple members of Uganayan (who had been approached by students and families of the high school frustrated with the school administration's inaction) conceived of doing a theatre project around that topic, which

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\(^{41}\) Held at the Plaza of Nations, celebrating the Filipino community's talent, food, business and other success. A highlight of the day is a beauty pageant for young Filipinas.
developed into Breaking Ground. Two youths in particular began co-ordinating the project, building on what they had learned and seen of cultural work in the Philippines on a recent trip. There they discovered BITAW – the Basic Integrated Theatre Arts Workshop – a popular method of community theatre organising that incorporates body work and role playing to bring out and understand experiences and integrates a process of reflecting on bigger structures and forces. They were inspired by artists they met there that saw art and activism as inseparable, their creativity born out of a basic struggle for survival and change.

In searching for funding for their endeavour, the youth coordinators once again were faced with local organisations uninterested in supporting an ethno-specific project, met time and again with the refrain “it’s not multicultural enough”. In the end they were finally awarded a grant by the United Way and what evolved, in the words of one respondent, was a culturally-based PAR project that was “trailblazing, comprehensive, and like nothing ever done in the community before” (KC02). They recruited participation from a broad range of members of the community – youth, recently re-unified family members, seniors, and domestic workers, most of who were not involved in organisations at the centre and had little or no theatre experience.

The process began with workshops based on expressing and working with the participants’ own experiences. They were “very emotional but also we make it comical, allowing everyone to step back and reflect on experiences as well as imagining those of others; it was important to have fun” (KC02). The script-writing process was participatory and democratic. Stories and experiences became scenarios and dialogue which were always brought back to the group for feedback. The final narrative centres on the experiences of Rosa, a nurse who migrates to Canada from the Philippines and ends up working as a nanny for a white middle-class family, tricked by her recruitment agency who had led her to believe she would be placed in a nursing job. She sponsors her younger brother and sister’s migrations to Canada who soon find out she is not working as a nurse and encounter their own obstacles to success in Canada (such as poor employment prospects, discrimination, and violent racism in high school) and struggle with their feelings of displacement, powerlessness, and desire to return home.
The hour long play, followed by facilitated discussion with the audience, was met with great response from both the Filipino and non-Filipino communities. The group was asked to perform for many communities and events, garnered some mainstream media coverage, and travelled to Winnipeg for the first Filipino National Consultative Forum in 1998.

Respondents discussed the experiences and impacts of the *Breaking Ground* process on both a personal and community level. Many found theatre, body work, and role playing very empowering, therapeutic, and healing as they were given the opportunity to express themselves in "open, raw, and emotional ways" (KC02) they weren't elsewhere, tapping into levels of experience and knowledge they didn't normally reflect on. One domestic worker characterised her experience as "empowering, accessible, and gratifying; I work better with actions than words" (KC05). Feeling shy and powerless when she first arrived in Canada, she feels her involvement at the Centre has made her stronger, less ashamed, and more open; "the creative side is really helpful for me. I can express anything I want, not like before, keeping it to myself" (KC05, Interviewed June 3, 2003). The space and process allowed people the time and tools to identify and work through some of their own issues. For instance, through role-playing a recently re-unified mother and daughter were able to begin understanding each other's experiences, diffusing some of the conflict between them, and allowing them to take needed action at the time (which ultimately was for the daughter to return to the Philippines).

In addition to analytical and critical thinking skills developed through the process, participants cultivated capacities in organising, planning, play-writing, acting, theatre production, publicity, fund-raising, and media communication. Many participants who never had considered acting, creative work, or community involvement began to see new possibilities for themselves. Relationships developed and grew, and over time, the process contributed to further mobilisation of the community to advocate and work for change, social justice and human rights in Canada and in the Philippines.

For the community, *Breaking Ground* provided a social and ritual opportunity for people to come together and have fun as well as engage in discussion about important and difficult issues. According to one coordinator, performing for the main Asian Heritage
Month (AHM) event in 1998 was a particularly important step in educating and engaging the wider Filipino and Canadian communities as well as challenging those already involved. AHM, he says, usually just focuses on the "fine arts" accomplishments of Asian communities. "Here we married community voices with a cultural experience so the audience could connect with the issues, challenging the purpose of AHM itself." (KC03)

Challenging people to consider the broader realities of the community, it made visible the most oppressed and exploited members of the community to mainstream Filipinos. As one youth participant put it "to make change, we need to understand each other's oppression, especially the most marginalised, and work with them" (KC04). The Sinag Bayan members who were involved in Breaking Ground see this "integration" as an essential part of their work. "We grow stronger in unity and work – this is the real basis for action. You can read everything about oppressed people but if you don't actually come into contact with it, it is easy to give up on it and take it lightly. Arts and culture bridge the gap of understanding because it shows how one person's experience is connected to everyone's experiences" (KC04).

"So in the end, we were able to bring out the experiences of the community and mirror/reflect these experiences back at the community itself in the audience. This was very powerful. Also, it was a powerful educational tool to raise awareness in the Canadian population. Rarely has this been done so comprehensively in our community – usually we just get to hear snippets of our experiences in spoken word performances, but this really got the integrated/related experiences of many parts of the community and how those experiences are related to each other and other structures and groups in Canadian society.....At the performances, the community was very moved, emotional, audience members were often crying as they saw for the first time their own unspoken experiences reflected on the stage." (KC03)

Of course, not all of the audience response was positive or favourable, and that's part of it, say Sinag Bayan members. It's about opening up a dialogue, opening up to different perspectives. While some audience members communicated their support for the performance and voiced ways in which they identified with the stories and felt things should change, others expressed disapproval for the play's critical take on Canadian policy and the quality of life and treatment experienced here by marginalised members of the community. A sense of shame is common for many Filipinos, rooted in cultural norms of avoiding conflict that value "not complaining", "keeping quiet", and "not rocking the boat" (KC01). One Sinag Bayan member mentioned she hears comments sometimes like "we're in Canada now, and we have to abide by Canada's rules"
Some members of our community do not agree with exposing our struggle - they are ashamed and embarrassed to say ‘we are not OK and something needs to change.’ We say – maybe the rules need to change” (KC01).

sinag bayan – a community cultural theatre collective

And so the story of cultural work at the Centre continues. *Breaking Ground* garnered a lot of attention and positive response, inspiring confidence and interest in expanding and building on cultural work. RRR grows broader and bigger each year, developing and changing along with the goals and experiences of the youth members. In 2002 Mindanao’s *Kathara Dance Theatre Collective*\(^2\), a group of newly arrived Filipino artists, came into contact with the Centre. This was seen as an opportunity for mutual learning – Kathara members navigating their own experiences in Canada and the Centre continuing to develop ways to engage and educate the community creatively.

In January 2003, SIKLAB (the Migrants’ group) began to lead the relationship with Kathara, signalling a shift from cultural work at the Centre being mostly youth-led to an effort to outreach to a broader spectrum of people. To a community possessing experience in music, theatre, music, spoken word and visual arts, Kathara offered expertise in traditional music, martial arts, modern and traditional dance. The concept of a cultural arts collective emerged, and Sinag Bayan was born in early 2003. The idea was to establish a group (in the tradition of arts/theatre collectives in the
Philippines rooted in a PAR model) dedicated specifically to organising and engaging the community through the arts and culture.

Figures 6.11 and 6.12 A Kathara multi-media performance (left); Kathara contributing to Vancouver’s Canada Day celebrations (right).

"The collective is about nurturing the process, the relationships, the mutual learning, the dialogue, and the intergenerational and community integration we are seeing come out of cultural work," says one member (KC02). It is also seen as a space where community members can direct their talent, ideas and creativity. Another member points out that creating this kind of opportunity is "a natural next step and especially important now when community organising on the whole seems so divorced from creativity" (KC04). The principal work undertaken thus far by Sinag Bayan has been a multi-media production show-casing an array of Filipino indigenous folk dances, music, drama, comedy and poetry entitled *Ugat ng Kasaysayan*. Compared to *Breaking Ground*, Sinag Bayan has developed a more complex story and concepts, focusing on bodies and movement, aware that “actions become more powerful than words on stage” (KC04)

*Ugat ng Kasaysayan* tells a story of the history of the Philippines and its relationship to the current situation in the country and that of Filipinos living overseas. It begins before colonisation, depicting a colourful and complex island culture, then moving on to colonisation and the struggle to survive amidst encroaching foreign interests, to forced migration, first from rural to urban areas and then abroad, where Filipinos are faced with many new obstacles, levels of oppression and experiences. Its themes are struggle

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Kathara is a multi-media arts collective (specializing in traditional dance, theatre, martial arts and music) now based in Vancouver, originally from the southern Philippine island of Mindanao. These six artists immigrated to Canada in June 2002 and initially experienced difficulty in settlement and establishing themselves as professional artists.
and perseverance, interdependence and connection, the search for truth, identity, belonging, and genuine independence.

"So many – from young to old, from devoutly Catholic to atheist up to wazoo – are responding, and it's because it's the message of empowerment and the need to bring out stories that is so clear and people can see their lives as part of that. They can see their visions come alive, and they are willing to invest their time." (KC02).

"With Sinag Bayan, it's a story that's never told. It's revealing. It's the truth." (KC05)

"This play helps us visualise the migration experience, and make a connection between the experience in the Philippines and Canada and realise we are all part of the same cycle – exploitation, oppression, and poverty continues here." (KC01)

Sinag Bayan so far has been very successful at bringing different generations, genders, and socio-economic groups within the community together in its 15-person membership. *Ugat ng Kasaysayan* is the product of six months of intensive workshops – bringing out people's experiences and stories, learning dance and movement skills, script development, production planning, and promotion. The one hour and forty minute performance premiered at the Chinese Cultural Centre in Vancouver in June 2003.

According to the members, this production is proving even more successful than *Breaking Ground*. Invitations to perform in the community and around the city are numerous and there has been much positive feedback, as well as similar disapproval, like that associated with the previous theatre production. Members hope their work will
further open dialogue between factions within the community. There is some indication that this is happening, to the extent that a number “mainstream” Filipinos have become involved in the productions themselves. However, the potential for broader dialogue across these divides being facilitated by these productions and performances (or the possibility of them exacerbating factionalism) remains to be seen. Sinag Bayan members hold high hopes and believe that cultural work is they key to attracting and engaging a broader audience and facilitating communication and education.

More than cultural work in the past, Sinag Bayan is attracting a lot of attention from a diversity of people who are expressing support as well as actually getting involved. There is talk of taking the process on the road; facilitating the building of CCD capacity through this kind of model with other Filipino communities across Canada.

Combining mediums like theatre, dance, music and poetry is special, one Sinag Bayan member relates (KC01). It tells a different story and prompts a more intuitive and nuanced process of reflection through engaging different ways of knowing. “Theatre is special. You can see and feel the truth. Its role is to show people ‘this is you’ and for the audience to question if it really is. It’s a mirror of reality, and the visual helps people immediately relate and consider their relationship to the issues. You can’t reflect the same through talking” (KC01). It plays a powerful role in conscientisation.

The workshop process has been transformative for the participants and their growing capacity and energy has rejuvenated SIKLAB as an organisation in particular, as awareness about the realities of the lives of migrants increases. Respondents tell of friends from other communities who have attended the production, expressing that it helps them organise and energise their work, seeing their own similar experiences reflected in this manner. Solidarity within the Filipino community and between it and other marginalised communities grows, forging a notion of multiculturalism beyond the mainstream nationalist concept – at once both localised and internationalised – re-imagining politics and negotiating identities and belonging along community, international, and collaborative lines (i.e. in solidarity with other groups).

For another Sinag Bayan and Ugnayan member (KC04), the connection of relationship established with people of different backgrounds and experiences is one of the most
important impacts. Opening up to others – sharing one’s experiences and trying to understand another’s – builds a strength and solidarity she sees as essential for positive social action and change. Working collectively across difference, for her, is exciting, inspiring, and ultimately contributes to her figuring out who she is and where she fits in her community, in Canada, and in the world.

regarding planners and city planning

An examination of the literature and reflection on the stories in this chapter reveal many needs within the Filipino community (especially amongst the most marginalised members) not being met by public services – such as access to affordable housing, appropriate employment opportunities, Filipino-specific services, settlement and integration services, family and re-unification counselling, youth services, and much needed advocacy initiatives in the face of discriminatory and exploitative policy and practice (i.e. immigration; labour/nursing). They also reveal a broad and rich array of human resources, in terms of cultural, creative, critical, research, organising, educating, and political capacities within the community. Organisations at the Centre are filling some of these gaps in service, but also play a crucial role in promoting community development and social / political / policy change through their multi-faceted work at the local, regional, national and international levels. The members of the Centre and its users (and their many community-based research project reports) hold crucial knowledge of the experiences, needs and resources of this large and rapidly changing community in Vancouver.

While members of the Centre are more “civically” active than many Canadian born residents of Vancouver (Pratt, 2003), they are operating in spaces of “insurgent citizenship” rather than through “official” channels for civic participation, especially at the city level. The Centre seems to have achieved a more successful level of dialogue and recognition at the national and regional levels (both with government and other NGOs) than at the local level with the City, although this relationship is evolving. This may have to do with the fact that much of the Centre’s work is directed towards being heard by policy-makers at the provincial and federal levels of government (i.e. regarding immigration and labour policy). At the same time, their work on affordable housing,

43 Funding for research and community consultations / capacity building implemented through Centre organizations has come from Status of Women Canada, Multiculturalism Canada, the provincial ministry responsible for housing, etc.
community economic development (i.e. a catering business) and youth experiences of
to violence and exclusion in schools and public spaces is place-based and locally
directed. Another factor is the lack of a defined geographical Filipino community or
“enclave” (Hiebert, 1998) around which to educate and organise around local planning
issues. While dispersed, there are concentrations of the Filipino population, particularly
in East Vancouver.

While attention to diversity and difference is a stated mandate of the City and there are
a great number of actions that have been taken to make services and information more
accessible and outreach to “diverse” groups (see Chapter Three), dialogue with and
outreach to the Centre, its members, and the particularly marginalised sectors of the
community it represents (women, domestic workers, youth, foreign-trained nurses,
more recent migrants and immigrants) has been relatively minimal. Compared to other,
perhaps less radical or political Filipino-specific organisations44, the Kalayaan Centre
has had much less contact with the City, and has only in the last year or two received
any funding, while other organisations have enjoyed more long-standing support.

When asked about the relationship the Centre and its organisations have with the City
planners and structures of local governance, respondents expressed some frustration
as well as determination to cultivate more open and constructive relationships, educate
local planners and officials, and really engage in dialogue. When asked about planning,
a variety of points came up, but time and again respondents related how they felt the
organisations and the work of the Centre are perceived as too ethno-specific and too
political to (a) be considered for financial support and (b) fit into the understanding of
multiculturalism held by all levels of government, including municipal. One of the
directors of the Centre expressed that social planners in particular need to expand their
understanding of multiculturalism beyond the celebration of the diversity through food
and culture, to one that includes “the reality of people struggling for social justice,
human rights, equality, and genuine development” (KC06, personal communication
December 8, 2004). She also questions the City’s commitment to working with diverse
groups when it has assigned only one staff member to work on the multicultural

44 For instance, the Filipino-Canadian Support Services Society (FCSS) (serving primarily the Filipino community) which
bills itself as a multicultural organization, focuses mostly on service provision, and isn’t overly political, has collaborated
much more with the City; the City funds some of its programs and the City-commissioned report on the Filipino
community was done in collaboration with this organization.
program in a city where nearly half the population has a mother tongue other than English.

There has been no comprehensive consultation with the Centre on the part of the City, but rather an evolving relationship of communication, initiated by the relentless efforts of the Centre, particularly in the last couple of years. Several members recalled a visit in 2001 from two social planners in response to the Centre’s application for a direct social service grant, which left them on the defensive and failed to establish a positive relationship.\(^{45}\) The Centre pressed on and when funding for women’s centres was slashed at the provincial level, it joined other women’s centres in a collective lobbying effort to get money from the city (from whom they now have partial funding for a coordinator).

The relationship is just beginning. The City’s multicultural planner has recently expressed interest in work at the Centre, including the cultural work. The Director challenged him: “then support us, talk to us, and engage with us” (KC06, personal communication, November 1, 2004). “I have always challenged the planners...to integrate and immerse themselves among the people so maybe they can be more innovative in their policy development” (KC06, personal communication, December 8, 2004). It remains to be seen what comes of this evolving relationship.

A number of other respondents had interesting and telling reflections regarding relations between the City and the community. A youth member says “I think they see our cultural work as safe (versus the rest of the work at the Centre), they don’t see it as political – that’s why we get some good responses from it. No funding support, though” (KC03). Recognising the positive response of the City to cultural work as a means of promoting a positive understanding of diversity, another youth relates: “We work with the system but we also challenge it – we are starting Sinag Bayan so we will have a cultural organisation that will hopefully open up more doors for funding and other networking opportunities” (KC02). A third youth expresses frustration at the failure to really connect with the community’s experiences and engage in holistic dialogue and

\(^{45}\) The planners told the Centre members that they weren’t well connected with the community’s needs and didn’t serve the community well with their work and focus, that they were isolated and that their location wasn’t safe, which the members took great issue with as a highly judgmental and inaccurate perspective. Members wrote a letter and appeared at City Hall criticising the department’s decision-making process as not transparent and undemocratic and the City called for a consultation about the process, to which there have been some minor changes.
practice: “Planners, as well as some activists, are talking heads; they forget to bring in the body and the emotion. There’s a lot of talk and rhetoric and no action – the key is internalising and integrating the work you want to do” (KC04).

Particularly telling was the story several respondents told about their experience with the City-appointed outside researcher investigating the situation of the Filipino community in Vancouver in 2000 (i.e. Martin Spigelman & Associates). The researcher came to the Centre to focus on the experiences of Filipino youth. As they tell it, he came in with no real context or relationship with the youth, brought them pizza and pop, talked to them for a few hours and concluded that racism and struggles of identity and belonging weren’t issues for these youths. Meanwhile, they say, experiences of racism, discrimination, and exclusion and confusion and struggle over the ongoing negotiation of their identity and sense of belonging in Canada play central roles in their lives: “[When we read the report] we were like, excuse us!!” (KC03).

One youth suggests the reason the researcher failed to get an accurate picture of their experiences was that he had no prior relationship with the them and he didn’t use a relevant or accessible approach (he just asked direct and personal, yet detached questions) and therefore they were reluctant to open up to him. This is a good example of how a community cultural development approach, using cultural and creative tools, might have made this process more accessible for the youth and elicited useful information for the planning researcher. Not only that, but the City’s use of an “outside” researcher to conduct this report, when the Centre had already published numerous valuable reports on the subject and could have offered community-based research expertise itself, is surprising and perhaps reflects the City’s ignorance of the Centre’s track record in the community and in collaboration with academic researchers as well, or their reluctance to work with them for political reasons.
6.4 learning from the experiences of the Filipino community

the centre and sinag bayan: implications of diversity for planning

The stories of members of Sinag Bayan and the Kalayaan Centre raise a number of critical questions about how planners respond to diversity and approach working with and in the interests of Vancouver's many ethno-cultural communities.

1. Understandings of multiculturalism and diversity. The City's particular commitment to and understanding of multiculturalism in this case seems to have resulted in differential treatment and hierarchies of ethno-cultural-national groups and organisations. Those that seem to share its understanding, work with a "multicultural population", and focus on increasing the accessibility of services, are favoured. The Centre, whose work promotes a more differentiated, collective, fluid, international/global understanding, doesn't fit. Their community and nationalist (Philippine) focus, their anti-imperialist politics, and their human rights and social justice perspective challenge the feel-good notion of multiculturalism and "Canadians complacency of our own relative virtue" (Pratt, 2003: 19). Their work highlights the fact that legal citizenship doesn't necessarily equal cultural citizenship – that economic, social, cultural, and political structures of power result in patterns of exclusion and discrimination, including the level of municipal policy and service. It also points to the important issue of non-citizen residents in the city - the exploitation and exclusion of migrant workers from processes of decision-making.

This case study challenges planners to question their roles. Is improving access to City processes through linguistic and cultural sensitivity enough? Is promoting a multiculturalism that only focuses on bringing "diverse" groups together going to achieve a more equitable, accepting, and pluralist society? Planners ought to respond to what communities are actually doing and saying – which may include both a desire to build understanding across ethnic and cultural difference as well as community-based and international mobilisation, education and research. Enabling community mobilisation, which is the heart of true community development, will require that

46 Which is a universalist, individualist, nationalist understanding of multiculturalism as a sort of simultaneous celebration/preservation of difference and cultural blending/integration.
planners become comfortable with this messy, contradictory, inherently political and sometimes divisive work.

The Centre and Sinag Bayan do education, mobilisation, and organisation work that is community-focused and international in reach but that also builds relationships, solidarity, and collaborations with other local marginalised communities, levels of government, other NGOs, and academic institutions towards their own interests and building strength, unity, knowledge and support. City planners must figure out how to engage with this process and dialogue, particularly as it represents the interests of a portion of such a significant minority population in Vancouver.

2. Achieving real community development and collaboration. The Centre and Sinag Bayan challenge the lip service that planners often pay to the need for a more community development approach to working with diverse publics (see also Chapters 4 and 5). Community development is rooted in community needs, desires, and resources — in all their diversity, contradiction, and politics — not only the needs/desires/resources of the members of communities that don't conflict with the status quo. CD is a risky business and unknown planning territory in many ways. It is inherently political and questions structures of power at its very centre, placing community members themselves in leadership roles and valuing their knowledge.

This case study has highlighted a number of other things. It has shown that planners need to expand their understanding of the fluid, changing, contested nature of cultural communities and its implications for practice. It underscores the importance of a broader social analysis — at the interdependence and root causes of experiences — in planning for inclusive processes and positive change. It underlines the importance of understanding and engaging the most marginalised groups in society to achieve meaningful community development opportunities. It reveals the need to respond to the needs of communities as the communities themselves perceive and communicate them, and learn to see resources and assets where they exist — such as the wealth of knowledge and resources the Centre represents.
3. Learning how to listen. As already noted by some planners themselves in Chapter 4 and CCD practitioners in Chapter 5, planners will be required to develop improved listening skills — both in verbal dialogue and in the other forms of communication community members offer — in order to really hear what communities are saying. Any sort of inclusive participatory planning must begin with good and accurate information and dialogue.

The process by which the City undertook to implement a “comprehensive needs assessment of the Filipino community” missed out on large quantities of information from certain sectors of that community. The City could have engaged researchers at the Centre themselves on a team that included Filipinos from other organisations to do the assessment themselves, rather than hire an outside researcher, facilitating relationships of trust and collaboration.

In the end, Martin Spigelman and Associates got bad information when they went to the Centre to talk to the youth. Being an outsider with no relationship with his respondents, there was no level of trust or comfort established. Valuable research skills on the part of the youth themselves went unidentified. Finally, his direct verbal approach didn’t speak to the youth — it made them uncomfortable and reluctant to open up. A community cultural development approach might have been much more relevant and productive, engaging the community in the design and implementation of the research process itself and allowing for a variety of ways of communicating and forums for relationship-building. While the City-commissioned research was being done, youth at the Centre were planning and putting on the first and second annual Roots, Rhymes, and Resistance events. So much could have been learned about youth experiences from attending those events and engaging with and listening to the community through its cultural work.

4. Story, cultural expression, identity and belonging. This case study also brings to light the importance of story in planning and the conversation and politics around belonging and identity that is so central to the daily lived reality in cities of difference but is often avoided by the planning profession. It’s a “mushy”, subjective, emotional, confusing — yet fundamental — realm of experience and work.
What is clear in this case study is the intense need for this community to tell its untold stories, reveal denied realities, and understand one another's experiences towards negotiating individual and collective identities, building solidarity, taking action and making change. Members of the Centre argue this bringing out of stories and experiences must go hand in hand, if not before, a "coming together" with different groups. This process of self-understanding is also about a "politics of recognition" (Taylor, 1994; Sandercock, 2003) – a process of educating and challenging non-Filipino Canadians and the "mainstream" Filipino population to acknowledge the reality of their experiences, oppression, and denied histories and their own implications therein. As the diversity consultant (Chapter 4) mentioned during our conversation regarding First Nations story-telling, the Filipino community will also "keep having to tell their stories until somebody listens and changes accordingly" (P01), and even then, will continue telling them as their experiences change and identities are continuously negotiated.

Learning and engaging in the language of story and creative expression – in its many forms – might be one way for planners to open up to the much needed conversation about what is home, who belongs and why, who is excluded and how, and what is to be done. Through its cultural work, Sinag Bayan members communicate (and create) the new forms of belonging and home that are being crafted at the Centre, in the process transforming Canada, what it means to be Canadian, and what multiculturalism and diversity might be about (Pratt, 2003).

**the centre and sinag bayan: cultural work and community engagement**

In terms of an example of a community cultural development process from which to learn, the story of Sinag Bayan and the Centre's cultural work reveals much about how these processes work in a real-life situation over time, how CCD processes are experienced, their physical, emotional, spiritual, and imaginative impacts on community and individuals, and the kinds of skills and capacities that are required of the practitioners who facilitate them.

The cultural work at the Centre has increasingly mobilised the community and brought people together, making space for and facilitating relationships and interactions between Filipinos of different backgrounds. Cultural and creative expression has been
a particularly relevant medium for Filipino youth in their struggle to understand their experiences and negotiate their identities. The theatre work has been an especially powerful tool of communication, education and analysis, facilitating an increased understanding across generations, backgrounds, and migration experiences. Through the process community members have built valuable capacities in creative / arts production, participatory process, research, organisation, communicating with the media and planning; an enhanced sense of agency and self esteem; and have built constructive relationships with other marginalised communities and community-based organisations.

While much of the PAR and community development work at the Centre contributes in similar ways, the cultural work in particular – its processes of creating, learning, and relationship building, and its creative products, being multi-media performances – contributes important unique functions and experiences.

The cultural work at the Centre aims to engage people in a more holistic way – acknowledging their multi-faceted selves, their diverse talents, and preferred ways of knowing and communicating. RRR has opened up space, especially for youth, who find spoken word, music, dance, and performance a comfortable and relevant way of expressing themselves. Theatre and dance workshops have been particularly good at engaging peoples' emotions and bodies in communicating and understanding ones own experience and the experiences of others. The productions themselves have had powerful visceral and emotional impacts on audience members and participants alike. As stories are told through metaphors and symbols, rhythm and movement, people are engaged in a profound way – at the level where they make meaning – opening them up to reflecting on situations in their lives and the lives of others. The way cultural expression is used as a language of emotion, somatic experience, and spirit, has proven to be very therapeutic, allowing hidden and painful realities to be communicated out in the open. The doing, the creating of something new, is a powerful metaphor and experience in the building of self-esteem and a sense of individual and collective agency.

Practitioners, all of whom are community members as well, express deep commitment and passion for their work and the role of the arts and culture in the struggle for social
justice, human rights, and genuine development for their community. They display many of the skills, capacities, and qualities discussed in previous chapters that are being increasingly seen as crucial in developing a more holistic planning practice. During our conversations they were frank, open, warm, comfortable, critical and self-aware. More than any other practitioners with whom I've spoken, they didn't place strict boundaries between their political and community work and their personal lives, seeing them as one in the same. They seemed to possess natural abilities in putting people at ease with good story-telling and listening skills, drawing people out, and in exciting and energising them. Their aptitude for working with people, expressing themselves culturally, and in creating environments that encourage people to cultivate their own creative expression has also developed over time. Sinag Bayan members have learned a great deal through experience as the cultural work at the Centre has evolved, and through a concerted effort to explore and learn from more experienced artist activists, like Kathara and those encountered on trips to the Philippines.

The Centre's cultural work overall, and the evolution of Sinag Bayan, are feeding the individual and collective spirits of the Filipino community. The CCD approach of RRR, Breaking Ground and Sinag Bayan promotes a faith in the knowledge, value and dignity of others. The relationship-centred approach and ritual framework of CCD encourages an awareness of the present and connection across difference, building solidarity and contributing to the forging of identity. In a community where many members face daily obstacles and challenges, the celebration of the commitment to a common struggle and shared history and values is very important. The Centre's cultural work nourishes the community's thirst for celebration and fun. It also responds to the basic need of storytelling – of making explicit and working through collective and individual experience, memories, and histories.

While the cultural work at the Centre has up until recently been primarily youth-focused, Sinag Bayan has opened up opportunities for and brought out interest in community members of a variety of ages and backgrounds and the work has become more and more integrated in other aspects of the Centre's work. It will be interesting to see where

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47 It is interesting to note that the Centre is secular in orientation and doesn't involve itself in the tight-knit network of Filipino churches in Vancouver which indeed play a central role at the heart of the (especially "mainstream") Filipino community, which suggests another aspect of diversity / division among the overall community. Distinguishing itself this way might also prevent the Centre from connecting with Filipinos who turn to the church for guidance and assistance with dealing with individual and community problems and goals.
the cultural work evolves from here. The imagination and innovation at the Centre also holds the promise of stimulating creativity in the work and lives of the broader Filipino and non-Filipino communities. As members continue to take risks, try new things, challenge assumptions, engage with other communities, imagine alternate futures, and welcome and value the imagination of others, creative leaders and spaces will no doubt continue to develop and play significant roles in the social, political, and cultural landscapes of Vancouver.

The story of Kalayaan Centre's cultural work specifically, including Sinag Bayan, should be seen as a valuable learning tool for planners in two important ways: (a) their story, as they embody and tell it, details how a community has incorporated the arts and culture into an overall approach to community development within its own unique circumstances and (b) the cultural expression produced at the Centre itself provides important information and forums for dialogue and learning about the experiences, perspectives, needs and resources of one of Vancouver's largest visible minority populations.

The case study of Sinag Bayan and the creative cultural work at the Kalayaan Centre is just one example of the wealth of experience, knowledge, and practice existing at the community level from which planners can learn. In the next chapter, I shift focus from this ethno-cultural community to a geographical one, where a community-based organisation committed to the principles of diversification has achieved unique successes with an arts-based community development program.
chapter seven: the renfrew-collingwood arts pow wow – building community through cultural expression

7.1 introduction to the case study

While Sinag Bayan and the Kalayaan Centre present an important example of innovative community cultural work being done by and for the Filipino community in Vancouver, the Renfrew-Collingwood Arts Pow Wow offers insight into an effort to build community through the arts across difference in one of Vancouver's most diverse geographical neighbourhoods. The Pow Wow is a program of Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH), a non-profit non-government organisation that is a leader in inclusive community-based service provision, advocacy, and development – a true innovator in the development of an "intercultural institution" (Dang, 2002; Sandercock, 2003). As I spoke with various planners and CCD practitioners at the beginning stages of my research, the Pow Wow was often offered as an example of a ground-breaking multi-year multi-level program. I was excited to explore how a community organisation, so committed to making CNH a "place for everyone", find the arts and culture useful in achieving its goals.

The coordinators and staff at the Neighbourhood House were tremendously welcoming, gracious, and open to a student researcher picking their brains and poking through their documents and files. The findings presented in this chapter are drawn from interviews with seven coordinators of various Pow Wow programs, a review of the extensive documentation and evaluation of the program, and my own impressions and experiences collected over the two week period I spent in June 2003 exploring the Neighbourhood House, the neighbourhood itself, and the hearts, passions, and stories of several Pow Wow members.

The chapter begins by contextualising the case study with a brief profile of Collingwood-Renfrew and an outline of the history and work of the Neighbourhood House. The story of the Pow Wow starts with "how it all began" and continues with a summary of its goals, objectives, methods, and tools – all of which are well documented in its many funding
proposals and reports. I then turn to the stories of seven Pow Wow members to better understand how Pow Wow activities and processes were experienced, understood, and perceived. Their stories, along with the results of a participatory evaluation carried out by the Pow Wow, and my own observations and experiences, are used to consider the following questions: What is going on here? What are people at the CNH doing to creatively engage members of this community? How do practitioners use and understand arts and culture? What skills and capacities do they display? How do people experience Pow Wow processes and what are the social, economic, physical, cultural, emotional and spiritual impacts? What can planners learn from the Pow Wow about the implications of diversity and developing more inclusive participatory democratic processes and a more holistic planning culture?

7.2 background: “a place for everyone”

Collingwood-Renfrew is a primarily residential neighbourhood home to 41,780 people in east Vancouver. Rapid demographic changes in the last 20 years have transformed the neighbourhood into one of exceptional ethno-culturally diversity. In 1986 the majority of Collingwood residents were of English background (51.5%) while only 21.1% were Chinese. By 1996 the English population had shrunk to 10.2%, while the Chinese population increased to 43.8%. Today, only 32% of the population have English as their first language (compared to 51.8% in Vancouver overall). Other main ethnic groups in the neighbourhood include Filipino, Italian, Portuguese, South Asian, Scottish, Irish, German, and First Nations, many of which are broken up into separate linguistic and sub-cultural groups. About 29.6% of the population live in low-income households. The neighbourhood has the city’s largest youth population (25% under the age of 19) as well as a growing aging population (16% are seniors).
Collingwood Neighbourhood House was established in 1986, emerging out of community activism in opposition to the planned construction of an elevated rapid transit line through the community in the early 1980s (Dang, 2002). This early group identified and focused on filling a community need for family and childcare services. Early on, members prioritised diversifying the organisation in terms of language and ethnicity hoping to achieve broader representation, build a sense of community among isolated and diverse residents, and comply with criteria of funders that were at that time beginning to focus on diversity and multiculturalism. Over the last 15 years, CNH has expanded its programs and services to include recreation, advocacy and community development initiatives in addition to family and childcare services, rooted in a commitment to principles of diversification (please see Figure 7.3) (ibid.).

In its mission to offer a “place for everyone”, CNH eschews culturally-specific programming in favour of programming that is intercultural, towards building community based on common residency, humanity, and sharing across difference. Community building is pursued through processes, programs, and activities that are rooted in community needs, assets, and initiatives and that get people doing things together. Relationship-building and participatory action research is at the heart of all of the work at CNH. Anti-racism and diversity training and the recruitment of staff that are representative of the community (in terms of ethnicity, gender, income-level) are par for the course in an organisation that sees itself as a “learning organisation”, engaging in a daily an ongoing negotiation of difference (Dang, 2002; Sandercock, 2003).

Figure 7.2 Collingwood Neighbourhood House

Figure 7.3 Principles of diversification articulated in the mission statement of CNH

- Cooperation and mutual respect;
- Self-reliance and empowerment of individuals and the community;
- Social justice and equity for all;
- Accountability to the community and responsiveness to its changing needs;
- Full participation of everyone in the social, cultural and economic life of the community;
- Valuing the work of staff and volunteers and providing ongoing support;
- Resident involvement in problem-solving and decision-making;
- Integration and collaboration among service providers within CNH and the greater community;
- Diversity and multicultural nature of Collingwood.

(Adapted from Dang (2002: 73))
The Neighbourhood House has expanded its reach to an estimated 25,000 to 35,000 residents (60-86% of the total population) and gained wide recognition for valuable and innovative diversification practice (ibid.). Its successes are unmistakable. A number of religious groups (Muslim, Christian, and various Chinese traditions) share NH space as a place of study and worship. In 1999 it received the City of Vancouver Cultural Harmony Award. Its Community Leadership Training Institute and the Renfrew-Collingwood Arts Pow Wow\(^5\) programs have truly facilitated the building of community, capacities, agency, change, and understanding within this large and diverse neighbourhood. The Neighbourhood House itself is a warm and welcoming place – teeming with activity and swathed with colourful art pieces reflecting the great creative resources and diverse backgrounds of its residents.

Dang (2002) sees CNH’s successes rooted in a four-part organisational structure geared towards: achieving differentiated benefits (through ensuring flexibility within broad-based programs and ongoing assessment of community needs and program responsiveness); achieving inclusive participation (in both programs but also decision-making through rigorous outreach and personal relationship building); achieving varied discourse (through bringing people together, facilitating dialogue, especially through conflict, and building leadership capacity) ; and achieving inclusive definitions (through making the organisation accessible and reflective of local diversity and fostering a sense of ownership and belonging in the NH). He argues that most of all, patience, deliberate cross-cultural outreach and good communication skills, and the stability of an organisation known to the community over time, are crucial elements in its success. Also, a unique funding model which depends on monies acquired through upwards of sixty separate grants allows the CNH to never be beholden to any one funding agency.

In its unique and innovative work, encouraging an expansive, daily, negotiated, collaborative, learning and experience-based approach to difference (vs. a more narrow and limited procedural approach favoured by bureaucracy) CNH has found participatory arts and cultural expression invaluable. It is the story of the Pow Wow to which we now turn.

\(^5\) The Pow Wow is also known as the “Building Community through Cultural Expression” programme, which was the name used in the funding proposals and project reports between 1999 and 2002. Although that substantial three-year funding has come to an end, the Pow Wow, its networks, relationships, traditions, resources, plans and dreams live on.
7.3 stories of the pow wow

how it all began

As a part of a desire to bring the organisation, which by 1995 had grown to employ 120 people, back to its roots and support more community-based initiatives, the Board at CNH decided to split the Director position in half between two people. One would head up the well-used family, childcare and recreational services arm of the organisation and another would develop a community development arm. As the Director of Community Development tells it (PW02, Interviewed April 1, 2003), they fed the notion out through staff and volunteers to the community that the NH was interested in supporting community initiatives. That same week she was approached by three different community members touting proposals and ideas that involved engaging people through various artistic and creative means.

Not long after these three people [an environmental artist interested in working on community issues around a park (PW03, Interviewed June 3, 2003), a visual artist driven to develop the region’s creative resources and support artists (PW04, Interviewed June 13, 2003), and an individual with expertise and interest in a community newspaper (PW01, Interviewed June 9, 2003)] began outreach, planning, and meetings regarding their own little areas, another individual came forward. An aboriginal leader wanted to do something around youth and traditional carving. These four individuals constituted the core of the Pow Wow at its inception.

The program evolved organically, according to issues, concerns, and resources identified by the community at various meetings and events and the vision of those early artist leaders. A main community concern identified early on was safety and drug and alcohol addiction in the community, especially the effect on public spaces.\(^{51}\) The Board also wanted to focus community development efforts on a particular geographical area. Since community belonging and networking are often associated with community spaces, and much of the safety concern was directed there, the Norquay area around Slocan Park was chosen. The small but marginalised and struggling Aboriginal

\(^{51}\) At the time there were a lot of needles and condoms found in the neighbourhood, especially Slocan Park. Through a series of meetings facilitated by the NH, people were encouraged to voice their concerns and fears and at the same time there was a focus on how to support and assist the increasing number of addicted people in the neighbourhood. Opening up space where such a conflict-ridden and emotional issue could be discussed really helped shift attitudes and inspire action (CD06, Interviewed June 14, 2003).
community was also selected as another concentration. This way, through the Board, community, and artist-organiser research and dialogue, the four areas of the Pow Wow were born: Aboriginal Development, Neighbourhood Development (Slocan Park), Community Development (of artistic capacities and community resources), and Communication. A steering committee was established and grants applications were submitted for “Building Community through Cultural Expression”. Eventually, the Pow Wow secured substantial funding from a number of sources for three years to support their CCD program.

the ways of the pow wow: goals and methods

In keeping with the mission and methods of the Neighbourhood House, rooted in inclusive community development and localised asset-based approaches, the official goals and objectives of the Pow Wow are:

**Goals of the Pow Wow**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connection and Expression</th>
<th>To provide an opportunity for residents in the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood to work together to create public art, cultural education and sharing, local communication networks, and public venues for cultural and creative expression and mutual support.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote artists</td>
<td>To identify the artists who live and work in the community to promote their skills and abilities and facilitate their contribution, learning and employment in Renfrew-Collingwood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value creativity</td>
<td>To create an appreciation and value for artistic and creative qualities within individuals and the local community as a whole.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community capacity building</td>
<td>To increase the number of residents involved in community decision-making and help to develop their self-esteem and leadership skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic community development</td>
<td>To improve the physical, social, economic, and environmental components of the Renfrew-Collingwood community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Collingwood Neighbourhood House, 1999)

**Objectives of the Pow Wow**

1. Cultural pride and self worth. To foster cultural pride and self worth in the children, youth and adults of Renfrew-Collingwood by facilitating their learning and expression of personal talents.

2. Decrease isolation. To decrease the feeling of isolation felt by new and old residents through increased human connections, written stories, visual arts and audio visual presentation and public displays.

3. Increase cross-cultural learning and communication. To increase the knowledge of First Nations, Chinese, South Asian, Latin American, Vietnamese, African, Japanese, and European cultures within the Renfrew-Collingwood community by facilitating public venues for...
| **4. Beautification.** | To beautify and personalise the community through public art production and creative and cultural programs and performances. |
| **5. Skills inventory.** | To maintain a cultural capacity inventory and other avenues to identify and document community capacities, interests and histories. |
| **6. Networks of Connection.** | To link residents who are young and old, long time and new residents, from different cultures and with different skills and abilities through creating grassroots networks, and public venues for meeting, supporting and working together. |
| **7. Common goals and interests.** | To connect residents, groups, business, and public bodies to one another to work on common interests, visions, values, issues and concerns. |
| **8. Promote local links and services.** | To find ways to bring services, support, and links closer to home through neighbourhood level development. |
| **9. Communication strategy.** | To develop a communication strategy that supports the vision, goals, and objectives and builds relations amongst residents and community partners at a local community level. |
| **10. Documentation.** | To document the process and development of projects with stories, still photos, videotapes, and websites. |
| **11. Participatory feedback and evaluation.** | To develop feedback mechanisms and channels to improve on the ongoing processes and activities. |

(Adapted from Collingwood Neighbourhood House, 1999)

Pow Wow practitioners employ a great variety of mediums and tools in their work – from community mapping, murals, mosaics, puppetry, aboriginal carving, participatory action research, music, celebrations, gardening, video, information technology, physical recreation, the creation of sacred spaces and much, much more. Their methods reflect the principles and approach of community cultural development (please see pages 60-61) which: prioritise participation and learning through experience; see the role of the artist as facilitator and of culture and art as transformative, open and dynamic; focus on diversity as asset and pursue equality, human rights, and inclusive participation; work towards expanding dialogue and communication; focus on long-term open dynamic relationships; and root work in the needs, assets, and resources of local people. In the next section, I examine how these goals and principles have played out in everyday work, experiences and stories of Pow Wow processes.
experiencing pow wow processes and events

While the official articulated goals and objectives found in funding proposals and reports give us a great idea of the overall vision of the Pow Wow, individual stories and experiences offer invaluable personal insights into what is actually going on. We can read in a final report that "participants felt a greater sense of belonging and community", but what does this mean? How do people experience and understand these processes? What does it feel like to participate? How do they impact individuals and the community? Why and how do practitioners do the work that they do?

This section is organised into six parts: overall Pow Wow coordination, the four Pow Wow areas of development, and finally overall reflections and evaluations of the Pow Wow. Drawing from Pow Wow documentation, including the results of a participatory evaluation implemented in 2001, and individual practice stories, I explore the evolution, experience, and impacts of Collingwood Renfrew Arts Pow Wow.

1. overall pow wow coordination

The coordination of such an extensive project is quite a feat. Between 1999 and 2001 alone, over 6,000 neighbourhood residents were involved in the Pow Wow in some way and volunteers clocked in just less than 10,000 hours. There was one key coordinator and various project-specific coordinators, all of whom were supported by the Director of Community Development of CNH. The process is perceived as one of ongoing learning and reflection, and relationship building for everyone – "we do a lot of storytelling about the events, the whole process, we videotape things, make books outlining what we've done over the years, have celebrations and volunteer appreciation events" (PW02).

Generally, coordination was seen as very good, the relationship between artists and coordinators characterised as "a friend, supportive, connectors, valuable resource, advisor, and idea sharer" (Collinwood Neighbourhood House, 2001). There was of course some conflict associated with coordination, often due to poor communication, insecurity, and perceived expectations, which was identified as an area to work on in the future (ibid.). All coordinators I spoke with made a point of mentioning how the role of Director of Community Development at the CNH was crucial and invaluable. There was no shortage of praise and gratitude for her ability to "keep everyone together and
realistic, maintaining and fostering relationships with the municipality and the funders, and maintaining the structure of this huge thing. She has the capacity to walk the line of being radical and being acceptable and palatable to funders and government support” (PW04). Overall, coordinators and participants were given significant latitude in developing and implementing their own work plans – there was a great deal of belief in and respect for one another’s capacities and ideas (CNH, 2001).

The Director, who has been at the helm of CNH since the beginning, truly came off as possessing incredible gifts – of communication and listening, support, great vision, creativity, and an ability to come up with innovative approaches and initiate and inspire action. Speaking with her and learning more about the Pow Wow, I was struck with just how integrated the projects were. There was a real attempt made to “think about how to best do every step in the process, keeping it local and contributing to the neighbourhood” (PW02). For instance, the local Girl Guides were contracted to deliver the Collingwood News (the newspaper is the heart of the communication section of the Pow Wow) instead of selling cookies.

Securing and managing funding was another big part of Pow Wow coordination. The struggle for CCD projects to appeal to funders mentioned in previous chapters was experienced here as well. While the Pow Wow was lucky enough to obtain substantial funding through the federal Millennium Project and provincial Community Spirit money, other funds were also raised from different sources. All of the funding came through community development organisations as opposed to arts organisations, which tend to look only at professional and recognised artists. While the Pow Wow engaged a number of professional artists, many operated more at the grassroots level or were immigrants who are recognised as artists in their country of origin but are not yet established here.

The Director says “we’ve seen our role as one of education with a lot of the arts funding organizations”, who just “don’t get” the kind of work they are doing (PW02). Another issue is simply that the arts are already extremely under funded and there isn’t much money to go around. She also made the point that core funding generally isn’t offered by community development funders who favour short-term project-based funding. This makes establishing the long-term kinds of programs and relationships associated with community development difficult. Nevertheless, the Pow Wow has succeeded in this.
2. aboriginal development

Vancouver is home to a large urban Aboriginal population of over 10,000 (Statistics Canada, 2001). A Vancouver School Board report indicates secondary school drop-out rate for Aboriginals is 80%. The City of Vancouver reports 40% of street youth are Aboriginal, their incarceration rate 11 times that of non-Aboriginals. Collingwood has 800 Aboriginal residents with a serious lack of services that are community-based and Aboriginal-driven. (Collingwood Neighbourhood House, 2000)

Discussions at a First Nations drop-in program at the Neighbourhood House identified a desire to provide opportunities for children to retain an understanding of their culture, believing that cultural knowledge would foster self esteem and provide tools for participating in society. Goals were to strengthen cultural expressions and foster cultural pride in the youth; provide caring skills to youth; organise community celebrations; develop a Canoe Club with mentors knowledgeable in canoe and wilderness instruction; decrease isolation felt by residents; increase knowledge of First Nations culture, and document the process. Along with the leadership of the Aboriginal carver who was a founding member of the Pow Wow, the aboriginal program took shape. (Collingwood Neighbourhood House, 2000)

According to another coordinator of the Aboriginal program, there was a tremendous amount of response to the various activities from different members of the community.
People came to observe and interact with the youth carvers and mentor at the carving site, which established relationships and a new level of understanding of the First Nations community that never would have existed otherwise. There was a great turnout for the Eagle Spirit sculpture-raising in Slocan Park, the ritual of the ceremony bringing people together and marking the significance of the event, as well as the Canoe Club. The coordinator spoke passionately about how the experience helped the youth build self-esteem and personal and practical capacities.

Similarly, the Director relates how through the process, people began to see themselves as adding value, of contributing, rather than in terms of their needs or deficiencies. Equally, non-Aboriginal residents began to see the Aboriginal community in a new light.

"Another thing I really noticed was there were huge shifts in attitudes in the community, particularly in the aboriginal community. People had always perceived the aboriginal community as a high need community, there were always constant problems in the co-ops which were of high aboriginal population. When they started to do the carving people all of a sudden started to see them as being gifted and that whole attitude about a people changed and shifted significantly. Those who were involved have been really disenfranchised youth, who have not been involved in the mainstream in any way, shape, or form, really struggling in their own lives. With every day their self-esteem grew. I remember their first project when they were all nervous about everything, and then with the second project, they were out there with the TVs. And you see them after three or four and they've developed into these mature adults who see themselves as contributing members and not needy, and that shift was pronounced." (PW02)

3. Neighbourhood Development

Activities:

- Four annual Slocan Park community festivals and parades, including "Faces of Our Neighbourhood", "Mosaic Madness", "Nature and Art", and "Moon Festival" celebrations attracting thousands of attendees altogether;
- Planning meetings for Slocan Park Landscape and Art Plans and ongoing discussion with Vancouver Park Board regarding redevelopment;
- Field house mural painting;
- Children's stories and puppet shows;
- Safety audit;
- Pebble mosaics, clay tile stencils, banners, safety lights and native plantings for Duchess Walkway;
- Renfrew Ravine Labyrinth and Gateway Garden;
- Workshops: mosaics, puppets, stilt walking, costumes.
The neighbourhood development section of Pow Wow started with small art activities in Slocan Park. From there, two coordinators (PW03; PW06) began to gather information from local residents on the history and environment of the park and about local skills and resources through talking with individuals and institutions and listening to the stories people were telling them. Local creative networks began to emerge and be identified, from elder storytellers to photography clubs to Tai Chi practitioners. Once the multi-year funding was secured, the process gained momentum and many of the larger projects and events listed above were planned and implemented with wide community participation.

The safety issue was successfully addressed through an audit and specific changes to the parks physical elements (e.g. the addition of lights and a walkway), as well as the development of the park overall as a place people now love and where they feel welcome. Community networks grew, cross-cultural communication and collaboration improved through shared interests and mutual learning, and there was a great increase in civic action and involvement overall, such as the ongoing relationship with the Parks Board. People worked together and had fun together.

"They've created a nucleus of hundreds of people in the local area, they've met one another, and they know each other's capacity. They tell stories about an elderly Chinese man who joined a drumming group that's happening at the park. He couldn't speak any English and he couldn't participate with his neighbours, but every Friday he would come and drum with the African drummers. People formed friendships in things like that. There was a Tai Chi group that worked in the park. There was about 60 of them and initially when the artists started to do work there, they would approach them and people were very reluctant about talking to strangers and through the work they've now become very good friends and the Tai Chi group is a very strong supporter of the work that's happening in the park. They come out to help, they help to build mosaics, to raise the totem pole, they came to the celebration, and they lobbied the Parks Board for improvements. At one of our meetings there were so many people from the Tai Chi group there that we actually held the meeting in Cantonese, and have it translated back into English. So it had some really wonderful community building impacts.

You go into the Norquay area now and you see people who know each other, not just through the programs but through creating art and something that is going to have a lasting legacy. They all bring their friends and families and neighbours and show them how they helped contribute." (PW02)

Another artist coordinator with a background in Celebration Arts and Dance became involved in the Pow Wow a year or two into the process. Since then she has organised
annual festivals and parades; “it just seemed the obvious thing to do a festival to highlight everything the community had been doing.” (PW05). With all of the positive, creative and exciting things happening in the community, people really wanted to celebrate, to come together and share the magic and awe they felt at the resources and beautiful things about their community. The colourful and musical parades and celebrations – where community members participated in the planning and designing and making of processional items, puppets, and other manner of parade gear – were extremely well attended. Other Pow Wow members commented on the importance of the celebrations as unifying rituals, particularly for a broad program with so many separate parts and participants; “the celebrations really brought everything together for the Pow Wow” (PW01).

The same artist also led the Renfrew Ravine garden clean-up / re-development, along with two other artist/coordinators, one with the Evergreen Environmental Organisation and one who helped develop the art pieces.

“The ravine is such and interesting and magical place, with old growth stumps and blackberry thickets, but also lots of trash was dumped there. We did clean-ups with students from Windermere; people from Evergreen Environmental Organisation helped put down mulch; everyone did plantings...we made some of the first mosaics with semi-precious stones from a community member who had passed away...all generations were working on it, from ages 5 to 85. We also created a meditative labyrinth and we did a celebration with a parade and a ceremonial opening to the path” (PW05).

She describes what she characterises as “synergy” in the project.

“We saw the city pulling out a huge rock out by that home down the street, and I asked if I could have the rock. They made me sign for it, but then they delivered it and placed it for free. That’s a sample of the synergy that was present in the project – that rock would have cost $1000 to buy and have delivered, but it was in the way on the street so they did it” (PW05).
This artist also identified a number of obstacles in the process which are echoed later in this section. One was the sheer challenge of the community building project in a community and society that is so fractured, so rapidly changing.

"You have to re-build a sense of community – we are almost artificially imposing it because it is just so fractured right now. All these new houses that go up. The satellite dish goes up before the furniture arrives, and the security fence and security codes and security lights. And then you try to have a street festival and people stay inside watching American TV, and people don’t realize that if there is an earthquake, it’s not American TV that’s going to help you; your neighbours are going to help you” (PW05)

The second challenge is doing community arts work with so little support in terms of resources, and the Pow Wow was better funded by far than most. After that funding ended (where the artist was paid for 10-12 hours a week for coordination of celebrations, etc.), she was paid $2000 a month for her work on the Ravine Garden through a City-funded grant, which at the official 25 hours a week is a respectable $20 an hour – a "decent wage for a working artist" (PW05). In reality she actually worked 60 hour weeks, highlighting once again the disparity between the amount of support offered by the City for community cultural development work and the kind of quality and scope of processes and impacts it expects.

4. community development

Activities:
- The “Arts Centre”
- Monthly Artist Gatherings (now called MAGA, Multicultural Artist Gathering);
- Skills inventory;
- Festiva Event;
- Arts Groove Event;
- Collingwood Music Club;
- MAGA calendar;
- Body pARTS process in association with Evergreen Health Centre;
- Collingwood Spirit mural;
- Workshops: African Drumming, mosaics, artists and musicians gatherings, writing circle, multimedia, handmade books, collages, painting, printing, puppeteering, woodwork, environmental art, parade banners, stilt walking, stilt building, costumes

Figure 7.8 Collingwood Spirit Mural.

Figure 7.9 The music club jamming.
Originally, the idea of an **Arts Centre** was conceptualised by the two artist coordinators (one responsible for musicians and the other for visual artists) as a physical space, a place where artists in the community could gather, share, and find ways to engage with community, bringing the elite concept of art back to everyday life.

"Creativity is a very basic need that we all carry and we really have to watch and take care of it, just like we care for our kids. I thought that the way might be some sort of organism or entity that might help do that, bringing the artists and community together. We never got to have a space called an Arts Centre, but over two years we developed practically what was the Arts Centre." (PW04)

"we would try to make everything in our community an Arts Centre so we were trying to think outside the walls and the facilities. An Arts Centre could be in the park, an Arts Centre could be in the Legion Hall which has a stage and is perfectly set up for music, an Arts Centre could be in the Neighbourhood House where people could display their art, or at the Evergreen Health Centre. The whole concept of that started to unfold a little more and we were able to take the arts into more parts of the community. We are seeing that at the Board level now – at the Renfrew Community Centre and at the Community Policing office, they are starting to see art as an asset. If we were under a better financial and political climate, I bet we would have a very successful campaign for a building because it is really strong in the community and so many have participated.” (PW02)

Another major component developed at the community level was the **Artists Gatherings**, a monthly event where local artists would meet, share work and skills, network, and support one another. Turn out was great – it was obvious there was a real need for support for artists and a tremendous amount of talent and creativity in the neighbourhood. Several Pow Wow members spoke of the community feel, energy and festivity of the gatherings where people would bring their children and there would be food and drink. Several larger arts and cultural fairs and auctions were held (Festiva and Arts Groove), attracting hundreds of community members and even making a profit. Artists began to collaborate on projects (i.e. working with local B.I.A. on murals, a multicultural arts calendar, Body pARTS) and spaces, opportunities and relationships began to open up for this local development. A big part of their role in the Pow Wow was to keep concepts like “buy locally, hire locally” at the forefront of the project. While funding has run out, enthusiasm and relationships have not. As one coordinator put it “there are many ideas for future projects, workshops, collaboration, but it’s hard also trying to make a living and build community with no financial support” (PW05).
Central to the community development work was the development of a skills inventory based on John McKnight’s asset-based model (McKnight and Kretzmann, 1993).

“It can be really hard to get people to focus on their assets, because their needs are always in their face and often community members, especially marginalised ones, come to define themselves through their needs (because that is how they are often perceived). The only way to begin working against that is through one-to-one contact and connections that the artists made talking to one another and finding out ‘so-an-so’s an artist and so-and-so knows somebody who is an artist’. We have managed to create a lot of employment; more than 150 artists are listed in the inventory. But that was also one of the interesting things when we went out to do the skills inventory was that we had really draw people’s assets out of themselves because people had never seen themselves that way before. That was a very empowering exercise for everyone, and some still are struggling with that.” (PW02)

The inventory is incredibly multicultural. All Pow Wow members interviewed pointed to the power of the arts to transcend difference as a central reason for their success. Collingwood residents are just so incredibly diverse linguistically and culturally that a common language is required in order to communicate, to make connections — that common language is cultural expression. “Also, some people are just more oral or visual or physical than others” (PW02) and the arts allows for different kinds of expression and knowledge than would normally be welcomed in a meeting or participatory process.

“70% of the community has English as a second language, so wherever you can find opportunities for people to find commonalities, that’s really how you build community and that’s one of the ways the arts has really done it. It has allowed people expression when they would not normally have participated in expressing themselves. I think of one of the projects of one of the artists at the Evergreen Health Centre where they decided to go out and do consultations in the community with people using art, rather than what they normally do which is have a meeting where people talk of what have you….they had artists facilitate workshops where they would put together these tapestries. The tapestries were really an expression of people’s ideas and thoughts about health and what it meant to be healthy. After each workshop the artists would come in and talk about this woman who had lost a breast, or a refugee who had experienced trauma in her country of origin, and they were able to express those sorts of thing…through drawing, primarily, and sharing in that kind of a way. When I think about that, it allowed people expression where they probably would not have had the opportunity. The cultural connection to meetings is not as relevant to different cultures as much as others.” (PW02)

The Body pARTS community health arts process described above, also discussed in Chapter Four, really highlights how arts can be both useful — in getting at different kinds of information from “hard-to-reach” (i.e. through traditional meetings or surveys) groups
and individuals — as well as transformative, as it keeps people present, opens them up to really listening to others, challenges stereotypes and shifts attitudes about "others" and the "self".

“There is the shift in attitude towards First Nations but also if you think about the relationship between the Tai Chi group and the residents — people starting to see each other on a kind of neighbour-to-neighbour basis, not as either strangers, or as members of a group where there might have been some judgments or some attitudes.” (PW02)

The story of the Collingwood Spirit Mural illustrates the special energy and skills exercised by Pow Wow members (See Figure 7.10). Owners of the large building beside CNH (Concert Properties, large Vancouver developers) had plans to create a mural on the wall directly adjacent to the CNH's entrance. The Director of Community Development got hold of the design, which was seen to be rather unappealing and irrelevant to the community by those at the CNH. She established a relationship with the developer and asked them to go through a community design process. Concert Properties agreed and contributed money for the process and supplies, which would never have happened had the Director not had her ear to the ground, been willing to take the risk, be pro-active, engage in relationship with the developers, and respond to the desires of the community.

Over several months, community members offered suggestions and voted on the final design. One of the Artist Gathering coordinators took the lead, photographing the faces of hundreds of community members and reproducing them on a giant canvas mural that the community then painted together52. Response has been great — people take great pride and pleasure in seeing their faces up on the mural. This mural led to a number of other requests for the artist to facilitate mural painting at several local schools.

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52 This process held less true to a CCD model than the other processes in the Pow Wow, in that the artist really controlled the aesthetic outcome of the mural. There was a great deal of community participation, but the community didn’t drive the creation of the artwork.
5. communication and media

This aspect of the Pow Wow is headed up by a musical artist and communications / IT enthusiast. The newspaper, which now reaches 10,000 households six times a year, has provided the opportunity to promote some of the work that was happening through the Pow Wow. It became a vehicle to communicate information as well as network throughout the community, selling advertising to local businesses and collaborating with organisations such as the recreation centre that now purchases four pages of the paper for their own purposes. At the time of our interview, they were trying to get the local B.I.A. on board so that instead of competing for readership among several little newsletters around the neighbourhood, they could combine their efforts and have one substantial community paper.

When we spoke, the communications coordinator was also developing a “smart community” which is basically a website / community portal where people can get all the regional information and news (including the Collingwood News). As an interactive website, people could post information on issues, there could be community opinion polls, training for community leaders in IT for community development, a translator function for many different languages; “it could really be used to get things going” (PW01). He was in the process of trying to obtain a grant but was experiencing some difficulty as funders “want things to be self-sustaining, but it’s hard to be self-sustaining from the get go” (PW01). In reflecting on the challenges of the communication program,
the coordinator relates difficulty in linking up with the many different ways people share their information in different cultures and language groups.

"We had the intention of working with established cultural networks. Each community or culture has a place where it goes to get its information – a community paper, a corner store, a restaurant, an organized group. We had plans to get to know where those were for say the Chinese or Spanish community, get a handle on what they were discussing in their own dialogues, and link them up together and with what we are doing. I don’t think we’ve done very well with that. The closest thing I can say is the Tai Chi group in the park. Or I might get someone who speaks Chinese to come on the advertising trips talking to businesses. Maybe we should have 1 page in Chinese, but some on the committee are dead set against that – that we are in Canada now...”

6. reflecting on and evaluating the pow wow

Reflection and evaluation has of course been and continues to be an essential part of the Pow Wow process. I sensed a strong spirit of awareness and self-reflection when speaking with all seven of the artist coordinators I interviewed, which is also indicated in the way the Pow Wow chose to evaluate its achievements in 2001 – through a participatory evaluation (PE) process, including coordinators, artist participants, individual community participants, and community focus groups. Pow Wow members followed a medicine wheel approach when reflecting on their own experiences in order to provide a deeper and more holistic analysis. Community participants were asked to describe their experiences and consider their community before and after the Pow Wow. Figure 7.11 reflects the results of the medicine wheel evaluation and Figure 7.12 outlines the perspectives revealed from event participants and focus groups, both of which are based on the documentation of the 2001 evaluation. Several important excerpts from practitioners’ experience stories follow.
Figure 7.11 Medicine wheel evaluation

Developed feelings of:
- Being valued
- Belonging
- Excited at diversity and the gifts and talents of others

Overcame emotional challenges of:
- Frustration
- Fear
- Insecurity about personal knowledge and skills

Learning about:
- Way of life and issues of other cultures
- Strength of culture and art in bringing our spirit and community
- Understanding community
- Community process
- New creative skills
- Technical, IT, media skills
- Business and political lingo
- Others’ strengths and abilities

Figure 7.12 Participants and Focus Group evaluation results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Participants</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every participant surveyed viewed events positively and over half made reference to the value of the event in building community</td>
<td>The Pow Wow is seen as a unique and positive approach that helps people reflect on diversity in the community in a new way, as well as builds pride and positive community image.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other aspects mentioned were: it's educational; brings people together; fun and people are happy; highly visible; well organised but not too organised; great for all generations</td>
<td>People especially loved the parades, the pole raising, the mosaic, and the family friendly activities, arguing they were instrumental in bringing the two neighbourhoods together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I like the energy and diversity of the people.”</td>
<td>People said that arts and culture contributes to strengthening the feeling of community in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think it’s great, really community re-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
building type of event.”

“Very moving...to have people in awe of their own neighbourhood...love those kids...love that ravine...inspired by other people’s visions.”

Renfrew-Collingwood because people have come together in a positive way, not based on a problem.

- They also felt it unifies the community by creating opportunities for contact, bridges culture, and promotes understanding.
- They believe that a community working in harmony will promote economic development and more opportunity for artists.

“I think the Pow Wow works well because of the community outreach...residents have a common goal – to make their neighbourhoods safer, nicer, and a pleasant place to be...every step in our project involves our neighbours and that works well” (CNH, 2003).

“Pow Wow projects have helped to develop the spiritual growth and well-being of many community members including myself” (CNH, 2001)

“One of the things I really value about working with artists and community development is the ability to stimulate creativity. I think often, particularly when you’re working in a community where people feel like they are deficit somehow, that people are poor and unemployed. There is a feeling that you just have to receive; that you don’t have the ability to create... It has given people the opportunity to think outside the box, and take more control over their lives than they originally thought they could. They can create things that improve their community, they can create relationships that make a difference, and they can create their own employment” (PW02).

“Another thing is the value of creativity and expression is absolutely universal. It’s a sacred thing; I get very moved when I talk about these things because it is so deeply important, like music and gesture. It’s human values that everyone has, it doesn’t matter where you were born, if you went to university or not, or if you have enough money or not – it’s within all of us. And those are the factors that bring people together and create unity, and factors that help fight the negativities of aggression or fear and all the other things that we have to deal with. I think they are really effective tools, but people don’t realize until they are there, you know, with hands-on getting all dirty, and in the middle of the enjoyment of it all they realize the value of it.” (PW04)

The Pow Wow was also seen as successful and contributing greatly to the building of community in Renfrew Collingwood due to its ability to achieve such wide community participation, artist involvement, and foster a great number of partnerships and relationships among those involved, such as: community groups (i.e. the Tai Chi group, the Aboriginal community), local schools, the Evergreen Health Centre, the Community Policing Office, local businesses, the Park Board, the Royal Canadian Legion, Translink, Translink.

53 Over 5,000 community members participated and over 9,000 volunteer hours were contributed (Collingwood Neighbourhood House, 2001).
Concert Properties and more. At the civic level, the relationship with the Park Board has evolved positively and constructively, with the consultation and implementation of the Slocan Park Master Plan and the overall arts-based focus, central to both the CNH and the Park Board's vision. Supporters of Pow Wow processes and events include the Canadian Federal government\textsuperscript{54}, the Province of British Columbia\textsuperscript{55}, and a number of local, regional, and national foundations\textsuperscript{56} and corporations\textsuperscript{57}.

At the heart of the Pow Wow and CNH's approach is the building of capacity within the community through opening up opportunities for collaboration and mutual learning – whenever a resource is required or a gap in knowledge identified, the first thought is – how can we do this so we are utilising local resources and keeping the benefits within the community? (PW02)

The Pow Wow has helped forge connection and foster pride and a sense of place in the geographical spaces where it has focused, but also across the two neighbourhoods as a whole. There was little connection between Renfrew and Collingwood before the Pow Wow, but some of the larger events, such as the annual parades and celebrations (where processions of community members began in the respective communities and wound their way through the streets to meet in Slocan Park) were symbolically important and provided ritual and celebratory space for people to come together and connect (PW01; PW02). The newspaper and evolving communications strategy also supply a forum for a community-level exchange of ideas and information. Artist Gatherings, workshops, and the skills inventory have also attracted artists and identified creative resources from across the two neighbourhoods.

Pow Wow members' stories and the perspectives gathered from community members in the 2001 evaluation indicate the special role Pow Wow events and processes have played in overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers within such a diverse community. The Pow Wow offers opportunities for people to express themselves and contribute their opinions, knowledge, feelings, and assets in ways not available in typical planning or community development processes. Many felt this valuing of different ways of knowing

\textsuperscript{54} Through the Millenium Partnership Program and Human Resources Development Canada.
\textsuperscript{55} Through the BC 2000 Community Spirit Grant and Youth Community Action Program.
\textsuperscript{56} Such as the Vancouver Foundation, Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation, National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, etc.
\textsuperscript{57} Such as BC Hydro.
and communicating is what attracted such a broad array of participation from the community, particularly from some groups and individuals that normally don’t participate. A sense of agency, possibility and increased self esteem developed among community members used to feeling powerless, isolated, frustrated and sceptical about their ability to change things in their lives and the community. This increased self esteem is particularly important for groups and individuals used to being defined by their needs by others, such as the Aboriginal community. It plays a crucial role in the development of positive cultural identity and contributes to enhanced communicative competence necessary for civic involvement.

Practitioners reflected on challenges and aspects of the Pow Wow process they looked towards improving – in their stories and the 2001 evaluation. Community participants and focus group members offered few criticisms, other than a request for more music in the future. This may have to do with the brevity and context of the evaluation process rather than an indication that they had no criticisms at all. Overall, it seems people were very happy with the events. Among the Pow Wow members, areas for improvement included strengthening relationships with volunteers and refining administrative processes for increased efficiency. Reflected strongly in the 2001 evaluation and in my conversations with practitioners was the importance of communication, especially around touchy and uncomfortable subjects such as conflicts over expectations of artists to volunteer / be compensated for their time and expertise. Another challenge mentioned in a number of interviews was how difficult it is to get things going in Vancouver due to the enormous amount of bureaucratic red tape at the City, even for simple matters, such as putting up a banner.

While the Pow Wow, as CCD processes go, had a substantial budget between 1999 and 2002, the massive scope of the programming meant resources were still spread thin – a common challenge faced in CCD in general as we saw in Chapters 5 and 6. Participatory work can be all-consuming and highly intensive, many of the members relating the drain on their personal life and the risk of burn-out amongst artists and coordinators. It was suggested that communication could be improved surrounding expectations and problems; that perhaps artist-facilitators could engage in conflict-

58 Participants were asked a number of questions at events and celebrations and didn't have much time to reflect on their answers, while focus groups were held with various community groups including both individuals who were and were not involved in Pow Wow events and processes.
resolution training; that the medicine wheel process could be used periodically to check-in on people's emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual well-being; and that they could make more time to have fun together and nurture and support their own creative arts practice.

As related in the last section, the communication coordinator pointed out the difficulty in bridging languages when verbal and text-based contact is indeed necessary for communicating information and attracting participation and dialogue through print and media. His suggestion of tapping into existing culturally-based forms / spaces of communication is a good one, which could be facilitated by further diversifying the Pow Wow coordination team with active members of different cultural groups who speak relevant languages. Providing the newspaper and Pow Wow pamphlets, advertising, and web site in several languages would be a demanding undertaking, but might go a long way in making the process even more inclusive and broadening its reach.

While a central commitment of the CNH and the Pow Wow is to promote cooperation, mutual respect, empowerment, social justice, equity, full participation in the social, economic, cultural, and artistic life of the community, and resident involvement in problem-solving and decision-making for everyone in the community, there is an articulated concentration on responding to the multicultural nature of Renfrew-Collingwood's great diversity. Sensitivity to differences in gender, income, physical ability, age, education and sexual orientation and the implications of this diversity in community participation – while not absent from individual practitioners stories in some cases – comes across as more generally implied in the notion of opening up processes to "everyone" in official documents.

A number of artist-facilitators brought up other aspects of difference in their stories. Many spoke of how Pow Wow processes attracted different generations, were particularly appealing to youth, and promoted cross-generational communication that otherwise might not happen (CD02; CD04; CD07). While it was never addressed directly in our conversations, it would be interesting to know if there were gendered dimensions to participation patterns. The great majority of Pow Wow coordinators are women, but any difference in response to Pow Wow processes or events based on gender was only mentioned in the discussion of the Body pARTS process of outreach to
diverse groups regarding issues of health and well being. In that process, drawing and story allowed many women, particularly immigrant women, to discuss experiences and concerns related to their body and health in comfortable and creative ways (CD01, PW02). It was in that same process, facilitated by some of the Pow Wow artist-facilitators, that concerted outreach was made to engage often marginalised groups including women, children, seniors, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered individuals, people with mental illness, people with disabilities, and the aboriginal community.

CCD participation is free, requires no expertise or background in art or community, is fun, and values many kinds of knowledge and contribution. Each of these factors were cited by many Pow Wow members as reasons for its accessibility to a broad range of people from all income levels, educational backgrounds, and with diverse interests and abilities. It seems clear from practitioners' stories that there was a great feeling of diverse participation in Pow Wow processes and events, particularly across cultures, which was one of the principal goals. However, it would be interesting to know how active participation was amongst some other marginalised groups – such as the queer community, people with mental illness, people with disabilities, and low income families, for instance – groups that were not explicitly targeted by the processes.

The Pow Wow journey continues today. While its substantial funding ended more than two years ago, the networks and connections developed continue to grow, members carry on looking for further funding and collaboration opportunities to promote the contribution of arts in community building, certain programs persist under volunteer steam and in some cases have acquired other support, and plans for the future are being developed. The legacy of the Pow Wow can be seen across the neighbourhood, in the social spaces of connection and collaboration that have been opened up by new relationships, understandings and a felt-sense of agency and power, and in the physical and environmental spaces of the neighbourhood – the parks, gardens, schools, the Community Centre, the Evergreen Health Centre, and the Neighbourhood House itself – where art and creative expression have enriched the urban landscape with physical pieces and changes that communicate a sense of belonging, beauty, fun, connection, surprise, and celebration.
7.4 learning from the pow wow

There is much to be learned about planning for multiple publics from considering the story of the Renfrew-Collingwood Arts Pow Wow and its unique setting - a large, tremendously diverse, and rapidly changing urban residential neighbourhood.

1. Who people are and how they work makes a difference.

The practitioners I spoke with from the Pow Wow seemed to hold special gifts, skills, and capacities previously identified as fundamental in cultivating a more holistic approach to planning with diverse populations. Who they are and how they work came across in their practice stories - in what they said and how they said it. Firstly, Pow Wow members exuded positive energy, relaxation, openness and comfort in our interviews - they were the ones to put me at ease, and not vice versa! Many had clearly spent a great deal of time over the years reflecting on their work and their personal relationship to it. On the most part they were quite open with their biases, their strengths and weaknesses, their preferences, and with self criticism and recognised the importance of self-awareness in their work. They spoke of the importance of a well rounded team, of working together with others that complimented their skills, and the significance of having such excellent overall planning, leadership and coordination coming out of the Director of Community Development at the CNH. The also talked about their own learning processes, how they figured out what worked and how to be in community processes over time.

Other qualities and skills that came through in their stories were: cultural fluency and sensitivity; the willingness to take risks and be spontaneous; the willingness to be wrong; creative vision and leadership; the ability to let go of control and a true faith and belief in others; story-telling and listening; a literacy in the language of emotions, body, imagination, intuition, spirit; curiosity and excitement in the face of uncertainty; and the ability to be present and open to change, transformation, difference, discomfort, contradiction, and conflict. These qualities and skills weren't necessarily the only tools they brought out to use when necessary in practice, but seemed to be part of their approach to life, which also comes across in this quote from CNH's Director of CD in response to my question about practice skills and the kind of environment required to inspire community creativity:
“I think they have to have a very open, flexible, and comfortable environment for sure. People need room and space to be creative. We tend to put things in a box because it makes things easy to account for, but I think that often comes into conflict with creativity. Part of it is that a few of the artists in the Pow Wow just have these incredible abilities to draw out people’s creativity and abilities. They’re skilled that way; they are trained teachers that way. But they also live their life that way, that’s how they model it. So in relationship, things happen that begin to create a synergy, a vibe. People have to have a lot of flexibility to lead their own initiatives too; I think it’s really important. It’s different to do something that’s been given to you as a task as opposed to something that you create and bring your own passion and bring your own joy to, and you bring your own commitment. That kind of stuff really sparks creativity for people because they live it.” (PW02)

2. Each situation is unique and planning context is crucial.

One of the special skills required to work from a CCD or CD approach is the ability to see what’s going on and hear what people are really saying to you in a community. Keen observation and good listening skills as well as flexibility are fundamental in dealing with the unique reality of any planning situation. Pow Wow coordinators were faced with a community with diverse needs and human resources and worked from what they found, developing events, projects and processes accordingly in collaboration with community members.

There are many unique aspects of the case study of the Pow Wow that contributed to the successful achievement of its goals. Their organic, community-driven approaches lead to a high level of community ownership and the development of relevant and appropriate projects. Coordinated and supported through the Neighbourhood House, the Pow Wow benefited from the practical wisdom, vision, and experience of staff and members committed to the principles of diversification. Its experience in fundraising allowed for an (all-too-unusual) relatively stable and long-term support for such a broad and ambitious CCD program. The fact that the CNH is such a well respected and trusted organisation also helped in garnering participation and support. As one Pow Wow member so profoundly put it in reference to the uniqueness of the Pow Wow and Collingwood Neighbourhood House phenomenon:

“This place, it’s like what we were fighting for in Chile, when I was your age. The future, the ideal we had, was this. In those years, 30 years ago...the true uniqueness of the group, the community and the institution of the Neighbourhood House – the openness, the trust, the flexibility, the responsibility given to and taken on by the community members themselves... my bosses always had such faith in me, were open to any creative idea – there is this basic value of dignifying the other...” (PW04)
The tremendous diversity of Collingwood Renfrew was seen by the Pow Wow as both a challenge (in terms of overcoming isolation and conflict associated with perceptions of difference) and a resource (broad range of assets and rich knowledge) in the project of building community through cultural expression. The neighbourhood itself was also unique in its recent decades of rapid demographic change, which contributed to social isolation but also meant there were few established community organisations – people were hungry for services and opportunities for involvement. Finally, some Pow Wow artist-coordinators seem to think the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood in particular has more than its fair share of resident artists, which, if true, might have assisted in their focus on truly local development and the use of local expertise and knowledge in its cultural development work.

3. Processes of creative expression and artists do special work; they also require distinctive resources and support.

Like the case study of Sinag Bayan and the Kalayaan Centre, the story of the Renfrew-Collingwood Arts Pow Wow illustrates how community cultural development processes can work in specific community settings to engage a broader range of people and draw on a wider array of resources than typically employed in community development, planning, decision-making, research, and more. In the case of this diverse urban residential community where residents experienced social isolation and where perceptions of different groups fuelled fear, misconception, and exclusion, CCD has been used as an integral component of an overall approach to community building.

Pow Wow activities and processes have provided the ritual/social/physical spaces and means for residents to establish connections and forge relationships across difference by identifying common goals and getting people doing creative things together, sharing knowledge and stories; seeing the humanity in one another. They have engaged people’s multi-faceted selves, and contributed to the economic, social, cultural, and environmental development of the community. They have built community decision-making capacity and helped to develop people’s self-esteem, cultural pride, and leadership skills and a real sense of ownership and agency. They have promoted the skills and abilities of artists and facilitated their contribution, learning and employment in the community. They have fostered a sense of excitement and awe in the resources
that exist within and between people, engaging people's spirits, imaginations, and emotions through celebration, music, visual arts and performance.

Reflecting on this story is particularly useful in thinking about how arts processes might enrich a more holistic planning approach to neighbourhood planning and responding to diversity. Recognising the unique and critical contributions of the artists and the participatory creative process to this success story, it is important that planners acknowledge the need for resources and support in this kind of work. It is time to fundamentally revolutionise the valuing of art, artists, and community process as making essential and unique contributions to planning for multiple publics.

4. **Community building and community mobilisation go hand in hand.**

While it generally favours all-inclusive programming over culturally-specific initiatives in the effort to create a "place for everyone", the CNH and members of the Pow Wow recognise the need to enable marginalised and typically excluded groups and communities to mobilise themselves in the greater process of neighbourhood development. The Aboriginal development component of the Pow Wow shows how differentiated benefits can be achieved through such a broad-based program and through being responsive to community needs and assets. Like the case study in Chapter Six, the Pow Wow illustrates that lasting inclusive community development cannot be achieved without making the special effort to reach out to and involve the most marginalised in society. For planning in particular, responding to this reality will require substantial shifts in practice, philosophy/theory, politics, and policy, some of which are explored in the final chapter of this thesis.

The ongoing story of the Renfrew-Collingwood Arts Pow Wow presents an all-too-rare opportunity to reflect on the impacts of a long-term, multi-layered, multi-faceted, integrated arts-based community development program. Planners should learn from the ground-breaking and radical way in which Pow Wow coordinators have managed to negotiate constructive and collaborative relationships with levels of government, bureaucrats, public and private funding bodies, and corporate actors, all the while challenging business-as-usual and taken-for-granted assumptions, staying flexible and open, and ensuring their work is rooted in and driven by community assets, desires, and members.
The stories of Sinag Bayan / the Kalayaan Centre and Collingwood Neighbourhood House’s Arts Pow Wow shared and explored in these two case studies tell us a great deal about what is going on in the daily practice of community cultural development and surface a number of useful insights about planning and working with multiple publics. Each is a unique story of passionate, visionary practitioners engaging people and communities in truly transformative and innovative work towards a more inclusive, democratic, and pluralist society. Each is an example of the wealth of experience, knowledge, and practice existing at the community level from which planners must learn as they question their roles, search for more effective and appropriate tools, and develop the necessary capacities for working in the diverse, multi-faceted, and relationship-centred realities of planning in today’s cities.
8.1 new metaphors for a changing reality

Let's play "spot the planning activity" again. All of these images could be interpreted in a number of ways as referencing issues, functions, fields and experiences of planning: bureaucratic procedure, international and local politics, direct action, emotion, theatrical story-telling, felt experience, statistic analysis, celebration, relationship, community development, symbols, identity, belonging, etc. As depictions of different creative and cultural expressions, the power of these images to communicate meaning, to evoke emotions, and generate impressions and ideas in us as viewers also speaks to the fundamental importance of representation. In assuming both a broader and more specific view of the domains and realities of planning it becomes clear that all of these illustrations reflect "planning activities" in one way or another. In this revelation lies one seed of a much needed professional revolution that, as suggested by theorists mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2 and in the stories recounted in Chapters 4 through 7, in some cases is already in progress.

As discussed in a number of instances along this journey, metaphors are powerful tools that can shift perspectives and redirect energies (LeBaron, 2002; Sandercock, 2003). They are also basic building blocks of the way we as humans construct our realities and
windows into who we think we are, our purpose, and our approach to life. In the interest of developing a new "planning imagination" (Sandercock, 2003) – a revolution in ways of doing, thinking and being as practitioners – rooted in a more holistic approach (Burayidi, 2000; LeBaron, 2002; 2003) to diversity, individuals, communities, and our roles as planners and people, we need to explore new professional metaphors. Instead of the flow-chart rigidity of A to B sequential planning, the ladder of participation, or the three-legged stool of sustainability, I suggest we experiment with envisioning planning as a medicine wheel, a spiral, or a theatre. Playing with images and symbols that speak to the embedded, embodied, interconnected, political, performed, and grounded-in-experience nature of today's planning realities might help us in this imagining.

In this thesis I have explored approaches that might be considered "new", foreign, or even incongruent to the traditional modernist planning principles and methods that continue to characterise much of planning theory and practice. Nevertheless, they are hardly new practices and hardly new to other disciplines and fields of practice – such as feminist and cultural studies, conflict resolution, community development and community cultural development – that have put these approaches at the centre of their work.

These approaches are about innovative ways of bringing existing disciplines together towards fresh ways of thinking about complex and deep-rooted problems. They are about attempting to move towards a more balanced, collaborative, politically transparent, critical, pro-active and responsive approach to planning in cities of difference. They are about gaining some perspective on the strengths as well as the areas that could be improved in how planners think about and do their work. They are about opening up to ways of knowing we all share yet value differently, inherent capacities we can develop in useful ways, and recognising the rich array of resources that exists within people and our diverse communities.

This thesis follows the arguments of planning theorists like John Friedmann (2002), John Forester (1989; 1999) and Leonie Sandercock (1998; 2003) that in order to create more inclusive participatory democratic planning processes and ensure that planner's work contributes to the development of greater social and environmental justice and a more pluralist society, there is a fundamental need to revolutionise planning theory, practice, research, institutions, policy, and education in response to the realities within which the
profession operates in today's cities. Along the way I have been guided by literature that considers four intersecting realities in particular:

(1) The implications of urban diversity on planning and developing opportunities for civic participation;

(2) The need for a more holistic planning approach rooted in an expanded view of the interconnected, relationship-centred and multi-faceted nature of people, communities, and planning issues and the recognition that who and how we are is as important as what we do;

(3) That culture not only matters but that understanding and working with its varied and creative expressions in community and participatory processes holds uniquely insightful and transformative opportunities for communication, education, connection, and action;

(4) There is a wealth of invaluable knowledge about what's really going on and what works in authentic, daily, messy, discreet practice situations contained within the experience stories of practitioners and community members. Learning how to listen to and work with stories – in the many forms in which they are told – and tell our own, is a vital planning capacity in need of enhancement.

In this thesis I have chosen to focus on what lessons a certain kind of practice – community cultural development – and the stories of its use and experience holds for planners faced with these realities.

In developing my analytical framework in Chapter 2, I began to explore some links between realms of practice and research (i.e. multicultural planning; popular and transformative education; conflict resolution; education; emotions / spirit / body / imagination; art and society; community cultural development; and more) that are beginning to be brought together by leading thinkers and innovative practitioners in those fields and which are ripe for further connection and consideration. Planning research and academic writing has a great deal of catching up to do in exploring these relationships and in working out what a more holistic, responsive, and inclusive planning might look like. Influenced greatly by the theory and research approaches of John Forester (1989; 1999), I hope to contribute to this conversation by responding to the need for analysis of real practices and experiences of practitioners wrestling on a daily
basis with how to engage people in meaningful processes, actions, and relationships in increasingly diverse and rapidly changing cities. I have focused on exploring what is going on in situations where innovative practitioners are using processes of creative and cultural expression to engage individuals and communities typically marginalised or left out of planning processes in Vancouver.

In Chapter 3 I delved into the “official story” of how the City of Vancouver has approached issues of multiculturalism, diversity, participation, and the arts in terms of city and neighbourhood planning and the administration of its parks and community centres. Academic studies reveal and City documents acknowledge that the impacts of diversity are some of the biggest challenges facing planners and other community development practitioners in Vancouver today. Seen by some as a leader in multicultural and participatory planning processes (Edgington and Hutton, 2002; Edgington et. al., 2001), other studies suggest that while Vancouver may be doing well relative to most Canadian cities, it falls decidedly short in many areas (Context Research Ltd., 1998; Lee, 2002).

Processes such as CityPlan and Community Visioning, a series of multicultural / diversity initiatives, and the Public Involvement Review indicate the City’s good intentions and a commitment (in theory, at least) to work towards greater public involvement, cultural sensitivity, dialogue and multicultural outreach. Realistically, however, it remains that (a) newcomers continue to receive inadequate support and information from the City, (b) marginalised groups are consistently underrepresented in participatory planning, and (c) the City is weak in terms of initial research, outreach, and mandating participatory processes as well as in following up on public contribution afterwards (Context Research Limited, 1998; Lee, 2003). These call into significant question the appropriateness and effectiveness of the City’s methods and tools and the authenticity of its commitment to a truly collaborative approach.

In terms of the arts, the “official story” indicates the City of Vancouver envisions the arts and culture as fundamental to the economic viability, liveability, and quality of life of its communities, and an effective means of encouraging cross-cultural understanding. As such, the arts are much more integrated in municipal functions than other Canadian cities. The Vancouver Parks Board in particular sees community cultural development
as a fundamental component of its rather revolutionary approach to running parks and community centres. Nevertheless, the majority of City arts resources seem to be funnelled towards traditional arts areas (i.e. support of professional artists, institutions, and public art) vs. processes which engage non-artists in the creative process. There seems to be a great deal of untapped potential for integrating creative processes and CCD as viable and effective tools in participatory planning.

In Chapter 4, I reflected on the “unofficial” stories of the experiences of six real-life practitioners. These stories give us an idea of how issues and policies relevant to multiculturalism, diversity, participation and the arts/cultural expression play out for individuals in specific, messy, daily, deliberative practice situations (Forester, 1999). We get a sense of who they are, how they work, what they perceive as strengths in the system and where they see room for change.

First and foremost from their stories we recognise that planning in Vancouver, like elsewhere, is undergoing a period of transition as practitioners question their roles, their relationships with communities, their goals, tools and approaches. Most of these practitioners strongly advocate moving towards a community development approach to multicultural, neighbourhood, and park planning that goes beyond the typical “token” engagement of marginalised or “diverse” groups and is rooted in more collaborative, communicative, pro-active, community-driven and relationship-centred initiatives.

The practitioners describe their personal learning processes as they try new methods and tools, take risks, make mistakes, challenge their colleagues, relax their need to control the process, develop new professional capacities, and open up to the rich resources and possibilities they find in diverse communities. They portray their roles as those of enablers, facilitators, capacity-builders; in bringing people together and people to resources. They argue that moving towards a more inclusive and participatory planning system requires changes of mindset and structure at many levels (i.e. redistribution of resources, political will, shifts in conceptions of time and efficiency, revolutionising education and training) to which there exists considerable resistance.

The majority of these practitioners exhibit and encourage certain abilities necessary in developing a more holistic approach, such as expanding their creative, audacious, and
therapeutic capacities (Sandercock, 2003); enhancing their cultural fluency and their valuing of and responding to multiple intelligences (LeBaron, 2003); improving their listening and relationship building skills; and embracing an attitude of ongoing personal learning. Where a gap does seem to emerge, perhaps, is in terms of these practitioners’ critical and political capacities. While issues of power were often implied and sometimes discussed in their stories, practitioners’ language was mostly limited to a discussion of overcoming a lack of communication and connection through community building. Messier notions like identity politics, fear of difference, and struggles over belonging and rights were not addressed, perhaps because they operate within a planning culture that is only willing to go so far in the recognition of its own political nature and the criticism of its own power structure. There doesn’t seem to be a planning language to address the messy, contested, and ambiguous nature of identity, citizenship, multiculturalism, and rights claims which characterises much of the political conversation regarding diversity.

Much of the literature reviewed in this thesis and the findings in Chapters 5 through 7 indicate that cultural and creative expression represent much better avenues for dealing with the messy, contested, shifting and difficult realities of oppression, identity politics, and difference than the traditional planning ones (avoidance, adversarial approaches, or the discounting of dissent), precisely because they are open rather than closed and can help shift and un-stick some of the powerful assumptions around these issues. They allow for ambiguity and highlight the significance of representation and work with it. As is evident from their stories, practitioners are beginning to recognise processes of cultural and creative expression as uniquely useful in their accessibility and flexibility for working with diverse populations. They are seeing that the incorporation of art processes in their work has many positive affects. They also speculate that these kinds of processes hold great possibility for contributing more than they already do in City functions in terms of facilitating dialogue and communication, especially across difference; creating more open social spaces, away from issues and conflict; making decisions and imagining alternatives; creating special, inclusive, more liveable and respectful cities and physical spaces, and contributing to community development processes.

These practitioners are clearly working at cultivating more holistic practices each in their own way. A prevalent refrain in their stories is the central importance of relationship and
communication in their work. They are saying: We need to communicate with community from the beginning. We need to learn how to listen. We need to get to know each other. We need to understand ourselves better and how who we are effects how we work. We pay a lot of lip service to participation, but to truly create meaningful opportunities for diverse populations we have to make a lot of fundamental changes, question many assumptions, and commit time, energy, resources, and our selves.

Through examining the exciting practice stories of CCD practitioners in Chapter 5, we begin to get a more thorough idea of what is going on in CCD processes and how learning from the experiences, goals, methods, capacities and tools of CCD practitioners might enrich participatory planning processes for diverse populations.

These practitioners are compelled to do this kind of work because they see opportunities to engage in arts and culture as essential to a healthy urban pluralist society and cultural democracy as a fundamental requirement for equality and social and environmental justice. They cite diversity, isolation, powerlessness, distrust and fear as common challenges and argue that how and why people are engaged in democracy and planning is crucial, criticising most participatory planning as ritualistic and inaccessible. They argue for the fundamental importance of a community development approach, the necessity to develop the political will to be truly collaborative, and the need to direct public resources into training (in participatory planning and diversity) and relationship building, in order to increase the accountability, accessibility, and effectiveness of participatory planning.

From these few stories encompassing a variety of practices we get a sense that there is a great deal of innovative work going on in Vancouver. On one hand there seems to be considerable support for community art work in the arts community and at the City. On the other, the very modest amount of financial support generally offered for CCD (resulting in shorter one-off projects and few resources earmarked for evaluation) indicates that the City and other funding organisations might not see or value them as legitimate, important, or as essential as other professional arts and planning functions.

The practitioners I interviewed struck me as very special kinds of people; both talented artists and naturally gifted in working with people and communities. They demonstrate
goals, capacities and skills essential to community development work and holistic practice. Their goals include creating processes that are community-driven and rooted in local needs and assets; fostering dialogue and creating spaces where people interact that normally wouldn't; creating storytelling and listening opportunities using a range of mediums of expression; ensuring positive experiences that enhance self esteem and encourage fun; encouraging mutually meaningful and collaborative relationships across difference between participants and organisers; providing opportunities to learn from others and oneself in accessible and transformative ways that acknowledge and work to redress inequalities in power; building capacity for action and change; and producing positive, inclusive, beautiful and productive social and physical spaces.

The tools employed by these eight practitioners are many. Every kind of cultural or creative expression seems to be seen as potentially transformative – from fashion to graffiti, from gardening to parades. The processes they facilitate, which are seen as more important than the products generated, are typically rooted in a popular education spiral of research, learning, reflection and action. The capacities and skills on which these practitioners rely most are many of the same ones the innovative planning practitioners in Chapter 4 are beginning to recognise as indispensable. They are often working from a very personal place, sharing much of themselves in an open, friendly, approachable style. Their story-telling and listening abilities, political and critical awareness and their willingness to relinquish control, trust others, be present, and be changed themselves help them cultivate special kinds of environments, processes, and relationships that harness and encourage creativity in others.

Reflecting on practitioners' stories, it appears that when done well, community cultural development approaches can broaden who is engaged in decision-making, civic action, and involvement and how they are engaged, drawing on a wider range of capacities and resources within communities and practitioners than in most traditional participatory planning processes. CCD's community development, relationship-centred, asset-based approach expands the possibility of empowerment and transformation. CCD not only values different ways of knowing, recognising our multi-faceted selves and interconnected realities, but it also assists in different kinds of work that planning will need to incorporate in developing more inclusive participatory processes. This work includes facilitating cross-cultural communication through story-telling and ritual;
engaging diverse forms of knowledge revealing different information, meanings, and insights; making time for reflection, listening, and being present with others; building capacity, agency and self esteem; creating more inclusive and open physical spaces; and opening up to change, spontaneity, creative alternatives, and imagined futures.

These CCD practitioners caution that there are considerable challenges to overcome in terms of establishing better relationships with systems of government, agencies and commercial interests; securing sufficient resources for their work, balancing the product vs. process tug-of-war and ensuring the quality and effectiveness of their interventions. They also strenuously argue that art processes can and should be used in an array of planning practices and could enhance the participatory work done on any number of planning issues, making them more inclusive, meaningful, holistic, constructive, and creative.

In reflecting on the in-depth case studies of Sinag Bayan and the cultural work of the Kalayaan Centre in Chapter 6 and the Renfrew-Collingwood Arts Pow Wow in Chapter 7 we get a more detailed, complex, and nuanced idea of how processes of creative and cultural expression engage and impact particular communities. Real stories recounted by various practitioners and community members come together to reveal chronicles of great social, political, cultural, and physical transformation in both cases. These people are engaging in truly radical and revolutionary work that is having some incredibly positive effects.

In Chapter 6 we see practitioners, who are members of the Filipino community, using creative and cultural expression as central tools in their daily struggle for social justice, human rights, political and institutional change, recognition, belonging, and meaningful civic participation at local, national and international levels. Insisting that understanding the realities of the most marginalised members of their community is fundamentally important to overall community development, they have been using theatre and performance events and processes to unearth and examine untold stories and histories of their community. The cultural work continues to evolve as an important element of the Centre’s organising, mobilising, and educational work. It has been found to be particularly effective in engaging younger members of the community; in encouraging cross-generational and cross-cultural communication and learning; in promoting
celebration and connection in positive, inspired and fun ways; in giving voice to sometimes painful experiences through engaging the emotions, body, and spirit; and in helping community members develop skills and become empowered to use culture to express themselves, understand their experiences, and take action towards change.

In addition to a greater understanding of the workings of CCD in a specific community situation, the story of the Centre and Sinag Bayan highlights a number of fundamental implications of diversity that some planning theorists have been recently challenging the profession to address: 1. The need to recognise and deal with the implications of competing and contested understandings of multiculturalism and diversity; 2. The need to question how to go about achieving real community development and collaboration; 3. The need to comprehend the value of learning how to listen as practitioners; and, 4. The need to appreciate the importance of story, history, cultural expression, and concepts of identity and belonging in planning.

In Chapter 7 we see how the Collingwood Neighbourhood House – a recognised leader in inclusive community-based service provision, advocacy and development – has found the arts and cultural expression to be particularly accessible, transformative, responsive and flexible tools for community building through the Renfrew-Collingwood Arts Pow Wow. Rooted in principles of diversification and following a very organic and community-driven process, the Pow Wow has provided opportunities for members of these tremendously diverse neighbourhoods to come together, express themselves and forge relationships, leading to many dramatic and positive changes.

In this case, a CCD approach was found to be particularly effective in decreasing social isolation by facilitating communication, learning and relationship across linguistic, cultural and generational differences; eliciting a broad array of participation in civic action (especially from typically marginalised groups); contributing to a sense of agency, increased self esteem and positive cultural identity; fostering community pride and a sense of place; encouraging the valuing of creativity and local knowledge, skills, and services; and in identifying common goals and interests. The legacy of the Pow Wow can be seen across the neighbourhood, in the social spaces of connection and collaboration that have been opened up by new relationships, understandings and a felt-sense of agency and power, and in the physical and environmental spaces of the
neighbourhood – the parks, gardens, schools, the Community Centre, the Evergreen Health Centre, and the Neighbourhood House itself – where art and creative expression have enriched the urban landscape with physical pieces and changes that communicate a sense of belonging, beauty, fun, connection, surprise, and celebration.

The story of the Renfrew-Collingwood Arts Pow Wow presents an all-too-rare opportunity to reflect on the impacts of a long-term, multi-layered, multi-faceted, integrated arts-based community development program. Planners can learn from the ground-breaking and radical way in which Pow Wow coordinators have managed to negotiate constructive and collaborative relationships with levels of government, bureaucrats, public and private funding bodies, and corporate actors, all the while challenging business-as-usual and taken-for-granted assumptions, staying flexible and open, and ensuring their work is rooted in and driven by community assets, desires, and members. The Pow Wow story also highlights four important points in thinking about developing a more inclusive planning culture: 1. Who people are and how they work makes a difference; 2. Each situation is unique and understanding the planning context is crucial; 3. Processes of creative expression and artists do special work and they require distinctive resources and support; and 4. Community building and community mobilisation go hand in hand.

8.2 implications for planning theory and practice

This thesis considers some of the learning opportunities that exist in looking at the theories and practices of community cultural development for a planning profession in need of a new “operating system” compatible with the realities it faces today. In an urban world of increasing diversity, uncertainty, isolation and fear, creative and compassionate approaches and solutions are called for more than ever before. Planning would do well to begin living up to its interdisciplinary concept of itself and open to the wisdom and experiences of other fields and disciplines. Here, in learning from theorists and the experiences of innovative practitioners and community members, fundamental components of this re-orientation or re-imagination of planning theory and practice have been identified to include:
Opening to the complexities and urgencies of diversity. The planning profession urgently needs to expand and explore its understandings of diversity, multiculturalism, culture, community, citizenship, and identity and the very real implications of the contested and competing perceptions and manifestations of these concepts for theory and practice (Ameyaw, 2000; Burayidi, 2000; Fincher and Jacobs, 1998; Sandercock, 1998b; 2003; Wallace and Milroy, 1999). In terms of theory, it is imperative that interdisciplinary dialogue and research around these issues are prioritised, particularly that which reflects on insights from actual practice. Practically, planners have to fundamentally re-consider their philosophies, capacities, goals, skills, and tools in response to the implications of diversity and develop a language for talking about matters such as identity, belonging, and multiculturalism that are at the forefront of the public conversation about, and experience of, diversity in the city. Planners have got to learn how to really listen to and work with communities where they are at in ways that respond to their needs and desires, recognising the fluid and fragmented nature of cultural groups and communities.

CCD, as we have seen, both as a radical “would be paradigm” and a collection of practices and approaches, could assist in this expansion. As a process of research, education, communication and community development, CCD can help create social and physical spaces that invite open and constructive dialogues and action around issues of diversity. The goals, skills, capacities, and tools displayed and used by CCD practitioners might also be developed and / or modified for use by planners in their search for ways to expand their understanding and shape a more responsive practice.

Municipal planners in particular need to recognise their critical role in dealing with the challenges and opportunities presented by diversity. Impacts of diversity are experienced most profoundly at the local level, but policy and legislation pertaining to multiculturalism and diversity operate at more senior levels of government in Canada (Siemiatycki Isin, 1997; Friedmann, 2002). This lack of wide-ranging, nuanced, complex and responsive local policy and programming must be addressed. As of yet, no Canadian municipality has even reviewed its Official Plan in light of diversity, indicating an ignorance of or reluctance to address the cultural biases and racism embedded in policies, institutions, and the behaviour of planners (Quadeer, 1997; Wallace and Milroy, 1999). Barriers to participation exist at all levels of government and therefore enhanced
collaboration and communication between governments on diversity issues will be imperative. As identified by many of the practitioners interviewed for this study, a pro-active and collaborative approach (between planners, communities, governments, and organisations/agencies) – that engages and values the contributions of marginalised groups in particular – to identifying problems, resources and solutions is an essential first step.

**Responding to the interconnected realities of planning.** In re-orienting the planning profession’s “operating system” to respond to the multi-facetted, interconnected, relationship-centered realities within which it works, implications exist for both theory and practice. Theoretically, much work needs to be done in articulating and exploring what an “epistemology of multiplicity” and holistic approaches really mean and look like (Ameyaw, 2000; Burayidi, 2000; Sandercock, 1998; 2003). Research into what is going on in radical and transformative practice such as that described by the practitioners interviewed for this thesis should be a priority. As the domains of planning begin to be conceptualised as broader and more interconnected and fluid, planning theorists and academics should learn from and engage in dialogue and research with other fields – such as education, conflict resolution, feminist studies, sociology, anthropology, community cultural development, spirituality – following the example of theorists such as Leonie Sandercock (2003) who incorporates ideas from many of these fields in her work.

In practice, planners need to re-think theory as well. Opening up to the inherently political nature of planning practice, the complex realities of diversity, and an expanded understanding of the domains of planning brings taken for granted beliefs in how things work into question (Burayidi, 1998; Fenster, 1999; Forester, 1989; LeBaron, 2002; 2003; Macy, 1992; Sandercock, 1998a, 1998b; 2003; Quadeer, 1997; 2000). In a traditionally technical and procedural profession, space needs to be created where planners can talk about their theories, philosophies, and experiences and reflect on the appropriateness and effectiveness of their roles, capacities and tools (Sandercock, 2003). Planners need to develop a personal awareness and an understanding of how who they are impacts their work (Glassman et. al., 2004; Hogget and Miller, 2000; LeBaron, 2002; 2003; Lindhal, 2002; Macy, 2002.)
A revolution in planning education is being called for, where traditional planning functions and tools are questioned and balanced by the exploration of capacities and methods required for working in today's planning reality – from developing cultural and emotional fluency to listening skills, to facilitating processes of community development and mobilisation to critical thinking. This education shouldn't stop in planning schools, but be integrated into programs of professional development based on learning, reflection, and sharing rooted in practical experience. As we have seen, there is a great deal to be learned in these respects from community cultural development theory, from the stories of its practitioners, and through engaging in CCD practices themselves.

**Vis-à-vis history / whose story.** Another main point emerging from the thesis findings is the fundamental importance of story in planning. As a valuable tool of practical reflection and learning and a universal human activity essential in making meaning and sense of the world, the capacity to value, tell, and listen to stories – in the many forms in which they are told – is essential in the pursuit of a more holistic and responsive practice (LeBaron, 2002; 2003; Sandercock, 2003). The recognition and valuing of the histories and experiences of marginalised groups in particular, often long denied and de-legitimised by planning's own "official" stories, is a fundamental step in creating more inclusive democratic participatory processes and societies (Sandercock, 1998a).

Both case studies are examples of how CCD processes can provide unique opportunities for very diverse groups of people to express themselves, tell their stories, begin to understand one another's experiences, build relationships and skills, and generate the energy and sense of agency needed to take action. Implications for planning theory include the need to reflect critically on "official" planning history through pursuing the investigation of insurgent histories and stories (ibid.). The vast wealth of knowledge contained in the experience stories of practitioners is also ripe for further exploration.

**Valuing community participation and artistic process.** Holistic approaches to planning value different and often marginalised forms of knowledge and action for their very real and fundamental contributions they represent (Ameyaw, 2000; McKnight and Kretzmann, 1993). Planners need to revolutionise how the profession
values community process and the arts in general and participatory art processes in particular. A great deal of lip service is paid to the importance of public participation, but the kinds of knowledge and information gained in community processes — knowledge rooted in experience, practical wisdom, and emotional, somatic, spiritual and imaginative intelligences — is rarely viewed as legitimate or as significant as that produced by more traditional planning means (Forester, 1999; LeBaron, 2002; Sandercock, 1998b). In the interest of developing more inclusive and responsive practices, planners need to place more value on the products of participatory process (as well as the value of the process itself for those involved), be willing to resource processes adequately, give community-based and technically-based knowledge equivalent consideration, and account for how information is used to those who have contributed it.

Similarly, it isn’t surprising that the meaning of the arts to people and communities is diminished in our consumer-based market-driven society. Art is subjective, “soft”, ephemeral, and often subversive; its impacts and “value” are difficult to measure (Kay, 2000; Newman et. al., 2003). The last few decades have seen increasing commodification of the arts as urban cultural assets, creating a “cultural economy” or “culture industry” that focuses on cultural activity as an economic development and employment strategy rather than valuable for its social, health, intellectual or spiritual functions (Evans, 2001; Landry, 2000). When the arts are considered more broadly in planning, for instance in terms of their impacts on social interaction and liveability, it is the creative product and not the process which is seen as important.

The reasons the profession shies away from creative expression and participatory process as legitimate tools and culture as an equal “leg” in the sustainability stool is precisely why they are essential: they contribute different and essential things to our lives and human society (things that planning often considers outside of its “jurisdiction”) and can assist in doing different kinds of work in planning. This thesis has been about exploring what some of those unique contributions might be. Planning theorists and practitioners need to make further links with ideas from fields like cultural studies, art theory and history, feminist studies, anthropology, and CCD and perhaps question the reasons behind the profession’s rather slow response to the considerable cross-fertilisation in these fields. Practically, planners must spend time and resources investigating the workings and impacts of participatory arts processes. The profession
should acknowledge the integral role artists and CCD practitioners can play in planning based on their unique skills, capacities, and tools and respect and resource them accordingly. Creative and cultural approaches and knowledge should be integrated into planning processes from the beginning rather than added on as peripheral activities considered less important than others.

**Imagining a collaborative effort.** Many theorists and practitioners considered in this thesis argue that for planning to be responsive, appropriate, effective, and make positive contributions to cities of difference, it is going to have to be more collaborative. Findings here and elsewhere also indicate that an inclusive participatory democratic planning approach must be rooted in community development and mobilisation and intercultural dialogue (Forester, 1999; McKnight and Kretzmann, 1993; Sandercock, 2003). We all need to learn how to learn from one another. As practitioners’ stories reveal, there is a tremendous amount of innovative work going on at the grassroots and non-government levels and invaluable knowledge and information held by people and communities. Planning theory and practice would be deepened further if dialogue and collaboration between planners and community-based practitioners / organisations and across disciplines were increased. Practically, the political will to think in the long term and a willingness to shift priorities and mindsets are required. A commitment to genuinely collaborative and inclusive planning will require research, resources, and a readiness to change and evolve in unknown ways.

**8.3 recommendations: thoughts on planning in vancouver**

In light of the arguments and findings of this thesis, I would like to make several points directed at planners, Vancouver’s Planning Department, and City of Vancouver departments more generally.

**→ Systemic review.** A significant amount of time and resources over the years have been spent in attempting on a piecemeal basis to respond to Vancouver’s increasingly diverse population. Unfortunately, planning processes continue to elicit participation from a primarily white middle-aged and middle class audience. The City is in the process of responding to the criticisms and recommendations of the Public
Involvement Review which includes the development of a guide to public participation, a language and translation strategy, and a strategy for outreach to multicultural communities. These are good first steps, but in light of the complexities and urgencies of the implications of difference in this city, a more systemic overhaul accountable to citizens and communities is required.

**Contested concepts.** The Planning Department needs to review and articulate its understanding of multiculturalism and diversity and how these understandings shape its policies and programming. As these are highly political and contested areas, deepening the City's understanding of their meanings and implications and how residents experience diversity on daily basis should involve both public dialogue on these issues and some longer-term community-based research initiatives.

**Evaluation.** The City should commit resources and time to evaluating the impacts of the policies and initiatives that have been implemented already in response to diversity. Developing a more holistic and participatory evaluation approach to City initiatives would mean there would be a greater likelihood of getting good information from those the policies actually intended to benefit.

**Community development.** The City needs to honestly consider its commitment to collaborative approaches to planning and governance. It pays a lot of lip service to the importance of participation and has expended many resources into trying to achieve it. However, in reflecting on its previous efforts and the stories of the practitioners interviewed for this study it is clear that fundamental changes need to be made in how things are perceived and done for people to be meaningfully and effectively engaged. Practitioners argue for a truly community development approach, especially when it comes to ensuring the inclusion of marginalised and minority groups. The City needs to review the impacts of the community development work already being done by neighbourhood and multicultural planners and community centre / Park Board coordinators and contemplate what incorporating a community development approach to other decision-making and planning processes might contribute and entail.
Prioritising diversity planning. A basic questioning of the effectiveness and appropriateness of multicultural planning as it stands in Vancouver is needed. Vancouver is one of the most multicultural cities in the world! The city encompasses both the country's wealthiest and poorest postal codes, boasts nearly 50% of its population as having a first language other than English, and continues to experience tremendous demographic, economic, and social changes. Managing the implications of difference should be a priority for the Planning Department. I would recommend:

- Expanding the multicultural planning team to include more than one full-time planner, including planners from minority communities.
- A systematic review of planning policy and legislation in light of issues of diversity, focusing particularly on identifying and remedying the effects of embedded cultural bias.
- Integrating an awareness of diversity issues beyond the planning department through mandatory diversity training and formal and informal dialogue.
- Relative to the point regarding community development, the Planning Department should reflect on how a community development and community cultural development approaches might enrich a diversity and outreach strategy.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current planning capacities and tools for diversity planning and begin to fill in the gaps through both formal skills development and mutual learning between practitioners.

Mutual learning and collaboration. As we have seen in this thesis, planners and the Planning Department need not look far for resources and insight in developing more holistic approaches and responding to diversity. Looking to the experiences of planning departments in other multicultural Canadian cities (i.e. Toronto) or internationally (i.e. Sydney) might result in helpful direction. Learning from and collaborating with the many community-based organisations doing incredibly creative community development and public engagement work in Vancouver, of which the Kalayaan Centre and Collingwood Neighbourhood House are two, is a must. Bridging theory and practice could also be facilitated through collaborating with researchers, students, and faculty of universities and research institutes.
Professional development. The Planning Department could open up a dialogue amongst its staff about the gaps they are recognising in their own tool boxes and skill sets and encourage filling these gaps through both mutual learning and outside training. A workshop format where planners could share their experiences and skills – what works, what doesn’t, what’s surprising – with their colleagues, as well as learn from practitioners from outside the City to share expertise, would be useful.

Evaluation. As with its diversity initiatives, the City needs to commit time and resources for evaluating the community art projects already supported by the City. The Parks Board has implemented two participatory processes regarding its Arts Policy – one in its initial development and a second in evaluating the impacts of the Policy after 10 years. The Office of Cultural Affairs should follow the Parks Board’s lead in developing a more participatory evaluation approach in order to ensure its programming is relevant, effective, responsive, and inclusive.

Dialogue. City Planning and other departments need to engage in dialogue about the arts, culture, and creativity and what role they play in planning, participation, and governance. The Creative City Network is a great resource and forum for beginning this type of dialogue. I would suggest expanding that conversation to include more reflection on CCD practice in particular and a consideration of the opportunities presented by creative and cultural expression for shaping more inclusive democratic planning processes overall.

8.4 and the journey continues

All sanity depends on this: that is should be a delight to feel heat strike the skin, a delight to stand upright, knowing the bones are moving easily under the flesh. – Doris Lessing

I merely took the energy it takes to pout and wrote some blues. – Duke Ellington

A discovery is said to be an accident meeting a prepared mind. – Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

You will do foolish things, but do them with enthusiasm. – Collette

Logic only gives man what he needs. Magic gives man what he wants. – Tom Robbins
As I mentioned in my introductory chapter, this thesis research has been an important part of my personal journey. It's been about making my way along this path of figuring out who I am, identifying my strengths and weaknesses, and deciding how I want to be and what I mean to get done with this life I've got. It hasn't been about just getting a paper done so I can move on, although there were times along the way when I wished it was. The writing of this conclusion is particularly challenging for me. It requires me to wrap up a complex process of thinking and experience and it represents the finale of this act in my life, which feels kind of significant.

Also, if there is something I have learned about developing our creative capacities through this process, it is that creativity must be nurtured. It can't be forced. Julia Cameron, the well-known author of the classic guide to creative recovery *The Artist's Way*, speaks of creativity as a well. The well is not bottomless and we cannot draw from it endlessly without taking time to re-stock it with inspiration, self-care, and play. It will dry out. After a year and a half of writing I realise I haven't replenished the well as quickly as I've drawn from it and I come up thirsty without the juice needed to wrap things up. My creativity has been clear-cut! I think this metaphor holds a lesson for practitioners of any kind who wish to develop more creative ways of doing things: you have to keep restocking the well, whatever that means for you.

This whole research process has been transformative – the reading, the sharing and hearing of stories, the relationships I've developed. The reflection and writing process has been especially valuable as much as it has been long, hard, and painful at times. I've discovered more about how I work well, what kinds of factors and environments nurture my creativity, my critical thinking, my insight. All this talk about skills and capacities has stimulated my own self-observation; what am I good at in terms of the qualities needed to work in a new diverse urban reality? What do I need to develop and how might I go about pursuing that development? One thing I've done recently in this regard is complete the aforementioned *Artists' Way* course, which involves a lot of meditative writing and a lot of just *doing* things, taking risks, trying stuff out, and creation. I've realised the more I make time for my own creative exploration – like personal writing, working on visual art pieces, cooking – the more inspiration, spontaneity, enthusiasm, and creativity I have for other areas of my life and work.
Returning to the metaphor of the medicine wheel, I begin to see more clearly than ever the link between who we are as people and what we do as practitioners. Accepting the interconnected, diverse, relationship-centred, and continually fluctuating nature of reality, our efforts to create healthy communities parallel our struggle to discover and maintain healthy and balanced lives as individuals. We must strive to work with whole individuals and communities as whole people ourselves. Just as we consider the interrelated social, political, economic, spiritual, cultural, emotional and ecological aspects of planning issues, as individuals we must recognise the links between our physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, imaginative and intellectual health. Without an awareness of who we are — our strengths, our weaknesses, our biases, our desires — and where we are at ourselves, how can we hope to engage with others genuinely and effectively in a collective effort towards positive change?

I was introduced to another helpful metaphor just the other day. In the Buddhist tradition, a flower is often used to represent the potential for compassion, wisdom, clarity and joy to blossom in our life. In contrast, a rock symbolises our bewildered and inflexible mind that is set in its ways and unable to see reality as it really is — interconnected and constantly changing. If we think of the flower as the potential for true cultural democracy and open and inclusive communication and collaboration in our cities and communities, and the rock as our taken-for-granted ways of thinking and doing things or as an often inflexible planning tradition out of step with reality...

If we want the flower to take root and grow, we have to work to create the right conditions. The problem for most of us is that we're trying to grow a flower on a rock. The garden hasn't been tilled properly. We haven't trained our minds. It doesn't work to just throw
some seeds on top of the hard ground and then hope for the flowers to grow. We have to prepare the ground, which takes effort. First we have to move the rocks and hoe the weeds. Then we have to soften up the earth and create nice topsoil. This is what we are doing by learning to peacefully abide in meditation: creating the space for our garden to grow. Then we can cultivate the qualities that will allow us to live our lives in full bloom. (Mipham, 2003: 7)


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my experiences of community cultural development

as a participant:

1. SCARP Community Quilting Process, January-May 2002
2. Community Quilting Workshop, facilitated by local community artist, March 7, 2003
3. DanceArts Earth Project Movement Workshops, March 2003
4. DanceArts Earth Project Theatre Workshop, April 2003
5. Theatre of the Oppressed Workshop Series with Julian Boal, Summer Program, Institute for Management and Community Development (Concordia University), June 16 – 19, 2003
6. Headlines Theatre’s “Don’t Say a Word: How Not to get your Ass Kicked”, April 2003, as participating audience member
7. Public Dreams Society’s public festivals in 2002 and 2003 – Illuminares and the Parade of Lost Souls

as an observer:

2. International Women’s Day Celebration, March 7, 2003 with cultural performances by Sinag-Bayan, Palestinian Solidarity Group, Grassroots Women, Mexican group, Guatemalan group
4. Roots, Rhymes and Resistance IV, May 2002
5. Roots, Rhymes and Resistance V, May 2003
7. Ugat ng Kasaysayan, Sinag Bayan’s multi-media show at the Chinese Cultural Centre, June, 2003
8. Exploration of many of the social and physical spaces and places touched and enriched by the Renfrew Collingwood Arts Pow Wow, i.e. Slocan Park (Eagle Spirit Totem, fieldhouse mural, Dutchess Walkway), Renfrew Ravine Garden, Collingwood Neighbourhood House (Community Spirit Mural, Multicultural Gateway), Evergreen Health Centre
9. Watch your Step! public art pieces in Yaletown and near The Gathering Place Community Centre
10. Britannia Community Services Centre and School, community murals and mosaics
11. Mount Pleasant Community Fence
12. The Discovery Project: Community Markers